

'How I survived under rubble of collapsed building for four hours'

Victim begs govt, Nigerians for help

By Abubakar Yakubu, Abuja

WHEN Blessing Moses, a 22-year-old-year-old hair stylist and single mother from Benue State moved into a self-contained apartment at Sultan Dasuki Road, Phase 2, Site 2, Kubwa in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, she was very excited.

Saturday Sun gathered that the building, which housed 49 other self-contained rooms, was initially meant to be a hospital. But the owner was said to have later changed his mind and converted the building to a hotel. He later decided to give out the rooms for rent, it was gathered.

The reason for Blessing's excitement was that the apartment was not far from where she worked, and she was comfortable with the facilities in the room. She lived next door to a female corps member whose name she didn't know. She merely referred to her lady co-tenant as Neighbour.

According to her, things went well until about 6am on Saturday, July 12, 2024, when she woke up and went to the toilet to prepare for work.

"While in the toilet, the place was shaking terribly and before I could run out, the entire building collapsed and I found myself under the rubble," she narrated.

"I was conscious and kept praying as well as crying out for help continuously until a Good Samaritan got through to me four hours later, after using a digger to remove rubble from where I was trapped," she said. She said the person who saved her also rescued her neighbour, the corps member, and they were both rushed to Kubwa General Hospital, where she was admitted. She informed also that her neighbour was referred to the National Hospital. Sadly, the female corps member later died at the hospital, Blessing said.

"My neighbour was a very peaceful person and whenever she returned from her place of primary assignment, she would stay indoors for the rest of the day," Blessing narrated.

Saturday Sun learnt that when the building collapsed, people kept their distance for fear that the section of the building that was still standing might still fall. It was not until a certain man holding a digger entered the premises and began to dig out survivors that some others developed some confidence that the rescue efforts should commence.

A resident said officials of the FCT Emergency Management Department (FEMD) later joined the man with sophisticated equipment. They were able to rescue three other tenants in the building. The three were subsequently treated and discharged from the hospital. Blessing Moses, according to a medical report seen by this reporter and signed by Dr. A.O. Bello, suffered from a fracture to the superior and inferior pelvic rami bilaterally with associated diastasis of the left sacroiliac joint.

She said she was asked to pay N800,000 for surgery but her family could only pay N350,000



Blessing Moses and her mother, Helen at the Kubwa General Hospital in Abuja

before the operation was carried out.

"We still owe the balance and since this incident happened, the owner of the building hasn't visited me to check on how I am faring," she lamented.

She said all her belongings were trapped when the building collapsed, adding that she has since then been barely managing to survive in the hospital.

Hear her: "I take care of my feeding, and I also purchase the drugs that the doctors prescribed for me. I have been told also by the doctors that I am supposed to be fit in about eight to 12 months.

She appealed to the federal government, FCT Administration and well-meaning Nigerians to assist her, adding that all her life, she has always been hard-working, until the unfortunate incident of the building collapse, which took away all she had and caused the injuries she now suffers.

"To start life afresh, I will need money to finish up my treatment and to purchase my work tools so that I can look after myself and my six-year-old son," she pleaded.

In a chat, Blessing's mother, Mrs Heien Ik-

yaave, told *Saturday Sun* that when she heard that her daughter was involved in a building collapse in Abuja, she was distressed. She said she had to rush down to Abuja where she mercifully discovered that her daughter was alive.

"I am happy and I thank God she is alive as well as responding to treatment," she said.

Ikyaave also disclosed that she had been buying food and the drugs prescribed for her daughter by the doctors. She appealed for assistance from government and goodhearted Nigerians to ensure that her daughter overcomes her current challenge.

Mr Jide Olarewaju, a resident of Kubwa, said since the incident was an unforeseen emergency, the federal government and FCT Administration should assist victims of the collapsed building.

"President Bola Tinubu sympathised with the victims immediately after the incident happened and I expected that the federal government would take over their hospital bills and feeding arrangements in the hospital," he said.

Another tenant of the collapsed building, who didn't want his name on print, said when the tenants noticed the cracks on the wall, they

phoned the landlord to express their fears. He noted, however, that the landlord merely told them that he was in transit and would send an engineer to observe the building.

"How are we going to pull through this disaster in this period of hardship unless we get help from the government," the tenant wondered.

While noting that all his property had been destroyed in the incident, he also appealed to the government to compel the landlord to refund the money paid by the tenants so that they could get alternative accommodation.

Saturday Sun further learnt that on the day the building collapsed, the FCT Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was notified at about 6.45 am by passers-by through distress calls on the 112 emergency toll-free number.

Acting director-general of FEMA, Mrs Florence Dawon Wenegieme advised developers to strictly follow the building code and avoid the use of substandard materials.

Also speaking at the incident site, FCT Commissioner of Police, Bennett Igweh, said five persons were rescued in stable conditions and conveyed to Kubwa General Hospital.



Rescue workers few hours after the building collapsed in Kubwa, Abuja



The collapsed building site being taken over by the FCT administration, after all structures in the premises were demolished.