

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari and Kano State Governor Abdullahi Ganduje have expressed grief over Tuesday's boat accident in the state.

More than 20 persons were initially said to have died in the incident, which happened in the Badau area of Bagwai council of the state.

But by yesterday, the death toll had risen to 36, it was learnt.

Seven persons were in intensive care in hospital, while some were still missing, as search continued.

"As efforts are being made to rescue the passengers still unaccounted for, I join fellow citizens in praying for the repose of those lost, and for safety and well-being of all the others", the President said yesterday in a statement by Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity Mallam Garba Shehu.

Seven suspected

Kano boat accident: Buhari, Ganduje mourn as death now 36

•State Exco sets up probe panel

From Bolaji Ogundele, Abuja, and Fanen Ihyongo, Kano

According to a police report yesterday, 36 bodies have been recovered.

A statement by police spokesman, Abdullahi Haruna Kiyawa, said, "36 bodies have been recovered. 29 confirmed dead by a medical doctor. Seven rescued are receiving treatment at Bagwai Hospital. Of those rescued are four females and three males. Rescue mission in progress."

Ganduje described the incident as a 'state tragedy'.

It was gathered that the boat was sailing from Hayin Badau to Bagwai, with 50 pas-

sengers, most of them Islamiyyah students, when it capsized due to "overloading."

Ganduje said: "We learned the boat started from Hayin Badau to Bagwai with passengers who were on their way to attend Maulud celebration."

"The boat was ferrying about 50 people with some loads. It capsized because of overload. And most of them were Islamiyyah students."

The state Executive Council (SEC) has set up a committee to investigate the accident.

Commissioner for Information, Malam Muhammad Garba, who briefed reporters after an emergency meeting of

the council at the Africa House, Kano, said, "The search for 14 other victims of the tragic boat accident has intensified".

Malam Garba also announced that the council has approved measures to support the bereaved families of the victims and provide relief materials that include 120 bags each of rice, maize, 60 bags each of sugar and salt, as well as cash support of N6 million at N100,000 per head.

Garba said: "The executive council also approved the formation of an immediate investigation committee on the accident to advise the government on how to avert future occurrence."