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## **Ethnic and Communal Clashes in Nigeria: The Case of the Sagamu 1999 Hausa-Yoruba Conflict (Pp. 135-149)**

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### **Abstract**

*The Yoruba and the Hausas are among the largest, politically active and commercially inclined ethnic groups in Nigeria. While the Hausas live in the north of the country, the Yoruba dwell in the south western part. The trade in cattle and kola nut brought many Hausas to settle in the Remo-Yoruba town of Sagamu. Over the years, this trade became an avenue for both ethnic groups to develop a cordial and an harmonious relationship until the conflict of July 1999 which brought about far reaching impact not only on the town of Sagamu but also on the hitherto existing peaceful relationship between the two ethnic groups. Indeed, some of the effects of the conflict have remained till today. This paper attempts a historical analysis of the Hausa/Yoruba conflict. It examines the causes of the conflict and discusses its character and nature. Unlike previous studies on the subject of conflict and ethnicity, this paper brings out the central importance of culture in the inter-relationship between two ethnic groups in Nigeria. It shows that the failure to respect the culture of one ethnic group by the other was the root cause of the Yoruba/Hausa conflict.*

**Key Words:** Nigeria, Ethnic, Conflict, Hausa, Yoruba

## **Introduction**

“...a national calamity...” (*National Concord*, Thursday, July 22, 1999, p.1)

The above statement was made Chief Sunday Afolabi, Nigerian Minister of Internal Affairs when he led a Federal government delegation to Sagamu to visit the scenes of the violent ethnic clash between the Yoruba and Hausa in July 1999. This statement summarises the magnitude of the incident and therefore, provides a justification for its study by historians. We need to thoroughly investigate the immediate and remote causes of the incident with a view to making recommendations to prevent a future reoccurrence. Nigeria is no doubt a multi-ethnic country with approximately 374 ethnic groups. Therefore, given the heterogeneous ethnic composition of the country, inter-ethnic clashes have been a recurrent feature in the country’s history. Sagamu, where the Hausa-Yoruba conflict took place is located about sixty-five kilometres north of the city of Lagos. It is inhabited by a group of people known as the Remo, a sub group of the Yoruba. The town is the largest of all Remo towns. It is bounded in the north by Ikenne, in the south by Ogijo, in the west by Egbaland and in the east by Ode-Remo.

Before we proceed to analyse the causes, course and impact of the conflict, let us attempt a literature review and provide a theoretical basis for the study. The subject of ethnic conflict has received the attention of several Nigerian scholars. Few of such studies include that of Nnoli (1978), Otite (1991), Albert (1994) and French Institute for Research in Africa otherwise known as IFRA (1994). These studies have looked at the various dimensions of ethnic violence and conflicts in Nigeria. They tried to provide explanations for some of the inter-ethnic conflicts which have taken place in the country. For example, conflicts have been caused by the fear of economic domination of one ethnic group by another. Others have resulted from the frustration experienced by a people due to their alienation from the state (IFRA, 1994: 124). What these studies have not done is to look at clashes or violence arising from cultural conflicts. By this we mean conflict arising from the intolerance or misunderstanding of the culture of one ethnic group by another. This is what this paper attempts to explore. We begin by looking the Yoruba- Hausa relations in Sagamu before the 1999 conflict.

## **Situation before the 1999 conflict**

The Hausa began to settle gradually in the town of Sagamu in the last decade of the nineteenth century. They probably came as traders, Sagamu being a

strategically located commercial town in Remoland. It was located on the important Remo trade route between Lagos and the hinterland. Tradition has it that the Hausa originally settled in Ibido, an Sagamu town from where they were later re-located by the *Akarigbo*, Oba Willian Adedoyin, to Makun, which was a quarter within Sagamu. However, due to an increase in the population of the Hausa, they were again moved to Sabo, a place which has remained their dwelling place till the crisis of 1999 broke out.

