

Niger Delta Weekly: De-escalating Cult and Gang Related Violence in Delta State

February 13-19, 2022

Description

This weekly update spotlights gang violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on cult and gang related killings in Delta State. According to data (see map below), over 290 cult and gang related fatalities were reported in Delta State between January 2018 and December 2021. Recent incidents indicate a resurgence of cult and gang related killings in the State. In December 2021, for instance, five persons were reportedly killed during clashes between rival cult gangs at different locations along DSC Expressway and Orhuwhorun community, Udu LGA. In January, 2022, a resident was reportedly killed during a clash over a supremacy battle between members of two rival gangs in Essi Layout, Warri South LGA. In February 2022, rival cult gangs reportedly besieged major streets in Otovwodo area of Agbassa community, Warri South LGA. More recently, on February 06, 2022, five young men were reportedly killed in a series of clashes in a battle for supremacy between the Black Axe and Eiye cult gangs in Agbarho community, Ughelli North LGA. The recent escalation of cult violence has caused anxiety among residents in the area.

Why it Matters

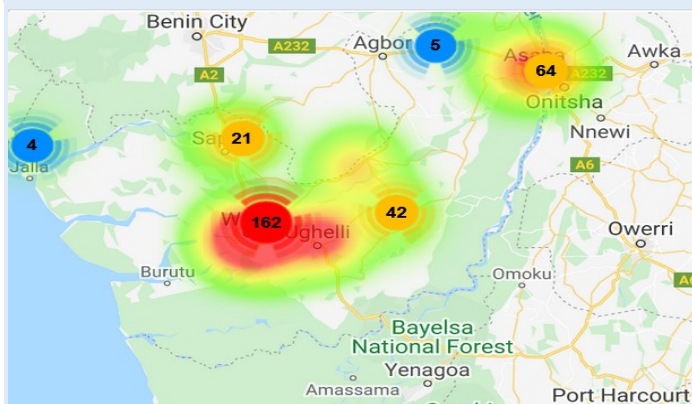
A resurgence of cult and gang related clashes could spark off a cycle of reprisal violence and killings by rival cult gangs in the State. The current situation could escalate into prolonged battles for supremacy and territorial control among the numerous cult gangs. This could intersect with organized criminality and social tensions in ways that could negatively affect the peace and conflict dynamics in the State.

Social: The growing spate of cult and gang related violence could threaten communal peace and stability, especially considering that cult gangs are increasingly permeating the streets and communities in the State. The prevailing situation could embolden cult gangs to recruit more youths to help defend their territories and consequently intensify criminal violence and lawlessness including arms proliferation, targeted killing, drug abuse, robbery and kidnapping for ransom.

Economic: The prevalence of cult clashes and associated violence could create an atmosphere of insecurity that is hostile to economic activities. Traders, shop owners and passers-by are often robbed or killed during cult clashes. This could result in low patronage for businesses in areas where cult clashes are prevalent. Therefore, a resurgence of cult violence could cause the closure of businesses, and loss of revenue, livelihoods, and economic opportunities in the State.

Political: Cult and gang violence could present additional security challenges for the State. It could drive up government spending on public security. Rivalry between cult gangs could also lead to political instability as they could be used to cause violence during elections.

Fatalities Heat Map of Cult and Gang Related Violence in Delta State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported cult and gang related fatalities in Delta State from January 2018 - December 2021. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The recent resurgence of cult and gang related violence has the potential to escalate and intersect with communal tensions and organized criminality in ways that could adversely impact the peace and conflict dynamics in the State. Peace and security stakeholders must adopt an integrated approach, involving community leaders and security agencies, to tackle the situation. The risk of cult and gang related violence should also be considered along with other crucial conflict issues such as criminal and communal violence.

Contact Us

Inquiries: Afeno Super Odomovo, Research Coordinator

Contacts: ✉ afeno@pindfoundation.org ☎ 08172401595

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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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