

Hammed ABODUNRIN

<http://www.ifra-nigeria.org/IMG/pdf/violence-related-death-osun-state.pdf>

A Survey of Violence Related
Deaths in Egbedore and
Ifedayo Local Government
of the State of Osun
(2006-2014)



The 'Invisible Violence' Project

Based in the premises of the French Institute for Research in Africa on the campus of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria Watch is a database project that has monitored fatal incidents and human security in Nigeria since 1 June 2006. The database compiles violent deaths on a daily basis, including fatalities resulting from accidents. It relies on a thorough reading of the Nigerian press (15 dailies & weeklies) and reports from human rights organisations. The two main objectives are to identify dangerous areas and assess the evolution of violence in the country.

However, violence is not always reported by the media, especially in remote rural areas that are difficult to access. Hence, in the last 8 years, Nigeria Watch has not recorded any report of fatal incidents in some of the 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the Nigerian Federation. There are two possibilities: either these places were very peaceful, or they were not covered by the media. This series of surveys thus investigates 'invisible' violence.

By 1 November 2014, there were still 23 LGAs with no report of fatal incidents in the Nigeria Watch database: Udung Uko and Urue-Offong/Oruko (Akwa Ibom), Kwaya Kusar (Borno), Nafada (Gombe), Auyo, Gagarawa, Kaugama and Yankwashi (Jigawa), Ingawa and Matazu (Katsina), Sakaba (Kebbi), Bassa, Igalamela-Odolu and Mopa-Muro (Kogi), Toto (Nassarawa), Ifedayo (Osun), Gudu and Gwadabaw (Sokoto), Ussa (Taraba), and Karasuwa, Machina, Nguru and Yunusari (Yobe).

*Dr. Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos
Professor, French Institute of Geopolitics, University of Paris 8*

**A Survey of Violence Related Deaths in
Egbedore and Ifedayo Local Government of
the State of Osun (2006-2014)**
Invisible Violence Project

Executive summary

Egbedore and Ifedayo local government areas (LGAs), like any other parts of the world, did not have complete immunity to violent conflicts and disasters that caused deaths. Though these areas are rural communities that did not attract media attention and have all happenings reported always, this does not mean that they had no share of violence leading to loss of lives between 2006 and 2014, the period under review. This paper focuses on these deaths, their causes, and the reasons such happenings were not reported by the national press.

A non-probability sampling technique was adopted for this study, using both incidental and purposive sampling to source information from people who were accessible and based on the researcher's choice, for accuracy. In all, 40 copies of a questionnaire were administered to stakeholders in violence and disaster management, while two Focus Group Discussions were conducted with commercial drivers and motorcyclists in each of the LGAs. In addition, nine interviews were conducted among the community leaders in the study areas and journalists working in the state. These were

* Hammed Abodunrin has an MA in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Any errors remain the sole responsibility of the author. Contact: hammedabodunrin@yahoo.com

complemented with relevant photographs. Secondary sources explored for the data used include records of the local governments, such as maps and souvenirs as well as their websites.

Virtually all the respondents (100% in Egbedore and 88.9% in Ifedayo) considered the study areas non-violent. However, nine and 13 violent deaths respectively were recorded in Egbedore and Ifedayo LGAs respectively during the period under review. Of these deaths, communal clashes and attacks over land disputes, police/transport union clashes, and personal attacks accounted for 22.2% in Egbedore and 30.8% in Ifedayo, whereas road accident deaths accounted for five (55.6%) in Egbedore and eight (61.5%) in Ifedayo. As revealed by the information gathered in the field, bad roads were responsible for the most of the accidents. For instance, Alagbede Hill, a particular spot along Ila-Ora road, recorded five of seven road crashes and six of the eight deaths caused by accidents in Ifedayo. Interviews conducted with journalists covering the State of Osun¹ revealed that almost all media houses represented in the state had one reporter to cover 30 LGAs and one area council. A number of reasons were advanced for not covering the councils appropriately: there were claims of poor and irregular salaries—and hence an inability to make frequent visits to remote parts of the state—lack of community newspapers, bad roads and poor transportation services, and an uncooperative attitude from security operatives in releasing information. In addition, journalists pointed to different media house styles, which see some stories as not weighty enough to make national news.

In light of all these factors, adequate coverage of events in rural Nigeria to make violent incidents in such areas visible can only be achieved through the use of

¹ The present administration in the state changed the name from Osun State to the State of Osun.

community-based media, not only to report violence but to also to offering early warning services.

INTRODUCTION

Violence is a global problem confronting all parts of the world, with its attendant negative effects on lives, property, and the environment. While quite a number of direct violent occurrences in terms of wars, insurgencies, and terrorist actions, among other high-profile destructive acts, are being witnessed in places like Syria, Central African Republic, and Nigeria, other lethal violent events also abound and, in many cases, pass unnoticed. These include violent communal clashes, riots, armed banditry, arson, ritual killing, and related extra-judicial killings, which remain 'invisible' since they are not recorded or accounted for. This work conducted a survey of such invisible violence, including violent deaths caused by accidents, in Egbedore and Ifedayo LGAs of the State of Osun from 2006 to May 2014.

THE STUDY AREA

Egbedore

Egbedore LGA is situated 7° 49' N and 4° 26' E and covers an approximate area of 102 km² in the State of Osun (Fig. 5). It has its headquarters in Awo, about 12 km from Osogbo, the state capital. Created in 1989 from the old Ede local government, Egbedore has many historical towns, including Ido-Osun (which hosted the first aerodrome in Nigeria), Ara, Ojo, Iragberi, Ofatedo, Ido, Ekuro, Iwoye, Aro, Okinni, and Olorunsogo, and shares boundaries with the five LGAs of Ede North, Ejigbo, Osogbo and Olorunda, thus making it one of the largest LGAs in the state.

