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Eight SBCA Officials Receive Bail in Lyari Building Collapse Case

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An Additional District and Sessions Judge (South) in Karachi granted bail to eight Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) officers connected to the collapse of a five-storey building in Lyari's Baghdadi area, which resulted in 27 deaths. The incident highlighted systemic failures in Pakistan's urban governance and raised serious questions about accountability and justice.

The collapse of Fotan Mansion on July 4, 2025, a deteriorating structure built in 1986, caused widespread outrage after claiming 27

lives, including women and children. The SBCA had declared the building unsafe since 2023 and issued several evacuation notices, yet it remained occupied. Utilities such as electricity and water continued to be supplied, despite the risk, as noted by defence lawyer Shahab Sarki during the bail hearing. The court granted bail to the eight officers – Syed Irfan Haider Naqvi, Ashfaq Hussain, Mohammad Jalees Siddiqui, Syed Faheem Murtaza, Asim Ali Khan, Faheem Ahmed, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, and Raheem Hussain Shah – each required to post a surety bond of Rs1 million. The defence argued that the officers had limited tenure and enforcement authority in Lyari, a challenging area, and the court noted weaknesses in the prosecution’s legal case.

The tragedy exposed deep-rooted problems in Karachi’s building regulation framework. The First Information Report (FIR) filed by Hamadullah, a section officer in the Sindh Local Government, Housing, and Town Planning Department, accused SBCA officials of criminal negligence for failing to act despite being aware of the building’s condition since 2022. However, the defence pointed to broader systemic failures involving utility providers and oversight committees led by the Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner. The SBCA Director General Shahmeer Khan Bhutto has issued show-cause notices to 21 officers, reflecting some internal accountability measures, but public confidence remains low. With 722 dangerous buildings identified in Karachi as of 2024, without substantial reforms and strict enforcement, such tragedies are likely to continue, leaving citizens vulnerable and justice unresolved.