

‘Ondo boat mishap caused by recklessness’

By **Oluwaseun Akingboye, Akure**

18 October 2021 | 4:01 am

Tragedy struck in Irele Local Government Area of Ondo State as a boat heading towards a neighbouring community in Edo State capsized, leaving two young persons dead.

The Guardian gathered that the incident happened on Friday when the boat carrying six passengers was leaving Iyansan to the said destination, but had an accident, leaving Adesayo Omogbehin and Michael Oki dead.

Sources in the area said four of the affected passengers were rescued immediately by villagers, while corpses of the deceased were not found until Saturday.

The State Commandant of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Mr. Hammed Abodunrin, who confirmed the incident, attributed it to recklessness of boat operators in the riverine areas.

He lamented the previous boat mishap at Ilaje Local Government Area, which claimed the life of a passenger, leaving 15 others wounded as a result of over-speeding and refusal to use life jackets.

Abodunrin expressed readiness of the command to arrest ferry transporters and their passengers, who repeatedly violate safety rules on waterways.

He said the Corps would no longer tolerate the lackadaisical attitude of boat transporters, who are only concerned with loading goods and passengers without ensuring their safety jackets.

He recalled a recent night occurrence when a speed boat left Ugbonla for Igbenefa in Ilaje and encountered a collision with a bigger wooden boat from the high sea, leading to the death of one, while four passengers were injured.

He said the bodies of the victims, Oki and Omogbehin, were recovered by officers deployed to Iyasan in Irele Local Government Area for rescue operations.

He said: “It is high time our people placed a premium on human life. We have warned repeatedly that no transporter or passenger should travel the waterways without putting on their life jackets.

Henceforth, the Command Marine Special force would be on patrol and violators would be arrested.”

He also affirmed the Command’s continuous collaboration with the Nigerian Navy Forward Operating Base (FOB), Igbokoda in the arrest of suspected Illegal dealers in petroleum products, vandals, oil bunkerers and enforcement of safety rules on waterways.

Abodunrin stressed that the corps have trained officers and men who would in turn carry out public sensitisation on how to identify possible security threats and imbibe proactive safety precautions.

While commiserating with the bereaved families and the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria, Ondo State Chapter, he reiterated that safety of life and property was a prerogative of the NSCDC, hence, refusal to wear life jackets while plying the waterways will no longer be tolerated.