

NEWS

Five die as ship burns in Cross River

From Kunle Johnson, Calabar

FIVE persons were killed and several others injured as a commercial vessel, M. T. Rocky, was gutted by fire in Calabar, Cross River State, at the weekend.

The incident occurred a few metres from the Marina jetty during a welding process on the Calabar River near NNS Victory, the naval base.

Police Public Relations Officer Etim Dickson confirmed the incident.

He said: "There were some maintenance jobs being done on the vessel when the fire occurred and some people died.

"So far they have recovered five bodies and some people with various degrees of injury rescued".

Sources said but for the Navy and the Fire Brigade, the casualty rate would have increased.

A Naval Officer, Capt. Adekunle Okeniyi blamed the incident on the crew, which embarked on welding while petroleum products were onboard.

But a source said the vessel was not carrying petroleum product. According to him, the crew was repair a damage when the oxygen and acetylene cylinders leaked.