

George collapse death toll rises to 6 in ongoing rescue effort

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Rescuers searched through the debris of a multi-storey building collapse in George that has left at least five people dead and dozens still trapped. President Cyril Ramaphosa offered his condolences to the families of the deceased and called for an investigation.



A rescue worker walks with a dog past the site where construction workers are trapped under a building that collapsed in George. Source: Reuters/Esa Alexander

"Investigations into the cause of the incident must aim to bring closure to the community and prevent a repeat of this disaster," Ramaphosa's office said in a statement.

Twenty-six construction workers who were at the site of the unfinished building when it collapsed have been removed from the rubble, while 49 remained unaccounted for, the municipality of George said in a statement.

"Three teams of rescue personnel are currently working on three different areas within the site of the collapsed building," it said.

A drone view of the site showed rescue workers removing debris in a bid to reach those still under the rubble.

"We are focusing on the areas... where we have actually been hearing people," Colin Deiner, chief of disaster management for the Western Cape province, told reporters at the scene.

CCTV footage obtained by Reuters showed a cloud of dust as the building crumbled on Monday afternoon.

“ Updated statement: *George Municipality confirms that as of 12pm this morning, 7 May, a total of six (6) patients have been declared deceased. Twenty-seven (27) patients have been removed from the rubble of the collapsed multi-story construction site at 75 Victoria Street, leaving 48 persons unaccounted for. 75 construction workers were present on the site at the time of the collapse which occurred at 14:09 on Monday 6 May and the rescue operation is now approaching 22 hours as of 12pm today, 7 May. An update will be issued at 3pm, 7 May 2024 – South African Time. ”*

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