

# 2 Killed, Others Injured In Akwa Ibom Demolition

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Two persons have been killed, while five others sustained varying degrees of injury in the ongoing demolition and reclamation of the Uyo-Ewet community in the Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

The area is currently under threat of gully erosion.

A resident, Akaniyene Udobong, said the tragedy struck when a two-storey Dominic Utuk Street building collapsed as artisans tried to chop off the concrete blocks on the top floor.

"The two persons that died were on the last floor of the building, trying to break the concrete blocks with a 'Monday Hammer', but suddenly it caved in from the top and the people were buried under the rubble.

"By the time the emergency rescue

team dug them out from under the piled concrete, they were already dead, and their remains evacuated. Others sustained injuries, with one very critical, as the weight of the crash seriously battered his two legs," he recalled.

"I escaped death by the whiskers because I was thrown far away from the site, but my hammer was buried underneath the concrete pile," another injured victim said.

However, hundreds of stranded residents have decried the sudden demolition of buildings without prior notice, lamenting that "all our properties have been buried in the rubbles of the destroyed buildings."

"I was called from my workplace to pack my properties; what I could only salvage was my television set; the rest went down the drains," another resident, who identified himself as Uduak Ette,

recalled.

"We all voted for this government, which owes us a duty to protect our welfare. We should have been given notice, but the government just came in and pulled down our shelters without notification and plans for compensation.

"The most annoying of all is that the commissioner for lands, Capt. Iniobong Ekong (rtd) is said to have promised to send estate valuers to come later to assess the value of each structure; the question is, do they value the cost of building after demolition?" he asked.

Governor Eno had ordered the immediate relocation of residents of the affected areas to avert the looming humanitarian crisis posed by gully erosion. This would enable reclamation and beautification work to commence following the setting aside of the place as one of the major tourism sites in the capital.