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A Study of Violence-Related
Deaths in Baure, Ingawa, Kurfi,
Mani and Matazu Local
Government Areas of Katsina
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, Gagawawa, 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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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Study of Violence-Related Deaths in Baure, Ingawa, Kurfi, Mani and Matazu Local Government Areas of Katsina State (2006–2014)

Project Invisible Violence

Introduction	5
Statement of the problem	7
Research questions	8
Methodology and limitation of the study	8
Ethnoreligious and geographical context of Katsina State.....	9
Socio-economic and political context of Katsina State	10
Baure: Socio-economic, Political and geographical context	11
Kurfi: Socio-economic, Political and geographical context	13
Mani: Socio-economic, Political and geographical context	16
Matazu: Socio-economic, Political and geographical context	19
Ingawa: Socio-economic, Political and geographical context	23
Analysis of unreported violence deaths in “invisible” LGAs	26
Why did incidents go unreported by the national press?	28
Ineffective news media coverage as major factor for unreported incidents.....	28
The political economy of news media ownership and control in Nigeria	30
Conclusion	32
References	33
List of tables	35
List of acronyms	35

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Project Invisible Violence

Summary

The purpose of this study is to determine the types of fatal incidents in five LGAs of Katsina State: Baure, Mani, Kurfi, Matazu, and Ingawa. The research also interrogates why these areas are neglected by the Nigerian press. The study primarily involved field research (via structured questionnaires) and a review of existing literature on violence, as well as the socio-economic, political, religious, and geographical context of Katsina State.

The study revealed 37 incidents of unreported cases of violence, which resulted in 104 deaths in the five ‘invisible’ LGAs of Katsina State between 2006 and 2014. The causes of these fatalities included, in order of prevalence, road accidents, drowning in rivers, fire outbreaks, and farmer–pastoralist clashes. Kurfi accounts for the highest number of fatal deaths in the five LGAs, followed by Ingawa, Baure, Mani, and Matazu.

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Road accidents were responsible for 63.46% of the deaths, followed by drownings (12.50%), farmer–pastoralist clashes (6.73%), building collapses (4.80%), assassinations (3.84%), fire-outbreaks (2.88%), animal attacks (1.92%), explosions (0.96%), and electrocutions (0.96%).

Essentially, this study identifies the ineffectiveness of press coverage as responsible for the failure of such incidents to make news headlines. A critical look exposes the political economy of the media in Nigeria, with private owners who underpay journalists and see news organs as political platforms to manipulate the unsuspecting masses, to the detriment of poor and marginalised groups in rural areas.

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation (WHO 2002: 5).

Also, the WHO's first *World Report on Violence and Health* argued:

“Violence has probably always been part of the human experience. Its impact can be seen, in various forms, in all parts of the world. Each year, more than a million people lose their lives, and many more suffer non-fatal injuries, as a result of self-inflicted, interpersonal or collective violence. Overall, violence is among the leading causes of death worldwide for people aged 15–44 years. The human cost in grief and pain, of course, cannot be calculated. In fact, much of it is almost invisible. While satellite technology has made certain types of violence—terrorism, wars, riots and civil unrest—visible to television audiences on a daily basis, much more violence occurs out of sight in homes, workplaces and even in the medical and social institutions set up to care for people. Many of the victims are too young, weak or ill to protect themselves. Others are forced by social conventions or pressures to keep silent about their experiences. As with its impacts, some causes of violence are easy to see. Others are deeply rooted in the social, cultural, economic fabric of human life. Recent research suggests that while biological and other individual factors explain some of the predisposition to aggression, more often these factors interact with family, community, cultural and other

external factors to create a situation where violence is likely to occur." (ibid. 3)

The WHO also categorizes violence into 3 different categories, based on the persons committing the acts of violence, which include self-directed violence, interpersonal violence, and collective violence (ibid. 6).

