



PHOTOS 1 AND 2: Lagos State deputy governor, Dr Obafemi Hamzat, with survivors of Ikoyi building collapse at Lagos Island General Hospital, on Tuesday.
PHOTO 3: Relatives of victims protesting over delay in rescue operation at the scene of the incident on Tuesday. Photos: Sylvester Okoruwa.

21-storey Ikoyi building collapse

Death toll rises to 19, nine brought out alive

- Sanwo-Olu suspends GM of Building Control Agency, sets up probe panel, Lagos to foot bill of injured persons
- We must get to bottom of this ghastly occurrence — Tinubu
- FG mobilises rescue operations for victims
- Bricklayers' association asks for inclusion in probe panel
- Everything about the building spelt doom — Bode George
- Developer's whereabouts still unknown

Ikoyi building collapse: Death toll rises to 19, nine rescued alive

-Sanwo-Olu orders suspension of LASBCA GM, to set up probe panel

Bola Badmus, Dayo Adeyemi, Olalekan Olabulo, Kehinde Akintola and Subair Muhammed | Lagos

Nine persons have been brought out alive while 19 others were brought out dead from the ruin of the collapsed 21-storey building on Gerrard Road, Ikoyi, Lagos.

As of 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday, the survivors were taken to the hospital, while the casualties were taken to the mortuary.

This is just as Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu ordered the indefinite suspension of the General Manager of the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA), Mr Gbolahan Oki, with immediate effect, while he indicated the readiness of the government to set up panel probe the collapsed building.

Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr Gbenga Omotoso, made the disclosure in a statement made available to newsmen, saying that members of the panel would be drawn from the Nigeria Institute of Architects (NIA), Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP), Nigeria Society of Engineers (NSE) and other professional bodies.

According to the commissioner, the panel will independently investigate the remote and immediate causes of the incident and make recommendations on how to prevent future occurrence, but quickly pointed out that the investigation was not going to be part of the internal probe already being conducted by the government.

He, however, said a help desk would be set up at the site for people seeking information about their relations who may have been involved in the incident, as-

suring that the media would be notified of "information whenever the need arises to avoid any sensational reporting of the unfortunate incident."

The deputy governor, Dr Obafemi Hamzat, who visited the site of the incident and the hospital where some of the rescued victims are being treated, promised that the state government would foot the medical bills of those affected.

He said some casualties of the collapsed building who were brought in to the hospital dead had been deposited at the morgue.

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Dr Olusegun Ogboye, who accompanied Hamzat on the visit, assured the victims of quality and optimal health care service at the facility.

Relatives, sympathisers protest slow pace of rescue operations

What could have degenerated into a major crisis was averted on Tuesday as relatives and sympathisers of victims trapped in the building staged a protest over what they described as 'Snail pace movement' of rescue operations at the site.

Safe for prompt intervention of the army on guard, there would have been stampede at the site as the protesters and other sympathisers threatened to force themselves into the building to commence rescue operation.

The move was hinged on the fact that the approved rescue team on site abandoned the operation for a while and went on break while many of the victims were still trapped in the rubble.

"Only four people have

been rescued since morning. We are begging you, please allow our boys to join in the rescue operation. As you can see, the operation had stopped since on the pretense that the rescue team was on break, while we have our brothers and loved ones trapped in the rubble. Delay in rescue operations like this is dangerous. They should allow us to move in to help to rescue our loved ones," one of the protesters said.

Another woman, Wunmi, claimed that her two brothers were still in the rubble, appealing to the government to expedite action on the rescue operation.

FG mobilises rescue operations for victims

Authorities of the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development on Tuesday directed the mobilisation of immediate emergency response towards rescue operations at the site.

The minister, Sadiya Umar Farouq, who issued the directive in Abuja, expressed shock at the incident.

"This is tragic. I sympathise with the Lagos State government and families of people still trapped inside the rubble. We have mobilised immediate rescue operations through the NEMA team from the Lagos Territorial Office to team up with the state SEMA.

"NEMA has also facilitated mobilisation of response involving heavy duty equipment for rescue operations and security for crowd control," she said.

Developer's whereabouts still unknown

Members of the family of the developer of the collapsed building, Femi

Osibona, were as of Tuesday evening still uncertain about his whereabouts.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that the family members, including his wife, arrived at the scene of the incident on Monday with expectations of Osibona being rescued.

A close source to the family, who pleaded anonymity while speaking with **Nigerian Tribune**, said "As of now (Tuesday evening) nobody knows what has happened to him. The wife and some of his family members were there yesterday with the hope that he would be rescued. The wife fainted when she saw the enormity of the damage and the loss of lives. She had to be taken away from the scene."

Gbajabiamila calls for measures to forestall recurrence

Speaker, House of Representatives, Honourable Femi Gbajabiamila, expressed sympathy over the building collapse.

Gbajabiamila said it was unfortunate that the building collapse happened at a time the Lagos State government was doing everything possible to ensure the safety of residents.

He sent his condolences to the families of the victims and called for adequate measures to forestall future recurrence.

We must get to bottom of this ghastly occurrence — Tinubu

Pained by the tragedy, former Lagos State governor and national leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Tinubu, backed the state government on the order for the probe of all that led to the collapse of the building.

According to him, "It is ob-

vious and plain to us all that something went terribly wrong. If indeed intentional or reckless wrongdoing has been committed, severe and appropriate sanctions should find those who have been found to have shirked their fundamental responsibilities. The departed, their grieving families and the people of Lagos deserve no less and should perhaps demand even more."

This was contained in a statement on Tuesday by his media office in Abuja.

The former Lagos governor said in the statement: "Once more and all too often, we have suffered the loss of lives for no defensible reason. This tragedy should never have occurred.

"No one should suffer what these people suffered. Nor should families have to hear such news and bear such a burden like this. As we pray that the souls of the deceased now rest in peace, human compassion requires us to do more. We must reach out to their families with both prayer and practical support and assistance during this terrible moment.

"I commend the Lagos State government for I know it will see to their immediate medical needs and provide whatever other assistance is required for them to survive the episode and return to a semblance of normalcy.

"Some tragedies are unavoidable, but most are not. We must get to the bottom of this ghastly occurrence. As much as we are in collective pain and grief, we must also be clear and focused. Let us use this tragedy to serve as a strong warning and deterrent to end any malpractices and misconduct that might in any way contribute to such an incident."

Bricklayers' association calls for inclusion in probe panel

Lagos State chapter of the Bricklayers Association of Nigeria (BAN) has called for inclusion of its members in the independent panel to be set up by the state government.

Chairman of the association, Oyebamiji Taye Dauda, made the request while speaking with newsmen at the scene of the incident, saying his members are ready to assist the government to unravel the misery behind the incident.

He implored building contractors to always use indigenous artisans who understand soil component of different locations in the country, in order to avert disaster.

Everything about the building spelt doom—Olabode George

While sympathising with those affected by the collapse, former deputy national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Olabode George, described the incident as a symbol of a systemic state failure, even as he declared that everything about the building spelt doom.

George, in a release made available to newsmen, further described the incident as a reflection of greed, the arrogance of power and sheer lawlessness.

"Some tragedies apparently take dangerous shortcuts to evade the law with the obvious connivance of those who are supposed to regulate their activities. This is one building disaster too many. This is also a moral to the electorate to chose wisely at the polls and make sure that those who are elected effectively represent their interests," he said.