



JUNE 2019

KILLING FIELDS



**INCIDENTS
OF ATROCITY IN RIVERS
STATE IN JUNE 2019**



INTRODUCTION

In the 30-day period of June 2019, there were 17 documented incidents of atrocity in Rivers state that resulted in 26 killings. While this is a marked decline in the quarter, it nonetheless reflects a general climate of insecurity and lawlessness which continues to highlight Rivers state in atrocious murders. 4 of the killings in June were committed by state actors including the army and police, while 13 were committed by none state actors mostly gang members.

The 26 killings recorded in the month of June is a significant decrease compared to the figure for the months of April and May which were 46 and 80 respectively. This decline largely reflects the outcome of outrage, pressures and demand for accountability from stakeholders including civil society organizations and traditional institutions in the state. As commendable as this dipping murder statistics are, it is important to note the manner the decline has been procured. In responding to citizens' demand to end the killings, different institutions in the state including law enforcement and local government authorities brokered a 'peace' deal with waring gangs in the state and secured a ceasefire in return for 'amnesty'.

We the People is deeply concerned that slowly but certainly, the granting of 'amnesty' to criminals is replacing actual law enforcement. It is worrying that the primary response of our law enforcement system to atrocious killings and other criminalities is an invitation to criminals to accept a blanket amnesty which absolves them of any liability or prosecution for crimes they committed. With such 'amnesties' no further

effort is made to secure justice for the victims and closure for their loved ones. Communities that have been victims of gang violence are forced to accept their assailants as esteemed members of the community. As previous amnesty interventions have shown, this is not a sustainable model.

The approach of 'buying off' atrocious killings through ill thought out amnesties fails to address the underlying drivers of killings in the state. For instance, in granting the recent spate of amnesty and peace deals, there has been no demand for handing over sophisticated weapons used in unleashing killings. Ironically, perpetrators are allowed to keep their arsenal while committing to a new life of peace. With the benefit of hindsight, it is known that the guns will be immediately turned against a new set of victims.

In all of this, law enforcement in Rivers state seem overwhelmed by the security challenges. The perpetrators of atrocious crimes have become more daring, bestial and murderous in the activities. There is great and immediate need for a new approach in addressing these cases in Rivers state.

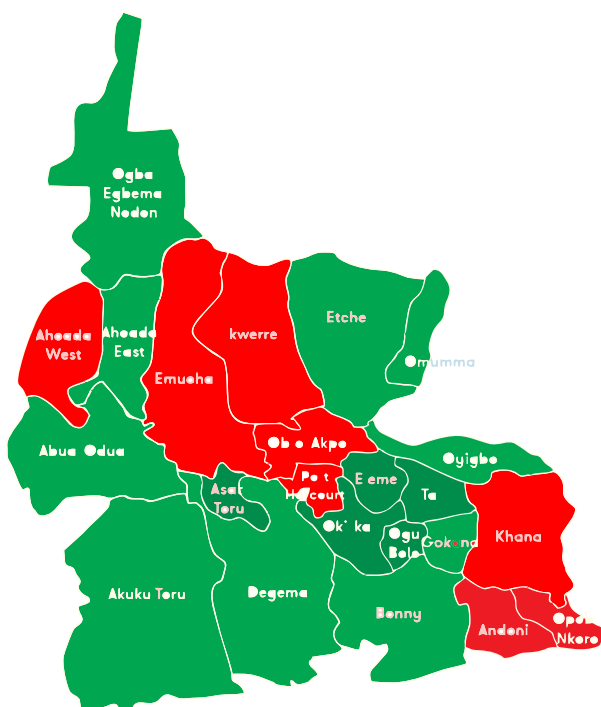
In tracking and documenting the killings in Rivers state, We the People has made deliberate effort to go beyond the headlines and dig deeper to know the personalities of these citizens and the circumstances that led to their deaths. For too long, the demand for accountability for atrocious killings in Nigeria have been weakened by the lack of any real information on the victims. It seems, sadly, that numbers and statistics have replaced the value of life and the need to account for every soul we lose in murderous circumstances.

As citizens, we remind our government at every level that the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that the Security and Welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. The government needs to act now.

We the People

Atrocity Flashpoints

Local Government Areas highlighted in red, represent locations in Rivers State where atrocities occurred in the month of May, 2019



INCIDENTS

On the 2nd of June, gunmen invaded the country home of the Vice Chancellor of Rivers State University, Prof. Blessing Didia, at Omerelu Community in Ikwerre Local Government Area. The assailants killed one, and destroyed properties worth millions of naira. It is believed that the attack was targeted at the Vice Chancellor.



