

Collapsed building: Red Cross confirms 25 dead

RESCUE operations at the four-storey building which collapsed last Tuesday have been concluded with the Nigerian Red Cross Society announcing that about 75 occupants survived and 25 persons dead.

Lagos State Ambulance Services had said last Wednesday that about 50 corpses were taken to various mortuaries in the state.

Addressing a news conference in Lagos, chairman of Red Cross in Lagos State, Mr. Theophilus Oladele, formally announced the conclusion of the exercise.

He advised survivors to register their names with the Red Cross to enable them to get assistance from the organisation.

He said the registration of survivors and the dead had started both at the site of the collapsed build-

ing and at the Red Cross office at Adekunle Street, Yaba.

Meanwhile, residents in the area claimed that many more were still trapped in the debris and called on the Lagos State Government to ensure that the corpses were evacuated to avert an outbreak of epidemic.

Some of the resident lamented that the stench from the bodies of those still in the debris was already affecting their health.

"It is unfortunate that we don't appreciate human lives in Nigeria. If it were in civilised countries, the rescue team would have been working 24 hours to completely evacuate the corpses," Mr. Solomon Gbinigie, said.

He criticised the attitude

of the state government over the disaster, stressing: "If the lives of those trapped were considered important, the rescue operations would have been more successful."

Tunji Sanni also frowned at the visits to the site by government officials whom, he noted, had only used the occasion to make political statements:

Occupants of the three other buildings constructed by the owner of the collapsed building, have started moving out of their apartments located at 42, 49 and 77 on Ibadan street, Ebute Meta.

They, however, want the government to assist in relocating them. Taiwo Adeola, an occupant, said: "My husband has just paid for five years rent and we have spent only one year."