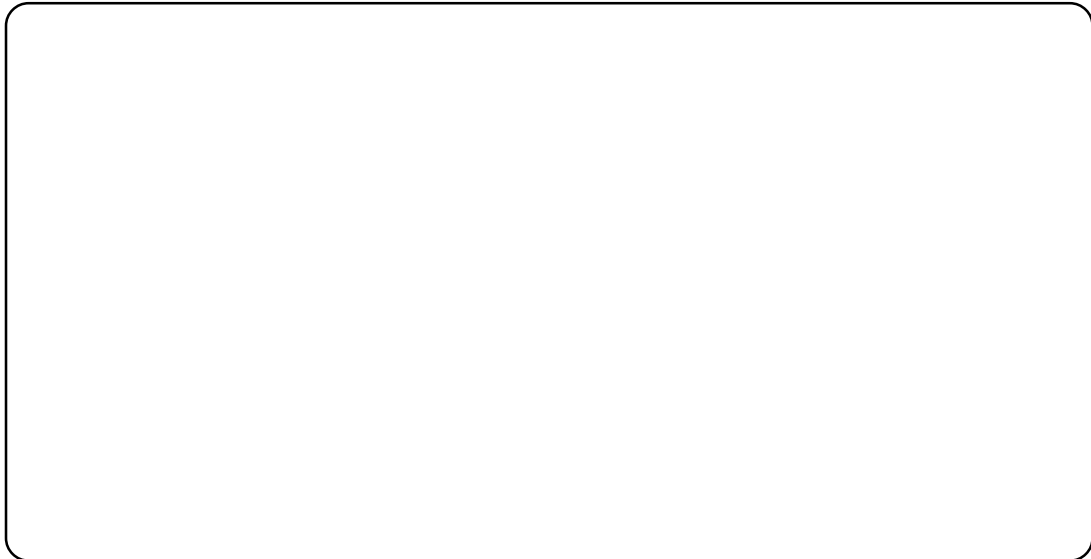


# EXECUTIVE WATCH

A Public Assessment Of President Olusegun Obasanjo's  
Government Policy Statements And Actions

## Stop Using Soldiers For Domestic Peace-keeping - Nigerians Tell Obasanjo



November 2001

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...promoting and protecting press freedom and freedom of expression

# **Executive Watch**

**A Public Assessment Of President Olusegun Obasanjo's  
Government Policy Statements And Actions**

**November 2001**



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The report was edited by **Tive Denedo**, MRA's Acting Executive Director, who supervised the project.

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## INTRODUCTION

The return of civil rule in Nigeria after more than 15 years of military rule came with promises of civil liberties, freedom, respect for rule of law as well as constitutional and participatory democracy. By its nature, democracy as a system of governance requires active participation and regular intervention through commentaries, questions, suggestions and debates by every section of the society.

But the constant interruption of the democratic process in Nigeria by successive military regimes eroded the culture of effective participation in governance in the country. Elected officers at the Federal, States and Local Government levels show, by their utterances, attitudes, and actions, the tendencies of military officers holding public office. With government's seeming disregard for interaction, there are fears of alienation by government, which portend grave danger for the new experiment at democratization.

Majority of the civil populace who are not consulted and are barely included in the scheme of governance are those mainly affected by the discrepancy between government policy plans and implementation. A common reaction is a feeling by the governed that there is no difference between military dictatorship and democracy as practised in Nigeria. Experiments on democracy have seen three unsuccessful models, all of which failed largely due to the lack of communication between the leaders and the governed.

However, for the current experiment to yield dividend, there has to be a way of measuring reactions from civil society. There need to be an established forum through which the people can effectively participate in the daily events that shape the present and define the future or, at the very least, be given an opportunity to have a say on such matters. The culture has to be developed as a way of giving assurance to civil society that democracy is indeed, a government of the people by the people and for the people, not merely by proclamation.

The Executive Watch is designed to open a communication line for civil society to effectively participate in the growth and sustenance of democracy. Through the Executive Watch project, Media Rights Agenda monitors the activities and policies of the Executive arm of Government, particularly the Presidency, to ascertain the popularity such activities and policies enjoy among a wide spectrum of Nigerians, the overall objectives being to ensure greater public participation in governance and create a feedback mechanism for the government to enable it gauge its popularity and the acceptance of its policies.

The specific objectives of the Executive Watch project are:

- \* To regularly monitor and document the discrepancies in government's policies and actions and thereby provide a primary source of information on these for the local and international communities on public reactions and responses to them.

- \* To provide a framework for the Nigerian government, its departments and agencies to assess their performance in relation to their policies and their implementation, and understand the public attitude to such policies and governmental action.

- \* To provide the citizens a forum to respond to and highlight areas of distortions in government policies and their implementation and contribute to the effective management of these distortions and thereby participate in the governance process.

## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE TOPIC

In November 1999, 12 policemen on a peace-keeping mission to Bayelsa State were allegedly killed by militant Ijaw youths. Consequently, President Olusegun Obasanjo deployed soldiers to Odi allegedly to arrest the militant Ijaw youths who killed the 12 policemen. The soldiers destroyed Odi town and killed over 200 persons. The incident was condemned by many Nigerians.

Barely two years after, in October 2001, and in a similar manner comparable to the Odi massacre, 19 of the 23 soldiers sent on a peace-keeping mission to the warring communities of Tiv in Benue and Jukun in Taraba were abducted and killed allegedly by Tiv ethnic militia, while three others remained missing.

The killing of the 19 soldiers came on the heels of complaints by the Tiv people that soldiers deployed to keep the peace were actually taking sides with their opponents to fight them. There were no known government investigations of the allegations.

During the burial of the soldiers, President Obasanjo was quoted by the press as saying that he has directed the security agents to track down and bring to book the perpetrators. After his statement, soldiers were drafted to the warring villages, and in what appeared a reprisal attack, over 150 Tiv villagers were allegedly killed by the soldiers.

In his comment thereafter, President Obasanjo blamed the soldiers for often overstepping their bounds when drafted for peace-keeping operations. He, however, admitted that they were not trained for such operations. President Obasanjo has since set up a panel on “National Security” headed by Professor Tekena Tamuno to investigate the killings and make recommendations.

Specifically, the study was to address the following issues:

- Establish, whether Nigerians think the alleged killing of soldiers by the Tivs, was justifiable on the basis of self-defence
- Establish, whether Nigerians think the reprisal action of the soldiers was justifiable.
- Ascertain whether or not, Nigerians believe the government when it denied that the deployed soldiers were not sent on specific instruction to avenge the killing of their colleagues.
- Establish also, whether or not, the President Obasanjo is justified in drafting soldiers to warring communities, when he is aware that such soldiers were not trained for peace-keeping operations.
- Inquire from respondents, whether or not they have the confidence that the outcome of Professor Tamuno’s panel of investigation into the crises in Benue, will be acted upon by the government.

