



*Rescue operation at the collapsed building site in Lagos yesterday.*

## ***Collapsed building: 50 dead, 100 still trapped***

**R**escue operations continued on Wednesday at the site of the collapsed building at Ebute Metta, Lagos with no fewer than 50 people confirmed dead, while three others were rescued.

More than 100 people were still trapped in the debris as at yesterday afternoon.

**From Olumide Bajulaiye & Samson Ojo, Lagos**

Residents claimed yesterday they petitioned the state government with concerns over the safety of the building months before its collapse.

Rescue workers, including officials of the Red Cross, Lagos State Ambulance

Services, the police and other volunteers were still struggling to save the lives of the trapped victims yesterday afternoon.

Rescue work was being hampered by crowds of spectators, Governor Tinubu said.

Governor Tinubu who expressed dissatisfaction

with the slow pace of rescue operation pleaded with the crowd to give the rescue workers chance to carry out their duties.

Governor Tinubu said: "The developer should be prosecuted and his other property in the area confiscated".

*Cont. on Pg. 4*

# **Collapsed building** *Cont. from pg. 1*

Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development over the hasty construction of the building.

A source said that the state government was still investigating the petition.

*The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* reports that two children and a man were rescued at about 9 a.m. by local rescue operators and sympathisers who thronged the scene.

They were immediately taken to the hospital for treatment.

*NAN* reports that the rescue team used sledge hammers, shovels, axes and pay loaders to carry out their operations amid wailing.

Loud jubilations greeted the successful rescue operations of the volunteers, while security officials, health workers, Red Cross and council staff watch helplessly.

Scores of people, according to eyewitnesses, were still trapped under the debris.

Mr. Ani Baba, an official of the Lagos State Ambulance Services (LASAMBUS) confirmed to *NAN* that more than 50 corpses recovered from the collapsed building had been deposited at the mortuaries in Gbagada, Ikeja and Lagos Island general hospitals.

Commenting on the incident, Mr. Olubode Ojajuni, Lagos state police spokesman said about 42 persons were rescued on Tuesday night.

"Immediately the building collapsed, the divisional police officer in the area mobilised security agents to assist in the rescue exercise," Ojajuni said.

At the Kuba clinic, Ebute Metta, where some of the

survivors were taken for treatment, a staff nurse, Mrs. Racheal Ogungbemi, told *NAN* that about 80 victims had been given free first aid treatment.

Ogungbemi said that while they were treating the victims, some hoodlums cashed in on the situation to steal some undisclosed amount of money from the clinic and in the process, a computer was damaged.

A lucky survivor, 28-year-old Miss Celestina Agbe, described her escape as an act of God, saying: "I was inside the house when I heard a loud shout and I came out to find out the cause and that was all I could remember".

Another victim, Mr. Kehinde Owodein, who owns a store in the building, explained that he had already closed for the day and went back to pick his cassette when suddenly the building came down.

The chairman, Lagos State Red Cross, Mr. Timothy Oladele, disclosed that an accountant with the Red Cross was among several persons still trapped, adding that his wife and two children had already been rescued.

The general manager, Lagos State Physical Planning and Development Authority, Alhaji Sulaimon Yusuf, described the disaster as "grave", adding that residents and neighbours had no cause to be suspicious of the state of the building because it was built only five years ago.

"The collapse started from the ground. The building practically sank into the ground," he said.

On March 22 2006, the 18-storey Bank of Industry building on Broad street,

Lagos collapsed, killing some people and injuring 24 others.

The top eight floors of the structure that had been gutted by fire a few days earlier were the worst hit during the incident, which occurred as the national census entered its second day.

In Abuja last month, a building containing two churches collapsed. No one was injured after church goers jumped out of windows to safety.

## **Atiku da produce FI**

**V**ice President Atiku Abubakar yesterday challenged the government to make public the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) records on the Vice President Atiku Abubakar.

Media reports yesterday indicated that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) had drafted a team to investigate the financial records of all prospective office holders. The search party is said to be combing the whole of Europe and the United States for fraudulent deals.

But the Media Consultant to the Vice President, Garba Shehu said that it is "attempt to smear the image of the Vice President. Why are they after him when he has not even made a formal declaration? He only made his intentions known and they are witch hunting him."

He noted further that the EFCC should go after others "if they are sincere in their