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the People

11:40 AM, Wednesday, March 25th, 2009

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3 die as building collapses in Lagos

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Wednesday, 25 March 2009

No fewer than three persons including a 10-year-old boy were confirmed dead yesterday evening after a three-storey building collapsed in Idi-Araba area of Lagos State.

Twenty persons were reportedly rescued while a yet-to-be known number of persons were still trapped inside the rubbles of the collapsed building, situated on Ojerinde Street, as at 8.30 p.m. when Vanguard visited the scene.

Eyewitnesses told Vanguard that rescue operations commenced only after sympathisers who rushed to the scene succeeded in rescuing some of the people trapped in the collapsed building. The head of the dead 10-year-old boy brought out from the rubble was compressed.

It was alleged that men of the Lagos State Fire Service and officials of LASEM who earlier arrived the scene could not achieve much as they departed immediately without rendering help. However, few hours later, they came back with heavy cranes and other equipment for the rescue operation.

It was gathered that some of the trapped victims made desperate calls to their relatives begging for quick intervention, saying they were suffocating. At a point, most of the victims could reportedly not be reached on their phones, as the phones kept ringing without results.

Five of the victims rescued from the collapsed building were rushed to the accident and emergency ward of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Idi-Araba, Lagos where medical personnel battled to save their lives.

Hospital sources confirmed to our reporters that the victims, comprising three adults and two children, were brought in at different times. "Their condition is stable and they are responding to treatment. It is only one of the children who sustained a more serious injury that we cannot say what will happen next. We are up to the situation. Everyone here is at alert and the situation is well under control," the sources said.

Further, it was gathered that the LUTH authorities responded swiftly to the incident and authorised the movement of some old patients with less severe cases from the accident ward into the main wards to create more room in anticipation of more casualties from the collapsed building.

Confirming the incident, Lagos State Police spokesman, Mr Frank Mba, said efforts were on to contact Julius Berger construction company and other relevant agencies to help clear the rubbles with a view to rescuing some of the trapped victims.



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