On the 3rd of June, Robertson Ndigbara, was mobbed to death in Bori, Khana Local Government Area, over a robbery incident he was alleged to be involved in. Robertson was beaten with sticks, shovels, and whatever weapons the mob could lay their hands on. Before his death, the young man was the son of Chief Solomon Ndigbara, a former militant leader and a 'repentant cultist' who holds sway in the Ogoni axis of Rivers State. Chief Solomon Ndigbara dissociated himself from the crime his son was accused of, saying everyone should be held to account for the crimes they commit.



On the 3rd of June, soldiers attached to officials of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) at B-Dere Community in Gokana Local Government Area, engage some suspected oil thieves in a gun duel in the Community. A middle age commercial motorcyclist from Biara Community, was returning from his day's work when soldiers mistook him for an oil thief, shot and killed him. The victim was married and had three children. In the month of April, a similar incident happened in the nearby community, K-Dere, where one Mr. Nen-eekepe Legbara was killed by law enforcement officers attached to the same company.



On the 4th of June, a young man identified as Ebi Pade, from Bayelsa State, was stabbed to death by a man believed to be gang member at Mgbuoshimini, in Obio/Akpor Local government Area. According to sources, after stabbing Ebi, the attacker became even more voracious. While Ebi was still in the pool of his blood, struggling to hang on to life, his attacker ran to a nearby shack from where he obtained a pistol and returned to shoot the victim who was already dead. Ebi was 21-year old and lived with his mother and siblings.



On the 5th of June, gunmen believed to be members of a gang killed two men in Bodo in Gokana Local Government Area. There has been a long-standing supremacy battle in the area for who controls the activities of the illegal artisanal refinery in the community.



On the 12th of June, 16-year old Abdullahi Idris and an unidentified man were killed in police custody after they were wrongfully accused of stealing a generator set. Sources said that Idris was a porter and wheelbarrow pusher from Tambura in Gezawa Local Government Area of Kano State, who arrived Port Harcourt only a few weeks earlier. He had used his wheelbarrow to convey a generator set which the unidentified man had asked him to carry. On sighting Idris and the man with the item, some youths rounded and beat them up before they were arrested by officers of the Mile 3 Nkpolu Police station on the orders of Baridon Monsi, the Divisional Police Officer. Baridon Monsi, was alleged to have ordered the killing of the two after they had been arrested. When the effort of the family of Idris to get him out of police custody proved abortive, they contacted the Commissioner of Police in Rivers State, who ordered an investigation. The investigations revealed that Idris and the other



man had been killed and buried in a shallow grave behind the Nkpolu Police station. Upon interrogation, the D.P.O. alleged that Idris and his gang tried to shoot him (the D.P.O), before he was killed. Following this, the Commissioner ordered the arrest of the D.P.O. and nine officers over the incident. He also instructed that the bodies be exhumed for further investigation.

On Sunday 16th June, one soldier and two officials of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (N.S.C.D.C.) were killed by suspected oil thieves in Gio Community in Tai Local Government Area. Before the attack on them, the security officials were guarding the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) Trans National Pipelines (TNP) in Gio community. Sources report that the gunmen took away one AK 47 and two G3 rifles after killing the soldier and the NSCDC personnel. Moments later, a combined team of soldiers and N.S.C.D.C. personnel flooded the community in search of the killers, shooting and destroying homes. In a very short time, the entire community was deserted out of fear of reprisal.



On the 17th of June, soldiers killed Korobe Menele Gberegbara in Tai Local government Area. Korobe, a native of B-Dere in Gokana Local Government Area, is believed to have masterminded the attack that saw the death of a soldier and two officials of the N.S.C.D.C. a day before in Gio, Tai. Until his death, Korobe was a notorious gang leader who coordinated the activities of some suspected oil thieves in some Ogoni Communities.



On the 17th of June, men in military uniform shot and killed five in Zaakon and Bori, respectively, in Khana Local Government Area. While the two who were killed in Zaakon could not be identified (their corpses were taken away by their killers), the three killed at the junction of the Kenule Beeson Saro Wiwa Polytechnic, Bori, were Augustine Bariledum, Nwibari Fade and Barilugbene Doole. Sources reported that the killers who were in Army camouflage were actual soldiers avenging the death of their colleagues a day before at Gio, in Tai.



On Tuesday 18th of June, suspected armed robbers killed Prof. Emmanuel Amadi at his residence in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. Sources said the gunmen who earlier gained entrance to home of the professor, left the vicinity, came back and attacked him with an iron rod, after they discovered that he recognised one of them. The Professor was confirmed dead when he was taken to the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH) after he had fainted from the blow. Before his death, Prof. Emmanuel Amadi was a lecturer in the Department of Microbiology in Rivers State University, Nkpolu, Port Harcourt.



