

# Lagos begins demolition of burnt Balogun Market building

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The Balogun Market building Photo: Olukayode Jaiyeola

## Deji Lambo

The Lagos State Government has commenced the demolition of the five-storey building that was razed at the Balogun Market on the Lagos Island on Tuesday.

The demolition began after Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu had visited the scene to commiserate with traders, who lost goods worth millions of naira to the inferno, which raged for about 23 hours.

According to the governor, the incident has brought to the fore the need for a total regeneration of the Lagos Island to prevent occurrences that can endanger the lives of the people.

According to him, the government will hold meetings with the owners of abandoned high-rise buildings in the area to fashion out better uses for such properties.

Sanwo-Olu said the government would conduct integrity test on all buildings in the Central Business District of the Lagos Island and revisit the master plan for the regeneration of the area.

Sanwo-Olu stated, “This fire incident presents discussion for a complete regeneration of the Lagos Island. Here, we have a lot of buildings as old as a century. Now is the time to look into the master plan for a complete regeneration of the entire area. All families must support our move to start the regeneration.

“We also have abandoned high-rise buildings on the island and we have done an audit of all these buildings. We need to have conversation with the owners on how we can put the abandoned properties to better use.

“There are a lot of traders, who wish to take their wares off the road and occupy these abandoned buildings. We need to talk to the owners and reach an agreement with them on a scheme that will make traders use the abandoned properties.

“I have summoned an emergency meeting with all local government chairmen. We cannot condone the reckless approach in which shops are allocated to people in a manner that is not coordinated. When problems arise, they come back to the state government. We will not fold our arms and wait for disasters like this to be repeated.”

The General Manager, Lagos Building Control Agency, Abiola Kosegbe, said the building suffered partial collapse, adding that the demolition had to be undertaken to avert disaster.

Kosegbe stated, “We had to do the needful; the fire is still raging and it is difficult for our officials to go too close. The inferno prevented us from doing all the necessary things.

“A part of the burning building has partially collapsed; everywhere in the building is still hot, so LASBCA, in conjunction with the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency had to go into the building, systematically bringing it down so that it will not cause other problems.”

The General Manager, LASEMA, Oluwafemi Oke-Osanyintolu, said, “We are pulling it down for reconstruction and we will also subject the surrounding buildings to a structural test. The policeman, who was rescued from the rubble of the collapsed portion of the building, has died.”

The acting Head, Lagos State Fire Service, Margaret Adeseye, said the fire raged for 23 hours, adding that it started on the second floor, where the generators were kept.

“The building in the Balogun Market suffered a partial collapse on Tuesday around 9pm during the course of extinguishing the fire. The challenge that we had was that the area had narrow roads and the human population affected accessibility to the building. We finally extinguished the fire before the governor came around 10am on Wednesday,” she stated.

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