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A Survey of Violence-Related  
Deaths in Urue-Offong/Oruko and  
Udung Uko Local Governement  
Areas in Akwa Ibom State  
(2006-2014)



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## **A Survey of Violence-Related Deaths in Urue-Offong/Oruko and Udung Uko Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State (2006–2014)**

### *Executive Summary*

This paper highlights violent deaths in two local government areas (LGAs) in Nigeria: Urue Offong/Okubo and Udung Uko, both in Awka-Ibom State. Primary data collected using key informant interviews (KIIs), 40 copies of a questionnaire, and focus group discussions (FGDs) were analysed. The respondents considered their LGAs to be generally peaceful and blamed violent incidents on continual deprivation, youth agitation, and skirmishes experienced as part of everyday life.

During the period under study (2006–2014), the main causes of violent deaths in Urue Offong/Okubo and Udung Uko were cult attacks, witchcraft, and motor accidents because of bad roads and inadequate education on traffic laws. Although the predominant religion of the area is Christianity, traditional beliefs still have a strong hold over the populace; and accusations of witchcraft

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sometimes resulted in the killing of persons considered to be a source of misfortune.

The reasons for the non-coverage of violence by the national media in the two LGAs include the following: accessibility problems, fear of attack, lethargic attitude to volunteering information, dearth of published official records, and inadequate personnel. Other factors are the irregular salaries of journalists, the presence of many local tabloids, the poor infrastructural facilities, and illiteracy. Also worthy of note is that security operatives in the areas under review were insufficient and uncooperative in releasing information.

## INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this work were to discover the following:

- the number of violence-related deaths that occurred in Urue Offong/Oruko and Udung Uko Local Government Areas (LGAs) between June 2006 and May 2014
- the causes of these deaths
- whether these deaths were officially reported at appropriate quarters such as hospitals and security operatives' offices
- why these deaths were not reported in the national media.

## URUE OFFONG/ORUKO AND UDUNG UKO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

Urue Offong/Oruko and Udung Uko LGAs were created in 1991 and 1996 from the old Oron division. The two areas are adjacent. Urue Offong/Oruko also shares boundaries with Oron, Okobo Esit, Eket, and Mbo, while Udung Uko is bounded by Oron, Mbo, Okobo, and the Atlantic Ocean. This proximity to each other accounts for similarities in experiences, challenges, culture, and weather. The two LGAs are in the tropical region and have a uniformly high temperature all year round. The dry season spans from October to April; the wet season starts around May and ends in September, sometimes in October.

Both Udung Uko and Urue-Offong/Oruko could thus be referred to as a set of 'twin' LGAs. They share quite a number of similarities and are located on both sides of their mother council, Oron. Having been created earlier, Urue-Offong/Oruko seems, however, to be somewhat more developed regarding its road network, its health facilities, and its local government secretariat. Another area of slight difference is that while the Udung Uko people do more fishing, the inhabitants of Urue Offong/Oruko are mainly farmers and petty traders.

### **Population**

According to the 2006 census, Urue Offong/Okubo and Udung Uko have a population of 71,159 and 53,278 inhabitants, respectively. Located in the western estuary of the lower Cross River, their people are popularly called 'Akpakip Oro', 'Oro Ukpabang' or, more simply, 'Oron'. They are made up of ten clans: Odu, Eta, Idua (Ilue), Ebughu, Effiat, Ibigi, Okiuso, Okpo, Ukong, and Ubodung.

Officially, Urue Offong/Oruko has 33 villages, for example, Oyuko, Okuku, Elei, Oyubia, Eyulor, Atte-Oro, Mbupueyu, and Umume, just to mention a few. Udung Uko consists of 21 villages, including Uboro Isong Inyang, Eyokpomung, Udung-Adatang, Eyo-Nsek, Udung Otok, Eyo-Uwe, Eyo-Biome, Eyo-Ukpe, Eyo-Uhong, Eyofin, Eudikor, Udung Esio, Eniongo, Usung, Ekiun, Eyo-Oko, Eyo-Bising, Eyo Ating, Eyo-Sio-Asung, Ating-Asung, and Eyotai (the latter is in the process of being officially recognized).

