

Niger Delta Weekly: Highlighting the Resurgence of Gun Violence in Rivers State

February 20-26, 2022

Description

This edition of the weekly update highlights lethal violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on the resurgence of gun violence in Rivers State. According to data (see map below), gun violence caused over 200 fatalities in Rivers State between January 2020 and September 2021. Recent incidents indicate a resurgence of gun related violence, including targeted killing of residents and armed clashes between criminal gangs and government security forces in the State. In January 2022, for instance, gunmen reportedly attacked a divisional police station and freed several inmates in Okrika town, Okrika LGA. Separately, in January, gunmen reportedly ambushed and killed a soldier and wounded two others at Ahiankwo market near a river bordering Asari-Toru and Emohua LGAs. More recently, on February 13, 2022, gunmen reportedly killed a resident at Omuobuizu village in Ibaa community, Emohua LGA. The gunmen reportedly attacked the community and shot indiscriminately at residents. The incident allegedly involved members of a disbanded local vigilante group and a newly formed community security outfit in the area.

Why it Matters

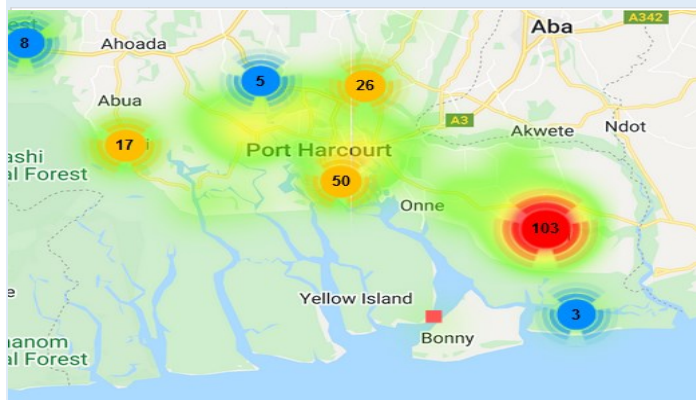
The resurgence of gun related violence has the potential to intensify insecurity and adversely impact the security environment in the State. It could cause a breakdown of law and order which could result in public unrest, widespread hooliganism, arbitrary killings, spontaneous victimization and the deployment of repressive measures by security forces. Rising incidents of gun violence could have devastating social, economic, political and security consequences in the State.

Social: Given its destructive nature and fatal consequences, gun violence could have wide-ranging and long-lasting devastating impact on residents. The growing spate of gun violence could cause arms proliferation which could intensify violent criminality and insecurity. Gun related deaths and injuries could also bring about serious psychosocial and health consequences for individuals and communities, including internal displacement and humanitarian crisis in the State.

Economic: In addition to the human cost of gun-related deaths, the prevalence of gun violence could create an atmosphere of insecurity that is detrimental to economic development. Incidents of gun violence could disrupt economic activities and cause loss of livelihoods and business opportunities. This could reduce government's revenue from taxation and undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: A resurgence of gun violence could weaken citizen's trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and properties in the State, and therefore undermine the authority of the government. This could also bring about civil unrest and cause political instability.

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



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of gun related deaths reported in Rivers State from January 2020 - December 2021. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

Gun violence is increasingly becoming prevalent in Rivers State, driven mainly by criminality, communal tensions and clashes between hoodlums and public security forces, as well as arms proliferation. Stakeholders should collaborate with the State government to address the underlying drivers. Law enforcement agencies should also work with local residents for early warning and intelligence gathering to curb the proliferation of arms and reinforce 'hot spot policing' and 'focused deterrence' of gun violence 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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