Violence or violent activities have always been part of life in Nigeria; and, until recently, road accidents and political clashes were responsible for the highest number of violent deaths in Nigeria. However, the pattern and trend of violent activities and their resultant deaths in Nigeria was greatly altered by the Boko Haram insurgency, which has thus far accounted for the deaths of over 10,000 Nigerians, according to the National Security Adviser (NSA), Sambo Dasuki (Alli 2014). According to Nigeria Watch's *Fourth Report on Violence in Nigeria* [2006–2014] (2014: 7):

"Cumulative figures for the years 2006–2014 show that the main causes of violent deaths are, in order of importance, accidents, crime, political clashes, ethno-religious fighting, and economic issues. In 2014, however, this pattern changed because of the Boko Haram crisis in the North-East. On a national level, political clashes, religious fighting, and crime became the main causes of violent deaths after emergency rule was put in place in May 2013."

Thus, the spate of violent deaths has increased dramatically in Nigeria's northern half since the re-emergence in 2010 of the dreaded salafist sect, Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (JASLWJ) (trans. "People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad", and better known by its sobriquet, Boko Haram). Over time, the insurgency is proving seemingly as insolvable as it is intricately difficult to understand. Yet, many other factors account for a significant number of victims of violence across the country. In fact, there are hundreds of cases of violent deaths across Nigeria which have nothing to do with

Boko Haram and which result from accidents, natural disasters, and ethno-religious conflicts. While most of these fatal incidents are reported by the media, some never make news headlines.

Katsina State is one of the northern regions affected by the wave of violence occasioned by the Boko Haram crisis. However, it is not one of the areas worst affected by the insurgency, compared with Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, and Kano. No Boko Haram attacks were recorded in the five LGAs under review in Katsina State. In fact, few fatal incidents were reported by the national press in the region between 2006 and 2014. This study attempted to discover why. Was it because there were no such cases in Baure, Ingawa, Mani, Kurfi, and Matazu LGAs? Or was it a result of shortcomings in the system of data gathering on lethal violence? As expected, the research revealed scores of fatalities in all the five ‘invisible’ LGAs, proving the ineffectiveness of the news coverage by the national press.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Violent deaths resulting from accidents (motor accidents, fire outbreaks, building collapses, drownings), ethno-religious crises, political violence, and various crimes (from assassinations to terrorism) are almost daily occurrences in Nigeria. Katsina State is no exception. In Baure, Mani, Matazu, Kurfi, and Ingawa LGAs, this research revealed many fatal incidents that were not reported by the media, showing a huge gap in the capacity of the national press to effectively cover rural areas. Although most of these LGAs were not necessarily inaccessible and not particularly distant from the state capital, news reporters did not go there owing to serious logistical challenges that confined them to cities—or, to be more precise, to the corridors of power: Government House, the ministries, departments, and public agencies.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study responds to two main questions:

1. What are the categories of violent incidents that led to death in the five LGAs under review?

2. Why are the five 'invisible' LGAs neglected by the national press?

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

After reviewing the existing literature, undocumented violent deaths were identified through interviews with inhabitants of the five LGAs under review. For easier access to respondents, who may not ordinarily be willing to discuss such a sensitive topic, the researcher relied on the leaders of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) to select ten inhabitants per LGA and administer a total of 50 structured questionnaires. The investigation also examined why fatalities went unreported by the national press. To answer this question, the researcher reached out to the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ).

The study faced a number of challenges, which no doubt affected the outcome of its findings. First, the researcher could have contacted more respondents in other parts of the LGAs, if not for the limitation in funding. This might have revealed another pattern of unreported violent deaths. Moreover, the investigation was significantly constrained by the lack of available data or literature on 'invisible' violence in rural Nigeria, except for a few available press reports in the archives of Nigeria Watch. Lack of access to adequate literature on the social, economic, political, ethnic, religious, and geographical context of Katsina State left the researcher no option but to gather what was available to him via the Internet.

