

SPACES FOR CHANGE



**OTODO-GBAME:
Life After Forced
Evictions**

Between 2014 - 2017, private actors, often acting in connivance with Lagos State authorities have launched several attacks in Otodo-gbame community leading to the large-scale displacement of predominantly urban poor inhabitants who are now dispersed in different localities across the State. SPACES FOR CHANGE traced the displaced residents to the areas they moved to, in order to understand their coping mechanisms and document their individual and collective experiences after the forced evictions.

4x3

16x9

Where are the inhabitants of Otodo-gbame community?



- With their own communal land grabbed from them, Otodo-gbame community members are now scattered across various waterfront communities and informal settlements in Lagos State, such as Makoko, Sabo-Koji, Bariga, Ajah, Badore, Oreta, Ogogoro, Epe etc.
- Sergio village (pictured) is in Oreta District, off the lagoon at Irepodun, Ikorodu LGA, Lagos State. According to reports, the district's population swelled by approximately 3,000 persons, mostly visitors from Otodo-gbame community who fled to the area following demolitions of their former homes.

Where are the inhabitants of Otodogbame community? [II]



- Neighboring Offin (Ilu-Aje) District is also off the lagoon, at Irepodun, Ikorodu Local Government Area. This district now hosts several visitors from Otodogbame community. In fact, when some Oreta inhabitants heard about the threats to lives and property of their kin at Otodogbame, they embarked on rescue missions by boat and successfully ferried several persons to safety, away from the vicious demolition crew.



Evictees' tales and demands

Baale Dansu Humkpe – The chief of a community put asunder

- Baale Dansu Humkpe meets SPACES FOR CHANGE at Ikorodu to conduct a guided tour of the localities where former Otodo-gbame community members have sought refuge. His stance is clear: Otodo-gbame land is theirs, and has been so several decades. Legal redress is due.
- He accompanies SPACES FOR CHANGE to Sergio village, stopping at various points to either exchange greetings with the locals, or clarify an important point.



... Women cluster, here and there, sharing common tales of woes



Despair, grief envelop the community, as large numbers of residents, mainly women and young children, cluster in various corners, discussing the demolitions and sharing common tales of woes.

‘I need to air my travails’ – Yaba Oke



Mr. Yaba Oke’s luggage, still unpacked, are placed inside a tent too close to the shore. This is his new abode. He mends his fishing net, hopeful for a big catch. Speaking in Egun language, he says:

‘I stay here because I have no other choice. Having lost so many properties, I feel deep pain. Mosquitoes terrorize us here, but there is nothing we can do about it.

Simon Kpose needs to go school

- Simon Kpose is a junior secondary school student of Kuramo Junior Secondary School, Sand-fill, Lekki, Lagos State. His home and community (Otodo-gbame) was demolished by without giving them adequate notices. His father, Mr. Kpose, is a corn miller, and his wife, Mrs. Kpose, a restaurateur.

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They all moved to Sergio Village in Oreta District when they were sacked from. Otodo-gbame. He says:

‘We have lost too much. My parents’ businesses were demolished and they hastily relocated to this area to prevent any loss of life. Me and my little sister, Oluwaremilekun, don’t go to school anymore. I want the Lagos State Government to allow us return to Otodo-gbame.

Governor Ambode has lost my vote

- Mr. Joshua Esinsu is a disc-jockey and student of St. Ireti Senior Grammar School, Ikoyi. Now, he stays at Sergio village in Oreta District. He just stays at home.
- He says '2019 looks bleak for the current administration with growing number of disenchanted electorates.'



We need empowerment- Women Leader

- ❑ Madam Roseline Esinsu is currently at Sergio village, alongside her immediate and extended family.
- ❑ She invites SPACES FOR CHANGE to meet her children and grand children. She wants relief assistance and succor from well-meaning Nigerians. Her family survives on charity. She says:
- ❑ 'The women of Otodo-gbame can rebuild businesses and institutions demolished with at least N100,000.00 per individual. I used to run a church at Otodo-gbame. I want to rebuild my church in the new location to continue the work of ministration. Our community members would also appreciate public donations such as clothing (wrappers), mosquito nets, and food items.

See her below surrounded by her family and properties piled around a plank habitation constructed on a small portion of land.



Mr. Solomon Hunga – life is cruel on a boat



Mr. Solomon Hunga squats at Offin (Ilu-Aje) District, alongside no fewer than 10 other persons who fled the forced evictions in Otodogbame.

