

Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing Vigilante Related Violence and Killings in Rivers State

May 08-14, 2022

Description

This edition of the weekly update spotlights vigilante and mob violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on vigilante related violence and killings in Rivers State. According to data (see map below), vigilante related violence caused over 80 fatalities in Rivers State between January 2018 and March 2022. Recent data shows an upsurge in vigilante related violence and killings, including clashes between local vigilantes and government security operatives as well as infighting between members of local vigilante groups. In January 2022, for instance, an officer of the Nigeria Air Force (NAF) was reportedly killed by a suspected member of a local vigilante group in Omuanwa community, Ikwerre LGA. In March, a suspected local vigilante reportedly killed a soldier at his residence in Obelle community, Emohua LGA. In April, four residents were reportedly killed during armed clashes between two rival factions of a local vigilante group in Ibaa community, Emohua LGA. More recently, on May 09, 2022, suspected members of a local vigilante group reportedly set ablaze the house of a community leader in Obelle community, Emohua LGA.

Why it Matters

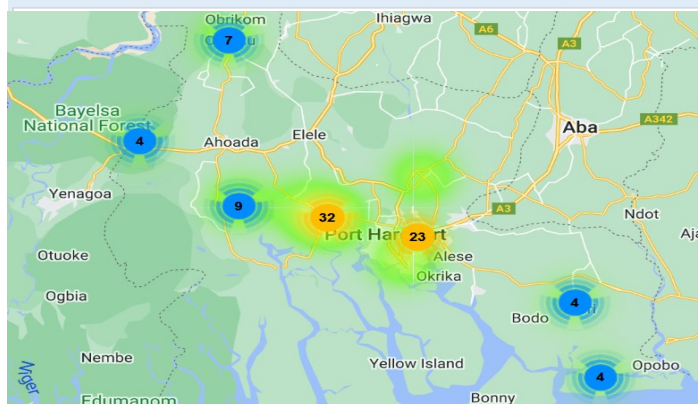
Violence and killings by suspected local vigilantes is increasingly becoming prevalent in Rivers State. The emerging situation could cause a breakdown of law and order which could cause public unrest, hooliganism and arbitrary killings, and the deployment of repressive measures by government security forces. The security situation could also intersect with communal tensions and organized criminality to cause socio-economic disruptions and political instability in the State.

Social: The current wave of vigilante violence could encourage a culture of collective violence, especially given the proliferation of both recognized and unrecognized local vigilante groups in the State. This could intensify arms proliferation, insecurity and communal tensions which could be exploited by cult and criminal gangs to perpetrate violence. This could also degenerate into a sequence of violence which could undermine communal stability and human security.

Economic: The prevalence of vigilante violence could create an atmosphere of insecurity that is detrimental to economic development. Violence and killings by local vigilantes could cause civil unrest which could result in arson, looting and vandalism. This could disrupt business activities and cause loss of livelihood and business opportunities and consequently undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: Violence and killings by local vigilantes could present additional security challenges for the State. It could cause lawlessness which could undermine the security of lives and properties. It could intensify criminality and cause social unrest including mob violence, riots and protests, which could cause political instability in the State.

Fatalities Heat Map of Vigilante Related Violence in Rivers State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of reported fatalities caused by vigilante violence in Rivers State from January 2018 - March 2022. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The current wave of violence and killings by suspected local vigilantes has the potential to escalate and adversely impact the security landscape, especially given the proliferation of vigilante groups in the State. Stakeholders should work with the State government, the relevant security agencies and community leaders to address the underlying drivers of the current wave of violence. Stakeholders should also devise appropriate strategies to effectively regulate vigilante groups and other informal security outfits in the State.

Contact Us

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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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