Population

The LGA's population was put at 73,969, according to the 2006 population census. The population is, no doubt, enhanced by the proximity of the some of the towns in the LGA to Osogbo, the capital of the State of Osun. Like others in the state, Egbedore also has a homogenous Yoruba population of Oyo extraction. As a result of the closeness of some of the towns such as Ofatedo, Ido-Osun, Okinni, and other minor settlements to the state capital, the LGA is being inhabited by other Nigerians and foreigners, especially from the West African sub-region.

Economic activities

The locals are predominantly farmers, cultivating both food and cash crops. They also practise fish farming and raise poultry, with many non-indigenes participating. According to the council's information handbook, the LGA has been identified by the State of Osun's Ministry of Commerce and Industry as possessing large quantities of granite, talc, laterite, and precious stones. Miners' activities were noticeable in many parts of the LGA, especially around Awo, the headquarters where talc is suspected to be in large deposits, and in Iwoye, Egbedi, Ido-Osun, Okinni, Idoo, and other towns and villages where granite, gravel, and sand are being extracted for construction purposes.

There are also commercial activities that thrive in the LGA. As a matter of fact, the area played host to the state's trade fair complex located in Ido Osun, where the then joint trade fair among all Odua states—Oyo, Ekiti, Ondo, and Ogun—was held on a rotational basis. The complex is currently being reconstructed as an ultra-modern market by the state government. There are small businesses that engage artisans such as mechanics, tailors,

and brick layers, as well as commercial motorists and cyclists.

Socio-political features

Politically, the LGA is divided into 10 wards, each producing a councillor to represent it at the council's legislative arm. The wards are distributed among the towns and villages that constitute the LGA as follows: Awo/Abudo, Ara I, Ara II, Ido-Osun/Egbedi, Iragberi I, Iragberi II, Iwoye/ Ekuro/ Idoo/ Origo, Ikotun/ Olope, Ojo/Aro, and Okinni/Ofatedo/Olorunsogo (Source: Egbedore local government website).

Since the commencement of the fourth republic, the chairmanship position in the LG is rotated among the indigenes of the major towns. Individual towns and villages are also administered traditionally by the Obas (kings) and chiefs, who essentially handle non-violent conflicts and other civil matters as may be referred to them.

There are two prominent religions, Christianity and Islam, as well as the traditional religions in various constituent communities.

As a result of the proximity of some of its settlements to the state capital, the LG enjoys many of the benefits of the developments around the seat of power. Among these are relatively regular electricity, potable water, communication and transport facilities, and other physical and economic development programmes. For instance, Ido-Osun, one of the towns in the LGA, currently hosts the state office of the National Communication Commission, the proposed international airport under construction (Plate 1), the relocated sawmill and plank market, and a new international market complex under construction.

In addition, junior and senior government workers, as well low- and high-level income earners in the private sector, now see some satellite towns in the LGA as alternative places to reside and are building their houses in the area. Towns like Ofatedo, Okinni, Ido-Osun, Olorunsogo, and up as far as Egbedi are being rapidly built up to provide accommodation to people who work in the state capital

However, these developments are also a source of violence in various forms in the LGA. As a result of the pressure on land, competition has become so severe that both inter- and intra-community clashes have sometimes led to deaths. Furthermore, the volume of traffic as well as the pressure on villagers to improve their incomes to compete favourably with the new settlers in the market are additional sources of problems in the LGA. This has also led to traffic-related deaths in the council area.

Ifedayo

Ifedayo LGA was carved out of the old Ila local government in September 1991, as noted in the Federal Government Gazette No. 54 of October 2 of the same year. This border LGA in the State of Osun is located at 7° 57' N and 4° 59' E, sharing boundaries with Kwara and Ekiti states, thus making it the farthest from the state capital at Osogbo (Fig. 5). Ifedayo has only two major towns: Ora, reputed to host the first church (built in 1895) in the area; and Oke Ila, the LGA's headquarters. There are adjoining villages, such as Ooyi-Aduni, Ayegunle, Idi-Awewe, Ayedaade, Ejifunmi, Temidire, Alagbede, Idi-Odan, Agunsoro, Isimi-Ehinle, and Baasin/Arutu. All these are grouped together and called "Leesiti" by the locals, which is the bastardised pronunciation of "less cities". The LGA has an area of 128 km².

Population

According to the 2006 census, Ifedayo has a total population of 37,058. Apart from few settlers from the northern and eastern parts of Nigeria, who mainly practise farming and supply labour to the indigenous farmers, the LGA has a homogenous population, mainly of the Igbomina sub-ethnic group of the Yorubas.

Economy

Ifedayo has a predominantly agrarian economy, as the tropical rain forest supports farming, especially in the areas of food and cash crop production. Food crops, including yam, cassava, maize, rice, and vegetables, however are still being grown in many cases at the subsistence level. Farmers bring only the excess for sale in the markets. It is somewhat better in the areas of cash crops, especially cocoa and kola nuts, as well as oil palm. The majority of the farmers in Ifedayo still use old implements and human labour to manage their farms and to process agricultural products such as palm kernels. In addition, many of the farms are inherited.

Other economic activities include petty trading, especially among the women, and the transportation business, dominated by young commercial motorcyclists. These transport businesses provide services to the likes of LG workers, teachers, paramedics, and security operatives, consisting mainly of the Nigerian Police and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps. There were very few commercial vehicles plying routes in the LGA.

Some Fulani cattle herdsman have also settled in some of the Lessiti villages, where they rear their cattle and practise some form of food crop farming, mainly in maize and millet cultivation. Their women earn their

living by selling cheese produced from cow milk. The nature of this occupation, where animals are moved from one point to another to graze, has on some occasions caused conflicts between local farmers and the herdsmen settlers.

