

# 100 children feared trapped as school collapses in Lagos



Emergency and rescue personnel are seen at the site of a building which collapsed in Lagos

● **Police said they believed scores of people were trapped under the rubble**

● **Panicked parents, local residents and shocked onlookers rushed to the area**

● **A reporter at the scene saw at least eight people pulled from the wreckage**

● **School bags, toys and clothes could be seen among the piles of rubble**

Reuters, AFP | Lagos, Nigeria

As many as 100 children and many others were feared trapped yesterday after a building containing a primary school collapsed in Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos.

A reporter at the scene saw

a boy of 10 being pulled from the rubble covered in dust but with no visible injuries. A crowd erupted into cheers as another child was pulled from the wreckage. The two were among eight children residents said had been rescued so far.

Workers on top of the rubble shoveled debris away as thousands of people swarmed around the rescue site — dozens watching from rooftops and hundreds more packed into the surrounding streets.

"It is believed that many people including children are currently trapped in the building," said Ibrahim Farinloye, spokesman for the National Emergency Management Agency's southwest region, adding that casualty figures were not yet available.

Residents of the area said around 100 children attended the school, which was on the third floor of the building.

At the site, many people were shouting and screaming. A fight almost broke out as anger at the collapse boiled over.

In the crowd's midst stood ambulances, fire trucks and a fork lift. Workers from the Red Cross

and police were on hand.

The building was in the Ita-faji area of Lagos island, the original heart of the lagoon city before it expanded onto the mainland.

"We are still trying to find out how many are trapped inside," said police officer Seun Ariwoy, who added that the number was probably scores.

He said "at least 20 have been brought out" but did not say whether they were alive or dead.

One local resident who witnessed the moment of collapse said there was no warning.

"We were smoking outside when the building just collapsed," Olamide Nuzbah told in pidgin English.

## Distraught parents

As rescuers worked furiously to reach those inside, distraught parents begged them to find their children.

"Please, save my child, save my child!" wept one traumatised mother whose seven-year-old daughter was trapped inside, as people tried in vain to console her.

School bags, toys and clothes could be seen among the piles

of rubble as a bulldozer tried to clear a path through some of the wreckage to help the rescue efforts. As the day wore on, a correspondent saw several children being brought out, at least one of whom appeared to be dead.

Elsewhere, hundreds of local residents tried to help, passing water and helmets through to dust-covered rescuers working tirelessly to sift through the rubble, some of whom appeared to be distressed.

Many locals said that the building, which was in an advanced state of disrepair, had been "earmarked" for demolition by the authorities.

Lagos, which has a population of 20 million people and serves as Nigeria's economic capital, is made up of a collection of islands. One of them is Lagos Island, a densely-populated area which is one of the city's oldest neighbourhoods.

It is characterised by its Afro-Brazilian architecture, a style brought over by thousands of freed slaves who headed back home after decades working the plantations in Brazil.



Men carry a boy who was rescued



Rescue workers help carry a child



A woman reacts at the site of the collapse building



People watch rescue workers at the site

## 19 migrants kidnapped from bus in Mexico

AFP | Mexico City, Mexico

Nineteen passengers who were kidnapped from a bus last week in northern Mexico were migrants, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said yesterday, as investigators worked through the murky details of the case.

The men were crossing the violent state of Tamaulipas, on the US-Mexican border, on Thursday when four vehicles blocked the road and forced their bus to



Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador

stop, according to authorities.

Armed men then boarded the coach and kidnapped 19 passengers whose names they had on a list.

"I can confirm that they were

migrants," Lopez Obrador said, referring to the abducted men, without specifying their nationalities. The bus was traveling from the port of Tampico to Reynosa, a border city across from McAllen, Texas.

Although the bus driver told authorities that 19 passengers were kidnapped, investigation sources have indicated the real number of victims could be as high as 25.

The president told a news conference that one line of

investigation is the possibility the men could have staged their own kidnapping as a way to drop off the radar and then enter the United States undetected.

Mexico's National Human Rights Commission, however, warned the men may have been genuinely kidnapped, and that their lives could be in danger.

"They are in a situation of vulnerability on multiple fronts that places them at extraordinary risk," it said in a statement.

## Several dead in Brazil school shooting

Sao Paulo, Brazil

A shooting at a school near Sao Paulo yesterday left several people dead, police sources said, with initial reports putting the death toll as high as eight.

Sao Paulo's state military police department said that "several people were shot" when "an individual" entered the institution in Suzano and opened fire.

Brazilian television channel Globo and website U01 said eight people had died, including five children, a teacher and two teenagers believed to be the shooters.

U01 said 17 people were also injured in the shooting.

Television pictures showed worried family members congregating outside the Raul Brasil school in the greater Sao Paulo area, alongside firefighters and security services.