

# ② One dies, others injured in Edo boat accident

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**THE Edo State Police Command on Monday said one person died while four others were injured when a commercial boat hit stationary barges in Gelele, the Ovia South West Local Government of the state on Thursday.**

This is just as some residents claimed that no fewer than seven persons died in the accident.

The boat conveying mainly women and children was said to have run out of fuel after a passenger alighted in one of the settlements in the riverine communities.

The boat was said to have drifted away from its route and collided with the barges.

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, SP Chidi Nwabuzor, confirmed the accident, saying that only one person died in the mishap.

"Marine police confirmed that one person died and four others were injured while others were rescued unhurt," Nwabuzor said.

The council's Vice Chairman,



• Edo governor, Godwin Obaseki Source: File

Blessing Perewari, who visited the scene of the incident, sympathised with the families of the victims and said the dead had been deposited at the mortuary.

He said, "From what I heard, about 28 adults, two pregnant women and three babies were involved. When they got to the Gelele waterside, there were oil barges that were parked in parallel.

"The barges were parked in a way that they obstructed the waterway. So, this particular boat carrying 28 persons, after

dropping two passengers, tried to restart the boat but the engine failed to respond.

"Because of the high current of the river, it pushed the boat into the barges and it torpedoed under the barges making it difficult for the victims to come out. Some of them that could swim managed to escape while others were trapped under the barges.

"With the help of the Marine Police and other community members, we were able to rescue 18 of the passengers and seven

died."

Perewari blamed the oil company for its inability to provide ambulances to convey the dead.

However, a senior staff member of the company, who is not authorised to speak on the issue, said, "Our barges and tug boat were anchored at our jetty and that day incidentally was Ekheuan market day. If you have been to our jetty before, we have three barges that are normally there, they have been there before 1987 and that was not the only boat that passed through that place that day.

"The police were involved in the rescue operations and they know everything that happened. The Army speedboat was also close by and witnessed all that happened.

"The community chairman works for the company that owns the barges. He was there just for his routine inspection when the incident occurred. He was the one who first mobilised some divers from the community for rescue operations."