## Summary of Findings

Nigerians have condemned the drafting of soldiers by the Federal Government to warring communities of Tiv in Benue and Junkun in Taraba states. According to them it was inappropriate on the part of the Federal Government to draft soldiers to warring communities, for the purpose of peace-keeping when such soldiers were not trained for such operations.

Nigerians also condemned in equal term, the force-for- force approach by the Federal Government at solving the problem of warring communities, saying such approach will not stop the killings of security agents.

Advising the government, Nigerians said the need to guard the new democracy is imperative, as democracy and violence do not go together.

However, they commended the federal government for setting up a panel of investigation headed by Professor Tekena Tamuno, which they said was a right step, provided the recommendations are looked into.

Out of the 6,157 respondents polled in the survey, 3,493 (56.7%), said despite that the Tivs complained earlier that the soldiers sent on peace- keeping mission were taking sides with their opponents, the killing of the soldiers was not justifiable, while 2,523 (41%) others, regarded the killings as justifiable. One hundred and forty one respondents, representing 2.3 per cent, were, however, undecided.

On whether the reprisal action of the soldiers was justified, 3,239 (52.6%) respondents said 'No', while 2,786 (45.2%) said 'Yes'. One hundred and thirty two others representing 2.2 per cent were undecided.

Asked whether despite President Obasanjo denial, respondents believe that the soldiers deployed to track down and bring to book the perpetrators, were deployed with specific instructions to avenge the killings of their colleagues, 3,989 (64.8%) said 'No', meaning they do not believe the the reprisal killings was officially sanctioned. Two thousand and seventy four (33.7%) others said 'Yes', meaning they believe the reraisal killings were premeditated and officially sanctioned. Ninety-four others, representing 1.5 per cent were undecided.

Responding to the question whether respondents think that it is appropriate to use soldiers for the purpose of peace- keeping when such soldiers were not trained for such operations, 3,777 (61.3%) said 'No', while 2,276 (37%) said 'Yes'. One hundred and four respondents representing 1.7 per cent, were undecided.

On the question whether respondents have confidence that the outcome of the panel of investigation headed by Professor Tamuno would see the light of the day, 3,673 (59.7%) respondents said 'No' while 2,415 (39.2%) said 'Yes'. However , 69 (1.1%) respondents were undecided.

Lastly, asked whether the force- for -force approach adopted by the government would solve the problem of warring communities killing security agents, 4,032 (65.5%) said 'No' while 2,102 (34.1%) said 'Yes'. However 21 (.4%) respondents were undecided.



## Outline of Findings

Majority of Nigerians, precisely 3,493 (56.7%) out of the total sample of 6,157 respondents, condemned the killing of the soldiers sent on peace keeping mission in Benue and Taraba states alleged by the Tiv ethnic militia. The argument that the killing became necessary when earlier complaints by the Tivs that the soldiers were taking sides with their opponents was not heeded by the government, was regarded as baseless. However, 2,523 (41%) other respondents said the Tivs were justified, as their action was in self-defense. One hundred and forty one (2.3%) respondents were undecided.

On a city- by-city basis, the survey indicated that majority of respondents in most of the cities polled, did not support the killing of the soldiers allegedly by the Tivs even on the excuse self defense. The exception is, however, in Enugu, Kaduna and Benin, where majority of respondents said the alleged action of the Tivs was justified.

Specifically, the response pattern shows in Abuja, 562 (58.7%) did not support the killing of soldiers on the basis of self defence, while 393 (41%) supported it. Three respondents, representing 0.3 per cent, were undecided. In Benin, 332 (44%) supported, 302 (40%) did not support. One hundred and twenty respondents were undecided; Enugu, 610 (64.9%) supported, 312 (33.2%) did not, and eighteen others were undecided; Ibadan, 206 (25.5%) supported, 603 (74.5%) did not; Kaduna, 565 (58.1%) supported, while 408 (41.9%) did not support; Kano, 150 (15.4%) supported, and 823 (84.6%) did not; Lagos, 267(35.6%) supported and 483 (64.4%) did not support.

On whether the reprisal action of the soldiers was justified, 3,239 (52.6%) respondents said it was not while 2,786 (45.2%) said it was. One hundred and thirty two others representing 2.2 per cent were undecided

Broken into city- by- city analysis, the result showed that except in Enugu, Kano and Lagos, where majority of respondents said the reprisal action of the soldiers was justified, majority in other cities said it was not.

For instance, in Abuja, 437 (45.6%) respondents said the action was justified while 508 (53%) said it was not. Thirteen others, representing 1.4 per cent, were undecided. In Benin, 306 (40.6%) said it was justified and 364 (48.3%) said it was unjustified. Eighty-four respondents representing (11.1%) were undecided. In Ibadan, while 96 (11.9%) said it was justified and 713 (88.1%) said it was unjustified. In Kaduna, 261 (26.8%) said it was justified ,while 712 (73.2%) said it was unjustified.

Asked whether despite President Obasanjo denial, respondents believe that the soldiers deployed to track down and bring to book the perpetrators, were deployed with specific instructions to avenge the killings of their colleague, 3,989 (64.8%) said 'No', while 2,074 (33.7%) said 'Yes'. Ninety-four others, representing 1.5 per cent, were undecided.

On a city- by-city basis, the survey indicated that majority of respondents in all but one of the cities covered by the survey said 'No'. But in Benin the number of respondents who said 'Yes' and those who said 'No' equalled.

The responses are as follows: Abuja, 584 (61%) said 'No', while 372 (38.8%) said 'Yes'. In Benin, 331(43.9%) 'No', 331(43.9%) said 'Yes' and 92 others were undecided; Enugu, 625 (66.5%) said 'No', 315 (33.5%) said 'Yes'; Ibadan; 621 (76.8%) said 'No', 188 (23.2%) said 'Yes'. Kaduna; 683 (70.1%) said 'No', (291

(29.9%) said 'Yes'; Kano, 622 (63.9%) said 'No', 351 (36.1%) said 'Yes'; Lagos, 524 (69.8%) said 'No' while 226 (30.1%) said 'Yes'.

Responding to the question whether respondents think that it is appropriate for the government to deploy soldiers to warring communities for the purpose of peace-keeping when such soldiers were not trained for such operations, 3,77 (61.3%) said 'No', while 2,276 (37%) said 'Yes'. One hundred and four respondents, representing 1.7 per cent, were undecided.

On a city-by-city pattern, the poll showed that in Benin and Kano there was a marginal difference of 10 and 11, respectively, between respondents who said it was appropriate for the government to deploy soldiers who were not trained in the art of peace-keeping to warring communities and others who said it was inappropriate. In Ibadan, 663 (32%) respondents considered the federal government action appropriate while 146 (18%) said it was inappropriate.

However, majority of respondents in other cities said the action of the Federal Government was inappropriate. The result showed that in Abuja, 615 (64.2%) considered the government action inappropriate, while 335 (35%) considered it appropriate. In Enugu, 96 (10.2%) said it was appropriate and 840 (89.4%) said it was inappropriate; Kaduna, 139 (14.3%) considered it appropriate, 843 (85.7%) considered it inappropriate; Lagos, 225 (31.1%) said it was appropriate, 524 (89.95%) said it was inappropriate.

