

Eight Die in Boat Mishap in Benue

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PIC. 5. AN OVERLOADED BOAT WITH PASSENGERS NOT WEARING LIFE JACKETS AT THE MARINA AREA OF BADAGRY, LAGOS STATE, ON THURSDAY (15/5/14). 3021/15/5/2014/DAE/AIN/NAN



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George Okoh in Makurdi

Eight persons in Gums Local Government Area of Benue State yesterday lost their lives after a boat carrying them capsized while they were attending a burial ceremony.

Sole administrator of the area, Mr. Anthony Shawon, who disclosed this in a chat with newsmen in Makurdi, said the boat, which was conveying mourners, was overloaded when it capsized near Kaambe crossing point at Gbajimba.

He attributed the cause of the boat accident to heavy wind, adding that most of the mourners, who were reportedly heavily drunk, refused to heed to advice of the boat paddlers who had insisted they would ferry some number of persons across and return to carry others.

Angered by the incident, youths in the area held a protest making bonfire while alleging that the incident has a superstitious connotation. During the process, Shawon said three elders were stoned to death and their houses burnt while the district head of Gbajimba Gwatse Akaahena had the windscreen of his car smashed.

"On arrival in Gbajimba, I saw there was protest as the youths made bonfire alleging that the incident has a spiritual connotation. I tried to calm them down. But they went wild pursuing every elder in the area. I then saw another group of Indian hemp smokers with machetes parading the area.

I reported the incident to the soldiers and mobile police who swiftly intervened and restored security to the area", Shawon said. According to him, no arrest has been made at the time of the incident.

Meanwhile, Benue State Police Public Relations' Officer ASP Moses Yamu confirmed the incident, stating that there was mob action in Gbajimba just as normalcy has since been restored to the area while investigation into the cause has commenced.