

The report of Kogi NGOs Network (KONGONET) Committee on Flood Impact Rapid Assessment Across the Nine (9) Flooded Local Government Areas of Kogi State.

Background of 2022 Flood Situation in Kogi State

The 2022 flood disaster which affected Kogi state marks exactly ten years after a massive flood submerged several communities across nine local government areas in the State in 2012. The waters have returned in 2022 even in a higher volume wreaking more havoc on vulnerable citizens and residence of the state. The flood has sacked people from their houses and destroyed invaluable properties including crops and farmlands thereby subjecting men and women, school boys and girls to untold hardship.

Lokoja, the State capital and Confluence of Rivers Niger and Benue on Saturday night 24th September, 2022 witnessed the rivers overflowing their banks. By Sunday morning thousands of persons have been forced out of their houses to lodge with sympathizers, friends or relations. Those not too lucky to have such privileged relations, relocated to abandoned buildings and schools in view of the fact that the state government as at 24th September, 2022 has not officially set up Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camps. This has associated effects on families and individuals exposed not only to hunger and starvation but also the danger of men from the other world such as armed robbers, kidnapper, rapists as well as the risk of high prevalent malaria due to exposure to mosquitoes.

Prior to this time the National Meteorological Agency (NiMeT) had predicted that flood would affect a number of States in Nigeria and Kogi was one of the States forecasted to experience flood this year (2022). This information and warning came early enough to allow for adequate preparation by individuals and governments at different levels to minimize damage and destruction the flood would have cause to lives and properties.

Summary Report of on-the-spot Assessment of the Ravaging Flood in Kogi State

Nine (9) Local Government Areas of Kogi State, namely; Ajaokuta, Bassa, Idah, Ibaji, Igalamela-Odolu, Ofu, Kogi-Koto, Omala and Lokoja are currently affected at an alarming rate. Ibaji local government area of Kogi state is totally submerge as at the visit of KONGONET flood impact rapid assessment team. It is estimated that over 500,000 Kogites across the nine LGAs affected by flood has been displaced, leaving an estimated 12,331 houses built with muds across the local communities destroyed while others are submerged. Over 600 hectares of rice farmlands has been affected and other major sources of livelihood of kogites destroyed.

In Lokoja the Kogi state capital alone, residents of Kabawa, Sarkin Noma, Adankolo, Gaduma and Ganaja have been submerged and cut off totally from the rest of state capital. The team assessment revealed that over a thousand houses within the metropolis of Lokoja has been affected as the high tide water is constantly increasing by the day. Many civil servants as well as various workers within the affected communities in Lokoja were caught unaware and could not find their ways to their various offices and those who are brave enough went through the aid of canoes to various parts of the state, which is the new normal.

It was indeed a sad situation for parents who were taking their wards for resumption of school forced to go back home as none can risk leaving school children to cross water to get to school at this moment.

The team also visited the popular Ganaja road leading to Ajaokuta LGA, nine other LGAs in Kogi East and several Eastern states of the country and discovered it has been take-over by flood and submerged as many trucks were stocked in the water, while vehicles have to park by the roadside with commuters.

The market men and women were not left out, as several market women in the state capital and other flooded LGAs expressed their frustrations as they could not get to market with various goods. In some of the affected areas visited by KONGONET team, it was observed that young school age boys were cashing-in on the flood impact to extort commuters/citizens crossing from one end of the town to the other, their prices range from N200 to as high as N1,000.

Other than Lokoja the state capital and the confluence on Rivers Niger and Benue, Report from Ibaji, Idah, Igamela/Odolu, Omala, Ofu, Idah, Ajaokuta and Kogi Koton Karfe areas are more terrible and devastating as many communities went under water and the farmers especially rice and yam farmers in these areas are already groaning in pains as their farmlands and the farm produces have been completely destroyed by the rampaging floods of fury across their communities.

