

Vanguard

Four siblings killed in Lagos mudslide

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*My children sleeping, not dead – Bereaved mother

*Where do I start from? – Father

By Evelyn Usman

Tragedy struck, yesterday, after mud detached from a hill at Isheri Magodo area of Ojodu Berger, Lagos, landed on two buildings, caving them inside the earth.

Four siblings were brought out of the debris of one of the collapsed buildings dead by rescue workers. But their mother reportedly escaped death by the whiskers.

The deceased siblings were identified as Sylva Odiah (23), Sayo Odiah (15), Clinton Odiah (11) and Endurance Odiah (8).

Eye witnesses said the tragedy occurred at about 6.45am during a down pour.

However, no casualty was recorded in the second building which had a single room apartment, as residents were said to have escaped unhurt.

The eye witnesses told Sunday Vanguard that a deafening sound, which shook the entire area, was heard. When curious residents went out to ascertain where the sound came from, it was discovered that the mudslide, near River Ogun, had fallen on the buildings located on Orisha Street, forcing them to cave in.

Rescue effort by residents was said to have immediately began.

The body of eight-year-old Endurance was the first to be recovered from the debris at about 7.15 am. Their mother was reportedly rescued with bruises and rushed to hospital.

At about 8.40am, the body of Sylva was reportedly recovered, followed by that of Sayo, about 35 minutes later and Clinton's around 10.15am.

Officials of the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, Lagos State Building Control Agency, LASBCA, Lagos State Fire Service, Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, LASEMA, and the police later joined residents to participate in the rescue operation.

When contacted, South West spokesman for NEMA, Ibrahim Farinloye, said: "All the four victims were recovered dead. Collapse was due to the heavy rain; a mud detached from the cleavage of a hill beside River Ogun and hit the three-bedroom flat. Unfortunately, the room where the dead were staying was the one hit by the mudslide.

Another mudslide fell on one single room building but no one was trapped there.“

Also, Director, Lagos State Fire Service, Mr Rasaq Fadipe, said that during rescue operation in the three-bedroom flat, the one-room apartment collapsed . He said his men were drafted to the scene to contain fire outbreak and also to water the ground with a view to dousing the heat which could suffocate trapped victims.

Meanwhile, the mother of the deceased siblings did not believe her children were dead, saying “they are still sleeping and will wake up soon.”

When Vanguard visited the victims’ house, the mother, Felicia, was sighted outside the building calling the names of the four children; one after the other.

Felicia, who escaped with deep cut on her leg, narrated that most of the mud beneath the structure (staircase) on the cleavage hill that was adjacent to their building had been washed away, adding: “Immediately the rain subsided, there was a mudslide from the cleavage of the hill which hit our house. The section hit was the children’s room.

“So I don’t know how I escaped from the collapsed building. All I knew after I escaped was that I called my children but none has been able to answer me. I know that soon, they will do because they are still sleeping.

“He (Shayo) was planning to gain admission into varsity this year. My son is still sleeping. I ran out when the incident occurred.”

How I lost children – victims’ father

Mr. Okeoseye Odia, the father of the four siblings, told Sunday Vanguard. “I lost four boys today (yesterday); where do I start from?”

Explaining how the tragedy occurred, in an interview, Okeoseye, a police officer attached to the Murtala Muhammed Airport, Lagos, said, “I woke them up at about 12 midnight while sleeping on the sofa in the parlour. I went into my room. Due to the condition of my job, I woke few minutes past 4 am to prepare for work.

“At about 5 am, while in the parlour preparing to leave for the office, I heard a loud bang. Before I knew what was happening, the entire house was filed with mud and water. That was how I lost four children. My first son was 25-year-old.”

While others were wailing, the 50-year-old bereaved father could only sigh. He said: “As if I knew this would happen few months ago, I complained on how residents of Magodo Phase 1 were channelling their waste water into our community especially the building adjacent to mine. But they didn’t yield. Today, their action has claimed my four children.”