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Man dies inside Cocoa House elevator - Decomposed body found after three days

By Jackson Udom - 15.02.2009

TRAGEDY struck on Thursday at the premises of the Cocoa House, the tallest building in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, when a man, in his bid to make use of the lift facility in the commercial complex, fell headlong and died immediately.

The management of the complex and those who have business concerns within the complex were said not to have been aware of the tragedy that had befallen them. According to an eyewitness account, "the man wanted to use the lift, which is under repairs, but he stepped into an empty space which hitherto housed the lift, fell headlong and died instantly."

It was also gathered that neither the contractor handling the refurbishment of the outdated elevator, nor the workers in the complex, were aware of the unfortunate incident, until the body of the man (whose name is yet to be made public), started decomposing with offensive odour oozing out from the ground floor of the lift compartment.

As a result of the tragic incident, the premises that houses the building is now being inundated with posters warning members of the public to stay clear of the lift area, saying: "The lifts are under repairs and it would be dangerous for anybody to either make use of it or go near it."

When Sunday Tribune got to the premises, those who spoke with our reporter confirmed the incident but they were not ready to give further information on whether the man died as a result of the faulty and outdated elevator or he died due to his carelessness. They all blamed the management of the building for not being sensitive to the safety of members of the public who come to the premises to transact one business or the other. "Virtually everything in that building is outdated and grossly malfunctioning.

"The elevators there are now death traps. Those elevators were installed by Papa Obafemi Awolowo and since then they have always been undergoing repairs. Now that somebody has been trapped in it, may be they will do something about it." Attempts by Sunday Tribune to get in touch with the management of the building proved abortive as none of them was available for comments.

According to a police source who pleaded anonymity, "we are yet to know the identity of the deceased and by Monday, we would invite the site contractor, because what we are hearing is that the man was one of their workers. We learnt that the man fell from the lift. The decomposing body of the man had been evacuated to the Adeoyo Mortuary.

When contacted, the Oyo State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Ms Bisi Okuwobi, confirmed the story adding that the man's decomposing body was discovered three days after his death inside the elevator. "It is true. The man died several days before his body was found inside the elevator."