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Five feared drowned in Abuja flood

 By [John Ofikhenua](#) | Published Today | [News](#) | Rating: ★★★★★

Dog saves family



Vehicles submerged by the flood

Flood yesterday sacked residents of Gwagw-alada and Kubwa, satellite towns in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, rendering most of them homeless. While the authorities and some of the residents are shifting blames, others are counting their losses. JOHN OFIKHENUA and DELE ANOFI report.

About five persons were feared drowned yesterday in the flood that sacked two Abuja satellite towns - Gwagwalada and Kubwa.

The victims are two children and three adults, it was learnt.

In Kutunku and Dagiri, houses and the market on Park Road were almost washed away by the flood which followed a heavy downpour.

Scores of distraught residents beside a hotel on Sultan Dasuki Road, Kubwa, were salvaging their belongings.

At the Federal Housing Authority Phase 3 section of the district, a Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), a two-storey building, was flooded to the lintel level of the ground floor.

Besides, over 30 cars of various brands were over-flooded. Two of them were moved from their positions and left elsewhere within the estate.

But it was not all a sad tale: the persistent howling of a dog saved a family from the flood.

The owner of the dog, Mr. Emeka Iлека, who lives at 32 Crescent, Phase III Federal Housing Estate, Kubwa, Abuja, said his family was awoken by Pharoah's howlings, only to find their premises almost submerged.

"By the time we got up, the body of water was already taking over the house and we hurried out. You remember we had a similar experience three years ago.

"We did not bother to begin to arrange things. We just scurried out to safety," Iлека said.

The flood pulled down fences and other structures in its path, throwing the residents into panic.

Abdoulahi Hossein, a Nigerien guard on one of the streets, said they were praying in a mosque when they noticed the surging water and raised the alarm so that residents could flee to safety.

As at 6.15 a.m., when anxious residents began to place calls to media houses, fire service, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), the flood had spread to a third of the estate.

The major road to the estate from the Phase 2-1 had been submerged, disallowing any human or vehicular movement.

The fire engine that arrived at the scene could not enter the submerged church.

Officials of FRSC and NEMA arrived at the area much later as the flood began to recede.

The estate suffered a similar incident on August 7, 2006, prompting the FCT Administration to demolish structures it believed were obstructing the water channel.

Following the devastating flood, some residents say it is time for the FCT Administration to compel the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) to respect its agreement to provide a "retention wall" on the flood channel.

The FHA agreed with the administration after the last flood on

August 7, 2006, that it would build an embankment and dykes as an alternative to demolishing the houses close to the channel, one of the residents said.

The source, who pleaded for anonymity, said in Kubwa that "as a corrective measure, the FCT Department of Development Control marked about 80 FHA-owned property in Phase III for demolition.

"But FHA appealed the decision, reasoning that those properties would be saved if a retention wall was erected instead.

"The emphasis is that FHA will have to build a retention wall to fence off its property from the 15-metre right-of-way identified as the flood channel," he said.

Officials from the planning and implementation department of the FHA, the source said, have since discussed the terms with the FCTA on the need to retain the houses but provide a properly defined fence to protect the FHA houses.

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"But that was all we heard and no further action until this development," he said.

Another resident said it would have cost the FHA about N400 million at the 2006 market value to get those marked houses go down.

"The price of demolition, in addition to pains to be inflicted on occupants of the houses, were some of the considerations for sparing the properties," the source said.

City planners and engineers insisted that what was needed to stem further flooding was a proper flood control mechanism and not demolition.

"An effective control of flood waters, like the one that ravaged parts of Kubwa, is a better option than demolishing the structures," a civil engineer, Mr. Ben Ileka, said.

He said it was a wrong to attempt to demolish the houses instead of seeking "sound engineering solutions".

Ileka said what happened in Kubwa was a result of poor planning.

"I expect the FCDA department of engineering to sit down, critically examine the situation, and plan a proper flood control," he said.

A resident, Mr. John Kude, appealed to the Abuja Environmental Protection Board, to ensure better management of refuse.

He said dumping of refuse in the waterways by some residents contributed to the flooding.

The Chairman of the FHA Phase III Residents Association, Mr. Benson Arayi, called for the dredging of the waterways.

He suggested a stakeholders meeting of the relevant agencies to find a solution to the problem.

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Joysammy Oluwaseyin Rating: ★★★★★

said this on 01 Sep 2009 9:15:04 AM WAT

In a Nigeria's Federal Capital? it is amazing and disgraceful

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roy Rating: ★★★★★

said this on 01 Sep 2009 10:28:49 AM WAT

Mr Joysammy, It can happen anywhere...even in Washington or London. It is nature and it cannot be controlled. Let the FCT government think of ways to reduce the damages that can occur when this kind of thin happens.

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Ayeni Emma O Rating: ★★★★★

said this on 01 Sep 2009 12:30:30 PM WAT

It happens everywhere. It just our luck to be situated in a continent of least natural disaster. It happened even in united state, india, china, japan and all other powerful countries. Let just continue to pray for our country and leaders to lead us in the way that will please God. We are proceeding. GOD bless nigeria.

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