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## Synagogue Building Collapse: Death toll rises to 44, with 139 rescued

on September 15, 2014 / in [Headlines](#) 12:06 am / [Comments](#)

By Leke Adeseri, S-west Regional Editor & Evelyn Usman

LAGOS—The death toll from last Friday's collapsed five-storey building owned by the Synagogue Church of All Nations, SCOAN, in Ikotun area of Lagos State, rose to 44, yesterday. 25 bodies were recovered by rescue workers from the rubble.

On the other hand, six persons, all women, were reportedly rescued alive, thereby raising the number of survivors to 139.

Meantime, the Lagos State Governor, Babatunde Fashola, while condoling with General Overseer of the church, Prophet Temitope Joshua and members of the church, advised that staff and members of the church, should allow emergency workers could do their work. Fashola gave the advice when he visited the scene, yesterday.

Prophet Joshua popularly called T. B Joshua, yesterday, played a footage of the collapsed building as allegedly captured by the Church's Close Circuit Television, CCTV, camera to his congregation.

The footage showed that the building, which served as a guest house where people with varying ailments from within and outside the country put up, caved in at exactly 12.44pm. This was shortly after an airplane which was captured while hovering round the church's premises left.

Joshua narrated how he left 'prayer mountain' where he 'lives' to return to the church, only to be alerted by a telephone



(<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/09/tb-joshua-suggests-sabotage-deadly-building-collapse/tb-joshua-scoan/>)

TB Joshua suggests sabotage over deadly building collapse

call, in which the caller told him that a plane was hovering around the church's premises.

The structure was initially a two-storey building before it was converted to a five-storey edifice.

Those who were trapped under the debris included foreigners, some kitchen staff and construction workers.

Fashola's directs church members to vacate site

Fashola, during his visit, yesterday, urged Joshua to prevail on members of the church allow government rescue workers a chance to do their job unhindered as they (members) were not trained to manage emergency situations.

[See photos here](http://community.vanguardngr.com/photo/album/show?id=4565467%3AAlbum%3A827091&xg_source=activity) ([http://community.vanguardngr.com/photo/album/show?id=4565467%3AAlbum%3A827091&xg\\_source=activity](http://community.vanguardngr.com/photo/album/show?id=4565467%3AAlbum%3A827091&xg_source=activity))

"What you need to understand now is that this place is now an accident scene and so all your staff must leave this place. We need to take control of this place and have people who have been trained to do this job to do so.

"So, please ask all your staff to step down from this place until we finish. When we finish, if you have any person, whether an engineer or a medical person you want to be on the site with them, working with them to know what they are taking there, then it is easier; they can report to you and then report to me.

"But, we can't continue rescue operations with your men hanging around here. We understand this is an unfortunate incident, we understand their sense of sympathy and compassion. But let them allow those who are trained to do the job to take over and do the job. It won't make sense if they are getting in their way."

Joshua, later conducted the governor and his entourage round the site after an earlier brief, closed door meeting.

Meanwhile, the Lagos State Government has expressed willingness to apply necessary sanction if investigation found any lapses on the part of the developer and owner of the building in line with state government policy on such matter.

Special Adviser to Governor Babatunde Fashola on Information and Strategy, Alhaji Lateef Raji made the remarks while speaking with Vanguard on the development.

It will be recalled that the state government had commenced investigation into the immediate and remote cause(s) of the collapsed building.

The Lagos State Building and Control Agency, LASBCA, boss, Mrs Abimbola Animashaun, yesterday, maintained that the state government could not confirm a trace of any document stating that the building was approved.

Animashaun, who led her team to the scene of the incident on Friday, said none of the church members could provide evidence of approval for the collapsed building.

According to her: "We have been here challenging them on the building approval but they haven't said anything convincing. They claimed to have approval but we could not confirm it. They were told to bring the building approval authorised by the state government but none of them could provide it."

Sources, however, told Vanguard, yesterday, that the correct status of the building's approval will emerge as work resumes in government offices today.

We must avoid future avoidable disaster — Commissioner

Commenting on the incident, the state Commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development, Mr Olutoyin Ayinde, said the church authority was yet to present evidence of building approval.

On the other buildings under construction within the premises, Ayinde said: “Like the collapsed building, the church has begun to add more floors to some existing buildings. The act is a dangerous development which must be checked before it results into another avoidable disaster

“The church authority claimed they have a team of engineers overseeing ongoing building constructions in the church premises. They claimed they have approval for the building. We have told them to present their approval. So, we are still waiting for them to present it.

On whether those building with additional floors will be sealed off by the government, he said: “We are waiting for the building approval which they claimed they have”.

I’m the target, God’ll get back at them — Joshua

Addressing his congregation during yesterday’s service, Joshua said: “I know this is not the right time to talk. I will just say a little because I don’t want to interfere with the job of security personnel.

[Security Footage Of Synagogue Building Collapse](http://community.vanguardngr.com/video/exclusive-security-footage-of-synagogue-building-collapse-strange) (<http://community.vanguardngr.com/video/exclusive-security-footage-of-synagogue-building-collapse-strange>)

“First, I received a call that there was a jet hovering around the mountain (the church) which I just left at very close range. Later, I was informed that the plane in question was flying dangerously low over a particular building within the church premises. This is to tell you we have a stable terrain in this area. I have been in this community for the past 30 years and no building has ever collapsed here

“I know you will ask me why Synagogue? Don’t forget the spiritual blessing that God has bestowed on us? A big head wears a large hat. They are trying to scare you from coming to this church. Don’t be scared, you are not the target, I am the target. I know my hour has not yet come. I have not yet finished my job. There is no compromise in what we do at all. I am going to leave this for you to judge. I want to assure you that our God will get back at them – the agents of Satan.

“The reason I am showing you this is for you to know the God you are serving. God wants to reveal to you what He has been doing that you don’t know about. I know that faithless attendees may likely stop visiting this church”, he said.

He, however, assured that effort was in top gear to rescue the remaining trapped victims, even as he described those who lost their lives in the tragic incident as people of faith who knew the God they served.

At about 5pm, yesterday, rescue operation was still ongoing. Vanguard gathered that between the early hours of yesterday when rescue workers resumed operation at the scene and 9.43 am, 28 persons were rescued from the rubble. Six of them were reportedly rescued alive while 22 were brought out dead.

At about 11.30am, the corpse of a woman was recovered. Barely three hours later, another body was reportedly removed from the debris. Again, at 4.35pm, a female dead body was brought out by rescue workers.

South West Spokes person of the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, Ibrahim Farinloye said: “ As at now, 4.30pm, a total of 139 persons have been rescued alive while 44 are dead. 80 per cent of the rescued are women”.

The building collapsed in a second —Victim’s relation

When Vanguard visited one of the male wards at the Isolo General Hospital, Isolo Local Government Area, four of the injured victims were on admission.

Among the four was Hamisu Abdullahi from Kano State, who sustained head injury.

Also speaking, Yusuf Abdullahi, who claimed to be Hamisu’s brother explained: “On Friday when the building collapsed, we were unable to locate him, to know if he escaped or not. And the reason for that was because we had a chat before we both set out for work.

“And on Saturday morning, after so much search, we were able to locate him here (Isolo General Hospital).

“Hamisu is one of the labourers at the site. And he had been working at the site for months,” he added.

On how it happened, Yusuf said: “He (Hamisu) could not say how the building collapsed. All he said was that the building collapsed some few minutes past 12:00 pm. And it caved in within a twinkle of an eye. And it didn’t give any sign of crack to alert the workers and the church members.

“I am happy Hamisu is now in stable condition. I know some people died after the building collapsed,” Abdullahi said.

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