

Benue boat mishap: One family lost 5 children, another triplets

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Boat mishap

...Victims were all children of MOPOL 13 personnel in Makurdi

By Peter Duru

Five more bodies were yesterday, recovered from River Benue by local fishermen and the Police taking the number of victims of Sunday's boat mishap on River Benue at Ijaha community, an outskirt of Makurdi Local Government Area, LGA, to 26.

The victims said to be children of Mobile Police personnel of MOPOL 13 in Makurdi and members of the youth wing of Evangelical Church Winning All, ECWA, Adeke Makurdi, were on their way to an annual church retreat for youths when the boat which they were travelling in capsized midstream due to overloading.

The victims were crossing from Agbor, Innyongu Area of Wadata to a village in an island opposite Kwaghter called Ole-Gabu, for the Annual Church Retreat.

One of the families lost five children in the mishap while another lost 17-year-old triplets.

Though the state Police Command had earlier confirmed that 21 persons were missing in the boat mishap and that the boat was conveying members of ECAN Church Ijaha, it was later discovered that the victims, who died in the mishap, were 26 in number and were youths of ECWA Church Adeke.

When Vanguard visited the homes of the 26 victims, it was discovered that the youngest among them was nine years old, Mary Adegizi, while the oldest was 26 year, Shedrack Sanni, who recently completed his youth service and was said to be the group leader.

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Also, mourners and some parents of the victims were seen gathered at Ijaha community to receive the bodies of their loved ones as local fishermen continue the search to recover bodies from the nearby river.

It was also gathered that the local boat pilot and his assistant had earlier been rescued but were in critical condition at a public hospital.

District Church Council (DCC) Secretary of ECWA Church, Rev. Benjamin Dooga, who led all Pastors of the District to commiserate with families of victims told newsmen that as sad as the incidence was, "the Church had surrendered to the will of God who knows and understands all things."

Meanwhile, the state Governor, Samuel Ortom in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Terver Akase has sympathized with families of the victims and also consoled the ECWA Church, Adeke.