

The scene of the tanker explosion in Gombe State on Wednesday.

15 die, many others declared missing in Niger boat accident

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TRAGEDY struck in Borgu Local Government Area of Niger State on Sunday in a boat mishap, as 15 persons were feared dead while several others have been declared missing.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that the victims were returning from Warrah market, a border community in Ngaski Local Government Area of Kebbi State, to Sabo Yumu in Borgu, when the accident occurred late in the evening.

It was further learnt that the accident might have been as a result of poor visibility on the part of the boat's driver

due to bad weather, which caused the boat to run into a tree stump on River Malale, midway into the journey.

A source close to the scene of the accident informed the **Nigerian Tribune** on Wednesday in Minna that: "as we speak, 15 corpses have been recovered and already buried, while two others were rescued alive, even as many are still missing."

The source, who craved for anonymity, told the **Nigerian Tribune** that local divers were still searching for the remaining passengers as of the time of filing this report.

The source noted that the number of passengers in

the boat had yet to be ascertained, but said that "the boat was big and has capacity for over 50 passengers.

"Also, because it was market day, the immediate or remote cause of the accident might have been overloading the boat.

Meanwhile, the Director General, Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA) Alhaji Ahmed Ibrahim Inga, who confirmed the development to the **Nigerian Tribune** in a telephone interview, also put the death toll at 15 persons.

He added that the accident boat was carrying 50 passengers, and that some survivors

were rescued, while divers were still searching for the remaining occupants.

The NSEMA boss further disclosed that the state government was working towards putting in place regulatory framework to check the activities of commercial boat operators in the state and addressing some of the challenges hampering their activities.

He also disclosed that government was looking at the possibility of providing life jackets to boat drivers and passengers, in a bid to reduce the high casualties often recorded during boat mishaps in parts of the state.