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Many missing as Apete makeshift bridge collapses •Residents protest, 1 injured

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30.Jun.2014 | [DISQUS_COMMENTS](#) | Taiwo Olanrewaju And Nurudeen Alimi



MEN of the Operation Burst, a security outfit put in place by the Oyo State government, fired tear gas on protesting residents of Apete in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State.

The protest, the Nigerian Tribune, learnt was orchestrated by the collapse of a makeshift bridge that links the community to other parts of Ibadan City which many of them attributed to the slow pace of work by the state government on the construction of a new bridge since the collapse of the old one during the August 2011, flood in which many lives were lost.

Although, none of the men of the Operation Burst, was willing to speak with the Nigerian Tribune, on why they were on ground, but a source among the crowd informed that they were there to prevent people from moving closer to the river in order to avert further tragedy.

In the process of maintaining law and order around the area, an unidentified man, was injured and taken to the hospital for treatment following the release of teargas and shooting of gun into the air by the security personnel to disperse protesting residents who are demanding prompt action from the Oyo State government on the construction of a new bridge.

The source further informed that: "I think men of the Operation Burst fired the tear gas and fired gun into the air to disperse the crowd, particularly, the area boys present at the scene who may want to take the advantage of the protest to perpetrate criminal act."

A volunteer, who controls traffic on the bridge, Mr Jonathan Chukwudi, while speaking with the Nigerian Tribune on the Saturday evening flood which washed away some residents of the area, informed that the incident occurred when the rain stopped around 7:00p.m. he said: "The whole thing happened about 30 minutes after the rain had stopped.

I am a volunteer here, "I control traffic on the bridge on daily basis and that Saturday evening was not an exception. Sincerely speaking, I alongside some other people warned those that were swept away by the flood not to use the bridge because it was already shaking but they resisted, maybe because they do not want to be stranded".

He further stated that only two people were rescued, while a pregnant woman and her baby alongside some other people were swept away with the bridge and no one could ascertain the actual figure. "I do not know where some people get their own figure from. I also read in a national newspaper that 10 people were drowned, it is true that some people were drowned but nobody can authoritatively say that this is the actual figure".

Another resident, Hammed Ogundoyin, also in a chat with the Nigerian Tribune lamented the loss of lives caused by the Apete bridge since it first collapsed in August, 2011. He said: "The Federal Government should come to our aid because it seems the state government is not doing enough as far as work on the reconstruction of another bridge three years after the 2011 flood which claimed many lives".

Some of them decried the stress they will encounter to get in and out of the community on a daily basis as they will have to take either Ajibode via University of Ibadan or Ologuneru/Eleyele route to get to their place of work.



A resident, Mrs Ameenat Raheem, who spoke with the Nigerian Tribune, informed that: "It will cost me nothing less than N500 to and from my workplace if I take Ajibode U.I route on a daily basis. And you know the implication of that considering the economic situation in the country today.

I want to appeal to the state government to hasten the pace of work on the new bridge in order to save us from this hardship and the continued loss of lives," she said.

G5 condemns use of force

The G5, a political group in Oyo State, has condemned the use of force by the APC-led government in Oyo State to harrass the people of Apete, as they mourn the lives lost as a result of makeshift bridge in the community.

According to its national secretary, Kareem Olorunbe, the killing could have been averted "if we have a caring government in Oyo State."

The group urged the state government not to play politics with the lives of the people as they did with Boko Haram saga.

Lives, properties lost in Baale village's flooding

Six people were feared dead, three injured, while buildings and fences collapsed and property worth millions of naira destroyed at Baale Village, Olodo area, Ibadan, when Egberi River overflowed its banks, after a downpour on Saturday.

Five of the deceased were said to be members of Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Ibudo-Ayo, while the sixth, a baby strapped to its mother's back, was said to have been released into the flood by its mother, to enable her to swim to safety.

As at press time, four of the dead bodies had been found and two interred while search still continued for the fifth member of the church.

The founder of the church, Prophetess Ajijola Jesu and a Muslim woman, who was in the church for a special programme, had been buried at the river bank, while the corpses of Eri, a boy of about 10-year-old and Tunmise, the daughter of the founder and who was said to be on a spiritual journey, had been recovered.

Speaking with the Nigerian Tribune, the village head, Baale Alimi Sanusi, who described the downpour as a sign of anger of God, said the rain, which fell for about one hour, from about 4pm to 5pm, would have claimed more casualties if most residents were indoors.

Prophet Ajani Okiki, founder, Ori Oke Okiki Olodumare, said in his 30 years sojourn in the area, last Saturday was the third time the area would be flooded, claiming that it was fatal than the incidents of 2011 and 2001.

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