

Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting Killing of Women and Girls for Rituals in the Niger Delta

February 06-12, 2022

Description

This special edition of the weekly update spotlights targeted killings of women and girls for ritual purposes in the Niger Delta. According to data (see map below), over 150 incidents of ritual-related killings were reported in the Niger Delta between January 2018 and December 2021. Recent incidents also indicate an upsurge in targeted killings of women and girls for ritual purposes in the region, particularly in Cross River, Delta and Imo State. In January 2022, for example, more than 10 girls were reportedly killed for rituals in Ogoja town, Cross River State. Some vital organs of the victims were allegedly harvested. Separately, in January, suspected ritualists reportedly killed a young girl and removed her eyes in Ogwashi-Uku town in Aniocha North LGA, Delta State. Also, in January, a young man reportedly attempted to kill his mother for ritual purposes in Owerri, the Imo State capital. The woman was stabbed with a knife severally before she escaped. More recently, on February 07, 2022, an 80-year old woman was reportedly killed and her body parts harvested for ritual purposes in Olomoro town in Isoko South LGA, Delta State.

Why it Matters

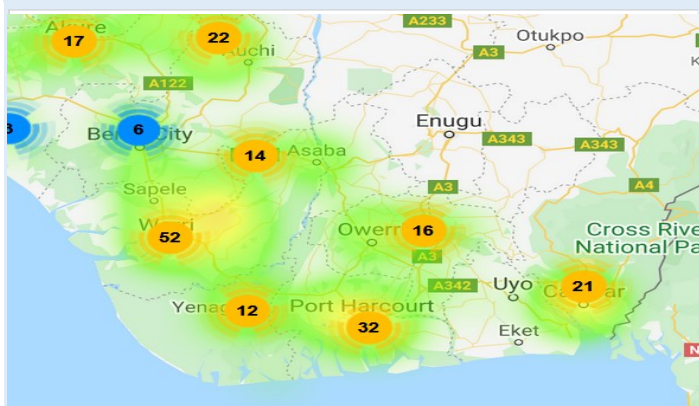
The growing prevalence of targeted killings of women and girls for rituals is a serious threat to human security. The prevailing situation, which is seemingly driven by a growing demand for human body parts for money-making occult rituals, has the potential to reinforce harmful cultural beliefs and practices that could endanger the safety and security of women and girls. This could have far-reaching socio-economic and political repercussions at the State and regional levels.

Social: Killings of women and girls for rituals could have devastating psychosocial consequences. This malevolent practice could reduce respect for human life and cause a relapse of ethical and moral standards in the society. This could reinforce other harmful cultural beliefs and practices that can undermine the value of women, and intensify gender-base violence. This menace could also cause panic and insecurity that could destabilize communal stability and social wellbeing.

Economic: Widespread killing of women for rituals could inhibit economic activities such as trading and farming, and cause loss of livelihoods and food insecurity. The demand for human parts could also evolve into an underground economy that could undermine legitimate businesses and reduce government revenue from taxation.

Political: Targeted killings of women and girls for rituals is a gross human rights violation and a threat to human security. The prevalence of ritual killings could cause public disaffection with government efforts to protect human rights and ensure public security. This could cause violent protest and unrest that could disrupt governance.

Fatalities Heat Map of Ritual-Related Killings in the Niger Delta of Nigeria



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of reported incidents of ritual killings in the Niger Delta from January 2018 - December 2021. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The widespread targeting of women and girls for ritual killing is a major security threat in the Niger Delta. Stakeholders should work with relevant government agencies including the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to address the underlying drivers and develop appropriate punitive and preventive measures to mitigate the situation. Stakeholders should also work with popular media outlets to sensitize the public about ritual killings, encourage good parenting and promote values that discourage money-making ritual crimes.

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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