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A Survey of Violence-Related Deaths in Aninri and Isi-Uzo Local Government Areas of Enugu State, 2006–2014

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Joachim Uche OKANUME

<http://www.ifra-nigeria.org/IMG/pdf/violence-related-deaths-enugu-nigeria.pdf>

A Survey of
Violence-Related Deaths
in Aninri and Isi-Uzo Local
Government Areas of Enugu
State, 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).

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Joachin Uche OKANUME*

**A Survey of Violence-Related Deaths in Aninri
and Isi-Uzo Local Government Areas of
Enugu State, 2006–2014**
Invisible Violence Project

Executive summary

Aninri and Isi-Uzo are rural Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Enugu West and Enugu East Senatorial Zones of Enugu State, respectively. Their inhabitants are predominantly farmers and traders who are not immune to violence. Yet many fatal incidents are not reported by the national press. Thus, the general aim of this study is to document virtually all the violence-related deaths that occurred in these two LGAs from June 2006 until May 2014 and to ascertain why they were neglected by the media.

Fieldwork was conducted in October 2014 in Aninri and Isi-Uzo LGAs, as well as in Enugu, the state capital. Sixty questionnaires were administered to randomly selected respondents, while 38 key informants were purposively selected and interviewed. The study also utilized two focus group discussions (FGDs), which

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comprised of 17 participants drawn from the various communities that make up the two LGAs.

Our findings reveal, among other things, that there have been numerous violent deaths in the study areas within the time frame covered by the study. It was also discovered that the national press neglects these rural LGAs because they have no economic value, lack urban centres, and are difficult to access, particularly Isi-Uzo.

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, the media have been reporting violence-related deaths in virtually all the communities and LGAs of the country. In Enugu State, however, newspapers and magazines have missed many fatal incidents in Aninri and Isi-Uzo LGAs since 2006. Yet these two LGAs did not enjoy peace. Hence this study intends to undertake the following:

- document properly all the violence-related deaths in Aninri and Isi-Uzo from June 2006 to May 2014, the period covered by the Nigeria Watch database
- discover what types of violence occurred
- explain why these LGAs are neglected by the national press.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A total of 60 questionnaires, 38 key informant interviews (KIIs) and two focus group discussions (FGDs) were utilized for generating the primary data for the survey. The FGDs were composed of 17 participants drawn from the various communities that make up the two LGAs. The key informants were traditional rulers, community leaders, medical doctors, security personnel, journalists, civil servants, women and youth leaders, commercial motorcyclists, etc. They were immensely useful not only in providing detailed information for the study but also in validating some of the data elicited with questionnaires.

A limitation encountered during the survey was the inability of respondents to recall the totality of

violence-related deaths that took place in the two LGAs from 2006 to 2014. This might explain why, in Aninri, more incidents were remembered for 2013 than for other years. In Isi-Uzo, however, violence-related deaths peaked in 2010 and 2011 and then declined in 2012, 2013, and 2014 (see the figures below). Clearly, respondents were not able to recall the specific dates of occurrence for most of the incidents remembered. Data had to be crosschecked to confirm that fatal events actually occurred at the places mentioned, despite a few discrepancies with regard to the date. Some law enforcement agents who spoke to the researcher in their individual capacities mentioned specific cases as well as validated some of the information elicited from other sources. However, all efforts by the researcher to gain access to the official records of the security agencies operating within these LGAs yielded no result.

