

Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting the Sale and Trafficking of Children in Cross River State

February 28–March 06, 2021

Description

This edition of the weekly update spotlights child trafficking in the Niger Delta with a focus on child labor trafficking and illegal breeding and selling of babies in Cross River State. According to data (see map below), over 150 child trafficking incidents were reported in the Niger Delta between 2015 and 2020. In Cross River State, recent incidents indicate an increase in child labor trafficking and the spread of 'Baby Factories' - homes where young women are kept and made to get pregnant to produce babies for sale in black markets. In January, 2021, for instance, operatives of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) reportedly arrested two child traffickers and rescued six children in Calabar, the state capital. The suspects were reportedly arrested while attempting to transport the children to Ogun State for child labor trafficking. Separately, in February, operatives of the Cross River State special security outfit code-named 'Operation Akpakwu' reportedly arrested two child traffickers and rescued 24 pregnant women and 11 children at a 'Baby Factory' in Anantigha, the headquarters of Calabar South LGA.

Why it Matters

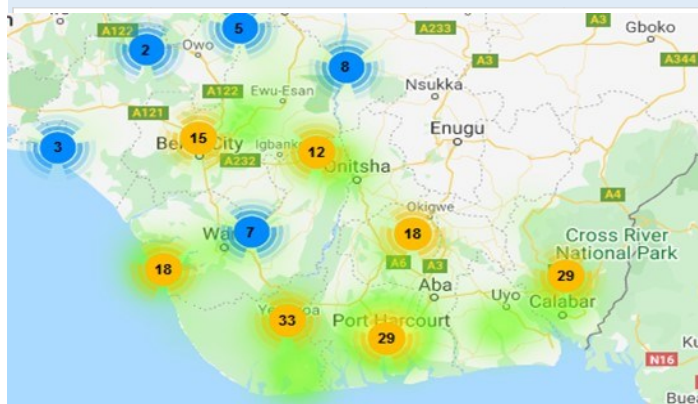
The proliferation of 'Baby Factories' could intensify the commodification of babies and commercialization of the reproductive abilities of young girls and women. This could grow into a thriving black market for human commodity that could further sustain human trafficking networks at the regional and national levels. This could have far-reaching socio-economic and political consequences for the State.

Social: Child trafficking could have serious psycho-social and health consequences for the victims and society. Trafficked children could be adopted illegally or killed for ritualistic purposes. Illegally adopted babies could generate paternity disputes that can result in broken homes. Young women in 'Baby Factories' could be exposed to sexually transmitted diseases, while the babies could face serious health challenges due to early separation from their biological mothers.

Economic: Child trafficking and baby harvesting could distort the economy because of their illegal and hidden nature. The breeding and trafficking of babies could divert human and financial resources from legitimate businesses into criminal networks. This could reduce government revenue from taxation. The selling of babies could also develop into a thriving black market for human commodity.

Political: Child trafficking is a human rights violation with significant political implications. It is a violation of several international conventions and national laws such as the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' and the national 'Child Rights Act'. The prevalence of illegal breeding and trafficking of babies could tarnish the State's image.

Incidents Heat Map of Child Trafficking in the Niger Delta of Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of child trafficking in the Niger Delta from January 2015 - December 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

The operation of 'Baby Factories' and child trafficking in Cross River has the potential to intensify because it is sustained by a thriving black market for new-born babies in Nigeria. While the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) is making efforts to tackle the situation nationwide, stakeholders should collaborate with the State government to develop a multi-faceted anti-child trafficking strategy that combines advocacy and awareness campaigns with appropriate punitive and remedial measures.

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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