

More than 100 missing, feared dead after Nigerian boat sinks



File photo of an overloaded boat on Niger River in northern Nigeria

Abuja, May 27 (RHC)-- More than 100 people were missing and feared dead after a boat with more than 165 passengers, including women and children, broke up and sank as it was travelling in Nigeria's northern Kebbi state.

Twenty-two people had been rescued and five bodies recovered, including a baby, according to Sani Dododo, chairman of the Kebbi State Emergency Management Agency. "We have two male and two female corpses, while the fifth is that of a baby that is less than one year old," he said, adding that the mother of the infant had not been identified.

Eleven rescue boats and divers were searching for about 138 missing passengers as anxiety grew among relatives of those missing.

One passenger rescued from the boat, Shehu Bello, told AP that five children were with him when the boat sank and all of them were still missing, making him incredibly worried. "Two of the children are mine, while the other three are the children of my brother," he said. Shehu said the boat broke apart suddenly and then started to sink.

It was unclear what caused the boat to break up as it was travelling on the Niger River from Nigeria's Niger state to the town of Wara in Kebbi state. Boat accidents are common in Nigeria, especially along the Niger River, due to overloading, poor conditions of the boats and, collisions with debris under water.

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