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# 38 die in Port Harcourt boat mishap

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By JIMITOTA ONOYUME with agency report

Port Harcourt—No fewer than 38 persons were feared dead in a boat mishap on [Ngbuodohia waterway](#) in the [Rumuolumeni](#) area of Port Harcourt.

Details were still hazy at press time even as the state Police Public Relations Officer, Deputy Superintendent Ben Uguegbulam, who confirmed the incident said only two persons lost their lives.

Rescue operations have been launched by a combined team of residents, Marine Police, Rumuolumeni Police Division, SOS led by Deputy Commissioner of Police, Operations



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and the Navy.

Some versions of the tragedy said seven persons including a two-year-old baby were rescued while others said a two- year-old baby and one person were confirmed dead. Corpses of the dead ones were deposited at BMH mortuary. Rescue operations and further investigations going on please", the Police spokesman said.

However, eyewitnesses told the News Agency of Nigeria, NAN on Wednesday that the mishap, which occurred on Tuesday night, involved a speed boat carrying mainly traders numbering around 40.

The boat reportedly capsized about 9 p.m., emptying all the passengers into the water.

Rescue operations have been launched by the residents but only four passengers have so far been rescued alive.

Some community members who spoke to NAN at the waterfront, blamed the situation on the poor state of roads which had forced people to use the Ngbuodohia water route.

A resident, Mr. Collins Onunwo, accused the state government of being insensitive to the plight of the people in terms of providing such critical infrastructure.

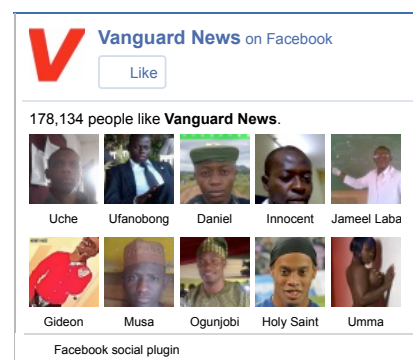
"Our road is the worst in the state at the



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moment; accessing other parts of the city from here is difficult, so people have resorted to this means.

“This would not have happened if the roads were in good shape.”

Onunwo said the accident had thrown the community into mourning as the identities of those who had died were still not known.

Speaking to NAN, Rivers Chairman of Maritime Workers Union, Mr. Francis Bruno, called on the state government to pay adequate attention to marine transportation to avoid further mishaps.

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