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Countryman**Collapsed building:Death toll now 12**

STAN OKENWA

The death toll in last Saturday's building collapse in Iddo, Lagos State rose to 12 yesterday as one of the victims reportedly died at the Lagos Island General Hospital.

Medical personnel at the hospital, who pleaded for anonymity, told newsmen that all the victims brought to the hospital were in stable condition, except one of them, who died while receiving treatment.

The agents of death were let loose last Saturday, as a two-storey building at the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) premises collapsed, claiming 11 lives while over 30 persons have so far been rescued alive, even as some are said to be trapped in the debris.

The tragedy struck, following the heavy downpour in the night which shook the foundation of the old building, leading to its collapse.

Our correspondent who visited the site yesterday said the area had been cordoned by the police while the clearing of the rubbles continues.

It was observed that the traditional means of sealing-off sites of collapsed buildings by the state government was not applied in this scenario as the staff of the NRC resisted the state government on the grounds that the place belongs to the federal government.

Lagos State Commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development, Mr. Francisco Abosede, who briefed newsmen on the development, decried the ugly development, saying "What the Ministry is doing is to ensure the safety of residents on the sites and also implement building control within the confines of the state.

According to Abosede, many of the buildings within the premises were built over 40 years ago, saying they have lost strength and are now death traps.

Investigation at the site reveals that the collapsed building was formally a warehouse, which was later converted to a 2-storey building without due approvals. The reconstruction, according to the investigation was due to the scarce of accommodation. It was also gathered that the ground floor, which before the conversion was a warehouse has remained so since then.

An expert in constructions and principal consultant of Build-Well Maintenance Services, Lagos, Engineer Afolabi Adedeji traced the cause of the collapse to serious shockwaves that cannot be contained at the joints between the original pillars for the warehouse on construction and the reinforcements meant to carry the added 2-storey building.

He however warned developers in the country to desist from illegal and unprofessional conversion of old buildings, so as to reduce the incessant cases of building collapse in Nigeria.



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