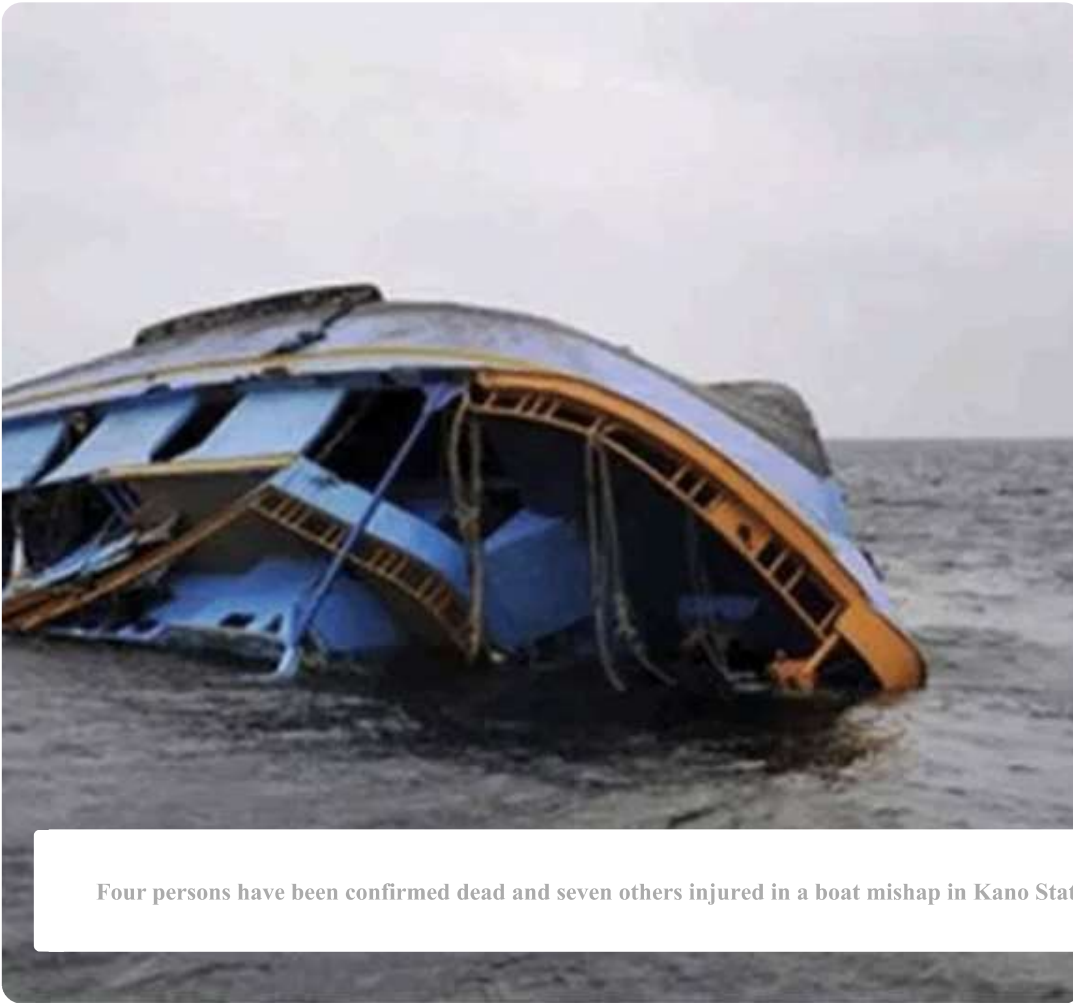


20 feared dead in Kogi boat mishap

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Four persons have been confirmed dead and seven others injured in a boat mishap in Kano State

At least 20 people have been confirmed dead following a boat accident that occurred on Tuesday evening in Ibaji Local Government Area of Kogi State.

The incident, which happened around 4:30 p.m. on September 30, involved a boat conveying traders and residents from the Onugwa community to Ilushi market before it capsized on the River Niger.

An eyewitness, James Otoga, a farmer in the area, said the boat was fully loaded with passengers heading to the market ahead of the October 1st Independence Day celebration.

“The boat was fully loaded with our people going to the market. Only five survivors have been rescued so far, while 20 bodies have been recovered. Many more are still missing beneath the river,” he said.

Otoga added that some mourners who had attended a burial in Onugwa and were returning to Ilushi were also among the victims. The exact number of passengers on board could not be immediately confirmed.

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Chairman of Ibaji Local Government, Hon. Ugeh Emmanuel, described the tragedy as the worst boat accident in the area's history.

“As I speak with you, no one can authoritatively state the actual number of casualties, and we cannot even ascertain the number of people on board from their departure point. The mishap occurred before the boat reached Ilushi. Most of the victims were on their way to celebrate October 1st as is the community's tradition,” Emmanuel said.

The accident adds to a series of fatal boat mishaps recorded in Kogi, Niger, and other riverine states over the past year.

Efforts to reach the Managing Director of the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), Bola Oyebanji, and the agency's Assistant General Manager (Corporate Affairs), Suleiman Makama, were unsuccessful as their phones could not be reached.