

George collapse survivor returns to site to 'check on guys'

By [Shafiek Tassiem](#) and [Esa Alexander](#)

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Moses Malala, a 34-year-old construction worker who escaped the wreckage of a five-storey building in George, South Africa, recalled the moment it collapsed and a cloud of dust engulfed him, as rescue efforts continued at the site 48 hours on.



Rescuers work to rescue construction workers trapped under a building that collapsed in George. Source: Reuters/Esa Alexander

Malala and 74 other construction workers were on site when the building crumbled on Monday. So far 36 have been retrieved so far, including seven deceased, while 39 remain unaccounted for.

Malala survived with only minor injuries but said he is scarred by the death of a co-worker and unable to sleep.



George collapse rescue mission continues: 7 dead and 36 retrieved

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"I see the dust coming up. Starting from the basement it's coming up... then I'm starting to see the slab is cracking, sliding to go down," he recalled.

"Every night I can't sleep," Malala said, adding he is thinking of the co-worker nearest to him who passed away. He has been returning to the site "to check our guys".

Search and rescue

Local authorities in the city east of Cape Town said on Tuesday that the rescue teams were in contact with some survivors buried beneath the structure. Teams searched the site with sniffer dogs.

It is not yet clear how the building collapsed. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has called for an investigation.

Alan Winde, premier for the Western Cape province, said more than 200 emergency service personnel were involved in the rescue on Wednesday.

"I cannot express the emotions I felt yesterday when the site would suddenly go completely quiet in the hope that our teams might be close to locating another survivor," Winde said.

Rescuers were met with applause when they pulled survivors from the debris, riddled with broken concrete slabs and twisted steel reinforcements.

Community spirit

Edna Nissi waited for an update on her brother Charles Thangalimodzi, who is believed to still be under the rubble.

"From Monday we didn't hear anything that he is out. We heard this morning that he is still down," she said.

Friends and relatives of the other workers gathered at the site and sang, joined by local reverend Siyanda Sijila, who said the community had not experienced an event like this before.

"We only see these things happening somewhere else but now it's happened to us," Sijila said.

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