

# Ibadan stampede: Death toll hits 40; Ooni's ex-wife, others detained

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**T**he city of Ibadan has been thrown in mourning following the stampede at a children's funfair organised by the Wing's Foundation, an NGO, which resulted in the death of 35 children and hospitalisation of others.

Daily Trust had reported that a stampede occurred at Islamic High School, Bashorun Ibadan, after an uncontrolled crowd besieged the school gate in an attempt to benefit from provisions made for 5,000 children.

Following the unfortunate stampede which occurred on Wednesday, the city of Ibadan has been thrown into mourning as condolences to the victims' parents and their families are being expressed on news and social media.

Daily Trust spoke with Mrs Oniyide; the mothers of one of the victims. She confirmed the death of her child and lamented how she was not aware that her child was heading to the venue.

"I did not know that anyone was sharing anything. My child was 10 years old. Aina is her name. She did not tell me. No one told me. She went hawking as she normally hawks ogi (corn pap) for me every morning. It was yesterday evening that I heard that many children were wounded or dead. I had been looking for her all day. She did not tell me. We found her body in one of the hospitals, very late at night. We have buried her," she cried.

A witness, 18-year-old Ganiyat Ajibola, said that she lives around the venue of the incident, said "The crowd was too much. Some of the parents came with as many as six to seven children and were struggling to gain entry with them.

"I saw a mother helping her child to climb the fence, another was very tired herself and almost fainted as she tried to retrieve her children from the crowd. I thought it was fun, I didn't know that so many lives would be lost," she said.

While expressing condolences, the Nigerian Bar Association, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and a host of indigenes, dignitaries and politicians, urged the state



■ Oyo State Deputy Governor, Bayo Lawal during a visit to the victims of the stampede

Photo: Adenike Kaffi

government to conduct a thorough investigation and bring those found culpable to book.

Meanwhile, Prophetess Naomi Silekunola and eight others have been arrested and are helping with investigations into the circumstances that led to the incident.

Daily Trust also gathered that the embattled ex-wife of the Ooni of Ife, Oba Enitan Ogunwusi, who is also the main sponsor of the event, is currently being investigated by the State Criminal Investigation Department of the Nigeria Police.

According to Wale Osifeso, Oyo State PPRO, others being interrogated include Fasasi Abdulahi, the principal, Islamic High School, Ibadan, Genesis Christopher, Tanimowo Moruf, Anisulaja Olabode, Idowu Ibrahim, and Abiola Oluwatimilehin.

The police have also called on residents around the axis not to panic as they would witness high-level patrols and visible police presence to prevent hoodlums from taking advantage of the unfortunate situation.

Meanwhile, the Ooni of Ife has condoled with the victims and their families while affirming support for affected persons.

According to Otunba Moses Olafare, Director, Media and Public Affairs of Ooni's Palace, Queen Naomi Silekunola, who is an ex-wife of Oba Enitan Ogunwusi (Ojaja II), meant well as she had always

been known for her philanthropic contributions to the society.

He said, "The House of Oduduwa extends its heartfelt sympathy to the government of Oyo State, the organisers, Agidigbo Radio, owned by Oriyomi Hamzat, the Women in Need of Guidance and Support (WINGS) owned by a former queen at the Ooni's Palace; Ms Naomi Silekunola Ogunseyi, the bereaved families of the young souls lost in the tragic incident in Ibadan yesterday.

"We share in the grief and pains that have engulfed the affected families. We pray that Olodumare grants them the fortitude to bear this trying time.

"While at the Ile Oodua here as a queen, Miss Naomi Silekunola Ogunseyi demonstrated love and care to the children of Ile-Ife through similar events which she executed passionately to give succour to children of indigent parents every December period like this."

He added that the House of Oduduwa pledges to support all efforts aimed at bringing solace and healing to those affected by the devastating loss.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has expressed sorrow over the loss of lives in the stampede during the children's carnival in Ibadan.

In a statement issued by Bayo Onanuga, his special adviser on information and strategy, the president ordered investigation into

the incident.