The LGA can also boast of civil and public servants who work in its council secretariat, seven secondary schools (including three privately owned), two state hospitals (in Oke-Ila and Ora), the maternity units in Lessiti, waterworks, the presence of the security services of Police, Civil Defence, Department of State Security, and the Immigration service. A major tourist attraction that occasionally draws visitors to the LGA is Ayekunugba waterfall.²

Being a border LGA, commuters find the Osogbo-Ila–Ora road, which links the state to Otun Ekiti in Ekiti State, especially convenient when going to Abuja. This has been a source of problems to the people of the area for various reasons. The volume of traffic, including heavy-duty vehicles, increases drastically each time the road is reconstructed and has consequently shortened its lifespan, as is noticeable at present. Secondly, due to the hilly nature of the road, with its many sharp bends especially between Ila and Ora, road accidents can be fatal. This is worsened when the road becomes bad during the rainy season. Commuters who use the link to their destinations do not normally stop, except on the occasions when their vehicles develop a fault that prevents them from moving further. Residents also occasionally stop to buy farm products such as plantains and, at times, cheese from herdsmen's wives and children who hawk them along the roads.

² Ayekunugba is the name given to the waterfall located in Oke Ila Orangun.

Socio-Political features

The LGA has two prominent religions: Islam and Christianity. There are also traditional religions and festivals. Thus, aside the celebration of Christmas and Eid-kabir by the Christians and Muslims respectively, *Egungun, oro, isagun*³ are held at their appointed times. Like any other typical Yoruba settlement, the two major towns are ruled by the traditional rulers (*obas*) and their chiefs. The headquarters, Oke-Ila, is headed by the Orangun of Oke-Ila. However, Ora unusually has two *obas*. Both have separate palaces on either side of the only road that links the town to Ila Orangun. Entering the town while coming from Ila reveals the palace of the *Akesin*⁴ of Ora-Igbomina to the right, while that of the *Asaoni*⁵ of Ora-Igbomina is to the left. The unresolved historical conflict over who should be the paramount traditional head of the sleepy community has occasionally led to violence in the past, resulting in destruction of property and loss of lives on both sides.

Politically, Ifedayo is divided into 10 wards, mainly shared among the two towns. These are Oyi Ayegunle, Ayetoro, Isinmi olootu, Balogun, Obaale, Aworo/Oke-Ila Rural, Asaoni, Akesin/Otun, Akesin/Oja/Ora, and Akesin/Temidire. These are designated wards 1 to 10, respectively. They are all represented by either elected or appointed councillors at the council's legislative arm. The council is headed by an elected or appointed chairman, as the larger political situation in the state may dictate. For instance, since the dissolution of the last elected chairmen in all the LGAs in

³ *Egungun, oro, and isagun* are forms of masquerades celebrated in Ifedayo communities at regular interval.

⁴ *Akesin* is the title given to the traditional ruler of Ora by one side of the indigenes.

⁵ *Asaoni* is the title given to the traditional ruler of Ora by the other side of the indigenes.

the State of Osun about four years ago, LG elections have not been held. As such, operators of the executive arms of the local governments have been the appointees of the governor.

Ifedayo LGA, especially Ora, has produced many prominent Nigerians in the political sphere, including a Nigerian Ambassador to The Philippines, Dr. Yemi Farounbi, and a senator representing Osun Central senatorial District, Professor Sola Adeyeye.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The main objectives of the research are as follows:

- i. To discover the number of violence-related deaths that occurred in the study areas between 2006 and May 2014.
- ii. To discover the causes of such violent actions.
- iii. To discover whether or not such deaths were officially reported at appropriate quarters such as security operatives' offices and hospitals.
- iv. To discover reasons why such violent deaths were not reported in the media.

For the purposes of this research, violent deaths in the period under review include those that resulted from disasters, road crashes, drowning, being trapped at mining sites, and fire incidents, apart from fatalities caused by interpersonal disputes, communal clashes, and attacks. The mismanagement of conflicts was also studied.

Since Egbedore was created from the old Ede LGA, its constituent communities that share boundaries with the mother council, such as Awo and Ido-Osun, have been in constant disputes. Also, like any value-based conflict, the chieftaincy rift over who should be the paramount ruler of Ora in Ifedayo LGA, between the persons bearing the *Akesin* and *Asaoni* titles, seems

difficult to resolve once and for all and requires constant management.

MEDIA REPORTS AND GATEKEEPING THEORY

Media is defined by O’Sullivan *et al.* as an intermediate agency that enables communication to take place and a technological development that extends the channels and range of speed of communication. It can also mean “those institutional structures that foster the rapid transmission of standardized information to a relatively large audience through some mechanised channels or medium” (Ike 2005). In a nutshell, the media is responsible for the dissemination of information among people, while it also takes their reactions in the form of feedback, with the view to making such feedback available. The media is the link, that is, the channel of communication, that ensures a successful journey of the code from the sender to the receivers, who then decode the message and respond in the form of feedback, thus making it an information chain.

Whether or not a piece of information will make it to the public arena is always a painstaking activity in the media. The volume of information available to any medium is enormous, and hence the need to prune it down to allow the most important items to see the light of the day, while other items have to wait temporarily or forever. In taking this decision, there are sets of rules and regulations to be followed, including ethical considerations and the public interest. The process is referred to as gatekeeping, and it manifests at every strata of the media, that is, from the reporters in the field who decide which information should be gathered, processed, and sent to the news editor, and the editor who has the final say. Ekeli in Folarin (1995) summarized it thus:

“Gatekeeping is nothing but self-censorship performed by the media themselves. Gatekeeping emanates from the understanding by the journalists that apart from legal restrictions on what is to be published, including photographs, journalists have a moral right to be socially responsible to their readers in whatever materials they package for them.”

