

# How flood swept away my husband'

By Jeremiah Oke, Ibadan | Published Date Feb 19, 2020 3:41 AM



*Late Oladiti Alo and wife, Sarah*

**He was the bread-winner of his family. Aside his immediate family, he had young and elderly brothers and sisters he was taking care of. He was always hailed as a selfless, gentleman dedicated to running his commercial transportation business in Ibadan to fend for his family.**

Tragically, it was that kind-hearted virtue that would claim the life of Moses Oladiti Alo. On Wednesday September 18, 2019, Alo was swept away by flood while he was making efforts to save a woman from drowning.

Sarah, his wife, has been an emotional and financial wreck since then as she kept hoping the Oyo State government would, at least, intervene to ameliorate the suffering she said she and the two children had been plunged into.

“I have been left alone with a heavy burden since he died. He died helping people to live. I pray the state government and kind-hearted people will come to our assistance to also survive,” Sarah pleaded as she narrated her plight to *Eko Trust* last Friday.

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Alo, a father of two teenage boys, lived at the Elebun area, Plot 3, Peace Street, Premier Estate, Akuru Oluyole Extension, Ibadan, with Sarah. He owned a taxi, which he was operating to care for his family. The wife owns a hairdressing saloon, with which she was supporting the husband to run the home.

Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, had widely experienced disastrous events after a torrential downpour on September 18, 2019. Many areas, including Alaro, Zartech, Oluyole extension, Idi-Ayunre, Olodo, New Garage, parts of the Gbekuba area, Apata and Omi Adio were affected by the flood, with scores of people trapped out-of-home when roads, bridges and culverts were virtually rendered impassable by the surging flood.

At the Alaro-Zartech area of Oluyole extension, the only bridge that linked the people with the city was completely submerged by water and many residents struggled through the flood to gain access to their homes.

It was in that circumstance that Alo took it upon himself to assist people, especially women and children, across the flooded area to safe land. Unfortunately, the price he would pay for that beneficence would be fatal.

An automobile engineer, Rasheed Kolawole, who was among the rescuers on that day, told Eko Trust, “The man motivated us to help the women and the young students to cross. On that day, the heavy downpour was so much to the extent that many women and school children could not cross the bridge.

“Of course, we didn’t know him before then, but when we saw him carrying the children and women across the flood, we joined him to save them. The man you are talking about was unfortunate to be a victim. We could only watch him as the water dragged him and swept him away. We tried but we could not help.”

That catastrophe has remained the darkest moment of Sarah’s life. Recalling how she received the sad news, the widow told our correspondent, “On the fateful day, there was heavy rain here in Ibadan. The entire roads were flooded so it was difficult for many to go through. The children and I could not easily get access to the house because of the rain. But we eventually got home around 9.15pm.

“When I got home, I did not meet my husband there. There was no light; everywhere was dark so I was worried. But I thought that maybe he was waiting for the rain to subside before coming home. However, throughout that night, he did not come home. Before then, my son had told me that he had received his father’s call some few hours earlier saying he would be home soon. We called his line many times, but the calls didn’t go through.

There was panic and anxiety in the home. We could not sleep as we were busy calling his friends and family members to know if they had any information about his whereabouts.

“The next day, Thursday morning, I went out again to search for him. Later, that day, some elders from our worship came to tell me they had found my husband. They said he was a victim of the Wednesday’s flood. I was informed that a Fulani herdsman who was tendering his cows discovered his lifeless body on top of a culvert near the Zartech company, near some bamboo trees.

“When he saw it, he informed the landlords, who later reported the matter at the Oluyole police station. Later, a woman came to the house to inform us that the deceased had been hailed as a saviour and hero the previous day when he saw a woman being swept away by the raging flood and rescued her. She said that, sadly, as he was about to move out of the water his leg slipped and he was carried away.”

Tears rolling down her cheeks, Sarah went philosophical, “I know I will one day re-unite with my husband when the dead will come back to life.”

The state government had then sympathised with the victims of the flood and promised assistance. However, the victims, including Sarah whose husband paid the supreme price for being a good Samaritan, are still waiting for Godot, as it were.

The Oyo State Commissioner for Environment and Water Resources, Honourable Kehinde Ayoola, in a chat with our correspondent, admitted there were damages to bridges, culverts and roads, but claimed he did not receive any report of a missing person.

Ayoola, sympathising with the widow and the entire Alo family, said if the government had known about the incident and death on time, it would have taken immediate action on it.

“But I will advise that a letter be written to the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), giving them a report of the incident. I can assure that the government, through the agency, will do the needful,” he said.