

Travellers lament attacks as pirates kill two in Rivers waterways

Dennis Naku 4 June 2021

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Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Eboka Friday

Two persons have been reportedly killed after suspected pirates attacked a passenger boat travelling in Ke community, in the Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State.

This is coming on the heels of a similar attack by gunmen dressed in the uniform of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps along the waterways in the Asari-Toru LGA. Two people were killed and five injured in that incident.

In the latest attack, it was gathered that the pirates, who were in two speedboats, intercepted the travellers, who were returning to Port Harcourt.

The hoodlums were reported to have carted away goods and personal belongings, even as they used hard objects on the passengers and fled.

Two persons later died from the attack.

Speaking on the incident, a member of the Ke Community Development Committee, Daibi Ekine, told journalists that travelling by water to the community had become a nightmare.

He said, "Pirates attacked two of our community boats, took the engines and left with two boys. While we were crying over it, we heard that they collected another 75-horsepower engine from people living in our community."

“These attacks are rampant in our territory. We have been calling on the state government to send security agents to this area so that we can have peace of mind, especially on the waterways.”

Ekine said piracy had affected their livelihood, adding that boat drivers skipped some days of doing business for fear of being attacked and losing their engines.

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“From Ke to Port Harcourt is about one hour on water. But we are not safe and because of this, some days our boats are not running and we are suffering because of pirates.

“Almost half of the Kalabari community is in riverine areas. So, we are begging the Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike, to do something to help us,” he added.

Meanwhile, the Coordinator of Partners for Peace in Rivers State, Livingstone Membere, has called for an urgent stakeholders’ meeting that will address rising cases of attacks on the waterways.

“Most of the time if there are interactions between the security agencies and these stakeholders, this situation can be checked.

“I commend the effort of the state government towards addressing insecurity in Rivers State. But the riverine communities are also part of the state and the people need to be safe while going about their daily activities,” he added.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Nnamdi Omoni, said he had yet to get a report of the incident as of the time of filing this report.

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