The essence of gatekeeping therefore is to ensure relevant, factual, and responsible information is disseminated to the reading public. However, in reality, gatekeeping is far more complex. There are many factors other than the need to ensure factual, relevant, and balanced information. For instance, a one-time correspondent of TIME magazine in China, Teddy White, was reported to have put a sign in his office that “Any resemblance between what is written here and what is printed in TIME magazine is purely coincidental” Kunczik (1988, cited in Folarin 1995). Even the editor of the magazine himself was also once quoted to have said:

I don’t pretend this is an objective magazine. It’s an editorial from the first page to the last and whatever comes out has to reflect my view and that’s the way it is. (*ibid*)

Without doubt, whatever is eventually published in the newspapers or broadcast in the electronic media is largely determined by the reporters and, more importantly, by their editors. Speaking about editors, Bolawole (2004, in Arogundade 2004) submitted the following:

“Editors are different kettles of fish. Some are bold and brave, some are adventurous and idealistic. Some are practical down to earth realists of the present day Nigeria. Some are conscious of the naira value of the seats on which they sit while some are conscious of their place in history.”

There are other factors, however, that may act naturally as gatekeepers, beyond the control of the reporters and their editors. These may include unforeseen circumstances such as disasters, including crashes, flood, or fire disasters, that can cause damage to the materials intended for broadcast or publication. The reporters themselves can be victims of such mishaps. In addition, there can be technological problems in terms of communicating the gathered information to the newsroom and even the processing of the information for the public (Abodunrin 2007)

Another uncontrollable gatekeeper in this category is the consumer. Even when reporters and editors make news stories available, consumers may not listen to or read them. This is referred to as selective consumption (Folarin 2005). This may include the boycott of certain media products in protest, or the consumer may simply have preferences for other media outlets.

Again, the media thrive on information, which is, relatively speaking, a perishable item. If the media is unaware of a particular development, such a development can go unreported. Nobody can give what is not available. However, as noted by Bello (2007), the gate must be opened widely, especially for partnership. This will allow the media not only to report disasters but also to render early warning (EW) services such as educating the public, sharing information about affected areas, and alerting government.

METHODOLOGY

Sources of data

Broadly speaking, the data for this work was derived from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included the administration of questionnaires and interviews. Secondary sources were

records from security operatives, local government authorities, and Internet resources (the study areas' website pages).

Sampling techniques

A non-probability sampling technique was adopted for this study. Thus, both incidental and purposive sampling employed sourced information from people who were accessible and based on the researcher's choice. This was as a result of the need to get accurate and official angles on the data collected. Among the people accessed were members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers and selected community leaders, while security operatives were purposively selected. The necessity for purposive selection was as a result of the fact that, by their mode of operation, not all officers and men of security services were authorised to give information. In addition, certain services tended to decline to give information in any form, for what they always referred to as "security reasons".

Thus, personal interviews were conducted with stakeholders. Four focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers operating in Egbedore and Ifedayo LGAs, in equal proportion. Key informant interviews were also conducted with journalists working in the state, as well as with security operatives and health workers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This research aimed to answer two basic questions:

1. What types of violence are recorded in these 'invisible' LGAs?
2. Why are these LGAs neglected by the national press?
- 3.

These and sundry other questions, such as causes of the violence recorded, were discussed using simple descriptive statistical analysis.

Egbedore LGA

Despite frequent land disputes among the people of this area, it is still considered not violent by all the respondents, including security operatives, community leaders, and organized union members. Twenty copies of the questionnaire were distributed purposively, as explained above, and 17 were returned. All the respondents answered “No” to the question “Do you consider your neighbourhood to be violent?” The reasons for this were explained thus by a respondent from Ido-Osun, who said he had lived in the community for over 40 years:

“Generally, Egbedore is peaceful if not for the issue of land disputes that occurred occasionally. If there is land tussle, we refer the case to the palace for settlement. Whoever sells to more than one person would either be made to refund money or provide another parcel except the buyer refuses. The major land issue here is caused by the government. They should have come up with a definite policy that will show who owns the land where the airport is being built. That is the major problem for now. The youth from Ede wanted to claim Ido-Osunland and the youths here resisted them. The government owns the land but when the airport is ready, it should bear the name of Ido-Osun.”

Another respondent at Okinni, who also described Egbedore as peaceful, noted:

“The major problem here is land, because many civil servants in Osogbo have been building their houses here and Ido Osun because of their nearness to the state capital. Family members at times fought and the ones they could not resolve were reported to the police. There

was an occasion or two when people went violent but the police arrested the suspects and I don't know the latest now."

Types of violence in Egbedore

Although Egbedore cannot be said to be a violent LGA, it has had its own share of deaths (Table 2). Broadly speaking, the reported fatal incidents can be categorised into natural disasters, accidents, and crime, including clashes.

Table 2 below shows the recorded violence and deaths in Egbedore LGA between November 2009 and May 2014. There were no records, especially from official angles, to show these types of violence and deaths from 2006 to 2008 in the LGA. The only violent conflict that came close was in 2003, when the community and the police clashed over the alleged repeated arrest of residents for no just reasons. Matters came to a head in February 2003 when irate members of the community burnt the part of a private building being used as the police station and then chased the policemen away. The residents took over the security of the town for about 10 years until a police post was recently built in the the Oba's palace. For the residents interviewed, the fact that they could do without policemen for about 10 years was a pointer to the non-violent nature of the community and its environs.

