

# Minister expresses fear over collapsed Bank of Industry

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A NATIONAL tragedy is imminent unless urgent steps are taken to pull down the collapsed Bank of Industry (BOI) building, Lagos, just as the Federal Government is yet to get a contractor to demolish the structure with minimum economic losses.

Indication of looming danger emerged yesterday when Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Dr. Mimiko, said the fear of the 20-storey BOI, formerly Nigeria Industrial Development Bank (NIDB) Ltd, collapsing again has been heightened by the inability of the Federal Government to get a competent contractor to demolish the wrecked structure with minimum losses.

Dr. Mimiko stressed that a German demolition firm, CWA, which conducted a study on the collapsed building, "reported that implosion was not possible and that a piling to support a platform of 20m high to provide a seat for the start of demolition by cutting was required."

The minister stressed that before the Germans came for the demolition inspection in March 2006, Julius Berger Nigeria had submitted a proposal on bringing down the collapsed structure.

"However, it was discovered that the piling will compromise the structural integrity of the building and surrounding ones," Dr. Mimiko noted.

Chairman of BOI, Chief Olabode George, added that the bank does not have the money to pay compensation.

Faced with this difficulty, Dr. Mimiko said the government wanted to pull down the collapsed building with minimal losses, while regretting that the problem had not been solved.

While praying God that the bank building does not sink again and cause national calamity, Dr. Mimiko said government is unrelenting in finding a lasting solution to the death trap.

Towards this end, he said, a 10-man technical committee headed by Mallam Umaru Aliyu, an architect, has been set up to resolve the national challenge of the collapsed BOI building.

A man identified simply as Dogo was killed and 26 others injured when the BOI House collapsed.

The tragedy occurred barely 72 hours after the eighth floor of the building was gutted by fire. The edifice was built in 1974 by G. Carpa, an Italian construction firm.