

# Our tragedies, by Mokwa flood victims



- ***Death toll rises to 153***
- ***Trailer drivers count losses***

"I went to look for food and came home to meet no home. I lost nine of my children," lamented Isa Daban, an indigene of one of the three Mokwa communities in Niger State ravaged by floods late last week.

Another indigene, Musa Ismaila, who described the floods as devastating, said a building with 80 Almajiri was swept away.

"A lot of the people involved were children. An Almajiri house with over 80 children was washed away," he lamented.

Daban's and Ismaila's narratives were some of the most touching heard by The Nation reporter who visited Angwan Hausawa and Ndayako, two of the affected communities yesterday.

Daban, with teary eyes, showed our reporter the spot where his house once stood.

He said: "I do not stay in Mokwa. I usually go and come back every weekend. When I heard about the flood, I rushed home and this is what I met (pointing at a spot). I went to look for food and came home to meet no home."

Ismaila, who said the rain which began without notice, quickly led to a "powerful" flood that swept people, houses, farmlands away.

His words: "The damage is very devastating. A lot of people involved were children."

"An Almajiri house with over 80 children was washed away. Farms and their crops were washed away, many businesses were also lost. There is really nothing left."

He also lamented the condition of the survivors, who according to him, "are sleeping in the open with no adequate food."

Ismaila added: "Many of the survivors have been wearing the same clothes since Thursday. There are some people hospitalised while several families are still looking for their loved ones. This is a serious emergency."

Jubrin Alhassan painted a painful picture of how his uncle would have to live with the pains for the remaining days of his life.

"Seventeen of my uncle's sons and daughters were buried in my presence," he said.



His uncle, Usman Kontagora; his aunty, Nnagi Zuwaira, and another family member whose name Alhassan did not give, are among scores of residents still missing.

"The whole building of my uncle was swept off to the extent that even a spoon was not recovered. Today (yesterday) marks four days Fidau prayers of our loved ones," he added.

The Nation gathered that more lives would have been lost but for a "railroad decking" that held flood waters from entering some houses before it broke down.

Also, Mokwa youths braved the floods by rescuing some people from their buildings.

A video showed a youth rescuing a blind old man from the decking of a house.

However, not everyone captured in the video was lucky. Some children on the decking which eventually collapsed were swept away.

Isaac Eneayiajo, manager of a printing company affected by the incident, said: "We came here but could not see our building or anything that has to do with our business. We do not know what to do."

"Majority of us are family members. What happened will not be easy for us."

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### • *Death toll rises to 153*

Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA) confirmed that the death toll rose to 153, following the recovery of more bodies.

"More dead bodies were recovered on Saturday under the bridge. They were buried this (Sunday) morning," said the agency's spokesperson Hussein Ibrahim, in an update on the tragedy.

The update partly reads: "In Mokwa town, the death is 153, 3,018 affected population, 503 affected households, 11 persons injured, three bridges washed off.

"In Ndayako community, there was no death, 98 population affected, 58 houses affected and 17 households affected. In Raba, there was no death, five houses affected, one bridge washed away."

The deputy governor, Yakubu Garba, had on Saturday told a Federal Government delegation that there was need for an emergency temporary camp for the displaced persons.



Garba said that support in cash and in kind would go a long way to address the challenges faced by the affected persons.

He added that a dedicated account had been opened by the state government for the flood victims.

Yakubu told the team that people living close to flood plains had been directed to vacate to prevent future incidents.

The Federal Government delegation was led by Information Minister Mohammed Idris and his Humanitarian Affairs counterpart, Nentawe Goshwe Yilwatda.

### • ***Niger Govt reassures survivors***

Secretary to the State Government(SSG) Abubakar Gawu called on the people to trust the government in helping the flood victims.

He said: “This unfortunate disaster has affected numerous homes and individuals, and the government remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting affected families and communities.

“The Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA), in collaboration with local authorities and volunteers, continues to work around the clock to provide relief to the affected people.

“While we share in the pain of every family that has been affected, we urge members of the public to remain calm and sensitive in their communications, particularly on social media and other platforms. This is a time of mourning and collective grief for us as a state as spreading unverified or sensational information only adds to the sorrow and confusion already being experienced.

“The government calls on all citizens to cooperate with relevant authorities and to trust in the ongoing response efforts. We also appeal to the conscience of all Nigerlites to prioritise unity, compassion, and factual reporting during this challenging time.”

### • ***Trailer drivers count losses***

Bida – Mokwa Road, which for two days was blocked because of the floods was free as of 12 noon yesterday.

The development doused fear of food and livestock scarcity in the South ahead of with Sallah.

The road is one of the major highways that link the North and the South.

A trailer driver, Muktar Yusuf, who said he slept at “Mokwa garage till today (yesterday) because of traffic jam,” described his experience as “unpalatable.”

He added: “I lost two rams. Heat and lack of water killed them. Several of us carrying animals had to offload to ensure that they did not die even though most of us still lost some animals.

“The drivers who suffered more were those carrying tomatoes and watermelon. Several of them got spoilt because these things do not stay for long.”

Muktar, however, said he was happy that he could continue his journey to the South.