

30th September, 2013

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## 150 feared dead in River Niger tragedy

SEPTEMBER 29, 2013 BY AGENCY REPORTER 26 COMMENTS



One hundred and fifty persons were feared dead on Friday following a boat mishap in River Niger, close to Malilli village in the Borgu Local Government Area of Niger State.

The accident happened at about 2 pm. While 42 bodies were recovered and confirmed dead, over 100 others are reportedly missing.

As at 10:30pm, no there was no survivor. Divers were still at the river looking for more victims.

The Public Relation Officer of the Niger State Emergency Management Agency, Mr. Ibrahim Hussaini, told our correspondent via the telephone that the incident occurred as the traders were returning from Malili village to their village, Tunga Illo, which is across the River Niger.

He said, "The boat was believed to have carried over 150 passengers, mostly traders when it capsized mid way into its journey, resulting in the drowning of 42 passengers, while 100 others are missing.

"Swimmers from Malili village swung into action immediately after they heard about the mishap, retrieving 42 corpses from the river, while efforts are being made to rescue possible survivors along the bank of the river or the corpses of those that drown.

"At the moment, search and rescue is ongoing on the river, I will make the detail of the incident known soon."

Meanwhile, the Governor of Niger State, Babangida Aliyu, has commiserated with the families of the victims of the boat mishap. In a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Danladi Ndayebo, the governor said it was disheartening for such a tragedy to befall the state at a time when government was grappling with challenges to better the lot of the people.

The statement urged those involved with water transportation to be more careful, especially during raining season when water level was usually high.

It said the state's emergency management agency had since deployed its officials to the scene of the mishap to ascertain the extent of loss incurred with a view to compensating families of the victims.

The Secretary to the State Government, Mr. Saidu Ndako, also confirmed the boat mishap. He said, "I received the information late in the night that a boat had capsized and 42 persons have drowned in the incident, while rescue operation is ongoing.

"We believe that the boat was overloaded because the boat's capacity was put at 60 passengers, but over 150 passengers were said to be on board during the incident. "The debris in the swollen river may also have been responsible for the incident."

Last month, nine people drowned in similar circumstance in Taraba while in March, 27 out of 133 persons died after their boat capsized in Calabar.

Also, in March, seven persons drowned in a similar accident in Delta State.

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