

Double tragedy in Lagos

EVELYN USMAN

IT was double tragedy in Lagos yesterday: Five persons were killed in an auto accident caused by fuel scarcity while many were trapped in a collapsed building.

The auto accident happened in Alapere area of the metropolis when a truck rammed into vehicles on queue for fuel, killing the five persons and leaving scores of others seriously injured.

The incident involving the collapsed building reportedly occurred at 1 p.m. at 33 Egerton Street, in Oke Arin area of central Lagos.

The debris of the three-storey building was believed to still have many people trapped under it at press time.

Governor Babatunde Fasola, who visited the scene of the incident, ordered immediate deployment of earth moving equipment to the site to help in rescue operation.

Fasola, who cut short his other engagements to visit the site, said he started making contacts with experts and organizations with equipment to assist with rescue operations as soon as reports of the incident got to him. He noted that the narrow streets and general inaccessibility to the site made rescue operation difficult insisting however that no stone would be left unturned to ensure that help reached those said to be trapped within the shortest time possible.

He said medical personnel including doctors, nurses and officials of the Lagos State Ambulance Services (LASAMBUS), Red Cross and other volunteer groups were already on hand to offer assistance.

An assistant superintendent of police (ASP) attached to Elere Division whose identity could not be immediately ascertained, his wife and cousin were said to be among those that lost their lives in the auto accident.

The fate of seven other victims, one of them the deceased ASP's daughter, were as at press time not ascertained as they were said to be in critical situation in two undisclosed private hospitals around the

•Truck rams into fuel queue, killing ASP, wife, 3 others •Building collapses, traps victims

area.

Eye witnesses told *Sunday Vanguard* that the truck apparently suffered break failure and in the driver's bid to control it, it veered off its lane and crashed into the vehicles on queue at the entrance of a filling station, waiting to buy fuel. In a further attempt to bring the truck to a

halt, it reportedly forced the vehicle in which the police officer and members of his family were sitting into a valley by China village. The truck then fell on the vehicle in the valley, making efforts to rescue the victims difficult.

The incident caused a stam-

pede as motorists reportedly abandoned their vehicles at the fuel station and took to their heels leaving the injured to their fate. Sympathisers later thronged the scene to help the critically injured to the hospital and take the bodies of the dead to mortuary. The sympathisers blamed the accident on the ongoing strike by oil marketers and truck owners which triggered fuel scarcity in Lagos metropolis.

Contacted, the Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Olubode Ojajumi, confirmed both incidents and said police men under whose jurisdiction the incidents occurred were at the scene to provide necessary assistance.

Obi returns, raises fears over security

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enforce the Supreme Court judgment. But while the state awaits the governor's arrival, reactions have continued to greet Obi's reinstatement. The people of the state want Obi to change his leadership style, move with a faster pace and carry them along.

They accused his administration of being miserly and that the masses did not fare well under his first time in office. But reacting to this allegation, Obi's political godfather and chairman of Peter Obi Campaign, Chief Slyva Nwogbu Alu, said the governor had initiated several people oriented projects that would change the face of the state and the people will be better for it. He said: "What I want people to understand is that Peter planned. By the time he wanted to implement his plans, they impeached him. The woman, that is the deputy governor, who took over as governor, just executed Peter's plans. When he came back he continued to implement them and his speed was fantastic. If they allow him to perform, in the next six months, Anambra will be the best state in Nigeria in terms of development".

NATIONAL AWARD
Speaking on the Supreme Court ruling, Chief Anse Ezetah, lawyer, observed: "The Supreme Court Justices deserve the highest national award for courageously defending the constitution in this

case as in Ararume's case and in AG Lagos vs AG Federal on Local Government issue. I also hail president Yar' Adua for opting to support the rule of law. In that alone, he has achieved what eluded Nigeria in the past 24 years".

In his own reaction, Umeh, APGA boss, stated: "The landmark decision by the Supreme Court which reinstated Obi to complete the remaining three years of his four-year tenure has restored hope to Nigerians that the judiciary of this country will at all times defend and protect the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"While we commend the apex court for the exemplary boldness and courage with which it dispensed justice in this matter, the Supreme Court of Nigeria can now be said to be ranking among the best apex courts in the world.

"To us in APGA, we are grateful to the Nigerian judiciary for always coming to the rescue of the party as shown in Mr. Peter Obi's major victories through the courts since 2005.

"We encourage the lower courts to toe the line of the apex court in this major responsibility to ensure that the rule of law and total obedience to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria are strictly adhered to.

"This landmark judicial victory recorded by APGA on Thursday is yet another modest contribution by APGA towards the advancement of true democ-

racy and rule of law in Nigeria.

"We salute His Excellency, Mr. Peter Obi, for lifting APGA high through his tenacious judicial struggles that made this novel constitutional victory possible.

"To the people of Anambra State, we join them in glorifying God for liberating them from the siege laid on the state for the past eight years by the agents of former President Olusegun Obasanjo. We enjoin everybody to close ranks and join hands with Governor Peter Obi in restoring lasting peace and genuine development to the state. APGA will never let the state down.

"We also enjoin all Nigerians to emulate Obi's footsteps in resolving legal disputes".

PRAYER
In his reaction, the first Basilica Archbishop in Nigeria and Catholic Archbishop of Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province, Most Rev. Valerian Okeke, described the Supreme Court judgment as a welcome development.

Speaking with *Sunday Vanguard* in Onitsha, Okeke said, "I must have to congratulate the judiciary for the landmark judgment. As a matter of fact, it shows that there is hope for the common man in this country and in a most special way, there is hope for the people of Anambra State."

He said that before the judgment, Catholic Church and other religious organizations in the state had been calling on the people to