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# 4 Killed, Children Drown As Niger Villagers Flee From Bandits

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Four children yesterday drowned as a boat conveying their parents who fled for fear of bandits' attack capsized in Gurmana, Shiroro local government area of Niger State.

It was learnt that the boat was conveying no fewer than 70 villagers, including children between ages 3 and 5 years old and thus could not swim when the accident

occurred.

LEADERSHIP Friday gathered that the villagers fled to an island to hide from bandits Wednesday night, but while coming back yesterday morning after the bandits had finished raiding the communities, the boat capsized.

A villager, Mohammed Yusuf, confirmed to LEADERSHIP Friday that they go to an island in the middle of River Kaduna to

hide from bandits, who are usually scared of rivers.

"The only way to evade the bandit's attack when we heard of the attacks going on around Bassa area is to go to the Island because we know the bandits do not like Rivers," he added.

Another villager who prefers anonymity said, "We were told that they were attacking Kasmana, Anguwan Madi after killing four at Bassa; we hurriedly packed

our things, left the vigilantes and went to the Island, out of fear and on our way back this morning the boat capsized, and four of our children drowned because they were too young to swim."

The state commissioner for homeland security, Mohammed Garba Bello, could not be reached on the incident, but a top Shiroro local government official who preferred anonymity confirmed the mishap.

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coming up, 4 in Lagos."