### **Economic activities**

Both LGAs share similar topography, culture, and people. The communities of Udung Uko are predominantly fishermen due to their proximity to the Atlantic Ocean. The rest engage in farming and small-scale mining. A preponderance of farmers exists in Urue Offong/Oruko because their soil supports the natural growth of mangrove swamp forests and palm bushes of the hinterland. A few of them are also involved in fishing.

Like most other LGAs in Akwa Ibom State, Urue-Offong/Oruko, and Udung Uko are rich in natural resources and oil deposits. 'All this provides investment opportunities in exploration and production of petroleum-related products, as well as gas, and establishment of businesses in the downstream sectors, such as refining, petrochemicals and marketing of petroleum products' (Udeme 2004).

### **Socio-political structure**

The Oron who inhabit Urue-Offong/Oruko and Udung Uko are the third largest ethnic group in Akwa Ibom State. They are also found in Oron LGA, which was carved out from the old Oron division. They claim to have origins in Palestinian and Bantu groups that migrated from Israel through Egypt and Abyssinia to Central Africa, Congo, and southern Cameroon to the present-day Niger Delta region in Nigeria.

Oron LGA is now the umbilical cord to which the two areas under review are tied historically.

*Oron became a Division in August 1970 and in 1976, was made a local government area. However, following the local government creation exercise of the federal government in 1989, Oron was split into 3 Local Government Areas of Mbo, Oron and Okobo. Again in September 1991, Urue Offong/Oruko Local Government Area was carved out of Oron Local Government Area. Finally in December 1996, Udung Uko Local Government Area was further carved out of Oron. (Uwak 2013).*

### **Culture**

The inhabitants of Urue-Offong/Oruko and Udung Uko share the traditions and the cultural heritage of the Oron. The Ekpe Society is used as the main authority, together with other traditional cults like Ekpo, Abang, Edeme Awan Nkwho, Ekon, Afikegit, Konkoma, Mbok, Ababa, and Nnabo. Historically, the Oron people were also among the earliest to encounter Western education in West Africa. This is most evident with the establishment of the Hope Waddell Training Institute in Calabar in 1895 and the Methodist Boys High School in Oron in 1905. These schools are among the oldest in the history of Nigeria and attracted students from all over West and Central Africa. In contrast to this forefront position, Urue-Offong/Oruko and Udung Uko LGAs now have some

eight secondary schools and many primary schools. Their people are renowned for their political consciousness. An indigene of Urue-Offong/Oruko, Engr. Ben Ukpong, for instance, was the running mate of Umana Okon Umana, the All Progressive Congress (APC) gubernatorial candidate for Akwa Ibom State.

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A good foundation to contextualize the findings of this study is the frustration and aggression theory. It holds that 'the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression' (Dollard et al. 1939). As simple as this theory is, it has been used by various scholars to explain political violence (Midlarsky 1975; Zillman 1979; Maire 2004). According to Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009), for instance, tension builds up owing to the pressure of an unfulfilled aspiration or an unsatisfied urge or need. When not arrested in time, frustration then leads to a violent disposition towards the environment. This applies quite well to the indigenes of Urue-Offong/Oruko and Udung Uko, who have not experienced commensurable wealth despite the oil resources generated by their region. For example, the road to Udung Uko headquarters is hardly useable, and sometimes only motorbikes can pass. Although the headquarters of Urue-Offong/Oruko is easier to reach, most of the adjoining rural communities are inaccessible by road, a problem which is a major cause of accidents. The point is that members of these two LGAs experience a gap between their level of expectations and their actual situation. There is considerable disparity between what people want from the local, state, and federal governments, or oil companies, and what the state has actually delivered in terms of social amenities.