Mr Jonathan Ogwuche of the Rice Farmer Association in Ibaji Local government area of Kogi State stated that members have lost billions of Naira to the flood as it may take long time for the flood to recede. This ugly development does not only affect the direct victims alone but has devastating impacts on food security within Kogi State and beyond. There is a looming food crises and high level of hunger, poverty and diseases outbreak not just within the affected communities but the nation at large.

This situation calls for an urgent and collective interventions by all critical stakeholders, aide agencies and well spirited individuals in order to mitigate the impacts of the disaster on the affected individuals, households and on the socio-economic life of the people of Kogi state. In view of the above, the Kogi NGOs Network (KONGONET) flood impact rapid assessment team also visited government authorities within the State while conducting on the spot assessment of the impacts of the flood disaster with the aim of ascertaining the true extent of damages so as to use the report of the investigation as a tool for reaching out to critical stakeholders for necessary action to mitigate the impacts of the disaster.

Objective of the Investigation

Although KONGONET as a body may not have the financial resources to reach out to the victims of the flood disaster in the state, however the organization has the structure and human resource with which to mobilize and take action which will lead to the improvement of leaving condition of victims of the disaster. Our rapid assessment objectives therefore are;

1. To visit most of the affected areas and communities so as to ascertain the true situation and extent of damages caused by the 2022 flood.
2. Ascertain the aide or helps already offered to victims or on the way for victims with the view of helping to properly channel such aides. And as well make use of the on-the-spot assessment report as a resource mobilization for victims.

3. To make both short term recommendation to reduce the impacts of the disaster on the victims and offer long term recommendations to critical duty bearers to reduce the impacts of the disaster as well as the possibilities of forestalling the recurrent flood disasters.

Strategy/ methodology of the investigation

To ascertain the true situation of the disaster, KONGONET adhoc committee devised a number of strategies to be utilized in the rapid assessment. These strategies are

1. Setting up a flood impacts assessment committee made up of various experts in the civil society space within the state.
2. On the spot visit to the various communities affected by the flood disaster as well as visits to relevant agencies working together in the flood disaster situation room.
3. Interview with the victims of the flood disaster as well as relevant government agencies with the view of ascertaining the true situation and impacts on the victims and the society at large.

The committee commenced their assignment on Friday 30th September 2022 with her planning meeting where the committee agreed on her strategies as well as drafting her movement plans. The committee agreed to commence her assessment visits on Monday 3rd October, 2022 with visits to various communities affected by the flood disaster.

The first point of call of the committee was at the Ganaja area of Lokoja where the flood water had completely submerged the Ganaja primary school and affected other private business premises such as Hotel 69 psalms, Safari Beach Hotel, and several other small-scale businesses which serve as sources of livelihood for hundreds of citizens and residence of the area. At the Ganaja area, the high ways connecting Lokoja to ten 9 local government areas in the eastern part of kogi state and several other parts of the eastern Nigeria was already completely submerged thereby making the road impassable. Road users were seen resorting to the use of canoes and other small engine boats many of whom were without safety jackets. Although as at the time of visit, some state members of Maritimes Workers Union of Nigeria led by one of the NEC executive members (Comr. Hassan Gimba) were seen at the bank of the flooded area in Ganaja offering supports such as assisting with safety jackets to passengers in the boats however, the live jackets were highly inadequate.

KONGONENT team proceeded to other part affected by the flood such as the Confluence Beach Hotel one of the government owned facilities affected by the flood. This particular facility at some point in the state served as a revenue generating tool for the state but a shadow of itself in recent times and now a victim of the flood disaster.

The experience at the kogi state house of assembly quarters Gadumo was disturbing as the flood disaster had already taking over a number of buildings in the quarters almost reaching to the quarters of the deputy speaker Kogi State House of Assembly, Rt Hon Rabiuh Alfa Momoh. It was revealed by some occupants of the quarters that the Abuja Electricity

Distribution Company AEDC had to be called upon to disconnect power supply to the area to protect lives and properties from electrocution.

