

How rainstorm killed my three cousins —Taraba woman

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Taraba State Commissioner of Police, Mr. David Akinremi,

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A woman, Mrs. Henrietta Anthony, on Saturday, said three of her cousins were killed when a mast belonging to a telecommunications company fell on them during a rainstorm in Jalingo, Taraba State.

No fewer than five people were killed, while many others sustained varying degrees of injuries during the rainstorm early Saturday morning.

The rainstorm also destroyed several houses, offices, schools, police officers' mess and worship places among others.

The Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee of the Taraba Specialist Hospital, Dr. Dashe Dasogot, told our correspondent that five bodies were brought to the morgue after the rainstorm.

Dasogot added that two persons, with injuries, were receiving treatment at the emergency unit.

“Four of the victims died when a telecommunications mast fell on them opposite the gate of our hospital and one other was brought from the town,” he said.

Anthony told *SUNDAY PUNCH* that three of her cousins — Aisha Useni, Felicia Istifanus and Istiah James — were part of the four killed by the fallen mast.

Anthony, who owns a restaurant across the street from the Taraba Specialist Hospital, explained that her cousins had left the house early to work in the restaurant after which the incident occurred.

She added, “They finished cooking and were ready to sell food to customers around 6 am when the rainstorm felled the mast behind the restaurant.

“Three of them, including a customer, and a driver to the Commissioner for Water Resource, Mr. Emmanuel Gowon, who came to buy food, died instantly.

“Miss Konah Danjuma, who was also in the shop, sustained shoulder and head injuries.”

Similarly, the Director of Communications of the Catholic Diocese of Jalingo, Rev. Fr. John Jerome, noted that the Chaplain of St. Thomas Aquinas Chaplaincy, Taraba State University, Rev. Fr. Pontianus Jaffla, and seven students sustained injuries when the temporary shelter serving as the church collapsed while congregants observed the morning mass.

Also, the Taraba State Coordinator of the National Youth Service Corps, Mrs. Altam Altine, said the rainstorm injured eight corps members as well as six market women and workers in the camp.

In an interview with *SUNDAY PUNCH*, the NYSC coordinator said four of the injured corps members were treated and discharged, while the others were still at the Federal Medical Center Jalingo, but in

stable condition.

She added, “The Secretary to the State Government, Mr. Anthony Jellason, and other top government officials were here earlier today (Saturday) to see the level of damage caused by the rainstorm.

“He also visited the corps members in the hospital and promised to settle all their medical bills, including those of the camp market women who were injured in the disaster.”

On the repair of the damaged structures which was ongoing when our correspondent visited the camp, the state coordinator said they were doing their best to ensure that corps members had a place to lay their heads.

Our correspondent gathered that at least seven structures, mostly hostels, were badly affected.