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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN OYO STATE: THE 2024 BODIJA EXPLOSION

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ABSTRACT

A strategic response plan is the foundation of a nation's effective governance, especially when it relates to sustainable development. This study interrogated the cause of the 2024 Bodija explosion in Ibadan and Oyo state government's response to the explosion. The study used a qualitative research approach throughout the process. The study used both primary and secondary data. Eight (8) respondents from government agencies, victims, and impacted communities were purposefully selected and interviewed for the primary data. However, secondary data came from a variety of sources, including books, journals, media, and official government reports. Content analysis was used to analyse the data collected. The study discovered that the 2024 Bodija explosion was as a result of Water Gel Type Based Explosive that was set off by an electric spark. A Malian stored the explosive in a residential building. In order to control the explosion, the Oyo state administration took a cooperative stance. It synergised with organizations such as NEMA, LASEMA, and OYSEMA. The response of the State can be categorised into three: initial, medium, and long-term. In order to handle the risks that may arise from an explosive outbreak and associated disaster in the state, the study suggests that Oyo State government should come up with an efficient emergency management plan. This will properly control the flow of hazardous substances. The state government should review its residential and settlement policies, and mount greater emphasis on environmental safety as well as increase its disaster management capabilities.

Keywords: *Oyo state government, Emergency management, Bodija explosion, Oyo State response.*

INTRODUCTION

Explosions, regardless of their cause, have the potential to drastically alter society. However, the amount of property damage and fatalities during an explosion can be reduced with a comprehensive strategy and response mechanism. Since explosions are unplanned and undesirable in any community, taking precautions to restrict their destructive effects will help prevent them from spreading. For example, the 2024 explosion shock waves in Ibadan, Bodija, demonstrated the significance of having both state and federal governments respond effectively. In such difficult times, the desire of citizens to work with the government is also crucial. The importance of municipal, state, and federal governments in controlling and preparing for natural disasters was emphasized by Acuity International (Acuity International, 2023). It is important for all individuals and organizations to ensure that victims of disasters like earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, and explosions receive the support they require in order to reconstruct their communities and lives (International Acuity, 2024).

Nigeria has seen numerous natural and man-made calamities. Among other groups, non-state actors like Boko-Haram, bandits, and armed robbers have been responsible for non-natural disasters. In Nigeria, for example, there were approximately 445 violent explosives between 2014 and 2023, resulting in 12,728 casualties, 868 (68%) of whom were reported to be civilians (Action on Armed Violence, 2023). Most of the time, the number of people killed by these events is shocking. These explosives are frequently found in several states, including but not limited to Borno, Adamawa, Kano, Yobe, and Gombe (Action on Armed Violence, 2023).

While explosions can be chemical, mechanical and nuclear, they can all have a major impact on nearby infrastructure, people, and the atmosphere. Depending on its size, the repercussions of an explosion can last for many years. This emphasises how crucial government readiness and actions are to save lives when they happen. According to Idowu and Adewole (2024), the government should have equipment, blood transfusion units, victim transportation and movement capabilities, and medical professionals with disaster orientation skills in order to be prepared for emergency response. A government's health facilities must be of the highest caliber in order to have an effective emergency response strategy, according to (Istifanus, 2022).

In particular, fire outbreaks, gas and petroleum explosions, floods, and most recently, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have all occurred in Oyo State over the years (National Emergency Management Agency, 2023). In order to manage and lessen the resulting destruction, the state administration has taken a number of actions. In light of this, this study looked at how the Oyo state government handled the 2024 Bodija explosion, paying particular emphasis to emergency medical services, victim support, and measures put in place to prevent a recurrence. Among the questions addressed in the paper were: What caused the explosion in Bodija? What was the response of the government of Oyo State to the Bodija explosion? How effective were responses to the explosion? In order to prevent such explosions, what actions did the administration of Oyo state take?

Conceptual definition

Government

Our understanding of government is that it is the state's engine, with the ability to enact and enforce laws through specific agents or administrators. Governments, in general, function in various circumstances based on the nation. In certain states, the elite hold the power to run government at any level, whereas in others, the masses hold the power at the local, state, and federal levels. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches, as well as other parastatals, are one of the institutions that make up the government, which is the framework for carrying out the functions of a state. However, government, as a process of control, entails state-wide operations that include the creation, execution, and interpretation of policies pertaining to social, economic, cultural, political, foreign relations, and other issues.