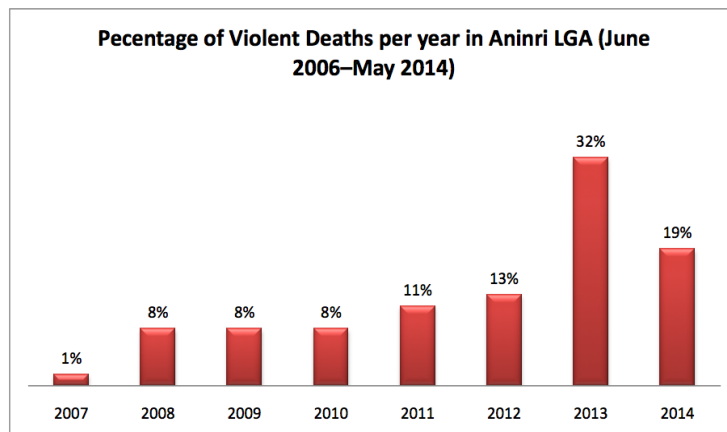


Figure 1 – Source: Fieldwork, October 2014

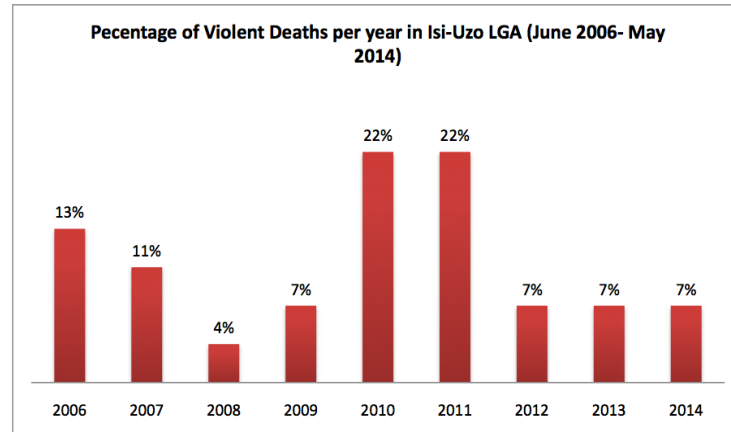


Figure 2 – Source: Fieldwork, October 2014

ANINRI: GEOGRAPHIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Aninri is an LGA in Enugu West Senatorial Zone of Enugu State. It was created from Awgu LGA in 1996 and its headquarters are at Ndiabor. It has an area of 364 km² and a population of 133,723, according to the 2006 census. The LGA has a total of ten wards: one each in Ndiabor, Okpanku, and Mpu; three in Nenwe; and four in Oduma. It is composed of five major communities, which are all Igbo, namely Ndiabor, Mpu, Nenwe, Oduma, and Okpanku. Each of these is further divided into smaller autonomous communities: Ndiabor is split into two autonomous communities; Mpu into four; Nenwe into four; Oduma into eight; and Okpanku into two.

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy because the land is lush, making the people predominantly farmers who are contented with their daily meals. The major food products are rice, okro, cassava, yam, and groundnut. Being farmers, people believe that no member of the community can commit sacrilege, such as killing, without supernatural powers getting him to confess to the act in his lifetime. In their opinion, this

system has helped in the curbing of violence, even if it was brought into serious question when a series of murders were committed by unknown persons, who were never identified. In addition, there are two police posts, at Mpu and Ekoli-Okpanku, and a police station opposite the LGA Secretariat at Ndiabor.

Despite its rural background, Aninri has quite a sizeable number of politicians. Among them are the current Deputy President of Nigeria's Senate, Ike Ekweremadu, the former speaker of the Enugu State House of Assembly, Mr. Abel Chukwu (who is now a member of the Federal Character Commission), and the former State Chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Onyioha Nwanjoku. Aninri had so far had 13 sole administrators and chairmen. Senator Ike Ekweremadu, for instance, became its first Executive Chairman in 1997 after a Sole Administrator was appointed when the LGA was created by the military regime of General Sani Abacha in 1996. As in many rural communities in Nigeria, these political heavyweights are not domiciled in the LGA. Rather, they reside in Enugu, Abuja, and other large cities. Yet they do contribute to local development. Thus, Aninri had very poor roads before 2011; since then, they have been renovated.

ISI-UZO: GEOGRAPHIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Isi-Uzo is an LGA in Enugu East Senatorial Zone of Enugu State. It has an area of 877 km² and a population of 148,415, according to 2006 census. It was initially called Isi-Uzo County Council until it became a District Council in 1950. With its headquarters at Ikem, it is bounded in the East by Ishielu LGA in Ebonyi State, in the West by Enugu East LGA, in the South by Udenu LGA of Enugu State, and in the North by Ogbadibo, Okpokwu, and Ador LGAs in Benue State. The present Isi-Uzo was created in 1976 and includes five main

communities, all Igbo: Eha-Amufu, Ikem, Neke, Mbu, and Umualor. In terms of land mass, Eha-Amufu is said to constitute about 60% of the LGA and accommodates seven other autonomous communities. Ikem, Neke, Mbu, and Umualor have four, four, three, and two autonomous communities, respectively.