ETHNORELIGIOUS AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF KATSINA STATE

According to the official website of Katsina Local Government Area:

“Katsina was one of the pre-jihad Hausa city states which was conquered and annexed into the Sokoto caliphate by Mallam Urnmarun Dallaji in the early part of the 19th Century. After the British colonial conquest in 1903, the erstwhile Katsina and Daura emirates became Katsina Province of the former Northern region of Nigeria. Later, Katsina and Zaria Provinces together formed the North Central State under the Gowon regime's twelve-state structure. North Central State was left intact in 1976 when the number of states was increased to nineteen under the new name of Kaduna State. Katsina State came into existence on the 23rd of September, 1987 covering the same area of the former Katsina Province of the defunct Northern Region.” (Katsina, n.d., para. 15–17)

Furthermore, according to an undated *Katsina State Profile* produced by the Katsina State History and Culture Bureau:

“The State comprises the two Emirates of Katsina and Daura, with an estimated population of 5,792,578 people, based on 2006 census. The State occupies an area of about 23,938 sq kilometers. It is situated on Latitude between 11° 07' 49N' 13° 22' 57” and Longitude between 6° 52' 03E and 9° 02' 02'E”. The predominant tribes in the State are Hausa/Fulani. Languages spoken in the State are Hausa and Fulfulde. The State is one of the peaceful States in the Federation. There are at present thirty-four (34) Local Government Areas in the State namely Bakori, Batagarawa, Batsari, Baure, Bindawa, Charanchi,

Dandume, Danja, Danmusa, Daura, Dutsi, Dutsin-ma, Faskari, Funtua, Ingawa, Jibia, Kafur, Kaita, Kankara, Kankiya, Katsina, Kurfi, Kusada, Mai'adua, Malumfashi, Mani, Mashi, Matazu, Musawa, Rimi, Sabuwa, Safana, Sandamu and Zango." (p. 2)

The state shares borders with Kano and Jigawa states to the east, Kaduna State to the south, Zamfara State to the west, and the Republic of Niger to the north. Its population is predominantly Hausa-Fulani and Muslim. Some 'pagan' Maguzawa live in the southern part of the state along the Malumfashi-Kafur-Bakori axis, a large majority of whom have converted to Christianity or Islam. There are also immigrants from the South, mostly of Igbo, Yoruba, and Nupe extraction. They are spread across the state and involved in various commercial activities. A significant percentage of the Yorubas are found in Funtua town in southern Katsina. They settled there generations ago and have been assimilated into the local community, earning the appellation *Yarabawan Funtua* (lit. the Yorubas of Funtua).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF KATSINA STATE

Like other states in northern Nigeria, Katsina's economy is mainly agrarian, which means that a large majority of the residents rely on agriculture as a primary means of livelihood. These activities include rain-fed and irrigation cultivation, as well as poultry farming, cattle breeding, beekeeping, and forestry. The state government aims to develop its three major dams of Jibia, Sabke, and Zobe for irrigation, but access to fertiliser is still very limited for farmers. According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development:

"Poverty is widespread in the country and has increased since the late 1990s. Some 70 per cent of Nigerians live on less than US\$1.25 a day. Poverty is

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especially severe in rural areas, where up to 80 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line, and social services and infrastructure are limited. The country's poor rural women and men depend on agriculture for food and income. About 90 per cent of Nigeria's food is produced by small-scale farmers who cultivate small plots of land and depend on rainfall rather than irrigation systems. The poorest groups eke out a subsistence living but often go short of food, particularly during the pre-harvest period.” (IFAD 2012: 2)

Other than agriculture, the second-largest employer in Katsina State is the government. Solid mineral resources are largely underexplored in an oil-dependent economy, despite the abundance of kaolin, fire clay, ball clay, granite, marble, silica, asbestos, salt, nickel, uranium, lead, iron ore, iron oxide, gold, manganese, gemstones, and precious stones in the region.

BAURE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Baure falls under the northern (Daura) senatorial district of Katsina State. It is headquartered at Baure town and was formed from Zango LGA in 1996. The local government has a total area of 707 sq km and a population of 197,425, according to the 2006 census. It has 12 wards: Baure, Garki, Faski, Maibara, Dankum, Yanduna, Hui, Unguwar Rai, Taramnawa, Yanmaulu, Muduri, and Babban Mutum.