On whether respondents have confidence that the outcome of the panel of investigation headed by Professor Tamuno would be acted upon by the government, 3,673 (59.7%) said 'No', while 2,415 (39.2%) said 'Yes'. However, 69 (1.1%) respondents were undecided.

Broken down on a city-by-city pattern, the result showed that except in Benin and Ibadan where majority of the respondents said they have confidence that the recommendations of the investigation will be acted upon by the government, majority of others in other cities said they do not have such confidence given that several similar panel's recommendations in the past had suffered neglect.

Further analysis showed that in Abuja, 364 (38%) respondents said they have confidence that the report would be looked into, while 584 (61%) respondents said they lack such confidence. Enugu; 191 (20.3%) said they are confident, 749 (79.7%) said they are not. Kaduna; 210 (21.6%) said they are, 763 (78.4%) said they are not. Kano; 286 (29.4%) said they are, 687 (70.6%) said they are not. Lagos; 265 (35.3%) said they are, 485 (64.7%) said they are not.

Lastly, asked whether the force-for-force approach adopted by the government would solve the problem of warring communities killing security agents, 4,032 (65.5%) said 'No', while 2,102 (34.1%) said 'Yes'. However, 21 respondents, representing (0.4%), were undecided.

On a city-by-city basis, the pattern showed that it is only in Lagos that majority of respondents, precisely 482, (64.3%) said 'Yes', indicating that they believe that the force-by-force approach by the government would solve the problem of warring communities killing security agents. Majority of respondents in other cities said it will not.

The analysis showed that in Abuja, 597 (46.6%) respondents said 'No', while, 359 (37.5%) respondents said

'Yes'. Two respondents, representing 0.2 per cent, were undecided. Benin; 386 (51.2%) said 'No', while 352 (46.7%) said Yes. Enugu; 915 (97.4%) said 'No', while 22 (2.3%) said 'Yes'. Ibadan; 687 (84.7%), said 'No', while 122 (15.1%) said 'Yes'. Kaduna; 598 (61.5%) said 'No', while, 375 (38.5%) said Yes. Kano; 593 (59.9%) said 'No', while 390 (40.1%) said 'Yes'.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Eight thousand copies of the questionnaire were produced and administered, out of which 6,157 were returned. This number represents 77 per cent. One thousand eight hundred and forty three copies of the questionnaire, representing 23 per cent were not returned. These include all the 1,000 copies of the questionnaire sent to PortHarcourt which had not been turned in as at the time of writing this report.

In effect, one thousand copies of the questionnaire were administered in each of the seven other cities covered in this exercise. These include Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Lagos, and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Other cities are Benin, and Enugu. .

The survey was conducted between November 9 and 22, 2001. The questionnaire for the survey contained six structured questions, all of which were close-ended, requiring respondents to indicate either 'Yes' or 'No'.

The questionnaire were distributed among Nigerians of 18 years and above, both male and female. It also deliberately attempted to capture, in significant ratio, people of three broad educational background, i.e. No formal education to primary school education; post- primary education and post- secondary education.

Respondents who do not possess a sufficient literacy ability were assisted by MRA's researchers to read and interpret the questions and elect appropriate options according to the preferences of the respondents concerned.

## **CHARACTERITICS OF RESPONDENTS**

The exercise showed that 3,527 out of the total respondents numbering 6,157, representing 57.3per cent, are male and the remaining 2,630 respondents, representing 42.7 per cent, are female. It also showed that 3,328 of the respondents are single; 2,190 married; 432 widowed, and 207 divorced.

The survey also showed that 1,799 of the respondents are between the ages of 18 and 30 years, 3,298 are in the range of 31 to 50 years old and 750 are between the bracket of 51 to 60 years old. Three hundred and ten respondents are over 60 years old.

The occupation of the respondents ranges from civil servants, professionals, artisans, traders, housewives, unemployed persons and faith ministers.

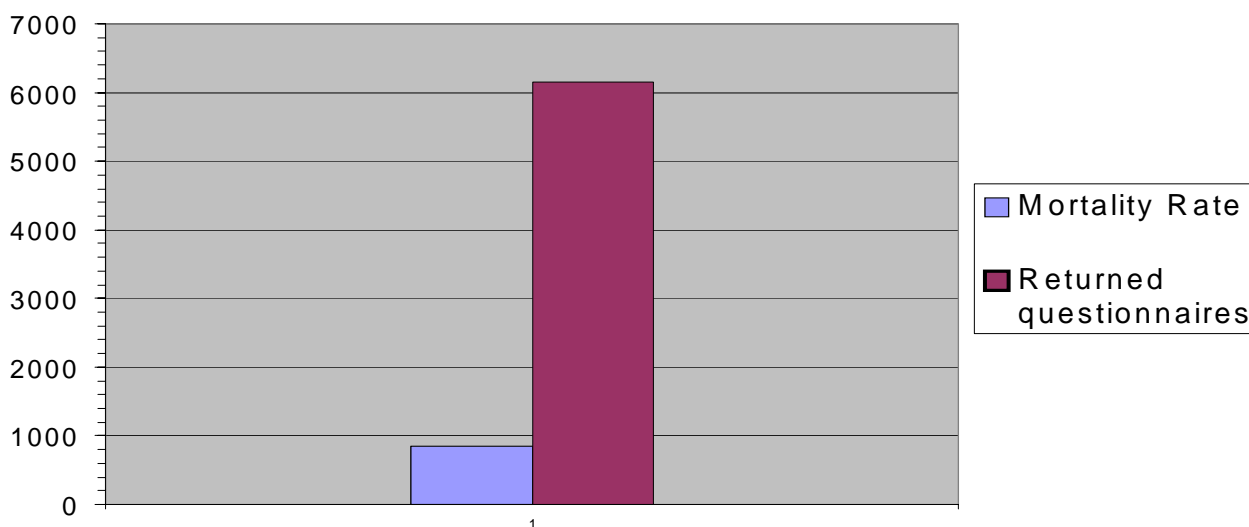
## QUESTIONNAIRE RATE OF RETURN / MORTALITY

### ACHIEVED SAMPLE

Sample sizes Sample groups	No of questionnaires administered	No of questionnaires received & %	No of questionnaires not received & %
Abuja	1,000	958 (95.8%)	42 (4.2%)
Benin	1,000	754 (75.4%)	246 (24.6%)
Enugu	1,000	940 (94%)	60 (6%)
Ibadan	1,000	809 (80.91%)	191 (19.1%)
Kaduna	1,000	973 (97.3%)	27 (2.7%)
Kano	1,000	973 (97.3%)	27 (2.7%)
Lagos	1,000	750 (75.0)	250 (25%)
<b>Grand Total</b>	Cumulative & % <b>7,000</b>	Cumulative & % <b>6157</b> <b>88 %</b>	Cumulative & % <b>843</b> <b>12%</b>

**NOTE:** The report for the sampling exercise conducted in Port Harcourt is not included. It was not available as at the time of writing this report.

