OFFSHORE MAGAZINE · GABON · DRILLING

Three dead as Prospector 5 sinks offshore Gabon

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Three bodies have been recovered following the sinking of the jackup drilling rig Prospector 5 offshore Gabon, with two of the 115 personnel who were onboard at the time of the incident still unaccounted for. The loss of the rig marks one of the more serious offshore drilling casualties in West African waters in recent memory.

The Prospector 5 sank last Saturday, triggering a search-and-rescue operation for crew members. Of the 115 staff onboard, the majority have been accounted for, but two individuals remain missing as of the time of reporting. Three fatalities have been confirmed through the recovery of bodies. No further details on the cause of the sinking, the operator, or the specific location of the incident have been disclosed in available reporting.

The incident will draw immediate attention from rig owners, drilling contractors, and offshore operators active in the Gulf of Guinea. Jackup rigs operating in West African waters face a combination of environmental, mechanical, and operational risk factors, and a sinking at this scale will likely prompt regulatory scrutiny from Gabonese authorities as well as internal investigations by the owning and contracting parties. The identity of the drilling contractor and the operator on whose licence the rig was working have not been confirmed in available reporting.

For the broader Norwegian offshore service community, the Prospector 5 incident is a sober reminder of the operational risk environment in West African drilling markets. Gabon maintains an active upstream sector, and the loss of a jackup unit will affect drilling schedules, insurance underwriting, and potentially rig supply dynamics in the

region. Companies with personnel, equipment, or contractual exposure in Gabonese waters should assess their contingency positions and monitor developments closely as investigation findings emerge.

Saga Advisory will continue to track this incident as further information becomes available regarding cause, liability, and any regulatory or contractual consequences for operators and contractors active offshore Gabon.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian service companies with personnel or equipment deployed offshore Gabon should immediately review duty-of-care protocols and contractual risk exposure pending investigation outcomes. No procurement or supplier outreach is appropriate at this stage; partners should monitor official investigation findings and any subsequent regulatory changes to drilling safety requirements in Gabonese waters that could affect future rig contracting.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Drilling contractors with rigs or personnel in the Gulf of Guinea should assess operational and insurance exposure in light of the Prospector 5 sinking and await investigation findings on root cause.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Subsea and marine asset operators should review emergency response and evacuation procedures for assets in Gabonese waters following this high-casualty jackup incident.
- **Service:** Well services companies with technicians deployed offshore Gabon should verify personnel accountability procedures and liaise with clients on any drilling schedule disruptions caused by the loss of the rig.

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