



NYSC declares 3-day mourning for 9 drowned corps members

ON AUGUST 7, 2018 6:45 AM / IN [CRIME GUARD, NEWS](#) / [2 COMMENTS](#)



By Luminous Jannamike & Femi Bolaji

ABUJA—National Youth Service Corps, NYSC, has declared a three-day mourning for the nine NYSC members that drowned, weekend, in River Mayo–Selbe near Gashaka Local Government Area of Taraba State.



Corps member

At press time, divers in Taraba State were yet to recover the bodies of the two remaining corps members after seven of them were recovered on Saturday.

Yesterday, flags of NYSC nationwide were flown at half-mast to commence the three-day mourning for the nine corps members.

Director, Press and Public Relations, NYSC, Adeyemi Adenike, who disclosed this in a statement, said the search was still ongoing to recover the remaining two bodies.

When *Vanguard* visited Serti, headquarters of Gashaka Local Government, corps members declined to volunteer information following orders from the state NYSC.

However, some residents who were friends to some of deceased on social media confirmed that Chike Melvin Ijeh and Ucheonye Nkadi Joshua were among those that drowned.

A check on their timeline on *Facebook* revealed a flood of eulogies from friends and acquaintances.

My last chat with them—*friend*

A resident, who gave her name as Ndidi, identified the first names of two other deceased as Blessing and Mimi.

She shared her last chat with Mimi with *Vanguard* and expressed shock over their demise.

According to Ndidi, “I was supposed to visit Mimi that Saturday. Unfortunately, I couldn’t because I had some other things to do. If I had visited her, probably I would have joined them to the picnic and only God knows what could have happened.”

In her account of her last encounter with Chike, she said: “I met him last at the ATM point where we talked on so many things. I can remember vividly that I was actually sick and queried him for not checking on me and he apologised.

“Being a nice guy, he also volunteered to help me withdraw from the ATM, but because of the crowd I opted to go withdraw from the counter, not knowing that would be the last time I would see him.”

Their place of primary assignment

Another resident of the neighbourhood, where some of the deceased lived, Bisong Alfred, gave the name of the place of primary assignment of two others as Elly Demonstration Academy, Serti.

When *Vanguard* visited their residence, their rooms were locked and fellow corps members were mourning, but declined to speak.

The Corps Liaison Officer, who ran into *Vanguard*, said the Local Government Inspector was the right person to be contacted for comments.

All efforts to reach him proved abortive as his mobile phone was switched off.

Meanwhile, Taraba State government, yesterday, condoled with the family of the nine corps members.

A statement by the Senior Special Adviser to Governor Ishaku on Media, Bala Dan-Abu, prayed God to grant families of the deceased fortitude to bear the loss.

The statement further advised corps members to always inform authorities and security agencies of their activities to forestall recurrence of such in the state.

NYSC statement

A statement by the NYSC Director, Press and Public Relations, Mrs Adenike Adeyemi, disclosed that seven bodies have so far been recovered from the river by local divers and security agents but that the search for two other missing corps members was ongoing.

The statement reads: “The entire NYSC family is shocked and saddened by the cruel twist of fate that befell our corps members who drowned as a result of the sudden increase in water volume and surge of the River Mayo-Selbe, near the Gashaka Falls in Gashaka Local Government Area of Taraba State.

“The corps members had, on Saturday, August 4, embarked on a picnic at the site before the unfortunate incident.

“Seven bodies have so far been recovered by the local divers and security agents while the search for the remaining two missing corps members is ongoing.

“Management has, therefore, declared a three-day mourning for the souls of our departed heroes, beginning from Monday, August 6, during which NYSC flags nationwide would fly half-mast.

“Our condolences are with the families and the scheme covets your prayers at this moment.”

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