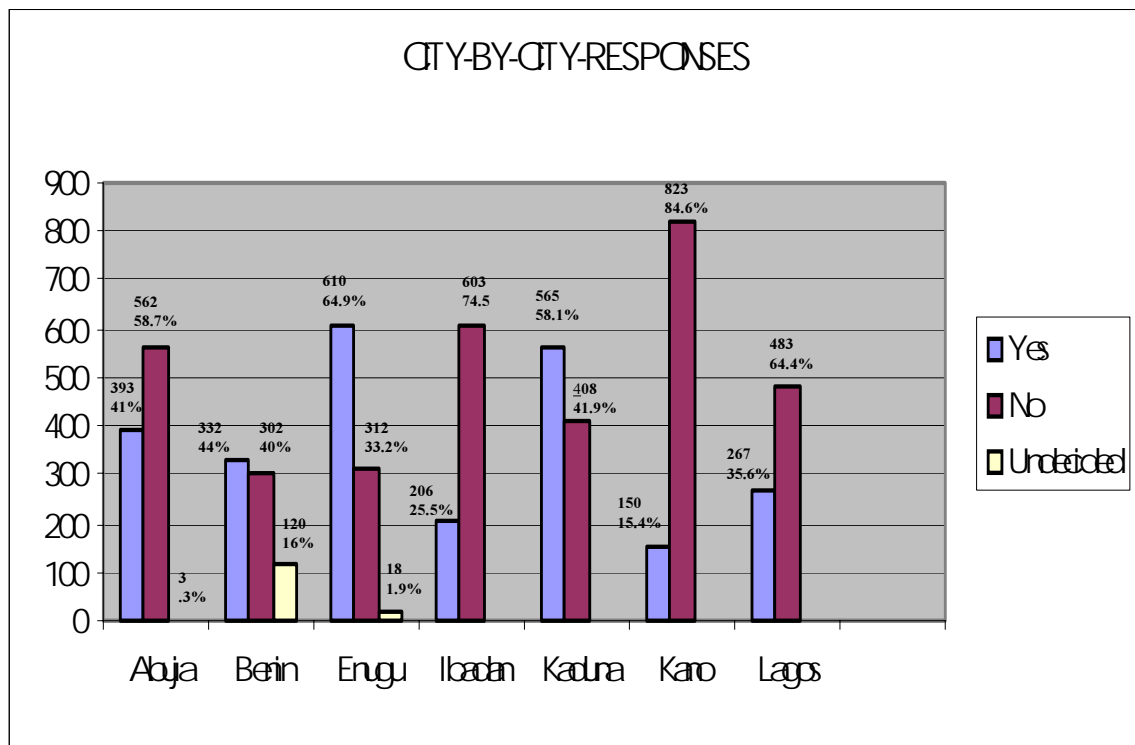
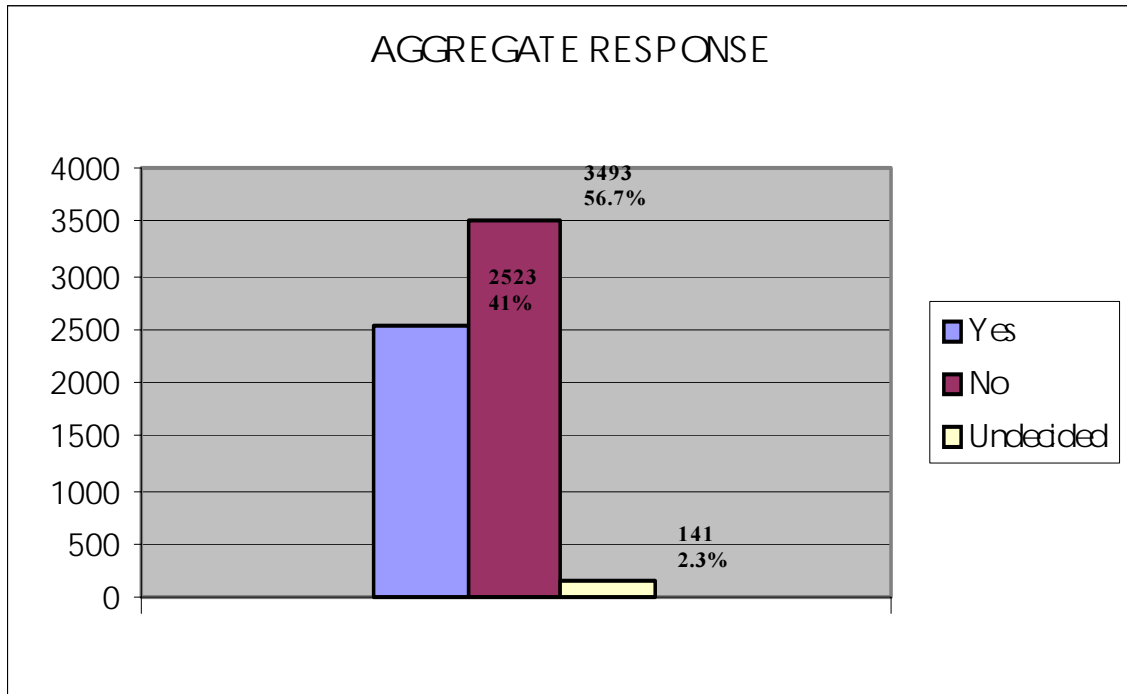
### QUESTIONNAIRE RATE OF RETURN



Q.1.