## METHODOLOGY

### **Sources of data**

In general, this research obtained data from both primary and secondary sources. While questionnaires, interviews, discussions, observations, and photographs taken in the field formed the primary sources, secondary sources included records from the security operatives and government offices as well as Internet resources, including relevant websites and reliable blogs with information on the study areas.

### **Sampling techniques**

The study made use of non-probability sampling and sourced the required information from the relevant stakeholders because of the sensitive nature of security issues. Thus, community leaders, members of commercial transport operators' associations, local government officials, security operatives, media correspondents, and the heads of the Akwa Ibom State branch of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) were selected for interviews and FGDs.

## EXPLAINING INVISIBLE VIOLENCE IN URUE OFFONG/OKUBO AND UDUNG UKO

### **Data analysis and presentation**

The main aim of this research was to provide answers to two basic questions:

1. What types of 'invisible' violence are recorded in Undung Uko and Urue Offong/Oruko local governments?
2. Why are these LGAs neglected by the national press?

### **Findings**

A total of 40 copies of a questionnaire were distributed in the two LGAs on an equal basis. The questionnaire was personally administered to the respondents, for several reasons:

1. leaving the questionnaire with the respondents did not yield the expected result because respondents were unwilling to speak on the issues involved.

2. Since respondents lived close to each other, they were likely to compare notes and there was the possibility of conspiring on what to say.

3. The limited time for the research did not accommodate the luxury of leaving questionnaires with respondents and returning to collect them later.

The questionnaire questions were sometimes challenged. A respondent in Eyofin, Udung Uko LGA, for instance, claimed:

*If people come together to fight for their right, you don't call them violent people. In any case, where in the world is free from protests?*

Another respondent expressed the following opinion:

*It is not a 'Yes' or 'No' answer. We have about 21 communities in this local government area. The fact that one or two incidents of violence occurred does not make all of us violent. Apart from some few bad boys who practise cultism, we are all peaceful people. At times, poverty can make you to be aggressive.*

In Eyulor, Urue-Offong/Oruko LGA, a respondent also explained:

*The youth restiveness being experienced in the area could not be used as a justification to brand us as violent. Even in this century, we still fetch our water from the stream, despite the fact that we have resources they tap every day. Besides, each time the youth want to protest, they listen to community leaders and they don't go violent. Violent people don't negotiate or sit down with the leaders for dialogue. I can also say, however, we do not enjoy perfect peace. This is not about human beings becoming troublesome alone; it is also about the polluted environment due to oil exploration. So, if you asked whether I consider our environment violent, I will say: Yes. [emphasis in original]*

A council staffer equally justified the seemingly frequent uproar in the area as needful. After an assault at the secretariat complex of Urue-Offong/Oruko on the Head of Service and other local government officials, who had their vehicle tyres deflated by the council workers over unpaid allowances, he had this to say:

*If you didn't witness this but heard it from outside, you would probably think it was a big violence. But you can see all of us, who just protested and asked for our rights, the way we laugh and even share soft drinks. If you don't push them, they will keep on cheating you. Now that they have promised to pay, we will allow them to look for vulcaniser who will pump their deflated tyres. So we are not violent, but struggling to get our basic rights.*

Officers and personnel of the NSCDC were sighted maintaining peace by talking to both parties. Two community leaders in both Udung Uko and Urue-offong/Oruko attested to the frequent occurrence of clashes between the residents and cult members or between the members of the communities and individuals, government officials, and oil and gas exploration companies.

