

Tuesday 30 October, 2012 Updated 15:16

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12 Die, 11 Children Delivered in Rivers Camps for Flood Victims

24 Oct 2012

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Camp for flood victims

By Ernest Chinwo

About a month after flood sacked many communities in Nigeria, the effect is still being felt at a time displaced people are beginning to adjust to life in the relief camps.

Living in the camps is a mixed bag of sorrow and joy for the internally displaced people. While some are dying, due to the poor sanitary condition of the environment that has aggravated their frailty, others are multiplying. In Ubie clan of Ahoada-East Local Government Area of Rivers State, 12 persons have died.

But even as deaths are being recorded, so are births, as 11 children have so far been delivered in the camps established for persons displaced by the floods. The births are being recorded in camps at Abua Central, Abua/Odual Local Government of the state.

The state government had set up about 12 camps to accommodate the victims of the flood disaster in communities of Abua/Odual and Ahoada-East, which appears to be one of the worst-hit local government areas in

the flash flood that ravaged parts of the country.

THISDAY gathered that most of the victims who died were those who took ill, essentially because of the poor sanitary condition in the over-crowded camps. Medical attention was said to have been poor, which helped to increase the number of casualties.

Narrating the ordeal of those in the relief camps, Chairman, Rivers State chapter of the Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Dr. Ibitrokoemi Faye-Kurubo, complained about the situation in the camps. He gave details of the challenges while briefing journalists at the opening of the 2012 Physicians' Week in Port Harcourt Tuesday.

Faye-Kurubo called for the deployment of more medical facilities in the camps to ensure better welfare for the displaced. From the situation in the camps so far, unless urgent and adequate medical attention is paid to the condition of the people, it is possible that more deaths could be recorded.

"Drugs and other medical aids should be deployed to the relevant agencies in the camps considering the challenges being faced by victims of the flood disaster and to avert possible outbreak of epidemic and other water-related diseases in the camps.

"During our (NMA) visit to the camps in Abua, we discovered that 11 children have been delivered by pregnant women," Faye-Kurubo said, noting that it was not the best environment for delivery.

But challenging as the camps are in terms of basic hygienic and health standards, the 11 babies were all safely delivered

and without complications. It could not be ascertained whether there are standing gynaecological personnel to assist women during childbirth, or whether the people resorted to using local maternity methods to aid baby deliveries at the camp.

It was also learnt that most of the people who died in the flood in Ubie clan are from Ubio, Ogoda, Oshiobele and Odieroke-Ubie communities in Ahoada-East Local Government Area.

Given the extent of damage caused by the flood in the state, most victims have faulted the Federal Government's categorisation of Rivers State as Category B when President Goodluck Jonathan, on October 9, announced relief packages for states affected by the flood disaster.

Rivers was classified into Category B states which were given N400 million.

The four categories are Category A - N500 million, Category B - N400 million, Category C - N300 million and Category D -N250 million. Although it was considered a thoughtful gesture from the Federal Government, many have expressed fear that the amount is not enough to take care of the victims even while in the relief camps, let alone rehabilitating their homes, which have been devastated by the flood.

Several state governments have constituted standing committees to organise and administer the affairs of those in the refugee camps. Some states are already making provisions for security in the various camps, as unconfirmed reports have hinted of cases of rape and other types of crime in the various relief camps across the country.

Several individuals and government agencies have joined the Federal Government and states in providing relief materials to the various camps. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), for instance, had provided relief materials, including food items, beddings and medicals to several relief camps within the region. The Presidential Amnesty Office has also provided sundry relief materials to victims of the flood in various states.

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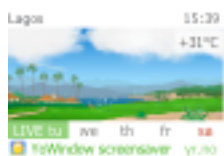
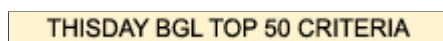
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