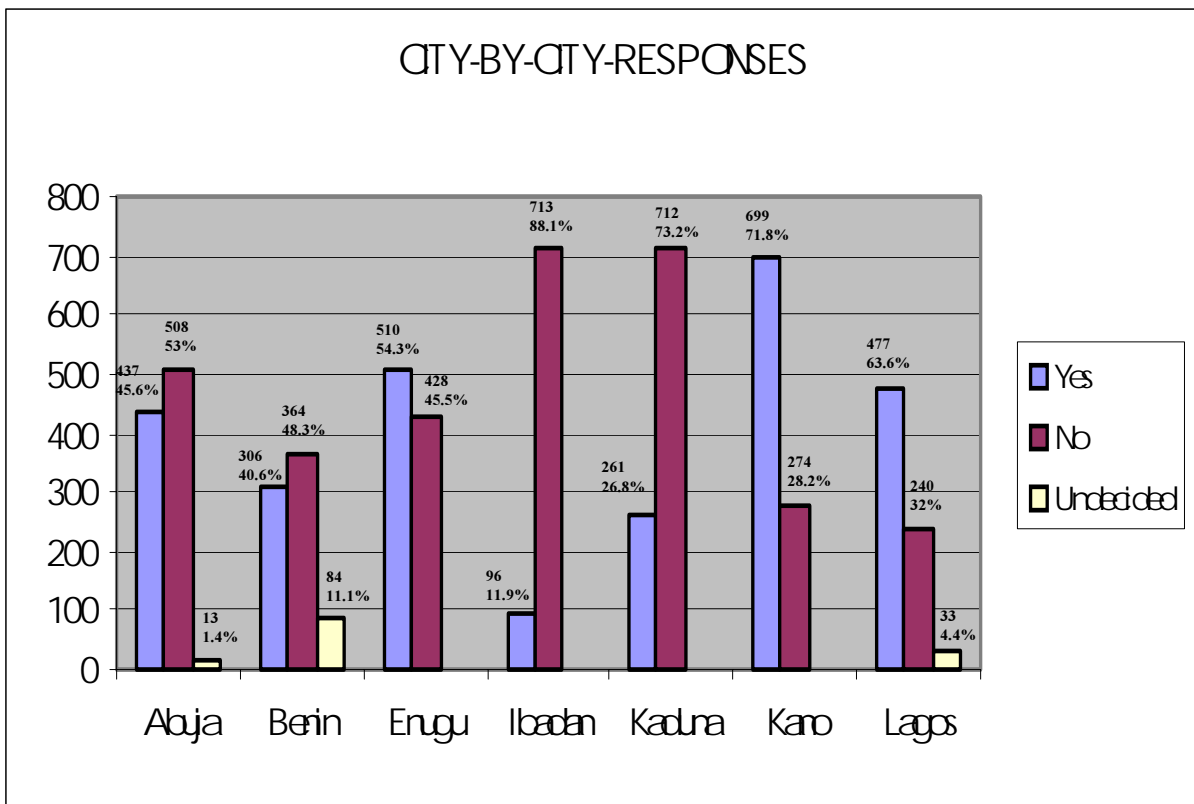
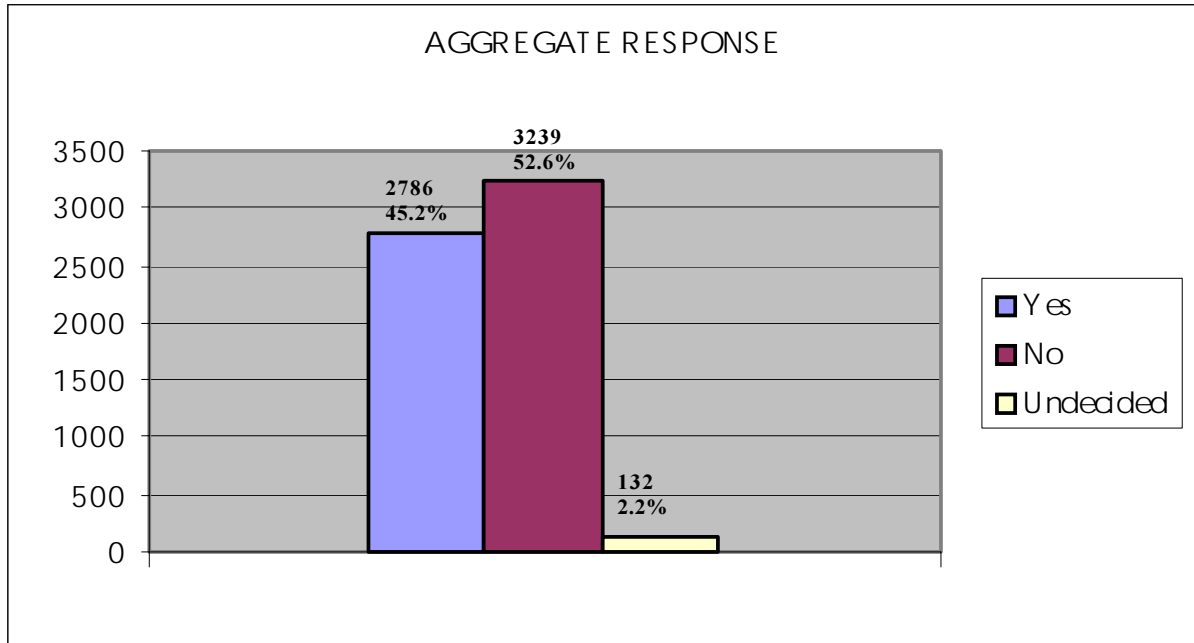
Given the earlier complaints by the Tivs that soldiers sent on peace-keeping mission were taking side with their opponents, do you think the alleged killing of soldiers by them is justifiable on the basis of self-defence?