The situation of the disaster within same axis along Dunamis Meme Bridge through the federal university to Adankolo areas where houses, workshops, business premises, worship centres and schools were badly affected by the disaster. It is even more worrisome when the team sighted part of the Government Day Secondary School newly renovated by the state government overtaken by the flood. The visit to Adankolo area saw the team to the palace of the Etsu of Adankolo Chief David Aibe Agbayi whose house was also affected by the ravaging flood at the time of the visit. The royal father was encouraged by the visit as he lamented that most stakeholders including the government agencies coming to the area hardly identify with the traditional institution which actually know the community better than anyone else. The royal father recommended the relocation of victims to safer location as the government was encouraged to build housing estates for victims of frequent flooding and the demolition of structures existing in the flood prone areas after alternative homes have been made available. This according to Chief David would discourage people from remaining in the flood prone areas.

Still within Lokoja the Kogi state capital, the team were able to gather information from areas such as the National Inland Water Ways Authority office along Jakura Marble area where the representative of the zonal Manager confirmed that as at Sunday 4th October, the last gate of the Shiroro dam was already opened adding that the flood water is predicted to start receding as soon as possible.

At the Kpata market area it was difficult for vehicles to access the market through the Jakura Marble area. Interaction with local sailors at the river bank in Kpata market revealed how passengers pay between two hundred to five hundred naira on boats and canoes from Kpata market to the new market area. This is indeed a difficult time for citizens and road users, traders, shop owners and even farmers especially rice farmers who farm along the river Niger bank. These farmers and other victims are still counting their losses as investments worth millions of naira have been submerged and destroyed by the ravaging 2022 flood.

Apart from Lokoja the Kogi state capital that is badly affected by the flood disaster other local government areas terribly affected according to investigation include; Kogi, Ibaji, Idah, Ajaokuta, Omala, Bassa, Igalamela LGAs, of all these LGAs investigation revealed that Kogi, Ibaji, Lokoja, Bassa are worst hit by the disaster. In Bassa LGA for instance communities such as Ikende, Kpanche, Ozugbe, Akakana, Gagba Ayede, Biroko, Kpokudu, Gbechi, Gbedikere, Mozum, Emi Audu, Atakpa, Gande, Ecewu, Shintaku, Efforo, Gbobe, Emi Jacob, Adimbeku, Ogba, Oguma and many other communities in Bassa LGA as many farms have been swept and houses submerged by the flood disaster.

In Ibaji Local Government Area, estimated 50,000 more persons as at assessment time have been displaced by Flood in Ibaji Local Government Area of Kogi State. Interaction with the

lawmaker representing the Constituency Hon Atule Egbunu confirmed that at least three persons have been killed in the flood water as the entire Local government has been submerged in Ibaji. Also affected were thousands of Houses and farmlands submerged by the disaster. Relocating the victims to a safer place like Idah is the best option for now however, the situation is currently difficult and beyond the capability of the victims and the local government authority. It is therefore important for the state, federal government and intervention agencies to come to the aide of the people of Ibaji urgently.

In kogi local government area over 70 per cent of the people in Koton Karfe communities now leave and sleep by the roadside and schools as a result of the overflowing of river Niger which has ravaged the area.

Interactions with the lawmaker representing Kogi Koton Karfe, Hon Abubakar Tanko Muhammed said the effect of the flood was devastating and worrisome, stressing that most people in the local government have lost their houses, farmlands and source of livelihood to the flood disaster.

In Ajaokuta local Government Area, the situation was as well worrisome as investigation revealed.

The KONGONET Flood impact assessment team day two on the spot assessment visit paid a courtesy call on Kogi State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Hydroelectric Power Producing Areas Development Commission (HYPADEC), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment and the office of the Deputy Governor.

At SEMA office, the team was received by the acting Executive Secretary (ES) Mrs Akwu Margaret. In her response she appreciated the KONGONET team on impact assessment, she said the state is prepared both in human and material resources. She said the agency has three (3) IDP camps across Lokoja the state headquarters, namely Adankolo, Gaduma and another at the back of 200 housing estate. The Executive Secretary gave a total number of 1, 500 people already captured in Adankolo IDP camp as at Monday 3rd of October 2022, while other camps within the state capital accommodates IDP ranging from 700 and above. The ES also said that food items are already in the state awaiting the non-food items to be distributed to victims in IDP camp and told the team that SEMA is working with Ministry of health and environment to ensure nurses and drugs are sent to the IDP camp. Though, the KONGONET team on assessment observed unavailability of relevant tools for effective functioning and capturing of information affected communities/persons for record purposes.

