

Niger Delta Weekly: **Spotlighting the Rising Wave of Assassinations in Imo State**

May 30 - June 05, 2021

Description

This edition of the weekly update spotlights targeted killings in the Niger Delta with a focus on the growing wave of assassinations in Imo State. According to data (see map below), targeted killings and homicidal violence caused over 85 fatalities in Imo State between 2018 and 2020. Recent incidents indicate an increase in assassinations and targeted killings in the State. In February, 2021, for instance, a 64-year old former chairman of the Imo State chapter of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) was reportedly killed by unknown assailants in his office in Owerri, the state capital. In May, a Deputy Superintendent of Immigration (DSI) was reportedly waylaid and assassinated by gunmen along the Owerri-Port Harcourt expressway in Owerri North LGA. Separately, in May, a former political adviser to an ex-president of Nigeria was reportedly ambushed and killed by gunmen in Umueze Obiangwu community, Ngor Okpala LGA. Most recently, on June 01, 2021, a local youth leader of a major political party was reportedly killed by gunmen suspected to be assassins in his residence in Awo-Amamma community, Oru East LGA.

Why it Matters

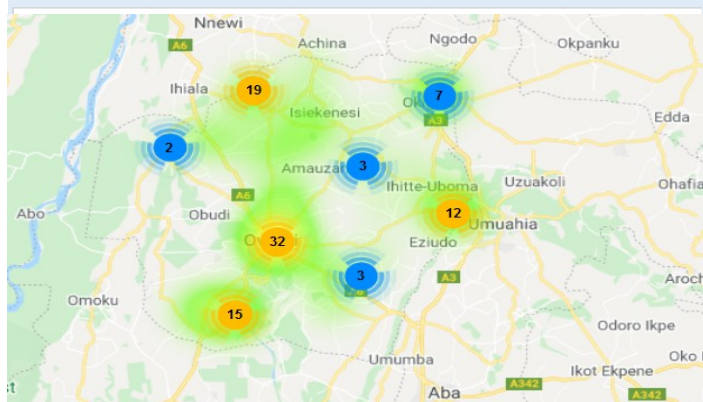
The growing wave of assassinations has the potential to escalate and intersect with ethno-regional tensions and criminality to worsen the security situation in the State, especially against the backdrop of the ongoing spate of targeted attacks on security agencies and public infrastructure in the South-East and South-South regions of the country. This could cause significant social disruptions with far-reaching detrimental impact on the local economy and politics in the State.

Social: Assassination and targeted killing could have significant psychosocial impact on residents. It could cause a general feeling of insecurity and a 'siege mentality' that could result in spontaneous criminal victimization. It could also exert pressure on law enforcement agencies to deploy repressive countermeasures that could cause human rights abuses and arbitrary killings. This could weaken police-community relations and intensify anti-police insurgency in the State.

Economic: Assassinations and targeted killings could create a hostile and insecure environment that is detrimental to economic development. This could increase expenditure on public and private security, force businesses to relocate, reduce government's revenue from taxation, and undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: The prevalence of assassination and targeted killing of civilians could undermine the political efficacy of the State and erode citizens' trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and properties. This could cause political unrest and embolden separatist groups to undermine the government and cause political instability.

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



Heat Map shows concentration of fatalities caused by targeted killings and homicidal violence in Imo State from January 2018-December 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The current wave of assassinations and targeted killings in Imo State has the potential to intensify 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 current wave of assassinations and targeted killings in the State. Stakeholders should also work with the State government to identify and address the underlying drivers of the rising wave of assassinations 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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