On Tuesday 18th of June, gunmen shot and killed two at a waterfront area of Bakana Community in Degema Local Government Area. The gunmen came in a speed boat, shot their victims, threw the corpses in a nearby mangrove and made away with six other speedboats. Sources say the attack was gang related. Recently the community has seen a number of gang related attacks that have kept residents in constant fear.



On Thursday 20th June, suspected sea pirates in a creek along the Bonny River shot and killed 27-year old Aaron, who was a boat driver and a native of Forupa Azagbene in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Aaron bought and sold petroleum products from vendors of illegally refined petroleum products in their camps. He was on his way to buy some, before he was robbed of N800,000, shot dead inside his speedboat and left in the pool of his blood.



On Saturday 22nd June, men of the Nigerian Army camped in Ibaa Town in Emohua Local Government Area, raided a football viewing centre in Obelle, shot and killed a 22-year old tiler, Mr. Junior Ovundah. Sources dissociated Junior of any crime and accused the Community Development Chairman of Obelle Community of conniving with the Nigerian Army to kill repentant gang members. The C.D.C. Chairman however, denied having any hand in the incident.



On the 24th of June, a man identified as Chimezie Eke was shot and killed by some gunmen in his car in front of No. 6 Okomoko Street, D/Line, Port Harcourt. The assailants took away large sums of money from the booth of the car which the victim withdrew from the bank minutes earlier. Sources report that he was involved in some gang related activities and was in-charge of some surveillance jobs in Rivers State. Chimezie had a child before his death.



On the 24th of June, the ONELGA Security Planning and Advisory Committee (OSPAC), a local security outfit in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, after arresting a man identified as Ezeh, killed him in Igwuruta in Ikwerre Local Government Area. The man was rumoured to be a gang member who terrorized the area, but residents absolved him of criminal activities and staged a protest along the Igwuruta Road to demand justice for him. Mr. Eze was a trailer driver known to have lost his wife to illness about six months ago. He died leaving a set of twin daughters behind.



In the morning of Friday, 27th June, gunmen killed one and injured another at Rumuchakara in Choba Community, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The attackers first attacked and beheaded John Ogbue, before cutting off his genitals. A girl who was in John's room at the time of the incident was shot but survived with sustained bullet wounds. John's severed head was later seen on the median on Choba Road. The incident is believed to be gang related. Until his death, John was a generator mechanic in Rumuchakara, Choba. The police have acknowledged the incident and said that the matter is under investigation.



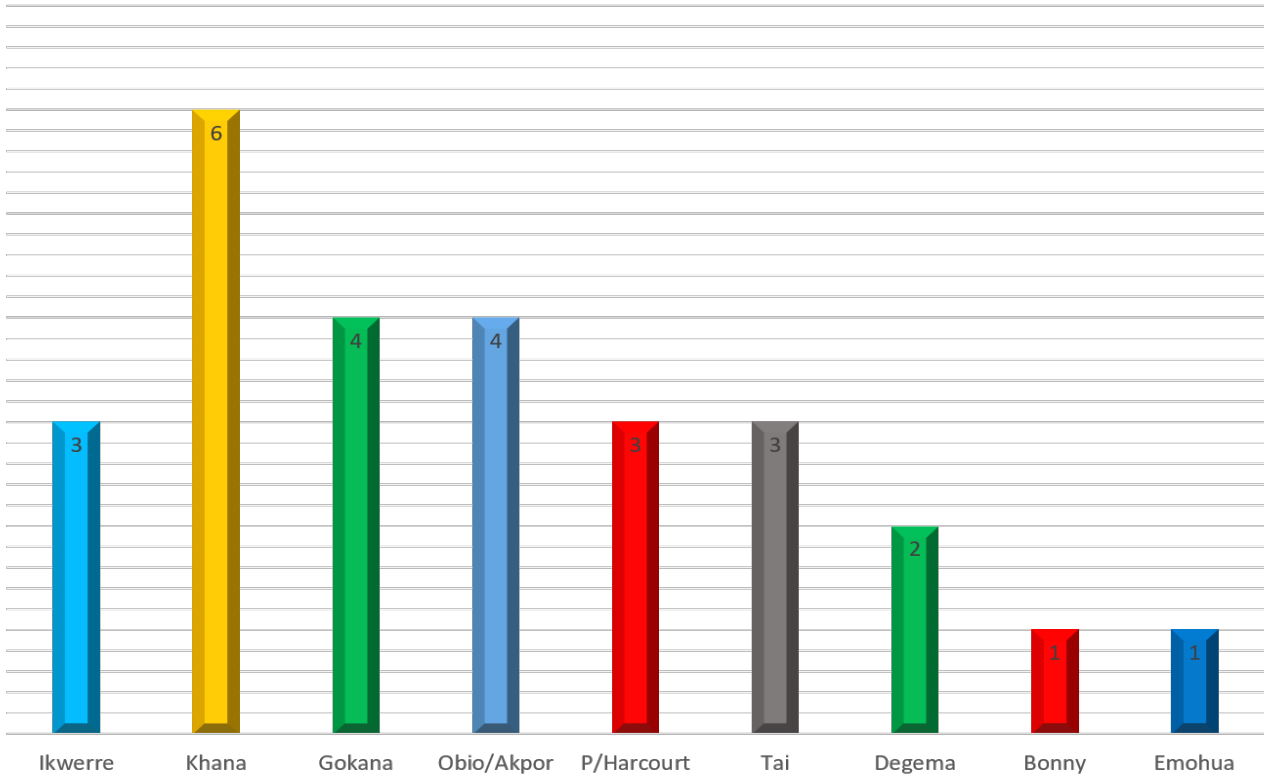
On the 27th June, a police officer identified as George Thomas was shot dead by unknown gunmen at Choba, in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. George was a Superintendent of Police with the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (S.A.R.S.) in Rivers State. Following the incident, the police has carried out series of arrests around Choba and some neighbouring communities where the killing took place.



