

Four dead, over 50 workers trapped as 21-storey building collapses in Lagos - Sanwo-Olu orders probe

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NO fewer than four persons have so far been brought out dead from the rubble of the 21-storey building which collapsed on Monday on Gerard Road, Ikoyi, Lagos State.

South-West Zonal Co-ordinator of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Mr Ibrahim Farinloye, disclosed this on Monday.

The high-rise building under construction, collapsed around 2.00 p.m. according to eyewitnesses.

The building, strictly a residential facility, was planned to have serviced flats in the three towers for residents to experience a stress-free lifestyle, complete with a hotel

flair and 360 degree view of Lagos State.

NEMA team and that of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA), army, the police, fire fighters and other agencies were on ground trying to rescue trapped workers.

The owner of the building, who is a popular estate developer in Ikoyi, was reported to be among those trapped inside the building.

Survivors confirmed that over 50 workers, including the site manager and friends on inspection, were in the building when the incident occurred.

Lagos State deputy governor, Dr Obafemi Hamzat and other state functionaries, including the Commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development, Dr Idris Salako; Commissioner

for Special Duty, Mr Bamgbose Martins; Special Adviser, Urban Development, Ganiyu Adele Ayuba; Special Adviser, GIS and Physical Planning, Dr Olajide Babatunde; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, as well as General Manager, LASEMA, Dr Femi Oke-Osanyintolu, arrived at scene promptly to muster help for those trapped in the building.

As of the time of filing this report, seven people had been retrieved from the rubble out of which were three survivors, while many were still trapped.

One of the survivors, who identified himself simply as John, said there were more than 40 workers in the building when it caved in.

He said the site engineer,

who was also trapped, was having a meeting with all the construction workers when the incident happened.

Another survivor, Samuel, a bricklayer, while being treated inside the LASEMA emergency ambulance, said he was at the top floor of the building.

One of the construction workers, who identified himself simply as Paul, who claimed to have escaped the disaster by a whisker, said more than 40 workers, comprising engineer, bricklayers, tilers, electricians and others were in the building when it collapsed.

Paul said he moved out of the building to buy sachet water from a nearby vendor when the building caved in.

He said there were cracks on the building's columns, suggesting that something

was wrong.

The security man on the site said he just came out of the building not up to 30 minutes before the incident happened.

Speaking with journalists, the state Commissioner of Police in Lagos, H.O. Odumosu, said it was too early to ascertain the number of those that died and workers trapped.

"What we are doing now is rescue operation," he said.

A press statement later released and signed by the Deputy Director, Public Affairs, Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, Mukaila Sanusi, said with the combined efforts of the Lagos Rescue Unit (LRU), Lagos State Fire Service and LAS-AMBUS, not less than three victims of the collapsed

building were rescued alive, while rescue operations continued.

Speaking at the scene of the incident, Dr Hamzat noted that it was important to cordon off the area to facilitate efforts of professionals and limit casualty.

Meanwhile, Lagos State governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has ordered investigation into the incident, with an assurance that its report will be made public in due course.

Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr Gbenga Omotoso, made this known in a statement made available to newsmen.

"Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has ordered an investigation into the incident. A report of the investigations will be made public in due course," he said.

Two die in early Monday