The large majority of Baure's inhabitants are farmers who earn their livelihood through agricultural production, largely crop cultivation alongside the rearing of animals like sheep, goats, and cows. Aside from Yanduna, the wards of the LGA have neither a river nor a dam for commercial irrigation farming. Thus, almost all the farmers engage in subsistence farming of crops such

as millet, beans, ground nuts, sesame, and guinea corn. Due to this rural nature, the only major market of the local government is in Garki, once in a week on Mondays. Baure is the most backward, remote, and inaccessible of the five 'invisible' LGAs under review. According to respondents, it recorded the following fatal incidents:

S/N	DATE	LOCATION	CAUSE	DESCRIPTION	FATALITIES
1	June 2011	Maibawa	Motor accident	The accident was caused by the numerous pot-holes on Baure-Sandamu road	6
2	June 2013	Chinai, Babban Mutum	Motor accident	The accident occurred when a bus driver tried to overtake a heavy-duty vehicle	7
3	August 2014	Garki	Building collapse	The building collapse was caused by a heavy downpour as well as the lack of a proper drainage system in the village	5

Table 1 - Violent deaths in Baure LGA (2006–2014)

KURFI: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Kurfi falls under the central (Katsina) senatorial district and is headquartered in Kurfi town. The LGA has a total area of 572 sq km and a population of 117,581 inhabitants, according to the 2006 census. It was formed from Dutsinma LGA in 1989 and has ten wards: Kurfi A, Kurfi B, Barkiya, Wurma A, Wurma B, Tsauri A, Tsauri B, Rawayau A, Rawayau B, and Birci.

The major economic activity is agricultural production. Inhabitants rely on the Kawara, Barkiya, Wurma, and Tamawa rivers for irrigation farming. In fact, irrigation farming of vegetables such as hot peppers, lettuce, onions, and carrots accounts for about 40% of the LGA’s annual cultivation. For the rain-fed agriculture, people produce crops like maize, guinea corn, beans, ground nuts, and sesame. There are four major weekly markets in the local government: Kurfi on Tuesdays, Birci on Thursdays, Wurma on Mondays, and Rawayau on Saturdays. According to respondents, the LGA recorded the following fatal incidents:

S/N	DATE	LOCATION	CAUSE	DESCRIPTION	FATALITIES
1.	November 2008	Yakasai village along the Katsina–Dutsinma road	Motor accident	The accident occurred when a Peugeot J5 rammed into a heavy-duty vehicle. While sympathisers were trying to rescue the victims, a Nissan Urban	13

				crashed into the crowd	
2	July 2010	Kurfi Town, near the filling station	Motor accident	A cyclist was hit and killed by the driver of a Volkswagen Golf	1
3	March, 2013	Gwanzo village	Execution	2 alleged armed robbers were lynched by local vigilantes	2
4	June 2013	Kurfi Town, near Government Secondary School	Motor accident	The driver of a Volkswagen Golf wrongly overtook another vehicle and rammed into a Honda Accord	5
5	October 2013	Dalabu Saulawa	Drowning	The victim was drowned while swimming in a river	1
6	February 2014	Along the Kurfi–Batsari road	Motor accident	The victims died as a result of a farmer–herder clash over water and grazing land	7
7	August 2014	Kaukawa, Kurfi Town	Drowning	A boy fell into a well	1

				and was drowned	
8	September 2014	Kurfi Town, near Kurfi General Hospital	Motor accident	A motorcyclist was drowned while swimming in a river	1
9	September 2014	Wurma village	Assassination	A local trader was murdered by a gang in his house	1
10	September 2014	Yaranda village	Animal attack	The victim was hit by his ox while working in his farm	1

Table 2 - Violent deaths in Kurfi LGA (2006–2014)

MANI: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Mani falls under the northern (Daura) senatorial district of Katsina State. It was one of the first 301 LGAs created in 1976 in Nigeria. Three LGAs (Bindawa, Dutsi, Mashi) were subsequently formed out of it. It is now headquartered in Mani town and has a total area of 784 sq km and a population of 176,966, according to the 2006 census. It has 11 wards: Mani, Machika, Kwatta, Jani, Muduru, Tsagem Takusheyi, Bagiwa, Hamceta, Magami, Bujawa Kewayan, and Duwan Makau.

