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Lintel collapse kills Niger student, raises concern on school building

By Ahmed Tahir Ajobe (Minna) & Adamu Umar | Publish Date: Jul 26 2018 3:54AM

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Gauraka town, located off Abuja-Kaduna highway in Tafa Local Government Area of Niger State, was thrown into mourning recently when the lintel of an ageing classroom block collapsed on

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a Senior Secondary School (SSS) II student of Government Day Secondary School, Ibrahim Abdullahi.

The 17-year-old was entering the class and had to pass through the junior section where the ill-fated building was located when the lintel gave way, crashing on him.

According to some students who spoke to Daily Trust on condition of anonymity, a rod penetrated the deceased's skull.

He was said to have died while being rushed to Sabon Wuse General Hospital. The medical personnel on duty at the hospital confirmed him dead on arrival.

Daily Trust learnt that when the news of his death filtered into the school, the students went on rampage blocking all exits into the town over what they described as negligence by the school authority and government.

The protesting students were said to have broken into the principal's office, the staff rooms as well as the corporers' station.

According to the bereaved father, Malam Mukhtari Muhammad, the deceased was reluctant to go to school that fateful day. "I had to scold him when I noticed that it was well past 8 am and he was still at home. I had to be sure that he had left for school before I also set out for the farm," the father explained.

But Muhammad had barely settled down to work in the farm when news of what happened to his son got to him.

"About two hours later, one of my neighbours called me on phone while I was in my farm asking whether I was aware of what happened to my son. He went ahead to broke the bad news to me that Ibrahim was dead following the collapse of part of a building that fell on him at school.

"I don't know how I got to my house, where I met a crowd of sympathizers and students of the school," he explained.



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It was gathered that all efforts to bring the corpse home for burial was resisted by the rampaging youths until around 3pm after the intervention of the Police Area Commander from Suleja, alongside the Divisional Police Officers and their men from Madalla and Sabo-Wuse respectively who brought the situation under control.

When asked on the incident, the bereaved father, said it was natural for him to be sad but that as a Muslim, he believes “only Allah decides the cause of our departure from this world.”

He said the state Ministry of Education’s delegation had visited to condole with him and his family over the loss, while the school principal and a team of her staff have also visited them countless times.

Daily Trust learnt that exams were suspended and the school closed for three days following the accident.

According to some students, the accident was just waiting to happen as the main pillar holding the lintel broke a long time ago, leaving part of it dangling.

“There was a lintel attached to one of the classrooms which also got broken following the collapsed of a pillar that held it some months back.

“The lintel which was hanging all the while suddenly broke loose from the building and collapsed on him,” one of the students explained.

On why they embarked on protest, a senior student of the school said they had expressed concern over the poor state of the structure to the authority but nothing was done and it has eventually claimed one of them.

“We have expressed our displeasure and also registered our grievances to the authority for urgent action,” he explained.

The protest seems to have elicited some result as some minor rehabilitation work was being done on the building when Daily Trust visited the school on Monday.

The principal, Hajiya Larai, confirmed the incident but declined to respond to the allegations made by the students.

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However, some of the elders of the community appealed to the state government not to limit the ongoing work to the building alone as most of the structures in the school are old and dilapidated. Also, the existing structures, according to them, were inadequate for the growing population of students.

Daily Trust learnt that the school was initially meant for primary pupils before the secondary section was started.

The district head of Zuma, Alhaji Adamu Tanko, said there was need for expansion and regular maintenance of existing facilities.

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