

Wike orders arrest of owner, contractor of collapsed building

By Kelvin Ebiri, Port
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[FILE PHOTO] Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike



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Rivers State governor, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, has ordered the arrest of the owner of the collapsed seven-storey building, the contractor and state government officials who gave approval for the building to be constructed.

Wike, who was out of the country when the incident happened on Friday evening, also directed the state Attorney-General to set up a Commission of Inquiry to ascertain the remote and immediate causes of the building collapse located at Woji road, New GRA in Port Harcourt.

Some of the rescued persons have raised the alarm over lack of medical treatment at the hospitals where they were taken to. With several persons still trapped in the rubble, Wike, during his visit to the scene yesterday declared that all officials of the Rivers State government who defaulted in their duties will be sanctioned.

“I feel so pained that we have to face this kind of calamity at this time. I commiserate with the families that have lost their loved ones who came to seek their daily bread. Government will do all it can to give them the necessary support. I have directed the Attorney General of Rivers to ensure that all legal steps are taken to do what is right within the ambit of the law,” he said.



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The governor explained that the state government would take steps to acquire the property. He warned the state couldn't allow illegality because a look at master plan of the area clearly indicates that a seven-storey building ought not to be allowed there.

The governor lauded construction companies, security agencies and non-governmental organisations for working with the state government to carry out the rescue operation at the site of the building collapse.

As at yesterday, 38 persons have been rescued, while seven persons have been confirmed dead. One of the survivors, Nonso Festus, lamented that the private hospital where he was admitted, stopped administering treatment to him due to lack of payment.

Another survivor, who identified himself as Daniel, said he has had to leave the hospital too because they stopped treating him as he could not make advance payment.

The head of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) rescue team at the scene, Yakubu Suleiman, said seven persons have been confirmed dead. Scores of rescue workers are still at the scene searching through the rubble for possible survivors.

The Commissioner for Information and Communications, Emma Okah, told newsmen that the search has been intensive. He confirmed that the state government has identified the alleged owner of the collapsed property as one Joseph Allagoa.



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