

National

# Five die, 26 rescued in Onitsha market building collapse

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*Scene of the collapsed building in Onitsha, Anambra State, yesterday.*

Five people were reportedly killed while 26 others were rescued following a building collapse which occurred on Monday night, at Odu-Igbo market, Ochanja, Anambra State.

At the scene, yesterday, the state governor, Chukwuma Soludo, wept, even as he said a rescue operation was still ongoing. Addressing a crowd, Soludo expressed sadness, describing the collapse as “tragic, and an incident that was not supposed to happen.”

The governor announced that 26 individuals had been rescued and hospitalised; five casualties were recorded, while rescue efforts were ongoing to locate persons who may still be trapped under the rubbles.

He restated his commitment to tackling illegal constructions and impunity in the state, noting that the collapsed building was erected by a private developer without government approval.

He said the contractor, at his own cost, will put down the illegal buildings he erected. “They are all going to come down. My government did not approve of this building. We will redesign this area and build it properly. All buildings constructed without proper approval will be brought down, henceforth, including structures currently under construction at other markets.

“A comprehensive inventory of buildings in Anambra markets and public places will be conducted. All markets will undergo integrity tests to identify and remove potentially unsafe structures, and individuals found responsible for illegal construction will face legal consequences,” the governor said.

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He emphasised the importance of prioritising public safety, vowing to eradicate “the impunity and lawlessness” that surround unauthorised construction.

Soludo added that the hospital bills of those receiving treatment would be undertaken by his government, even as he condoled with the families of those who lost their lives.

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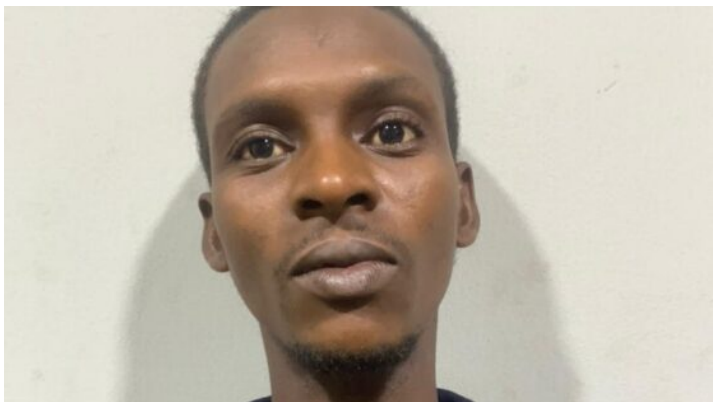
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