

2 drown in Bayelsa community, residents protest

By Samuel Oyadongha

1 THE recovery of the corpses of two persons, who drowned in the Epie Creek at Agudama in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, yesterday, sparked off heavy protest in the area.

The victims, said to be siblings, were identified as Jeff, 22 and Adeni, 24.

They were said to have met their tragic end Friday night when the boat conveying them across the Epie Creek capsized.

It was learned that while five other occupants of the ill-fated boat were rescued, the deceased were not lucky as they were swept away by the swift current.

The corpses of the victims were recovered by the locals yesterday, triggering protest in the area over "neglect by the government."

The development caused traffic gridlock along Agudama-Edepie stretch of the Melford Okilo Expressway.

However, the timely intervention of the Police prevented the situation from degenerating into violence.

The incident, community sources told *Vanguard*, was the third in recent time.

A resident, Mr. Endwell Azibayam, said: "Yearly, people from this neighbourhood die because of the flood. On Friday night about 11p.m., seven persons were crossing from Mblama-Yenagoa Road to our area when the boat capsized.

"We managed to rescue five persons, but two were swept away by the current of the flood. Since that day we have been searching for their bodies until this morning (yesterday) when we found them. Because the government failed to build a bridge for us, we built a wooden bridge we managed until the flood came and swept it away.

"So the only way we can connect to the outside world is to cross the Epie Creek with the canoe. If not for that reason, those boys wouldn't have died in the manner they did on Friday."

Uncle to the deceased, Mr. Julius Diepreye, blamed what he described as the insensitivity of the government for the death of his nephews, saying the government have continuously failed to live up to its responsibilities.

Julius said: "The state government have failed to meet its primary responsibility. I am not asking government to give my family money, but relief materials."

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