

Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing Election-related Violence In the Niger Delta

May 29 - June 04, 2022

Description

This weekly update spotlights electoral violence in the Niger Delta. Elections in the Niger Delta are high stake affairs, often characterized by violence. According to data (see map below), over 240 incidents of electoral violence were reported in the region between January 2019 and April 2022, including more than 150 related fatalities. In the lead-up to the 2023 general elections, the political situation is already charged with many reported incidents of violence in all the States in the region. In May 2022, for instance, a youth leader was reportedly killed during the primary elections of a political party in Ukanafun LGA, Akwa Ibom State. Separately, in May, a man was reportedly killed during the primary elections of a political party in Ogbia LGA, Bayelsa State. Also, in May, political thugs reportedly attacked the venue of the primary elections of a political party and shot sporadically to scare away security personnel and party delegates in Isoko North LGA, Delta State. More recently, on May 23, 2022, a policeman was reportedly shot dead at the venue of the primary elections of a political party in Obudu LGA, Cross River State.

Why it Matters

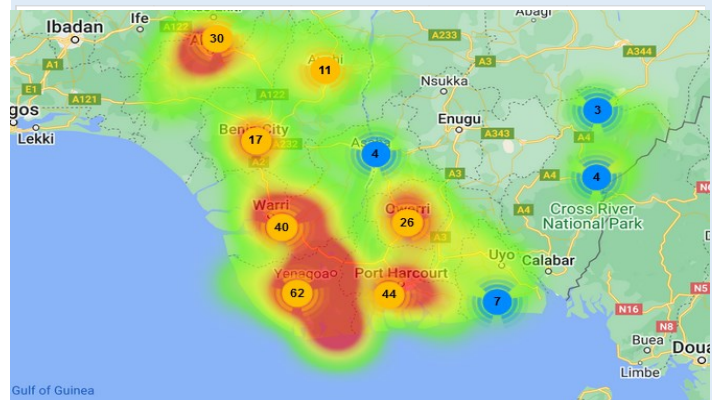
The level of violence that characterized the primary elections of the major political parties in the region underscores an urgent need for measures to mitigate the risk of violence during campaigns and the elections. The prevailing situation has the potential to cause widespread violence during and after the elections. This could cause low voter turnout which could undermine the legitimacy of the electoral process, with serious socio-economic and political repercussions.

Social: Rising political tensions and violence could negatively impact the regional dynamics of conflict and insecurity. It could intensify arms proliferation, violent criminality, and clashes between rival cult gangs. Political thugs and armed youths could mutate into criminal gangs and ethnic militias that could perpetrate violence and endanger public security after the elections. This could deepen political polarization, heighten communal tensions and undermine social cohesion.

Economic: A tensed political situation could create a climate of insecurity that could adversely impact the regional economy. It could provide avenues for hoodlums and criminals to loot, rob and vandalize properties. This could disrupt business activities, weaken investors' confidence and cause loss of revenue, livelihoods and economic opportunities. This could also undermine the wellbeing of residents.

Political: Electoral violence could have long-term consequences for political attitudes, behavior and participation. It could cause voter apathy which could undermine the formal mechanisms of political competition, and thus subvert the electoral and political processes.

Incidents Heat Map of Political & Election-related Violence in the Niger Delta of Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of election-related violence in the Niger Delta from January 2019 - April 2022. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The prevailing political situation in the region has the potential to escalate in ways that could intensify lethal violence before and during the upcoming 2023 general elections and beyond. Stakeholders should de-escalate the situation by continuing to advocate for peaceful elections through popular media outfits. Stakeholders should also create relevant structures for peace messaging, advocacy, and facilitation of peace accords between major political actors to reduce tensions and mitigate electoral violence in the region.

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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