

TOP STORIES

YOU HAVE A STORY FOR US?
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LAST Wednesday, voices rang out from Lokoja, Kogi State, dripping with sorrow and anguish. They were the voices of people in the throes of flood, crying out loud over the deluge.

With heavy hearts, Mr Solomon Ibejigba, former curator, National Museum, Lokoja and Paul-Maeyor Ihionu, a staff of Federal University, Lokoja, told gripping tales of flooding incidents in the state.

"The disaster in Lokoja is devastating. The people are completely shattered; the only means of transport now available is the canoe," Mr Ibejigba declared.

Also, Mr Ihionu who sent video clips/photos of farms, houses and cars submerged in water in Lokoja, labelled the situation: "a terrible disaster."

Also early in the week, advisories emerged warning people to avoid the Kotonkarfi axis of the Lokoja-Abuja highway.

The area had been taken over by burgeoning flood, roaring from the angry River Niger.

Sunday Sun learnt that the situation in Kogi State mirrors the crushing blows of flood across the country coming at this time the nation's rivers and streams are overflowing with water.

Already, whereas hundreds have been killed, and scores displaced, many will no longer have a home to return to after the flood has receded. At every turn, people are sharing hard-to-believe experiences of deaths, devastation and displacement — all caused by flood.

Kogi State: More than 30 killed

In Kogi, flood had killed no fewer than 30 people in the state and submerged residential houses, worship centres, as well as farmlands.

Areas such as Ajaokuta, Kotonkarfi, Idah, Oju and Ibaji were not spared.

The lawmaker representing Ibaji constituency, Atule Egbunu, said that three persons were killed, while over 50,000 people were displaced in the area, describing the incident as "unfortunate annual disaster."

The Chairman of the local government, Williams Iko-Ojo, confirmed that three persons, including a baby were killed as his parents rallied to escape the surging flood.

Therefore, the traditional ruler of Ibaji, Ajofe John Odiche Egwemi, has called on the Federal Government to complete the dredging

PAIN, SORROW EVERYWHERE

...As flood wreaks havoc in Lagos, Niger, Kogi, Anambra, Delta, Kwara, Nasarawa, Benue, Edo, Bayelsa states

■ Scores killed, many displaced, property worth millions lost to deluge

of the River Niger and embark on other long-term measures.

In Ajaokuta, a boat conveying passengers to Lokoja capsized last Monday morning at the Ganaja village, killing five people.

It was learnt that at least 600 hectares of rice farms were also washed away by the flood.

The owners of the farms are beneficiaries of the Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP) under the FGN/IFAD assisted project in Kogi.

Narrating their ordeals, the Ibaji Local Government Liaison Officer, Mr Achogu Fredrick, disclosed that a total of 216 rural farmers in Ibaji who benefited from the IFAD-VCDP RPSF, had all lost their rice farmlands to flood.

Meanwhile, a family of four has been roasted after fleeing from the flood. A family member, Godwin Wanbebe, said that the victims were displaced by the flood at the Adankolo quarters, only to be hit by gas explosion hours after settling in an apartment offered to them by a good Samaritan, saying that their lives are now in danger.

However, the state governor, Yahaya Bello, has assured that he would create some IDP camps in Lokoja and other local governments affected by the flood.

He called for help from the Federal Government and all other international agencies.

Also, the Executive Director, Initiative for Grassroots Advancement in Nigeria (INGRA), Hamza Aliyu, has lamented government's poor response to flooding in the country, particularly in Kogi State.

Niger State: Dead bodies washed away

The flood in Niger State has kept the people on edge, washing away houses, farmlands and their

produce.

It was learnt that about 500 communities across nine local government areas of the state had been affected.

According to the Director General, Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA), Mallam Ibrahim Inga, more communities could still be affected as the rains intensify.

Inga said that the affected local governments were Lavi, Magama, Rafi, Kontagora, Gbako, Mashi, Mariga, Wushishi and Mokwa.

Speaking, Alhaji Alhassan Musa Naibi, Chief Imam of Mariga Central Mosque, said that the community woke up on Friday, September 16, to discover that flood had washed away about 500 bodies from their graves and were seen floating on the water.

In Kontagora local government, over 50 communities were hit by the flood after three days of heavy rainfall that destroyed no fewer than 300 houses and farmlands.

Over 1,000 people were rendered homeless, forcing them to take shelters in government facilities or with relations in neighbouring communities.

Meanwhile, the state governor, Alhaji Abubakar Sani Bello, has directed the Ministry of Environment to collaborate with relevant ministries and Kontagora local government to demolish all structures built on waterways as part of measures to avert future occurrences.

Anambra State: Flood kills 2, submerges 651, 053 houses, schools, markets

In Anambra State, flood has killed two persons in Ahambra, East and Ogburu local government areas.