Before the 1999 crisis, there was no major dispute between the Yoruba and the Hausa in Sagamu (Ayodele, 2000). In fact, cordial political, economic and social relations existed between the two ethnic groups. Politically, the Hausa community did not suffer any disabilities in the town. They had the freedom to join any political party of their choice (Olabanji & Sobanjo, 2009:24). Not only that, they occupied an important place in the politics of the town. The Hausa had the freedom to elect a representative to the local government council. Thus, an Hausa man in the person of Alhaji Dan Sagamu was once elected as a member of Offin Sagamu Local Council. Also, Alhaji Lawal Isa was elected on the Ijebu Remo Local Government Council between 1976 and 1979 while Alhaji Aminu Umaru was elected as a member of Remo Local Government Council from 1990 to 1991. Also, Alhaji Sanni Aliyu was a member of Sagamu Local Government Council between 1990 and 1991. We can therefore, see that the Hausa community of Sabo was not excluded from the politics of Sagamu. They were not deprived their political rights.

The Hausa were also actively involved in the economy of Sagamu. The need to trade brought the Hausas to Sagamu. They initially started with the cattle business. They brought cattle from northern Nigeria down to Sagamu for sale and after the sale of the cattle; some of the money they realized was used to buy kola nuts from the people of Sagamu which they took back to the north for sale. The kola nut trade brought wealth and prosperity to both the Hausas and Yoruba. It created job opportunities for the indigenes and avenue for the farmers to dispose their kola nut. The flourishing kola nut business helped to promote harmonious relationship between Yoruba residents in Sagamu and the Hausas. Such was the increasing number of Hausas in Sagamu that they were given permission by the indigenes to build a Central Mosque in Sabo 1976 (Olabanji & Sobanjo, 2009: 24). They embarked on other community projects such as establishment of the Islamic schools and hospitals. All these benefited both the Hausa community and the Yoruba in the town, thereby creating a milieu for cordial inter-ethnic relationship the town.

On the social level, many inter-marriages had taken place between the two ethnic groups. Not only this, many Hausas in Sagamu speak Yoruba language and eat Yoruba food and vice versa. The Yoruba can also be seen wearing Hausa clothes. From the above, we can see that a harmonious and cordial relationship existed between the two ethnic groups prior to the crisis of 1999. Indeed, an observer remarked that both “communities have always respected the different norms, cultures and ways of life of one another” (Ehiagiator, 1999:4). This situation of harmonious co-existence remained until the mid-night of July Sunday July 19 when the conflict broke out.

### **An analysis of the causes of the crisis**

Available sources have attempted to explain what led to the crisis of July 1999 between the Yoruba and Hausa communities in Sagamu. Three different explanations have been provided. The first and perhaps most common explanation is that it was caused by the death of two Hausa women said to be prostitutes who were killed during the celebration of a traditional festival known as Oro. The women had their workshop at Star Light Hotel, Sabo, Sagamu. They had opened the shop around 6.00p.m. till about mid-night without any patronage. In their desperation to attract men, they moved out of the Hotel into the street, visiting wherever there was a show. They thought that at least in coming out they would be able to attract men’s attention. Unfortunately, this coincided with the celebration of the annual traditional Oro festival in Sagamu. During the week long celebrations, no woman must be seen outside between mid-night and 6.00a.m (Efunnuga, 1999:20). Indeed it was a taboo for any woman to see an Oro masquerade and according to the tradition of Sagamu people, any woman who violated the sacred tradition would lose her life instantly.

It was the usual practice every year for the community leaders of the Yoruba to send out warning signals before the commencement of Oro festival. All and sundry were usually told the rules and regulations governing the celebration of the festival. On this particular occasion, the *Seriki* Hausa, Alhaji Abdullahi admitted that the warning was sent out and that having lived in Sagamu for decades he “knew the implication of disobedience to cultural/traditional rules” (Olagunju, 1999:7). As such, before the commencement of the festival he sent warning to his people.

On this particular occasion trouble broke out because two Hausa prostitutes came out to look for clients at about 1.00am defying the tradition that women

must be in-door during the night whenever the Oro festival was being celebrated. The disobedience of the prostitutes was what led to their death. The death was not taken lightly by their colleagues and indeed, many of the other Hausas residents of Sabo quarter in Sagamu. They therefore, trooped out *en masse* to protest. The protest was a joint one. Meanwhile, as far as the Oro worshippers were concerned any female found outside within the stipulated time becomes dead. This led to heavy trouble as the aggrieved Hausas were not willing to retreat. The protest degenerated into violence which later brought about destruction of lives and property. The clash became a retaliatory affair which claimed lives and left many injured (Efunnuga, 1999:20).

