

and for belonging to a cult. Shortly

Commissioner of Police at the time,

most his supporters. However, 21 persons have so far been arrested in con-

those in breach of the Electoral Act will be made to face the full wrath of the law."

Two bodies recovered, four still missing after bus plunged into river

From Ann Godwin, Port Harcourt
and Julius Osahon, Yenagoa

- Residents slam NEMA over alleged inefficiency
- Bayelsa yet to receive assistance from FG for flood victims, says Dickson

TWO dead bodies have been recovered after the combined efforts of a rescue team led by Mr. James Ogwu, a sea diver, with family and friends of victims of the fully loaded 14-seater bus that was swept away by flood and which plunged into a river on Tuesday.

The two bodies brought the number of persons recovered to 10 after eight persons were earlier rescued on Tuesday. Four persons are however still missing. The bus skidded off the Akala Olu flooded bridge, along Okogbe Mbiama, Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The Guardian findings revealed that the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has been inactive since the flood incidents and several disasters that have claimed lives in the state. Officials of the agency are hardly seen at scenes of disasters to assist in rescue operations or administer aids to victims.

When the head, NEMA Emergency Operations Centre, in charge of Rivers

and Bayelsa State, Yakubu Sulaiman, was contacted yesterday for update, he said: "I am not aware of anything now in Rivers, I am in Yenegoa, Bayelsa State."

He told *The Guardian* to send a text message briefing him about the Tuesday incident. A well-detailed text was sent, which he failed to respond to. Several calls were later put across to the NEMA Head of Emergency operations, but it was ignored.

However, residents and human rights activists in the state have described the action of the agency as unfortunate. They said the agency's inactiveness in disaster management has become worrisome, noting that it shows lack of humanity from the Federal Government and its relevant agencies.

Reacting to the situation, chancellor of the International Society for Social Justice and Human Rights,

Omenazu Jackson, said: "A situation where human lives means nothing to the Federal Government and its agencies that suppose to be proactive about disaster management is unfortunate."

In the same vein, the governor of Bayelsa, Seriake Dickson, has said the state government has not received any financial assistance from the Federal Government to alleviate the plight of flood victims in the state.

Dickson said in a statement by his Special Adviser, Media Relations, Mr. Fidelis Soriwei, yesterday that the state had only received between 300 and 400 bags of rice as intervention from the Federal Government in the raging flood that has sacked about 70 per cent of communities and destroyed billions of Naira worth of property.

The governor stressed that the Federal Government had not rendered any concrete help to the state in its bid to overcome the challenges posed by the flood. He recalled that Bayelsa,

which was the most affected by the unfortunate incidence of flooding, did not get any help from the Federal Government even during the severe flooding in 2012.

Dickson added that the state government had spend about N500 million on the upkeep of those displaced by the flood. He said the state was struggling with emergent responsibilities of ensuring the maintenance of those internally displaced by the flood and ensuring their return to their homes after the flood.

Dickson called on public-spirited individuals, organizations and donor agencies to come to the aid of the thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the state.

He said while the state was doing its best to alleviate the suffering of the displaced persons, there was the challenge of inadequate funds to deal decisively with the situation.

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