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Rivers PDP rally stampede: death toll rises to 19

Posted By [admin](#) On 14 Feb 2011. Under [Across the nation, Hot Stories](#)

No fewer than 19 supporters of the People's Democratic Party [PDP] in the South-South zone have been reported dead due to a stampede at the Liberation Stadium, Elekahia, venue of the PDP rally for the April elections in Port-Harcourt, the Rivers state capital.

Eye witnesses say the stampede began after a policeman fired into the air in an attempt to disperse surging crowds as thousands of party supporters left the rally.

The Acting Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mr Blesyn Wikina confirmed the casualties, saying about 29 others injured in the stampede had been taken to a state owned hospital, and the Teme clinic managed by doctors without borders.

Wikina said: "The incident is regrettable, including the accident that happened at Aba road. As I speak to you ambulances are still going there to take care of those who are injured."

However, while confirming the incident, the Rivers State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Rita Inoma-Abbey could not say the exact casualty figure.

Inoma-Abbey, a Superintendent of Police

(SP) said: "At about 14:50 hours at the liberation stadium, Elekahia during the presidential campaign flag off for the South-South zone, lots of jubilant supporters were exiting the main gate that their governors had been given the PDP flag. Those coming in were pushing their way out. In the ensuing



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stampede, so many people fell down.

"The police mounted troops, Police Mobile Force (PMF) and other security agents contained the push by closing the main gate to rescue the victims. Some were taken to clinic with police ambulance.

"Some to Teme Clinic and Braithwaite Memorial Hospital (BMH) for treatment. Identities of casualties and number of death are unknown."



The state Governor, Chibuike Amechi ordered ambulance services to evacuate the injured to hospitals for treatment and the dead to the mortuary.

Prior to this time, two persons reportedly lost their lives in an accident involving the presidential

convoy along the Port Harcourt-Aba road.

Meanwhile, the Senate President, Senator David Mark said he is saddened over the death of 19 PDP supporters in Port-Harcourt.

Senator Mark in a condolence message sympathized with President Goodluck Jonathan, the government and people of rivers state as well as the bereaved families.

He goes on to tell Governor Rotimi Amechi of Rivers State to set machinery in motion with a view to identifying the victims in order to compensate the bereaved families.

Senator Mark reiterated the need for free, fair and credible polls in April so that those who lost their lives in the stampede during the rally would not be in vain.

Senator Mark also asked security operatives especially the police to investigate the cause of yesterday's stampede in order to improve on crowd management and control.

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