As the largest community, Eha-Amufu was formerly said to dominate political affairs in Isi-Uzo. Nowadays, however, political offices rotate among the five main communities, particularly the chairmanship of the LGA. Since its creation in 1976, Isi-Uzo has had 20 chairmen or administrators, none of them being female. The distribution of wards among the major communities is as follows: Eha-Amufu has four; Ikem has two; Neke has two; Mbu has two; and Umualor has one. The LGA is included in Enugu East Senatorial Zone despite its cultural affinity with the people of Nsukka in Enugu North Senatorial Zone.

Isi-Uzo is a rural area and the majority of the people are farmers and petty traders. The major food products are cassava, rice, yam, and gari. As far back as the 1930s, economic activities started booming when a railway station was built in Eha-Amufu. Today, each of the five major communities of Isi-Uzo has its market day, but the market at Eha-Amufu attracts people from all parts of the country either to sell or to buy items. Eha-Amufu has also benefited from the College of Education which was established there by the old Anambra State in the early 1980s and upgraded to a Federal College of Education ten years later; some of the students and staff still reside in the community. Other infrastructures are to be found at Ikem, which has the only police station in the entire LGA, and Mbu, where the Divisional Office of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) is located.

Regarding development, however, almost all the roads in Isi-Uzo are in a deplorable state except the one leading to the headquarters at Ikem from Ugwuogo Nike in Enugu East LGA. This factor, respondents bitterly complained, has adversely affected economic activities in the area. All our respondents at Eha-Amufu argued that previously you could see at least ten truckloads of gari leaving the community every market day, as against three nowadays.

ANINRI: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The table below shows that there were more male respondents than female. The study was originally designed to administer equal number of questionnaires to both. But the women were not as responsive as the men. The majority of the 30 respondents were married and between the ages of 41 and 50 years. Most of them were self-employed; a few were farmers and civil servants. A majority had lived in Aninri since birth. Hence, most respondents had lived in the LGA for a minimum of eight years, covering the time frame of the study.

| Sex | n | % |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| Male | 19 | 63.3 |
| Female | 11 | 36.7 |
| Age | n | % |
| 20 – 30 | 4 | 13.3 |
| 31 – 40 | 8 | 26.7 |
| 41 – 50 | 13 | 43.3 |
| 51 – 60 | 4 | 13.3 |
| Above 60 | 1 | 3.3 |
| Marital status | n | % |
| Married | 21 | 70.0 |
| Single | 6 | 20.0 |
| Widow/widower | 3 | 10.0 |

| Employment status | n | % |
|--|----------|----------|
| Civil/Public servant | 6 | 20.0 |
| Self-employed | 15 | 50.0 |
| Farmer | 7 | 23.3 |
| Student | 2 | 6.7 |
| Years of residence in the community | n | % |
| 8 – 10 years | 7 | 23.3 |
| 11 – 15 years | 1 | 3.3 |
| 16 – 20 years | 10 | 33.3 |
| Since birth | 12 | 40.0 |

Table 1 - Demographic characteristics of respondents in Aninri LGA - Source: Fieldwork, October 2014

While 96.7% of the respondents claimed that their neighbourhood was not violent, all of them were aware of fatal incidents in their various communities. The following events readily came to their minds:

