

# Five-year-old boy dies in Calabar flood, one rescued

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The survivor, Covenant and his mother, Madam Favour Effiong

A five-year-old boy, identified as Mathias, has died after being swept away by [floodwaters](#) in Ekorinim 1, Calabar Municipality, while another child, Covenant, survived following a dramatic rescue by a resident, Mr. Abam Usang Bassey.

The incident occurred on Sunday, November 16, after heavy rainfall flooded major parts of the community. Residents said the boys were among several children playing in the rain near a heavily flooded drainage channel around 5:30 p.m.

Witnesses reported that the [children](#) had been taking turns riding on a sliced plantain trunk used as a makeshift raft along the fast-moving water.

The thrill turned tragic when Mathias and Covenant, caught by the strong current, were swept into a 400-metre-long gutter that empties into a swamp off Peterson Street.

Panic spread through the neighbourhood as residents raced along the drainage in a desperate attempt to save the boys. Bassey, popularly known as Apostle Paul, said he was alerted by some youths who rushed to his barbershop crying for help.

“I immediately followed them to the scene and jumped inside the drainage,” he recounted. “The current was strong, but I kept swimming until I found Covenant alive, though injured. People shouted with joy.”

However, efforts to find the second boy took nearly an hour. Bassey said he ignored suggestions that the flood had swept the child into the swamp and continued searching within the drainage.

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Eventually, he discovered Mathias' body trapped under plantain trunks and leaves beneath a concrete section of the gutter. Residents rushed him to the hospital, but he was confirmed dead on arrival.

Covenant's mother, Madam Favour Effiong, said she was devastated when she heard her son had fallen into the gutter, especially as he survived a similar near-drowning incident five years earlier.

Through tears, she thanked Bassey for saving her son's life. "God has given him a second chance. I pray every day for destiny helpers for my child. God sent this man to save him," she said.

Effiong, a single mother, also appealed to the government to fix the dilapidated drainage and road network in Ekorinim, saying residents are often trapped indoors during heavy rains due to dangerous flood levels.

A community leader, Elder Ene Okon, described the incident as both tragic and "spiritually worrying," suggesting the circumstances were unusual.

He blamed lack of parental supervision, noting that the deceased child's mother had travelled for a ceremony, leaving him and his older sibling behind.

"What happened is a lesson. Parents must take care of their children. Our drainage system is also terrible. Government must come to our aid," he said.

Residents expressed frustration over years of neglect, pointing to poor roads and inadequate drainage channels as recurring causes of flooding in the community.

They called on the Cross River State Government and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to intervene urgently.

The parents of the deceased boy had reportedly taken his remains to Ito in Odukpani Local Government Area for burial and were unavailable for comments.