

Four persons feared killed in Oyo as century-old tree falls to windstorm

FOUR persons were feared killed and another seriously injured when an ancient 'Odan' tree fell due to heavy windstorm in Saabo area of Oyo town, Oyo State, on Monday.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that the ancient tree provided shelter for butchers, mini buses and commercial motorcycle operators with its wide branches at a popular food-stuff market in the town.

Chairman of Saabo Market in Oyo town, Alhaji Akeebu Alarape, said the tree was about 100 years old.

Alarape said four different

loggers invited to cut the tree did not succeed until a fifth one was able to cut part of it for rescue operation to begin.

A trader in the area, Mrs Kareemot Ejide (65), said she had known the tree since her childhood days.

The Head of Operations of Amotekun Corps in Atiba Local Council Development Area, Mr Akeem Ojo, said the tree fell at about 6:00 p.m.

"A female student of the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, a woman with a baby strapped to her back and a boy she was holding were pulled out

from under the tree.

"One person was seriously injured and was taken to a private hospital in the area, while motorcycle and mini bus parks under the tree were damaged," Ojo said.

He added that Amotekun's presence at the scene was to prevent rioting and looting of goods in the market.

Chairman of Sooro Local Council Development Area, Oke-Isiwin, Oyo, Mr Seun Oguntona, confirmed that those affected were people who took shelter under the tree during a downpour.

He added that those trading under the tree would be

relocated.

He urged people in the area to always stay indoor and not take shelter under trees whenever it rains.

He debunked the rumour that the tree had diabolical powers, adding that the person who planted it died 30 years ago.

Oguntona said though the man was a Sango worshipper, he planted the tree to provide shade for people.

Efforts to get the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state, Adewale Osifeso, to react were not successful as he did not answer calls made to his mobile phone.

Decomposing body of Warri-based comedian