

Niger Delta Weekly: De-escalating Gang Violence in Delta State

December 06-12, 2020

Description

This weekly update spotlights organized violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on gang violence in Delta State. According to data (see map below), over 165 gang related fatalities were reported in Delta State between January 2016 and October 2020. Recent incidents indicate an increase in gang related killings in the State. Over the last two months, more than 15 persons have been killed in a series of armed clashes reportedly involving Arrow Baga, Aiye, Black Axe, Eiye and Mafia cult gangs in the State. In October 2020, for instance, 4 persons were reportedly killed during a clash between two rival cult gangs in Ogwashi-Uku town, Aniocha North LGA. Separately, 3 persons were reportedly killed during a clash between rival cult gangs in Abraka town, Ethiope East LGA. In November, over 7 residents were reportedly killed and several others injured in a series of clashes between rival cult gangs at different locations in Ughelli town, Ughelli North LGA. More recently, on December 03, 2020, a 38-year old leader of an anti-cultism volunteer corps was reportedly killed by a gang of cultists in Kwale community, Ndokwa West LGA.

Why it Matters

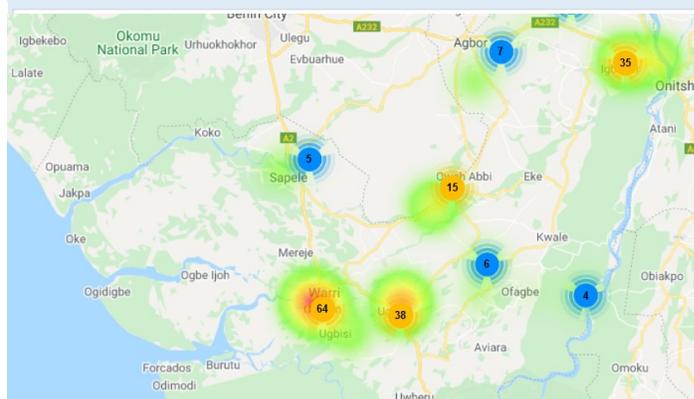
A resurgence of gang related violence and killings could adversely impact the peace and security dynamics in the State. Recurrent incidents of gang violence could degenerate into extended battles for supremacy and territorial control among the numerous cult gangs in the State. This could intersect with organized criminality and social tensions to cause socio-economic and political instability in the State.

Social: Gang violence could set off a sequence of armed clashes and reprisal killings in the State. This could intensify arms proliferation and a subsequent rise in criminality including robbery and kidnapping for ransom. Also, considering that cult gangs are increasingly permeating the streets and communities, growing incidents of gang violence could promote a culture of violence which could negatively affect social activities and threaten communal peace and stability.

Economic: The prevalence of gang violence could be economically devastating for the State. It could create an atmosphere of insecurity that is hostile to economic activities. For instance, some of the recent cult clashes in the State occurred in business premises including markets, hotels, restaurants and football viewing centers. Therefore, recurrent incidents of gang violence could cause the closure of businesses and loss of revenue, economic opportunities and livelihoods.

Political: Rising incidents of gang violence could erode citizen's trust in the capacity of the State government and the security agencies to protect lives and property. This could trigger violent protests and civil unrest which could weaken public support for the State government.

Fatalities Heat Map of Gang Violence in Delta State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows the geographical concentration of gang violence related fatalities in Delta State from January 2016 - October 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Gang violence is increasingly becoming prevalent in Delta State, driven mainly by youth unemployment. Peace and development actors should work with the State government to intensify ongoing anti-cultism efforts including creation of employment opportunities for the youths. The State government should ensure that the proposed security outfit, 'Operation Delta Hawk', is structured to counteract gang violence. Stakeholders should also work with media outfits to raise awareness on the negative effects of gang violence.

Contact Us

Inquiries: Afeno Super Odomovo, Research Coordinator

Telephone: 08172401595

Email: afeno@pindfoundation.org

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Incident Details: Kindly include the State, LGA, Town, Date, and Brief Incident Description.



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