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15 die as rainstorm wreaks havoc in Lagos

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BY OUR REPORTERS

LAGOS — AN early morning rainstorm, which began at about 7.10 am, yesterday, wreaked havoc in several parts of Lagos, killing [15 persons](#), destroying many houses, cars, [electric poles](#) and uprooting [many trees](#).

Among the dead were [10 children](#), who drowned at [Shibiri Ekunpa area of Ojo](#) when a passenger ferry conveying them to school capsized due to a gust of wind that assailed it. Also, [two students of Goodness Comprehensive High School](#) in the area were killed when the [storm destroyed their school building](#).

A [teacher at St Gregory College, Obalende](#)

was reportedly killed by a mast that collapsed on him while four others were injured. Also, around Radio Nigeria, Ikoyi office, several trees were uprooted by the storm, which caused severe damage to some cars parked in the area.

At Jakande Estate, Oke-Afa in Isolo Local Council, two persons were killed by a tree felled by the rainstorm.



At Ejigbo Local Council Development Area, LCDA, over 100 buildings including Jakande Low Cost Housing Estate Primary School, Oke Afa Junior and Senior Colleges and the Area office of Ejigbo LCDA in Jakande Estate had their roofs blown away by the rainstorm, which lasted for about 15 minutes.

The Third Mainland Bridge was also blocked for most of the morning as street light poles felled by the storm lay on the road, obstructing free flow of traffic. It took the intervention of men of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority, LASTMA, to prevent motorists from running into the poles.

At press time, a combined team of the police and LASTMA operatives was seen making efforts to clear the bridge of the debris caused by the storm to make way for

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free traffic flow.

Reminiscence of the July 10, 2011 rainfall that killed scores of people and destroyed property worth millions of Naira, other local government areas equally hit by yesterday's downpour include Ejigbo, Onipanu, Obalende and Lekki.

The Lagos State Office of Public Defender (OPD) in Surulere billed to be inaugurated by Governor Babatunde Fashola today was not spared by the rainstorm as a section of its roof was ripped open.

Also some Mega BRT bus stops on the ever busy road were destroyed while three Multi-media bill boards pulled down by the storm lay on the road. The situation led to traffic gridlock as traffic officials worked frantically to ease traffic.

Wind travelled at 120 km/hr

The winds from the storm reached about 74 miles (120 kilometers) an hour, the threshold for hurricane wind speeds, said Mary Iso, the Meteorological Manager of Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos. Further inland, winds reached up to 40 miles (about 65 kilometers) an hour, she said. About two-thirds of an inch (about 1.7 centimeters) of water fell during the storm, which lasted about 15 minutes, Iso said.

The Nigerian Meteorological Agency had previously issued warnings about the possibility of a storm coming through as the seasons begin to change in the nation, Iso said. Nigeria remains gripped by Harmattan winds, which carry sand from the Sahara

Desert over Africa's most populous nation. The country's rainy season typically begins in several weeks. "Within a transitional period like this, we normally have erratic weather," Iso said.

The cause of the rain

Another meteorologist, Mr. Abayomi Oyegoke, with Nigeria Meteorological Agency (NIMET), Oshodi, said the rain was not unusual in terms of scale and attributed the destruction to the wind. "The rain was not massive. When measured, it was 18.6 mm. It is not a massive rainfall. It is the wind that caused the destruction."

He said the rain came as a result of a micro scale system that developed over the Delta area, grew and propagated into the West towards Lagos. "In the process of that movement, another cold system developed around the inland of the South West. Because of the one coming from the Delta area, it invigorates and merges and became a massive system. This massive system now caused a downdraft. The downdraft was associated with the strong velocity of wind that led to the maximum wind gust that caused the destruction we witnessed today."

Lagos opens relief camp

As of press time, the identity and total number of the victims were still being sought by the state government officials saddled with rescue operations.

The General Manager of Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, LASEMA, Mr Femi Oke-Osanyintolu, who confirmed

the incident said the state government was on top of the situation as rescue operation was ongoing.

He added that in the interim, the state government has declared open the Agbowo Relief Camp, in Ikorodu suburb for all willing Internally Displaced People, IDP, for accommodation as part of measures to mitigate their loss pending permanent solution to their plight.

Osanyintolu, added that the state government was working out a form of compensation for all the enumerated victims of the latest disaster.

He explained: "As soon as we got the information in the early hours of the day, my men (LASEMA) rushed to the scene to save the situation from getting out of hands. Our early arrival saved the situation from recording higher casualties.