Emergency Management

Emergency management's primary objectives are preparedness and response. This can include both man-made and natural disasters, such as storms and wildfires, as well as large-scale events like explosions or terrorist attacks. Emergency management, which involves planning, coordinating, and organizing resources to mitigate and minimize the effects of disasters, is an essential field of public administration.

Professionals and scholars have offered varying definitions of emergency management. First, the Federal Emergency Management Agency defines emergency management as "the process of planning and

organizing for, reacting to, and recovering from any type of disaster" (FEMA, 2023). A more thorough definition of emergency management is provided by Alexander and Thompson (2007), who define it as "the process of planning for and responding to emergencies, including natural disasters, technological disasters, and acts of terrorism." These two definitions place a strong emphasis on the necessity of proactive and reactive measure, collaboration and readiness among different societal sectors.

The four main indices of emergency management are mitigation, response, recovery, and readiness. **Mitigating** a disaster is to take action to lessen its effects or reduce the likelihood that it will happen (Alexander & Thompson, 2007); **Preparedness** is planning ahead and preparing for calamities. According to FEMA (2023), the goal of preparedness is to develop emergency response plans and make sure that communities and organizations are prepared to act in the event of a disaster. **Response**, according to Lindell, Prater, and Perry (2011), refers to the immediate actions taken during and immediately following a disaster in order to protect people, property, and provide necessary services; **Recovery** is the process of rebuilding and restoring a community to its pre-disaster state.

REVIEW OF EXTANT LITERATURE

Scholars have argued that one of ways of preventing explosions in any setting is efficient response. Studies have also revealed how important it is for the state to maintain property, public safety, and security as well as environmental sustainability. In Nigeria, Idowu (2024) emphasized the absence of remote technologies for explosion mitigation, a lack of public health training, a lack of policy review for disaster management, and insufficient laws to prevent both natural and man-made disasters. However, in Nigeria, it has been noted that underdeveloped infrastructure and badly maintained pipes, storage facilities, and other equipment have also resulted in explosions (Adewale & Olowokere, 2020). Due to a lack of maintenance and infrastructure investment, outdated and hazardous equipment is being used, which frequently causes explosions. Poor infrastructure in Nigeria has also been connected to corruption (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019). According to Peter and Lionel (2013), the main barrier to Nigeria's application of due process in infrastructure development is the lack of a suitable monitoring system that ensures the end goals are met. Even when a monitoring system is in existence, it is usually not operated by those who most strongly adhere to the principles of justice, honesty, and integrity.

According to Eke and Okoro (2020), there have been several explosions in the areas, which have led to a significant number of fatalities, multiple injuries, and population displacement, perpetuating a cycle of violence and instability. Therefore, as Akpan (2017) points out, the emotional trauma and psychological suffering caused by recurrent explosions have a profound and long-lasting effect on individuals and communities. The resilience and social cohesiveness of the affected populations may be weakened by prolonged exposure to traumatic events, which can exacerbate mental health issues such as anxiety, sadness, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

As mentioned by Adewale and Olowokere (2020), Nigeria's frequent explosions have major negative economic effects, such as infrastructure damage, lost income, and higher costs for cleanup and restoration. These explosions' devastating consequences are seen in the destruction of farmland, the displacement of inhabitants, and the deaths they cause. For instance, on Tuesday, May 17, 2022, an explosion near a school in Sabon Gari, Kano, Nigeria, was reported to have caused nine fatalities and twenty-seven injuries (Chiara, 2022). Reconstruction, rehabilitation, and environmental restoration might occasionally cost more after one of these calamities.

Yet, some scholars argue that the usage of explosives in mining areas has increased rapidly as a result of the exploration of natural resources. For example, Maurie and Priyadarshi (2011) claimed that the mining sector, which includes both surface and underground mining, is the most relevant sector for explosives use. In surface mining, explosives are used to produce metals like copper, gold, and iron ore for steel companies; limestone, marble, and shale for cement factories; and granite aggregates, stone base, and asphalt for building, bridge, and road construction (Meyer et al. 2007; Cooper, 1996).

