

Four siblings, man die in Cross River landslide



Torrential rain triggers disaster

A landslide has buried alive four siblings and another man in Calabar.

The tragedy occurred last Friday night, less than 20 days after two landslides on Obudu Mountain Resort Road.

The siblings are Bright Kingsley Edu, 18, Godswill Kingsley Edu, 12, Daniel Kingsley Edu, 11, and Richard Kingsley Edu, 10 while the man is identified as Mr. Udo, a tanker driver attached to the fuel depot in Calabar.

The incident occurred after hours of uninterrupted heavy rainfall in the state capital, causing flooding and destruction of property in several parts of the city.

The mother, Mrs. Mercy Kingsley Edu, popularly known as Mama Uwana, said the rain intensified while they were in church. But, her children rushed home before the downpour increased.

According to her, the children arrived home safely, changed into dry clothes and laid down to rest.

She said the earth collapsed and buried the house, trapping the children beneath the debris.

“Everything was buried in the landslide, taking my children and leaving us hopeless and homeless,” the woman, a waterleaf farmer, lamented.

Overwhelmed with grief, she asked: "Why me? Why me? Four out of seven are gone in one day. At least, it should have been an accident that claimed their legs, not four children buried in one day. Where will I start? My husband never buys anything for himself because he wants his children to go to school. Three boys and a girl... all gone."

Her husband, Mr. Kingsley Edu, a Homeland Security staff member, who was away on duty during the incident upon his return, was too devastated to speak to reporters.

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The bodies of the four siblings were buried shortly after they were retrieved, while the remains of Mr. Udo were deposited in a morgue.

The tragedy has thrown Ikot Awatim Community into mourning, with residents and sympathisers trooping to the scene to console the bereaved family and witness the scale of the devastation.

Community members have appealed to the state government, led by Governor Bassey Otu, as well as well-meaning Cross Riverians, to come to the aid of the bereaved family, who have not only lost four children but have also been left without shelter after their home was destroyed by the landslide.

The incident is the latest in a series of weather-related disasters linked to the persistent rainfall across Calabar, and other parts of the state which has resulted in flooding, erosion, windstorm and destruction of homes and properties worth millions of naira.

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As residents continue to count their losses, many are calling for urgent government intervention to address the growing threat posed by flooding and landslides in vulnerable communities across the state.

However, this is not the first time the Obudu Mountain Resort, and Calabar has been hit by landslides. It is a recurring threat, in areas like Obudu and Calabar, especially in areas plagued with serious erosion and steep terrain.

Last month, CrossRiverWatch reported on the Nigerian Geological Survey Agency, showing that Cross River is among 12 states in Nigeria with “high susceptibility” to landslides due to steep terrain and heavy rainfall.

Infrastructure resilience is, therefore, critical to maintaining visitor confidence for the tourism sector in the state and Nigeria as a whole which the World Travel and Tourism Council says contributed 3.6 per cent to Gross Domestic Product in 2023.

A resident from Obudu Mountain Resort, Sunday Michael, said: “We have planned to construct 100 gridiron walls. We have 25 already, which is not enough for the 11.5 kilometres stretch. That is why we are working towards 100.”