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## One dies as roof crashes on pupils, teacher

MARCH 12, 2015 BY SAMSON FOLARIN ■ 8 COMMENTS

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**The old building; the new block; Fibian**

| credits: Samson Folarin

Tragedy struck in Ilara community, in the Ogijo area of Ogun State after the roof of a school building crashed on three pupils and a teacher of the school.

PUNCH Metro learnt that while a 10-year-old Primary five pupil, Fibian Lawal, died on the spot, the other victims were taken to some hospitals in the area and were said to be in critical conditions.

Our correspondent gathered that the incident happened on Monday at the Local Government Primary School Ajeregún, while the teacher, identified simply as Ms Onanuga, was taking the pupils in a lesson

shortly after school hours.

The five-block building was said to have been built around 1955 when the school was established.

It was also said the traditional ruler of the community and some other top government functionaries attended the school whose building had become dilapidated.

However, PUNCH Metro, during a visit to the school on Wednesday, observed a new block of classrooms beside it, which was said to have been shut upon completion in 2014, because it had not been inaugurated by the government.

It was learnt that parents of the pupils contributed money for the new building, with some supports from the government.

Our correspondent saw sandals, slippers and books scattered on the school premises, which was deserted.

It was observed that the old building, which had lost its window frames and doors, was hit by a storm which blew off the roof.

A pupil of the school and classmate of late Fibian, Adijat Ohize, explained that the roof crashed on the pupils and the teacher.

She said, "We had finished school but we were all waiting for lesson when it began to rain. The other teachers left the school and their pupils, but our aunty did not leave.

"The rain was blowing into the classroom and our aunty said we should all run to a private school beside our school.

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"I ran and got there, but as Fibian stepped out of the class, her shoes got stuck in the mud on the ground. She started struggling to get out."

Fibian's younger brother, Okiki, 7, who also sustained injuries in the hand, said he was under a shade when he saw the late pupil struggling with the mud.

He said, "When the teacher asked us to go to the private school because of the rain, I first ran under a mango tree. I saw my sister struggling and I went to help her, but the roof fell on her. My hand was injured. I started shouting her name, but she did not answer me."

It was learnt that the teacher had also stepped outside and asked other pupils still in the class to join her when they all became trapped.

The food seller of the school, Mrs. Idiatsu Shonuga, said she had briefly left her shade under the mango tree for her house due to low patronage, when she learnt about the incident.

She said she ran back and saw the teacher in a pool of blood.

"She kept saying 'my neck, my neck'. A pupil's leg was broken and another was seriously injured. They were all rushed to different hospitals.

"The girl that died was crushed under the roof. She had become limp when she was brought out and efforts to revive her were abortive," she added.

Shonuga said the tragedy could have been prevented if the community development association had responded on time to series of letters from the school asking for help to upgrade the building.

The victim's mother, Olushola Lawal, said she wished she had died in place of her daughter, saying Fibian was the hope of the family.

She said she had given her and Okiki N1,200 on the day of the incident as the family's contribution for a new teacher employed by the school.

She said, "It was her younger brother, Okiki, that cried home and said Kemi (Fibian) had died after the roof fell on her. I couldn't believe it and people kept deceiving me that she was in the hospital.

"She was a good writer and could draw anything perfectly. She would just ask you to sit and she would draw you. She had a note for drawing.

"She always said she would take care of me when she grew older. I wish I had died in her place."

Fibian's elder brother, Oluwaseun, criticised the government's attitude towards the community.

He wondered why the pupils were not relocated to the new building, but allowed to stay in a weak structure "until a life was lost, and that happened to be my sister."

**PUNCH Metro** learnt the family buried Fibian the same day she died.

The Ogun State Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, John Odubela, said the new building had been opened.

He said, "The new building was recently completed and there is a procedure to be followed when a building is completed. The contractor will have to file notice, among other things. As we speak now, they have opened the new one for the pupils to use.

"Government officials from the local government area and the State Universal Basic Education Board have visited the family; they were at the girl's burial.

"The head teacher of the school did not inform us on time."

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