

**METRO PLUS**

# Rainstorm kills pregnant woman, destroys houses, churches

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Thousands of residents of the Agbado-Oke Odo Local Council Development Area of Lagos State have been rendered homeless after their houses were damaged by a rainstorm on Monday.



*PUNCH Metro* gathered that no fewer than 100 houses and 13 churches were destroyed by the rainstorm.

Schools, shops, filling stations, fences, electric poles and trees were damaged by the storm, which residents said lasted for about one hour.

After the dust had settled, a seven-month pregnant woman, identified only as Basirat, was found dead inside a church.

The communities were still counting their losses when *PUNCH Metro* visited on Tuesday.

It was gathered that the affected communities included Peace Estate, Ikola-Eleyin, Ikola-Odunsi, Liberty Estate, Ikola-Powerline and Oke-Ishagun, among others.



Each community has several community development associations and consisted of no fewer than 10 streets.

Some residents were observed by our correspondents repairing their buildings, while those whose houses were levelled sat beside the rubble.

The roofs of houses and schools blown off by the storm littered the roads.

Basirat, who was said to be about 27 years old, was reportedly asleep inside a canopy-covered orthodox church when the rainstorm blew the church away.

A woman, whose house was beside the church, explained that the victim had attempted to escape when she was hit

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the rainstorm started, it blew off the church's canopy. The woman, who was aroused from sleep, stood up to flee, but was struck down by a thunderbolt. She fell on her stomach and died."

The resident took *PUNCH Metro* to her house, which had also collapsed and the roof blown off. It was observed that appliances in the house were burnt, including sockets and cables.

She insisted there was no electricity at the time of the incident, adding that her generator was also not on.

Our correspondents learnt that the family of late Basirat had deposited her corpse in a morgue before officials of the Emergency Response Unit of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency arrived at the scene.

*PUNCH Metro* gathered that three other women were injured after their houses caved in.

"One of them sustained burns on her cheek, another had a broken shoulder, while the third sustained injuries in her buttocks," a female resident said.

A trader, Taiye Godwin, described her escape as a miracle, saying she was close to the office of a construction company that suddenly collapsed.

She said, "The rain started around 1pm on Monday. It first poured slightly before the storm followed. Since I was born, I have not seen such a rainstorm. It was making a furious sound. Suddenly, the construction company's office collapsed and an electric pole beside it snapped into two."

Three men, who were seen discussing the incident in front of a house on Command Road, said they took permission from office to fix their buildings.

One of them said, "I thought it was something minor until when I got to Baruwa and started seeing ambulances and emergency workers. When I got to our estate, I saw a lot of houses that had been damaged by the rainstorm. I got home and discovered that my house was also affected. I have called them in the office that I can't resume until I fix my house."

Our correspondents observed that their house was levelled by the rainstorm.

Kudirat said, “We were formerly living in the Ikotun area. We recently moved to this place where we struggled to build a room for our family.

“The children were still in school when the rainstorm damaged the building. It destroyed all we have. We don’t know where to go from here.”

A worker at a filling station said its roof and some other property were destroyed, adding that it would cost the company a lot of money to fix the damage.

There was panic in the community as officials of the Lagos State Building Control Agency moved round to mark houses for demolition.

The officials observed that most of the houses were constructed under the power line, which aggravated the effect of the rainstorm.

“One thing we have also observed is that most of the houses are substandard. They were not constructed with good blocks and they lack foundation. The affected orthodox churches are not fit for human habitation,” one of them said.

A female resident, Oladayo Azeez, insisted that the government must provide alternatives for residents if they wanted them to leave the area.

She said, “We won’t say the government should not demolish houses, but will they provide us with alternatives? My mother paid for two plots of land in different parts of Lagos, and she later discovered she had been duped. The landlords gave us tough times and we became homeless. Left with no option, we had to look for somewhere to lay our heads and this is where we found ourselves.

“So, if the government is chasing us away from here, where are they taking us to?”

The General Manager of the Lagos State Building Control Agency, Oladotun Olasoji, could not be reached on the telephone.

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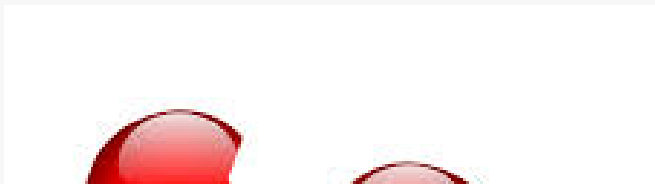
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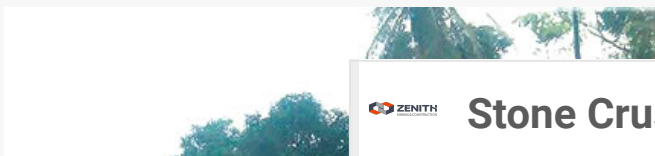
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