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## **Daily Independent (Lagos)**

# Nigeria: Fresh Flood Kills One, Sacks Hundreds in Lagos - Senate Faults FG's Response to Disaster

Stella Odueme, Ekene Okoro (Lagos)and Sola Shittu

14 July 2011

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2 personnes recommandent ça. Soyez le premier parmi vos amis.

Abuja — Another rainfall in Lagos on Thursday produced flood that led to the death of a woman in Aboru and the displacement of hundreds of others.

About a dozen persons died and thousands were made homeless in the first flood on Sunday.

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The downpour on Thursday started at about 4 a.m. and lasted till early evening.

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The woman who died, identified as Mama Risi, drowned where the state government had urged communities to relocate because of the warning about heavy rainfall issued by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NMA).

Several residents in Agege Pen Cinema, Akera, Ajegunle, Olodi Apapa, and Ketu-Ikosi have been rendered

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Internet Gateway **Content Providers**  Grace Uren, resident in Agege, lamented that, "We just lost many of our belongings in the heavy rainfall and flood on Sunday, now the few things we managed to save have been destroyed again by flood.

"I expected the government to immediately mobilise people down to this place and clear the drainage channel that is totally blocked so that the flood can pass freely but here we are again drenched with water with all our things damaged."

Another resident in Ketu said apart from losing his belongings to the flood on Sunday he has been in and out of hospital to treat skin rashes and pneumonia he and his children contracted from the flood and constant exposure to cold due to displacement.

Motorists in Lekki and on Victoria Island hurried into their cars to drive to safe points to prevent a repeat of the trauma they went through on Sunday.

Shop owners packed up their wares, hurried into buses to make it home before nightfall.

A fruit merchant on Victoria Island when asked why she was closing up shop, replied: "My brother, you no see this rain wey dey fall again, where you dey on Sunday? You no hear say people like me die? Abeg my life important pass."

Governor Babatunde Fashola has urged residents to bear with the government which is doing everything within its resources to tackle flooding.

Fashola, speaking at this year's Tree Planting Day, with the theme "A Tree for Life." noted that the state survived Sunday's 17-hour downpour due to its proactive measures in line with the warning by experts on climate change and global warming.

"In other places, we have seen cities submerged and remaining like that for many days after just six hours of rains," he said.

He urged Lagosians to stop felling trees and planting instead, as trees help to mitigate against flooding.

Fashola said, just before planting a tree in Oyingbo: "The thrust of my message is to urge us all to continue to heed the advice of our experts, that it is mitigation and adaptation that will help make life sustainable on this planet because our consumption and utilisation of nature's gift has already caused some damage.

"Tree planting and tree conservation are some of the adaptations and mitigation strategies that have been recommended which we will continue to implement."





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He explained that the present difficulties caused by flooding goes beyond the seasonal challenge, saving it is a hard lesson to Nigerians to change their ways.

"The cutting of trees threatens our economy, threatens our health and threatens our planet. The exigencies of our time immensely require that we do more to preserve nature so that we can live in peace."

Fashola reiterated that weather reports warn of more rain this week, stressing that whenever there is heavy rainfall, there will be flooding.

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From Abuja came a report that Senate Preident David Mark faulted the Federal Government's response to disaster across the country, describing it as slow and late.

He said a state of emergency does not necessarily mean the removal of Governor as is popularly misconstrued.

The Senate observed a minute silence for the victims of the flood and asked the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FRMA) to "urgently repair affected federal roads" in Lagos other states hit by flood.

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It took note of flood disasters in Kano, Katsina, Ogun, and Oyo and solicited assistance to enable the states recover.

"Some federal roads, particularly the Abeokuta Expressway, collapsed in three places thereby hampering the movement of people in and out of Lagos and that axis of the South West," Ganiyu Solomon (ACN, Lagos), the sponsor of the motion, said.

"The Apapa-Oshodi Expressway was also flooded and is in danger of collapse and therefore requires attention."

He noted that no fewer than 29 persons were killed and several others declared missing in the flood on Sunday, besides the destruction of buildings and roads.

The Senate said in such disaster situations the Federal Government should declare a state of emergency and move in the military for search and rescue and reconstruction.

It appealed to Abuja to hasten assistance to states affected by flood in reconstructing major damages.

Mark noted that Lagos, the country's commercial hub, has been shut down, with economic activities grounded, and fears that the state may be submerged.

He urged Abuja and the state governments to provide relief materials to the victims and

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avert further losses.

Solomon added that several ships lost anchor in the flood, and the Senate asked the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) to remove all wrecked ships on the Lagos coastline.

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The shutting down of Lagos "is a national calamity," Senate Spokesman Ayogu Eze said. He attributed the flood to global warming aggravated by human errors of blocking drainages.

Eze likened the Sunday flood to the Biblical great flood, saying it affected the whole nation.

Ita Enang (PDP, Akwa Ibom) said the flood was the spiritual consequence of the reclamation of part of the Atlantic Ocean in Lagos.

"The water is taking back its land," he added.

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