Like other LGAs, a large majority of the people rely on agriculture as a means of livelihood. Many engage in intensive irrigation farming of vegetable crops like tomatoes, hot peppers, and onions. On a daily basis, truckloads of these perishable foods are transported out of Mani to southern Nigeria. The major markets in the LGA are in Mani town, Muduru, and Jani. Mani is the oldest and most developed of the five 'invisible' LGAs. According to respondents, it recorded the following fatal incidents:

S/N	DATE	LOCATION	CAUSE	DESCRIPTION	FATALITIES
1.	June 2011	Kugado village	Motor accident	Two vehicles had a head-on collision. One of them, a Peugeot J5, was conveying traders returning from a local market	7
2	June 2014	Gawon Mala village	Motor accident	The victims included a mother and her 2 children in a motor accident between a Volkswagen Sharon SUV and an unnamed vehicle	5
3	August 2014	Magami village	Motor accident	The victims died in an accident involving a Volkswagen Sharon SUV	3
4	August 2014	Mani Town, River Chima	Drowning	A 26-year old youth was drowned while trying	1

				to fetch water	
5	September 2014	Jani ward, Dallatu river	Drowning	A village head of Turawa was drowned	1

Table 3 - Violent deaths in Mani LGA (2006-2014)

MATAZU: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Matazu falls under the southern (Funtua) senatorial districts of Katsina State. It is headquartered in Matazu town and was formed from Musawa LGA in 1991. The local government has a total area of 503 sq km and a population of 115,325, according to the 2006 census. Matazu has 10 wards: Matazu A, Matazu B, Sayaya, Karadua, Kogari, Rinjin Idi, Rissi, and Mazoji A and B.

Farmers produce vegetables such as onions, hot peppers, lettuce, and carrots, thanks to irrigation schemes around the Fandabuwa Dam and three earth dams in Rinjin Idi, Fafu, and Kasharuwa. For the rain-fed agriculture, they produce maize, guinea corn, rice, beans, sesame, soya beans, and cotton. Other than agriculture, the people of Matazu engage in commercial traditional weaving, blacksmithing, and the manufacturing of tools such as hoes. There are three major weekly and bi-weekly markets: Matazu on Fridays and Tuesdays, Karadua on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Mazoji on Mondays. According to respondents, the LGA recorded the following fatal incidents:

S/N	DATE	LOCATION	CAUSE	DESCRIPTION	FATALITIES
1.	February 2010	Kogon Maidawa, Sayawa Ward	Murder	A farmer on his way to his fields was killed when he came across a madman carrying a hoe.	1
2	February 2011	Salihawa village	Execution	The alleged ringleader of a gang engaged in the theft of goats and sheep was ambushed and killed by the community's vigilantes	1
3	September 2011	Sayaya village	Drowning	The victim was in the business of helping people cross over the Sayaya river. One day, while swimming, he became exhausted and was drowned	1

4	December 2011	Dogon Hawa village	Motorcycle accident	A police officer and a resident of Karadua village collided with one another while riding on motorcycles	2
5	February 2012	Near Matazu township market	Motor accident	2 motorcyclists were hit by the driver of a Volkswagen Golf who lost control of his car when its tyre burst	2
6	August 2012	Karadua village	Motor accident	The victim was hit by the driver of a Volkswagen Golf while trying to cross the Kafin Soli–Matazu road	1
7	November 2013	Matazu Town, near the bridge	Motor accident	The driver of a Toyota Starlet hit a motorbike. Both the motorcyclist and the passenger of	2

				the car died	
8	August 2014	Sabon Sara village, Sayaya ward	Drowning	A divorcee who went to fetch water missed a step, slipped back into the river and was drowned	1
9	August 2014	Nasarawa village	Drowning	A boy was drowned while fishing	1
10	October 2014	Rinjin Idi earth dam	Drowning	4 boys were drowned while swimming	4

Table 4 - Violent deaths in Matazu LGA (2006–2014)

INGAWA: SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Ingawa falls under the northern (Daura) senatorial district of Katsina State. It is headquartered at Ingawa town. It was formed from Kankia LGA in May 1989. Ingawa has a total area of 892 sq km and a population of 169,753, according to the 2006 census. It has 11 wards: Ingawa, Kandawa Jobe, Manomawa Kafi, Yayabi Dore, Dara, Daunaka Bakinkwari, Bareruwa Ruruma, Kurfeji Yankaura, Dugul; Yandoma, and Agayawa.