| S/N | DATE OF EVENT | COMMUNITY | CAUSE | DESCRIPTION | NO. OF FATALITIES |
|------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | 2007 | Amachara | Accident | A man went fishing and drowned in the river | 1 |
| 2 | 2008 | Amaorji Nenwe | Crime | A boy was said to have slaughtered his uncle with a machete | 1 |
| 3 | 2008 | Obiofu Amaorji Nenwe | Accident | A palm tree cutter fell and died | 1 |
| 4 | 2008 | Obiofu Amaorji Nenwe | Accident | Another palm tree cutter fell and died. The deceased's wife and son later died in a motor accident in a different LGA | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------|--|---------------------|--|---|
| 5 | 30 Dec 2008 | Nenwe Junction, along Port Harcourt–Enugu Expressway | Motor accident | A teenage girl went to fetch some water and was hit by a vehicle | 1 |
| 6 | 2008 | Nenwe Junction, along Port Harcourt–Enugu Expressway | Motor accident | A former security man at Comprehensive Secondary School, Nenwe was hit by a vehicle as he was riding his bicycle to night duty | 1 |
| 7 | 2009 | Obuagu Mpu, along Ishiagu Road | Motorcycle accident | A commercial motorcyclist hit and killed a man crossing the road | 1 |
| 8 | 2009 | Abacheku village, Ndiabor | Land dispute | A woman was reportedly killed as she was farming on disputed land between Ndiabor and Oduma | 1 |
| 9 | 2009 | Oduma | Crime | A mother came to separate two male siblings fighting; in the process, one of the boys cut her with a machete and she died | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---|---|
| 10 | 2009 | Obiofu Junction, Amaorji Nenwe | Motor accident | A woman was hit by a car | 1 |
| 11 | 2009 | Nenwe | Motor accident | A cyclist was hit in an accident involving a car and a commercial motorcycle; he later died in hospital | 1 |
| 12 | 31 Aug 2010 | Nenwe | Motorcycle accident | Two motorcycles had a head-on collision and one rider died | 1 |
| 13 | oct-10 | Nenwe, along Nenwe/Mgbowo road | Motorcycle accident | An over-speeding private motorcyclist had an accident at an ongoing bridge construction site | 1 |
| 14 | 2010 | Obiofu Junction, Amaorji Nenwe | Motor accident | A woman was hit by a car on her way from a farm | 1 |
| 15 | 2010 | Amangwu village, Ndiabor | Accident | A young boy drowned in a pond | 1 |
| 16 | 2010 | Aguenyi Mpu | Crime | A female farmer was murdered by herdsmen whom she had scolded for trespassing into her farm with their cattle | 1 |
| 17 | 2011 | Uke Mpu | Crime | A woman was allegedly murdered in | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|----|----------|--------------------------|---------------------|---|---|
| | | | | her farm by herdsmen while she was cutting bamboo sticks | |
| 18 | 2011 | Umuoma village, Ndiabor | Crime | A woman allegedly hit and killed her husband with a digger | 1 |
| 19 | 2011 | Amaeke Oduma | Motorcycle accident | A man lost his life in an accident involving two motorcycles in a head-on collision | 1 |
| 20 | 2011 | Ohafia Oduma | Crime | At a building construction site, a young boy clubbed another to death with a stick | 1 |
| 21 | 2011 | Nenwe, along Mgbowo road | Motor accident | A cyclist died instantly in an accident involving a tipper and a motorcyclist | 1 |
| 22 | 2011 | Nenwe, along Oduma road | Motor accident | A woman hit by a car died later at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH) | 1 |
| 23 | 2011 | Ndiabor | Crime | A man was allegedly murdered and dumped in a bush behind the LGA Secretariat | 1 |
| 24 | Feb 2012 | Okpanku | Motor accident | A car and a commercial motorcyclist | 2 |

| | | | | | |
|----|--------|--|---------------------|--|---|
| | | | | had a head-on collision. The cyclist and his passenger died instantly. | |
| 25 | 2012 | Amaorji Nenwe | Crime | A man was murdered and dumped in the bush. | 1 |
| 26 | sep-12 | Amaorji Nenwe | Crime | A girl's naked and lifeless body was found somewhere near St. Peter's Catholic Church. The autopsy revealed that she was raped to death. | 1 |
| 27 | 2012 | Agbada Nenwe | Accident | A carpenter fell from a building where he was working | 1 |
| 28 | 2012 | Nenwe Junction, along Port Harcourt–Enugu Expressway | Motorcycle accident | A man was hit by a motorcycle and died | 1 |
| 29 | 2012 | Nenwe Junction, along Port Harcourt–Enugu Expressway | Motorcycle accident | A man was hit by a motorcycle and later died in hospital | 1 |
| 30 | 2012 | Ugwungo village, Ndiabor | Crime | One boy died while fighting with another one | 1 |
| 31 | 2012 | Obuagu Mpu | Motor accident | An accident between a bus and a | 2 |

