

Niger Delta Weekly: De-escalating Violent Agitation and Criminal Insurgency in Imo State

April 17-23, 2022

Description

This weekly update spotlights criminal violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on violent separatist agitation and criminal insurgency in Imo State. According to data (see map below), separatist agitation and counter-insurgent violence caused over 400 fatalities in Imo State between January 2019 and December 2021. Recent data shows a rise in violent separatist agitation and criminal insurgency in the State. In April 2022, for example, suspected members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) - the militia arm of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) - reportedly attacked a divisional police station with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in Mbieri town, Mbaitoli LGA. Separately, in April, gunmen reportedly attacked a local council headquarters with IEDs in Awo-Idemili town, Orsu LGA. Also, in April, separatist militias reportedly attacked a voter registration center and killed a staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Amakohia town, Ihitte Uboma LGA. Recently, on April 17, 2022, a resident was reportedly killed during a clash between security operatives and separatist militias in Ihioma town, Orlu LGA.

Why it Matters

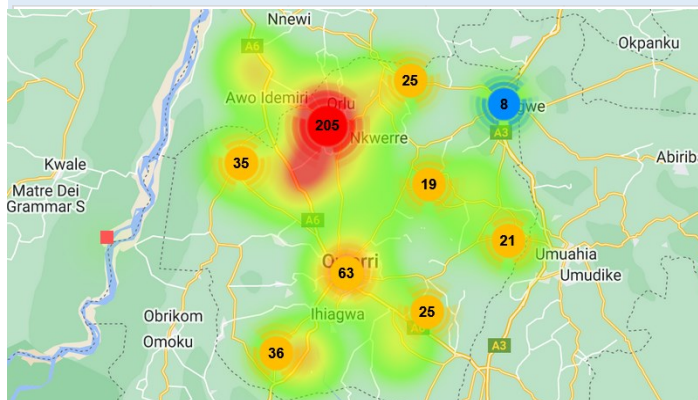
The current spate of violent separatist agitation and criminal insurgency has the potential to escalate and intensify hooliganism, communal tensions and reprisal killings in the State. If not de-escalated, the evolving situation could cause a breakdown of law and order and deployment of repressive security strategies that could result in arbitrary killings and other forms of human rights violations. This could cause substantial socio-economic disruptions and political instability.

Social: The growing wave of violent separatist agitation and criminal insurgency could degenerate into widespread hooliganism and lawlessness. The situation could be exploited by criminal gangs to rob residents, loot shops and vandalize public infrastructure. This could also exert pressure on law enforcement agencies to deploy repressive counter-measures that could result in accidental killing of residents, human rights violations, and thus undermine communal stability.

Economic: Violent agitation and counter-insurgent violence could create a hostile environment that is detrimental to economic development. Clashes between government security forces and separatist militias could result in the restriction of human and vehicular movement and disruption of economic activities. This could cause loss of livelihoods and thus undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: The rising spate of violent separatist agitation could lower the morale of security operatives and weaken citizens' trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and properties. This could undermine the authority of the government and cause civil disorder.

Fatalities Heat Map of Violent Agitation and Criminal Insurgency in Imo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of fatalities caused by violent agitation and criminal insurgency in Imo State from Jan 2019 - Dec 2021. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The growing spate of violent separatist agitation, criminal insurgency and counter-insurgent violence could degenerate and worsen the security situation in the State. Stakeholders should work with the relevant security agencies to deploy appropriate preventive measures to de-escalate the situation. Peace and security stakeholders should also work with the State government and reputable community leaders to identify and address the underlying drivers as well as the triggers of the current wave of agitation in the State.

Contact Us

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Report Incidents: IPDU Early Warning System

Please report any verified incident of conflict to the IPDU SMS early warning system: Text report to **080 9936 2222**

Incident Details: Kindly include the State, LGA, Town, Date, and brief incident description.



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