

Woman dies in PH boat fire

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ONE person was feared dead on Monday when a passenger boat went up in flames after loading at a jetty in Nembe Waterside, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The incident, which occurred at about 9.30am on Monday, paralysed all activities at the waterways as people fled the scene. The affected boat, which was said to have been loaded with petroleum products and other items, was preparing to move to one of the coastal communities in the Niger Delta.

Though the cause of the fire could not be confirmed by some officials at Nembe Waterways, an eyewitness told *THE PUNCH* that the inferno might have been caused by an electrical device in the boat.

It was also gathered that the number of people in the boat combined with the heavy items loaded in it did not give anybody a chance to immediately ascertain the point the fire emanated from.

The victim of the fire outbreak was said to have suffered severe burns and died on the way to the hospital. The situation, according to another witness, Mr. David Chikwe, became worse when the state fire service could not reach the scene of the incident.

The spokesperson for the state police command, Dr. Rita Inoma-Abbey, however, explained that she was yet to be briefed on the matter.

Inoma-Abbey said she had already put a call across to the Divisional Police Officer in charge of the area and promised to provide further details about the incident.