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|-------------------------|----------------|--|---|
| | | | | commercial motorcycle killed two | |
| 32 | 25 Dec 2012 | Aguenyi Mpu | Accident | A man was electrocuted at an electric transformer | 1 |
| 33 | jan-13 | Okpanku | Motor accident | A commercial motorcyclist died when he hit a car | 1 |
| 34 | 2013 | Amagu Mpu | Crime | A man was allegedly murdered | 1 |
| 35 | 2013 | Amagu Mpu | Crime | A man was allegedly shot dead by armed robbers | 1 |
| 36 | 2013 | Ovum Mpu | Crime | A young girl's dead body was found near the river. An autopsy allegedly revealed she was raped to death. | 1 |
| 37 | 2013 | Mpu, along Ishiagu road | Motor accident | A bus hit an eight-year old girl | 1 |
| 38 | 2013 | Mpu, along Oduma road | Motor accident | Another bus killed a girl. The driver reportedly ran away. | 1 |
| 39 | 2013 | Obuagu | Accident | A young prince of the community was drowned in their river | 1 |
| 40 | 2013 | Umarah village, Ndiabor | Land dispute | A young man used a short bamboo stick and beat his uncle to death. He | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|----|-----------|------------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| | | | | reportedly did not run away but waited until the police came and apprehended him. | |
| 41 | 2013 | Amauro village, Ndiabor | Crime | A madman attacked and killed a lady. | 1 |
| 42 | 2013 | Emudo Nenwe | Sorcery | A man was caught after he had allegedly killed a four-year old child, purportedly for ritual purposes | 1 |
| 43 | 2013 | Ndiabor, along Mpu Road | Motor accident | A man riding on a motorcycle with his wife hit a car, and the woman died on the spot | 1 |
| 44 | May 2013 | Mpu | Motorcycle accident | A motorcyclist hit a wall and died instantly | 1 |
| 45 | June 2013 | Amaogudu village, Okpanku | Motor accident | A Hausa passenger on a commercial motorcycle was severely injured in an accident with a Volvo car; he died in hospital that same day | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|----|-----------|--------------------------------|---------------------|--|---|
| 46 | July 2013 | Oduma | Crime | A commercial bus driver was strangled to death by unknown persons | 1 |
| 47 | 2013 | Obiofu Junction, Amaorji Nenwe | Motorcycle accident | An elderly woman was hit by a truck while she was crossing the expressway on her way from her farm | 1 |
| 48 | 2013 | Nenwe | Crime | A man's lifeless body was found in a bush not far from his motorcycle. The deceased allegedly chased people's wives and was therefore suspected to have been killed for revenge. | 1 |
| 49 | nov-13 | Nenwe, along Mgbowo Road | Motor accident | A cyclist ran into a bus and died instantly | 1 |
| 50 | nov-13 | Oduma | Crime | A man was said to have been stabbed to death by unknown persons | 1 |
| 51 | Dec 2013 | Nenwe | Crime | A young man was found dead with injuries on his body at the boundary between Nenwe and Omogho | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|---|------------------------|---|---|
| 52 | 25 Dec 2013 | Aguenyi Mpu, opposite the secondary school | Motor accident | A commercial motorcyclist died instantly in an accident with a car | 1 |
| 53 | jan-14 | Ohafia Oduma | Crime | A boy used a stick and beat another boy to death | 1 |
| 54 | jan-14 | Ohafia Oduma, close to Afor market | Motorcycle accident | Two motorcycles had a head-on collision | 1 |
| 55 | 26-jan-14 | Uhueze Nenwe | Accident | A man was electrocuted on an electric pole | 1 |
| 56 | Feb 2014 | Ohafia Oduma | Motorcycle accident | A man had a head-on collision on his motorcycle | 1 |
| 57 | mar-14 | Nenwe Junction, along Port Harcourt– Enugu Expressway | Motor accident | Two persons died on the spot in a car accident | 2 |
| 58 | 2014 | Emudo Nenwe | Accident | A man fell from a tree and died as he was being taken to a hospital | 1 |
| 59 | 2014 | Aninri LGA Secretariat, Ndiabor | Accident | A man reportedly fell from a tree while cutting palm fruit within the premises of the LGA Secretariat | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|----|----------|---|---------------------|--|---|
| 60 | 2014 | Aguenyi Mpu | Motor accident | A pregnant woman was riding on a private motorcycle when she was hit by a car. She died on the spot. | 1 |
| 61 | May 2014 | Nenwe, close to Nenwe Girls High School | Motorcycle accident | A commercial motorcyclist had a road accident | 1 |
| 62 | May 2014 | Ohafia Oduma | Motor accident | A young child was hit by a truck belonging to Setraco, a construction company working on the road | 1 |
| 63 | May 2014 | Oduma | Motor accident | A man was hit by a tipper belonging to Setraco | 1 |

Table 2 - Violent events recorded in Aninri LGA, 2006–2014 - Source: Fieldwork, October 2014

The table above reveals that at least 66 violence-related deaths occurred in Aninri LGA from May 2006 to June 2014: 43 from accidents, 19 from crimes, two from land disputes, and one from sorcery. Motor accidents involving cars, buses, lorries, trucks, and motorcycles were by far the most deadly (see the figure below). Data on Aninri clearly show a rise in the number of fatalities within the period covered by the study, and this may be connected to the fact that the recall period is shorter and people remembered better. Interestingly enough, respondents lamented the fact that the good roads provided by the government had become a source of concern owing to over-speeding and reckless driving. The study revealed that 26 people had lost their lives in motor and motorcycle accidents in the last three years, as against eight persons who had died from the same cause prior to the time the roads were extended to most parts of the LGA. This calls for a vigorous public enlightenment campaign, targeting more particularly commercial motorcyclists and bus drivers.