At the HYPADEC office in Lokoja, the was received by the state coordinator Engr. Joan Oguche and the Area Officer Koton Karfe LGA, Mr. Michael Ajayi. The coordinator appreciated the KONGONET team for visiting HYPADEC and she gave a brief overview of how the commission has been able to quickly respond with relief materials to affected persons across 10 local government area of the state, she said the commission plan to do more.

At the Kogi State ministry of health, the team was received by the permanent secretary on behalf of the commissioner, she said the ministry is at the stage of finalizing her plans to deploy medical personnel, drugs and other medical consumables to the identified IDP camps across the state.

At the ministry of Environment, the team was received by the Commissioner, Hon. Omofaiye, he appreciated the visit and provided update on the level of engagement thus far, he said major intervention to affected households and IDP camps will kick start immediately. Although as expected by the KONGONET team on impact assessment, the team was disappointed that the state is yet to put in place Flood Disaster Situation Room to coordinate responses at the time of visit to the ministry 4th October, 2022 for a disaster that hit the state for over a week earlier.

At the deputy Governor's office, the team was received by the Chief of Staff to the Deputy Governor, Hon. Sunday Falake he gave a rundown of the situation across the 9 flood affected Areas in Kogi State. He said the deputy Governor's office coordinates the entire response process and that the office gets daily updates from SEMA and other relevant agencies responding to the flood situation in Kogi State. He said the procurement of the necessary food materials and other food/relief materials has been done and ready to be dispatched to all the affected LGAs.

The KONGONET team lead, Ambassador Idris Ozovehe Muraina, requested the office to speed up her engagement and ensure effective coordination process as the findings across IDP camps visited within the state capital is already overcrowded without proper records of households and children. Also, the team observed the non-availability of water, toiletries and personnel of SEMA across the visited camps. The KONGONET team also recommend immediate set up flood coordination situation room and that it should be located at the Kogi State ministry of Environment as usual.

Observations and recommendations of the Committee

Having taken time to go round the major communities and points affected by the flood disaster and having interacted with many of the affected Local governments areas, as well as the interaction of the committee with various critical community and government stakeholders, the following observations and recommendations came forth;

1. It was observed by the team that there were thousands of houses, shops, workshops, business premises, schools, worship centres and other properties worth billions of naira submerged under the flood water.
2. It was observed that established camps are not organized across the communities to house the victims of the flood disaster, victims were only seen taking refuge at the primary schools such as St Luke Model primary School Adankolo where the vigilante groups and the school management were left alone to manage the camp as at the time of visit.

3. There were no sufficient presence of government officials and security personal to effectively take record of the camp as well as effectively manage the camps.
4. As at the time of the visit, there were no coordinated relief materials administered to the victims especially those on the IDP camps.
5. The team further observed that the traditional institutions at the communities are not effectively carried along by most stakeholders and interventionists who visit some of the communities.
6. There were no proper rescue team on the water ways on patrol to intervene in times of emergency.
7. There were no enough safety jackets available to those who sail through the flood water from one location to the other.
8. There were no government provided and managed water transport system to alleviate the suffering and risks of the people using the water ways.
9. No proper budgetary allocation in the 2022 kogi state budget for emergency management despite early warnings by the Nigeria Metrological Agency.

Recommendations

In view of the above numerous observations, the following recommendations have been put forth;

1. The government and her agencies responsible for disaster management should as a matter of priority make food items, toiletries, sleeping mats/foams, blankets and other non-food material available as a matter of urgency to only genuine victims of the disaster.
2. The state government in conjunctions with other stakeholders should set up well managed camps with basic amenities such as water, lighting system, health care outpost, free drugs and toiletries to make life more meaningful for victims.
3. Kogi state government should urgently deploy her agencies to the various camps to be able to effectively and professionally manage the camps so as to ensure that adequate record of data of the victims are kept and effectively managed.
4. The committee highly recommend the inclusion of the traditional rulers in the various affected communities to ensure that actual affected persons are reached out to in the entire disaster management.