While the above incident might have been the immediate cause of the crisis, the historian is interested in knowing the remote and deep-rooted reasons for the conflict. Newspaper evidence appears to be of help in this regard. Evidence shows that before the incident of Sunday July 19, 1999, the Hausa had insisted that the Yoruba Oro masqueraders celebrating their festival must not come to Sabo, an area which had a predominant Hausa population (Sorunke *et al*, 1999:2). This fact was confirmed by Chief Sanni Owodunni, a Yoruba Youth leader in Sagamu who said that the Yoruba had always celebrated the Oro traditional festival peacefully until about eighteen years ago when the Hausa began to declare Sabo, “a no-go area for the traditionalists” (Olagunju & Efunnuga, 1999:6). The indigenes however, felt that the northerners could not restrain them in their town since the latter had been intimated about the festival officially, through their head, the *Seriki* Hausa, several days before the traditional festival began (Sorunke *at al*, 1999:2). Against this background, it would appear that the action of the Hausa prostitutes was premeditated.

The cause of the Sagamu crisis has also been given a political explanation. According to this view, the Oodua People’s Congress (OPC) which is a Pan-Yoruba group arrived in Sagamu on Monday 19 July in a hired bus to defend their Yoruba kinsmen who were being attacked by the Hausa (Adewunmi, 1999:5). The OPC allegedly attacked the police station at Ewusi, Makun but they were repelled by the police. This incident led to a violent confrontation between the OPC and the government security agents. This situation was later reported by the Senate Committee on Internal Affairs, led by Chief Jim Nwobodo as having caused the Sagamu crisis. Looking closely at this account, we would see that the explanation could not have been correct given

the fact that fighting had begun in the town in the mid-night of Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>, hours before the OPC arrived in Sagamu on Monday July 19. How then could they have precipitated the crisis? But according to newspaper report, the Senate Committee blamed the OPC for the crisis.

While it is true that the OPC got involved in the crisis, there is no evidence written or oral to say that the organisation was the cause of the crisis. Of a truth, the involvement of the OPC led to the shooting of “no fewer than 10” people on Monday July 19, 1999 but this was after the conflict had already broken out in the mid-night of the previous day (Sorunke, Memuletiwon et al, 1999:1-2). It will, therefore, be historical incorrect to say that the OPC caused the crisis as being claimed in some quarters. What we need to remember is that this was the dispensation of the civilian administration and it was common to trade blames among political parties whenever an ugly incident occurred. It may not, therefore, be surprising to see the ruling Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) putting the blame for the Sagamu crisis on the OPC, an organisation known for its sympathy and support for the opposition political party, the Alliance for Democracy (AD). However, from the point of view of history, there is no evidence to lay the blame for the crisis at the feet of the OPC. What is certain is that the OPC’s involvement in the conflict nearly aggravated the situation.

The Sagamu crisis has also been explained in terms of the attempts of some elements to sabotage the administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo-led Federal government of Nigeria. According to this view, “it was the plan by some disgruntled elements to sabotage the government of President Obasanjo” (Adewunmi, 1999:5). Proponents of this line of thought claimed that certain undesirable element arrived at Sagamu some days before the crisis and invited the Hausas residing in Sagamu into an hotel for a meeting. It was at the meeting that “they planned and directed most Hausas living to Sagamu to perpetrate the destructive act” (Adewunmi, 1999:5). Proponents of this view argue that everybody whether indigenes or non-indigenes was duly informed that the Oro festival was being celebrated and the Hausas who violated the custom of the Yourba knew the implications of their action. It was also said that some respectable men in Sagamu left the town before the crisis began, giving the impression that they had a fore-knowledge of the incident (Chief Olusegun Ayodele, personal communication, February 6, 2009). It is further argued that since the event took place only two months after the inauguration of the civilian administration of Chief Olusegun

Obasanjo, it could be said that the crisis was the Hausa's way of expressing the fact that they were not in support of a Yoruba heading the administration of the country (Chief M. L. Gisanrin, personal communication, February 20, 2009). It is further submitted that since the incident occurred in a Yoruba town, it was enough to embarrass the Federal government which at the time was being headed by a Yoruba man.

