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Two persons were feared dead and several others injured yesterday, following a stampede at Ibom Hall on IBB Way, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State capital.

The government had announced its intention to empower unemployed graduates and students to the tune of several millions of naira in order to garner support for the upcoming elections.

Consequently, thousands of students trooped to Ibom Hall, venue of the cash disbursement, but poor management of the crowd resulted in a stampede.

According to Imo Bassey, from Akpautong in Esit Eket Local Government Area, trouble started when the Deputy Governor-designate, Obong Nsima Ekere, announced that the sum of N3.1 million would be shared across the 31 local government areas.

Incidentally, he had asked the beneficiaries to conduct themselves peacefully in order to avoid a repeat of the stampede that occurred in Port Harcourt during a presidential rally of the Peoples Democratic Party recently.

But the Commissioner for Youths and Sports, Ojong Asuquo, who conducted the sharing of the money only narrowly escaped being mobbed by the angry youths.

One of the supposed beneficiaries, Etim Antia, who hails from Abak, said: "The anger of the people grew as the students waited for a long time for the money. People were asked to queue according to their local government areas.

"They wanted to start alphabetically from Abak Local Government, but they later started with Uyo. The people were disappointed and started throwing stones at the officials around 7 pm, causing the commissioner to flee.

"The money was later handed over to the executive members of the graduates' forum, who ran away with the money."

According to him, the police threw several canisters of tear gas and used gun butts and batons to control the surging crowd.

One of the protesters was knocked down by a fast-moving Hilux van along Barracks Road during the protest.

Meanwhile, sixteen Akwa Ibom indigenes, who are victims of the Port Harcourt stampede, are still lying critically ill at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (UUTH).

Governor Godswill Akpabio, moved by compassion, has promised to pick their medical bills.



Comments (4 posted):

francis on 05/03/2011 06:12:10



hmmmm.



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Anik Eyoh on 05/03/2011 08:55:50



First off, you guys should try and get your facts right before publishing. The unfortunate incident occurred at The Government House at Wellington Bassey Way.

Second, I don't see why his advisers or he himself (Akpabio) didn't foresee the stampede issue. The so-called "security" people have now arrested people some of which were just passing by. I mean, we're talking about money and youths.. You don't expect voluntary orderliness from this combo. Moreover the supposed money was for students but they failed to make sure that only "students" went into Government House, hence the influx of touts and alalok (commercial cyclists). Now people are wounded, some in jail because of paltry N1000.