

SORROW IN NSUKKA AS FLOOD KILLS 3

From **Felix Ikem, Nsukka**

THERE was deep sorrow across the length and breadth of the university town of Nsukka, Enugu State, recently, as the downpour predicted by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET) claimed three lives in the area.

The tale of sorrow started with the rain of Wednesday, July 4, which left the town flooded. It swept away a schoolgirl at Uwali-Ugwu, one of the surrounding communities.

Barely 24 hours after, another devastating flood washed away two persons; a commercial motorcyclist and his passenger.

Daily Sun gathered that Uwali-Ugwu has been on the receiving end of flooding since the recent construction of roads in Nsukka town. Two years ago, flood sacked more than 20 families in the community even as property worth over N10 million was also lost to the disaster.

A witness, Shedrack Obeachere, a Catholic seminarian, who found the schoolgirl later identified as Chimsimdiri Onoja said he initially thought the floating body was a piece of cloth.

"But when I took a closer look, I discovered that it was a human being floating on the flood."

It was at that point that he raised the alarm, jumped into the gutter and brought out the lifeless body with the help of other people around.

The remains were later identified and claimed by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Beneya Onoja who took the body to their home town, Enugu-Ezike, for burial.

Chimsimdiri, a five-year old nursery school pupil, was coming back from school on that fateful day when she fell into a flooded gutter.

Similarly, the tragic incident involving the okada operator and his passenger happened around 1.45 pm near the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) first gate.

Shortly after the incident, the story went round the university town that a particular corps member that engaged in okada operation to make ends meet was one of the victims. Many sympathisers, mainly students rushed to the flooded area



• People searching for victims near the university gate after the rains

'Flooding a yearly occurrence around the UNN gate'

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on search and rescue before their lifeless bodies were eventually recovered at Ala Uno and deposited at the mortuary of Faith Foundation Hospital Nsukka.

However, Daily Sun gathered from one of the people at the scene that the motorcycle rider was identified as Monday Ezema from Edemani Nsukka while the passenger, was said to be Alex Chukwu, a 200-level student of the Department of Mathematics from Ebonyi State.

Residents said flooding has become a yearly occurrence around the UNN gate but alleged that the situation has been aggravated by the recent construction of roads in the town without proper drainage.

"I have heard strange things about this place. Yearly, people must be drowned; and any corpse must be found in Ala Uno. It happened last year, it was a lady. It was the same place, the same story. It happened last two years; the same spot; same history. Should something not be done about this horror? I was warned by indigenes not to enter okada whenever the rain is falling or fell towards that location. It's a sad evening. I am still in shock," said Maazi Ogbonnaya Okoro, one of those involved in the search said.

In the case of Uwali-Ugwu, the community had reportedly alerted the government to the impending catastrophic consequences of lack of proper channelling of water bodies.

Chairman of the community,



• Drainage

Mr Levi Ikeoha who described the incident as unfortunate and painful, urged government to come and remedy the situation so as to avert further tragedies.

"We have complained to relevant agencies in the state on the menace of flood in the community. The problem of flood in the community worsened after the construction of Obeachara/Ikenga road by the contractors who channelled all the water in the area to our community," he lamented.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in Enugu State, Mr Ebere Amaraizu confirmed the two incidents and urged residents to avoid flood prone points during rainy season.

"The tragic incidents have been reported to the police and we have started investigations,"