

# Police confirm 35 children dead in Ibadan stampede



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- *Tinubu mourns, orders probe*

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- *Ooni's ex-queen, six others arrested*

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The police yesterday put the death toll of children during the stampede at a funfair in Ibadan on Wednesday at 35.

Six critically injured participants are undergoing treatment.

Also yesterday, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who expressed deep sorrow over the deaths, ordered full investigation.

The police added that seven people, including Naomi Silekunola, an ex-queen of Ooni of Ife Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi, have been taken into custody in connection with the incident.

On Wednesday, the Oyo State government, in an initial statement which it later withdrew to allow the police to compile the casualties figure, said 32 children died.

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Wings Foundation, in collaboration with Agidigbo FM, organised the funfair, with a plan to give N5,000 each and food to 5,000 kids.

The event slated for the Islamic High School, Bashorun, Ibadan was billed to start by 10 am.

However, as early as 5 am, children, many of them accompanied by their parents, started converging on the venue. By 7.30 am, the place was jam-packed.

An attempt to open the gate of the venue led to a stampede.

In an attempt to gain an advantage, many were trampled upon, causing deaths and injuries.

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An eyewitness said security was inadequate and the event poorly planned.

Police spokesman Adewale Osifeso, who said the matter had been transferred to the Homicide Section for a full investigation, announced that six others are critically injured and receiving treatment.

He listed those arrested as follows: “Prophetess Naomi Silekunola ‘f’ age 31yrs, Fasasi Abdulahi, ‘m’ age 56yrs (School Principal Islamic High School, Ibadan), Genesis Christopher, ‘m’ age 24yrs, Tanimowo Moruf, ‘m’ age 52yrs, Anisolaja Olabode, ‘m’ age 42yrs, Idowu Ibrahim, ‘m’ age 35yrs and Abiola Oluwatimilehin, ‘m’ age 25yrs.”

The statement by the police added: “Sequel to the stampede recorded on Wednesday 18/12/2024 at the Islamic High School, Basorun, Ibadan venue of the family event organised by Wings Foundation

and media partner, Agidigbo FM, the Oyo State Police Command wishes to inform the good people of the state that seven persons have since been arrested for their various involvements.

“So far, 35 minors have been documented dead while six others are critically injured and on various medical interventions.

“In furtherance of the above, the case has since been transferred to the Homicide Section of the State Criminal Investigation Department, Iyaganku with the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge leading the investigations.

“Also, residents around the axis are advised not to panic as they would witness high-level patrols and visible police presence to prevent hoodlums from taking advantage of the unfortunate situation.

“Finally, the Oyo State Police Command sympathises with all the families and loved ones affected by the tragedy and assures the good people of the state that Justice will be served accordingly.”

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### **It should not reoccur, says Tinubu**

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President Tinubu said in a statement by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, that safety measures should be put in place to prevent a reoccurrence.

The President extended his heartfelt condolences to the government and people of Oyo State, and the grieving families.

“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 read.

President Tinubu directed relevant authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into the tragedy, emphasising the need for transparency and accountability.

He said: “It is imperative to determine whether negligence or deliberate actions contributed to this painful incident.”

Apart from demanding accountability, the President urged the Oyo State Government to implement stringent safety measures, including a comprehensive review of safety protocols at public events, strict enforcement of regulations, and regular audits of event venues, to prevent a recurrence.

The President also appealed to event organisers to prioritise safety, especially for children, stressing the importance of professional security, protocol, and logistics.

He added: “Our children’s safety and well-being remain paramount. No event should ever compromise their safety or take precedence over their lives.”

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### **First Lady mourns**

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Senator Tinubu, who expressed deep sorrow over the tragic stampede, described the tragedy as a blow to the state and the country.

In a condolence message to Governor Makinde and the people of Oyo, she extended her heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families, friends, and loved ones of the deceased.

Mrs. Tinubu said: “I condole with Governor Makinde, and the people of Oyo State on the tragedy that occurred on Wednesday, where the lives of many children were lost in a stampede.

“I sympathise with the family friends, and loved ones of the deceased.”

The First Lady also offered prayers for the speedy recovery of those injured in the incident, emphasising the need for hope and healing in the face of such a heartbreaking occurrence.

She said: “I also pray for speedy recovery and total healing for those who are still in the 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.