



AFRICA/NIGERIA - A stampede left at least 28 people dead during a prayer vigil

Abuja (Agenzia Fides) - A stampede that left at least 28 people dead was caused by a false alarm raised by someone not yet identified (and another 200 were hospitalized) in the Holy Ghost Adoration Center in Uke, in the State of Anambra (Nigeria). This was stated by His Exc. Mgr. Valerian Okeke, Bishop of Onitsha to Catholic News Service (CNS). "My heart goes to the families, relatives and friends of those who lost their lives", said the Bishop. The faithful were attending a vigil that was held on the night between 2 and 3 November .

According to another reconstruction shortly before the tragedy some local politicians went to the place of worship to address an election appeal to the faithful, raising protests among those present. Suddenly someone launched the alarm of a non-existent fire causing the stampede of about 5,000 people present.

After the tragedy in Uke, the chapter of the south-east of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN, the association that gathers the Christian denominations in Nigeria, including the Catholic Church) has decided to ban the holding of political meetings in churches. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 07/11/2013)