

Two more bodies recovered as Ojodu building collapse death toll rises to eight

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 **Date:** 22 Apr 2025 **Share :**     



Rescuers at the incident scene yesterday. PHOTO: VICTOR GBONEGUN

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Building owner arrested, agency blames failure to report distressed structure

The death toll from the collapsed building at Ojodu-Berger, Lagos, has risen to eight following the recovery of two more bodies from the rubble yesterday.

Six persons had earlier been confirmed dead while 20 others were rescued after the three-storey uncompleted structure, located at No. 10 Oremeta Street, gave way at about 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 19, 2025.

The discovery of the additional bodies heightened emotions at the scene, with sympathisers, many of whom had besieged the site since the incident occurred, overcome with grief. The area has since turned into a pilgrimage point of sorts for residents and onlookers.

Construction work was said to have recently resumed on the top floor of the building before it caved in. A resident told The Guardian that while the ground floor served as a bar, eatery, and parking space, the upper floors were not occupied.

Officials from the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA) and the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) remained at the scene yesterday, using excavators to dig through the rubble and load debris onto stationed trucks as part of the final clearance operations.

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It was learnt that the Chief Executive Officer of Equal Rights Restaurant, Mariam Omotanwa Salua, begun renovation of the building, including the addition of new pillars, allegedly without informing the appropriate regulatory agencies.

Sources at the site disclosed that the two recovered bodies were staff members of Equal Rights Restaurant, which operated on the ground floor and was a popular relaxation hub for locals.

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Survivors of the incident, mostly adult females, are currently receiving medical treatment at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH).

The Lagos State government has arrested Mr Sani Salau, the owner of the ill-fated building, who is expected to face legal action.

A visibly distressed resident at the scene recounted that a 22-year-old restaurant worker, Ayomide Adebola, was among those feared trapped.

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A disc jockey at the restaurant, who narrowly escaped, said he noticed a pillar shifting and blocks falling, prompting him to raise an alarm. "I rushed upstairs to warn others, but some didn't take me seriously. I left with a few people just before the building collapsed," he said.

Chairman of the All Ojodu Communities Development Association, Alhaji Abdulganiu Sani, criticised LASBCA for failing in its oversight duties, arguing that the building should have been marked for demolition.

In response, LASBCA spokesperson, Ademuyiwa Adu, noted that residents were aware of the poor state of the building but failed to report it to the agency or the Lagos State Material Testing Laboratory (LSMTL), which is located nearby.

Meanwhile, scavengers attempted to invade the site to cart away reinforcement bars from the wreckage, but were repelled by police officers and LASBCA officials. Only a designated truck was permitted to remove the iron bars from the scene.

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