

## HOW COLLAPSED 3-STOREY BUILDING KILLED 3 KIDS IN KADUNA



Category: News Published on Saturday, 13 July 2013 06:00 Written by Ismail Mudashir & Christiana Alabi, Kaduna Hits: 209

After eight hours rescue operations, three children were yesterday confirmed dead in the three storey building that collapsed along Hadejia road near the famous Abubakar Gumi central market in the heart of Kaduna metropolis, even as a three weeks old baby boy survived unhurt.

Weekly Trust gathered that the baby which was trapped in the 3rd floor was rescued around 9pm, eight hours after the building started collapsing. Rescue officials said the baby was found sleeping on a mattress but that soon after he was rescued he woke up and started crying.

Witnesses said the baby did not sustain any injury and that his mattress was intact. The baby's mother was among the first set of people that were rescued around 3pm and was rushed to a nearby hospital.

The building which was built in the 80s started collapsing around 1.05pm on Thursday and officials of the Kaduna state emergency management agency that raced to the scene could not rescue the trapped persons. They only went there with fire service vehicle.

Weekly Trust reports that the rescue operation which started around 4.30pm on Thursday lasted till about 2.30am on Friday.

In all, nine people were rescued while three children of the same parent lost their lives. They were among the six children that were declared missing hours after the building started collapsing.

An official of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Mr. Manzo Ezekiel confirmed the casualties, saying that two out of the three children that lost their lives were found dead in the second floor of the building.

"My officials on ground told me that two children were found dead in the building and that one other died in the hospital. Two other persons sustained injuries and I was told that they are responding to treatment," he said in a telephone interview.

Our correspondents' reports that at the end of the rescue operation, six people were found alive while three were found dead and that the three deceased were buried in accordance to Islamic rite yesterday before juaam'at prayers. The three children who died were the seniors of the three others who survived in the collapse building.

According to an elder in the area, the collapsed building was initially built in 1968 as a mud house but that it was later demolished and rebuilt with blocks in the 80s.

Habeb Shittu, one of the sons of the owner of the house said, "There is nothing I can say than to thank God because what happened on Thursday was not easy at all. Nine people were rescued from the collapse building out of which three died and six survived."

He told our correspondent that out of the nine people rescued, three of them are tenants while six are his elder brother's children and that three of the six children including two boys and one girl died. The deceased include Suleiman 15, Maryam 13, and Kadir 11 while the survivors of the same parent include Taiye, Kehinde and Idowu.

"As human beings, we feel so sad but again as believers, we must thank God in every situation because death is inevitable. I believe this is destined to happen because we all left home in the morning without noticing any crack or any sign that the building was going to collapse," he said.

Attempt to reach the parent of the deceased failed as their whereabouts was not disclosed as at the time of filing this report.

In an interview, the acting general manager of KAPWA, Engineer Gbadamosi Tanimu Abubakar who was seen at

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the scene of the incident, said, "We were informed about the incident around 4pm on Thursday by Governor Ramalan Yero who asked us to mobilise our men and equipment to the site and start evacuating the debris immediately. We started around 4.30pm and we completed the work around 2am. We rescued seven people, four alive and three dead. The four that survived have been taken to 44 Army Reference Hospital for medical attention while the three that died have been buried."

According to him, in order to forestall this kind of occurrence, the commissioner, Ministry of Works and Transport have set up a committee including staff of Ministry of Works, KAPWA, KASUPDA and SEMA to search for all dilapidated and weak structures in the state with a view to demolishing them before they cause havoc on the people.

On what could be responsible for the collapse, he said that the materials used for the building is very weak and that the reinforcement is not adequate. "The collapse was caused by structure failure," he added saying that they are also going to demolish the remaining part of the building that did not collapse to avoid further havoc.

Meanwhile, in spite of the security agents who barricaded the area, mammoth crowd have continued to throng the scene of the collapsed building with different side talks and comments.

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