

12 die in Bayelsa boat mishap

SIMON UTEBOR

TWELVE persons have reportedly died in a boat mishap along Ikoli River close to Ayama community in Ogbia Local Government Area of the Bayelsa State.

SUNDAY PUNCH learnt that the boat accident occurred on Christmas Day in the night following a head-on collision between a passenger boat and cargo boat.

It was learnt that two persons in the passenger boat narrowly escaped death while 12 others, including some university undergraduates, died.

The undergraduates were said to be returning from a picnic at Otuabula in Ogbia when they met their deaths.

Though it could not be ascertained as of press time, a lecturer with the Niger Delta University was listed among the casualties.

It was gathered that eight corpses had so far been recovered by local divers, who were still combing the river beds for other missing bodies.

A source, who craved anonymity, said the recovered corpses were deposited at the morgue of the Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa on Friday.

The source claimed the passenger boat, which had no navigational light for night travel, was returning to Onuegbum in Ogbia when it collided with the wooden boat, which also had no light, on the Ayama stretch of the river.

Chairman of the state chapter of Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria, Mr. Lloyd Sese, confirmed the incident.

He expressed sadness over the development.

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Alex Akhigbe, confirmed the incident.

He, however, said the information at his disposal was still sketchy.

He promised to provide our correspondent with the details of the tragic accident after briefing by the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Ogbia Division.