

Building collapse: How girl, 9, died on birthday eve

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A victim of Saturday's building collapse in Agege, Lagos State, would have turned nine yesterday, if not for the tragedy.

Sherifat Olalere was one of the two victims of the collapsed building at 9, Abeje Street, Markaz, Agege.

She was said to be drinking water in the kitchen when it collapsed on her.

The other victim, Toyin Ogundimu, 35, died when the kitchen wall fell on her. Ogundimu lived in the house with her husband and children.

Sherifat's father, *The Nation* learnt, had told her and her siblings to stay in the mosque opposite their house till he returned home.

The late Sherifat went home to take water when the building fell.

A resident, who identified herself as Funmi, said Sherifat's father told his children to stay in the mosque all day.

"I learnt that Sherifat's father told all his children not to stay in the house. He told them to stay in the mosque which is opposite the house; maybe he already sensed danger. Sherifat and her siblings were all eating in the mosque when she went into the house to drink water; It is unfortunate that that was the last time we would all see her," she said.

A woman, who was washing clothes, ran out when she saw the wall coming down.

The building was sealed off yesterday; all the occupants have moved out. Many gathered in groups discussing what happened in hushed tones. A tenant, Mustapha Salaudeen, was injured.

One of the occupants, Tayo Adekunle, said it was unfortunate that the collapse led to the death of her neighbours.

"I cooked at the kitchen on Friday; I also had my bath in the bathroom on Saturday morning before going to work. I was surprised to receive a call while I was at work on Saturday morning that my house has collapsed. I am yet to get over the shock."

She said she never noticed anything wrong with the building since she moved into it about a year ago.

Adekunle said: "The only thing I know is that before I left the house that Saturday morning, I saw a bricklayer who was meant to fix some things in the building. I did not know what the bricklayer was billed to do, but I was told that it was while the bricklayer was still trying to gather all he would need to fix the house that it collapsed.

“It is so painful that Sherifat is dead because she was meant to celebrate her nine years birthday today (yesterday). She stays here with her parents and four other siblings. Everybody living here has left.”

A neighbour, Muhammed Aminu, said he was among those who took Ogundimu’s body for burial.

“When I heard that this building has collapsed and led to Ogundimu’s death, I was in a sad state because Ogundimu, her husband and children attend the same mosque with me (Tijani Mosque). Being a Muslim, we had to bury her immediately in a burial ground in Agege here.”

He described the late Ogundimu as a nice person, adding that the entire family is good.

“She and her husband would always be at the mosque at every praying time with their children,” Aminu said.