A village head in Udung Uko, Chief Asukuo Etim, also noted that the entire LGA lacked development, with only two secondary schools serving 21 communities. He noted further that the level of poverty in the area had made it even impossible for fishermen to acquire their own boats, forcing them to hire from 'big men' in urban centres:

*The situation is such that all these jobless youths who are not empowered to either work on farms or equipped with fishing materials are the ones precipitating the occasional violence. But we always curb them. At times, we had to use traditional methods because we don't have enough security operatives. Youth restiveness and cultism is our major concern.*

The situation is not that different in Urue-offong/Oruko. The LGA is made up of oil-producing communities. A village head, Reverend Etim Ndekhedehe, and his secretary were unanimous in their opinion about the major causes of violence in the area:

*Ours are oil-bearing communities, and we have about ten oil wells here; but there is nothing to show for it. As you can see, our roads are bad, and we go to streams to get water. If you take note, all the roofs on our*

*houses have turned brown, not because of old age, but due to gas flaring and deposit. The gas coming out of these wells also destroys our farmlands.*

*Some people came here from the UNDP and gave us a borehole, which has stopped functioning since. We later learnt that the pumping machine was stolen. Of course, we don't have enough security operatives to ensure protection.*

The story at the only functioning hospital is similar. The hospital serves about four LGAs but has no ambulance, while the roof is leaking due to corrosion. More importantly, there were only two medical doctors in a building left without perimeter fence.

### **Types of violent deaths recorded in the study area**

As established above, the people of these LGAs as well as other stakeholders do not see their neighbourhood as violent. They all agreed, however, that there is frequent friction among the residents, on one hand, and between the residents, government officials, and oil exploration companies, on the other hand.

There is little in the way of records as far as lethal violence is concerned. Even basic pieces of information such as maps were not readily available. Council officials and staffers would always refer such matters to the chairman. This also, perhaps, accounts for the scanty information about these LGAs online. As for motor accidents, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) had no offices in the two LGAs—only in Eket, which oversaw the study areas. As a result, the data available had to be corroborated by respondents from the Commercial Motorcycle Riders Association. Thus, our investigation was able to record the following incidents, including prominent cult-killing cases:

**i. On 27 March 2011**, suspected cultists killed a middle-aged man after cutting off all his fingers. A community leader in Udung Uko who confirmed the story said the deceased was dumped in a bush close to the village head's house. When the corpse was discovered and the village head reported the case to the police at around midnight, no policemen followed him. The village head said he had to hire some men and buy drinks for them to look after the corpse until daybreak. He said the cultists in the area could take away the corpse to frustrate investigation. The police eventually came the following morning and took away the corpse to a mortuary. Although a suspect who was seen loitering around the area with an axe was arrested, the case had not been concluded at the time of this research.

**i. In July 2010**, at Oduenuim in Urue-Offong/Oruko LGA, a woman was reportedly killed by cultists near Iroko market. When the killers could not be traced, the family members buried her. However, three months later, in October, the suspected killers desecrated the grave of the woman, exhumed the corpse, and burnt it to ashes. This infuriated the villagers and all the surrounding communities so much that they had to resort to traditional means of oath-taking. The perpetrators were cursed to serve as a deterrent to others. According to the villagers, incidences of cultism have reduced since then.

**i. In November or December 2013**, a multiple road crash involving a bus, a Toyota Camry car, and a commercial motorcycle was said to have claimed two lives: the bike rider and his passenger. This was confirmed by a resident in Eyulor community in Urue-Offong/Oruko LGA as well as the immediate past chairman of the Commercial Motorcycle Riders Association operating at Eyulor Junction. However, the accident was not part of the only available FRSC records

for the axis covering the period between 13 July 2013 and 20 May 2014.

As shown in the Table 1, the FRSC records for the entire Eket unit, which covers the study areas, did not indicate any fatal crash during this period. There were nine road accidents, however, with a total of ten victims, including nine males and one female.

*Table 1: Road traffic accidents in Eket Unit, July 2013–May 2014*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Injured males</b>	<b>Injured females</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Type of crash</b>
17-7-13	Eket-Oron	0	0	0	minor
09-8-13	Eket township	2	0	2	serious
06-9-13	Eket-Oron	2	0	2	serious
23-9-13	Nsit Urua	0	0	0	minor
14-11-13	KM 3	0	0	0	minor
17-12-13	Village Marine Rd	3	1	4	serious
1-02-14	Opposite Apostolic Church, Uroko	0	0	0	minor
7-02-14	Kuzo	1	0	0	serious
20-5-14	KM 5	1	0	0	serious

Source: FRSC 2015

### WHY WERE THE STUDY AREAS NEGLECTED BY THE NATIONAL PRESS?

The second main thrust of this research was to discover why such cases of violence were not adequately covered by the national media during the period under review. To answer this question, three research instruments were deployed: key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and questionnaires. The researchers also observed some obstructive factors in the field.

