

4 feared dead as another building collapses

LUKKEY ABAWURU and
STAN OKENWA

AT least four persons were feared killed yesterday when an uncompleted three-storey building collapsed in Ikorodu, Lagos State. Five others, including a couple and their five-year-old

baby whose identities could not be ascertained, were rescued from the wreckage

Daily Champion recalls that another building had collapsed Monday at Igboelerin in the Iba area of Lagos State, killing at least two persons.

However, in the latest incident,

a body of one of the victims as well as a man who reportedly called for help via his telephone were among those still trapped as at press time.

The survivors including a couple and their child, our correspondents gathered,

are receiving treatment at undisclosed hospital at Ikorodu. The incident occurred at about 1.45 yesterday.

When our correspondents visited the 21 Nosiru Alunwon Street, Eyita Estate, Ikorodu, scene

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Collapsed building

visited the 14 Nosiru Alunwon Street, Eyita estate, Ikorodu scene of the tragedy, frantic efforts were being made by combined team of Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, State Ambulance Services (LASAMBUS) Fire Service and police to rescue the trapped victims.

The lifeless body of Friday was recovered yesterday and one Sunday rescued alive.

There was pandemonium at the scene as friends, families and relations of victims were struggling to catch a glimpse of the incident.

But one of survivor's neighbour, Mr. Ikenna Okoye explained in an interview at the site that he would have been a victim of the incident had the landlord and Chief Medical Director of Empire Hospital, Ikorodu, Dr Onuoha accepted his proposal to pay for two-year up front tenancy fee last two weeks. He added that the entire victims of the collapsed building are from one family.

"According to him, the bread winner, Emeka runs a fashion shop along the road with two trade servants and two brothers. Now he has lost one brother and servant while himself, wife and daughter are in intensive care unit."

Ikenna revealed that Emeka and family are the first set of tenants to pack into the building which has two-room self contained on each floor of the back of the main three storey building.

However, on the executive orders of the Ikorodu local government chairman, the three storey building in front of the collapsed house was yesterday marked for demolition based on the fact that the about four-year structure has already developed observable cracks from the last floor. The demolition order of the tragedy, frantic efforts were being made by a combined team of Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, Lagos State, Ambulance Services (LASAMBUS), Fire Service and the police to rescue the trapped victims.

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There was pandemonium at the scene as friends, families and relations of victims were struggling to catch a glimpse of the incident.

One of survivors neighbour, Mr. Ikenna Okoye, explained in an interview at the site that he would have been a victim of the incident had the landlord and Chief Medical

Director of Empire Hospital, Ikorodu, accepted his proposal a fortnight ago to pay a two-year upfront rent. He added that the entire victims of the collapsed building were from one family.

"According to him, the bread winner, Emeka runs a fashion shop along the road with two apprentices and two brothers. Now he has lost one brother and a servant while he, wife and daughter are under intensive care."

Ikenna revealed that Emeka and family were the first set of tenants to move into the building which has a two-room, self contained apartment on each floor of the back of the main three-storey building.

However, on the executive orders of the Ikorodu Local Government chairman, the three-storey building in front of the collapsed house was yesterday marked for demolition based on the fact that the nearly four-year structure has already developed observable cracks from the last floor. The demolition order immediately prompted the already-jittery residents to start moving their property away from the compound as bulldozers are expected to hit the site today.

Contacted, experts from the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development said the main building would be demolished today because it has substantiated evidence of

collapse in not-too-distant time. He argued that the collapsed building "was not only hurried but was developed with substandard materials, poor cement contacts and very unacceptable quality of reinforcement."

Collapse of buildings under construction in the state has been on the increase.

Only recently, a new structure being put up by a new-generation bank caved in Ogudu in the Ojota axis, instantly killing five.

It would be recalled that the Lagos State government had earlier in the month directed the immediate evacuation of residents of about eight blocks of flats within the Sogunro Low Cost Housing Estate in the Ogba area.

The Deputy Governor, Mrs. Sarah Sosan, while handing down the order, warned residents to leave the building which had displayed signs of collapse, cracks and to always report same to the government in the overall public interest.

An environmental engineer, Dr. Daniel Agu, observed in a telephone interview that the rainy season always saturated the state's solid earth with weak foundation and defects.

Only this March, Lagos State has scaled the highest cases of building collapse in the last five years.

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given as Messrs Angel Gabriel Enifoghale, an alleged student of Federal University of Technology (FUTO), Chimauche Ohiri and Michael Okwukwu had trailed the woman to an unnamed Catholic Church and abducted her.

Okiro noted that upon arrest and interrogation, the suspects confessed to committing the crime, adding that police detectives recovered a Mercedes Benz 230 V-Booth, a Toyota Altima saloon car and a Jetta car from the hoodlums.

The suspects who also corroborated the IGP said they were convinced they had embarked on a "useless escapade".

They, however, said their

Abductors

accomplices Emeka and Steve, who took active party in the crime are still at large and in possession of the woman's Jeep when they stole while they kidnapped her.

In a similar development, five suspected kidnappers who abducted Master Iwunze, son of Hon. Simon Iwunze and collected N2 million ransom were also paraded.

Th police boss gave their names as Nnamdi Uzoma Ihenetu, who claimed to be a student of Oko Polytechnic, Oko, Obinna Amah, Patrick Anayo, Oparaku Uchechukwu, who also claimed he is a student of Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri and Tanko Ibrahim. They