

\$95.6M awarded to Philadelphia building collapse survivor

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PHILADELPHIA (AP) - An arbitrator has awarded \$95.6 million to a Ukrainian immigrant who was seriously injured in a 2013 Philadelphia building collapse.

Mariya Plekan's attorney, **Andrew Stern**, announced the division of the \$227 million settlement on Thursday. Lawyers for 19 people killed or injured in the collapse reached the settlement with several defendants in February after a 17-week trial. Plekan was expected to receive the largest individual portion.

Six people were killed and 13 injured when a towering brick wall left unbraced during a demolition project crushed an adjacent Salvation Army store on June 5, 2013. One of the injured died a few weeks later. The jury had found the Salvation Army and the building owner, a New York real estate speculator, largely responsible.

Plekan, who was then 52 and a frequent shopper at the Salvation Army store, was buried beneath the rubble for 13 hours. Stern said she was rescued, but her injuries were so severe that she suffered a "guillotine amputation," the removal of the lower half of her body at the hips.

Stern told the jury at trial earlier this year that Plekan had undergone 30 operations. While she had survived kidney failure and lung problems, she had lost her ability to speak because of throat damage from months on a respirator. He added that she would require 24-hour medical care for the rest of her life and estimated her future medical expenses at \$50 million.

"We take comfort that Ms. Plekan finally can obtain the appropriate skilled medical care she needs for the rest of her life, and that she has received just compensation for the gruesome injuries she sustained from this devastating tragedy," Stern said Thursday following the arbitrator's announcement of the award.