

Metro

Eleven dead, seven injured in tragic Ibadan building collapse

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Scene of the collapse

- Rivers govt probes collapse of three-storey building in Obio/Akpor
- Fire razes six shops, destroys N10m goods

Thousands of residents in the Jegeda Olunloyo area of Ona Ara Local Council, Oyo State, were plunged into mourning yesterday after a tragic building collapse claimed 11 lives and left seven others injured.

The one-storey building, described as 'distressed,' collapsed around 2:00 a.m., leaving four of the injured in critical condition at the General Hospital.

The collapse occurred suddenly following a brief storm, which a witness described as "like a flash." Moments later, the building caved in, trapping many victims inside and filling the air with their desperate cries for help.

The wails were particularly haunting in the darkness, as a power outage compounded the challenges of locating those trapped, especially infants.

Firefighters and other government rescue agencies faced severe delays due to the poor road conditions leading into the community. This hindered their ability to reach the scene promptly as rescue workers struggled to navigate the deteriorated roadways in the early hours of the morning.

Among those trapped in the building were the landlord, 80-year-old Lamidi Babare, several of his children and grandchildren, and multiple psychiatric patients whom Babare had been treating on-site.

His wife, Idiatu Babare, who had been fortunate to avoid the disaster by not staying in the building that night, shared her ordeal at MercyLand Hospital, where some survivors were admitted.

"Five of Baba's children and grandchildren died, along with some mentally ill patients my husband was attending to," she told The Guardian.

Her husband, who survived the collapse by a twist of fate, had left the main building to use the toilet at approximately 1:30 a.m.

"He said after cleaning up, he heard a loud noise, and the next thing he knew, he was being rushed to the hospital," she recounted, adding, "Had he stayed inside, he too would have perished."

Pointing to one of the survivors lying in the intensive care unit, she said, "That is Latifu, one of the psychiatric patients my husband was treating."

In response to the tragedy, the Commissioner for Lands and Urban Development, Williams Akin Funmilayo, and Ona Ara Council Chairman, Temitope Kolapo, visited the site to extend their condolences.

Funmilayo acknowledged that this building, along with many others in the vicinity, had been structurally compromised, describing them as 'distressed'.

He and Kolapo vowed that Governor Seyi Makinde's administration would take decisive action by conducting integrity tests on buildings across the state to prevent further tragedies.

Yemi Akinyinka, General Manager of the state Fire Services, confirmed that his team received a distress call from residents at about 2:00 a.m.

"By the time we arrived, 10 people had already died," he said, noting that three bodies were recovered by locals before the firefighters' arrival, with four more bodies later pulled from the rubble by his team. "Our men are still working," he added.

At MercyLand Hospital, Matron Taiwo Temitola stated that eight survivors were initially admitted, but four of the most critical cases were later transferred to the General Hospital.

Tragedy struck again in the same area just days earlier, as a fire razed six shops on Tuesday, destroying goods and valuables worth over N10 million. Shop owners sifted through the ashes, attempting to salvage anything left.

Bode Akindipe, a shop owner, attributed the blaze to a power surge when IBEDC restored electricity on Monday night. Firefighters were once again hindered by the poor condition of the access road, delaying their arrival.

In a related incident, the government in Rivers State has commenced an investigation into a separate building collapse.

A three-storey structure under construction at Iriebe in Obio/Akpor Local Council collapsed in the early hours of Tuesday, October 29, 2024. Fortunately, no lives were lost in the incident.

Commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development Evans Bipi disclosed this during a site inspection, accompanied by officials from the Greater Port-Harcourt City Development Authority and other ministry directors.

A statement issued by Emeka Idika Kalu, Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to the Commissioner, confirmed that the site has been temporarily sealed pending a detailed investigation.

Bipi attributed the Rivers collapse to suspected structural defects, negligence, cutting corners, and the use of substandard materials by the contractor. He

stressed that the collapsed building lacked the requisite government approval, a vital measure to ensure structural safety.

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