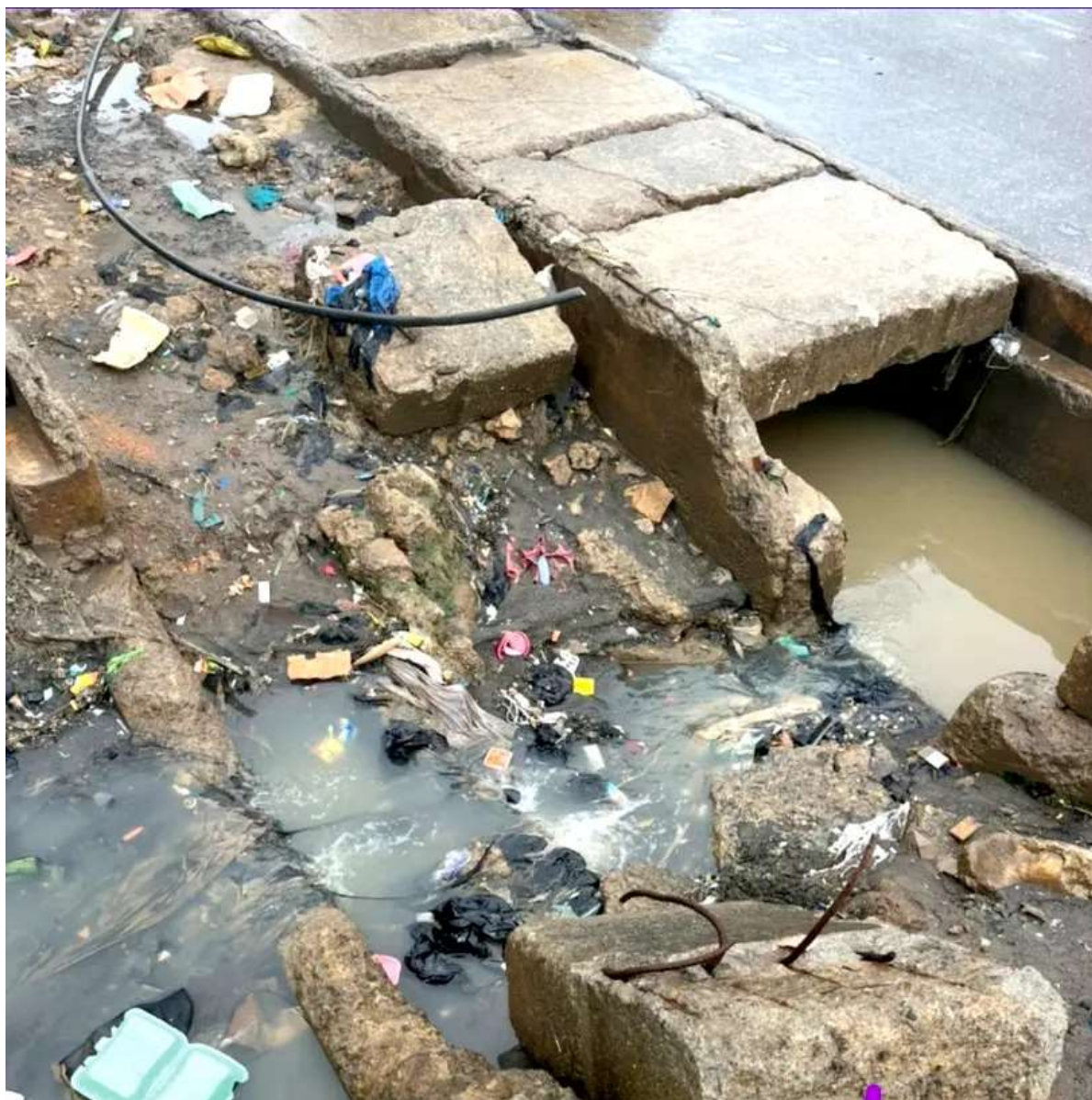


Lagos drain where people die weekly; latest victim is 15-yr-old girl

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The drainage



By Efe Onodjæ

Residents of Idi-Oro, in the densely populated Mushin area of Lagos, are constantly living in fear, as a result of a decrepit drain filled with refuse, which has continued to take lives of unsuspecting passers-by.

The drain, located off Alhaji Lasisi Bus stop, in Mushin, has, in the past two months, claimed the lives of Abosede, a 25-year-old petty trader; Tijani, a 50-year-old and, last Friday, a 15-year-old pupil, simply identified as Mary.

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Surprisingly, most of the victims are ignorant of, not just the depth of the drain, but its actual location, especially after it rains.

The 15-year-old student, Erinle Moturayo Mary, was a student of Ajigbada Girls High School, Surulere. She was on her way back from school on a Friday afternoon, after a downpour, and fell into the drain.

All efforts to rescue her failed, as she was found dead by some mechanics, 12 kilometers from the Idi-Oro Bus stop, from where her bloated body was picked up.

An eyewitness, Oluwasesan Bamuya, an Okada rider, told Vanguard Metro that he witnessed the pathetic incident.

According to him: “This is not the first time this kind of ugly incident is occurring at this bus stop. It happened two months ago and claimed the lives of a family man and a young lady, although I heard they were more than two. However, what I witnessed last month was two.

Giving detailed account of how the schoolgirl lost her life, he continued: “I overheard the traders telling the little girl to turn back when I was dropping a passenger at Idi-Oro, unknown to me that she was already inside the drain.

“When I got there to rescue her, I saw her bag and I picked it up. Unfortunately, she had gone deep into the drain and was swept away.

“We started searching her bag to see if we can find something to identify her. A lady among us, who fries akara at the bus stop, saw the name written on her book and confirmed that she knew the little girl.

“An hour later, we heard that her body was found on the other side of the drain, which is Idi-Araba.”

The Chairman of Okada riders in Idi-Oro, Ayodele Davies, also asserted that the canal has taken not just one soul, but three.

According to him: “When Tijani, the 50-year-old man, was found dead in the drain, they reported to the chairman of the local government and he came with an entourage to take pictures and, till this very moment, nothing has been done.

“The government should please intervene, else more lives would be lost because the road is usually quiet at night and, as the major route that leads to the nooks and crannies of the street, strangers are usually the victims because there might be nobody at night to direct them properly.”

When Vanguard Metro visited the home of the late Erinle Motunrayo Mary, located at Number 13, Igbehinadun, Idi-Oro, Mr. Erin, Mary’s father, said there was nothing to say other than that the government has failed his daughter.

Meanwhile, residents of the area and angry traders, as well as commercial motorcyclists plying the ever-busy road where the drain is situated, are threatening to hold a peaceful protest if the state government refuses to do something about it.

They alleged that both the state and local government have woefully failed to re-construct the drain and make it safer for hundreds of people that pass through it daily.

“Rather, they are waiting for more people to die before fixing the drain or closing it up entirely.”