

Seven feared killed in Anambra students' hostel collapse

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No fewer than seven persons were feared dead when a three-storey building collapsed at Nwagu village near the Federal Polytechnic, Oko, Anambra State, on Sunday night.

The victims, who were mostly masons, our correspondent gathered, used the ground floor of the building as a temporary abode.

The authorities of the polytechnic, however, could not confirm the number of casualties as of 6pm on Monday.

The Public Relations Officer of the institution, Mr. Obinna Onuchukwu, said the building located at the village adjacent to school, belonged to a private estate developer.

According to him, students of the polytechnic would have rented the building on its completion.

Onuchukwu also noted that students occupying adjacent buildings to the collapsed one had been evacuated from the area.

He added, "There is no record of collapsed structure in the polytechnic. That shows that this one isn't ours. Our Rector, Prof. Godwin Onu, has visited the scene and immediately ordered the evacuation of students residing within the axis of the collapsed building."

Meanwhile, Governor Willie Obiano, has said that the contractor and owner of the collapsed building will face prosecution.

Obiano, who visited the polytechnic for an on-the-spot assessment of the situation, on Monday, described the incident as sad.

Promising to institute a panel to probe the incident, the governor said the state already had an

agency that would test the materials used for the construction of the building.

The governor, who sympathised with the students whose hostels had been shut because of the incident, said their safety was very important to the government.

He said, "The safety of students and every resident remain a major concern to my government, hence we will not hesitate to pull down these structures, if they fail the structural resistance test."

Obiano ordered the immediate investigation into the cause of the collapse which occurred on Sunday evening after a torrential rainfall.

Onu, who was at the scene, explained that the project was being carried out by a private developer.

Onu commended Obiano for his visit to the scene, saying that it was a clear demonstration of his commitment towards the welfare of the citizens of the state.

Rescue workers with the aid of heavy duty equipment, were still at the site as of 4.30 pm on Monday evacuating the debris in search of trapped persons.

Among the rescue workers are personnel of the National Emergency Management Agency, the state counterpart, SEMA, the Federal Road Safety Corps and the Police.

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