This "sabotage theory" leaves room for a number of questions: What was the basis of asking Hausas to cause a breach of peace in Sagamu with a view to sabotaging the Federal government? Why the choice of Sagamu town for such an act? How could such a meeting which bordered on committing a treasonable offence have escaped the notice of government security agencies? Moreso, even after the crisis, government agencies did not report that the crisis was caused by such clandestine subversive meeting? Are the advocates of this "sabotage theory" suggesting that the Hausas as a people were gullible such that they could cheaply be used to cause crisis within the polity? Our answer is that the Hausas were intelligent people who would not have allowed themselves to be used to achieve any selfish goal of some politicians. Not only this, the hotel where the secret meeting was held had no name. It is also strange that since the end of the crisis, the security operatives did not arrest anyone in connection with the treasonable act. Considered from all points, therefore, the "sabotage theory" lacks concrete historical basis and is therefore unacceptable as the cause of the 1999.

### **The Nature of the conflict**

The Sagamu crisis was a bloody armed conflict. Both sides in the conflict were armed with all manners of weapons such as guns, cutlasses, matchets, cudgels, arrows, bows and local knives. They also made use of traditional medicines popularly referred to as *juju*. The fighting on both sides did not appear to have been planned or coordinated as in modern day warfare where military personnel strategise to defeat the enemies. In the Sagamu crisis, attacks on each order appear to have been spontaneous and uncoordinated.

The Hausas reportedly trooped out from their dwelling place in Sabo and started attacking sleeping innocent Yoruba people in their houses at night. The Hausa began the attack in Ajegunle side of the town and carried it to Sabo. They murdered Yoruba people as they moved from place to place and burnt parked vehicles. Naturally the Yoruba and other people resident in Sabo were panic-stricken. The situation forced the people out of their houses

because they were not sure of their safety (Olabanji & Sobanjo, 2009:24). The Yoruba reacted by mobilising from the town and launched violent bloody attacks on the Hausa, killing any of them they found. Within hours law and order had broken down and the situation had gone completely out of hand. Figures of those killed were variously put at between 60 and 120 people. The *Nigerian Tribune* of Monday 19 July in its front page story reported that 50 people were killed while 60 were wounded and 80 houses were burnt. By the following day, it reported that the death toll had gone up to 120 people. The fighting began in the mid-night of Sunday 18 July and continued till around 9am on Monday 19 July. Several streets in the town were reportedly “littered” with corpses. No fewer than 100 houses and shops including three mosques, Arabic schools, hotels, hospitals, filling stations and a bank as well as several electric gadgets, vehicles and motorcycles were burnt in the violent clashes. The value of property destroyed was put at 5billion naira (Sorunke, 1999:1). The destruction of lives and property is unimaginable. The fighters did not spare any category of people. Aged people and women were part of the casualties. Many kids were killed while some lost their parents, becoming orphans at tender age.

The indiscriminate burning of houses and the killings on both sides of the combatants created an atmosphere of insecurity and this forced many people out of their homes to look for safe places to hide. People therefore, trekked from Sabo to the town through the bush, wading across the Eruwuru River (Chief Mrs. F.B. Ogunbomehin, personal communication, August 10, 1999). People who lived around the Muslim High School area fled for safety on foot to the neighbouring town of Ode-Lemo. Those who lived around the Sabo police station fled to Sotubo village.

The violent clashes brought about the displacement of people from their homes. By Tuesday 20 July, 1999 which was the second day of the violent clash, people began to move out of the troubled spots with their belongings, apparently for fear of a repeat attack. People re-located to the more peaceful parts of the town. Some people actually fled the town to neighbouring towns.