The acting state Coordinator of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Mr Thickman Tanimu, confirmed the death of one person at Enugu-Otu in Aguleri, Anambra East local government, and a 50-year-old man from Umudaike-Atani in Ogburu LGA of the state, who drowned in the flood last week.

The NEMA boss said that at least 651, 053 persons in six local government areas of the state had been displaced by flood in Ogburu, Anambra East and West local government.

Tanimu stated that NEMA, accompanied by officials of Anambra State Emergency Management Agency, (SEMA) had visited Umueze-Anam, Mkpunando, Igbedo, Inoma and Ifite-Ogwari, in Anambra East and Anyamelum council.

He disclosed that 13 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps, recruitment of camp managers, support staff, and activation of health workers to work with people in the camps had been provided.

Meanwhile, over 600 households of Ogburu riverine communities have fled their homes after flood submerge schools, Atani Magistrate and High Courts, Federal Polytechnic, Atani Campus, and worship centres.

A former member of the House of Representatives, and 2023 candidate of the Labour Party (LP) for House of Reps in Ogburu Federal Constituency, Hon. Victor Afam Ogene, raised the alarm following the ravaging flood.

He gave the affected areas as Ogwu Ikpele, Akili Ogidi, Obeagwe, Ossomala, Umunankwo, Ogbakuba, Ochuche, Akili Ozizor, Atani, Ohita and Odekpe, Amiyi, Iyiowa, Ogbekwu, Okoti and parts of Okpoko.

Ogene said that other affected areas are Amiyi, Iyiowa, Ogbekwu, Okoti and parts of Okpoko, declaring the incident as "pathetic."

The President General of Ogwuikpele community, Mr Madupuo Sunday Victor, said: "A lot of homes have been lost, while several families have relocated; the number is more than 300 persons."

A journalist, Mr Arinze Obaze, a native of Atani, whose house was submerged by the flood, described the situation as very terrible, lamenting that it was getting worse.

Anambra East and West, and Ayamelum LGAs communities such as Aguleri, Enugu-Otu, Umueze Anam, Umuoba Anam, Mmiata Anam, Nzam and Umueru were also hit by the flood.

The President General of Mmiata Anam, Prof Peter Okonkwo, described the disaster as "terrible" compared to last year's incident, regretting that property worth millions of naira had been destroyed.

The President General of Odekpe community, Innocent Nwanosike, also lamented the disaster, and called on the government to come to their aid.

But, the Commissioner for Environment, Mr Felix Odumegwu, said that the state government had commenced an inspection of the affected communities, confirming that holding centres for the internally-displaced persons been established for the victims.

"The Ayamelum centres would house victims from Anambra East and Ayamelum LGAs, while Anambra East itself has just two holding centres. "Ogburu LGA has three; Onitsha South, two; Onitsha North, four; Awka North, three; Ihiala, four while Ekwusigbo has two", he said.

Meanwhile, the state Commissioner for Education, Prof Chionna



Unachukwu, has directed the closure of all schools in the riverine and flood-prone areas in the state.

The government has also created a special academic calendar for the riverine areas in the state.

Delta State: Houses submerged as residents flee

In Delta State, residents of several riverine communities are counting their losses.

Exotic houses, churches built along the bank of the River Niger in Asaba, and other areas have been submerged by flood.

In the neighbouring Oko community, flood destroyed animals and crops.

Flood waters from the River Niger have chased away traders at the Hausa Market along the Benin-Asaba-Onitsha highway in Oko, where livestock and vegetables are sold.

Mohammed Kachala, who claimed to be the vice chairman of the market said: "Our property were carried by the water before we could rescue them."

A leader of Hausa community in the state and Senior Special Assistant to Governor Ifeanyi Okowa on Special Duties, Muktar Usman, disclosed that the traders sustained losses in excess of N500 million,

expressing gratitude that no life was lost.

In Ndokwa East local government, the council secretariat in Aboh has been shut by the authorities due to flood encroachment.

The Chairman of the council, Juan Amechee Governor, who announced the closure, stated that a Flood Management Committee had been set up for the various wards in the LGA.

He said that the secretariat closure was to prevent staff from being exposed to the danger of commuting by boat.

He urged the residents to adhere to "water- travel-safety measures, and avoid overloading, ensure you use life jackets during travel period, and to avoid low spots, like ditches, basements, or underpasses."

In the meantime, the state government has appointed an Inter-Ministerial Flood Disaster Management Committee, with the aim of taking appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of the flooding.

The Director General of the state Orientation Bureau, Eugene Uzum, who made this known in Asaba said that nine holding camps were being set up for displaced residents across the state.

Uzum promised that the education, health care and other needs of the people would be addressed at the holding camps, urging those who were yet to relocate from the plains to do so without further delay.

