

One dies, 27 injured in Lagos boat accident

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Scene of the incident

Afeez Hanafi

A woman was confirmed dead on Wednesday after a commercial boat en route to Victoria Island, Lagos, from Ikorodu ran into a log of wood and capsized.

Twenty seven other passengers aboard the speedboat escaped death with varying degrees of injuries and were said to have

been taken to the Ikorodu General Hospital and a private hospital in the area.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the boat had carried 27 passengers – six above the number that was supposed to be on board, making it difficult to regain balance after it rammed into the wood around 10am, shortly after it took off from the Origin Jetty in Ikorodu.

The Lagos State Waterways Authority, however, said the boat had the capacity to carry 30 passengers.

Emergency agencies comprising LASWA, Nigeria Inland Waterways Authority, Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, the Lagos State Ambulance Service and the Nigeria Police Force converged on the scene to rescue the victims.

“The accident was caused by overloading. The operator would have been able to manoeuvre if he had the normal number of passengers on board. The corpse of the victim had been deposited in a morgue, while 27 persons who sustained injuries are receiving treatment in hospitals,” an emergency official said.

The Managing Director, LASWA, Mrs. Abisola Kamson, said it was unfortunate that the woman, whose identity had yet to be ascertained, died in the accident, adding that the agency had set new standard for boat operators to forestall recurrence.

She said, “A boat named HMS 2 with 30 passengers’ capacity travelling with 28 passengers from the Origin Jetty to the Addax Jetty on Victoria Island, after travelling 400 meters from the Origin Jetty, hit a log submerged in the waterways, which damaged the single hull of the boat causing the boat to sink.

“Rescue operation started immediately and 27 passengers were rescued from the incident, but unfortunately one passenger was

confirmed dead at the scene of the incident. Investigation revealed that all passengers were wearing lifejackets. LASWA and NIWA have issued out new guidelines and standards to boat operators in Lagos aimed at sanitising and improving the waterways.”

The General Manager, LASEMA, Michael Akindele, confirmed that the boat was overloaded and advised boat operators to avoid speeding and always comply with safety regulations.

He said, “A boat identified as HMS 1 with 28 passengers, including one crew member on board capsized at about 9.55 am on the waterways. The passengers were rescued with one fatality. Investigation by LASEMA response team revealed that the boat, which took off from Ikorodu en route to Victorial Island, was overloaded. Instead of 21 passengers, it conveyed 28 passengers and was said to be on high speed when it collided with a log on the waterways, resulting in the accident.”