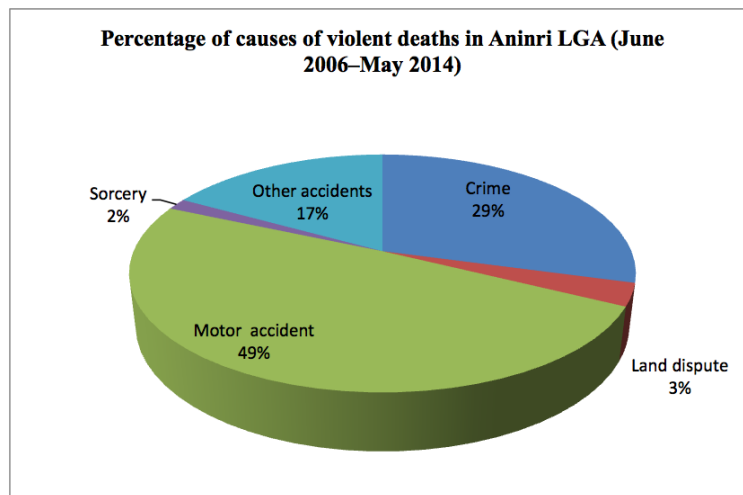


Figure 3

According to the survey, 90% of the respondents confirmed that the national press grossly underreported violence in Aninri, while 10% stated that they did not know. In the case of the Ezza people who were said to have migrated from Ebonyi State to Ndiabor and Mpu, for

instance, occasional skirmishes over land between the settlers and the aborigines were not covered by the media. The reasons advanced for this neglect were the lack of urban centres, the distant location from the state capital, and the absence of economic benefits for the media. Interestingly enough, none of the respondents mentioned lack of access roads as a factor in underreporting the area, unlike the respondents in Isi-Uzo (as we shall see later). Indeed, Aninri communities now have very good access roads, except the ones from Nenwe to Oduma, and from Mpu to Oduma, which was under construction at the time of fieldwork.

ISI-UZO: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents were male. As in the case of Aninri, females were reluctant to respond to the questionnaires. The majority of the respondents were married and in the age bracket of 31–50 years. More than half were born in Isi-Uzo LGA, and most had lived in the area long enough to be conversant with violence-occasioned deaths within the stipulated period (2006–2014).

| Sex | n | % |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| Male | 21 | 70.0 |
| Female | 9 | 30.0 |
| Age | n | % |
| 20 – 30 | 4 | 13.3 |
| 31 – 40 | 10 | 33.3 |
| 41 – 50 | 10 | 33.3 |
| 51 – 60 | 3 | 10.0 |
| Above 60 | 3 | 10.0 |
| Marital status | n | % |

| | | |
|--|----------|----------|
| Married | 20 | 66.7 |
| Single | 8 | 26.7 |
| Widow/widower | 2 | 6.7 |
| Employment status | n | % |
| Civil/Public servant | 6 | 20.0 |
| Self employed | 17 | 56.7 |
| Farmer | 4 | 13.3 |
| Student | 2 | 6.7 |
| Retired | 1 | 3.3 |
| Years of residence in the community | n | % |
| 8 – 10 years | 2 | 6.7 |
| 11 – 15 years | 4 | 13.3 |
| 16 – 20 years | 7 | 23.3 |
| Since birth | 17 | 56.7 |

Table 3 - Demographic characteristics of respondents in Isi-Uzo LGA - Source: Fieldwork, October 2014

