

Folawiyo's Cousin, 8 Others Confirmed Dead

No fewer than 41 persons were brought out from under the rubbles of the four-storey building which collapsed Wednesday night at No. 56 Bola Street, Ebute Metta East, Lagos, while nine, including a cousin of Alhaji Iyanda Folawiyo, were among those confirmed dead yesterday.

Lagos State Governor, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, has, however, vowed to prosecute

• *Tinubu vows to prosecute developers*

COLLAPSED BUILDING

By Deji Elumoye, Agha Ibiam and Eugene Agha

the estate agent and the developer of the building while pleading with residents who joined the rescue operation team, to "be calm"

THISDAY gathered that Mr.

Rotimi Folawiyo, a cousin of the *Baba Adini* of Nigeria, had visited his friend, Mr. Adeshina Rufai, at number 42, Ibadan Street at about 7.30pm before returning to his home where the house collapsed and killed him, his wife and three children.

Rufai recollected: "My

friend was with me that day, we ate together before he told me he was going home, I never

knew that would be our last moment together.

"He died with his wife and

their three children, no doubt all of us in this house are going to miss him because he was a nice person to everybody," he

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FORGING STRONG PARTNERSHIP...



said in an emotion laden voice. Amid repeated shouts of "no more developers," from the visibly angry residents, Tinubu who had come to sympathize with the residents of the area said "this kind of barbaric act will have to be done away with."

Out of the 41 rescued persons

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enjoined the audience to "take me seriously", and said: "President Obasanjo is respected man. When he makes any commitment, you better respect it."

He said the president believes that it was better to make more money "honestly in a growing economy than continue to steal from a dying economy."

He said, as a man who was on throes of death, he saw the need to promote democracy, rather than military dictatorship "as he demonstrated when he willingly organized, held and handed over power to a democratically elected government in Nigeria, when he had the option of staying on to power like his other African leaders of those days.

"Today Obasanjo is treated like a royalty all over the world because he has brought respectability to the African continent."

Also speaking at the event, the Chief Executive Officer of the Sullivan Foundation, Hope Sullivan, described Obasanjo as her earthly angel "Who watches over me and my family."

She eulogized what she called Obasanjo's leadership role on the continent and "His steadfastness in the actualization of my late father's dream. He is a man of honor, integrity and has bridged the gap between the Africans and the Americans."

In his welcome remarks, Obasanjo enjoined the delegates to eat, drink and dance as "We have the honour of having in our midst one of Nigeria's best artists, King Sunny Ade as well as several others."

alive, seven, including a six month old baby, were brought out dead while 36 others, among whom is a six month old twin baby boy, were rescued by a combined team of the Police, Red Cross, fire fighter operatives, officials of the Lagos State Emergency Ambulance Services (LASEMBUS) and volunteer groups.

While the Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Olubode Ojajuni put the death toll at four and survivors at about 10, officials of the Red Cross Society told THISDAY that seven dead bodies were removed from the debris as at press time while 34 others, majority of whom suffered various degrees of injuries, were rescued alive.

All deceased persons, according to Lagos State Health workers, have since been moved to the Lagos Island General Hospital mortuary in Marina while some of the survivors were treated at Bambo Hospital, Denton Street, Ebute Metta.

The Medical Director, Dr. Adeolu Olusodo, who also spoke to THISDAY on the number of victims that were brought to his hospital, said he received a total of 12 persons, five of whom were brought in already dead while the remaining seven were treated. Of the seven persons that were treated, according to him, three have since been discharged while the other four are still undergoing various treatment.

"A year old boy was among the five dead bodies that were brought to my hospital. I am still looking for anybody who can identify the boy since all the victims were brought to my hospital during the confusion that trailed the unfortunate incident" he added.

Formal rescue operation at the site of the building did not start until about 11am yesterday,

over 12 hours after the incident occurred, when construction giant, Julius Berger was seen at the site with two ACTROS Lorries with registration Nos. XB 842 BWR and XG 167 ABC, excavating trapped victims.

At least, four ambulances belonging to the State Government were also on stand by while rescue operation was on.

The first victim was brought out from under the debris at about 1pm, followed by a three-year old girl while a six month old twin baby boy was not so lucky.

His second was brought out alive along with their mother who had contacted her husband via her GSM mobile handset. She was said to have told her husband that she actually rescued both kids, and that one was trapped under the rubles when she went in search of the second.

Another man, identified as Nnadi had the sum of N120,000 in one thousand naira note denomination as at the time he was brought out dead. Narrating what happened, one of the rescue workers who identified himself as Gbinigie Solomon said he was actually on the street when the incident occurred, saying, the building came down with a heavy noise followed by a thick cloud of dust.

He said at first they all thought it was another case of bomb blast before they got a picture of what happened when a shrill cry came from some inhabitants of the building directly opposite the collapsed house.

He said it was rather unfortunate because he watched a young man and a lady, who drove into the street in an Honda Accord car some few minutes before the incident.