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15 die as building collapses in Onitsha

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03.Jun.2014 | DISQUS_COMMENTS |  Suzy Oruya-Onitsha

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About 15 people were, on Monday, crushed by a four-storey building under construction at St. Christopher Anglican Church, by Old Cemetery Road, Odo-akpu, Onitsha.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that the four-storey building, which was at the stage of its plastering with about 15 workers inside, collapsed at about 12.50 p.m, killing the workers inside.

According an eyewitness, the building trapped the 15 labourers who were taking part in some finishing work, including plastering, in the building. Though the Anglican Church authorities said only four people were trapped in the building, late rescue efforts marred rescue mission of some of the victims.

One of our sources, Favor Okafor, said the building caved in due to apparent use of substandard building materials and poor construction by the contractor in charged.

However, there was a conflicting report over the safety of the contractor handling the project, as some eyewitnesses said the contractor left the ill fated building a few minutes before it collapsed, while others said he was still inside the building when it collapsed.

One of the teachers at St Christopher Primary School, who pleaded anonymity, said before the building collapsed, primary school pupils and their nursery counterparts were inside the collapsed building playing during recess, adding that the building came crashing a few minutes the bell signalling end of the recess rang.

"This place has been where our children run into to play each time there was break day, as usual, these children were inside the building playing and once it was 12.30 p.m, we rang a bell to call them back to their classes and shortly after that, we heard a loud noise with dust flaring over the entire compound. We looked with astonishment," she said.

Another eyewitness, who identified herself as Ngozi, said over 15 persons were working at various sections of the building before the incident, saying that those plastering the building were four, including one person that was supplying them cement and sand while those working at the ceiling of the building were up to three.

"Apart from the masons who were four in number, there were also other people working, including carpenters and those doing PVC in the building. So the casualty figure is more than four. the church told us. I was sitting here when the incident happened. That man whose hand you saw from the rubbles was a man serving the masons. He came down from the building to the ground floor to carry a bag of cement when the building collapsed and he was crushed while others were at various locations in the collapsed building."

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