The next stage after an explosion is to respond effectively. An effective response is unavoidably necessary to stop and lessen the destructive effects of explosions on society. Therefore, the speed with which the government or other actors take action to safeguard people and property is the most significant indicator for lowering explosions. Therefore, there may be a connection between effective government and the preservation of human life through suitable laws that guarantee public safety. Having adequate disaster response skills at the federal, state, and local levels is another indication of good governance. Everyone has a role to play in disaster management, including the government, non-governmental organizations, civil society groups, the business community, foreign partners, and the UN. Over the years, a number of these groups have taken various actions and policies to fight disasters. However, without a clear policy framework, these actions have been taken in a disorganized and reactive way (Ruth et al., 2019). Abubakar and Tihami (2013) state that disaster management in Nigeria is a shared duty across the three tiers of government. These are the federal, state, and local levels. Under the direction of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the federal government is in charge of national disaster management research initiatives. In contrast, the state's disaster response organization is the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). In addition to carrying out disaster management operations throughout the states, the SEMA ensures that all local governments set up organizations with comparable roles. In the event that damage needs assessment exceeds the state's capacity for response, they may request assistance from the National Emergency Management Agency. It is under this premise that this paper interrogates the response of the Oyo State government to the 2024 Bodija explosion in Ibadan.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories that focus on strategic emergency management implementation and stakeholder functionality were utilized in this study. Among the theories are the Emergency Management Cycle Model (EMC) and Policy Network Theory (PNT). Because it sees policymaking as a process in which numerous interdependent players work together over time and across different levels of government to influence and impact policy, the former approach has analytical relevance for the research. Policy networks are groups of formal, institutional, and informal connections between governmental and other actors that are arranged around shared, but constantly negotiated, interests and viewpoints in the creation and implementation of public policy, according to Rhodes (2006). Because of their interdependence, these players' interactions shape policy. The actors could be trade unions, interest groups, and/or commercial organizations. These actors advise government on how to align interests. In the case of an explosion, these actors are crucial for influencing emergency response strategies, risk management protocols, and regulatory frameworks (Birkland, 2004, p. 190). Research on policy networks and explosions emphasized the contributions of this method to disaster management (Birkland, 2010, p. 105). For example, network governance promotes cooperation, adaptability, and resource sharing among stakeholders, all of which enhance explosion response and prevention (Comfort, 2007, p. 34). Policy networks can be studied to

better understand the intricacies of explosion response and to develop more effective risk-reduction and public safety policies through the use of policy network theory (PNT).

The second theory, which is the emergency management cycle, is essential to emergency management and control. According to Alexander (2002), there are four stages of emergency management within the pre- and post-disaster categories in the principles of emergency planning and management. Preparedness and mitigation are part of the pre-disaster phase, whereas response/relief and recovery are part of the post-disaster phase. According to the EMC, effective disaster management requires a cycle approach in which lessons learned from prior explosions inform mitigation and preparation measures (Drabek, 2007, p. 15). Emergency management techniques are continuously assessed and enhanced to offer resilience and adaptation in the face of explosive hazards (Birkland, 2010, p. 105).

An Overview of Disaster Incidence in Oyo State

The Oyo state government is organized into three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial, each having its own set of ministries, departments and agencies. The state contains 17 ministries, seven departments, and 50 agencies, each with their unique roles and responsibilities. However, the Oyo State Emergency Management Agency (OYSEMA) is an established agency that manages, prevents, and controls catastrophe outbreaks.

Oyo state had frequent riots, floods, traffic accidents, and farmer uprisings during Nigeria's military regimes. During the 1950s to 1980s, for example, the watersheds of the Ogunpa and Kudeti streams (two of Ibadan's main streams) experienced regular flooding (Aderogba, 2012). In Oyo, the civilian governments also had calamities. For example, a flood in 2010 impacted multiple villages in the Oke-Ogun area, causing property loss and displacement in Oke-Ogun, one of the five major groups in Oyo state (Adelekan, 2014). Poor drainage infrastructure and a lot of rainfall were blamed for the floods.

In 2020, goods were destroyed when a fire broke out at Oyo's Akesan Market. Over 1,000 stores and other properties valued at millions of naira were reportedly destroyed by fire (Oluwafunmilayo, 2020). Electrical problems and a lack of fire safety precautions were blamed for the fire breakout ("The Biggest Market in Oyo State," 2020). In 2020, a petrol tanker burst after falling, causing alarm among those around (Olaniyi, 2020). Other calamities that have occurred in and around the state include rainstorms, explosions, fires, floods, and gas outbreaks. A major downpour event in February 2009 damaged and destroyed at least 269 buildings in various sites throughout the city, according to data from the Oyo State Emergency Management Agency. However, some of these locations have old, poorly maintained structures, which further increased the risk (Adelekan, 2018). About 57 public schools in different local governments, including Egbeda, Akinyele, Ona-Ara, Oluyole, Ibadan Northeast, and Ibadan Southeast, were impacted by the 2009 flood. Ibadan city saw 61 disaster incidents between 2009 and 2014 (Bolanle and Saheed, 2014).