The crisis also adversely affected the economy of the town, known for its thriving business and commercial activities. While the crisis lasted, markets did not hold; shops, banks and other business concerns also did not open. Even taxi and motorcycle operators withdrew from the road, apparently for their dear lives. Not only this, school children could not go to school during

the crisis period as the activities in the town came to a virtual “stand still” (Olagunju, 1999:7).

To take care of people displaced from their homes and those who suffered some minor injuries, the Red Cross Society of Nigeria set up a refugee camp at the Wesley Primary School, Makun. Unfortunately due to paucity of information, we do not have information on this aspect of the crisis. People preferred not to talk about the crisis because they believed that doing so would remind them of their loved ones who died in the unfortunate incident. In this regard, mention must be made of the efforts made by the Sagamu Local government under the Chairmanship of Honourable Yaya Olodeoku to save the lives of those injured in the crisis (Olabanji & Sobanjo, 2009:31).

The Federal government on Wednesday 21 July sent a delegation led by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Sunday Afolabi to assess the effort made at restoring peace to the troubled town and to sympathise with the people and government of Ogun State. The delegation consisted of Minister of Police Affairs, Major General (rtd.) David Jemibewon, Special Adviser to the President on National Assembly Matters, Alhaji Aminu Wali and the Special Adviser to the President on Media Affairs, Dr. Doyin Okupe. On arrival in Sagamu, the leader of the delegation pointed out that the President; Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was not only worried but also grieved over the sad incident. He, however, expressed satisfaction with the effort made so far to restore normalcy to the town.

It is necessary to point out an unfortunate dimension to the Sagamu crisis. The security agents drafted to maintain law and order in the town actually increased the number of those killed due to their negligence and carelessness. It was reported that within two days (Monday 19 and Tuesday 20, July) about 10 people were shot dead by security agents. Documentary evidence showed how the security agents engaged in indiscriminate shooting as a result of which some residents were killed (Sorunke & Osadolor, 1999:1-2). The police even extended their shooting to the Ogun State University Teaching Hospital where some people had gone to take refuge. The Medical Director of the hospital showed the Federal government delegation that visited the hospital during the crisis, “eight empty bullets fired” into the premises by the police (Sorunke & Osadolor, 1999:1-2). The firing of gun shots at the hospital scared hospital staff who reacted by abandoning their duties thereby depriving patients the opportunity of being given adequate medical attention. It was this careless handling of the situation that made Sagamu residents to

accuse the police of being biased against the Yoruba in their peace-keeping mission. They therefore, called for the withdrawal of the anti-riot police from Sagamu. The Minister of Internal affairs who had led the Federal government delegation to visit Sagamu had to wade into the matter to caution the security agents in the town to be impartial in their peace keeping mission, pointing out that their mission in the town was to restore law and order.

The Sagamu crisis produced spill-over effect in certain other Nigerian cities. The first place was Kano city where some Hausa youths, outraged by the killing of their kinsmen in Sagamu, violently attacked Yoruba dwellers in some parts of the city between Friday 23 and Sunday 25 July, 1999. The attack was an attempt to avenge the deaths of Hausas in the mayhem that occurred in Sagamu the previous week. Newspaper report on the violent clash between the two ethnic groups noted that it left 30 people dead (Ikur *et al*, 1999:1). The clashes occurred in Kuma, Rijiyar, Lemo and Bachirawa settlements. As it happened in Ogun State, the Kano state government had to impose a dusk to dawn curfew on the state from 7.00pm to 6.00am in order to restore peace.

Another place where the Sagamu crisis had a ripple effect was Lagos. Here the State Governor, Senator Bola Tinubu had to make a state-wide radio and television broadcast to appeal to Lagosians to maintain peace in the city because the state government had security reports indicating that some people were planning to cause trouble in city after the manner of what happened in Sagamu. According to him, the state government was “reliably informed that some people are [sic] planning to take advantage of the Sagamu incident to forment and provoke ethnic conflicts in Lagos to further their own personal ends” (Ehigiator, 1999:1-2). The governor pointed out that Lagosians must not allow themselves to be used as tools in the hands of those who did not want democracy to thrive in the country. This proactive step taken by the state government prevented a breach of peace in the city.

