

The Metro Section

Five die as another building collapses

• Fire outbreak occurs on Victoria Island, Lagos

By Tope Templer Olaiya and Abdulwaheed Usamah

TRAGEDY struck yesterday as a two-storey building under construction at 29 Ishaja Road, Surulere area of Lagos, collapsed killing five people and injuring others. Several people are also reported trapped under the rubble.

A young girl identified as a bread hawker and some Hausa men who were working there as labourers were among the casualties.

A resident of the area who spoke to *The Guardian* under anonymity said the building went down around 10am after the early morning downpour and three persons were immediately rescued by chance and rushed to Lagos University Teaching Hospital, LUTH, Idi Araba.

"I saw the collapse coming on the building. I knew the building would collapse about eleven months ago," said one Mr Tajudeen Bello, another resident at Ishaja. Another eyewitness, Mr. Adewale Shobowale, said: "The kind of materials used for the construction was substandard. And the reason for this was that when we were rescuing the victims, with a single tap on the slabs, it breaks into rubbles."

Three others have been rescued according to National Emergency Management Agency officials and they have been rushed to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH).

Prior to the fatal collapse of the building, the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LABSCA) said it had warned the builders to desist and marked the structure unsafe.

The agency said the warning followed its finding upon visits and inspection of the workmen, papers and materials used at the site.

The General Manager of LABSCA, Mrs. Abimbola Animashaun Odunayo told reporters that the collapsed structure was one of those marked as unstable in the area.

She said the agency warned the builders to desist about two months ago when her crew visited the area to inspect structures and orientate the residents about the vulnerability of their buildings. "We sealed it and asked them to stop building because



The collapsed building yesterday...Inset is the building gutted by fire

of the inferior materials they used and the personnel constructing it. However, afterwards, they broke our warning seal and what they did was to build on weekends, believing our agency would not find out on those days," Mrs. Abimbola said.

Established in Lagos state last year, the LABSCA, Mrs. Abimbola said, has marked several buildings throughout the State with warnings that the owners should carry out certain tests and vacate premises until reconstructed.

"The duration we give them to vacate and rebuild depends upon the seriousness of the structures' weakness," she said. She warned that other buildings throughout the area have also been marked, and more collapses are impending.

Search and rescue and rescue efforts by men of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA),

Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA), fire service and other emergency rescue teams are still drilling for more victims who may still be

Meanwhile, another 12-storey building at Ajose Adeogun on Victoria Island was gutted by fire but was put off in several efforts by men of the Lagos State Fire Service.

According to the Lagos State Fire Service Director, Mr Abdulrasak Fadipe who briefed *The Guardian* about the incident, the fire started about 8am. The agency got emergency calls and arrived at the scene few minutes after the fire started.

He said that only the first to the third floors of the building were affected, as the agency's quick response in arresting the fire was able to save others. He said investigation would be carried out to ascertain the cause of the fire outbreak.

'I operated an account with fake name, documents'

• Serial fraudster, 22, arrested by SFU in Lagos, confesses

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