

# Death Toll From Stampede at Pentecostal Church Event Rises to 16

The death toll from a New Year's Eve stampede during a religious vigil at an overcrowded stadium in the Angolan capital Luanda has risen to 16, state-owned daily newspaper *Jornal de Angola* said on Wednesday.

State news agency Angop said on Tuesday that 10 people had been crushed to death and 120 injured at the gates of the Cidadela Desportiva stadium, where the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (IURD) organized a Pentecostal Christian vigil.

The death toll has now risen to 16, including three small children, an emergency services spokeswoman told the newspaper.

Angop cited Paulo de Almeida, the deputy leader of the Angolan police, as saying appropriate security measures for the vigil had been put in place but attendance exceeded estimates.

He said that around 150,000 people tried to attend the event at a stadium that has capacity for 50,000.

A IURD official earlier told Angop the church had expected an attendance of around 70,000.

IURD was created in 1977 in Brazil, where it has over 8 million followers, according to its website. IURD says it is present in most countries of the world.

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*Reporting by Shrikesh Laxmidas, edited by Richard Meares.*

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