### **Resolution and impact of the crisis**

In order to resolve the crisis, the government took a number of steps. The first step taken by the Ogun State government was to impose a dusk-to-dawn curfew from 7.00pm to 7am on the town. This had the immediate effect of restricting the movement of the people and ensuring that the crisis did not escalate (Sorunke *et al*, 1999:1-2). Secondly, efforts were made to reconcile the warring parties. In this regard, the Assistant Inspector-General of Police

(AIG) Zone II, Alhaji Wali Alkali, the State Police Commissioner, Mr. O. Ekama, the leader of the Hausa Community Alhaji Abdul Imam held meeting with the *Akarigbo* of Remo, Oba Michael Sonariwo to work out ways of restoring peace to the area.

Although the police in Sagamu made an immediate effort to curtail the fighting, they could not succeed because of the magnitude of the crisis. The government had to send men of the Lagos State Rapid Response Squad and other anti-riot policemen from the Ogun State Police Command to enforce peace in the area. By noon of Monday 19 July, the police had succeeded in restoring a degree of peace in the troubled town. Furthermore, as part of the effort to restore peace to the town, the state governor, Chief Olusegun Osoba visited the town twice, first on Monday 19 and again on Tuesday 20 July, to appeal to the warring sides to give peace a chance. During one of his visits to the town, the people complained that the Police Area Commander in Sagamu, Alhaji A. Shehu, had helped to fuel the crisis. The state governor, ordered his immediate transfer (Olagunju & Efunnuga, 1999:1). Subsequently, the Area Commander in charge of Abeokuta, Mr. Mike Foyibo was asked to take over as the Area Commander for Sagamu because the residents had made it clear that a non-Hausa and non-Yoruba officer was better to manage the crisis on hand.

The last stage of the conflict resolution was the signing of a peace pact between the Hausa and the Yoruba on Saturday 24 July, 1999. This was barely a week after the crisis happened. The speedy resolution of the crisis was due to the efforts of the security agencies, the state government as well as the readiness of the parties to the conflict to give peace a chance. In a communiqué issued after a meeting held at the palace of the *Akarigbo*, representatives and opinion leaders from both communities engaged in the conflict decided to endorse the peace agreement. Part of the terms of the peace agreement included an unconditional release of all those arrested during the disturbance. The agreement also called on the government to compensate the victims of the incident (Adebayo & Akitoye, 1999: 1-2). Following the agreement, peace returned to the town and commercial activities which had taken a down turn became rejuvenated. On Monday August 9, 1999, the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo visited Sagamu in company of the Ogun State governor, Chief Olusegun Osoba and other dignitaries. They inspected the sight of the troubled area.

Although the crisis was resolved and peace returned to the town, the crisis left remarkable impact on the town and its dwellers. The first noticeable impact was in the economy of the town. The crisis adversely affected the commercial activities of the people, resulting in loss of millions of naira. The losses incurred were of great magnitude. Those who suffered losses will never forget the experience. As pointed out earlier, during the one week which the crisis lasted, shops, banks, and other business concerns did not open for commercial transactions. Even taxi and motorcycle operators withdrew from the road. Another important area in which the crisis affected the economy of the town was in the popular kola nut trade. The kola nut trade in Sabo, Sagamu market fell drastically. Before the crisis, the value of the kola nut trade in Sabo market was put at between twenty and thirty million naira weekly. However, after the crisis the kola nut trade fell sharply, its value dropping to just about two million naira weekly. The reason for this being that traders who used to buy kola nuts in Sagamu had shifted their base from the Sabo market to other places considered peaceful to do business.

Apart from economic impact, the crisis also had effect on the socio-cultural relations between the Yoruba and Hausa in Sagamu. The crisis created fear and distrust between the two groups of people who had, before the war, lived harmoniously together. It should be noted that before the crisis, many intermarriages had taken place between the two groups of people. In fact, there were Hausas in Sagamu who spoke the Yoruba language fluently and *vice versa*. Some Hausas were actually born in Sagamu and had lived all their lives in the town. They had grown up to accept Sagamu as their home. Unfortunately the 1999 crisis hit at the root of such ethnic harmony and mutual understanding. The crisis created a situation which tended to reduce such social relations drastically. Moreover, in the aftermath of the crisis some Hausas actually left Sagamu and returned home claiming that the Yoruba town was unsafe for habitation by foreigners. Many who had settled in Sagamu for years and who had built houses and acquired properties in the town sold the houses and returned to their homes.