Town / location	Type of violence	Number of deaths	Date	Remarks
Awo	Land dispute	Nil	10-11-2009	Ede and Awo clash over boundary
Awo	Land Dispute	Nil	08-01-2010	Ede and Awo clash over boundary

Ido-Osun	Drowning	1	29-02-2012	Victim drowned while swimming at Kosa River
Awo	Mining accident	1	15-03-2012	A miner trapped at site
Ido-osun	Drowning	1	10-05-2013	19-year old drowned in Kosa River
Awo	Road accident	1	11-06-2013	Blood-stained woman's body found along Iwo Road
Ido-osun	Road accident	1	13-09-2013	A vehicle knocked hit two soldiers riding bike
Iwoye	Road accident	1	06-11-2013	Auto crash killed a passenger
Ido osun	Land dispute	1	09-11-2013	Man macheted, later died in his room
Ofatedo	Road accident	1	28-02-2014	A male victim killed
Okinni	Land Dispute	1	21-03-2014	A male victim hacked to death over land dispute

Table 1 - violence types and casualties in Egbedore LGA (November 2009 – June 2014) - Field work: August–September 2014

From the table above, one can see that a total of nine deaths were recorded in five communities during the period under review. This is represented graphically below (Fig. 1).

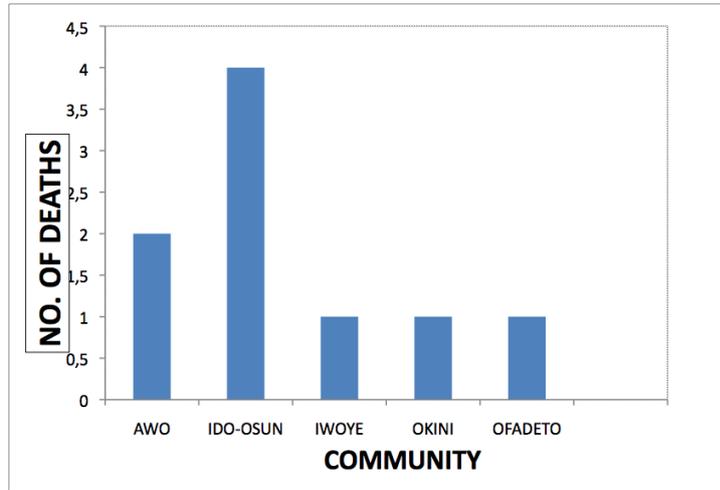


Figure 1 - Distribution of violent deaths per community in Egbedore LGA (2006–2014) -Source: fieldwork, August–September 2014

Of these deaths, only two (22.2%) were as a result of clashes/disputes, which was in line with the relatively peaceful nature of the LGA. Road accidents accounted for five deaths (55.6%), while drowning, another form of disaster, accounted for the remaining two (22.2%) (Fig. 2).

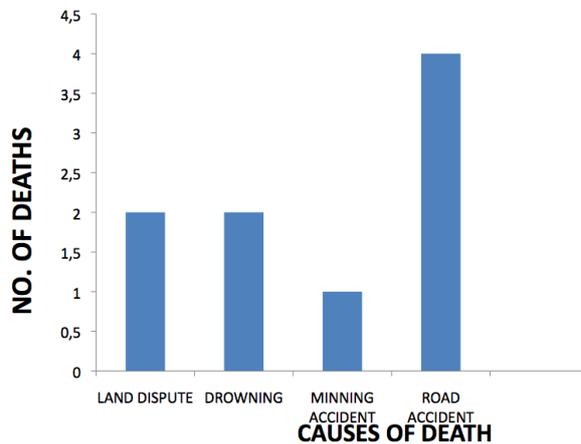


Figure 2 - Distribution of violent deaths according to causes in Egbedore LGA (2009–2014) - Source: fieldwork, August–September 2014

It should be noted that these are all development-related, as most of them occurred in those towns that are close to the state capital, that is, in the Ido Osun, Okinni, and Ofatedo/Dada Estate axis.

Summary of findings

As noted earlier, both Egbedore and Ifedayo LGAs of the State of Osun were under-reported in the last 10 years as far as violent deaths are concerned.

Although this research could not assess any record of violent deaths between 2006 and 2008, the following incidents were discovered between November 2009 and June 2014:

Awo

Awo (the headquarters of Egbedore LGA) and Ede (the headquarters of both Ede North and South LGAs, from which Egbedore was created in 1989) engaged in violent clashes on 11 November 2009 and 1 January 2010 over boundary disputes. Security operatives were drafted to the location on the two occasions to prevent escalation.

As explained above, the LGA is endowed with mineral resources such as talc, granite, and limestone. On the 15 March 2012, a worker of Sunny James Construction Company named Sunday Gbenga was trapped while working at the mining site excavating certain types of precious stone. Indiscriminate diggings dot the environment and continue to posing threats not only to these miners, but to other people and to animals in the area.

On the 11 June 2013 the corpse of a woman was found with blood stains along Awo-Iwo road in Awo. She appeared to be the victim of hit-and-run driver.

Ido-osun

Ido-osun shares a boundary with Ede which hosts the state's waterworks. On 29 February 2012, an Ayo drowned while swimming in Kosa River, one of the tributaries to Osun River.

On 10 May 2013, another person, a Class 5 YTD primary school student named Niyi Isiaka also drowned in Kosa River (which was overflowing because the dam across Osun River was opened). He was recovered the following day by Hausa fishermen because the fire fighters could not retrieve him on the first day.

On 13 September 2013, a vehicle number KSF976QC knocked two soldiers off the Honda bike they were riding along Ido-Osun Ede road in Ido-osun. One of the men, a 28-year old named Ibraheem, died instantly.

On 8 November 2013, a riot broke out between Ido-Osun and Ede over the name of the airport under construction, as the two communities lay claim to the land. A man named Fatai Oyedeji, who was reportedly attacked with machetes during the fracas, died the following day.

Ofatedo

A male victim called Fawad was crushed by a vehicle reported to be travelling at top speed on 28 February 2014.

It should be noted that Ofatedo is a community that is so close to Osogbo that, unless one is told, one cannot know it is separate town from the state capital.

