

Windstorm kills businesswoman, destroys homes, roads in Benue community



By Peter Duru, Makurdi

Residents of Obi Local Government Area, LGA, of Benue State are mourning and lamenting their losses following a devastating windstorm and heavy rainfall that reportedly caused widespread destruction across several communities, leaving homes, businesses and public infrastructure damaged.

The storm which occurred Wednesday evening uprooted trees, destroyed residential buildings and business premises, and disrupted movement in parts of the area.

According to a community source, the worst-hit was Obarike community along the Ogore axis, where a popular businesswoman allegedly lost her life after a large tree fell on her during the heavy downpour.

The sources said the woman, described as a respected restaurant operator in the area, died instantly at the scene. Her death has reportedly thrown family members, friends, customers and residents into deep mourning.

The storm also reportedly affected transportation around the Secretariat Road near Ijanke community, where fallen trees obstructed movement and raised safety concerns among residents and commuters.

The Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to the Chairman of Obi LGA, Emmanuel Ekpe, in a statement disclosed that the Council Chairman, Silas Ahunye, who undertook an assessment visit to affected communities expressed sadness over the incident and sympathised with victims and their families.

He disclosed that the disaster also affected him personally, damaging parts of the roof of his residence as well as his vehicle.

Ahunye described the windstorm as one of the most severe natural disasters witnessed in the LGA in recent times and appealed for urgent intervention from emergency response agencies and humanitarian organisations.

The Obi Council Chairman further appealed to the Benue State Emergency Management Agency, SEMA, humanitarian groups and well-meaning individuals to assist victims affected by the disaster.

In a show of solidarity, the Chairman of neighbouring Oju LGA, Jackson Ominyi, also visited Obi LGA to assess the level of destruction and sympathise with affected residents.

He called on relevant authorities and emergency agencies to provide immediate support, noting that the scale of destruction was unprecedented.

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