Furthermore, the crisis also had certain demography effects. It led to a reduction in the population of the town. As shown in this paper, the crisis led to the loss of lives of many people. Newspaper report put the figure at over 100 people. Also, not all those who fled to other parts of the country during the crisis came back. Government's effort to bring back all those that fled the town during the crisis did not prove successful, as some of them came back, while others never did.

The crisis also affected religious activities. During the period of crisis, there was low turnout of people in churches and mosques, as people were afraid to worship in their various worship centres. In fact, during the crisis period some churches did not open. Members were advised to stay at home until peace returned to the town (Pastor Alex Akiode, personal communication, May 22, 2009). The same applied to Islamic religious activities. Islamic religious activities only resumed after law and order got restored to the town.

It must be pointed out that Sagamu crisis created tension and conflicts in other parts of the country as in the case of Kano city in northern Nigeria and the city of Lagos. We already alluded to these developments in this paper. Finally, the all crises (in Ogun and Kano states) gave the government great cause for concern. This is so, because the Yoruba and the Hausa are among the biggest ethnic groups in the country and the most politically powerful. The crisis gave a warning signal to the newly inaugurated civilian administration in the country because the crisis came only after two months into the life of the government.

### **Conclusion**

In concluding this paper, we would like to draw attention to some important findings of this study. The first and perhaps most important is the point that the culture and traditions of a people are sacred and should always be respected by all the inhabitants of the community to which the culture belongs. Lack of respect for a people's culture or violation of the established traditions often lead to crisis as the Hausa/Yoruba crisis of Sagamu aptly shows. It was the disregard for the culture of the host community of Sagamu by the Hausas immigrants which led to the regrettable destruction of lives and property in the town in 1999. The second but related point we want to make is that there is need for mutual tolerance by people living in a town or community. It is unimaginable that the behaviour of two prostitutes could have led to the disturbance of the magnitude experienced in Sagamu in 1999. We are convinced that if some degree of restraint and tolerance had been exercised by both parties to the crisis, the Sagamu conflict might have been averted (Olagunju & Efunnuga, 1999:6). Thirdly, it is necessary to appreciate the fact that both sides to the crisis quickly recognised the need to give peace a chance and therefore, readily embraced the agreement which restored peace to the town. The need to quickly resolve conflict is often lost in most crisis situations and in such cases, this prolongs the restoration of peace and stability to troubled regions.

Finally, it is interesting to observe that over ten years after the Sagamu crisis, peace has fully returned to the town. But much more than this, the Hausas and Yorubas are back transacting businesses together in the Sabo area of Sagamu. The kola nut trade for which Sabo, Sagamu is well known has come back to live. Lorries can be seen in Sabo daily loading kola nuts for transportation to various towns in northern Nigeria. The Hausas are also back in their different trades especially the popular Sabo *Suya* trade. (*Suya* is a delicacy of the Hausa usually prepared by slicing beef, putting it into some sticks specially prepared for that purpose and then roasting it. After roasting, the beef is garnished with spices and onion. It is then ready for eating). Many Hausas can also be seen working as labourers on building construction sites in Sagamu. It is interesting to note that this was the very part of the town where the 1999 crisis began. Enmity has ended and peace and progress have returned to the town. Politically the Hausas have been re-integrated into the politics of the town. Hausa representatives are on the Local Government Security Council every year. Hausa representatives are also on the Police Community Relations Committee. Furthermore, the Hausas are usually consulted by the *Akarigbo* of Remo whenever there are matters that touch their interest (Olabanji & Sobanjo, 2009:43-45). As a result of all these, peace and stability have returned to Sagamu and the town is once again back on the path of socio-political and economic prosperity.

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