The people of Ingawa rely largely on agriculture as a means of livelihood. The crops cultivated are guinea corn, millet, maize, beans, sesame, cotton, and ground nuts. The inhabitants, particularly those of Agayawa, Yandoma, Dugul, and Dara, are also engaged in commercial traditional weaving. The major weekly markets are in Ingawa on Mondays, Tunas on Sundays, and Kurfeji on Wednesdays. According to respondents, the LGA recorded the following fatal incidents:

	DATE	LOCATION	CAUSE	DESCRIPTION	FATALITIES
1.	June 2007	Manomawa Kafi Ward, Gulbin Gari river	Drowning	A man was drowned while trying to recover his shoes in the river	1
2	June 2007	Ingawa Town, Sabon Gari	Fire	A girl died as a result of injuries sustained from a fire outbreak caused by a burning candle	1
3	February 2008	Ingawa Town, Kofar Yamma	Fire	The victim was burnt to death after he set up a fire to warm his body during the year's cold season	1
4	July 2010	Ingawa Town, Kofar Yamma	Electrocution	The victim was electrocuted by an uninsulated electric cable he mistakenly touched while trying to fix the	1

				mud wall of his shop	
5	August 2010	Yan Lawal Village	Cattle grazing	A farmer–herder clash over water	7
6	March 2012	Ingawa Town, AUYPetroleum filling station	Explosion	An attendant died while trying to fix a fuel pump which ignited an explosion	1
7	August 2013	Ingawa Town, Kuwait Island	Drowning	A boy was drowned while swimming in a river	1
8	May 2014	Kandawa village	Motor accident	The tyre of a Volkswagen Golf was shot at by officials of NDLEA, who suspected that passengers were criminals	6
9	June 2014	Kurfeji Market, Ingawa Town	Animal Attack	The victim was killed by the bite of a snake	1

Table 5 - Violent deaths in Ingawa LGA (2006–2014)

ANALYSIS OF UNREPORTED VIOLENCE DEATHS IN “INVISIBLE” LGAS

In Baure, Mani, Matazu, Ingawa, and Kurfi LGAs, the study discovered 37 fatal incidents, resulting in 104 deaths from 2006 to 2014. Kurfi accounted for the highest number of violent deaths (31.73% of the total), followed by Ingawa (19.23%), Baure (17.30%), Mani (16.34%), and Matazu (15.38%). As in many rural regions of Nigeria, fatalities were caused mainly by accidents such as motor crashes, drownings in rivers, electrocutions, fire outbreaks, and animal attacks. Of the 37 incidents, 15 were road accidents, accounting for 65.38% of the deaths. This finding confirms the argument of Agbonkhese et al. (2013: 90):

“Road accidents have become a normal and re-occurring phenomenon in Nigeria. Although both the developed and developing nations of the world have suffered from varying degrees of road accidents, the developing countries clearly dominate with Nigeria having the second highest rate of road accidents among 193 ranked countries of the world. Deaths from reckless driving are the third leading cause of death in Nigeria. In 2012, at least 473 persons died from a total of 1,115 vehicular accidents nationwide [...] There could be more unreported cases, and as often happens, some of the injured die without making the statistics.”

Second to road accident among the causes of violent deaths in Baure, Mani, Ingawa, Kurfi, and Matazu LGAs was drowning in rivers. Thirteen such incidents resulted in 12.5% of the fatalities. Other causes of violent deaths were farmer–pastoralist clashes (6.73%), building collapses (4.80%), assassinations (3.84%), fire-outbreaks (2.88%), animal attacks, (1.92%), explosions (0.96%), and electrocutions (0.96%).

