Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting the Resurgence of Sea Robbery and Kidnapping in Bayelsa State

January 30 - February 05, 2022

Description

This edition of the weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on sea robbery and kidnapping in Bayelsa State. Kidnapping and sea robbery are prevalent conflict risks and security issues in the State. According to data (see map below), over 200 incidents of sea robbery and kidnapping were reported in the State between January 2018 and December 2021. Recent incidents indicate a resurgence of sea robbery and kidnapping in the State. In December 2021, for instance, kidnappers reportedly abducted a personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and four civilians working with an oil firm in Koluama community, Southern Ijaw LGA. Also, in December, sea robbers reportedly attacked a commercial boat and robbed passengers along the waterways in Twon-Brass, Brass LGA. In January 2022, robbers reportedly attacked a commercial boat, dispossessed the passengers and made away with the boat engine in Twon-Brass. Recently, on January 20, 2022, gunmen reportedly abducted one of the state commissioners from his residence in Otuokpoti town, Ogbia LGA.
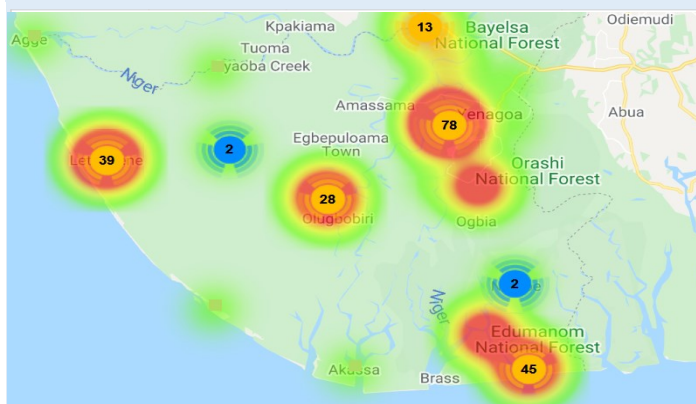
Why it Matters

The resurgence of sea robbery and kidnapping for ransom could undermine maritime safety and exacerbate insecurity in the State, especially considering that maritime insecurity affects security on land. The current situation could disrupt maritime activities with far-reaching socio-economic and political consequences for the State.

Social: The prevalence of sea robbery and kidnapping could be socially disrupting and upsetting. It could reinforce other organized criminal activities including illegal oil bunkering, militancy, gang violence, drugs trafficking, arms proliferation as well as armed clashes between criminals and public security forces which sometimes result in collateral damage among residents. Sea robbery and kidnapping for ransom could also endanger livelihoods and cause social tensions in ways that could adversely impact the wellbeing of residents.

Economic: Sea robbery and kidnapping for ransom could impose huge financial burdens on individuals and businesses including the loss of goods or the costs of extra security or ransom. This could increase the cost of water transportation, disrupt the local fishing economy and endanger the livelihoods of residents. Sea robbery and kidnapping could also disrupt oil and gas production and thus reduce the State government's revenue from taxation and federal allocations.

Political: The resurgence of sea robbery and kidnapping could cause public disaffection with the efforts of government security agencies to protect lives and properties. This could trigger violent protests and unrest, and thus present additional security challenges for the State.

Incidents Heat Map of Sea Robbery and Kidnapping in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of sea robbery and kidnapping in Bayelsa State from January 2018 - December 2021. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The growing prevalence of sea robbery and kidnapping has the potential to intensify insecurity both in the waterways and on land. Stakeholders should work with the State government and the relevant security agencies to intensify ongoing efforts to mitigate maritime crimes, including effective surveillance of coastlines and waterways. Stakeholders should also develop an inclusive community-driven counter-piracy strategy with a stronger inter-agency security coordination to reduce robbery and kidnapping 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.