The Role of Oyo State Government in Disasters Management

Policy Strategy

The Oyo State administration has implemented a number of disaster management and prevention policies in an effort to lessen the state's vulnerability to natural catastrophes. For instance, the state government's

"Connectivity Imperative of Projection Execution (CIPE)" concept is noteworthy. The goal of this project was to help different development organizations feel more aligned with their goals. The 2011 flood was managed in large part because of this approach. Under the initiative's framework, business institutions like banks, public liability firms, and international organizations donated cash, materials, and other items (Musibau, 2022). The Oyo State Government was also encouraged to adopt technology-driven emergency management strategies by this program (Olubunmi, 2023).

Partnership, Collaboration, and Aids

Addressing environmental challenges like disasters requires fostering cordial relationships between the government, agencies, interstate relations, national, and international linkages. To lessen the chance of disasters, the Oyo State government has taken part in several such partnerships. Since 2023, the state has called on all parties involved to take part in emergency and disaster management in order to ensure cooperation and enhance results. The Oyo State Ministry of Health (OYMH), Oyo State Fire Service (OSFS), and Oyo State Emergency Management Agency (OYSEMA) are some of these participants. Furthermore, the state has received vital assistance and aid from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), which is in charge of disaster management in Nigeria.

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Public Awareness and Sensitization

The government's responsibilities to avoid and lessen the effects of disasters by educating the public about the significance of disaster preparedness, warnings, and preventions cannot be understated in order to maintain environmental sustainability.

However, Oyo State's government has put in place a number of initiatives to increase public awareness of the risks posed by climate-related disasters. For instance, as flood warnings get more serious, the Oyo State government, working with National Emergency Management (NEMA), launched a flood prevention and control awareness campaign on August 16, 2016, advising citizens to practice better hygiene and avoid blocking waterways with trash (Akinola, 2016). Additionally, on November 12, 2023, the Oyo State government held a sensitization session at Ogbomoso about the "Impacts of Climate Change on the

Environment." In order to enable people, especially those in urban and rural regions, to realize the effects of their destructive conduct on the environment, the state administration emphasized the need for group activities (OYSEMA, 2023).

DATA AND SOURCES OF DATA

The research methodology used in this study was qualitative. Data sources included both original and secondary sources. Official public papers, personal observations, and interviews were the sources of the primary data. On the other hand, secondary data came from online sites, scholarly journals, and newspaper stories. Eight respondents who were purposefully chosen were interviewed in-depth to get the primary data. In addition to conducting in-person visits to the study locations for observations, the researchers spoke with three OYSEMA employees, two representatives of the national emergency agency, NEMA, and three representatives of the Bodija Estate Residents Association (BERA). Newspaper articles and official reports from the Oyo state government regarding the 2024 Bodija explosion serve as the study's primary sources of secondary data. Content analysis was done on the generated data.

INTERVIEWEES' DATA		
SEGMENT	UNIT	INTERVIEWEES
Agency	2	4
Association	1	1
From Affected Area	-	3
TOTAL		8

Data Presentation and Analysis:

The cause of the explosion and the Oyo State government's response to the Bodija explosion epidemic were highlighted and explored in this section. Significant damage and fatalities were caused by the Bodija explosion, highlighting the significance of taking appropriate steps to avoid and lessen similar disasters. The governmental reaction to prevent such a tragedy and to guarantee community growth and recovery can be divided into three categories: Initial response, medium-term response, and continuous or long-term response.

The cause of the explosion in Bodija

The detonation of a "Water Gel Type Based Explosive" set off by an electric spark has been identified as the cause of the explosion that took place in the Bodija neighborhood of Ibadan on Tuesday, January 16, 2024. Property numbers 8A and 8B on Aderinola Street were determined to be the epicenter of the incident. An investigation showed that illegal miners living in the impacted region, mostly of Malian descent, were involved.

A respondent observed that:

There is a Malian who was also a tenant, kept an explosive device--dynamite, under the ground for a long period of time. And his staff were cooking with gas in the kitchen on that fateful day. Additionally, for OYSEMA's agents, we were told that there was a meter, and the connection between this meter and the dynamite triggered the explosive device to explode.

