

Port Harcourt stampede: we didn't expect the crowd size, says King's Assembly

By Mike Odiegwu, Port Harcourt On May 30, 2022



- Abandoned footwear of some of the victims

King's Assembly, the church, whose Saturday outreach programme caused a stampede that killed 31 persons at Polo Club, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, has regretted the disaster.

The church also said it did not anticipate the size of the crowd that turned up for the event.

The church held only one yesterday instead of its usual three.

A member of the church said the pastor was in attendance but could not teach the congregation.

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In a statement by its Director of Administration, Chimeka Elem, the church said the stampede happened in the early hours before the commencement of its "benevolent and outreach programme called Shop-for-Free".

Elem described the programme as nondenominational and said its purpose was to share with the less privileged the gifts provided by members of the church, friends and partners.

He said: “Unfortunately, lives were lost and several people sustained varying degrees of injuries”.

Explaining the origin, Elem said: “Our Shop-for-Free programme was started in 2014 as our annual benevolent outreach and our choice of the large venue, Polo Club, was to accommodate the projected attendance.

“This year’s turnout, buildup and the attendant circumstances were absolutely unanticipated. The crowd converged overnight long before the security team for the event took formation”.