

Boat crash: Three students missing, C'River orders investigation



• Otu

Ada Wodu, Calabar

EFFORTS have continued to locate the whereabouts of three medical students who went missing when the boat conveying them to a destination crashed in the Calabar area of Cross River on Saturday.

PUNCH Metro gathered that officials of the Nigerian Navy and other security agencies in the state alongside local divers were involved in the rescue operation that led to the rescue of 11 of the students on the boat that crashed.

The state governor, Bassey Otu, in his reaction to the incident, blamed the crash on overcrowding, adding that he had ordered an investigation into the incident.

Otu decried the safety standards at the Marina Resort and vowed that anyone found to be culpable in the incident would be severely sanctioned.

In a statement by his Chief Press

Secretary, Emmanuel Ogbeche, on Sunday, Otu said, "The news of a cruise boat mishap at the Marina Resort, a tourist and relaxation destination in Calabar, is saddening and calls for concern not only as your governor but as a parent.

"To imagine that the boat was overcrowded and some of those on it were without life jackets is of even greater concern and the more reason why the state government will be investigating the incident and all those found culpable of having compromised on safety standards will face the wrath of the law.

"As a government, our administration remains committed to protecting the sanctity of life and providing an enabling environment for business, tourism and peaceable living. Therefore, any untoward action that could derail our objective will not be tolerated."

He, however, noted that all the rescued students except one were out of the hospital, adding that he was confident that the remaining victim would pull through as doctors said he had been responding to treatment.

Otu also praised personnel of the Nigerian Navy and villagers who responded swiftly to the hapless victims of the boat crash and rescued 11 of the 14 passengers on the boat.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the medical students were in Calabar for the Nigeria Medical Students Games when the incident happened at the weekend.