

At least six people have died during a crowd crush at a military recruitment event in a stadium in Ghana.

Wednesday's "tragic" crush appeared to have been caused by "an unexpected surge of applicants who breached security protocols and rushed into the gates," said a statement from Ghana's armed forces. Twenty-two others were injured, including five who remain in critical condition.

Thousands had turned up to El-Wak stadium, in the capital, Accra, with the hope of joining the military.

Ghana has a youth unemployment rate of about 32%, the latest government statistics show, and such recruitment events normally draw large crowds and often result in chaotic scenes.

The deadline to apply for this event was extended by a week to accommodate more applicants, as some had experienced difficulties in the process.

Army spokesperson Capt Veronica Adzo Arhin said the crush occurred ahead of the event's scheduled start of 06:20 GMT.

On the same day, five people were injured in a crush at separate military recruitment session in the central city of Kumasi, regional official Dr Frank Amoakohene reported on Facebook.

In Accra, families crowded the emergency ward at the 37 Military Hospital, desperate for news of their loved ones, the AFP news agency reported.

Relatives wept while security officers struggled to contain the crowd outside.

Ghana's President John Mahama arrived in the afternoon to visit the injured.

Despite the deaths, the recruitment exercise did start, but it was suspended in the afternoon "to allow for additional measures to ensure a seamless exercise", Capt Arhin said.

She added that there would be an investigation into the crush.