

Rice Stampede: Anambra Police Confirm 22 Deaths, Soludo Mourns



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The Anambra State Police Command confirmed on Sunday that 22 people died in the rice stampede that occurred on Saturday in the Ihiala Local Government Area of the state.

The Anambra State Government also expressed grief over the tragic loss of lives in the incident.

The Commissioner of Police in Anambra State, CP Nnaghe Obono Itam, provided the figure after visiting the hospital where the victims of the stampede were receiving treatment.

The CP, while commiserating with the families and friends of the deceased, wished the injured quick recovery.

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The spokesman of the command, SP Ikenga Tochukwu, who spoke on behalf of the CP, said in a statement that the investigation into the unfortunate incident was still ongoing.

He assured that the police command remained dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of Ndi Anambra through crime prevention, prompt and effective emergency response, protection of vulnerable population, and fostering a sense of security and community.

Meanwhile, Anambra State Governor, Prof. Charles Soludo, has extended his deepest condolences to the families of the deceased, especially the women, the elderly, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children who lost their lives in this unfortunate incident.

The governor's condolences were conveyed in a statement issued by his Press Secretary, Mr. Christian Aburime.

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The statement said that, according to available information, the state government acknowledged that the Obi Jackson Foundation, led by Chief Ernest Obiejesi, had organised the event with the noble intention of sharing relief materials with less privileged members of the community during the festive season.

According to the governor, the resulting tragedy underscored the urgent need for a more structured and safer approach to distributing such assistance.

“The Anambra State Government, in response to the incident, has initiated a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding the stampede. The government will work closely with relevant agencies to determine the root causes of this unfortunate event and ensure that any negligence or lapses in safety protocols are duly addressed,” he stated.

Meanwhile, the state government has also urged all well-meaning individuals and organisations engaged in charitable activities to prioritise the safety and well-being of beneficiaries.

Soludo strongly advised that future distributions of relief materials be conducted in a more organised and decentralised manner, with adequate crowd control measures in place.

“This method may include establishing multiple distribution points within the community to reduce overcrowding at a single location; implementing a system to prioritize vulnerable groups such as the elderly, pregnant women, children, and people with disabilities; employing trained personnel to manage crowds, ensure orderly queues, and provide assistance to those in need; and conducting public awareness campaigns to educate the public on safety protocols during such events,” he added.