Among the key informants interviewed were Elder Patrick Albert, the chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists in Akwa Ibom State, Mr Etim Epimah, the *Punch* newspaper reporter covering the area, and Mr Saviour Epe, the publisher of a grassroots newspaper, *Newsfront*.

Some of the factors identified for the lack of adequate coverage include the following:

#### **Accessibility problems**

Most of the roads within the LGAs are bad. Virtually all those interviewed mentioned and emphasized this factor. Their responses were corroborated by observation in the field. For instance, the feeder roads in these LGAs are generally not motorable. While some could be plied successfully during the short dry season, most of the roads became deplorable during the rainy season. In fact, the road to the headquarters office of Udung Uko was not tarred and was even difficult to ply for motorcycles (*okada* or *akauke* in the local parlance). A journalist noted:

*The people of those areas are suffering because there are no access roads. What will you enjoy when there is no access road? You*

*cannot go out freely, you cannot come in freely. That is the situation of those areas.*

Another one described the situation as follows:

*In fact, it is a coincidence that you are asking me this type of question now because I just visited the place with others about two weeks ago on a tour. I did not visit the area for a very long time because I cannot imagine myself taking my car to such places. We went in a brand new bus. I discovered that the access road was horrible. It was horrible, horrible! And even with our new bus, it was a hell on Earth. That is why when you see these grievances among the people of Niger Delta, it is as a result of things like these. Accessibility has been very, very poor, very, very rough, and very horrible despite their contributions to the nation's development through the oil they exploit from these areas.*

### **Inadequate transport means**

Inadequate and inappropriate means of transport combined to form a double-edged sword that keeps cutting away the study areas from the rest of the world, especially the media. For instance, transport fare from Uyo to Oron, a distance of about 60 km, fluctuates between 500 and 700 naira, depending on the availability of fuel. Also, from Oron to either Udung Uko or Orue Offong/Oruko costs a minimum of 100 naira for the shortest distance.

Commuters go through difficult times during the rainy season. To cover the rider and his passengers, some commercial motorcycles operators have constructed 'roofs' made of umbrellas and aluminium or iron pipes. Since the sides are not covered, both the rider and his customer are always moving at a slow speed to avoid the wind blowing too much water on them. When the rain is heavy or the wind is strong, movement of passengers or

goods by bike becomes virtually impossible. Thus, as it is difficult for journalists to cover stories in these areas, so it is even more difficult for the poor peasants to go to Uyo, the state capital, to report issues regarding violence.

### **Fear of attack**

The fear of retaliation by cultists was also identified as one of the reasons why violence was not reported. While on the one hand such attacks are not reported to the media, on the other hand journalists do not go after such stories. Speaking about the cult killing of 27 March 2011 (mentioned above), for instance, a community leader at Udung Uko said:

*Even when the matter was reported to the police in the night, they could not come till the following day. The head of this community had to look for people to look after the corpse so that the killer would not take it away to erase traces.*

In such a context, many members of the community avoid reporting violent issues when they occur, as they are not really sure whether they can be adequately protected. Without doubt, cultism is a prominent menace in the area. Although he commended the efforts of the security operatives, the head of a community in Euylor village, for instance, lamented the exhumation and burning in October 2010 of a woman killed by cultists in Urue Offong/Oruko. The elders had to organize a traditional ceremony (called *ojuju*) to make community members swear an oath against cultism and violence.

