

How baby girl, 8 others died in Lagos mall collapse



By Olasunkanmi Akoni & Florencemary Nwabueze

Tragedy struck Lagos, yesterday, as no fewer than nine persons, including a baby girl, were feared dead, while 26 others were rescued from the rubble of a three-storey mall that collapsed along Old Ojo Road, near Alakija Bus Stop on the Lagos-Badagry expressway, in Satellite Town, Ori-Ade Local Council Development Area.

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The building, which housed several businesses, including generator dealerships, a cybercafé and Point-of-Sale, POS, outlets, reportedly collapsed around 11 a.m., sending shockwaves through the community.

Eyewitnesses said residents, commuters and business operators fled for safety

before regrouping to assist in rescue efforts.

A police officer at the scene, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said about 15 people, including children and infants, were initially rescued, while several others remained trapped beneath the rubble.

Musa, an eyewitness who was passing by on a motorcycle, described the incident: “I was going to Mile 2 when I suddenly heard a loud noise behind me. I quickly moved ahead, turned back and saw that the mall had collapsed.”

Another witness, identified as Sule, said: “I had just arrived at a shop outside the building less than five minutes earlier when I heard a loud noise and saw dust everywhere. I grabbed my child and ran for safety.”

A resident who pleaded anonymity said the building had shown signs of structural weakness for years.

“My boss owned a cybercafé inside the mall. Two years ago, he moved out because the building was already showing signs that it could collapse,” the resident said.

Several residents also claimed that the Lagos State Government had previously marked the building for evacuation due to safety concerns.

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One grieving witness, Abdul-Lateef, said: “My friend is dead inside there. He was trying to run out when a block hit him. There are casualties.”

Amid the devastation, rescuers pulled a boy alive from the rubble, drawing cheers from anxious onlookers gathered at the scene.

All rescued victims and recovered bodies were taken to the Navy Town Hospital, Alakija.

Confirming the incident, the Permanent Secretary of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, LASEMA, Dr. Femi Oke-Osanyintolu, said eight bodies had been recovered while 26 persons were rescued.

“Multi-agency rescue operations are ongoing, with responders working systematically to search for and extricate anyone trapped beneath the rubble,” he said.

“As of 4:20 p.m., a total of 26 persons had been rescued, while nine fatalities, including a baby girl, had been recorded. There are reports that additional persons, including shop owners who had resumed business, may still be trapped.”

Oke-Osanyintolu urged residents to remain calm, avoid the scene and allow emergency responders unrestricted access.

Also confirming the casualty figures, the Controller-General of the Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service, Margaret Adeseye, said emergency responders from the Ijegan-Egba Fire Station were mobilised immediately after a distress call was received.

“As of 7 p.m., eight fatalities had been recorded, while 26 persons were rescued alive with varying degrees of injuries and handed over to medical personnel for treatment,” she said.

Agencies involved in the rescue operation included the Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service, Federal Fire Service, Nigeria Police Force, Nigerian Navy, Lagos Neighbourhood Safety Corps , LNSC, Nigerian Red Cross Society and other emergency responders.

Govt failure, regulatory compromise responsible for building collapse — REDAN

Chairman of the Real Estate Developers Association of Nigeria, REDAN, Lagos Chapter, Dr. Tony Kolawole, has blamed what he described as regulatory compromise, weak enforcement and government failure for the recurring cases of building collapse across the country.

Kolawole spoke against the backdrop of the collapse of a five-storey building in Rivers State on June 24 and another three-storey building in the Alakija area of Lagos on Thursday, saying the tragedies were avoidable and should no longer be dismissed as mere accidents.

According to him, innocent Nigerians are dying because building regulations are routinely compromised while those responsible are hardly held accountable.

“Buildings do not collapse by accident, they collapse because people deliberately cut corners, use substandard materials, manipulate approvals, ignore professional advice and evade statutory inspections. Every collapsed building is evidence of negligence, not fate.”

He warned that unless governments at all levels abandon what he described as a culture of reaction without accountability, the country would continue to witness avoidable disasters.

Kolawole called on the Lagos State Building Control Agency, LASBCA, and other building control agencies across the country to immediately intensify structural integrity inspections, especially in densely populated residential areas where defective buildings pose serious danger to lives and property.

He also urged state governments to ensure the criminal prosecution of developers, contractors, consultants, property owners and public officials found guilty of violating building regulations.

According to him, demolishing defective structures without prosecuting those responsible only encourages impunity.

“Demolition alone is not enough. Those responsible must face the law. Until developers and officials whose negligence leads to these disasters are prosecuted and convicted, others will continue to gamble with human lives,” he stated.