

## Again, Collapsed Structure Claims Two In Lagos



• A victim trapped in the rubble

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Tragedy again struck at the weekend in Lagos leaving two people dead and two others seriously wounded when a fence collapsed.

The incident happened at about 9pm on Friday at Galilee area in Ishaga part of the state.

It was gathered that one of them, Babafemi, died instantly due to the force of the fall while the other, Ibrahim Yusuf, 30 years of age, passed on at the Lagos Teaching Hospital, Idraba, at about 10am on Saturday. Babafemi, who just got married, was said to be making a phone call to his wife in Ibadan when the incident happened.

When \*\*\*\*Daily Independent\*\*\*\* visited the area, youths in the area set bonfire in protest of the death of victims, which they described as avoidable if only the owner of the fence popularly known as 'lawyer' had heeded various calls by the community to fix up the dilapidating fence.

It was learnt that only on that fateful Friday morning, some landlords had gone to 'lawyer' to prevail on him to find solution to the deplorable state of the fence but only to be chased away.

According to a woman

who craved anonymity, the fence was over 30 years.

"The fence is even older than Ibrahim who died. The lawyer was one of the first people to come to this area and ever since then the fence has remained the same way," she stated.

"This man is very wicked, some landlords went to him last Friday to do something about the fence but he chased them away with guns. Later, he asked one of them to help him fix the fence. Now see what he has caused," Adijat Yusuf, a sister to Ibrahim, lamented amidst tears.

Ibrahim popularly known as chairman, according to his father, Muhammed Yusuf, might have died of internal bleeding.

"We heard the sound and we all rushed out. On getting there, we saw that the fence had fallen on them. My son, Abdulahi, who was trying to rescue his brother Ibrahim, also had a share of wounds but thank God he is alive. We then rushed him to a nearby hospital but they demanded for money, which I did not have. Eventually, they treated him before they referred us to Ikeja General Hospital and because there was no space and room, they treated him outside. Thereafter, a doctor gave us an accompanying note to

Idi-Araba where he died this morning," he lamented.

He also confirmed that the owner of the fence had been very reluctant on the issue despite efforts of the Landlords Association to get him carry out the necessary repair works on it.

He also recalled how the fence almost killed four children barely two months ago when a section of the fence caved in but all entreaties to the said lawyer described as 'very wicked' by all the people who spoke to our correspondent failed. He also allegedly chased the people away at that time.

One of the survivors, Dolnatus Eze, who is critically laying ill at a nearby hospital with fractures, recalled how it happened: "I got prepared going to the night vigil and my last son was insisting on going with me but I told him to wait and come with his mother. He was crying and I ignored him and I left. I even discussed with a man that is selling telephone accessories before I said good night. Two minutes later, I got to that point and I saw some people who were in front of me and I felt they were wasting time so I moved ahead, immediately I heard 'gboom' before we knew it we were all under the

concrete blocks. I saw myself lifted up and was on the tarred road, then my legs straight into the gutter and I became unconscious but after some time I regained my consciousness. I tried to remove the debris from my body. Then I noticed that all the people we were walking together were still under the concrete and I tried to lift myself up. That was when I knew that my legs were gone before people started coming and I shouted help, help, before someone heard and told the others that someone was inside the gutter," he narrated in his hospital bed on Saturday.

"The telephone man was crying when he saw me before my wife came and I was brought here", he added.

On the owner of the fence, he responded thus: "I don't even know him. That man is supposed to go round to see those involved because he is the cause of all these problems. He acquired a lot of land there but he never left any gap. He just built the fence right on the road. If the fence had been two or three metres away from the road, it would not have been so devastating and killing people like this. These are young men that just died like that," he lamented.

His wife, who thanked God for sparing the life of

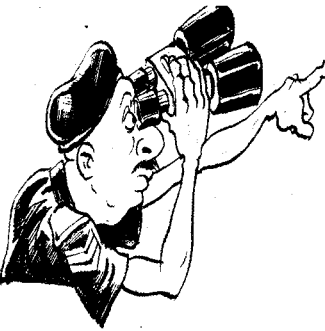
her husband, recalled how devastating the incident had on her, lamenting that the cause of the unfortunate incident did not even show any remorsefulness on the matter.

"When I saw my husband, I was confused. He kept saying he is dying and I told him that 'you will not die; the God that kept you till this time is the same and He will save you. If you want to die, then, I will die before you so that you will know that children have nobody to look after them'. It was at this point he kept quiet," she recalled, adding:

"He has not even come here. He is a very wicked man. I heard he had called the police for protection. Since I moved into the area, I suspected that he must be a wicked person because each time a child plays close to the front of his house, people will quickly warn such a child to move away immediately."

Though it was gathered that the lawyer has been apprehended by the police at Eliot Bus Stop, residents maintained that he would be released soon.

They want him to be brought to book as they called on the Lagos State Government to ensure that the matter is not swept under the carpet. The Ministry of Physical Planning must carry out assessment on what transpired.



### Metropolitan Police

#### Police Extortion Along Ozumba Mbadiwe Road

Walking along Ozumba Mbadiwe Street at any time of the day is now a dangerous adventure. This is not because armed robbers have taken over the place but because armed policemen working in cahoots with officials of the Kick Against Indiscipline (KAI) have turned it into a haven for extortion. Their operational area is the stretch of the road after Civic Centre to Adeyemo Alakija underbridge. What they do is that in their pretext that they are monitoring the environment, they arrest anyone who either knowingly or unknowingly treads on the grass planted on the roadside. Why it is accepted that ignorance is not an excuse in law, these law enforcement agents have taken the interpretation of the law to a ridiculous and mischievous limit. Apart from the fact that that portion of the road has no warning instruction (which they might have removed to aid their mischief), the law enforcement agents are in the habit of hiding under the bridge at Adeyemo Alakija junction where they peep to catch unwary 'offenders'. Wicked enough, anyone caught will have to cough out N10, 000 or else he would be bundled into a waiting Black Maria parked under the bridge and transfer to Alausa where the fellow might end up being an inmate of Ikoyi Prison. Those who post them there should tutor them on the need to serve with dignity because what is going on there is indeed service with indignity and extortion contrary to what the uniform is meant for.

If you are distressed by any unwholesome development around you, call The Metropolitan Police on 08054103433 (no flashing, please) or send your observations to [csi@independentngonline.com](mailto:csi@independentngonline.com) or [woljob@yahoo.com](mailto:woljob@yahoo.com)