

# Tinubu Orders Strict Enforcement of Crowd Control Measures as 39 Die in Anambra, FCT Stampedes

NIGERIA | 1 day ago



49  
Shares

Share

Share

Share

**\*Cancels scheduled Lagos events in honour of victims**

**\*Oyo, Abuja, Anambra stampedes signs of Nigeria's systemic failures, says Obi**

**\*Catholic Church, Kaigama, Obi Jackson Foundation  
mourn victims**

**\*IG orders probe, police may prosecute organisers**

**\*Sanwo-Olu, Wike direct distributors of palliatives to  
seek approval**

Deji Elumoye, Chuks Okocha, Olawale Ajimotokan,  
Onyebuchi Ezigbo, Linus Aleke in Abuja and David-Chyddy  
Eleke in Awka

President Bola Tinubu yesterday charged the state  
governments and other relevant authorities to enforce strict  
crowd control measures following the death of 39 people in  
stampedes in Anambra State and the Federal Capital  
Territory (FCT).

Tinubu also cancelled all his official events in Lagos,  
including attendance at the 2024 Lagos Boat Regatta in  
honour of the victims of the stampedes.

Reacting to the unfortunate incidents that occurred in  
Anambra State and the FCT, the presidential candidate of  
the Labour Party (LP) in the 2023 general election, Mr Peter

Obi, in a series of tweets on X, described the stampedes as systemic failures plaguing Nigeria.

The Catholic Church in Nigeria and the Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Most Rev. Ignatius Kaigama have also expressed shock and sadness at yesterday's tragedy at the Holy Trinity Church Maitama in Abuja.

Obijackson Foundation has also expressed deep sorrow over the tragic incident that led to the loss of lives during a stampede in Okija, Anambra State, during its annual distribution of rice.

This is just as the Inspector General of Police (IG), Kayode Egbetokun yesterday ordered the Commissioners of Police (CPs) of FCT as well as Anambra, and Oyo states to

investigate the immediate and remote causes of the tragic stampede that led to the loss of lives in their respective commands.

In response to the frequent stampedes during philanthropic activities in parts of the country, the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu has directed that individuals and organisations planning to distribute items to large gatherings during the festive season must obtain approval from the Lagos State Safety Commission.

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has directed individuals or organisations planning the public distribution of palliatives to obtain police permission. In a statement by his Senior Special Assistant on Public Communications and New Media, Lere Olayinka, the minister also issued a directive to government hospitals to treat those who were injured in the stampede free of charge.

While 29 people, mostly women, died yesterday during the distribution of bags of rice by the Obijackson Foundation owned by a multibillionaire businessman and philanthropist, Chief Ernest Azudialu-Obiejesi in Okija, Ihiala Local Government Area (LGA) of Anambra State, 10 others were confirmed dead yesterday in a stampede during the distribution of food items at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Maitama, Abuja.

Before yesterday's incidents, 35 children had died last Wednesday in a stampede at a funfair in Ibadan, Oyo State. Wings Foundation, in collaboration with Agidigbo FM, organised the funfair, with a plan to give N5,000 each and food to 5,000 kids.

Reacting to the two incidents of yesterday, President Tinubu, according to a statement by his Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga has cancelled his scheduled plan to watch the boat parade and other activities of the Boat Regatta from the waterfront of his Queen's Drive residence in Ikoyi.

According to the statement, dignitaries, including top officials of the Lagos State government and white cap chiefs from the state, were already seated when the president cancelled his appearance following briefings on the tragedies.

Commiserating with the victims of the unfortunate incidents, President Tinubu urged state governments and relevant authorities to enforce strict crowd control measures immediately.

He noted that it was very disturbing that the events at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Maitama, Abuja, and a community Centre in Okija, Anambra State, bore a distressing resemblance to the recent incident in Ibadan, Oyo State.

The president said local and state authorities should no longer tolerate operational lapses by organisations and corporate bodies involved in charitable and humanitarian activities.

He reiterated that these mishaps are avoidable if event planners adhere to necessary safeguards and protocols to ensure pre- and post-event safety.

”In a season of joy and celebration, we grieve with fellow citizens mourning the painful losses of their loved ones. Our prayers of divine comfort and healing are with them,” the president said.