However, a social commentator in Ndokwa area, Ossai Udom, has lamented that enough had not been done to ameliorate the sufferings of the people.

Kwara State: Lives lost, scores displaced, property destroyed

No fewer than seven lives have been lost to flood disaster in different parts of Kwara State this year alone with Patigi Local Government being the worst hit.

In the latest flood incident, at least 1,300 households and 2,800 persons were affected. The flood also submerged large hectares of farmland and residential buildings.

A victim, Mohammed Kolo, said the damage done by the flood was in hundreds of millions of naira, lamenting that the affected persons now had to pay between N1,500 to N2,500 per head to canoe operators to help them flee.

It was gathered that floods

washed away two bridges along Kulende Harmony Estate and Akerebiata area and another one between Medina and Technical area, while another in Oloje reportedly collapsed after a downpour.

A woman lost her life at Onijo compound, Pakata area of the town.

Four children were also reported to have sustained injuries when the wall of a building caved in at Kankatu-Okelele area of Ilorin.

The flood also destroyed some houses and washed away fish farms and ponds in many areas of the town.

Meanwhile, thousands of displaced persons are said to be living in make-shift accommodation in Patigi Local Government Area.

Sunday Sun gathered that the release of water from the Jebba dam compounded the problem of flooding in Patigi community and its environs.

It was also observed that the refusal of residents of flood-prone areas to heed early warning to relocate from the areas was partly responsible for the disasters.

A victim of the disaster, Mohammed Garba, who said he lost over one hectare of his rice farm, regretted that they could not relocate to the IDP camps provided by the Federal Government because their means of livelihood as fishing and farming, done in the riverine area.

During a recent inspection visit to Patigi, the Managing Director of Hydroelectric Power Producing Areas Development Commission (HYPPADEC), Alhaji Abubakar Yelwa, confirmed the lost of seven persons to flood.

Yelwa and his team had gone to Patigi to flag off the distribution of N50 million worth of relief materials to victims of flood in Kwara State.

In Ilorin, casualty figures from a recent flood disaster rose to six. Three bodies were recovered from a river along Sobi Road by men of the state fire service.

Kwara State safety agency also confirmed that two lives were lost as youths attempting to catch fish in the Asa riverine area of Amilegbe, got drowned.

Another victim of the disaster, Sheik Aboto was said to be returning from a journey in Niger State when his Toyota Yaris car plunged into the river along Sobi Road amid downpour.

Meanwhile, the state government had started channelisation

work and erection of embankment on the Asa River to prevent the river from overflowing its banks.

The state government in a statement jointly signed by the Commissioner for Environment, Mrs Remilekun Banigbe and Commissioner for Works, Engr Rotimi Iliasu, sympathised with the residents of Ilorin whose houses were flooded as a result of the downpour.

In addition, officials of the state's Ministry of Environment also carried out public enlightenment programmes, urging residents to avoid dumping refuse in the waterways in order to prevent flooding.

Nasarawa State: 361,000 persons displaced

Nasarawa State has recorded not less than 361,000 displaced persons in the eight out of the 13 local government areas of the state; farmlands have been washed away with property worth millions of naira destroyed.

Sunday Sun gathered that residents of the affected communities were sleeping in the open and uncompleted buildings while some are sheltering in the primary school in their communities.

In Toto Local government, about 17 villages and farmlands were submerged and destroyed.

The Chairman of the council, Hon. Abdullahi Aliyu Tashas, advised the residents to relocate to safer places until when the flood recedes.

In the southern part of Doma LGA, particularly in Ijiwo, flood destroyed property worth millions of naira.

A victim, Mary David, was in tears as she listened to her husband, David, narrated the events on the night of the flood.

"Suddenly we started seeing dark water everywhere. In no time the whole place was submerged," David recalled.

The Director General, Nasarawa State Emergency Management Agency,

Zachary Allumaga, said that no fewer than 361,000 persons were affected.

He recalled that Nasarawa was among the states the Nigerian Metrological Agency (NIMET) predicted would experience serious flooding in September and October 2022.

Benue State: More than 23 lives lost, 116,084 people displaced

Rita Adah watched in despair as her shop on Kilometer 4, Makurdi/Gboko Road from where she operates a hair saloon sank under water.

"I come here every day to check if the water has receded, but it has not. It's really difficult not having an income," she said.

Many other businesses in the area, including a part of Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH), and parts of Benue Links Transport Company, were submerged.

The Benue State government said that 11 out of the 23 local governments in the state were affected, while 23 persons lost their lives in the flood. Also, while 116,084 people and 12,856 households were displaced, 74 persons were injured with 4,411 houses either lost or submerged in the flood.

The flood also destroyed farm lands and other public property in the state.

At the Judges Quarters, a major bridge, constructed through communal effort linking Ashaver Street with the extension was washed away.