Yes                      No

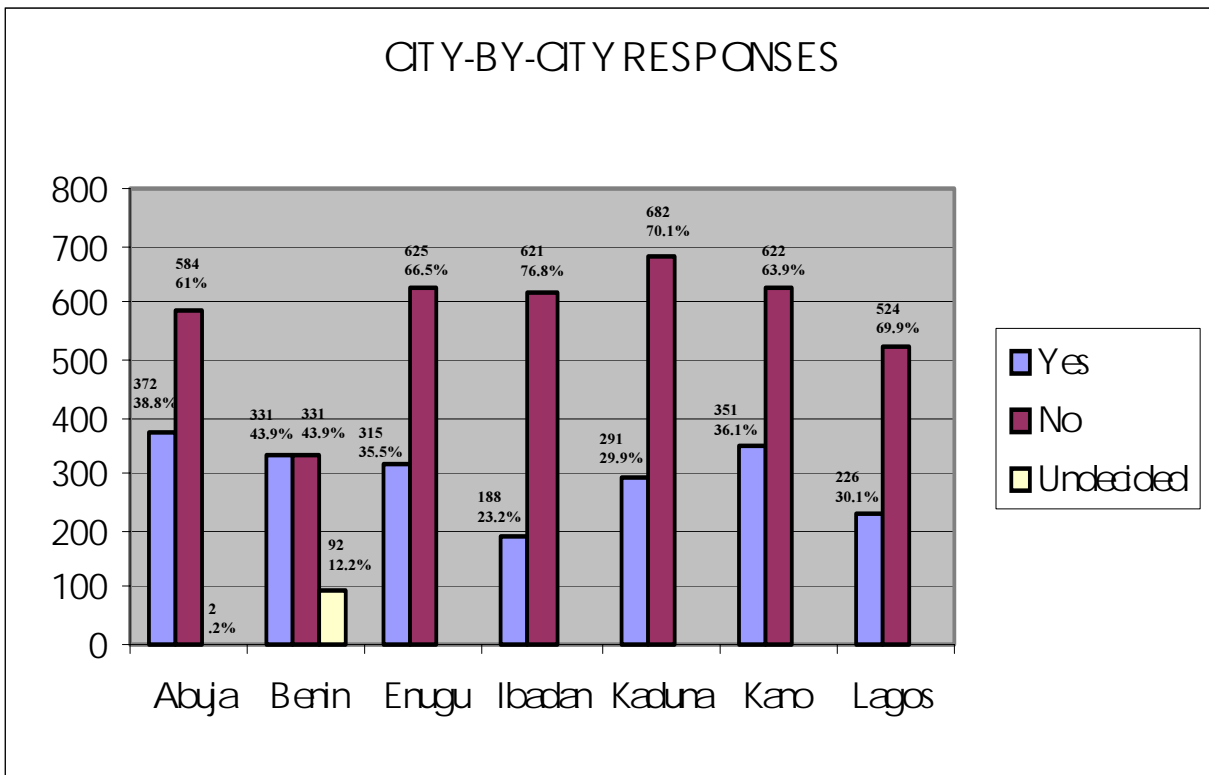
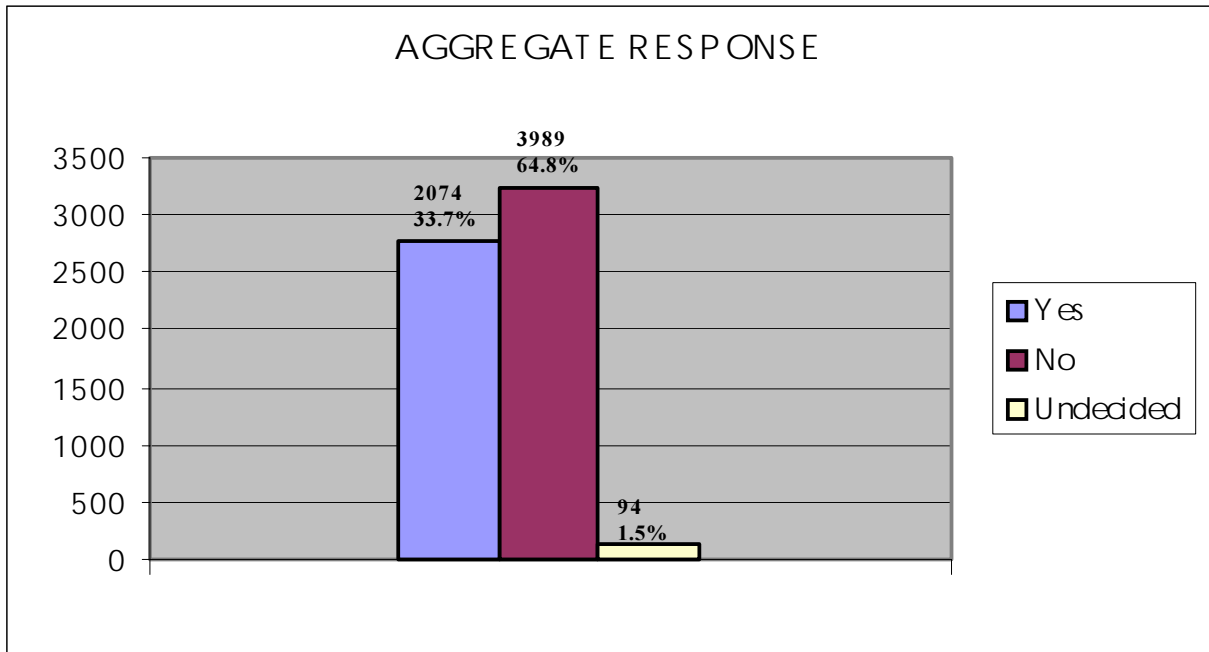


Q2. In your view, is the reprisal action of the soldiers justifiable? Yes

No

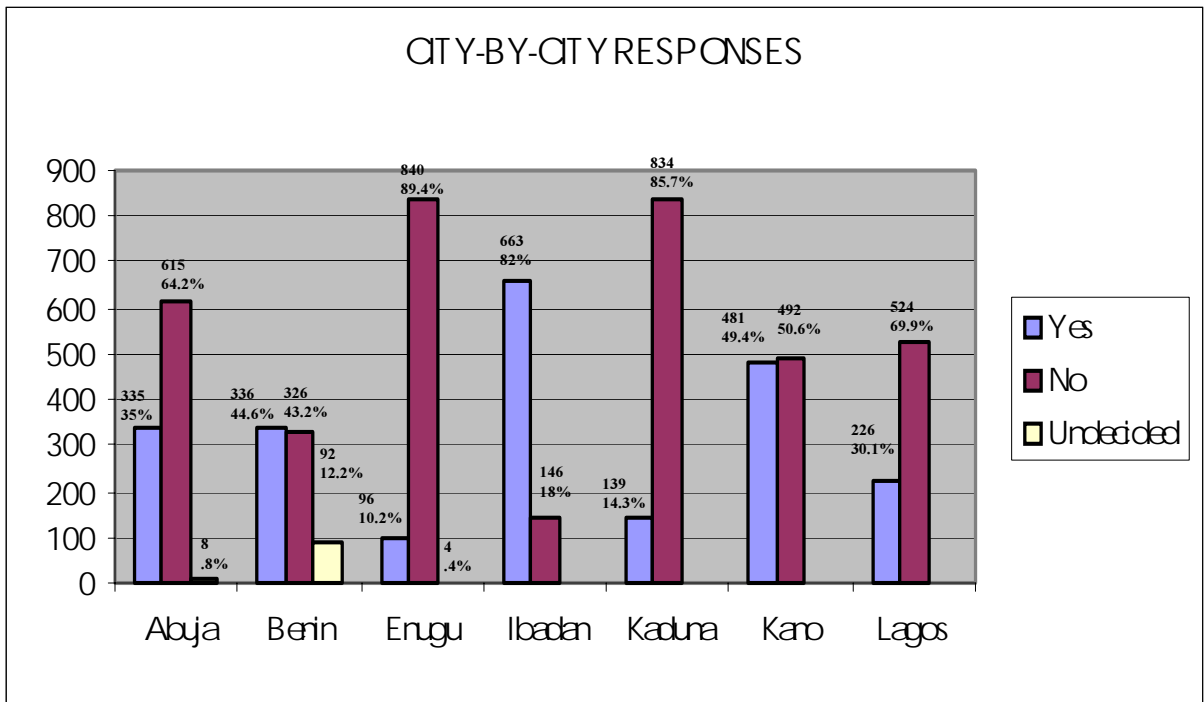
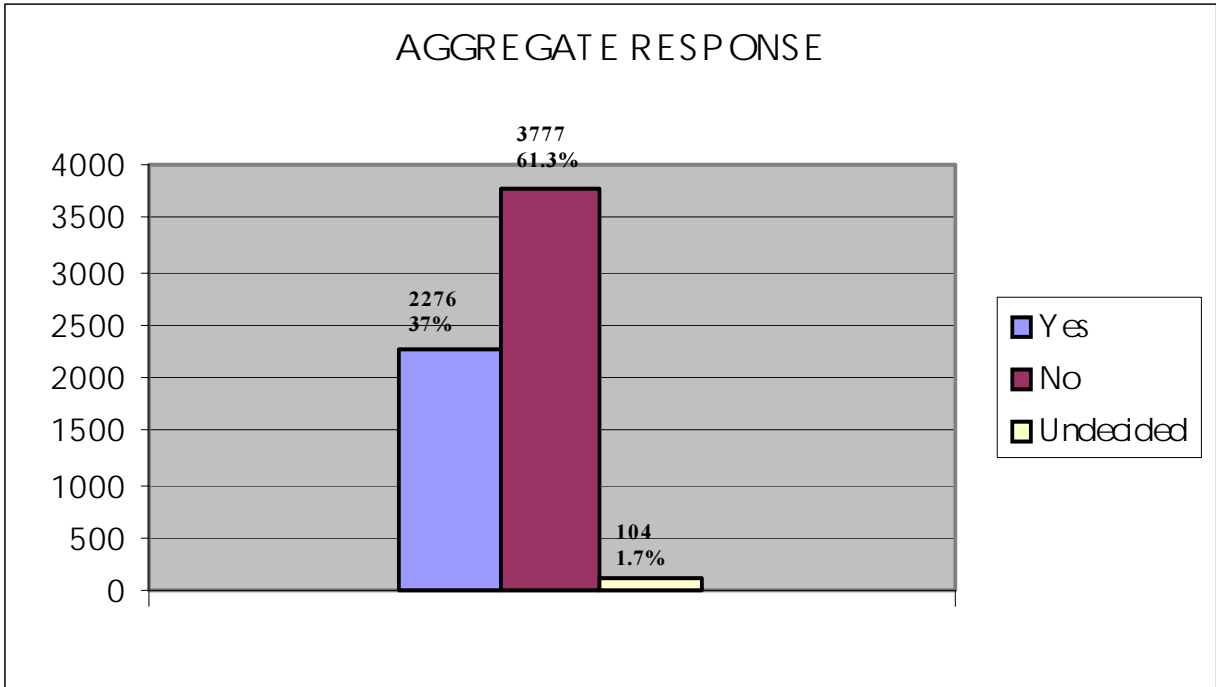