IFEDAYO LGA

Ifedayo is a typical rural LGA. Apart from being a border settlement far from the state capital, Osogbo, the hilly, windy, and pot-holed road from Ila Orangun makes it devoid of the hustle-bustle characteristic of cities. The LGA can also be said to be peaceful as 16 of our 18 respondents attested to this. Only one respondent, a road safety official, insisted that it is “not a Yes or No answer”; some road users, especially commercial motor cyclists popularly called *okada* riders, were violent in the way they used the road. Another respondent did not answer.

This was further corroborated by a community leader in Oke-Ila, who said:

“We have no problem here at all. We sometimes disagree but that is normal, even tongue and teeth as close as they are do fight and when the teeth bites tongue none of them will leave, the wound will be healed, and this does not happen always. Our only problem is bad road and other developments.”

Also in Ora, an FGD conducted among the commercial motorcyclists revealed that the LGA was relatively peaceful. A participant said the only problems they had were bad road and the numerous domestic animals, especially goats, that competed with them on roads.

The LGA’s major source of conflicts has been the age-old chieftaincy rift between the *Akesin* and *Asaoni* of Ora, who have been laying claims to the kingship of the sleepy town. The peak of the violence was in 2004, when both sides clashed and destroyed lives and property. They have since been avoiding a repeat. A community leader in Ora stated:

“It is true we once fought but that was long ago. We are now united; in fact, the Asaoni that just died and the current Akesin were good friends and they visited each other’s palaces. I think we are more concerned about our seeming neglect now than chieftaincy issues.”

Despite these opinions, Ifedayo also had incidences of violence that led to deaths in the period under review, as shown in the Table 2.

Town/location	Type of violence	Nb of deaths	Date	Remarks
Ora	Clash/attack	3	08-12-2009	Police/NURTW clashed at checkpoint
Eesinkin village	Clash/attack	1	04-07-2011	Herdsmen/farmers’ clash killed one man
Ora	Road accident	1	20-07-2013	Goat obstructed a speeding cyclist
Alagbede Hill	Road accident	1	23-10-2013	Motorcycle accident killed rider
Alagbede Hill	Road Accident	Nil	18-11-2013	A tanker skidded off the road
Alagbede Hill	Road accident	1	22-12-2013	A bus’s brakes failed, killing a passer-by
Alagbede Hill	Road accident	5	24-12-2013	A bus crashed, killing 5 and injuring 7
Alagbede Hill	Road Accident	Nil	03-02-2014	A asphalt-laden truck skidded off

				the road
Oke-Ila	Other ⁶	1	26-05-2014	60-year old man found dead on farm

Table 2 – Violence types and casualties in Ifedayo LGA (December 2009 – September 2014) – Field work: August-September 2014-11-29

From Table 2 above, it can be deduced that a total of 13 deaths were recorded during the period under review. Of the 13, Alagbede, one of the villages called “less city”, had seven deaths, while Ora and Oke-Ila had three each. Eesikin, a border village between the LGA and Ekiti, also had one death (Fig. 3)

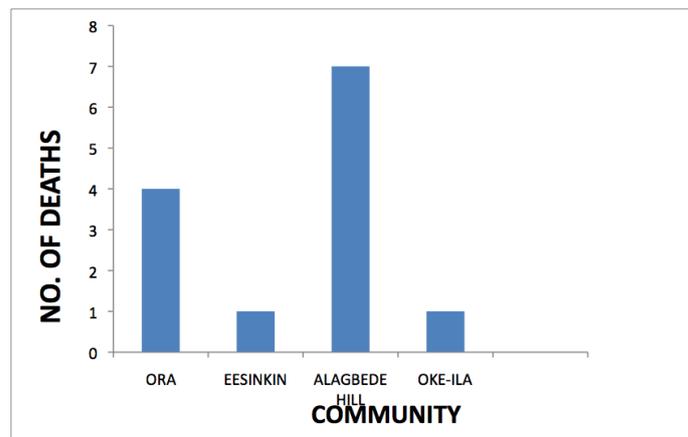


Figure 3 - Distribution of violent deaths among the communities in Ifedayo LGA (2009–2014) - Source: Fieldwork, August–September 2014

Only four of the deaths could be traced to clashes, thus justifying the claim of the respondents that the LGA

⁶ Prior his death, the deceased was said to have had a serious misunderstanding with a suspected hoodlum, who is now at large after allegedly killing a community night guard. However, the cause of the old man’s death has not been properly established.

was peaceful. The highest number (8) of violent deaths were caused by road accidents, while the remaining one death could not be traced to a definite cause (Fig. 4).

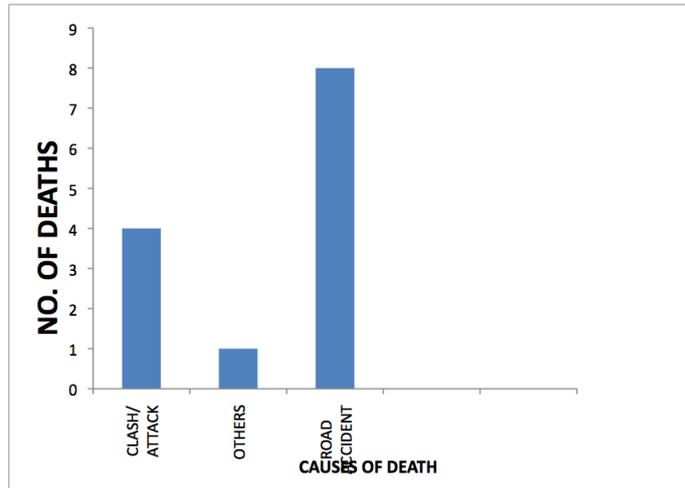


Figure 4 - Distribution of violent deaths according to causes in Ifedayo LGA (2009–2014) - Source: Fieldwork, August–September 2014

Summary of findings

Ifedayo is a rural LGA and a relatively peaceful area. The major source of violent deaths was accidents due to bad roads. Of the 13 deaths recovered during the period, eight (61.5%) were a result of road accidents. It is instructive to also note that of the seven road accidents recorded during the period under review, five (71.4%) occurred around Alagbede Hill, thus marking the place as disaster-prone. Details are as follows:

Ora

The most outstanding of the clashes/attacks recorded in the period under review was the clash between the police and the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) on 8 December 2009. One of the policemen at the check-point on the outskirts of Ora town, towards the border with Kwara, was reported to

have shot a driver dead. The deceased was said to be a leader of the NURTW in the town who had gone there to intervene on behalf of one of the members that was arrested. Other union members mobilized themselves and, in a reprisal attack, killed two policemen.

