

Naval officer dies rescuing 59 from drowning in Rivers

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The Base Operations Officer of the Nigerian Navy Forward Operating Base in Bonny, Lieutenant-Commander Gideon Gwaza, has lost his life during a rescue operation in River State.

The Director of Naval Information, Commodore Aiwuyor Adams-Aliu, in a statement on Friday, said the operation led to the rescue of 59 persons from a dredging vessel, MV AMBIKA 4, that was on the brink of sinking while operating at the Okpobo Field, near the Okpobo River.

Adams-Aliu said the operation was conducted in collaboration with the Nigerian Air Force.

He said, "In response, the Nigerian Navy Forward Operating Base in Bonny deployed a rescue team comprising 10 armed personnel in two interceptor boats, led by the Base Operations Officer, to carry out the rescue operation.

"Efforts to approach the distressed vessel were challenging due to the strength of the waves, prompting the

deployment of another squadron of three boats to reinforce the rescue team.

"Additionally, the Nigerian Navy Ship GONGOLA, drones, Nigerian Navy helicopters, and a Nigerian Air Force helicopter were mobilised for the search and rescue mission. Eventually, all 59 crew members were successfully rescued, but the Base Operations Officer, Lieutenant-Commander Gideon Gwaza, paid the ultimate price."

He noted that the deceased officer accidentally fell overboard during the rescue operation which lasted for approximately 10 hours, from midnight on July 29 to 30, 2024.

"The Nigerian Navy deeply mourns the loss of Gwaza, who bravely risked his life to save others.

"He was a well-trained combat diver whose untimely death reflects the risks and sacrifices of Nigerian Navy personnel in ensuring the safety of Nigeria's maritime domain.

"His dedication and sacrifice will forever be remembered," Adams-Aliu added.