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Building Collapses, Kills One in Abuja

From Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja, 05.30.2010

Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Senator Bala Mohammed yesterday read the riot act to developers and property owners, with a warning that they should comply fully with laid down rules and regulations in order to prevent incidents of collapsed buildings, waste of resources and other ugly developments.

Mohammed, who spoke against the backdrop of the collapse of a three-storey building under construction, located along Nkwerre Street, Garki 2 in the Abuja metropolis, in the early hours of yesterday, which killed at least one person and injured three others, vowed to ensure that all those who flout the rules and regulations guiding structural development in the federal capital are brought to book.

Speaking through a statement issued by his Special Assistant on Media, Nosike Ogbuenyi, Mohammed described the incident as a sad fallout of non-compliance with building rules and regulations.

The minister, who cut short other engagements to visit the scene, where the fifth occupant was rescued unhurt, stated that the FCTA has always insisted on full compliance with civil and technical specifications.

He warned that the administration will not condone unwholesome practices by property owners and developers.

Mohammed clarified that his views did not amount to total exoneration of building supervisors of the Federal Capital Development Authority, adding that it was unfortunate that a life was lost as a result of the current incident.

He described it as a sad development on a day most Nigerians were celebrating yet another anniversary of our nascent democracy. Visibly concerned at the ugly development, he vowed that all those found culpable would not go unpunished adding that the specified penalties would be invoked after investigations into the incident.

The minister expressed satisfaction with the prompt emergency response by the Urban Affairs Emergency organ of the Abuja Metropolitan Management Council (AMMC), the FCT Fire Service, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), voluntary bodies led by the Nigerian Red Cross and others that rendered assistance. Some other volunteers that assisted in the rescue operation were two popular civil engineering companies, Gilmor Engineering Nigeria Limited and Julius Berger Nigeria Limited.

In her own reaction, the Coordinator of Abuja Metropolitan Management Council (AMMC), Architect Bintu Shettima said the uncompleted building owned by one Chief Anayo Nkwonta from Anambra State had incomplete development plan approval. According to her, the owner had an initial building plan approval which he later altered unilaterally along the line without the consent of the relevant department of the Federal Capital Development Authority.

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