

I lost five relatives, nine patients to building collapse – Oyo native doctor

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A landlord, Pa Abdullamid Alabi, narrowly escaped death when his house collapsed in Jegede community, Ibadan, Oyo State.

But his wife, four grandchildren, and nine psychiatric patients lost their lives in the incident which occurred on Thursday.

The tragedy was attributed to a thunderstorm that forcefully ripped through the windows of the bungalow after a 30-minute rainfall.

Alabi, who spoke to Sunday PUNCH amid tears during a visit to Mercyland Hospital where he was being treated, said he had no premonition that danger lurked.

“The incident occurred at night. There was no crack in any part of the building. I still cannot tell what led to it, but God Almighty knows it all,” he added.

Almost all family members had retired for the night, except Alabi, who had stepped out to use the convenience around 12:10 am.

The survivor, who is also a native psychiatric doctor, said he was still in the toilet when the building collapsed.

He said, “As of that time, every member of my family had gone to bed; that is the last thing I can remember. I later found myself in this hospital. I survived through the grace of God.

“I was using the building as a clinic for the rehabilitation of psychiatric patients. They were living with us in the house. Nine of my patients died in the incident. They were undergoing psychiatric rehabilitation and had almost fully recovered before the incident happened.

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“A guardian of one of the deceased psychiatric patients willingly allowed one of them to live with me to regain full consciousness. I did not chain them; they moved freely around my house and lived peacefully with my family members.

“My first wife was also among the deceased. She was about 70 years old, and I am over 80. I am devastated. I am appealing to well-meaning Nigerians for help. I have nowhere to go from here. I am homeless.”

The victim also appreciated the intervention of all rescuers who he said played critical roles in pulling survivors out of the rubble.

The younger sister of the landlord, Jelilatu Olapade, said the building did not have any structural defects before it collapsed.

The 63-year-old noted that the children who died were fast asleep when the incident happened.

She said, “The children who died in the tragic incident were already fast asleep on the ground floor at the time the incident occurred. So, they could not escape and were covered by the wreckage of the collapsed building.

“The family members who narrowly escaped being buried in the debris were all upstairs. Even this one (pointing at another younger female survivor at the ward) and her husband were pulled out of the rubble.

“My daughter is a survivor. She is in another ward where she is receiving treatment for injuries sustained in the incident. If she had not quickly evacuated her newborn and another male kid from the rubble through God’s grace, they would have been compressed to death by now.”