

How Nigerian crew members, Briton died in Seplat's drilling rig mishap in Delta

From **Tony Osauro**,
Benin, **Paul Osuyi**, Asaba
and **Joseph Obukata**,
Warri

A Briton and five Nigerian oil workers have been reported dead in a collapsed drilling rig belonging to Seplat Energy at Ogboren near Ovhor Oilfield in Sapele Local Government Area, Delta State.

The incident happened on Tuesday with 96 crew members including a Briton onboard.

The company, in a statement signed by its Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Roger Brown, said "Seplat Energy regrets to announce a serious incident on the Depthwise swamp drilling rig "Majestic" in the early hours of this morning, August 15.

"Seplat as the operator of the SEPLAT/NNPCL joint venture contracted the rig. It was in-transit to its planned drilling location at Ovhor in Delta State when it

• Several others missing, Oborewori says incident tragic

capsized."

The statement explained that "92 of the 96-member crew are accounted for and safe. However, tragically one fatality occurred during the incident, while three other rig personnel are still missing.

"...Our emergency response and rescue efforts working alongside the rig owner and the authorities have been activated and are onsite. Our utmost priority will continue to be the safety and wellbeing of all the affected personnel and their families.

"We will provide further details as our understanding of the incident develops. A detailed investigation into the cause of the accident will follow," the statement assured.

As of the time of filing this report, six bodies had been recovered including that of a

Briton. Sources said many crew members were still missing as divers deployed by the oil firm battle to rescue them.

"As soon as we got the news of the incident, the company activated search and rescues mechanisms and the efforts yielded great results.

"As we speak, most of the workers are safe and getting medical attention but sadly, we lost six staff, a Briton included with about six other workers still missing."

Governor Sheriff Oborewori has described the incident as tragic and commiserated with the company as well as family members of the deceased.

He urged it to take urgent steps in searching for the missing crew members and launch an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the collapse of the oil rig.

"I am deeply shocked to hear

about the sad incident of your oil rig collapsing on the way to a planned drilling location and the death of one crew member with three others still missing as of press time.

"On behalf of the government and people of Delta, I sympathise with the management of Seplat Energy Limited on the unfortunate collapse of its Majestic oil rig leading to the death of one person and missing three crew members.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the three crew members who are still missing as of this moment as well as the family and friends of the crew member who tragically lost his life.

"I urge the management of the company to intensify rescue efforts for the missing crew members and also launch an inquiry into circumstances surrounding the unfortunate incident with a view to avoiding future occurrence," he stated.