IDI/M/OYSEMA Officer/Oyo State/2024

One of the executives of the Bodija Estate Residents Association (BERA), corroborated the above view on the cause of the explosion. She noted that “we realized that the explosion was caused by a gas leakage as cooking was ongoing, which later ignited the explosive device stored in the other house to explode. Because it is a twin-building, having A and B apartments” IDI/F/BERA Executive/Bodija/January, 2025. Again, the Punch newspaper reported that the Executive Governor of Oyo, Engineer Seyi Makinde has informed the public that preliminary investigations by security agencies revealed that the blast was triggered by illegal miners occupying one of the houses in the Bodija area of the ancient city.



Scene from the Bodija, Ibadan Explosion: Image cited from the Punch newspaper- January, 2024.

Adding to the preliminary investigations by security agencies, the Special Adviser on Security to the Governor, Fatai Owoseni retd CP, stated that:

The explosive is classified as Water Gel Type Based Explosive, and the explosion was caused by an electric spark. The street where the event occurred was Aderinola Street, not Dejo Oyelese Street as previously reported. Nos. 8A and 8B are the epicenters of the disaster. **SD-Punch Newspaper/M/SA on Security to the Governor, Oyo/2024.**

Drawing on the foregoing, the Bodija explosion incident emphasizes the significance of addressing the risks posed by illegal mining and mining-related explosive devices. The state government is responsible for regulating mining activities and keeping explosive devices safe from human communities. The use of technical instruments to detect and prevent explosion-related occurrences is becoming critical in our societies. In summary, strengthening government institutions' disaster response capabilities and supporting environmental conservation are essential for our collective survival in an ever-expanding city like Ibadan.

Miners are always licensed, thus there should be enough checks to guarantee that they do not transfer explosives inappropriately without security escort. The probe revealed failures by the state's security agency. The Explosives Act of 1964 and the Terrorism, Prohibition, and Prevention Act of 2022 make the use and purchase of explosives without a permit illegal (Premium Times, 2024). Thus, the arbitrary possession, use, and movement of explosives without sufficient security paperwork pose a threat to national security.

Initial response by the Oyo State Government to Bodija explosion

Quick response to disasters is crucial to disaster mitigation and control. On the other hand, the effectiveness of any response depends significantly on the volume of the rescue teams, stakeholders involved, and healthcare support. That is, a swift and well-coordinated response requires the deployment of adequate personnel, equipment, and resources to rapidly assess the situation, provide emergency care, and evacuate those affected. Few participants stated how the state government initiated a timely response to the Bodija explosion. A respondent stated:

The Oyo state administration responded to the situation at night, after the explosive device exploded. And, due to the dispersed locations of the State Emergency Management Agency's (SEMA) security staff, approximately 20 of us returned to the office to retrieve instruments. We were led by SEMA's Administrative Secretary, as authorized by the Governor. Meanwhile, the chairman of OYSEMA is also the Deputy Governor of Oyo State, and some agencies were present, such as the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Red Cross, private hospitals, and University College Hospital (UCH, Ibadan), including Mr. Fatai Owoseni (Special Adviser on Security to the Governor) (IDI/M/OYSEMA Officer/Oyo State/2024).

Another respondent stated that the Deputy Governor of Oyo State, Barrister Bayo Lawal, visited the location of the incident around 8:00 p.m. in the company of police officers, dogs, and other security personnel. The Governor, Eng. Seyi Makinde, arrived at the scene about 8:30 p.m. and remained until 1:30 a.m. (IDI/F/Affected Victim/Bodija/2024). According to The Cable, rescue operations lasted all night. The state administration swiftly dispatched earth-moving equipment, ambulances, emergency lighting, and

security personnel to the location. It is strategic to increase the state's capacity for catastrophe mitigation. This is critical for successful catastrophe preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery. Nevertheless, few respondents emphasized the state's competence to respond to calamities. A reply stated that "due to the nature of the explosion, a federal agency, NEMA, assisted SEMA during the rescue operation." This is due to NEMA's mandate to provide rescue operation help in any emergency situation across Nigeria (IDI/M/NEMA Officer/Oyo State/2024). The Bodija explosion highlighted the importance of a quick, multifaceted response in disaster management. The prompt mobilization of Oyo State's leadership and emergency services, combined with federal assistance from NEMA, demonstrated the importance of a well-defined, hierarchical governance framework, as well as positive and optimal synergy between state and federal agencies.

