

Borno flood: Over 30 confirmed dead, 1m affected

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The severe flooding which ravaged Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, has claimed at least 30 lives, officials said yesterday.

Hundreds of homes were flooded by the incident, which also caused significant damage to properties, including farmlands, residential areas, and business premises.

The disaster followed the collapse of the Alau Dam, which overflowed its banks, sending floodwaters from about 10 kilometres away into Maiduguri.

"The death toll is 30," National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) spokesman, Ezekiel Manzo, told AFP.

Residents, however, said the casualty figure could be higher as several people, including children, are still unaccounted for.

"Nobody has the actual number of people that died from this catastrophe," said Tasiu Abdullahi, a resident of one of the affected areas in Gwange.

"It could be as high as sixty or more," Babagana Modu, a taxi driver said. Key locations affected include the Monday Market, the Shehu of Borno's Palace, Shehuri, Gwange, Adamkolo, Gamboru, Fori, Bulabulin, Post Office areas, Moromoro, and Customs Bridge.

The Gwange cemetery was swept away, with corpses seen floating through the streets.

Patients at the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital (UMTH) were left stranded as parts of the facility were flooded.

1m affected - Zulum

Borno State governor, Prof. Babagana Umaru Zulum, said about one million people were affected by the flood.

The governor disclosed this to newsmen yesterday while distributing cash and cooked food to displaced persons taking refuge in Bakassi Camp in Maiduguri.

Governor Zulum said the full extent of the damage has yet to be determined but added that a rescue team has been deployed to affected areas to assess the losses in lives and property.

He also said a health emergency committee had been constituted to address potential outbreaks of flood-related diseases in Maiduguri and Jere.

The governor expressed concern about the spread of waterborne

illnesses due to the flooding of sewage systems but assured that efforts are being made to mitigate the situation.

He said: "You can see how water completely flooded the area, sewages were completely flooded, that means waterborne diseases would be transmitted but In sha Allah we should get over it."

"As of now, we are yet to ascertain the extent of damage, but about one-fourth of the entire Maiduguri is flooded with water", he said.

Food shortage hits Maiduguri

There is growing concern over a shortage of foodstuff and other commodities in Maiduguri as thousands of residents struggle for survival after a ravaging flood.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the flood submerged major markets including grains, fruits and vegetable depots in the town, while many shopping complexes and plazas remain closed. The development had led to a shortage of food items, making the prices of the few available ones high.

"It is difficult to find foodstuff now as all major markets are submerged."

"I can't operate my restaurant despite pressure from customers, because the foodstuff I stocked has been exhausted," Hajara Mohammed said.

Other food vendors who attended to customers the previous day, including Amina Isa, Rhoda Abdullahi and Jummai Mohammed, said their stocks had also been exhausted and there was nowhere to restock.

NAN reports that the health sector was also affected as a result of the flood incident.

FG provides N3bn in aid

Governor Zulum also announced that the federal government had provided a N3 billion flood intervention fund, which will be utilised to support the victims and address the challenges they face.

In response to questions about the cause of the flood, the governor attributed the disaster to climate change and unusually heavy rainfall this season.

He added that water released from a dam in Cameroon contributed to overwhelming the Alau Dam.

Zulum assured residents that the Alau Dam would be reconstructed and upgraded to handle larger volumes of water.

He also promised that illegal structures on waterways and



■ Residents displaced by flood arrive IDP camps in Gomari Primary School, Maiduguri, yesterday
Photo: Hamisu Matazu

in flood-prone areas would be demolished to prevent future disasters.

Trapped patients, residents plead for urgent assistance

Patients at the UMTH and the Maiduguri Specialist Hospital, as well as stranded residents across the town have called for immediate support.

Modu Abba, one of the flood victims, said hundreds of women, children and elderly people are stranded at Usman Jidda Shuwa Memorial Secondary School and Zaman Clinic.

"We are in desperate need of emergency food, water, medical assistance and temporary shelter," Abba pleaded.

Another victim, Bashir Umara, expressed concern over the state's capacity to handle the crisis, urging the federal government to expedite its intervention. He noted that access roads to certain areas had been cut off due to the flood, with two bridges submerged.

"We are cut off from the rest of the city. Thousands of people in the Muna Garage axis, 505 Estate, 303 Estate, Mairi, and Madinat areas are stranded. It's alarming."

"The only route still accessible is Damboa Road, and it could take two days for the floodwaters to recede enough for people to move," Umara said.

Residents returning to their homes in areas where the floodwaters have subsided recounted the devastation.

Hussein Abdullahi described the damage, saying: "I saw many houses cracked, some completely collapsed, and there were carcasses of domestic animals strewn around."

Another resident, Timta Yusuf from Gwange, lamented the destruction of his home. "The flood left my roof dangling, and everything inside was destroyed," he said.

Meanwhile, a good samaritan, Fatima Askira Satomi, has set up makeshift kitchens in various centres to provide meals to the displaced residents.

She said the gesture was aimed at supporting the government's relief efforts.

719 victims rescued from rooftops, trees

The Director-General of the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Mohammed Barkindo, confirmed that 719 people had been rescued from rooftops, trees and floodwaters in different parts of Maiduguri.

Barkindo said: "SEMA went with divers and rescued 719 people trapped on trees, upstairs and took them to their chosen locations. The rescue operations started yesterday and continued up to this time today (yesterday)."

"We documented their contacts to check on their well-being since they were taken to private residences, where they insisted on living with their relatives."

"All those we rescued, especially along Lagos Street, said they preferred to stay with their relatives, while the rest also suggested better options. None of the 719 was taken to the camp," he said.

NEMA deploys rescue team

NEMA has deployed additional search and rescue personnel, along with enhanced facilities, to bolster the ongoing efforts to assist Maiduguri residents affected by the flood.

NEMA's Director General, Mrs Zubaida Umar, announced that the agency has also provided clean drinking water through its water tankers to displaced residents in temporary shelters.

The initiative, she said, aimed to reduce the risk of waterborne diseases that may arise from flood-contaminated household water.

N/Assembly pledges

Immediate aid

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abbas Tajudeen, has assured that the National Assembly will provide immediate assistance to those impacted by flooding, particularly in Maiduguri.

During a meeting with Vice President Kashim Shettima at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, Tajudeen said both the parliament and the Presidency have designed strategies to deliver aid to flood victims within the coming days.

The speaker further mentioned that similar efforts are being made to support flood-affected communities across the country.

Vice President Shettima reiterated the federal government's commitment to collaborate with state governments to address the challenges posed by natural disasters like flooding.

He emphasised President Bola Tinubu's recent approval of N3 billion in funding for each state to combat these challenges, describing the Borno flood as a "national calamity" that affects the entire country.

Shettima assured that with the determination shown by President Tinubu, the issues surrounding flooding and other natural disasters will be effectively addressed.

"The President has demonstrated his zeal and commitment to partnering with the states to address these issues," he said, referencing the release of N3 billion to each state to tackle such challenges.

Marwa, APC condole Zulum, residents

The Chairman and Chief Executive of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Brigadier General Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd), has extended his condolences to the people and government of Borno State following the devastating flood that has displaced thousands of residents and caused extensive property damage.

In his message yesterday, Marwa, a former military governor of the old Borno State, expressed his sympathy to Governor Zulum, the Shehu of Borno, His Highness Abubakar Ibn Umar Garbai El-Kanemi, as well as the victims of the disaster.

The All Progressives Congress (APC) also called on both state and federal agencies to leave no stone unturned in addressing the humanitarian crisis triggered by the disaster.

Inceon unveils first locally produced electric vehicle