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## FLOOD LEAVES TEARS, SORROW IN NIGER

Friday, 07 September 2012 23:54 Hammed Salawu, Minna







0 Comments



Flood, resulting from down pour has killed no fewer than four persons in Bosso and Zungeru areas of Niger State. It was learnt that two brothers Abubakar and Abbdullahi Gwaibaita of Gungel village of Bosso local government area were killed while returning from the farm. The two others were Fulani herdsmen who were taking by flood along their grazing route in Zungeru in Wushishi local government area of the state.

An eyewitness said that Abubakar and Abdullahi had gone to the farm before the downpour but were unlucky as they were stuck in the heavy flood that took over the footpath to the farm. It was gathered that the farmers were found dead in a neighbouring village about 6 kilometres away from the path.

Also in Zungeru, two Fulani herdsmen were reportedly swept away from their grazing spots. It was gathered that the herdsmen were overpowered by the flood which took and hit them on a rock leading to their instant death.

Several houses, rice and sugarcane farmlands in Wuya Kede, Wuya Kanti, Batati and Muregi, all in Mokwa local government area of the state were also swept away by flood. The flood in these areas of Mokwa, in the middle course of River Niger, is often attributed to discharge of excess water from the hydro electric dams in the state.

There seems to be no end to the flooding disaster in Niger State. Remember, Niger State governor, Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, had raised the alarm that he had not received payments from the Ecological Fund since he assumed office. Maybe, such funds would have gone a long way in assuaging the rampaging floods that have claimed many lives and property worth millions of naira in recent times.

On Saturday, September 1, 2012, two innocent brothers, like the aforementioned discussed Abubakar and Abdullai Gwaibaita, died while attempting to cross drainage into their house. One account has it that the two brothers were playing with a used tyre inside the rain, when the tyre ran into the rampaging gully. The youngest boy, Mustapha Mohammed Kudu, 7, attempted to salvage the tyre, but ran into the gully and fell; an attempt by his elder brother, Bashir Mohammed Kudu, 10, to rescue him proved tragic, as he also fell into the voracious flood. The bodies of the two were later found near a culvert, not too far away from the scene of the incident.

Another version said both boys were returning from a Qu'ranic graduation (Walimat), programme, not too far away from their home. They were said to be in company of four equally young children when they fell into the drainage. According to sources, efforts by the others to rescue their colleagues proved futile,



making them rush to the parents of the drowned ones to raise an alarm. Relatives and neighbours then mobilised a search for the two boys, unfortunately, their bodies, trapped very close to a culvert near the New Tunga Central Mosque, were found.

Before their demise, the father stated that one of the children had requested for new school uniform and books, because his former ones were old. According to him, he told the boy to bring the old uniform and the books so that new ones could be bought. Basir, he continued, was always after his education. He was always committed to his studies; look at what has befallen him and his brother. "See me burying my children," he sobbed.

The bereaved father, who is also the acting bursar of the Federal University of Technology, FUT Minna, could not contain his emotion as he wept profusely. Bashir and Mustapha were pupils at the FUT Staff School and Himma International School, respectively.

Reacting to the spate of flooding in the state, Niger State Emergency Management Agency, NSEMA, said that the devastating flooding that recently ravaged over 10 local government areas of the state was as a result of heavy downpour and discharge of excess water from the neighbouring republics of Cameroon and Benin, including Jebba, Shiroro and Kainji thermal stations. NSEMA claimed that the flooding had been responsible for the killing of five people so far and destruction of property estimated at over N500 million.

The director general, NSEMA, Alhaji Mohammed Shaba, in a media parley in Minna, said that the flood affected 10 local government areas and 145 communities in the state. He disclosed that the 10 local government areas were worst affected in the state with deaths reported at Wushishi, Chanchaga and Bosso local governments saying, "unfortunately, we recorded loss of lives, two at Zungeru in Wushishi local government areas, two at Chanchaga (Minna) and one at Sabon Daga in Bosso local government areas."

The Niger State Disaster Management Agency director general, who expressed sadness at the development noted that, over 42 communities were affected in Mokwa local government area among

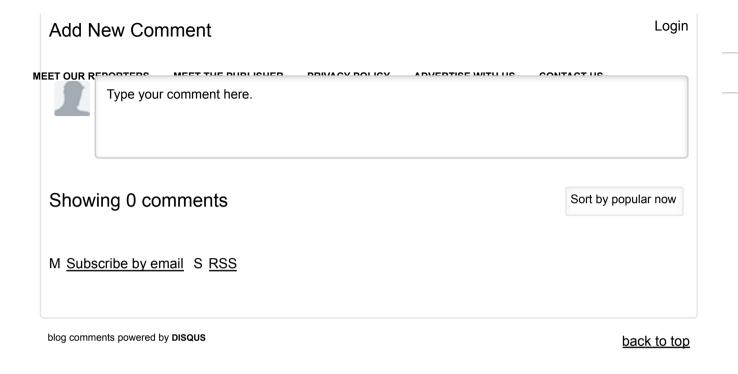


whom were Zdagu Kpashafu, Ketso, Gbogifu, Lenfakuso, Egbagi, Muregi ,among others. According to him, at Lavun council area, a total of 18 communities were devastated by flooding while in Edati local government area only four communities were affected namely Wuya Knati, Dokokpan, Tama and Emimam. In the state capital (Chanchaga local government) a total of seven areas were flooded in recent days while in Borgu and Shiroro which house the Kanji and Shiroro dams respectively, a total of 42 communities were ravaged by the flood. Also affected, he said, were Bida, Bosso, Munya and Wushishi , where over 50 communities have been destroyed as a result of the excess water released from the Shiroro and Kanji dams. Shaba noted that the estimated value of properties destroyed by the flood in the ten affected local government areas is about N500million. The DG , said a total of 300 persons are currently taking shelter under public school buildings in Mokwa, Shiroro and Borgu Local government councils. "There are over 300 internally displaced camps running at Mokwa, Shiroro and Borgu as we speak." Berating the lukewarm response of the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, in Niger State unfortunate flooding so far, Shaba pointed out that the federal government, especially, NEMA had been slow in responding to disasters in the state, accusing NEMA of being biased.

Condoling the families of the flood victims, Governor Aliyu appealed to the citizens to heed flood warnings, urging the people of the state to heed various flood warnings issued by the Federal Ministry of Environment, National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA and Power Holding Company of Nigeria, PHCN, predicting heavy rains, which may cause flooding in the state.

Specifically, Aliyu referred to the alert issued by the authority of the Jebba Hydro Power Station warning waterside communities, including illegal settlers of the commencement of seasonal water release for equipment maintenance and enhancement of power generation .The governor pleaded with the people, especially those in flood prone areas to take all necessary precautionary measures to avoid flood disasters, adding that similar warnings in the past had saved lives and property.

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