Oyo, Abuja, Anambra Stampedes Signs of Nigeria’s Systemic Failures, Says Obi



Also reacting, the presidential candidate of the LP in the 2023 general election, expressed sadness over the tragic loss of lives in stampedes during the collection of food palliatives in Oyo, Anambra, and Abuja.

In a series of tweets on X, Obi described the stampedes as systemic failures plaguing Nigeria.

He expressed concerns that despite abundant resources and fertile land in Nigeria, people were dying of hunger in the country.

“While I will not cast blame, but instead appreciate the organisers of these respective events for their kind gestures in providing palliatives and support to society, especially the poor, these tragedies reflect the systemic failures that plague our society.

“The desperate quest for survival in these harsh economic times has driven our people to extremes in their search for food, often at the cost of their lives.

“How do we explain that in a nation blessed with abundant resources, our people are dying of hunger in such numbers? How is it possible that we cannot feed our citizens despite the vast, fertile lands our nation is endowed with? My heart bleeds.”

Obi, however, commiserated with the families of the victims.

Catholic Church, Kaigama Mourn Victims

Meanwhile, the Catholic Church in Nigeria and the Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Kaigama have expressed shock and sadness at yesterday's tragedy at the Holy Trinity Church Maitama in Abuja.

Reacting to the tragedy, the Catholic Church said the ensuing stampede that caused deaths and injured some people was unexpected.

Speaking with journalists, the National Director of Social

Communications at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), Padre Mike Nsikak Umoh, said it was very unfortunate that such a good deed turned tragic.

He said the food distribution was designed by the church to bring succour to Nigerians during this Yuletide season.

Umoh urged all parishes across the country to put in place adequate crowd control measures to prevent any further incidents.

“It is very unfortunate this is happening in our country Nigeria, a land of plenty. We keep hearing every day about millions and billions being stolen with no accountability. It is sad because a similar incident occurred a few days ago in Ibadan. In our history in Nigeria, just within one week, we

have recorded two incidents,” CSN added.

“So, it’s an indication that hunger is real in the land; there is desperation in the land. People gravitate toward wherever there is food,” CSN said.

In his condolence message to the entire Archdiocesan family and the general public, Kaigama expressed shock and sadness at the incident.

He said: “I, on behalf of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja, mourn the tragic loss of lives and those injured at the St. Vincent de Paul Society’s food-sharing event at Holy Trinity Parish, Maitama, Abuja.”

In its reaction, the Obijackson Foundation has also expressed deep sorrow over yesterday’s tragic incident that led to the loss of lives in Okija, Anambra State.

According to a statement it issued, the foundation pledged to investigate the cause of the tragedy, to forestall future occurrences, stressing that it won’t be deterred from engaging in philanthropy.

“We humbly seek the understanding of our community as we reflect on this painful moment. This setback will not deter

us from our mission to serve the vulnerable and uplift those in need. We will learn from this experience and strive to do better,” the statement added.

### IG Orders Probe, Police May Prosecute Organisers

On his part, the IG of Police, Egbetokun, has expressed concerns over the unorganised distribution of palliatives and relief items across Nigeria during the festive period.

Addressing journalists in Abuja yesterday, the Force Spokesperson, Muyiwa Adejobi, said the IG has ordered the Commissioners of Police in the affected states to investigate the matter for possible legal actions.

He stated that the organisers of this charity are liable for criminal offences, citing relevant provisions in Nigeria's Penal and Criminal Codes.

Adejobi said, “The IG has hereby warned groups and organisers of similar events to ensure the involvement of security agencies as negligence on their part is criminal and would not be overlooked, as provided for in Sec. 196 of the Penal Code and Section 344 of the Criminal Code, Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.”

To Avert Stampedes, Lagos Tasks Distributors of Palliatives to Seek Approval

Meanwhile, the Lagos State Governor, Sanwo-Olu has directed individuals and organisations planning to distribute items to large gatherings during the festive season to register their events and obtain approval from the Lagos State Safety Commission to ensure proper crowd management and safety.

The Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Gbenga Omotoso, in a statement, emphasised the governor’s concerns over the recent tragic occurrences.

He also warned of strict legal consequences for non-compliance with the directive.