In both LGAs, inhabitants readily confirmed that there are many cults attacks, yet they were never willing to point to specific instances. Thus, journalists too may not have access or may not be willing to report such

issues for their own safety. A national daily correspondent noted:

*The problem is that you don't know whether the person you are talking to is involved, even among the law enforcers. I don't have police or any special protection.*

### **Unwillingness to release information**

Another major reason for lack of adequate reports on violence is the unwillingness of people to release information. Besides the fear of retaliation by the perpetrators of violence, there seems to be a general practice of centralizing information, even at the official level. For instance, nobody in the two councils was willing to give basic information about their history, their activities, or their achievements. The staff always referred to the chairman, who was not readily available.

### **Dearth of published official records**

Lack of published basic records also contributes to inadequate coverage. In the two council areas, there seems to be no documents such as information handbooks. The political maps of the council areas, for instance, were neither displayed anywhere in the premises of the LGA secretariat nor found via Internet searches. A senior officer at the LGA ministry in the state, when interviewed, affirmed that 'such documents could only be released by the chairman'. This is not a comfortable situation for a journalist who needs to be guided in such a terrain fraught with bad roads and inadequate means of transport.

### **Inadequate personnel**

An inadequate number of journalists is another factor responsible for the lack of good coverage. Many of the national media houses have only one correspondent to report stories in the 30 LGAs of Akwa Ibom. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), a wire service provider, is the only one to have more than one reporter to cover the state.

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Besides, virtually all of these national media correspondents are based in Uyo. The happenings in the state government, the House of Assembly, and tertiary institutions are already more than enough for just a single reporter to cover. Thus, going to remote areas is not an attractive option.

### **Irregular and poor salaries**

Many of the journalists said their pay package barely sustains their basic needs, not to speak of making extra efforts to travel to remote areas. Besides, the pay is sometimes irregular. One of the journalists captured the situation thus:

*The standard of living here is expensive. One will need as much as 400,000 naira to get a befitting accommodation—that is about four to five months' salary, if paid at all! Where do I now get extra money to start pursuing somebody who died? In any case, even if I cover such event of how a motorcycle accident claimed a life, do you think it will have a place when we have been talking about bomb blasts in the last five years or so?*

When reminded of the public's right to know, he responded:

*The right to know is as basic as the right to decent life. You have also moved round as you said, and you would have noted things are expensive here, including fish. Foods are sold per plate, and you need between 300–500 naira to eat in a local restaurant. This is because of the erroneous impression that since this is an oil-rich state, we are all oil workers.*

### **Presence of many local newspapers**

However, there are many local tabloids in the state, such as *Newsfront*, *Mid-Week Radar*, *The Ink*, and *Update*. Although all of them are also based in Uyo, they have better access to the rural areas. Moreover, the majority of their reporters are from within the state, even if they usually concentrate more on politics than violence as such. National media correspondents, therefore, seem to have left 'local' issues to these tabloids. A journalist from a national newspaper noted:

*Though we can source news from these local tabloids, it must be a worthy news, not a story of somebody who fell from a palm tree. If you keep reporting what has already been reported in the local newspapers, it will make news to those in Lagos, Abuja, or Kaduna. But it will make you look stupid here [in Akwa Ibom]. Readers will think you are just a copycat; and, you know, we have quite a number of local publications here, especially as mouthpieces for politicians.*

### **Poor infrastructural facilities**

The essence of news is to inform members of the public generally. However, making radio or television functional in rural local governments is a luxury because of epileptic power supply. For instance, a community secretary in Urue offong/Oruko noted:

*At times, there could be power outage for two years! It is as bad as that. How many people can afford a generator? Our television and radio sets are not better than our furniture or bags as far as communication is concerned. Even when people come here to interview us, as you come now, we don't get feedback.*

His position was corroborated by the chairman of the Akwa Ibom branch of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), who reported that his colleagues have been struggling to cope with a lack of good roads and inadequate supply of power in doing their work:

*The state government under the present administration has tried a lot for the media, as eight out of the 13 chapels of the union have been provided with vehicles and been given new buses. However, there is still the problem of electricity supply, especially in the rural areas. The joy of any journalist is to be able to see the result of a job done. Even newsmakers will not take you seriously next time if they are not sure that the information they want to give you will come out.*

This, perhaps, is one of the major reasons why national media correspondents are always discouraged from scouting for news in rural areas.