Q3. Despite President Obasanjo's denial, do you believe that the soldiers deployed to track down and bring to book the perpetrators, were not deployed specifically to avenge the killing of their colleagues?  
 Yes No

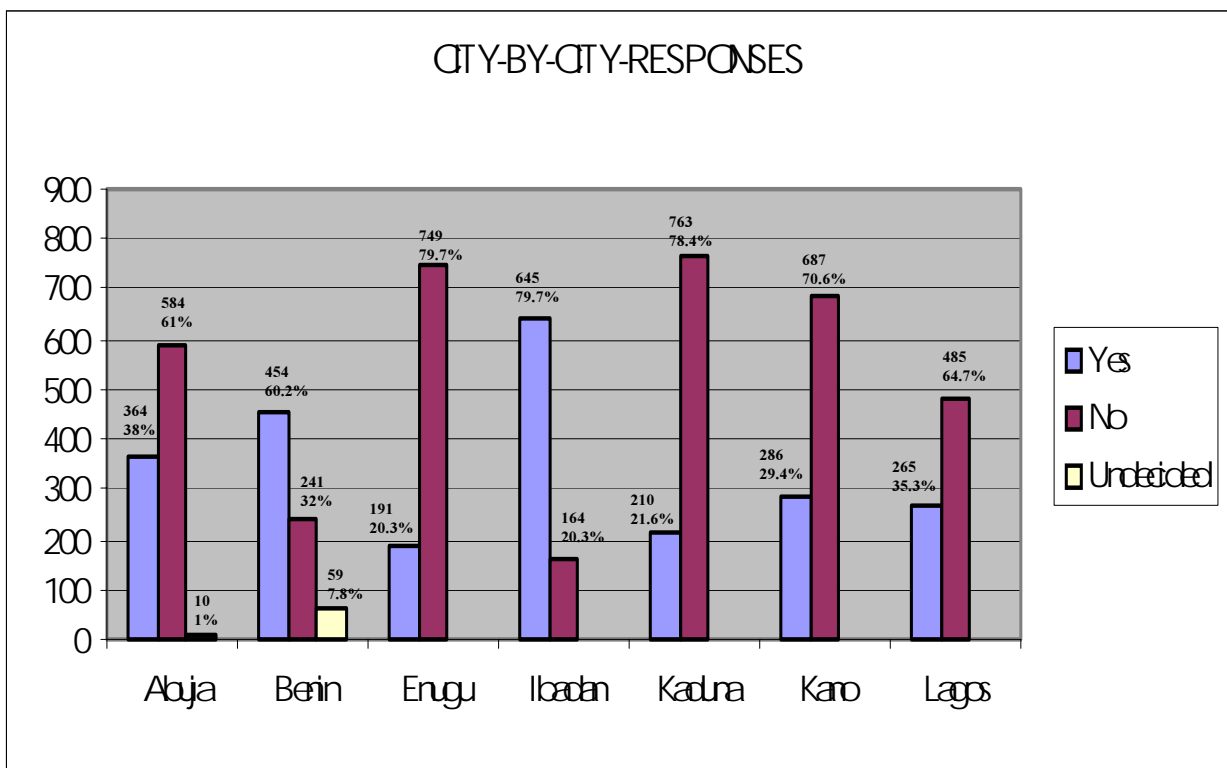
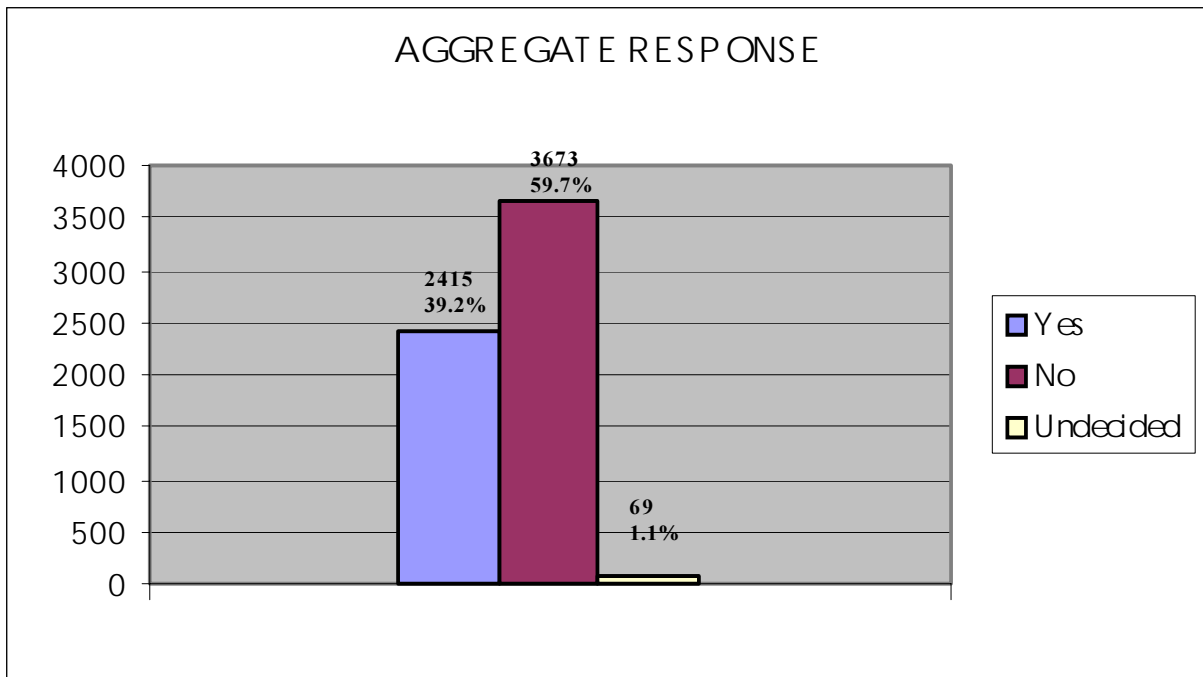




