

# Bayelsa: Sad Easter as scores die in boat mishap

• 5 dead bodies recovered • Gov Diri expresses sadness

From Femi Folaranmi, Yenagoa

**SEVERAL** persons were feared dead when a local boat capsized at Iwokiri along the Okoroma community, Nembe waterways in Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. According to investigations, the boat was conveying passengers and goods to Okpoama also in Brass Local Government Area when the incident happened.

Findings from sources in the area said that the incident happened in early Friday morning, saying that several persons are still missing.

The Chairman of Bayelsa State Maritime Union Chairman, Mr Ogoniba Ipigansi who confirmed the incident said that several bodies have been found, following a search and rescue mission.

"You know it is a big boat. And the boat doesn't have a record, unlike a speedboat. People just enter the boat like that with their loads.

"So we are still searching the area to see if we can find more dead bodies. Because even the owner of the boat doesn't know how many people were on board," he said.

Another source in the area said that while five bodies were initially recovered, more are still being recovered going by reports of the rescue team.

"The body of the local boat worker was found. And more bodies may be found before the end of today," he said.

Sources at the Swali water-side where the boat took off, said that people raised eyebrows over the number of goods the boat carried.

Mr Kpe Jeremiah Ayebainemi who disclosed that his mother and child were in the boat, but have been rescued complained that the boat carried more than the regular goods for its capacity.

"When I left for the water-side at Yenagoa to put them on the boat, the boat was tilted a bit to one side.

"They still loaded again about 200 bags of pure water at Okoroma even against the disdain of passengers and others that shortly after they had left the port it sank.

A visibly angry Ayebainemi called for the relevant authorities to regulate and monitor boat operators.

"They can't joke with people's life and property all for the greed of the change or money they want. This is the third time it is sinking again.

"If they don't put a threshold on their greed, it will be the end of their business. I give God the glory. My family is hale and hearty.

"I believe the Ministry of Transport in line with the

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