"My men are also on ground at the other locations across the state where the ugly incident also occurred. It is quite unfortunate that Lagosians have to pass through this kind of natural disaster again after the July 10th, 2011 tragedy as a result of heavy rainfall.

"I therefore, wish to assure Lagosians that government has put everything in place to ensure prompt response to any disaster in the state."

According to him, yet to be identified corpses had been deposited at the mortuary.

The Shibiri mishap

Unaware of what lay ahead of them, 14 school children had boarded the ferry which took them to school as usual. But tragedy struck at about 8 a.m when the ferry, which could not withstand the gust of wind capsized. The rescue team that raced to the scene was able to recover 10 dead bodies while four were brought out alive and they are currently receiving intensive medication in various hospitals.

Disaster at Oke Afa

About 200 families were rendered homeless as their roof tops and ceilings were completely pulled off by the wind which blew for close to an hour in some areas. Several buildings were partly damaged with some fences collapsed. Some vehicles' windscreens were shattered by hard objects which fell on them.

Residents of the area were greeted by a dark cloud which enveloped the atmosphere, followed by the raging wind which blew off their roofs, a situation that caused panic, as some of the residents rushed out of their apartments, for fear of collapse of their buildings.

Commercial motorcyclists were not left out, as some of them took cover under a tree at Oja Bus-stop. But the unexpected happened as a roof which pulled off landed on one of them. He was rushed to the hospital in an unconscious state. Some students who were also running to safety were reportedly hit by a tree, which fell around the Low Cost Housing Estate public

school, killing one of them in the process.

Chairman of the Ejigbo Local Council Development Area, Mr Kehinde Bamigbetan, who visited the estate to assess the level of damage, said that work on the affected buildings would begin before the day ran out.

Said Bamigbetan: "We are here to assess the damage and respond to the damage by restoring as much as we can within the shortest time. Our carpenters are already on ground and we are going to assess the situation, based on which we will look at the cost and try to respond to it".

A total of 100 blocks, he said were affected.

Adding that work would first begin on buildings which had their roofs completely pulled off. But for those whose roofs were partially affected, vanguard gathered that they were asked to fix them themselves but would be compensated by the state government.

Most of the affected occupants appreciated what they described as the state government's quick response but expressed doubt on whether those partially affected would get compensated at the end of the day.

A register for those affected was opened at the Landlord Association Civic Centre at about 1 pm and over 100 persons had registered as of press time.

Bamigbetan, however, advised the victims to evacuate their properties to a safe place

in the interim.

As part of arrangement to assist victims, the chairman has directed the victims to register their complaints at a special centre opened by the LCDA within the estate with photographic evidence of their claims

Also, Hon Omowunmi Olatunji Edet, member Lagos State House of Assembly, Representing Oshodi-Isolo Constituency II joined the council boss at the meeting and also expressed her sympathy assuring the victims of the state government's support even as she commended the swift response of Bamigbetan to the situation.

Some residents in Onipanu, Palmgrove, Fadeyi and other communities along Ikorodu, whose buildings were affected were seen salvaging some of their properties while others lamented the damage done to their belongings by the rainstorm.

The beautification projects of the Lagos State Government were affected at the Iganmu garden as some of the storm uprooted some newly planted trees.

Mrs Risikat Adeyanju, a resident of Okokomaiko in Ojo Local Government Area of the state also said no fewer than nine houses in the area were damaged by the rainstorm.

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the_adviser

We are talking of hurricane here not the normal rainfall we know but the powers that be are frightened of using the word "hurricane".

A wind that uproots trees and electricity masts is no longer a storm.

4 hours ago

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Oladimeji Bamigbele

The storm was quite terrible. I did not even realize that it had caused so much damage, not only to properties, but, to innocent and precious lives. May the good Lord, Jesus Christ, comfort our people that have lost loved ones. Amen.

Apart from scientific facts enumerated by experts as to the cause of this disaster, we must also not rule out the fact that our SINS as a people, Leaders and Followers alike, are continuing to haunt us. We are still battling with Boko Haram, Fuel subsidy 'palava', irregular power supply, Unemployment (especially of the youths), Good Education, Inadequate Infrastructure, True Federalism, National conference (whether sovereign or not), Religious Tolerance and so on. May God have mercy on us all in Jesus Name. Amen.

Ladi Bamigbele

8 hours ago 6 Likes

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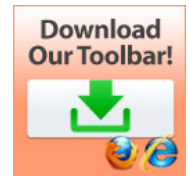
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