

TB Joshua's Church Denies Criminal Negligence in Megachurch Collapse

A Nigerian megachurch run by one of Africa's best known preachers, TB Joshua, has dismissed a coroner's ruling that it should be prosecuted over a building collapse last year in which 115 people, most of them South Africans, were killed.

"The Synagogue, Church Of All Nations (SCOAN) rejects the verdict of the coroner on the grounds that it is unreasonable, one-sided and biased," the Lagos-based ministry said in a statement on its Facebook page.

"The church maintains its stand that the incident was as a result of sabotage," it added. "We repeat: No matter how long a lie is sustained, the truth will someday prevail!"

Lagos coroner Oyetade Komolafe said on Wednesday that shoddy construction and weak foundations led to the collapse of a guesthouse owned by the church in September last year.

The incident strained diplomatic relations between South Africa and Nigeria. The church's rejection of the coroner's findings caused further public anger in South Africa, with callers to a Johannesburg radio station accusing it of shirking responsibility.

Joshua's evangelical Christian ministry draws tens of thousands of followers from across Africa, including politicians and sports stars, amid claims that he has the ability to cure the terminally ill and raise the dead.

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