

## Mosque collapse: JNl, CAN seek probe, death toll rises to 12

**FRIDAY OLOKOR and GODWIN ISENYO**

The death toll from the collapse of the 150-year-old Zaria Central Mosque, which led to the death of no fewer than eight worshippers on Friday, has risen to 12, Sunday PUNCH reports.

At least four worshippers were earlier confirmed killed and seven others sustained injury as a section of the mosque collapsed on Friday during prayer session.

The incident, it was learnt, occurred at about 4pm while the worshippers were praying.

However, on Saturday, a survivor who worshipped at the same mosque, Mallam Isa Bello, told one of our correspondents that apart from the four worshippers earlier confirmed death, "another four died later that same Friday while another four died today (Saturday), bringing the number of those killed in the mosque collapse to 12."

"So, the total number of those killed during the collapse mosque incident is 12," Bello said.

Meanwhile, the Christian Association of Nigeria has extended its condolences to the Muslim Ummah in Zaria and the entire nation following the death and injuries sustained after the collapse of a section of the Central Mosque during the prayer session on Friday.

The President of CAN, Archbishop Daniel Okoh, in a statement issued on Saturday in Abuja, called on religious leaders, both Christian and Muslim, to use the incident as an opportunity to deepen interfaith dialogue by showing understanding.

He said, "It is with shock that we received the news of the untimely demise of at least 10 worshippers, and we offer our sincere prayers and condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones in this unfortunate incident.

"We also extend our thoughts and prayers to the 25 individuals who sustained injuries, and we pray for their quick and complete recovery. The Zaria Central Mosque holds significant historical and religious value, having stood as an important place of worship for over 150 years.

"We recognise the deep attachment and emotional connection that the Muslim community has with this sacred place, and we share in their grief and loss.

"We urge the government and all relevant stakeholders to ensure a thorough investigation into the causes of this incident, with the aim of preventing such accidents in the future and ensuring the safety of worshippers in all places of worship across the country."

Also, the Jamaatul Nasir Islam led by the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, has expressed sadness over the collapsed mosque which led to the death of 12 worshippers.

The organisation in a statement by its Secretary-General, Prof. Abubakar Aliyu, in Kaduna on Saturday, expressed grief over the incident.

The JNl also called on authorities concern to conduct a thorough investigation to determine the causes of the traffic incident.

The statement partly read, "The Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNl), extends its heartfelt condolences to the Zazzau Emirate, the families of the deceased, and the entire Muslim Ummah following the devastating incident that occurred during a prayer session at the palace mosque in the ancient city of Zaria.

"In this time of grief, the Jama'atu Nasril Islam calls upon the authorities to conduct a thorough investigation to determine the causes of this tragic incident. Safety measures should be reviewed and implemented where necessary to prevent similar accidents from happening in the future."