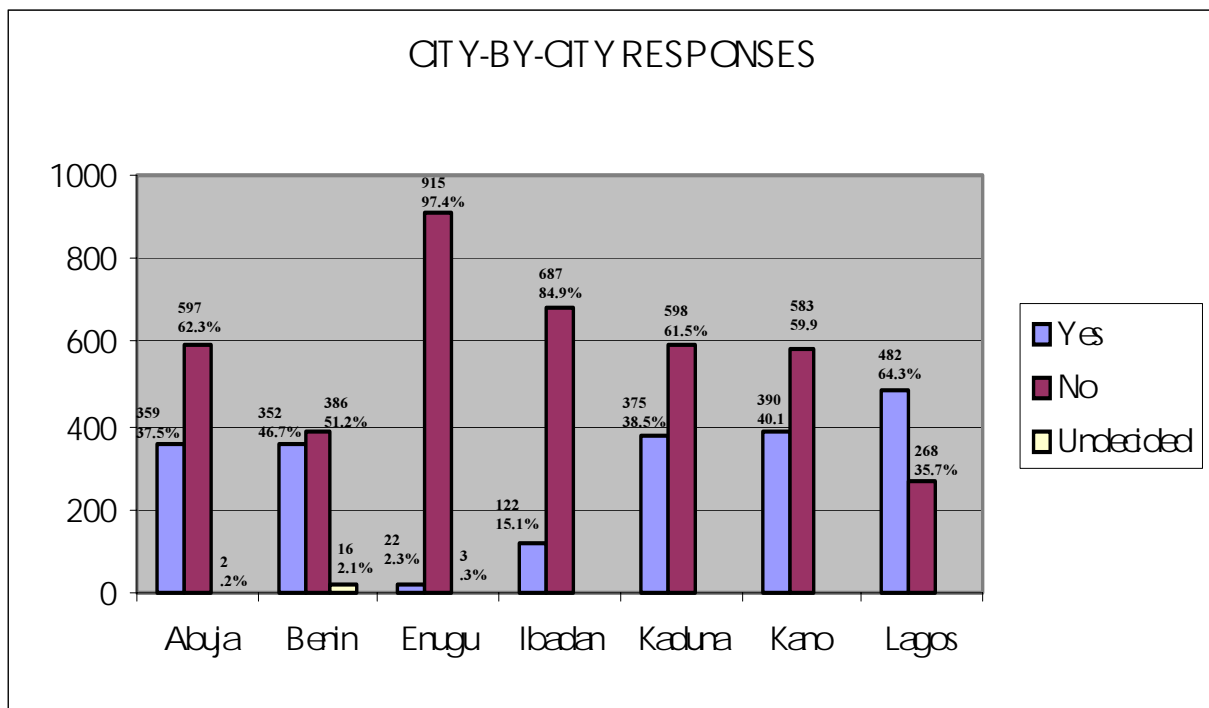
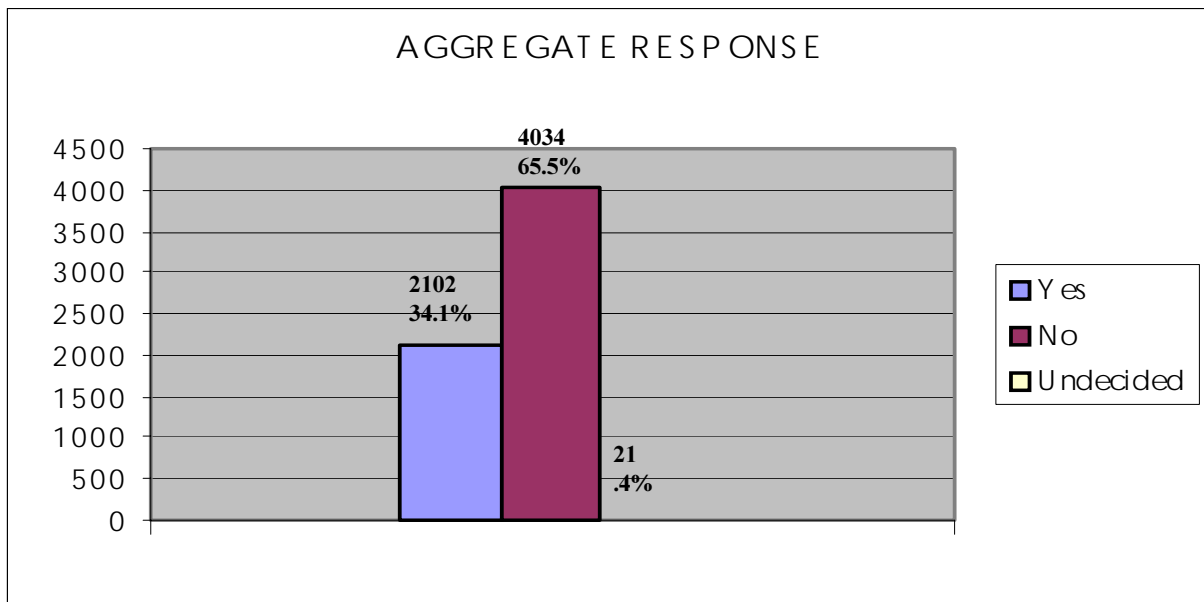
Q4. Irrespective of the position you hold on question 3, is it appropriate in your opinion that soldiers are used for the purpose of peace keeping considering that President Obasanjo said they are not trained for that purpose ? Yes No



Q5. Judging by the series of panels of investigation's recommendations on various crises in the past, which did not see the light of the day, do you have confidence that the outcome of professor Tamuno's panel will form the basis of a further action by the government? Yes No



Q6. Considering that the Benue Incident is similar in many ways to the ‘Odi incident’, do you believe that such force -for-force approach by government would solve the problem of warring communities killing security agents? Yes No





**M**edia Rights Agenda (MRA) is an independent, non-governmental organisation established in August 1993 for the purpose of promoting and protecting press freedom and freedom of expression in Nigeria. MRA is registered in Nigeria, and has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul, The Gambia.

The Aims and Objectives of Media Rights Agenda are:

- to promote respect and recognition for press freedom and freedom of expression in Nigeria;
- to provide protection and support for journalists and writers engaged in the lawful pursuit of their professional duties;
- to promote the highest standards of professional ethics, integrity, training and conduct in the journalism profession; and
- to bring about a conducive social and legal atmosphere for the practice of journalism, and ensure the protection of the journalist's right not to be compelled to work against his or her conviction or disclose confidential sources of information.

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*Executive Watch*

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