

Rainstorm kills four in C-River

BY GEORGE ONAH

OGOJA—NO fewer than four people have been reported dead and scores of others wounded, following a rainstorm that swept across Ogoja and Yala Local Governments of Cross River State.

One of the dead was a commercial motorcyclist, who allegedly rode at top speed into one of the several trees felled by the tornado, while the three others were crushed in their houses when giant trees uprooted by the storm crashed on the houses.

Consequently, about 10,000 people, including women, children and the aged have been rendered homeless, in which Ogoja ancestral home of Ishibori was worst hit with roofs of several houses blown off or destroyed.

Over a dozen primary and post primary schools as well as churches, scores of houses, masts and other structures were pulled down at the council headquarters, displacing a number of the staffers and office equipment.

Three commercial banks had their roofs partially blown off, while other private and commercial premises including several PHCN poles, which were smothered in Okuku, Igbekurikor, Ugaga of

Yala Council, has put the place in darkness since, last week-end.

Chairman of Ogoja Local Government, Mr. Joseph Eweh told *Vanguard* that it was "the first time in about 100 years that this type of monumental catastrophe will be witnessed here. Over 10,000 people have been displaced with no shelter since the rainstorms wreaked havoc here.

"We are appealing to both the federal and state governments to come to our aid by providing building materials to rehabilitate this teeming population that has been abruptly made homeless in their homeland. Our resources are too lean to cater for the magnitude of the destruction".

Also, the police from the state C.I.D. and Ogoja Area Command are on the trail of a proprietor of a secondary school in Boki Council, (names withheld) who collected N28, 000 from each of the 200 prospective candidates as fee for the on-going examinations of the West African Examinations Council.

The police said the man simply disappeared with the money put at over five million naira because he did not register the students for the examinations, leaving the children and their parents in the cold.