Tinubu extended his condolences to the government and people of Oyo State and, most importantly, to the grieving families that have lost their children in the unfortunate event.

"In this moment of mourning, President Tinubu stands in solidarity with the affected families and offers prayers that the Almighty God will grant peace to the souls of those who have departed in this unfortunate event," the statement reads.

"President Tinubu has urgently directed the relevant authorities to investigate the circumstances of this tragedy thoroughly. He emphasises that it is imperative to determine whether negligence or deliberate actions contributed to this painful incident, ensuring a transparent and accountable process."

The president also called on event organisers to prioritise the safety of all attendees, especially children.

The First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu also in a separate statement condoled with Governor Seyi Makinde and the people of Oyo State over the sad incident that resulted in the loss of innocent lives and left many injured.

In a message she personally signed, Remi condoled with the governor and the people and prayed for speedy recovery and total healing for those who are still in hospital.

"May the Lord grant peace to

Oyo State, comfort to the families who have lost their loved ones and hope to those grieving at this time. My heartfelt condolences to all those affected by this devastating incident," She said.

The governor of Ebonyi State, Hon. Francis Nwifuru, yesterday commiserated with his Oyo counterpart, Abiodun Makinde, over the death of dozens of children on Wednesday.

"On behalf of the people of Ebonyi State, we went to sympathize with the people of Oyo State and the families over the sad event which happened yesterday, Wednesday," he said.

Governor Nwifuru, represented by his Chief of Staff, Dr Emmanuel Echiagu, who described the incident as a big loss to the nation, further condoled with the family of the deceased.

"What happened was a huge loss not only to the people of Oyo but to the nation," he stated.

The presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP) in last year's elections, Peter Obi, has expressed outrage over Wednesday's children's funfair party stampede, which claimed many lives and caused multiple injuries to other children.

Yesterday, the Chief of staff to Oyo governor, Mr. Segun Ogunwuyi, said the dead toll had reached 40.

"More than 40 children have been confirmed dead while others are still in critical condition," Ogunwuyi disclosed in Ebonyi on Thursday, during Governor Seyi Makinde's birthday celebration, organized by Ali/Onyeyinchi Odefe education foundation.

The Police Command in Oyo State had earlier confirmed the arrest of eight suspects in connection with Wednesday's stampede during a children's funfair at Basorun Islamic High School, Ibadan.

The command's spokesperson, SP Adewale Osifeso, confirmed the arrest of the suspects and the death of 35 minors in a statement he issued in Ibadan on Thursday.

Osifeso said 35 minors had so far been documented dead while six others were left critically injured and on various medical interventions.

Osifeso said the case had been transferred to the Homicide Section of the State Criminal Investigation Department, Iyaganku, with the Deputy Commissioner of Police leading the investigation.

## Wike revokes Onnoghen, Abass, Akume's land allocations

By Hussein Yahaya

The FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike, has revoked 762 plots of land belonging to high-profile Nigerians in the highbrow Maitama district of Abuja over non-payment of statutory fees.

A public notice issued by the Federal Capital Territory

Administration (FCTA) on Thursday, said the affected people failed to pay for their Certificates of Occupancy (C-of-Os) for the confiscated plots.

Among those whose C-of-Os were revoked are the former Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Walter Onnoghen; Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abbas Tajudeen;

Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), George Akume, his wife, Regina; and Uba Sani, governor of Kaduna.

Former and serving lawmakers on the list include Senate chief whip, Tahir Monguno; former deputy speaker of the House of Representatives, Chibudom Nwuche; former Senate leader,

Teslim Folarin; former House of Representatives member, Nnenna Ukeje; Andy Uba and Smart Adeyemi, both former senators.

The FCTA also threatened to withdraw the rights of occupancy (R-of-O) of 614 other individuals and companies if they failed to pay outstanding bills for their plots within two weeks.

The notice said, "The Federal Capital Territory Administration wishes to inform the allottee(s)/title holder(s) of plots of land in Maitama 1 who have failed to make payment for their Certificate of Occupancy (C-of-O) bills that their Right of Occupancy to the land/property has been withdrawn.