

# 'How collapsed Taraba Bridge led to three fatalities'

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Scene of the incident

A year after heavy floods caused the collapse of the Namnai Bridge in Gassol Local Council of Taraba State, the absence of both the Federal Government and Taraba State government's intervention and growing impatience with political inaction has culminated in a grievous tragedy.

It would be recalled that floods in late 2024 washed away the Namnai Bridge, which is an essential transit route linking Taraba to Benue and southern Nigeria.

Local leaders and civil society groups raised the alarm as the critical westerly artery ground to a halt.

The Federal Government, via the North East Development Commission (NEDC), pledged reconstruction in early 2025.

Minister of State for Regional Development, Uba Maigari, and Governor AgbuJefas announced that full rehabilitation would begin within weeks.

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However, months later, no contractor has been seen at the site and no meaningful work has started despite repeated assurances.

The locals said that the alternative routes, often bush paths, became impassable, causing widespread hardship.

Farmers lost market access, traders closed shops, drivers abandoned the corridor, and market prices surged as perishable goods got rotten in fields.

On Friday, July 25, 2025, a boat ferrying vehicles and passengers across the river at the abandoned bridge site capsized at about 7:00 p.m.

Chairman, Jidda Mayoreniyo of Taraba Inland Water Transporters, confirmed that three people had died and several others still missing.

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At least four vehicles that were aboard were recovered from the river floor, while luggage and belongings remain submerged.

This tragic event underscores the extremely unsafe conditions commuters now face as a direct consequence of the infrastructure neglect.

Drivers and passengers, who spoke with The Guardian, blamed both the state and the Federal Government for the calamity that had befallen the state.

Citing the Nukkai Bridge in Jalingo, the state capital, that collapsed in 2005 where the then state governor, Rev Jolly Nyame, wasted no time in collaborating with the Federal Government to fix the bridge, they said the inability of the incumbent governor to tread the same path has become a source of concern to the people of the state.

His alleged failure to join forces with the National Assembly members from the state to herald the presence of the Federal Government to the collapsed bridge, they said, necessitated the recent deaths following a boat mishap.

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Meanwhile, disturbed by the development, the Gimbiyar Lau, Hajiya Mamma Fati Ibrahim Hassan Lau, who lost three of her family members in the tragic boat mishap that occurred in the collapsed bridge, urged the authorities to declare the reconstruction of Namnai Bridge a national emergency.

She also called on both the federal and the state governments to, as a matter of urgency, begin reconstruction work on the long-abandoned bridge.

She, however, appealed to Governor Kefas to intensify pressure on the Federal Government to prioritise the bridge's reconstruction, noting that the bridge is a critical infrastructure not just for local communities but also for the nation at large.

“The Jalingo–Wukari corridor where the bridge is located is a major economic artery linking northern and southern Nigeria.”

It is essential for the movement of agricultural produce, livestock, and goods to support commerce and foster regional integration,” she said.