

Babies die as women deliver in toilets, says Benue IDPs camp manager



File photo of displaced women.

...Inmates lament disease outbreak, starvation

Makurdi —The inmates of Agagbe Internally Displaced Persons, IDPs, camp in Gwer West Local Government Area of Benue, have raised the alarm over the outbreak of measles and others ailments as well as the increasing starvation in the camp.

The IDPs also expressed concerns over the resort to taking the delivery of pregnant women in toilets due to lack of medical care and support from the relevant authority, warning that the practice had already led to the death of some new born babies in the camp.

They appealed to the state government, spirited individuals and organisations to come to their aid, warning that the rate at which infections spread in the camp, coupled with lack of food and adequate medical care, the camp might record high death rates if nothing was done urgently.

Speaking on the development, yesterday, the Camp Manager, Jacob Ibaah, lamented that the IDPs were in dire situation that needed urgent intervention.

According to him, two inmates had already lost their babies in the last few days, adding: “One was premature birth, the other one lost the baby while giving birth. Both incidents happened on Sunday and Monday last week.

“As we speak, there is hunger in the camp. Also, they (pregnant women) could not get money to go to the hospital, so they delivered in the camp. Even a place to give birth is also a problem here.

There is a space, a toilet built by Doctors Without Borders, MSF, which is where most women here use for baby delivery.

“If they don’t have money to go to hospital, they use the toilet. They give birth there since we are currently congested in the rooms. It’s really tough. And the State Emergency Management Agency, SEMA, is aware of this development.

“Also, there is even the issue of outbreak of measles and other diseases here in the camp.

Already, we have identified six children who are down with measles and they are yet to receive medical attention. But in the alternative, they are taking herbs. It is indeed a bad situation.”

Contacted, acting Executive Secretary of Benue SEMA, Mr. James Iorpuu, said: “I alloted 200 bags of rice to them during the last food distribution exercise.”

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Agabe is reported to be home to thousands of the IDPs in that axis of the state.