3 feared dead in Anambra market building collapse

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From Aloysius Attah, Onitsha

Three persons reportedly died at the weekend when a building under construction collapsed at Ochanja Market, Onitsha, Anambra State.

A witness said the building caved in as a result of the erection of some structures on the existing weak building.

A market leader, who described the incident as a sad development, said, outside those who died, goods and property worth millons of naira were destroyed.

He said: "The owner was erecting some structures on an existing building without taking cognisance of the fact that the structure on the ground was already weak."

Last Friday, some traders at the market had protested the attempt by the market authorities to erect additional structures on the existing old and weak buildings in the area.

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The traders, during the protest, called for the immediate suspension of construction and arrest of those behind the act.

They also accused the leadership of the market of collaborating with some state government agents to construct shops on top of the weak buildings.

Efforts to speak with the newly appointed caretaker committee chairman of the market, Mr. Sunday Akachukwu, did not yield results, but the immediate past chairman, Chief Nelson Ojukwu, when contacted, said there was no incident of building collapse in the market and no one died.

Ojukwu said it was a walkway in the market, where some builders packed bags of cement that caved in, while there was no casualty of any sort.

Anambra State police spokesman, Mr. Tochukwu Ikenga, said he was not aware of any of such incidents in the area.