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## 3 family members, 4 others die in Onitsha flood

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BY OUR REPORTER ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2015

NATIONAL

From Jeff Amechi Agbodo and Aloysius Attah, Onitsha

A family of three and four others, including a 13-year-old girl, identified as Ebele Okafor, died after a downpour which flooded parts of Onitsha, Anambra State on Sunday evening.

The rain started at about 6pm and lasted till the early hours of yesterday, leaving in its trail much destruction. It was gathered the family members who perished in the flood were inside a private car, when the vehicle fell into a big drainage near a commercial bank by Okpoko junction, along the Onitsha -Asaba

Their corpses were later taken away in the morning, while some other families continued to search for loved ones missing since Sunday night.

Two bodies were recovered from an erosion-prone area near St. Jerome's Catholic outstation Church, Obosi, near Onitsha. One of the victims, identified as Ebuka, a commercial motorcyclist, was said to have visited a friend that evening and was swept away by the flood on his way home. Another corpse of a yet-tobe-identified man was also sighted at Modebe Avenue by Ozomagala junction

Confirming Okafor's death, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in charge of Inland Town Police station, Mr. Cosmas Eze, said the family of the girl reported her missing on Monday morning, and recovered her lifeless body from a ditch in the area.

## ...70 houses submerged, graves washed away in Anambra

From Aloysius Attah, Onitsha

No fewer than 70 houses have caved into the River Niger, while many graves of loved ones who are

supposed to be resting in peace have been washed away within the last six weeks in Ogbaru area of

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Anambra State owing to flooding and activities of sand excavators at the bank of the River Niger. Chairman of Ogbaru Stakeholders Forum, Sir Peter Okala, who disclosed this to reporters in Onitsha yesterday, said a tragedy of monumental proportion was imminent in Anambra State, unless government at all levels, rises up to the challenge.

Okala, who was flanked by the Secretary of the forum, Chris Nwabueze and public relations officer, Mathew Akuma, decried the attitude of the State and Federal Governments in handling the Sakamori drainage constructed in the 80's by the then Shagari administration, which serves as a collection channel for all the flood from Onitsha North and South, Idemili North and South, through the Idemili river, before emptying into the River Niger.

He stated that the drainage has been filled above capacity with refuse and sand, causing the Ogbaru end to be flooded after each rainfall, adding that efforts made to draw governmen's attention had drawn blank. Okala said the death of seven people swept away by flood on September 6, 2015 within the connecting drainage at Upper lweka would have been avoided if the necessary measures were put in place. He called for total concrete perimeter fencing of the bank of the River Niger to save the only motorable road that serves the Ogbaru community, while the authorities should beam their searchlight on the effects and activities of the sand excavators operating at the banks of the river.

"A careful look at the bank of the river revealed a great threat and this a sign of another calamity that may likely befall the agrarian people of Ogbaru and its inhabitants, if urgent measures are not taken in the face of the news of the imminent opening of the Cameroonian dam, which has the tendency to wipe out the entire inhabitants of Ogbaru" Okala said.

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