### **Illiteracy and poor income**

Illiteracy and poor income do not encourage media attention either. A majority of the villagers are farmers and fishermen. Apart from the fact that many could not read and appreciate the content of newspapers, they also do not have the time to do so. Besides, few can afford to spend money on buying newspapers. As a result, the national media correspondents are not inclined to comb the areas for news.

### **Uncooperative attitude of security operatives**

If getting information from the inhabitants of the LGA is difficult, it is almost impossible when it comes to the security agencies. In the study areas, officials of the

FRSC, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), and the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) volunteered to give what they considered ‘harmless’ information. But the State Security Service (SSS) and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) ‘danced’ around the issues. It was observed that when crime and violence are involved, security operatives are always reluctant to give information, especially to journalists. The usual excuse is to ask for permission from the ‘higher authorities’, which in many cases is either never sought or given. This attitude discourages journalists, who have many other places and stories to cover and, thus, might never return.

In addition, it appears that security operatives generally see reports on violence in their areas as indictments against their competence. For instance, many of the officials who responded to other questions during discussions insisted that they were always on top of security situations. They also kept such issues away from the press, either to ensure smooth investigations or to avoid embarrassment on their part.

### **Challenges faced by relevant governmental agencies**

Statutory agencies saddled with the responsibility of managing security and documenting violent incidents are grossly inadequate in the area. In both LGAs, respondents claimed that they were aware of only a police station in each of the council areas. Except for the Nigeria Police and the NSCDC, the other agencies also kept only one or two personnel to manage a whole LGA. For instance, the unit of the FRSC that monitors Udung Uko and Urue-offong/Oruko LGAs is located in Eket, a distance of about 100 km from some of the communities in the study areas. One of the security operatives captured the situation thus:

*I am the only one posted to this local government by my agency. There is neither vehicle nor motorcycle to monitor. I always go on foot, and there is limitation to where I can*

*trek to. Even when you apprehend an offender,  
arresting and transporting the suspect is a  
problem.*

There is no doubt that with a situation like this,  
journalists also find it difficult to obtain information or  
records.

### CONCLUSION

The two LGAs under review certainly witnessed  
violent deaths between 2006 and 2014; however, youth  
restiveness and protests of various forms are regarded as  
'justified' by the locals. They abhor being seen as violent  
people and condemn cultism.

Because of their location, moreover, the LGAs  
under review are not adequately covered by the security  
agencies that could document violence-related deaths to,  
at least, source media reports. Furthermore, hoarding  
information, deliberately or inadvertently, is a major  
problem. Situations where only the chief executive can  
release basic information such as a map of the LGA is  
clearly inimical to investigation.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APC	All Progressive Congress
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRSC	Federal Road Safety Corps
IFRA	Institut de Recherche français en Afrique
KII	Key Informant Interview
LG	Local Government
LGA	Local Government Area
NAN	News Agency of Nigeria
NIS	Nigeria Immigration Service
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
NUJ	Nigeria Union of Journalists.
RTA	Road Traffic Accident
SSS	State Security Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



*Fig. 1: Entrance to the Urue Offong/Oruko LGA secretariat*



*Fig. 2: The council's secretariat*

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OFFONG/ORUKO AND UDUNG UKO LOCAL  
GOVERNEMENT AREAS OF AKWA IBOM STATE (2006-  
2014)



*Fig. 3: Entrance to the Udung Uko LGA secretariat*



*Fig. 4: The council's secretariat complex*



*Fig. 5: Motorcycle fitted with umbrella as cover. The usual transport means on a road in Udung Uko*



*Fig. 6: The hospital at Urue-offong/Oruko without fence. The white patches on the roof are signs of frequent past repairs.*