

Woman dies after Rivers palliative sharing stampede

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A 62-year-old woman identified as Florence Onuobodo has died at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital after her involvement in a stampede that occurred in Elele, the Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The woman was said to have been trampled upon during Saturday's sharing of the state government palliatives to cushion the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, while three others were injured.

While some sources said the stampede happened outside the Vintage Farm, where the palliatives were shared, others insisted that the stampede occurred outside the place where the food items were distributed.

It was gathered that four women involved in the incident were rushed to the Elele Health Centre, while Onuobodo, whose condition appeared to be critical, was referred to the University of Port Harcourt, where she later died.

One of the leaders in the area, Eze Okechukwu Okah, explained that the stampede would not have occurred if the process was well managed.

“We know that our people are hungry because of the lockdown, but the governor has a good intention and a good mind to ensure that people who are on lockdown will feed.

“But why should there be stampede? It is just that somebody is taking it (sharing of palliatives) personal; taking it to his house and selecting people that he wants to give. If everybody had been allowed to enter the compound and allowed to observe social distance, I don’t think such stampede would occur.

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“The person wanted elected people who would be loyal to him. Did the governor give out the palliatives for people who would be loyal to him? The governor did not think about PDP or APC or any other party; he did it so that everybody will benefit from that.

“If the person had made up his mind to give to everybody equally, there would not have been stampede. During my own palliative, I brought out money to buy food and also gave women N5,000 each to help them,” Okah said.

But the Jacob Amadi, Councillor representing Ward 4, Elele and head of the palliative committee, explained that contrary to the claim in some quarters, the incident happened outside the venue of the palliative sharing.

When contacted, the State Police Public Relations Officer, Nnamdi Omoni, confirmed the incident, saying, “I am aware of the incident.”