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Collapsed building: Death toll rises to eight

By Abdullateef Aliyu and Eugene Agha, Lagos | Publish Date: Jul 27 2017 2:00AM

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After about 24 hours of rescue operation at the site of a collapsed building on the Lagos Island, eight dead bodies had been recovered, while 15 tenants were rescued alive.

The building, a four-storey structure located at No. 3/5, Massey Street, had collapsed on Tuesday at about 2:43p.m with many occupants trapped.

Emergency officials comprising the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Lagos State Emergency Management Agency

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(LASEMA) Response Unit, Lagos State Ambulance Service (LASAMBUS), Lagos State Fire Service, Civil Defence, among others, were involved in the rescue operations, which ended yesterday afternoon.



It was learnt that the LASEMA officials, led by its General Manager, Mr. Adesina Tiamiyu, were at the site of the collapsed building until midnight of Tuesday.

Fourteen persons were initially rescued alive, while two bodies were recovered by 10:00p.m on Tuesday, but the death toll rose yesterday as evacuation continued.

At the end of the recovery operations, a total of eight dead bodies were recovered at the site, while another victim, an 11-year-old boy, was also rescued. It was gathered that the boy's legs had to be amputated for him to be rescued.

Heavy duty equipment was deployed to scour through the rubbles during the evacuation exercise.

Preliminary investigations by emergency officials at the scene blamed the defective structure of the building on the collapse. Besides, the building was said to be 40-year-old earlier built as a one-storey structure before additional storeys were added at "irregular intervals," according to a source. Also, another source blamed the location of a telecommunication mast on the collapse.

One of the residents of the area, Mr Yusuf Alimi, blamed the collapse on greed by the landlords.

"They knew it was an old building and yet allowed one of the communication networks to erect a mast on top of it. Even if they had collected N10 million or more from the company, what have they gained now?" he asked.

An official, who pleaded anonymity, said, "Investigations also point to the siting of the mast, which residents said were erected with heavy concrete, while the mast itself was also heavy. A heavy generating set was also installed at the site of the building and residents said anytime the generator was put on, buildings around the area would be vibrating."



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Meanwhile, the Council for the Regulations of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) and the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA) have commenced investigation to determine the cause of the collapse.


The south-west spokesman of NEMA, Mr. Ibrahim Farinloye, who confirmed the casualty figure to City News suggested that an integrity test should be conducted on similar buildings in the area as some of them appeared weak.

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