

# One dead, 16 rescued, scores trapped as building collapses in Lagos

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**L**AGOS—A three-story building under construction at Richard Abimbola Street, Ilesamaja, Lagos, collapsed yesterday, killing one and trapping over 20 construction workers.

Sixteen persons were rescued alive at about 7.15p.m., with rescue work still ongoing at press time. Most of the workers were reportedly foreigners. The lifeless body of one of the workers was brought out from the rubble at 7.55p.m.

Work was reportedly ongoing, when the building suddenly caved in at about 2p.m. The impact of the collapse affected a nearby church, but there was no one in the church.

The collapse was blamed on substandard building materials. Residents also stated that owner of the building, who is on the run, bought an existing building and decided to raise it to three

floors on the existing foundation.

## Rescue

When *Vanguard* arrived the scene, rescue workers, comprising Police, Red Cross, Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, LASEMA; National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA; Lagos State Ambulance Service, LASAMBUS; Fire Service, among others, were battling to rescue the trapped victims.

*Vanguard* was informed that the first set of trapped victims were rescued from the debris by policemen from Isolo and Ilesha divisions, who arrived the scene before others, with the help of some residents.

At about 4.46p.m., 13 persons were rescued alive. Forty minutes later, one more worker was rescued alive, while another was rescued at about 6.10p.m.

As rescue work was ongoing, one of those trapped under the debris was heard calling on rescue workers to come towards his side. His voice

## ●Engineer ignored my warning—Survivor

became faint with time. As at 7.30p.m., none could locate where he was.

Some of the survivors were Sunday Gbose, 19; Chinonso Udeh, 37; Matthew Jimoh, 12; Monday Gadonu, 25; Benjamin Uchenna, 56; John Afolabi, 18; Dayo Fatau, 30; Ope Falolu and Agba Ogundele, 40.

Speaking on behalf of the foreigners, Sunday Peter, a professional photographer, who disclosed to *Vanguard* that they came from Akuko community in Benin Republic, said: "I was in my office when my friend called to alert me that the building where my relatives were working had collapsed.

"On my arrival, I discovered that only five out of the 15, who left home for the site, were so far rescued. We are hoping that others will be rescued alive from the rubble. One of those still trapped is Philip. He is from my

community in Benin Republic."

## Residents' accounts

A resident of the community, Adetutu Ojumu, disclosed that the building was completed less than three months after its owner bought it from its former owner. She disclosed that after demolition, the owner erected the hotel building on the old foundation to fast-track construction work.

Another resident, who identified himself as Olawale, blamed the state government officials over the collapse.

He said: "We discovered that the building had tilted few weeks ago before it was roofed. But efforts to warn the owner proved abortive, as he instructed the artisans to intensify the construction works.

## Survivor's story

One of the survivors, Dayo

Okanlawon, blamed the collapse on the weak foundation which he said could not take the three-storey building.

His words: "I discovered the fault in the structure on my arrival last week. I raised objection, but the engineer did not yield to my warning."

Also, Chairman of the Community Development Committee, CDC, Alhaji Alan Rahmon, said: "Today (yesterday) at about 1:45p.m. we discovered that the building had tilted. Few minutes later, the building collapsed on a church beside it."

Rahmon lamented that they would not have allowed the contractor to commence construction had they envisaged that the structure would not stand the test of time, adding "this is because when the contractor approached us, he assured us that the building would be constructed with the best materials."