

# At Least 41 Dead in Nigerian Church Guesthouse Collapse

The number of people killed in the collapse of a guesthouse under construction at the Lagos headquarters of one of Nigeria's best-known Christian evangelical pastors rose to 41 on Sunday, rescuers said, as they worked to clear the wreckage.

The five-story building in the Ikotun neighborhood of Lagos collapsed on Friday, and Farinloye said some 130 people had been pulled out alive with varying degrees of injury.

Local media showed a mound of flattened concrete and twisted steel wires at the compound belonging to the Synagogue Church of All Nations, which is headed by "Prophet" T.B. Joshua, who has followers across Africa and around the world.

"We have 41 dead now," Ibrahim Farinloye, spokesman in Lagos for Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), said.

On Friday after the collapse, members of the church had at first prevented emergency officials from participating in the rescue, making it difficult to establish a toll for the dead and injured. But state rescuers were allowed in on Saturday.

"We're still working at the site," said Farinloye, adding he expected the clear-up would extend into Monday.

There was no immediate explanation for the collapse.

Emergency services officials said the lower two floors of the building located in the large church compound had already been operating as a guesthouse, and it appeared construction work was underway to add three more floors/

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*Reporting by Pascal Fletcher; editing by Ralph Boulton*

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