Surprisingly, political issues were not identified among the causes of fatality, despite Katsina being one of the states affected by the post-2011 election violence. The five LGAs under review have been largely free of the effects of the deadly Boko Haram insurrection. They did not follow the pattern of other regions, where political conflicts constitute the third main cause of fatal violence nationwide (Nigeria Watch 2014: 3). However, the absence of such deaths in the five LGAs was not because there were actually no politically motivated acts of violence, but because these violent activities did not result in any deaths.

WHY DID INCIDENTS GO UNREPORTED BY THE NATIONAL PRESS?

Two main factors were responsible for the failure of the national press to report fatal incidents in Katsina State: the political economy of the Nigerian media and the semi-rural nature of the five LGAs. These factors are behind the lack of political and economic interest in these LGAs. Accessibility was not a challenge in the case of Mani, Matazu, Kurfi, and Ingawa, which are easily accessed from the state capital. Only the most rural area, Baure, lacks good roads.

INEFFECTIVE NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE AS MAJOR FACTOR FOR UNREPORTED INCIDENTS

In general, Nigerian journalists are too financially unstable to be able to effectively carry out their duties. Because most of the media cannot sponsor and post reporters to the various states of the Federation, they often employ correspondents with appointment letters and identity cards, leaving them to use whatever means they can to do their job. Such fulltime or freelance journalists have no option but to visit government houses or ministries in order to obtain press releases and some recompense in the form of cash for writing good reports about politicians.

According to Abdullahi Izma Yamadi, the chairman of Katsina State chapter of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (personal communication, 8 October 2014):

“There are problems concerning effective coverage by newspapers because most of the reporters are based in the state capital (Katsina) and of course, not only in the state capital but in the corridors of power—at the Government House. When you look at the situation critically, you don’t blame the reporters alone: they share

IFRA-Nigeria epapers series, 2015, n°45

the blame with the proprietors of newspapers who just employ these people [the reporters], issue them with identity cards and expect them to go and operate on their own. Of course they [the proprietors] shouldn't expect effective coverage because they didn't provide them with vehicles for easier mobility; they didn't give them all the necessary gadgets—and they are not being paid.”

Such reports [unnatural deaths] are reports that don't fetch a penny; no reporter expects to get a penny for reporting such incidents[,] which means they will not have the motivation to cover such incidents in remote rural areas. It is only those press releases that are issued by government agencies that are accompanied with some financial gratification[,] which is why our reporters are always there [in the corridors of power] because that is what they live on. So, I believe there are lapses and ineffectiveness in terms of coverage which is responsible for the lack of reported unnatural deaths in the said 5 LGAs of Katsina State.

In the same vein, Leman argued:

“The working conditions of journalists are in the most cases inadequate. Journalists working, as fulltime and as freelancers, are overall poorly remunerated. They do not enjoy health and safety protection. They are not even provided with the necessary equipment to help them protect themselves in conflicts or civilian unrests. Most media houses are not financially stable or strong and those who have the financial capacity to take safety measures do not want to invest in the safety of journalists and many are not properly trained.” (Thoughts on Nigeria Media and Ethical Challenges, presented at a workshop organized by Konrad Adenauer Foundation and German Embassy, 2014: 2)

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF NEWS MEDIA OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL IN NIGERIA

Today, the print, broadcast, and Internet media in Nigeria are largely privately owned and controlled. Until its deregulation by the Babangida regime in 1992, the broadcast media in Nigeria was government dominated. However, the print media had long before then remained private sector dominated.

According to Musa and Mohammed (2004: 243):

“In relation to the printed press, notably newspapers, private individuals constitute major owners. In fact, of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, only 14 own newspapers in addition to New Nigerian, Daily Times and Sunday Times owned by the Federal Government. In the case of both Daily Times and Sunday Times, government maintains a 60% shareholding. The rest of over 42 titles are all owned by private individuals.”

