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## 50 dead in Kwara canoe accident

By [Adekunle Jimoh](#) | Published Today | [News](#) | Unrated



Saraki

IT was all tears at the weekend in a Kwara State community following the death of 50 persons in an accident involving two canoes.

The victims, including school pupils, died in Baruten Local Government Area when the canoes capsized on the Nano River, Bukuro village.

Eighty passengers were said to be on board the canoes.

The canoes were said to be conveying the victims from neighbouring Yarawodo village in Benin Republic back to Bukuro after business transactions and schooling.

According to sources, residents of Baruten, a border town in Kwara State and Yaworodo town in Benin Republic share a lot in common, with many children and adults crossing over from Kwara to Yarawodo daily for schooling as well as business.

The tragedy was said to have occurred when the canoes conveying the victims back to Baruten after the day's business in Yarawodo capsized mid-way into the trip.

The disturbed Emir of Guanara in the local government, Alhaji Sabi Idris described the incident as the worst in the history of Guanara district.

The traditional ruler, who sympathised with the families of those who died in the incident, urged the Federal Government to pay more attention to the development of border towns, especially those in Baruten Local Government Area.

He lamented that his district had been described as the most neglected border town, a situation which he said called for urgent attention.

According to him, the incident would have been averted if the school in Bukuro is adequately equipped.

He emphasised the need for the Federal Government to provide the community with good roads and electricity to boost economic activities and discourage the people from crossing over to Benin Republic.

Said he: "Boat mishaps have been a yearly occurrence on the river. But the casualty figures for this year far outweigh the previous years'. I'm, therefore, using this forum to appeal to both the Nigerian and Benin governments to construct a bridge across the river to avert a repeat of these avoidable tragedies that have been our lot. The Nigerian government in the time past established the National Boundary Commission that has now become history with no solution in sight. Today has been one of the tragic days in my life.

"Our roads are in deplorable state. The Ilesha-Baruba road reconstruction started by the Federal Government seems to have been abandoned. That is the only major road that links Baruten Local Government with the rest of the state. If we have enough schools, our wards wouldn't have been crossing over to the next country for educational purposes."

The village head of Bukuro, Mallam Isa Aliyu, said his village, with a population of about 20,000, could only boast of three teachers in its only primary school.

He said the unfortunate incident was borne out of the determination of parents in its domain to get their children and wards educated, thereby necessitating the enrolment of the pupils in the Benin Republic schools.

The Education Secretary of the local government, Mallam Umaru Zango claimed that about 55 pupils were on board the canoes.

As at the time of this report, only 35 survivors had been found.

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