5. Government at the federal and state levels should make available rescue team on the water ways as well as provide more safety jackets to ensure the safety of the citizens who have the only options of using the water ways as means of transportation to their homes, businesses and places of work.
6. Government should make available government owned and managed water transport system to ensure adequate management and safety of the citizens.
7. Kogi state government should as a matter of urgency make supplementary budgeted on emergency management and lay same before the legislators in the state for approval so as to be able to effectively respond to the flood disaster and post flood disaster management.
8. On the long run, the federal government must show commitment towards the dredging of lower rivers Niger and Benue to curtail the ravaging flood disaster in the country.
9. Lastly, the federal and state government should consider the construction of dams along the rivers Niger and Benue to mitigate the perennial impacts of water released from various dams during the rainy season.

The Kogi NGOs Network (KONGONET) therefore, call on all well-meaning Nigerians, philanthropists and international donor organizations to support and provide needed aides to our people, government alone can do it all, we are grateful to those who had provided support earlier such as Christian Aids and we are calling for more support.

PICTURE GALLERY



Cross section of people stranded at Ganaja road attempting to board wooden boat across to the other side of Lokoja town.



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team at Confluence Beach a state government owned property currently under water.



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team at Kogi State House of Assembly Quarters overtaken by flood.



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team at the official residence of the Deputy Speaker Rt. Hon. Rabi'u Alfa overtaken by flood.



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team at the GYB Model Secondary School in Adankolo Over taken by flood.



Landscape view of Ganaja Axis of Lokoja and the new normal of transportation system.



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team at a Peugeot Store Along Ajaokuta Road overrun by flood.



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team at Kogi State house assembly members quarters, Landscape view of the flooded estate.



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team at Adankolo IDP Camp housing over 1500 IDPs.



The leaving condition of citizens as at Adankolo IDP Camp housing over 1500 IDPs.



The leaving condition of Adankolo estate flood victims at the visit of KONGONET team



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team at the popular kpata market in Lokoja



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team visit at the office of the acting Executive Secretary (ES) of Kogi State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Kogi State Secretariate Lokoja

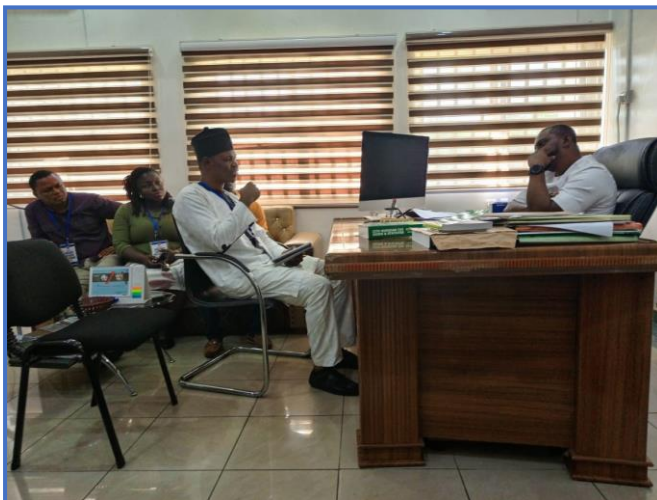




KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team visit at the ministry of Environment, received by the Hon. Commissioner.



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team visit at the ministry of health received by the permanent Secretary.



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team visit at the Office the Deputy Governor of Kogi State received by the deputy chief of staff.



KONGONET Flood Impact Assessment team visit at the ministry of Environment, Monday 3rd October, 2022.



For media inquiries please contact:

Amb. Idris Ozovehe Muraina +234 (0) 70 637 97550

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Long live the people of Kogi State. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Thank you.