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NATION**'I lost my life dream in a minute'**

By Muhammad Al-Deqai

JEDDAH – Residents' repeated warnings to Jeddah Mayorality of a potential danger of floods sweeping through the ill-fated riverbed of Wadi Quwz, east of Jeddah, were only received by more cheap street lighting projects, said one resident, who lost his house in the floods.

"There was nothing done about the drainage network here. They didn't listen to us," said Muhammad Al-Juhani.

"We have paid a hefty price for the city officials' mistakes," he said, hoping that they have by now realized the magnitude of the disaster caused by their inability to shoulder responsibility towards the public.

The residents of Quwz Valley, which still poses a great danger on the entire city of Jeddah, have been devastated by the loss of their homes in the floods which rushed through their valley.

Al-Juhani said he saw with his own eyes the floodwaters sweep towards his house into Wadi Quwz.

"At that point I knew that a big catastrophe would occur. I wasted no time in taking my two wives and seven children in my vehicle and drove them to a safe place."

When Al-Juhani returned a few hours later, he found that his dream home had been completely ruined by the floods. He had lived in the house for only a month when the disaster struck.

"I built this house with my blood and sweat from my pension, which is less than SR1,800, and from my earnings as a car broker. It was an effort that took many years of work. I lost my life dream in a minute." Al-Juhani still visits his destroyed house every day, takes a look at it, see some neighbors, and leaves.

Abu Yousef, one of Al-Juhani's neighbors, said he had a similar story to tell as he stared at the debris of his house, unbelieving that the pile of debris, some day, was his dream house.

He said he had to stay with relatives for more than three days after the floods destroyed his home.

Abu Yousef went to the committee in charge of evaluating damages to property, but was told he would have to bring the documents of his house to provide him with shelter. But he lost his papers in the flood. "For the first time, I saw the flood before the rain," he said. Left with a destroyed dream, Abu Yousef now puts out a candle of hope every night as he goes to sleep in the back of his pickup truck. – Okaz/SG

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