

Flood sweeps away five-year-old in Calabar, another rescued during community effort

Joseph Abasi-Abasi December 10, 2025



A five-year-old boy, identified as Mathias, died after he was swept away by floodwaters in Ekorinim 1, Calabar Municipality, during a downpour.

Another child, Covenant, survived the incident through the rescue effort of a resident, Mr. Abam Usang Bassey.

The tragedy occurred around 5:30 p.m. after torrential rains flooded major parts of the community. Residents said many children had been playing in the rain near a heavily flooded drainage channel and were taking turns riding on a sliced plantain trunk used as a makeshift raft.

The play turned fatal when the strong current pulled Mathias and Covenant into a fast-moving drainage channel stretching over 400 metres and emptying into a swamp off Peterson Street.

Panic spread across the neighbourhood as residents sprinted up the drainage in a desperate attempt to locate the boys. Mr. Bassey, popularly known as Apostle Paul, said he was alerted by youths who ran into his barbershop crying for help.

"I immediately followed them to the scene and jumped inside the drainage," he recounted. Adding that: "The current was strong, but I kept swimming until I found Covenant alive, though injured."

The search for the second child lasted nearly an hour. Despite suggestions that the flood had carried him into the swamp, Bassey continued combing the drainage. Mathias was eventually found lodged beneath plantain trunks and leaves under a concrete section of the gutter. He was rushed to the hospital but was confirmed dead on arrival.

Covenant's mother, Madam Favour Effiong, expressed gratitude to Bassey for saving her son, noting that he had survived a similar near-drowning incident five years earlier.

"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 in tears.

Effiong, a single mother, also appealed to the government to rehabilitate the dilapidated drainage and road network in Ekorinim, noting that residents often remain trapped in their homes during heavy rains due to dangerous flood levels.

A community leader, Elder Ene Okon, described the incident as both tragic and spiritually worrying, saying, the circumstances were unusual. He blamed poor parental supervision, noting that the deceased child's mother had travelled for a ceremony, leaving him in the care of an older sibling.

“What happened is a lesson. Parents must watch their children. Our drainage system is terrible. The government must come to our aid,” he said.

Residents expressed frustration over years of infrastructural neglect, citing failed roads and inadequate drainage as recurring causes of flooding in the area. They called on the state government and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to intervene urgently.

The family of the deceased has reportedly taken his remains to Ito in Odukpani Local Government Area for burial.