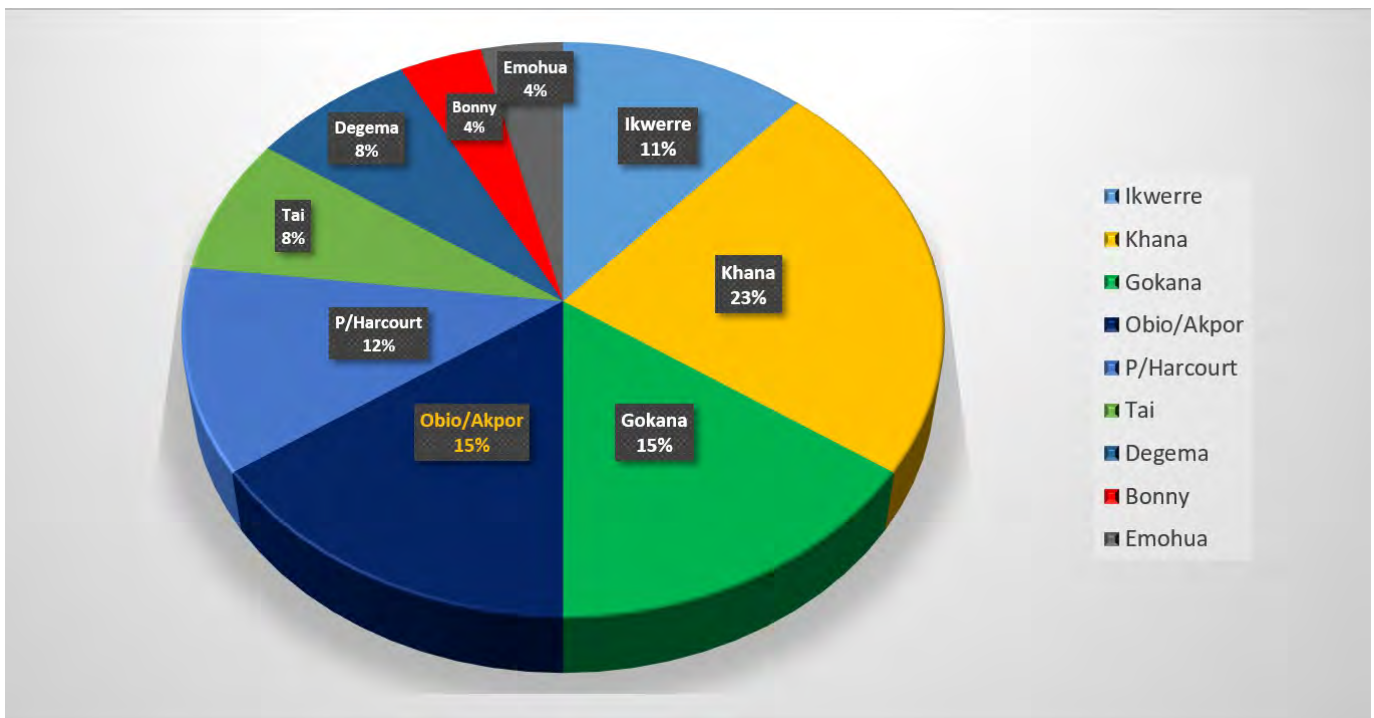
GRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

