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Eight family members, 22 others die in boat mishap

From Charles Akpeji, Jalingo

OVER 30 persons were feared drowned in a boat mishap, which occurred on Sunday afternoon on the River Benue.

Details available to The Guardian showed that the boat, which was conveying 40 persons from Jibu Village of Wukari Local Council across the river to attend a naming ceremony capsized right in the middle of the river.

The passengers, who were said to be mainly women and children, according to our sources, were swept off by the river as they were unable to swim.

As at the time of filing in this report, only 22 bodies were said to have been recovered by rescue operators who, The Guardian learnt, were not available at the time of the incident.

According to a source, "the people would have been saved but for the absence of divers, almost all of them died in the water".

More pathetic, he said, was the story of eight members of the same family, whom he added, died in the accident.

About three persons were last week lynched over the disappearance of a male genital organ in Baissa, the administrative headquarters of Kurmi Local Council of the state. Two of the victims were said to be indigenes of the neighbouring country of Cameroun Republic.

Confirming the report, chairman of the council, Alhaji Ladan Umar, who was out of the council for a meeting at the state capital, confirmed that he had just been hinted of the incident but could not ascertain the number of casualties.

Umar, who hurriedly referred to the council, promised to reach out to journalists as soon as he got full details of the accident.

The Guardian learnt that none of the occupants of the boat survived the mishap as rescue operators were said to be busy searching for dead bodies.

The state police command could not be reached as at the time of filing this report due to poor network, which has engulfed the state capital in the past three days.

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