

Flooding renders 1.5 m people homeless in Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Anambra

Six dead; farmlands, poultry farms destroyed, over 300 communities sacked

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ABOUT 1.5 million people were rendered homeless by the floods that swept through some states in Southern Nigeria, submerging houses, sacking communities and destroying farms and livestock recently.

Collated figures show that it affected 1,426,509 victims from several communities in Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta and Anambra. In Bayelsa, six people reportedly lost their lives in inexplicable circumstances within Yenagoa, the state capital while about 500,000 people and 300 communities were sacked. About 50 submerged filling stations shut down operations, thus creating severe petroleum scarcity. In Rivers State, 250,456 persons were displaced from four local government areas. In Delta State, about 25,000 people lost their homes to the floods. In Anambra, 651,053 were affected, although 41,000 were registered with the Internally Displaced Persons camps.

But of all the states, Bayelsa is believed to be worst hit. According to statistics provided by the state governor, Douye Diri, the flood affected people in 300 communities or eight out of the nine local governments. He noted that it would cost the state government billions of naira to replace damaged infrastructural facilities. But the Chairman of the Bayelsa State Emergency Agency (BY-SEMA), Walaman Igrubia said that the figures given by the governor should be regarded as an estimate as the agency is still collating data on the actual number of people affected.

Daily transportation of passengers and goods from Yenagoa to Port-Harcourt, Owerri, Aba, Onitsha, Uyo, and Calabar was suspended owing to the bad state of the Okogbe-Ahoada section of the East/ West road. The same applies to commuters plying Yenagoa to Lagos, Warri, Ughelli, Asaba, Benin.

In Rivers State, records provided

by the Rivers State Flood Committee Management show that in Ahoada East Local Government Area, 25,347 persons including men, women and children were displaced; in Ahoada West, 52,657; in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area 34,811 while in Abua/Odual LGA 137,641 victims were affected.

In Delta State, the victims took refuge in the 12 Internally Displaced Persons camps scattered across the state. Whereas the state government established eight of the camps, the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESO-PADEC) set up the other four.

A breakdown of the figures given by the Coordinator of the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Karo Gabriel Ovemeso, showed that 20,025 persons were registered at the camps established by the state government. But he warned that the total figures should be seen as conservative as relief efforts are still being extended to those who are sentimentally attached to their flooded homes. In Ndokwa East Local Government Area, 10,611 households were displaced across affected communities.

In Anambra, the flood affected six local governments areas. They are Ogbaru, Ayamelum, Anambra West, Anambra East, Awka North and Ayamelum. But though the waters have started receding, authorities said that the damages and losses cost will take longer period to be addressed. Collapsed buildings, including private homes, schools, churches and local government secretariat affected by the flood could be seen in communities that make up Ogbaru Local Government area. It also left roads in desolate and dilapidated state.

The Executive Secretary, State Emergency Management Agency, Chief Paul Odenigbo said that the state is grappling with about 41,000 displaced persons that suffered losses, including submerged homes and farmlands. He said although 651,053 persons were victims, many of them sought protection and succour in the homes of friends and relatives outside their localities.