On 4 July 2011, goats obstructed a commercial motorcycle that also carried a passenger. The rider died immediately. Competing with goats on roads is a common event in this LGA.

Algbede (Hill)

On 23 October 2013, a motorcycle accident claimed the life of the rider.

Again, on 18 November on this hill, a tanker skidded off the road and ran into an oncoming bus, damaging it. No life was lost.

On 22 December 2013, a bus marked Lagos XF507 LND had a break failure and killed a passerby.

On 24 December 2013, a Toyota Hiace Hummer bus crashed on this hill, killing five of its passengers and injuring seven.

On 3 February 2014, a truck marked YRE320XA and loaded with asphalt skidded off the road, but there were no casualties.

Oke-Ila

On 26 May 2014, a 60-year old man was found dead at his farm, with his clothes and hat on.

WHY ARE THESE LGAS NEGLECTED BY THE NATIONAL PRESS?

The second main question this research aimed to answer was this: since all the aforementioned incidents actually occurred, why did the press not capture them? Interviews conducted among members of the press corps in the State of Osun were quite revealing. Some of the factors responsible for such neglect included the following:

Inadequate personnel

It was discovered that of the about 22 media correspondents stationed in the state to represent various media houses in Nigeria, only one of them, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), has more than one reporter. Thus, newspapers, including the *Nigerian Tribune*, *Vanguard*, *Thisday*, *Daily Independent*, *Daily Trust*, *Newswatch*, *The Union*, *Punch*, *Guardian*, *National Mirror*, *Pilot*, and *The Sun*, have only one correspondent each to cover the entire state with its 30 LGAs and one area office. Thus, the journalists were not always aware of many of the things that happened; consequently, they could not report them.

News judgment

Reporters, who are the editors in the field, also exercise the privilege to determine what news is. For instance, one of the participants exclaimed during the group discussion:

“How do you think I will travel for about four hours to Oke-Ila because one old man died in the bush? And, if I should miss another important story, like a minister’s visit to the state, you think my editor will be happy?”

News Value

Another reason advanced for the seeming neglect of the study areas was that some of the happenings were not ‘weighty’ enough to get space in the national newspapers. Another participant said: “The death of an *okada* rider would be meaningless, even if I sent it in this era of Boko Haram and, lately, Ebola saga.” He advised that “only community newspapers can capture those things adequately.”

Over-reliance on official sources

Many correspondents covering the state live in Osogbo, the state capital. Many of them believe that as all the security agencies are based in Osogbo, the buck will surely land on the heads’ table. If such buck was newsworthy, the press would surely be invited.

Accessibility problem

There is also the problem of access, especially to Ifedayo LGA. For instance, Oke-Ila, a distance of about a hundred kilometers from Osogbo, could take a reporter the whole day to visit and come back using commercial transport. This is because the few buses that ply the route have to wait until their seats are filled before leaving the bus park. This may take between 30 minutes and one hour, depending on the time of the day. In addition, commuters going to either Ora or Oke-ila need to break their trips and have a stop-over at Ila. Few vehicles, between one and three, ply the Oke-ila/ Ora route, and the passengers need to again wait in Ila. However, commercial motorcyclists are filling the gap. Odetoro (2007) identified African topography and road geometry which results in steep slopes, bends, and pot-holes as a cause of difficult accessibility. The windy, hilly, and bad nature of the Ila-Ora-Oke-ila road has always been a menace to commuters; furthermore, the hills and bends

were not reconstructed when the road was renovated in 2008. Thus, journalists will not go if they are not invited for special programs, such as inauguration of projects by the local government or celebrations by a few politicians.

Uncooperative attitude of security operatives

When a criminal act is committed, security operatives generally want to conceal it to give them time to conclude investigations. Two members of the press attested to this. They agreed that security operatives would not release information voluntarily except when and where they solved large crimes and wanted to boost their egos. One of the journalists observed:

“When you heard such allegation and called them to react, they at times told you they would investigate and that situation was under control. At times, they would tell you reporting a case like accident could have negative psychological effect. Other offenders also beg them to shield their identity.”

This researcher also experienced such attitudes, as many of the operatives gave “no violence” responses to all questions posed. Some of them only agreed to give an official response after some facts were placed before them. Even then, they still craved anonymity. Security operatives consider that the presence of violence is an indictment of their performance.

Poor pay

Many journalists are still poorly paid and receive irregular salaries. With their meagre and irregular income, it is therefore difficult for many of them to incur extra expenses to travel frequently to rural areas for news.

Volume of information

One journalist said the volume of information at the disposal of the newspapers' headquarters at times "displaces my story". She gave the example of the *okada* accident at Alagbede Hill, which somebody told her about and which she actually wrote up and sent to her editor; but it was never published.

Lack of attractive political interest

The LGAs under review are located in rural areas, except for some parts of Egbedore, which has some of its communities as satellite towns to the state capital. Ifedayo, for instance, is located in the remotest part of the state, sharing boundaries with Ekiti and Kwara states. Although it has prominent sons and daughters that are politicians, they are based in Osogbo. Aside from a the few occasions of political rallies or meetings they decide to hold at home, such activities are held outside the council.

