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Buhari Grieves as Anambra Recovers 16 Bodies in Boat Tragedy

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*Directs rescue agencies to speed up action at incident scene

Deji Elumoye, Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja and David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

President Muhammadu Buhari, yesterday, expressed sadness over the boat accident in Anambra State, in which dozens of people were killed.

No fewer than 16 dead bodies have been recovered out of the 76 passengers declared missing in the boat tragedy that happened in Ogbaru Local Government Area.

The boat reportedly carrying 85 persons had capsized, following rising floods in Ogbaru area of the state, with emergency bodies confirming a death toll of 76.

Following the tragedy, the Nigerian Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), had embarked on rescue and recovery missions expeditiously.

As more details were awaited, President Buhari, in a release by his spokesman, Mallam Garba Shehu, expressed sadness by the boat accident and directed that all possible efforts be made to account for all the passengers.



of the family members of the victims of this tragic accident,” the president said.

Though there were conflicting figures, a former Transition Committee Chairman of Ogbaru Local Government, Mr Arinze Awogu, gave the figure of recovered dead bodies as 13.

One of the indigenes of the area, Eze Ogbugbulu, who claimed to be on ground at the rescuescene, insisted 16 bodies had been recovered, including children.

Ogbugbulu said majority of the people on the boat, were not from their area in Osamalla, but farmers working in farm settlements, who were going back for the weekend.

“To tell you, the truth, majority of the people in that capsized boat are from Okpolodu camp in Ogwuanocha, the last Community before Rivers State and Mputu. It is difficult to recover those bodies, because some of the bodies will hang in some of the metals and trees inside the river.

“But as we talk now, we learnt 16 bodies were recovered late Saturday and we’re still waiting today (Sunday) to see what will happen. It’s a difficult situation for us,” Ogbugbulu said.

Bayelsa Task Force Visits Affected Communities

The Bayelsa State Task Force on Flood Mitigation and Management, at the weekend, visited some affected communities for an on-the-spot assessment of the impact.

Communities visited in Yenagoa and Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Areas included Tombia-Ekpetiama, Odi, Sampou, Kaiama, Gbaranma Sabagreia, Okoloba, Biseni and neighbouring communities as well as some areas within the Yenagoa metropolis.

Speaking after the exercise, Commissioner for Environment and Chairman of the task force, Iselema Gbaranbiri, lamented the impact of the flooding in Biseni community, which he said was almost totally submerged.

Gbaranbiri sympathised with people of the area on behalf of the Governor, who he said was passionate about their wellbeing hence the setting up of the task force on flood mitigation on Wednesday during the state executive council meeting.

Also, the Director of Operations, Bayelsa State Emergency Management Agency (BYSEMA), Mr. Ayii



misnap as a “disaster of monumental proportions.”

A statement by his media office in Abuja, said the former Anambra State governor expressed “deep sadness and grief” over the tragic incident.

Ngige said, “On behalf of my immediate and extended family, I send my deepest sympathies and condolences to the government and people of Anambra State on the loss of scores of lives in the fatal boat mishap which occurred in Ogbaru.

“As a former Governor of the state, it was very distressful and agonising to me when I heard that over 76 precious lives were lost in the accident. The tragic mishap is a disaster of monumental proportions.

“I understand the pain and anguish that those, who lost their loved ones in the tragedy are experiencing at this time. My thoughts and prayers are with the families of the deceased, while I wish the injured, quick and speedy recovery.”

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