

Nigeria Holy Ghost Church Stampede Kills 24 Worshipers

At least 24 people died during a stampede at an overcrowded church gathering in eastern Nigeria, the Red Cross said on Sunday.

Nineteen women were among the dead at the stampede in the Holy Ghost Catholic Church in Uke, Anambra state on Saturday, where around 100,000 worshippers had gathered for All Souls' Day, Red Cross spokesman Peter Kachi said by telephone.

"There were too many people and the place was so overcrowded," Osmond Okoli, who narrowly survived being squashed in the crowd, told local station Channels TV.

"We were too compacted so people fell and they were being pushed on us and then we all began to shout from the ground."

Religious services gathering several hundred thousand people are common in Nigeria, a country of around 170 million split roughly evenly between Christians and Muslims.

*Reporting by Anamesere Igboeroteonwu and Abraham Terngu;
Writing by Tim Cocks; Editing by Susan Fenton*

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