

Eight feared killed as flood submerges Lagos community

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The canal

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The whereabouts of a yet-to-be-identified mother, her baby and six other persons including a man identified simply as Umar, have reportedly been unknown after flood induced by a heavy downpour washed them away in the Agege area of Lagos State.

PUNCH Metro gathered that during the heavy downpour on Thursday, flood overran a canal around the Abattoir area in Agege, and it levelled up to the bridge, making it impassable for motorists and residents to navigate their destinations in the area.

It was learnt that a tricycle operator while plying the axis, escaped death by a whisker when the flood swept his tricycle into the canal.

A resident, who gave his name simply as Wasiu, said as the events that almost led to the death of the tricycle operator happened, a woman while backing her child, lost control of her movement and fell into the flood.

As the flood was washing the mother and her child away, Wasiu said another resident, Umar, attempted to rescue the mother and her child by jumping into the flood, adding that the current of the flood washed the three of them into the canal.

Wasiu said, “The owner of the tricycle is my friend. He is a mechanic who stays in Oko-Oba. He was coming from Agege but when he got to the bridge, he realised flood had overrun the bridge and waited but suddenly lost control of the tricycle. As the tricycle moved forward, the flood dragged him and the tricycle into the canal.

“He was the only one in the tricycle and he survived because he swam out of the canal. His cloth got torn and people gave him something to wear. He is recuperating in the hospital.

“Around the same time, a woman, who carried her child at her back, tried to manoeuvre the flood but lost control, fell into the flood and it swept her feet and started dragging her and her child into the canal but Umar jumped into the flood to save them. The three of them have not been found to date.”

During a visit to Umar’s residence on Saturday, his neighbour told one of our correspondents that they got to know of the incident when people raised the alarm as the flood was sweeping them away.

The neighbour said, “He lived inside this compound. His name is Umar. When we heard the noise, we quickly rushed out but when we got outside, there was nothing anyone could do.

“We waited for the rain to subside. On the second day, we combed the entire area hoping to see the corpses. Even this morning, some of our residents still did but we found nothing.”

However, in another interview with one of our correspondents, another resident, who gave his name simply as Bamidele, said two tricycles were involved in the incident.

He added that while one of the tricycle operators escaped, the other tricycle operator and his passengers were swept away by the flood.

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Bamidele said, “They were two tricycle operators involved. The tricycle operator that did not carry passengers jumped out and survived. The flood carried the other tricycle operator, his tricycle and his passengers away. One tricycle was later recovered.

“It is difficult to know anything about their rescue because they don’t recover the corpses of victims around here, it is usually around Aboru or Itele in Ayetoro, Ogun State. We only go there if we know the victims involved.”

The Chairman, Orile Agege Local Council Development Area, Johnson Babatunde, when contacted, confirmed the incident.

“I’ve gotten the report. It happened at Abattoir beside Total Filling Station. Our people need enlightenment. How can you see a flood and decide to enter it? I don’t know what is happening to all these tricycle operators.

“There were five people in the tricycle. People were there waiting because of the flood,” he said, saying he wondered why the tricycle operator decided to enter the flood even when other people waited.

Asked if the corpses of any of the victims had been recovered or if anyone of them was rescued, Babatunde said, “We have not seen them, there is no update yet.”

When one of our correspondents visited the Abattoir Police Station, the Divisional Police Officer, CSP Olatunji Oladimeji, said he led his men to the scene to investigate the case.

He said, “Everyone we spoke with could not confirm it. They kept saying they heard about it. We heard different stories. Some people said it was a motorcycle while others said it was a tricycle.

“It is difficult for us to file such a report. Nobody can tell us that they saw them. And till now, nobody has come here to report that anything has happened to them or their loved ones.”

Contacted, the Public Relations Officer, Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, Nosa Okunbor, said the agency got “no official report yet.”

The Public Relations Officer of the state Ministry of Environment, Kunle Adeshina, said expansion work was ongoing on the drainage system in the area.

Adeshina said, “There is a drainage expansion project in the area. The contractor might have some delays but he is back on site working on it. There is also a need to clean up some parts of the area down to old Ota Road. Our drainage maintenance department has been contacted and cleaned up the site so that it can have the capacity to take up more water.

“When it rained, especially in flood-prone areas, we have always told people to refrain from underrating the power of water. It is better to wait and allow the rain to stop before people continue their journey. This has always been our campaign.”