While 86.7% of the respondents claimed that their neighbourhood was not violent, all of them were aware of fatal incidents in their locality. They mentioned the following cases:

| S/N | DATE OF EVENT | COMMUNITY | CAUSE | DESCRIPTION | NO. OF FATALITIES |
|------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | 2006 | Amede & Umuhu in Eha-Amufu | Religious issue | A group of Christian youths organised 'a crusade' and went on the rampage on what they called a war against idol worshippers | 3 |
| 2 | 2006 | Eha-Amufu | Crime | The community's vigilante group went to arrest a suspected notorious criminal and killed him | 1 |
| 3 | Jan 2007 | Umuhu in Eha-Amufu | Crime | A man was said to have been caught dancing around the grave of somebody buried the previous day, and he was lynched by a mob | 1 |
| 4 | 2007 | Mbu | Land dispute | Two young men allegedly set on fire a thatched house erected by their cousin on a disputed piece of land. The owner of the house shot dead the two cousins with a dane gun in a barbers shop and ran away. | 2 |

| | | | | | |
|----|------|---|---------|---|---|
| 5 | 2008 | Mbu | Crime | Two young men had a quarrel. One of them went home, got a knife, and stabbed the other to death. | 1 |
| 6 | 2009 | Mbu | Sorcery | A lady believed to be under demoniac influence was taken to a church to be attended to by prayer warriors. A church member applied force to calm her down and killed her. | 1 |
| 7 | 2009 | Amede, Eha-Amufu | Crime | A boy stabbed his friend to death because of ₦50 after they had both hired a wheelbarrow and worked on a construction site | 1 |
| 8 | 2010 | Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu | Sorcery | A female student of the institution was axed to death by suspected cultists | 1 |
| 9 | 2010 | Ihenyi, Eha-Amufu | Crime | A boy stabbed his girlfriend to death | 1 |
| 10 | 2010 | Ngelekwe, Eha- | Crime | A girl was strangled to death | 1 |

| | | Amufu | | | |
|----|------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---|---|
| 11 | 2010 | Agu Amede, Eha-Amufu | Crime | A boy attacked and killed a girl after they had a quarrel | 1 |
| 12 | 2010 | Ikem, along Ikem-Neke Road | Motorcycle accident | Two motorcycles had a head-on collision | 1 |
| 13 | 2010 | Mbu | Crime | A young man beat an old man who tried to stop a fight; the old man reportedly died on his way to hospital. | 1 |
| 14 | 2011 | Umuhu, Eha-Amufu | Crime | Two ladies dating the same boy were fighting over who would eventually become his wife; one of them stabbed the other to death. | 1 |
| 15 | 4 May 2011 | Eha-Amufu | Crime | There was a bank robbery at a branch of First Bank PLC | 4 |
| 16 | 2011 | Ogor, Ikem | Crime | A unmarried young man was cohabiting with a woman whose mother insisted that her daughter must return home. The infuriated | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|----------------------|----------------|---|---|
| | | | | man went to the would-be mother in-law's place, beheaded her, and ran away. | |
| 17 | 25 Dec 2012 | Agu Amede, Eha-Amufu | Crime | A young boy attacked an old woman because she had scolded him over forcing a young girl to be in a relationship with him | 1 |
| 18 | 2012 | Neke | Motor accident | During the construction of Ugwuogo Nike-Neke road, a truck belonging to the construction firm killed a cyclist | 1 |
| 19 | 25 Dec 2013 | Ikem | Land dispute | In a heated argument between two families over a land boundary, one of them, who was said to be a soldier, stabbed another to death | 1 |
| 20 | 2013 | Eha-Amufu | Crime | A lady who was believed to be mad gave birth to a daughter and killed her | 1 |
| 21 | Mar 2014 | Ogor Ikem | Crime | Members of a cultural troupe were hired to perform at a burial | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|----|------|------|--------------|--|---|
| | | | | ceremony and disagreed over sharing the money. One of them ran home, brought a gun, and shot dead a colleague. | |
| 22 | 2014 | Neke | Land dispute | An ongoing land dispute between Ikem and Neke claimed one life | 1 |

Table 4 - Violent events recorded in Isi-Uzo LGA, 2006–2014 - Source: Fieldwork, October 2014

We can see from the table above that not less than 28 violence-related deaths took place in Isi-Uzo LGA within the time frame covered by this study: 17 from crime, four from land disputes, three from religious issues, two from sorcery, and two from accidents (Figure 4). Data on Isi-Uzo indicate that the trend of fatalities fluctuated and decreased in 2012, 2013, and 2014. This challenges the notion that people usually remember recent incidents more than older ones. Whether or not this was as a result of actual reduction in the number of fatalities in Isi-Uzo, the study could not fathom. As in Aninri, almost all of the cases were not reported by the press. Motor accidents, in particular, did not make the news.

