

Osadebe's son, nine others die in Edo, Anambra flood

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File photo: Flooded house.

SIMON UTEBOR and **THEOPHILUS ONOJEGHEN** with agency reports

The Chairman of Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo, Mr. Victor Emuankhagbon, on Saturday confirmed that six deaths were recorded in the flooded communities in the area.

Emuankhagbon stated this when he received a delegation of National Emergency Management Agency and officials of the Federal Ministry of Health at Ubiaja.

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He said from the casualties, one of the bodies was yet to be recovered from the flooded area.

He said no fewer than 42 communities, 8,000 houses and 35,150 were affected by the flood.

The council boss, who also faulted the time of response by the concerned agencies, called for a change of attitude in the manner specific responsibilities were handled by those mandated to

implement them.

He also called for effective measures against natural disaster such as flooding.

Also in Anambra State, Okechukwu Osadebe, the 18-year-old son of the late highlife maestro, Chief Stephen Osadebe, has lost his life in a flood disaster in Ogbaru Local Government Area of Anambra State.

The *News Agency of Nigeria* reports that the younger Osadebe died on Thursday in the Osadebe's Atani country home in Ogbaru when he was swept away by the flood around 7:30 pm.

The death of Osadebe brings to four, the number of lives so far lost to flood disaster in Anambra in the last one week.

Mother of the deceased, Mrs. Amaechi Osadebe, told NAN in Atani on Friday that Okechukwu was returning home with two other persons when the flash flood overwhelmed them.

She explained that it was the high current and turbulence of the water that made it difficult for the two other boys to pull him out of the water.

The transition chairman of Ogbaru LGA, Mr. Arinzechukwu Awogu, who visited the family, described the death as a tragedy to the whole Ogbaru community.

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He, however, called on the people of the area to take extra precautions to avoid further loss of life.

In Bayelsa State, Governor Seriake Dickson has sought the collaboration of the Nigerian Air Force to undertake emergency evacuation of flood victims, as many communities have been submerged by flood in the state.

Dickson made the appeal on Thursday when the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshall Sadiq Abubakar, and his entourage paid him a courtesy visit in Yenagoa.

The governor said Bayelsa State was one of the worst hit in the country, in view of the fact that the entire state is now below sea level.

Dickson said, “Let me commend the Air Force for the way and manner your officers and men supported this state during the 2012 flood and let me also use this opportunity to call for more support, especially now.

“As we speak, so many of our communities are under water. As you know, the whole of Bayelsa is below sea level. So, whenever there is a major flooding, our state is one of the most impacted, because all the major rivers pass through here to the Atlantic.

“I want to see a situation where your officers and men collaborate more with our people, especially in the area of evacuation because the situation we have at hand is alarming.

“The reports we are getting are not palatable. We are told that the situation will continue for the next one month, by which time, I can count on my fingers how many communities in Bayelsa will not be evacuated.”

Meanwhile Chevron Nigeria Limited and the Nigeria National Petroleum Company Joint Venture have inaugurated a 500-meter-long drainage system for Edjeba community in Warri South Council Area of the state.

The project which was constructed to avert the perennial flooding in the community was inaugurated by Chevron’s General Manager, Policy, Government and Public Affairs, Esimaje Brikin, on Friday.

The drainage system, which was executed by an indigenous construction firm, is part of CNL’s Project Specific Agreement for its area of operation, particularly in the Niger Delta region.

Brikin, in his remark at the event, described the project as timely as it would address the perennial flooding in Edjeba community and evacuate water from the area straight to the Escravos river.

He noted that the project which was initiated in December 2017 was meant to show CNL/NNPC JV’s efforts to improve the welfare of the people in the community.

The immediate past governor of Delta State, Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan, has also donated relief materials worth several millions of naira to victims of the ravaging flood in the Isoko area of the state.

Uduaghan, who made the donation at the Internally Displaced Persons' camp in Emede, Isoko South Local Government Area of the state, after visiting some ravaged communities including Uzere and its neighbouring communities, described the situation as pathetic

Hundreds of buildings, including that of a popular businessman and former chairman of Isoko South Local Government Area, Chief Askia Ogeah, were submerged in the flood.

Our correspondent observed that some parts of Emede, Aviara and other communities lying along the River Niger have been sacked by the floods in the state.

Uduaghan, called on the Federal Government, Delta State, and individuals in the state to come to the rescue of the victims.

He said, "It is a serious situation, and unfortunately, the Federal Government has categorised it as a national disaster zone – one of the states that are badly affected. It reminds me of 2012 when we had this kind of situation in the state."

In a related development, residents of Ovom community in Bayelsa State have appealed for assistance from government and other stakeholders following the flooding, which submerged more than 70 houses, schools and Churches in the area.

Some of the residents and victims, who were seen making concerted effort to relocate from the affected area, made the appeal in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria on Saturday.

They stated that flooding in Ovom community in Yenagoa Local Government Area, had become a worrisome development requiring urgent intervention from government and other relevant stakeholders.

A victim, Mrs. Ebi Robinson, told NAN that the water level became a threat when it started flowing into their homes.

She said, “You can see things by yourself because right now, I am leaving with my family to some other place.

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“Most of our properties have been damaged and we don’t have food, but I thank God that no lives have been lost.

“My Children are no longer going to school; we are begging the government to come and help us.”

A teacher, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the school had to be shut to prevent loss of lives.

An official of the National Emergency Management Agency, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that Internally Displaced Persons’ camps had been built in parts of the state.

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