Medium-term response by the Oyo state government to Bodija Explosion

The medium-term reaction phase of disaster mitigation is important and requires thorough planning and execution to be effective. The study revealed that temporary measures and interventions, such as the provision of shelter and food, are critical in assisting victims to recover from the trauma and disruption created by the disaster. Some responders shared their opinions on effective medium-term responses. For example, a responder stated that:

The Oyo state government's response to the explosion was highly effective. The state authorities moved the affected victims to two different hotels (Carlton Gate and Palms 77). They also received food and medical treatment. External agencies, such as the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA) and non-profit organizations, including the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), played a key part in giving assistance to the victims (IDI/M/OYSEMA Officer/Oyo State/2024).

From to our assessment, providing shelter and food for the afflicted victims, particularly those whose buildings collapsed during the accident, alleviated the victims' difficulties. These humanitarian supplies were distributed to everyone in the afflicted neighborhood. The state's main criterion for distributing relief materials was proximity to the scene. The small number of victims was due to the state's response quality. A respondent stated that "the state government's response contributed to the saving of lives and further complication" (IDI/M/NEMA Officer/Oyo State/2024). According to reports, five people were killed in the blast, while 77 others were injured and hospitalized.

Stakeholders Present			
<i>The following Stakeholders were present</i>			
i	Nigerian Police Force (NPF)	ix	Federal Ministry of Mines and Street
ii	Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corp (NSCDC)	X	Nigerian Red Cross
iii	Department of State Service (DSS)	xi	State Ministry of Environment
iv	Oyo State Emergency Management Agency (OYSEMA)	xii	State Ministry of Women Affair
v	Nigeria Army	xiii	State Ministry of Land Hosing
vi	Nigerian Air Force	xiv	Amotekun Corps
vii	Federal and State Fire Service	xv	Rescue International
viii	Federal Road Safety Corp (FRSC)	xvi	Man O War

Report on Bodija explosion (Stakeholders): retrieved from NEMA's office- December, 2024.

Respondents stated that the low number of deaths and incidents recorded demonstrates the effectiveness of the state involvement.

Summary of Incidence		
S/N	ITEMS	STATUS
i	Number of casualty	77
ii	Number of dead	5
iii	Number of houses affected	58
iv	Number of electric poles	35
v	Number of cars	32
vi	Number of Transformer	4
vii	Cause of Incidence	Improvised Explosive Device (IED)
viii	Nature of Incidence	Explosion
ix	Date of occurrence	17th January, 2024

Report on Bodija explosion: retrieved from NEMA's office- December, 2024.

Respondents complained about a lack of effective monitoring over the use and purchase of explosive devices in the city. Arguing that the explosion was a clear oversight by the government. The government should take strong action on the regulation of explosive devices, including their management, storage, and disposal. Failure will increase the risk of accidental detonation or illegal access to explosives. A participant highlighted that "miners go about with unverified licenses claiming that they got them from the government" IDI/F/BERA Executive/Bodija. January 2025. Thus, what was particularly concerning about the case was that the suspect was Malian.

A major lapse by the state administration was the long delay to provide financial aid to victims who had lost their property, such as their homes. Financial assistance for the rehabilitation of the victims' properties would have provided long-term relief to those who had lost their property. For example, Prof. Olabode Lucas called on behalf of the locals to inform the authorities that several of the houses destroyed by the bomb are now overrun with weeds and infested with wild animals. He went on to say that the majority of the occupants are elderly individuals who, in the twilight of their life, lack the resources to

build new residences. The residents urged the federal and state governments to do more to alleviate their sufferings, particularly through financial rehabilitation that would allow many of them to rebuild their homes, as was done for victims of the mining explosion in Niger State and the more recent flood disaster in Maiduguri, Borno State (Yinka Adeniran, The Nation, October 16th, 2024).

Long-term or ongoing response by the Oyo state government towards Bodija explosion

Long-term response to disasters such as explosions is an important aspect of disaster management that necessitates ongoing efforts and commitment. This phase entails putting in place measures to help impacted communities recover and rebuild, as well as preventing similar incidents in the future. Respondents agreed that the state government had taken actionable actions to avoid and prevent such occurrences. For example, they noted the Emergency Operation Committee (EOC), the implementation of the Flood Early Warning System (FEWS), and the Emergency Situation Room, which allows the public to contact the government on any true emergency concerns via the state security emergency number (615). The government has officially designated the place where the explosion occurred as *Ground-Zero* to keep looters out. A 10-man committee was formed to provide recommendations and follow up with the Bodija Estate Residents Association regarding additional help from the Oyo state government (IDI/F/BERA Executive/Bodija/January 2025).

