

# Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting the Proliferation of Illicit Arms in Abia State

September 19-25, 2021

## Description

This special edition of the weekly update spotlights illegal arms production and trafficking in the Niger Delta with a focus on the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Abia State. According to data (see map below), more than 28% of reported incidents of illicit arms trafficking in the Niger Delta, between January 2018 and June 2021, occurred in Abia State. Recent data also shows an increase in the proliferation of illicit arms in the State. In May 2021, for instance, the police in Ebonyi State reportedly intercepted a gang of illegal arms dealers on their way to Umuahia, the Abia State capital, and recovered 753 live ammunition of General-Purpose Machine Gun. Also, in May, hoodlums reportedly attacked a police station and stole two AK-47 rifles in Ubakala community, Umuahia South LGA. Recently, on September 3, 2021, the police reportedly arrested two female illegal arms dealers and recovered several ammunition including 13 cartridges and two single-barrel guns at two different locations in Isuikwuato and Umuahia South LGAs. The suspects were reportedly intercepted while trafficking arms to criminals.

## Why it Matters

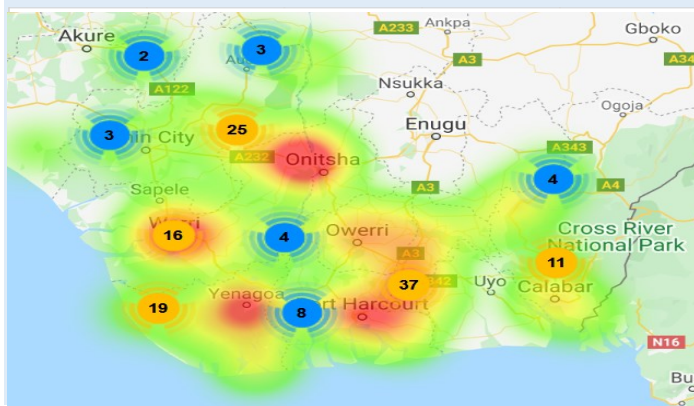
The trafficking and proliferation of illicit arms could adversely impact the peace and conflict dynamics in Abia State. The availability and illicit flows of arms could feed existing conflict risks and violence by fueling social strife and intensifying criminality. Widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) could also pose systemic threats that could impede economic growth and social stability, and facilitate violent actions that could cause political instability.

**Social:** The proliferation of SALWs could threaten social stability and communal peace by intensifying social strife and criminal violence, and facilitating actions that could cause human rights violations. The availability, accumulation and illicit flows of arms could strengthen criminals gangs, escalate communal conflicts, undermine law and order, and endanger the physical security and safety of residents.

**Economic:** SALWs proliferation could create an environment of insecurity that could constitute a major drawback to economic development. Availability of illicit arms could intensify criminal violence including armed robbery which could cause loss of businesses opportunities and neighborhood flight. Trading in illicit arms could also distort the local economy by facilitating activities that undermine legitimate businesses and reduce government's revenue from taxation.

**Political:** The widespread proliferation and trafficking of illicit arms could negatively affect politics and governance in the State by undermining law enforcement and public security. Illicit arms proliferation could also facilitate activities that could cause political instability.

## Incidents Heat Map of Illicit Arms Trafficking and Proliferation in the Niger Delta, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of arms trafficking and proliferation in the Niger Delta from January 2018 - June 2021. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org)

## Prognosis

The current wave of illegal production, trafficking and proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) has the potential to intensify insecurity in Abia State. Stakeholders should collaborate with the State government and law enforcement agencies to develop an integrated strategy to reduce arms proliferation, including a mop up of illicit arms in the State. Stakeholders should also work with the relevant national institutions to expedite action on the passage of the 'Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons Bill 2021' into law.

## 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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