# Niger Delta Weekly: Highlighting Homicidal Violence and Targeted Killings in Imo State

August 01-07, 2021

## Description

This edition of the weekly update highlights lethal violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on the rising wave of homicidal violence and targeted killings in Imo State. According to data (see map below), homicidal violence and targeted killings caused at least 200 fatalities in Imo State between June 2018 and June 2021. Current data shows the escalation of targeted killings and homicidal violence, which especially, but not exclusively involve beheading of individuals by 'Unknown Gunmen' in the State. In July 2021, for instance, armed men reportedly killed two men and displayed their severed heads at a market in Okporo community, Orlu LGA. Separately, in July, armed men reportedly attacked a police station with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in Njaba town, Njaba LGA. The Police reportedly killed two members of the gang during a gun battle. More recently, on August 01, 2021, armed men reportedly killed five residents, including a community leader who was allegedly beheaded in Okporo community, Orlu LGA. Several properties including a hotel, 10 vehicles and over 200 shops were reportedly burnt during the incident.

## Why it Matters

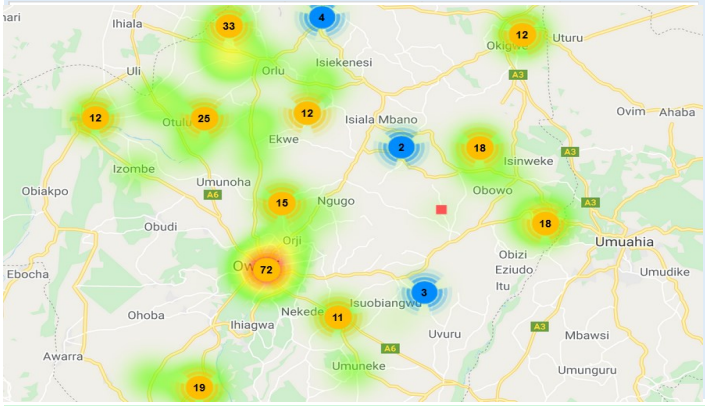
The current wave of targeted killings has the potential to escalate and intersect with organized criminality and communal tensions to worsen the security situation in the State, especially against the backdrop of the ongoing separatist agitation in South-Eastern Nigeria. This could cause a breakdown of law and order with far-reaching adverse impact on socio-political stability and economic development.

**Social:** Homicidal violence and targeted killings could bring about serious psychosocial and health consequences that can undermine communal stability and social wellbeing of residents. Recurrent incidents of targeted killings could cause a general feeling of insecurity and a 'siege mentality' that can result in impulsive criminal victimization and mob violence. The horrific nature of these killings - decapitation - can also cause post-traumatic stress disorder among residents.

**Economic:** The prevalence of targeted killings could create an atmosphere of heightened insecurity that could destabilize the local economy. The growing wave of killings could escalate into civil unrest and spontaneous criminal victimization that could result in looting, arson and vandalism. This could disrupt business activities and therefore cause loss of livelihood and business opportunities in the State.

**Political:** The rising wave of homicidal violence and targeted killings could weaken citizens' trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and property in the State, and therefore undermine the authority of the government. This could result in civil disorder which could cause serious political and security challenges for the State.

## Fatalities Heat Map of Homicidal Violence and Targeted Killings in Imo State, Nigeria




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

## Prognosis

The current wave of homicidal violence and targeted killings has the potential to escalate and worsen the security situation in Imo State. Stakeholders should collaborate with the relevant security agencies to deploy appropriate measures to de-escalate the current wave of violence in the State. Peace and security stakeholders should also work with the State government and relevant community leaders to identify and address the underlying drivers as well as the triggers of the current wave of targeted killings in the State.

## 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.