



Lagos Building Collapse Day 2: Death toll rises to 8, 16 rescued

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By Olasunkanmi Akoni

Two more bodies were, yesterday, recovered from the debris of the collapsed building at 3, Massey Street, Lagos Island, bringing the death toll to eight.

Among the dead was an 11-year-old boy, whose body was reportedly recovered at about midnight, while 16 people were rescued alive from the rubble.

According to eyewitnesses, the building went down at about 2.43p.m., Tuesday, during a rainstorm. Two bodies were recovered in the evening of the same day.

The rescue effort, which lasted throughout the night till the early hours of yesterday, saw many more bodies recovered.



Lagos building collapse

This is just as, yesterday, survivors, relatives and sympathisers wailed uncontrollably while the rescue operation lasted.

Telecomm mast

Meanwhile, Lagos State Building Control Agency, LASBCA, has said the building came down due to the additional load on its foundation brought on by the telecommunication mast mounted on the building two weeks ago.

Corroborating this point, one of the residents of the area, Mr. Yusuf Align, blamed the collapse on greed by the landlords.

Align said: "They know it is an old building and they allowed one of the communication networks to erect a mast on top of it. Even if they have paid them N10 million or more, what have they gained now?"

This was confirmed by Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, LASEMA, General Manager, Mr. Adeshina Tihamiyu.

He said that some of the residents explained that the building collapsed on Tuesday, exactly two weeks after the community rejected a generator brought there for the mast.

Tiamiyu said the community believed that the building was not strong enough to carry the generator as it vibrates whenever the power generating set was on.

The LASEMA chief said after the rescue and recovery operations, the agency will carry out its investigations to ascertain the cause of the collapse.

He said the investigation will be done with other emergency management agencies to ensure that the number of families living in the building tallied with the community's account.

It used to be a bungalow—NEMA

Also speaking on the incident, Alhaji Ibrahim Farinloye, the South-West spokesman for National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, said integrity test will be carried out on other buildings in the area to prevent recurrence of the incident.

Farinloye said the collapsed building was initially a bungalow before it was converted to a four-storey building with a penthouse.

He said the required six feet between buildings was not observed in the area, adding that the adjacent building was also under threat of collapse.

Farinloye advised the Lagos State Urban Renewal Agency to prevail on house owners to renovate their buildings regularly.

He said the advice followed the challenges of climate change, which might have effects on buildings in view of high volume of rainfall this year. He urged building

contractors to avoid the use of substandard materials in their construction works.

LASG fumes

Meanwhile, worried by continued rising cases of building collapse in the state, Lagos State Government, through the state's Building Control Agency, LASBCA, has warned building owners and developers to desist from adding unapproved floors or structures to old and existing buildings.

The agency's General Manager, Engr. Olalekan Shodeinde, who handed out the warning, said approvals are given for additional floor(s) after a thorough engineering appraisal and integrity test on the structure.

Verdict

Commenting on the collapsed building at Lagos Island, Lagos, Shodeinde said the building, a four-floor structure built with bricks, collapsed due to foundation failure when the bearing capacity of the soil could not sustain additional structure.

The occurrence, he stated, was due to the additional load on the property resulting from a communication mast erected on the building two weeks ago.

Shodeinde said several inspections conducted on the same property in the past did not reveal any signs of distress even though the structural members were constructed with gravel.

According to him, "the additional load imposed on the structure added to the previous design capacity, as such the extra load being transferred through the structural members made the building heavier than the capacity of the soil, which is the ultimate load bearer."