

## Death toll in Onitsha building collapse rises to 4

ON MAY 24, 2019 5:27 AMIN **NEWS**BY **IDOWU BANKOLE**COMMENTS



By Chimaobi Nwaiwu

**Nnewi—A total of four people lost their lives in the ill-fated four-storey building that collapsed at Ezenwa Street by Ogalonye Junction, Onitsha, while three people were rescued.**

This was disclosed by the rescue team of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, NSE, Onitsha branch, led by its chairman, Engineer Aniekwena Victor, who is also a member of Council of Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria, COREN.

He said three people were rescued on Wednesday evening, while a dismembered body and another body were brought out from the rubbles Wednesday night, while

the other two were brought out yesterday at about 12 p.m.

However, the developer who is a legal practitioner (name withheld) was yet to show up at the scene of the incident as he is said to be in great pains following the incident.

As at 9.30a.m. yesterday, when *Vanguard* visited the scene, the rescue operation was still ongoing but no government official was sited, just as the officials of the Nigerian Red Cross Society, Anambra State have left the scene.

The two bodies identified as that of Julius from Aguleri, Anambra East Local Government; and James from Enugu State brought out at about 11.30a.m. from the collapsed building, were still covered with trampoline where they were dropped as there was no vehicle to take them to the mortuary, sparking an angry reaction from sympathisers.

[Lagos Govt. sets up panel to investigate Ita-Faji building collapse\(Opens in a new browser tab\)](#)

However, a blue Volvo salon car was later brought at exactly 1.27p.m. to take the corpses to the mortuary after their relations identified them.

Aniekwena told newsmen: “When we got the distress call that there was a collapsed building, we contacted some of our colleagues who are residing around, we also got calls from the government and we rushed down to the scene and found that some people were trapped.”

“We gathered some of our colleagues who have the equipment and we started the rescue operation and did it till 1 am Thursday morning before we rested and continued again, one of the surviving victims said they were only seven and we got the seven out three a life and four dead.

“We brought four people out dead, the other three were a life when we brought them out, and one was even making a call telling us his position until we rescued him, he was even the one that pointed the positions they were before the incident and that helped in finding other easily, and the survivors have been taken to hospital.”

Aniekwena who was reluctant to make any preliminary observation, simply said “the developer may not have followed the rules and regulations, there were a lot of errors, but incidentally the Anambra State Lab test on Structures, Standards Organization of

Nigeria, SON, and all the people in charge of material testing have come and picked sample.

“They picked samples from the slabs, the reinforcements, the cement, the blocks; they have gone to do their analysis so by the time the result of the full analysis comes out, that is when we can say authoritatively the cause of the collapse.

“You know in any test there are some certain things that will draw your mind before you talk about something authoritatively, the building fell horizontally, so definitely, you will be able to know that it was foundation fault, maybe the developer did not do the needful, by doing soil text analysis to know the soil bearing capacity, and to know the kind of foundation to put up.

“We will ask the developer who is his engineer if he gives us the name we will be able to know if the person is an engineer or not we are seeing cases where people who not engineers are claiming they, we will find out.

“If we find out that the person is our member, his certificate will be in question, and we will investigate him and if we find out that it is engineering fault, the person is going down as the building he supervised went down, he will face the law.

“However, the person they said is an engineer is not one of us, we cannot identify him, every quack can come up and claim an engineer, once you can mix cement and put blocks, you now answer engineer, so the person we brought out as the engineer, we could not recognize him as an engineer. However, we are waiting for the developer to come out to provide who is his engineer behind the building.”



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