



15 die as school building collapses in Onitsha

on June 03, 2014 / in [News](#) 12:30 am / [Comments](#)

BY VINCENT UJUMADU

AWKA — NO fewer than 15 persons were feared dead and several others sustained injuries, yesterday, in the commercial city of Onitsha when a four-storey building under construction collapsed.

The building, which was nearing completion along St. Christopher's Anglican Church by Old Cemetery Road, Onitsha, in a dramatic manner, became a rubble over alleged use of poor quality and sub-standard construction materials.

The victims were mainly labourers said to be putting finishing touches to the building.

It was gathered that late arrival of rescue teams marred the survival of some of the victims.

The ill-fated building was being constructed by the Diocese of Niger to serve as classroom blocks for pupils of St Christopher's Primary School.

However, there were conflicting reports over the safety of the contractor handling the projects as some eyewitnesses said the contractor left the ill-fated building few minutes before it collapsed while others said he was still inside the building when it crashed.

However, late arrival of heavy equipment for the evacuation of the rubbles to save some of the trapped victims was attributed to the high level of casualty as sympathizers watched helplessly while those trapped inside the rubble perished.

One of the deceased, whose identity was not known at press time was crushed by the rubbles with his head smashed, ripping open his brain. It was gathered that the deceased was among those serving the mason men in plastering the walls of the building before the incident.

One of the teachers at St Christopher's Primary School, who pleaded anonymity, said before the building collapsed, primary school pupils and their nursery counterparts were inside the building playing during recess, adding that the building came crashing few minutes after the bell signalling end of recess rang.

“This place has been where our children run in to play each time there was break, so today, as usual, these children were

inside the building playing and once it was 12.30pm, we rang a bell to call them back to their classes.

“Shortly after that, we heard a loud noise with dust flaring over the entire compound. We looked with astonishment, it was the building where our children were playing inside few minutes ago that collapsed,” she said.

Meanwhile, efforts to evacuate the rubble and the deceased lingered due to non-availability of heavy forklift as sympathizers resorted to self help by using hands and hammer to break the concrete walls to know if they could save any of those trapped in the building, but that was after four hours of the incident.

Governor Willie Obiano of Anambra State, who was alerted by our reporter, immediately cut short his official engagement and ordered some major contractors working in various parts of the state to mobilise their equipment to the scene to save some of those trapped.

However, it took extra one hour before the equipment could come but before then, policemen led by the Divisional Police Officer in charge of the Central Police Station, CPS Tope Fasugba and the Federal Road Safety Corps, FRSC, Unit Commander, Onitsha, Mr. Chukwuemeka Metta were already on ground to control the situation.

You might also like

[Chelsea reject Inter bid for Mikel](http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/chelsea-reject-inter-bid-mikel/) (<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/chelsea-reject-inter-bid-mikel/>)

[I've lost count of persons I've kidnapped — Suspect](http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/ive-lost-count-persons-ive-kidnapped-suspect/) (<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/ive-lost-count-persons-ive-kidnapped-suspect/>)

[We almost suffocated inside cabin, stowaways recount ordeal](http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/almost-suffocated-inside-cabin-stowaways-recount-ordeal/) (<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/almost-suffocated-inside-cabin-stowaways-recount-ordeal/>)

[We are all Boko Haram](http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/boko-haram-3/) (<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/06/boko-haram-3/>)

Recommended by (#)