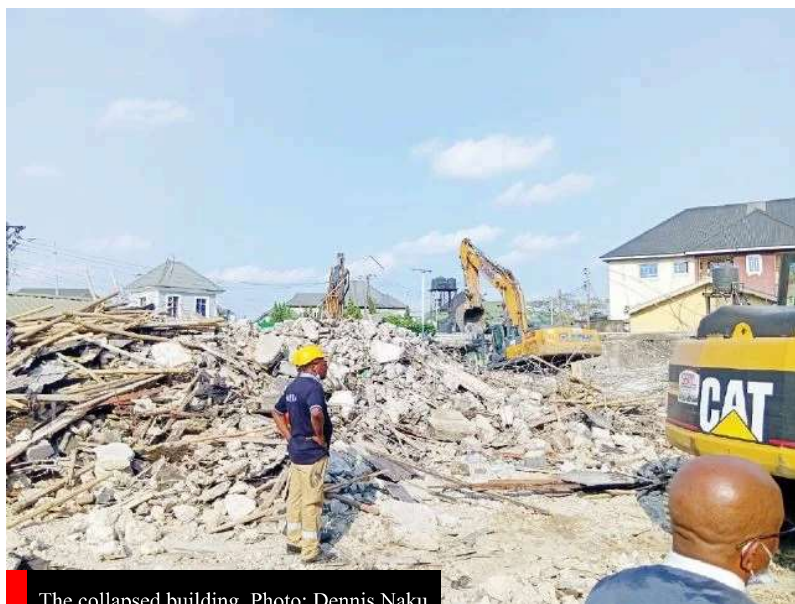


# One dead, many trapped as Rivers five-storey building crumbles

June 25, 2026 4:19 am



The collapsed building. Photo: Dennis Naku

By Dennis Naku

Kindly share this story:



Tragedy struck on Wednesday morning when a five-storey building under construction collapsed along Odili Road in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, leaving one person dead and several others trapped beneath the rubble.

As of 7:30pm, rescue operations were still ongoing, with victims, including the site engineer and a woman who sold food to construction workers, believed to be trapped in the debris.

Rescue workers said they could still hear the food vendor calling for help from beneath the rubble as efforts intensified to reach her.

The incident occurred barely three days after a three-storey building collapsed in the Iwofe area of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, although no casualties were recorded in that case.

The deceased victim was reportedly struck on the head by a falling pillar. He was pulled out of the rubble lifeless, drawing tears from residents and passers-by who witnessed the recovery of his body.

Officials of the Rivers State Emergency Medical Services rescued four victims and rushed them to the Rivers State University Teaching Hospital for treatment.

However, relatives of the deceased, said to be from northern Nigeria, reportedly resisted efforts by government officials to take the body to a mortuary, insisting they would bury him themselves.

Although the cause of the collapse had yet to be officially determined, some eyewitnesses blamed the incident on the use of substandard building materials.

To facilitate rescue operations, authorities shut down the Amadi Junction area leading to Odili Road.

An informed resident alleged that the building was originally approved as a three-storey hotel but was later expanded to five floors.

“The approval was for a three-storey hotel building. But when the owner saw that the work was progressing, he decided to add two more floors.

“I learnt the initial engineer objected to the modification and resigned. Another engineer was then brought in to continue the project. Unfortunately, this is what has happened,” the source, who requested anonymity, said.

Rescue operations continued into the evening, with state officials arranging floodlights to support nighttime efforts amid hopes that more trapped victims would be found alive.

The operation involved personnel from the Rivers State Government, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Federal Road Safety Corps, and other emergency agencies.

A survivor, Taiwo Oladimeji, a mason who said he was brought from Lagos to work at the site, told journalists that no fewer than eight workers were trapped when the structure suddenly gave way.

Fighting back tears, Oladimeji said his brother remained trapped in the rubble.

“This morning, I went outside to buy something. About eight people were working inside the building at the time. Some of them are Hausa workers.

## Related News

Rivers denies approving collapsed five-storey building

Two in custody after speeding vehicle kills Rivers woman

Court remands Lagos man for assaulting 18-year-old wife

“My brother was inside when it collapsed. Four people have been rescued alive, but others are still trapped,” he said.

Police operatives and officials of the Rivers State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, the Ministry of Health, and other agencies were seen coordinating rescue efforts at the scene.

Speaking with journalists, the acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Director of Medical Services, Dr Vincent Wachukwu, said emergency responders were mobilised immediately after news of the incident broke.

“We received information this morning that a building had collapsed in this area. As a health team, we quickly mobilised ambulances and medical personnel to support rescue efforts.

“So far, injured victims have been rescued and taken to the Rivers State University Teaching Hospital for treatment,” he said.

Wachukwu added that emergency medical services had been activated to ensure prompt treatment of victims.

“The hospital emergency team is on standby. NEMA, FRSC, NSCDC and other security agencies are all here. Everyone is working together to ensure that those still trapped are rescued,” he said.

Our correspondent observed three excavators clearing debris at the site in an effort to locate victims.

Rescue workers and anxious relatives were also seen searching through the rubble, listening for signs of life.

A resident at the scene said, “Some of the workers were brought from Lagos. One of them died after a pillar fell on his head.

“We could still hear voices from inside. More than 10 people were working there when the building collapsed, and some are still trapped.”

As night fell, floodlights were deployed to sustain the rescue mission.

The Commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development, Edward Hart, said the incident underscored the need for stronger collaboration among stakeholders in the building industry.

He warned that the state government would continue to clamp down on illegal developments and projects that violate approved building standards.

Hart disclosed that while the collapsed building had received approval from the Federal Housing Authority, it was not approved by the Rivers State urban development authorities.

He assured residents that the ministry would intensify monitoring of construction projects across the state to prevent similar tragedies.