His hosts at Offin made it clear that their stay is temporary. In fact, some spend the day on land and the nights on their boats with poor covering from the mosquitoes which swarm the area.

At Otodogbame, he worked as an Interior Decorator with specialty on POP. Since April 9, 2017, when some relatives rescued him by boat, he has no job and seeks assistance to stand on his feet again.

‘Give us back our land’ – Mrs. Awele



- Mrs. Rodi Awele (pictured in singlet), a mother of 4 children, says:
- ‘All I want is my home at Otodo-gbame. Gifts and aids in the form of food, cash, etc will finish over time and more needs will arise. But with my land and home, I can rebuild a fort for self and family to live in dignity’.

‘My husband was killed’– Mrs. Juliana Visshu

- Mr. Gbanagbe Visshu lost his life during the November, 2016 demolitions at Otodo-gbame community. He left behind a wife and 5 kids. His widow, Mrs. Juliana Visshu, recounted that her husband was hit by a bullet while fleeing the demolition excavators and crew. He was hospitalized for a few days and great expenses were incurred. He eventually died shortly thereafter.



‘My husband was killed’– Mrs. Juliana Visshu

All her kids appear to be below 10 years and peeped through the door of the house she shares with relatives at Offin.



The room although crowded by kids, is sparsely furnished, and poorly kept. Will the children of (late Mr. and) Mrs. Visshu go to school? Who will sponsor their education? What hope for livelihoods for the home that surely lost a loving bread winner for no just cause? Will his murderers go unpunished?

'My child was shot and injured'— Mrs. Modupe Ohfor

Mrs. Modupe Ohfor has 6 kids and a husband. She has been squatting in Offin District since November, 2016 following the November demolitions at Otodogbame where they lost all their possessions.

'One of my children was shot on the shoulder during the November demolitions, and is still recuperating almost 6 months after.



Mrs. Sale M.: 'My frozen food business was demolished'

As dusk falls, SPACES FOR CHANGE meets Mrs. Sale Motokaome , who has 6kids and no means to cater for them.

At Otodo-gbame, she had a frozen foods store which was demolished. She wants the Lagos State government to either resettle the community or give them back their land.



How do I get back to school? – Wensu Tleores



Walking through Sergio village, SPACES FOR CHANGE came across a small gathering of youth/teenagers including Wensu Tleores (pictured) who attends Falomo Secondary School, Ikoyi. He appeals to State authorities to rethink their actions because students need to go back to school. He says that they also need clothing as most residents lost their properties during the demolitions.

My family is scattered. I now fetch firewood and do chores to survive – Wensu shares



Although it may seem adventurous, Wensu shares that living on a boat is crude and really tough. He has had to sleep in the boat since April 9, 2017 when his family fled Otodo-gbame for the shores of Sergio village, with the ever-present swarm of mosquitoes making the experience much worse. He survives by fetching firewood for the locals.

His younger sister, aged 1 year and 6 months, shares the same fate with him. Their mother is away and his family is scattered across several locations in the State.

State Security Personnel shot at and injured a teenager



Marcel Joy was shot whilst fleeing the demolition crew in April 2017. His mother has had to fund his treatment at St. Kizito Hospital, Jakande, Oreta District where they fled to.

His bravery all through the tough experience is evident in his stoic disposition during the interview with SPACES FOR CHANGE.

I lost my school – Head teacher Zosy



Mr. Jonathan Zosy used to be the head teacher of Living Stone Nursery and Primary school at Otodo-gbame. The school exists no more. Before the demolition, the school boasted of 150 pupils, who are now out of school.

When SPACES FOR CHANGE asked him what he wants to do next, he says:

‘I am totally confused.’

I plan to rebuild the school – Head teacher Zosy

Teacher Zosy has plans to rebuild the school at Oreta District. Despite the demolition of his property, he strives to forge ahead and has conducted a survey already and requires N350,000.00 to purchase land and establish a school within the district.

When SPACES FOR CHANGE asked him: ‘What is your source of strength?’ Mr. Zosy replied, ‘I cannot change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to reach my destination.’

