

Many feared dead as boat with over 100 passengers capsizes in Taraba

From Magaji I. Hunkuyi,
Jalingo

A boat carrying over 100 passengers capsized mid water at Benue River on Saturday.

Daily Trust learnt that traders, women and children heading for Binnari town in Karim-Lamido Local Government Area of the state were on the ill-fated boat.

Many of the passengers were returning from Mayoreneyo fish market in Ardo-Kola LGA.

The boat left Mayoreneyo local jetty at about 3:30pm and capsized 40 minutes later, according to sources.

A resident of Mayoreneyo, Musa Mayoreneyo, told Daily Trust that the ill-fated boat had earlier conveyed the passengers from Binnari to Mayoreneyo.

A source at the Mayoreneyo local jetty said none of the passengers had a life jacket when the incident occurred.

The acting chairman of inland

water transporters in Taraba State, Jidda Mayoreneyo, said about 15 bodies were recovered close to the scene.

He said more bodies, mostly children, were recovered; while local divers were still searching for bodies.

He disclosed that many of them were rescued by operators of other boats operating in the river when the incident occurred.

He said many passengers were rescued because the accident

occurred during the daytime, adding that the association banned night journeys because rescue operation is always difficult in night.

Confirming the accident, the chairman of the caretaker committee of Ardo-Kola LGA, Dalhatu Kawu, described it as tragic.

The spokesman of state police command, Usman Abdullahi, who also confirmed the incident, said he could not ascertain the

number of passengers in the boat.

He said many passengers were rescued while local divers were searching for those missing.

The chairman of the caretaker committee of Ardo-Kola LGA, Dalhatu Kawu, called for strict regulations on waterways to reduce boat accidents.

He said many operators in the state neither followed safety measures nor provided life jackets to passengers.