

Corps member, five others feared dead in Bayelsa boat accident

Kindly share this story:



By Daniels Igoni

19th June 2022



No fewer than six persons including a female member of the National Youths Service Corps; a pregnant woman; a mother and her two children; and a 70-year-old man, have been feared dead in a passenger boat accident in Bayelsa State.

They were said to have drowned as a result of the incident which occurred on Saturday between Otuan and Ayama in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of the state.

According to reports, the boat which had 15 passengers on board, rammed into a barrier in the waters and sank while approaching Ayama to berth, amidst a heavy rainstorm.

It was gathered that the passengers were covered with a tarpaulin to protect them from the rainstorm when the accident happened.

The corpses of the casualties and the boats were still missing even as a search team had been deployed in the area as of the time of this report.

The unit chairman of the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria at Otuan community, Joseph Shadrach, said the boat driver, Christopher Lucky, had been detained by the police in Ayama for allegedly driving under poor visibility.

He claimed that preliminary investigation showed that the weather was bad due to the rainstorm, which had started before the boat moved.

He said, “I was the chairman of the union but some persons who claimed to know more than themselves have been taking charge of the Otuan unit.

“If I had been around, I would not have allowed the loading of the boat due to poor visibility and bad weather. I was told a corps member, two children, and a woman died.”

Related News

Mob sets suspected thief ablaze in Bayelsa

Bayelsa assembly approves oil palm plantations' establishment

Diri warns against plans to stop Nembe-Brass road project

Confirming the boat accident, the state chairman of MWUN, Ipigansi Ogoniba, said that six passengers had been confirmed dead.

“Six persons died. When the boat got to Ayama, it had a mishap. One corpse was recovered and handed to the family for proper burial. While three adults and three children were still missing or probably dead,” he said.

Ogoniba said the state NYSC authorities had been contacted through the community liaison officer on the identity of the deceased female corps member, adding that “they are still searching for her corpse and we have reached out to the NYSC for her identity.”

The spokesman for the State Police Command, Asinim Butswat, said that a search team comprising the marine police, MWUN and divers was combing the waters to recover the bodies of the victims.

He also confirmed that the boat driver had been detained for questioning over the circumstances that caused the accident.

The Public Relations Officer of the state NYSC, Matthew Ngobua, said the state coordinator of the scheme had departed for the scene of the incident for identification of the deceased corps member.

He said, “We got the information and the State Coordinator and other staff left the Orientation (Camp) and went to the place.

“The State Coordinator told me that the corps member’s name is said to be on the passenger manifest and the said corps member is not at the lodge.

“However, we will make a detailed report after the search and rescue or when the body is recovered. The NYSC will make an official brief when the body is sighted and properly identified.”