Other community members say:

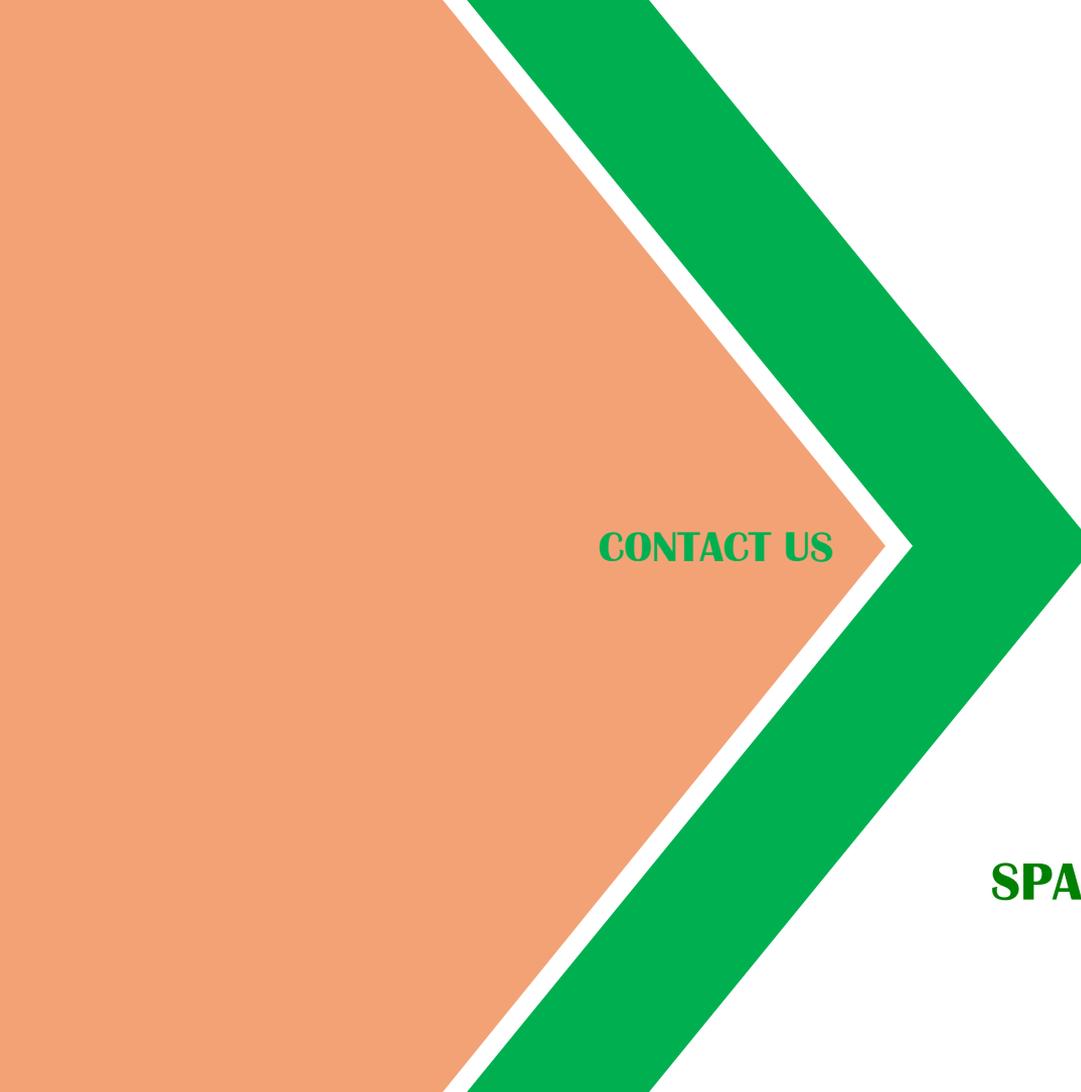


- Okey Emmanuel demands clearly – **‘we want to see the positive change this administration promised us during the electoral campaigns’**

- Mrs. Christiana Meze says that the house at Offin District where she currently squats is over-populated and she mulls over her next steps.

Otodo-gbame People ask Lagos Government to allow them return to their land and homes

- Displaced Otodo-gbame community members say they want to go back to their land, homes and businesses. They desire to hear the Governor's pledge to end the continuing human suffering and security threats they are facing.
- They say that their major income stream is threatened as e.g. fishing is tougher at Ikorodu because the coast line is less calm compared to that of Otodo-gbame. The turbulence makes fishing difficult and even a risky endeavor.



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