

# Suspect arrested over death of missing Rivers boat driver

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| By Dennis Naku

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The Rivers State Police Command has confirmed the arrest of a suspect in connection with the discovery of the body of the missing boat driver identified as Owei Ibolo days after he was declared missing in the Bakana Waterway in Degema Local Government Area of the state.

*PUNCH Metro* learnt that Ibolo, aged 47, a native of Southern Ijaw Local Government of Bayelsa State, was allegedly forced by gunmen who entered his boat at the Bakana Jetty after shooting sporadically and ordering him to drive on Sunday.

It was gathered that several hours afterwards, nothing was heard of him forcing his colleagues in the boat union and family to begin a search.

A relative of the deceased, Lolo Dokubo, who revealed his identity while speaking with newsmen in Port Harcourt on Wednesday, said Ibolo's body was found at the Bakana Sand-field while his boat was still missing.

He alleged that the boat driver was killed by the four armed men who were shooting indiscriminately before moving towards the waterside where they entered his boat.

But while speaking with our correspondent on Wednesday, the spokesperson for the state Police Command, Grace Iringe-Koko, confirmed the incident and the arrest of a suspect.

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Iringe-Koko said, “Yes I can confirm that the man was shot. One suspect has been arrested in connection with the incident and an investigation is ongoing.”

Earlier, while noting that a suspect had already been handed over to the Marine Police in Abonema for investigation, Lolo appealed to the Bakana community to assist in ensuring that the perpetrators were apprehended and made to face justice as well as recover the victim’s boat.

He said, “About four boys came out from the Bakana community with rifles and began to shoot. They didn’t use boats. They just came out from the community, entered the boat and drove away with him (Ibolo).

“Yesterday at about 4 pm, a call came from one of the drivers of a passenger boat travelling from Bakana to Port Harcourt, that they saw a corpse at the Bakana Sandfield and that we should go and check. So, we went there and saw that it was our brother. What we want is for justice to be done.”

Our correspondent recalls that the Bakana waterway was blocked a few days ago by members of the Bakana Boat Union following the killing of the boat driver. The aggrieved boat drivers called on the police to increase security surveillance on the waterways and arrest the suspects.