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Man loses 6 of his family on 'Black Wednesday'

Ibrahim Alawi

JEDDAH – With tears rolling down their cheeks, residents of southeast Jeddah narrate stories of what they call "Black Wednesday" which has claimed 113 lives and counting. Some think their stories are much too sad to tell.



Abdullah Al-Sulami said the rain of Black Wednesday has turned out to be the curse of his life as it was the day when he lost his wife Zuhur, his daughter Sajaya, his sons Muthana and Hani, and his sisters Ayda and Mashael in the floods.

The first ten minutes of the rain were pleasant for Al-Sulami who went out for a walk. But when he returned, he found the first floor of his house totally submerged with six members of his family dead.

The flood did not give them a chance to run for safety, he said. "It broke the door and windows and swept the entire living room and kitchen as my two girls who survived told me," Al-Sulami said.

Al-Sulami's two surviving daughters, Manal and Thuraya, were able to swim in the floodwater and hold onto the ceiling fans.

"When it started to rain heavily, I returned to my house, but it was half submerged. I saw it from across the street," he said. "It was quiet except for the roaring flood and screams of my daughters Manal and Thuraya."

Nobody could get close to the two children and they eventually became too exhausted to scream. Suddenly there was silence. Al-Sulami thought they were gone, lost in the flood.

It was only in the evening when Al-Sulami and his neighbors were able to reach the house after the water level had decreased that he found the two children were still alive.

The two girls said they saw the bodies of their family floating in the floodwater and just screamed again. – Okaz/SG

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