The following info-graphics represent Routine killings in Rivers state according to number of fatalities, local government area percentages and days of occurrences respectively

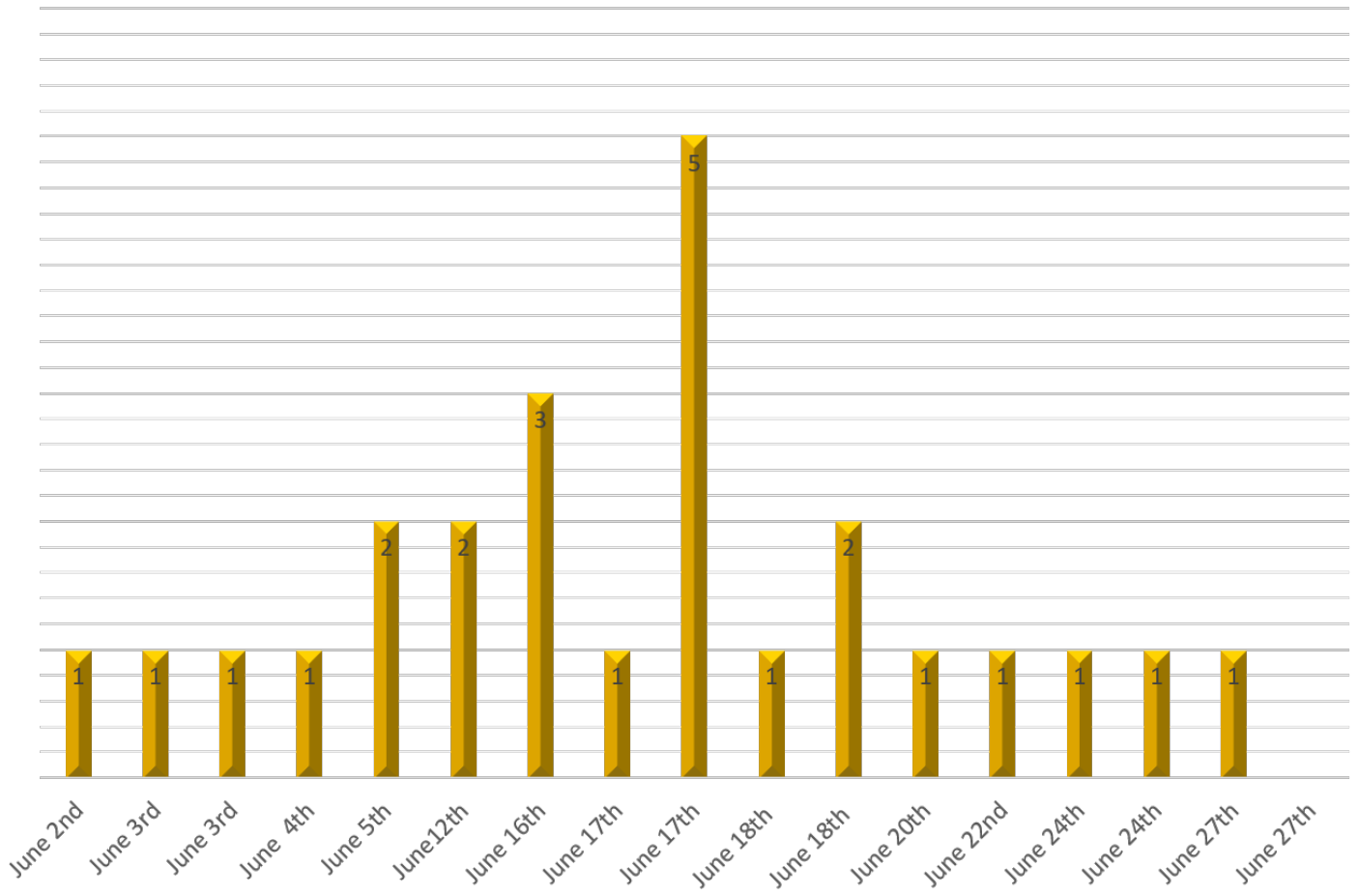
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF RECORDED DEATHS



PERCENTAGE OF DEATH BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA



DAYS OF RECORDED DEATHS



This Report is produced by We the People- Centre for Social Studies and Development within the framework of its Human Rights Accountability Programme supported by Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA).

May 2019

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