Limited economic interest

Although Ifedayo has a tourist attraction site, Ayekunugba waterfall, the volume of tourists is very low because it has not been properly developed and the road leading to the waterfall is bad. Apart from the modern market and the airport located in Ido-Osun, which were still under construction in August 2014, other parts of Egbedore were built up for private residential purposes. Perhaps the fact that issues of economic interest attract media attention accounts for the partial media coverage of the clash between Ido-osun and Ede over the site of the proposed airport, a clash that led to one death (a man from Ido-osun).

As noted earlier, consumers can also act as gatekeepers through selective consumption. For instance, the *Daily Sun* newspaper of 18 December 2009 reported the violent clash between the policemen and members of the NURTW, which led to the death of three persons. However, if a consumer did not buy or have access to that newspaper, they would have not know of the incident.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that no society is immune to the occurrence conflicts; and when such conflicts are not properly managed, they can degenerate into violence. Disasters are also part of human existence, and they can only be controlled or mitigated through proper preparedness and effective management.

As discovered in both Egbedore and Ifedayo LGAs, some violent conflicts over land disputes that claimed lives could have been avoided with an effective EW system.

In addition, deaths resulting from road crashes could be avoided if road users heeded warnings. Although poor roads can be a major cause of traffic accidents, bad practices of driving—such as road hogging, tailgating, and ragging⁷—also play a significant role (Akinola 2005). For instance, a road safety officer explained that there was enough “road furniture” to guide motorists using the Ila-Ora road, which he said was not being made use of. It was observed, however, that some of this furniture were already covered by bush. A typical example of such covered furniture was a large signpost erected by the members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), warning road users of bends, steep slopes, and the need to minimise speed.

⁷ Road hogging is the act of driving without adequate consideration for other road users. Tailgating is driving too close to another vehicle in a ‘nose-to-tail’ manner. Road ragging is the term used for violent driving in revenge or retaliation for others’ bad driving.

Despite the inevitability of these occurrences in some cases, the media cannot, as may be expected, always capture all these events, especially in rural areas. This is a result of a number of factors, ranging from problems of finance, inadequate media personnel, accessibility, right news judgment, lack of community-based print media houses, uncooperative attitude of security operatives, and others factors highlighted in the research.

However, effective coverage and documentation of such occurrences could be enhanced by having more staff in the media and including community-based newspapers (where they exist) in the process of documentation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akinola, Abayomi (2005) *Road Traffic in Nigeria-Cases, Causes and Control*. Osogbo: D & G International Limited, 2005. pp. 1-25.

Bello, Sulaiman. A (2007). *Disaster Response Strategy: Civil Protection*. Abuja: Sellobell Global Venture, 2007. pp. 127-128.

Bolawole, Bola (2004). Editorship and Investigative Journalism. In Arogundade, Lanre (ed.) *Guidelines and Resources on Investigative Journalism*. Lagos: International Press Centre, 2004. pp. 10-14.

Folarin, Babatunde (1998). *Theories of Mass Communication: An Introductory Text*. Lagos: Sterling-Herden Publishers Nigeria Limited, 1998. pp. 18-111.

Ifesinachi, Ken (2009). Early Warning System and Conflict Management. In Miriam Ikejiani-Clark ed., *Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: A Reader*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan, 2009. pp. 103-109.

Ike, Ndidi (2005). *Dictionary of Mass Communication*. Owerri: Book-Konzult, 2005. pp. 138.

Levinson, Martin H (2006). Anger Management and Violence Prevention: A Holistic Solution in Meier (2009) *A Review of Foundation for Co-Existence's (FCE) book "Third Generation Early Warning"*. <http://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-145561488/anger-management-and-violence-prevention-a-holistic-> [accessed 2 October 2014].

Odetoro, W. K (2007). *We All Had to Run. Prevention, Reduction and Management of Man-Made Disasters Around the World*. Abuja: Foundation Against Man-made Disasters (Publishers), 2007. pp. 28, 242-250.

Osaghae, Eghosa E. (2005). Violence in Africa: State, Ethnic and Regional Dimensions. In Albert I. O. (ed.) *Perspectives on Peace and Conflict in Africa, Essays in Honour of General (Dr) Abdusalami Abubakar*. Ibadan: Peace and Conflicts Studies (PCS) programme, Institute of African Studies (IAS), University of Ibadan, 2005. pp101-118

O’Sullivan, Tim et al (1991). *Key Concepts in Communication*. London: First published in 1983 by Methuen & Co Ltd. pp. 134.
<http://www.egbedore.com/overview.php> - [accessed 2 October 2014].
http://www.oke-ilaorangun.com/local_govt.php#
[assessed 2 October 2014].



Figure 5 - Map of the State of Osun, showing Egbedore and Ifedayo LGAs

ANNEX

List of acronyms

EW:	Early Warning
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
FRSC:	Federal Road Safety Corps
IFRA:	Institut de Recherche français en Afrique
LG:	Local Government
LGA:	Local Government Area
NURTW:	National Union of Road Transport Worker
NYSC:	National Youth Service Corps
RTA:	Road Traffic Accident

List of tables

Table 1: Violence types and casualties in Egbedore Local government Area (November 2009–June 2014)

Table 2: Violence types and casualties in Ifedayo Local Government Area (December 2009–June 2014)

List of figures

Fig.1: Distribution of deaths per community in Egbedore Local Government Area

Fig 2: Distribution of deaths according to causes in Egbedore Local Government Area (2009–2014)

Fig.3: Distribution of deaths per community in Ifedayo Local Government Area

Fig 4: Distribution of deaths according to causes in Ifedayo Local Government Area (2009–2014)

Fig. 5: Map of the State of Osun