

One dead, five trapped as rice mill collapses in Kebbi

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Rescue efforts ongoing at the collapsed rice mill in Birnin Kebbi on Tuesday evening. Photo: Animasahun Salman

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One worker has been confirmed dead, while five others were trapped on Tuesday evening after a section of a private rice mill collapsed in Birnin Kebbi, the Kebbi State capital.

Rescue operations were still ongoing at the time of filing this report, as emergency workers battled to reach the victims buried beneath metal and debris.

The Kebbi State Deputy Governor, Senator Umar Abubakar Tafida, led a government delegation to the scene for an on-the-spot assessment, assuring that all efforts were being made to rescue those still trapped.

“We are here to first assess the situation and, more importantly, to ensure that every possible effort is made to rescue those still trapped.

“The safety of workers is paramount, and the government will remain fully engaged until this operation is concluded,” Tafida said.

The state government expressed sympathy with the management and staff of NIA-AGRI, owners of the facility, describing the incident as tragic.

A project engineer at the site told the delegation that one staff member died instantly, while five others were believed to be trapped under the collapsed structure as of Tuesday night.

A joint rescue team comprising the Kebbi State Fire Service and other emergency responders has been deployed, using heavy-duty equipment to cut through the rubble in search of survivors.

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A senior emergency official said the operation was being handled with caution to avoid further casualties.

“The rescue operation is delicate, but our teams are doing everything possible to reach those trapped without causing further harm,” the official said at the scene.

The cause of the collapse has yet to be determined.

Tafida said the state government would launch a full investigation after the rescue operation to ascertain what led to the incident and prevent a recurrence.

Rice milling is a major component of Kebbi State’s agro-industrial drive, with several private facilities operating across the state and employing hundreds of workers.

The incident has raised concerns over safety standards in the sector.

The deputy governor assured that the government would support affected families and provide assistance where necessary.

“We pray for the safety of those still trapped and extend our condolences to the family of the deceased,” he said.