

Rivers boat accident: Remains of drowned children recovered

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Rivers State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Nnamdi Omoni

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A combined team of local divers and policemen have recovered the corpses of two children, Destiny and Ngowari Amamima, who got missing when a boat capsized in Okrika on Sunday.

The remains were said to have been recovered on Tuesday.

The two children, whose ages were four and six years, were found at about 6.15pm along the Kalioama-Okrika waterways, near where the boat capsized.

It was gathered that the children had boarded the boat with their mother, identified as Ngozi Amamina, and 21 others, heading to Okrika from Marine Base in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Our correspondents learnt that the corpses of the children were immediately buried after they were found.

A source said, “Given the fact that they have been in the water for a long time, they were buried immediately.”

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Nnamdi Omoni, told one of our correspondents that a combined team of local divers and marine policemen recovered the bodies.

Omoni explained that the corpses were found close to the spot where the boat capsized on Sunday.

“I can confirm to you that the bodies of the children have been recovered. They were recovered at the spot where the boat accident happened. I can also confirm to you that the bodies were buried the same day they were recovered,” Omoni said.

He stated that the state police command was addressing safety on waterways, adding that the two boat accidents that claimed three lives within 10 days were worrisome.

Recall that 10 days before the boat accident that claimed the lives of two children in Okrika, a similar accident had occurred in Bakana, in the Degema Local Government Area, where one person, Joe Blankson, lost his life.

Also, the Secretary, Marine Base, Okrika Waterways Boat Operators, Tamuno Wakama, urged the state government to help in decongesting the waterways of large vessels.

“Lifejackets were available, but they failed to provide any for the children. Every other passenger on board used lifejackets, except the two children. The situation is unfortunate.

“We are begging the state government to help us in ensuring that these big boats are removed to avoid such a case in the future,” Wakama added.

The spokesman for the Okrika Local Government Area, Mr Dean Elliot, blamed the accident on the carelessness of the boat captain and the encumbrance of large vessels anchored along the Marine Base to Okrika water route.

“The carelessness of the boat helmsman caused the boat to overturn because the captain was negotiating a curve on a high speed. Also, large boats, barges and other vessels owned by private companies have covered a large part of the waterways, making the route narrow compared to what it used to be,” Elliot said.

He said the council had set up a sea surveillance committee to work with the marine police with a view to enforcing the use of lifejackets by boat passengers.