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Ikoyi building collapse: victims' families besiege IDH

FAMILY members of those declared missing in the collapsed 21-storey building in Ikoyi, Lagos were in hospitals to identify their loved ones yesterday.

With the recovery of one more body from the site by rescue workers, the number of bodies recovered so far stood at 43 as at last night.

Lagos State Information and Strategy Commissioner Gbenga Omotoso, who confirmed the figure, said 49 persons have reported that their loved ones were missing.

According to him, agitated family members were at the Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH), Yaba, Lagos Mainland to in search of their missing loved ones.

In a statement, Omotoso said: "One more body has been recovered from the site

•Death toll rises

By Precious Igbonwelundu and Tajudeen Adebajo

of the collapsed 21-storey building in Ikoyi, Lagos. The body, which was recovered on Saturday, has brought the number of bodies retrieved from the rubble to 43.

"There are 15 survivors and 49 persons have reported that their loved ones are missing. At the Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH), Yaba, the identification of bodies continues."

But, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) put the death toll at 44, saying that two more bodies were recovered on Saturday night.

NEMA's official Ibrahim Farinloye confirmed the recovery; no additional body was brought out yesterday.

Farinloye, who said people were still believed to be trapped in the rubble, said rescuers were hopeful to achieve ground zero by today.

He said the Federal Government yesterday deployed the Nigerian Army Corps of Engineers to assist in the rescue operation.

The Lagos Commissioner for Special Duties, Bamgbose Martins, who had been on the site since Monday, said the work was almost over. The commissioner said he was in touch with the federal agency.

The Federal Government directed the Army Engineers to deploy equipment to the site and assist in removing the rubble. But, the Commissioner informed the team that resources on ground were enough to complete the job.

Farinloye said: "Further to the deployment of Disaster Response Unit (DRU) on the first day of the incident, the Federal Government directed the Army Corps of Engineers to assist in the operation. The Head of Army Corps of Engineers, Brig.-Gen. Omali, on arrival was received by NEMA that introduced the team to Lagos State Commissioners for Special Duties and Physical Planning.

"The Corps Engineers' team explained that a directive from Abuja said the corps should deploy equipment to assist in carting away the rubble. The Commissioner for Special Duties, in response informed the team that the work is almost over and that what was on ground was enough to complete the work left."