The government's attention was drawn to the fact that tenants occupy residences without first acquiring and verifying information about inhabitants, which is frequent in Ibadan city. This might present issues not only for the homeowners, but also for the community and state as a whole. A respondent stated that the routine is such that "forms are normally given to every tenant to fill out, which the Malian also did, but he lied that he is a staff member of the United Nations (UN), and there was no way we could verify his claims" (DI/F/BERA Executive/Bodija/January, 2025). This was the situation when the *Ground-Zero* measure was announced on the scene to prevent property theft, and a ten-member committee was formed to coordinate with the Bodija Estate Residents Association for additional assistance. To avoid identity fraud, it became necessary to authenticate residents. As a result, the government must improve its tenant screening regulations and encourage community engagement to maintain the safety and resilience of affected communities.

The number of incidents documented following a tragedy of this magnitude can be used to assess the efficacy of the state response. The stated number of seventy-seven (77) injuries demonstrates the level of the Oyo state government's response during and after the incident. This has helped to reduce the amount of fatalities. The state government's fast response prevented a conflagration. The Oyo state government faced various obstacles during the Bodija explosion. Some of these difficulties hampered the government's ability to respond effectively. The evacuation of victims to two distinct hotels (Carlton Gate and Palms 77) demonstrated that the state lacks emergency building facilities. This illustrates a lack of effective emergency plans to accommodate displaced people during an emergency. Ibadan is Nigeria's third-most populous city. Given its population, it would be great if the government made provisions to meet emergency scenarios.

Conclusion

The 2024 Bodija explosion emphasized the importance of government presence at all levels of society. The Oyo State Emergency Management institution (OYSEMA) is a statutory institution that handles emergency duties such as explosions and other disasters on behalf of the Oyo State Government. The study looked into OYSEMA's role in managing the 2024 Bodija explosion. The report investigated the

state's pre-disaster and post-disaster management procedures for managing the Bodija blast, as well as the problems faced by the agency during the rescue operation. The rescue mission required a deliberate effort by the authorities to reduce casualties and deaths.

The state government responded quickly to the blast and made commendable efforts to mitigate its devastating effects. The effort had various elements, ranging from victim removal to medical assistance, security of the location and its surroundings, and supply of shelter and food for the displaced. The state's rescue mission was truly extensive and comprehensive. There have been several complaints, particularly from relatives of the victims and those whose homes have been touched. The extent of the devastation was significant. However, it needed the collaborative efforts of multiple organizations to bring the situation under control. Organizations such as the Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps, Department of State Service, OYOSEMA, Nigerian Air Force, Federal and State Fire Service, Federal Road Safety Corp, Nigerian Red Cross, Amotekun Corp, Rescue International, Man O War, and others played important roles in the Bodija rescue mission. The rescue mission was hindered by several immediate problems, including limited funding for such an emergency, insufficient emergency medical facilities, and a lack of specialized accommodation for displaced victims in such an emergency circumstance.

Recommendation

- The study suggests that the Oyo state government promote the use of the Emergency Situation Room (ESR), which allows residents to interact directly with the government and share sensitive information through the existing emergency lines.
- The state government should be proactive in obtaining emergency buildings that can accommodate displaced persons during catastrophes and emergencies. This can also be used to connect displaced people to important services including legal aid, food and water, medical care, psychological support, and information about accessible resources.
- Some critical medical equipment, such as ambulances, hospitals with trauma centers, and trained medical professionals capable of dealing with mass casualties, should be kept on standby.
- To increase financial capability, the government should consider establishing a Public Emergency Account (PEA) to receive donations from both local and international groups committed to rescue efforts.
- It is important for the state to regulate and monitor the movement, usage, and storage of hazardous substances within the state. This would enable effective state government control to ensure compliance with safety rules, early detection of possible hazards, and the prevention of accidents or environmental harm.
- The Local Emergency Management Committees (L.E.M.Cs) should be equipped with adequate training and resources to assist the state emergency in monitoring the activities of local governments in the state to provide early detection of inappropriate storage of hazardous substances, as well as access to local residents for firsthand information gathering.

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