

Residents protest quarry operations after blast kills man, destroys homes in Oyo

By : Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan Date: 7 Oct 2025 Share :



Protesters

Two killed, one injured as quarry trailer causes fresh tragedy in Ibadan

Residents of the Orisunmbare community along the Lagos-Ibadan expressway in Oluyole Local Council, Oyo State, protested yesterday over the alleged killing of a man and destruction of homes, properties, and other valuables by Sequoia Mining Company Limited.

The residents said the quarry company's blasting activities had wreaked havoc on the community and claimed that a 25-year-old man, Abiodun Alarape, who worked at a nearby company, was killed by a blast penultimate Saturday.

During the protest at the company's premises, demonstrators demanded the relocation of the firm and carried placards with messages such as "No more quarrying", "Stop the killing", "We are not slaves", and "Stop killing us".

Ayo Akinyemi, Coordinator of the Orisunmbare Community Development Forum, alleged that the company's activities posed a serious environmental threat. "We are protesting here because we have a serious environmental issue with a quarry located in our community. The company blasted a week ago, and there were flying stones, which eventually killed a young man. Aside from that, they have been destroying our properties and houses," he said.

Akinyemi added that residents had reported the matter to the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) and other relevant bodies, but had yet to see concrete action.

"They are blasting seriously. Anytime they do that, it sounds like an earthquake, the ground shakes, and all our houses now have cracks. We don't want a situation where buildings will start collapsing on people," he said.

Another leader, Abiodun Akanji, condemned the company's continued operations despite the fatal incident. "My house was pulled down three times through their blasting. After the young man died, they were still working. This shows they have no sympathy," he said.

A resident, Olufadeke Akinyemi, urged authorities to shut the company down. "We are not bothered about compensation but the safety of lives. Our houses are collapsing. We keep talking and no action is taken," she said.

NESREA officials were present at the site. Assistant Chief Environmental Health Officer Mojisola Adeoye stated that the agency had issued a verbal stop-work order and was investigating the incident.

Akinola Sanusi, Administrative Officer of Sequoia Mining Company, expressed sympathy over the death, describing it as an accident. "The person who died is not from the village. We are very sorry it happened," he said. He added that previous complaints about damage were investigated and resolved by authorities.

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Meanwhile, tragedy struck again in the Idi-Ayunre area of Ibadan on Saturday when a trailer belonging to Kulum Quarry crushed three people, killing two and leaving another critically injured.

The accident, which occurred along the Ijebu-Ode Road, has sparked fresh outrage and grief across Oluyole Local Council.

Eyewitnesses said the trailer, which reportedly lost control, killed one person on the spot. Another victim died later in the hospital despite frantic medical efforts, while a third suffered severe injuries that required the amputation of a limb in a desperate bid to save her life.

The incident is the second fatal crash linked to Kulum Quarry in less than three months, following a similar accident that killed three students of Prospect High School, Aba Nla.

In response, the Executive Chairman of Oluyole Council, Asiwaju Akeem Olatunji, led senior officials to the scene to assess the situation and engage with angry residents who had barricaded the road in protest.

Addressing the crowd, Olatunji described the tragedy as “painful and entirely avoidable” and extended his condolences to the bereaved families and the wider Idi-Ayunre community.

“No one should lose their loved ones in such a cruel manner, especially when it could have been prevented. This is another avoidable tragedy. My heart goes out to the families of the victims,” he said.

The council chairman vowed that his administration would ensure justice by holding both the driver and the company accountable, while also compelling Kulum Quarry to compensate the victims’ families.

He revealed that many private companies operating in the area had failed to fulfil their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) commitments, particularly those related to safety and community welfare.

Following the earlier fatal crash involving the same company, the council had constructed speed breakers along the affected road to curb reckless driving. However, Olatunji said Saturday's tragedy showed that the company had not heeded previous warnings.

"We are now taking additional steps. More speed bumps will be installed along the Idi-Ayunre-Sabo Road, and we will ensure stricter monitoring of heavy-duty vehicles," he said.