However, terrible accidents occur on a weekly basis on a track of 2 km between Eha-Amufu and Mgbuji, which happens to be one of the very few tar roads in Isi-Uzo LGA. According to a chief of the community: “There is no week we do not record up to five motorcycle accidents, especially on our market days. Within the last two years, we have witnessed numerous accidents that have resulted to about four deaths on that road.” Motorists have also not helped matters, as they are said to often over-speed.

Comparatively, there were fewer motor and motorcycle accidents in Isi-Uzo than in Aninri; roads leading to most of the communities in the latter are in a very good state. This, unfortunately, has predisposed motorists to reckless driving, and Aninri recording higher fatalities resulting from road accidents.

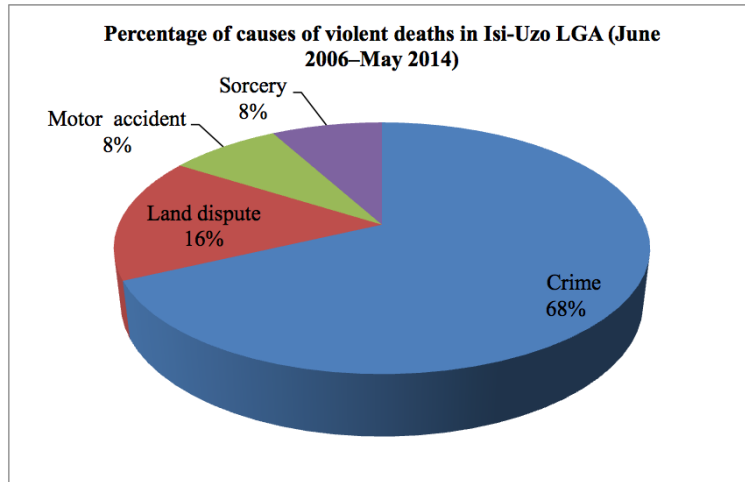


Figure 4

The majority of respondents (83.3%) agreed that the national press neglected events in their LGA. Only 3.3% disagreed, while 13.3% indicated that they did not know. When asked why the national press neglected Isi-Uzo, 83.3% mentioned factors such as impassable roads, lack of urban centres, the distant location from the state capital, and the absence of economic benefits for the media.

CONCLUSION

While carrying out fieldwork in all the communities of Aninri and Isi-Uzo LGAs during 27 days, the researcher could not find a single journalist except on Sunday, 19 October when several of them accompanied Senator Ike Ekweremadu, the Deputy President of Senate, to his country home at Mpu in Aninri. One of the traditional rulers interviewed observed sadly: “rural areas like ours do not make news in Nigeria because politicians do not reside here”. Thus, a female journalist in Enugu metropolis stated:

“As a journalist, I cannot just get up from here in Enugu and go to those places if I do not have a special project. For example, since the people of the two LGAs are mainly farmers, I could take up a project on agriculture to find out how they plant rice and how challenging it is for them to procure fertilizer. I could also go there if I have a special interview with a particular politician. So, before a journalist decides to report a particular rural community, something must have propelled her or him because there are less activities there.”

It is agreed that a rural society may not necessarily be as violent as a cosmopolitan city like Enugu, where anonymity encourages violence and crime. Yet fatal incidents do happen in remote places. To bridge this information gap, respondents in FGDs suggested that media houses should train and employ selected persons from local communities to serve as their reporters. However, a senior male journalist in the office of the chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Enugu State Chapter, disagreed because of the prevailing cost:

“Inasmuch as it would be proper to station reporters in these LGAs who are indigenes and would now transmit information to their offices in the state capital, media houses cannot afford it. Government should reduce tariff on printing materials to enable more newspapers, including community newspapers, to come on board; and then it would be easier for the owners of existing newspapers to save some money to be able to give employment to more people, especially in rural communities.”

To conclude, it is thus clear that fatal incidents are rarely reported by the national press, yet are part of people’s living experiences in Aninri and Isi-Uzo LGAs. These shortcomings, some argued, are due largely to the fact that rural communities hold little or no economic value for the media. Besides, most incidents resulted in one or two deaths maximum—not enough to attract the press.

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Figure 4: Percentage of causes of violent deaths in Isi-Uzo LGA (2006–2014)

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents in Aninri LGA

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Table 3: Demographic characteristics of respondents in Isi-Uzo LGA

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|--|
| FGD | Focus group discussion |
| KII | Key informant interview |
| LGA | Local Government Area |
| NSCDC | Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps |
| NUJ | Nigeria Union of Journalists |