At the moment, whereas *Daily Times* has been sold to a private investor under controversial circumstances, the fate of *New Nigerian* is deeply uncertain. Some of the 14 state-owned newspapers, such as the *Triumph*, have been closed down. Thus, the print media in Nigeria today is unarguably owned and controlled by the private sector.

The deregulation of the broadcast media in 1992 also spurred the proliferation of privately owned TV, radio, and cable networks, such as Africa Independent Television (AIT) and Ray Power FM in Lagos, Independent Television (ITV) in Benin City, Channels Television and Vision FM in Abuja, Desmins Independent Television (DITV) and Nagarta Radio in Kaduna, and Freedom Radio and Rahama Radio in Kano.

According to Ariye (2010):

“For several decades in Nigeria government could not muster courage to allow individuals to own electronic media. The fear expressed then was that radio and television as potent forces for mass mobilization should not be insensitively allowed to slip into the hands of private individuals. But by 1992 President Babangida announced that one of the legacies he would want to leave behind was the privatization of the electronic media. He then went on to establish the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), charging it to ensure that private radio and television licenses are issued before the end of his administration.”

However, it is still difficult for journalists to effectively cover the length and breadth of the country's vast land mass. Critically looking at the private media in Nigeria, one can clearly see that, historically, very few owners are apolitical. Almost all of them are either biased or card-carrying members of one political party or another. Thus, they are not neutral and do not serve the interests of the masses. Notable examples of media owners who are also politicians are APC's founding leader Bola Ahmed Tinubu (*Nation*), PDP stalwart Raymond Dokpesi (*AIT/Raypower*), APC presidential aspirant Sam Nda-Isaiah (*Leadership*), and former PDP Abia State governor Orji Uzor Kalu (*The Sun*).

Others who do not show any sympathy for a political party may be promoting a regional or ethnic agenda. They see their news media outfits as platforms to launch themselves into the political arena and win elected positions in Nigeria.

Musa and Mohammed (2004: 244) also share this belief:

“As usual of Nigerian politicians, some of them found media organizations to boost their standing in the polity preparatory to their active participation in partisan politics. At least, two instances may be recalled here. Chief Mike Ajaegbo, who founded Minaj cable television in 1995, later became a stalwart of PDP and successfully contested election as senator of the Federal Republic. The other is Mr James Ibori, who established the Diet daily and Sunday newspapers, joined PDP and successfully contested elections to become Governor of Delta State. Until they founded their respective media, both Ajaegbo and Ibori were hardly reckoned with as politicians either at national, state or local levels.”

Thus, the vision of the majority of the Nigerian media is rarely about the masses. Instead, newspapers, radio, and TV stations are a tool for the actualization of the personal ambitions, interests, and agendas of their owners. This explains why the welfare of reporters and their ability to cover remote rural areas are not a primary concern.

CONCLUSION

This research investigated the unreported cases of violent deaths in five LGAs of Katsina State: Baure, Mani, Ingawa, Kurfi, and Matazu. It showed that the absence of records of fatalities was a result of shortcomings in the system of data gathering by the media. The political economy of the ownership and control of the news media in Nigeria explains the ineffectiveness of the coverage of such rural areas. Historically, the private media has never been pro-masses but rather pro-establishment. Hence, unreported cases of violent deaths in rural Nigeria will continue to occur.

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LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1: Violent deaths in Baure LGA (2006-2014)
Table 2: Violent deaths in Kurfi LGA (2006-2014)
Table 3: Violent deaths in Mani LGA (2006-2014)
Table 4: Violent deaths in Matazu LGA (2006-2014)
Table 5: Violent deaths in Ingawa LGA (2006-2014)

LIST OF ACRONYMS

- AIT – Africa Independent Television
APC – All Progressives Congress
AUY – Alhaji Usman Yandoma
DITV – Desmins Independent Television
IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development
ITV – Independent Television (ITV)
JASLWJ – Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad
LGAs – Local Government Areas
NDLEA – National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
NUJ – Nigeria Union of Journalists
NULGE – Nigeria Union of Local Government
Employees
NSA – National Security Adviser
PDP – Peoples Democratic Party
SUV – Suburban Utility Vehicle
WHO – World Health Organization