

Niger Delta Weekly: De-escalating Communal Tensions over Land Disputes in Cross River State

March 06-12, 2022

Description

This weekly update spotlights communal conflicts in the Niger Delta with a focus on inter-communal clashes over land disputes in Cross River State. According to data (see map below), inter-communal conflict over land ownership and boundary disputes caused over 700 fatalities in Cross River State between January 2018 and December 2021. Recently, communal tensions escalated following renewed inter-communal clashes over land disputes in parts of the State. In February 2022, for instance, a bishop and his son were reportedly killed and several houses destroyed during a communal clash over a lingering land dispute between Urugbam and Abanwan communities in Biase LGA. The communal clash was reportedly triggered by a longstanding conflict over the ownership of an oil palm plantation in the area. More recently, on March 07, 2022, two persons were reportedly killed, many others injured, several properties destroyed and major roads blocked during a series of clashes over an ongoing conflict over a land dispute between Alesi community in Ikom LGA and Ochon community in Obubra LGA, Cross River State.

Why it Matters

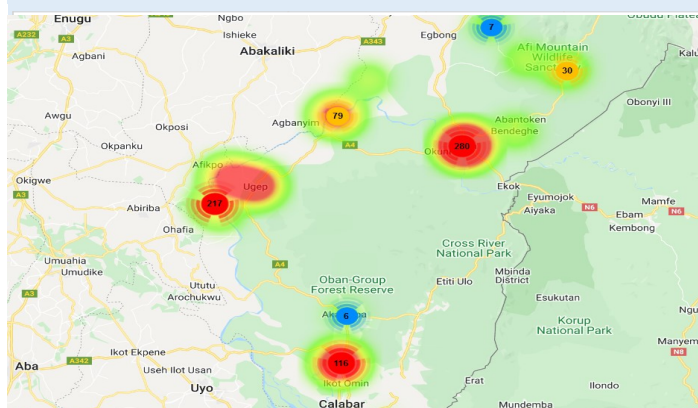
Recurrent clashes over land and boundary disputes has intensified intercommunal tensions in ways that could adversely impact the peace and security landscape at the local and state levels. Rising communal tensions could increase ethno-communal hostilities which could trigger a cycle of violence and reprisal killings in the State. This could have wide-ranging socio-economic and political repercussions.

Social: Communal clashes over land disputes could have devastating impact on communal peace and security. It could intensify ethno-communal aggression which could result in killings, plundering and internal displacement. Communal land disputes could also impact the local conflict dynamics by encouraging the creation of communal militias and the proliferation of arms, which could make the underlying drivers of communal conflict more complicated and intractable.

Economic: The recurrence of land disputes could be economically devastating, especially given that land is the mainstay of the local economy. It could discourage farming by limiting access to land. This could disrupt livelihoods and agro-allied businesses and cause food insecurity. Also, given the importance of agricultural livelihood to the wellbeing of rural communities, land disputes could deepen rural poverty by reducing agricultural productivity and household income.

Political: Recurrent communal conflict over land disputes could destabilize local politics and governance in the State, especially considering that land is not only an economic asset, but also the basis of communal identity, social legitimacy and political representation.

Fatalities Heat Map of Communal Conflicts over Land Disputes in Cross River State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported fatalities caused by clashes over land disputes in Cross River from January 2018 - December 2021. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

Communal conflict over land and boundary disputes in Cross River State remains recurrent with periodic lethal violence. Stakeholders should work with the State government to holistically address the underlying drivers of land conflicts, including efforts to redress historical grievances. Stakeholders should also work with the relevant government agencies to set up a conflict resolution committee and create a community-based early warning system to proactively identify and respond to potential triggers of communal conflicts.

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.



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