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### Boat Mishap Claims 33 Lives in Niger

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**Gov Babangida Aliyu**

By Aisha Wakaso

It was tragedy at dawn when a boat mishap occurred at the weekend, claiming no fewer than 33 persons. The boat, in which the passengers were commuting, capsized between Dere in Niger State and Murtala Bridge on the River Niger.

The boat accident was said to have occurred at 4.30 am when a pipeline patrol team flashed its light on the boat which led to the loss of control of the passenger boat conveying about 100 passengers, causing it to hit a tree in the river before it capsized.

The boat, which was conveying passengers to Lokoja market from Katcha Local Government of Niger State, was said to have broken into two.

THISDAY gathered that the passengers did not have life vests on, which was believed to have caused the high casualty figure.

The time of the travel may have also shielded the boat from checks by concerned authorities, just as the seaworthiness of the boat could not be confirmed.

It is common for river transporters to overload their boats without providing safety jackets for passengers.

It was also gathered that among the victims were people from Yawa and Baka in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State.

Aside the 100 persons, which the boat was conveying, it was also gathered that it had on board 100 bags of rice, baskets of fish and other valuables, fuelling suspicion that the boat may have been overloaded.

When contacted, the Niger State Police Command Public Relations Officer, ASP Abiodun Gambari, confirmed the incident but stated that it occurred outside the jurisdiction of Niger State.

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