

Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing Targeted Violence Against Traditional Rulers in Imo State

December 12-18, 2021

Description

This edition of the weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on targeted violence against traditional rulers in Imo State. According to data (see map below), targeted violence caused over 300 deaths in Imo State between January 2018 and September 2021. Recent data shows an escalation of violence against traditional rulers in the State. In October 2021, for instance, gunmen reportedly killed two traditional rulers during a meeting in Nnenas town, Njaba LGA. In November, a traditional ruler who is also the father of a former deputy governor of the State was allegedly kidnapped by gunmen in Iho community, Ikeduru LGA. In December, a traditional leader was reportedly abducted and killed by gunmen in Atta kingdom, Njaba LGA. Separately, a traditional ruler was allegedly kidnapped by gunmen in Mbutu kingdom, Aboh Mbase LGA. More recently, on December 12, 2021, the traditional leaders of Amagu Ihube and Ihitte Ihube communities in Okigwe LGA were reportedly abducted by gunmen. A youth leader was also allegedly kidnapped on the same day in Umulolo town, Okigwe LGA

Why it Matters

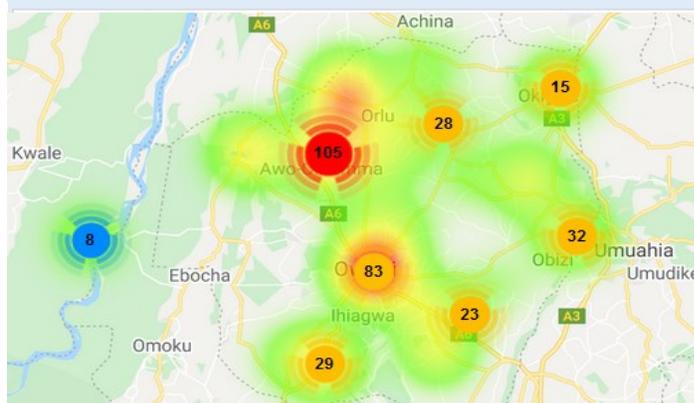
The current wave of targeted violence against community leaders has the potential to escalate in ways that could intensify communal tensions and increase insecurity in the State, especially within the context of ongoing separatist agitation in South-Eastern Nigeria. If the spate of targeted violence is not mitigated, it could weaken the traditional institutions and destabilize local governance in the State. This could cause far-reaching social, economic and political repercussions.

Social: Targeted violence against traditional rulers could have far-reaching devastating social impacts. It could erode public reverence for traditional rulers, weaken the power and authority of traditional institutions, and endanger the custom and cultural values of the people. Attacks on traditional rulers and other community leaders could also cause a breakdown of law and order, and intensify insecurity.

Economic: Recurrent attacks on traditional rulers could create an atmosphere of insecurity that could destabilize the local economy. The current spate of targeted violence could escalate into civil unrest and mob violence which could result in looting, arson and vandalism. This could disrupt business activities, cause loss of livelihoods, and consequently undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: The growing wave of targeted violence against traditional rulers could destabilize the traditional political structure in ways that could undermine local governance in the State. It could also weaken citizen's trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and properties. This could undermine the authority of the government.

Fatalities Heat Map of Targeted Violence in Imo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of targeted killings and homicidal violence in Imo State from January 2018 - September 2021. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The current spate of targeted violence against traditional rulers has the potential to escalate in ways that could negatively affect the sociopolitical and security landscape in the State. Stakeholders should work with the relevant security agencies to deploy appropriate countermeasures to mitigate the situation. Peace and security actors should also collaborate with the State government and relevant community leaders to identify and appropriately address the underlying drivers of the current wave of violence in the State.

Contact Us

Inquiries: Afeno Super Odomovo, Research Coordinator

Telephone: 08172401595

Email: afeno@pindfoundation.org

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.



FOUNDATION FOR PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES IN THE NIGER DELTA



FOUNDATION FOR NIGER DELTA PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE