Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting the Emerging Trend of Mass Kidnapping in Edo State

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Description

This weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on mass kidnapping for ransom in Edo State. According to data (see map below), more than 80 incidents of kidnapping were reported in Edo State between January 2021 and November 2022. Recent data shows a rise in kidnapping incidents including mass kidnapping of travelers and targeted abduction of government officials in the State. In December 2022, for instance, armed kidnappers reportedly invaded a farm camp (Ogoja Camp) and attempted to abduct the camp head in Ekiadolor town, Ovia North-East LGA. In January 2023, armed kidnappers reportedly attacked a sub-station of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) and abducted about 20 persons including passengers, the station manager and a ticket clerk in Ekehen community, Igueben LGA. Also, in January, gunmen reportedly abducted a former State House of Assembly member in Ubiaja community, Esan South-East LGA. More recently, on January 09, 2023, a female president of a customary court was reportedly abducted by gunmen in Ugoneki community, Uhunmwonde LGA.
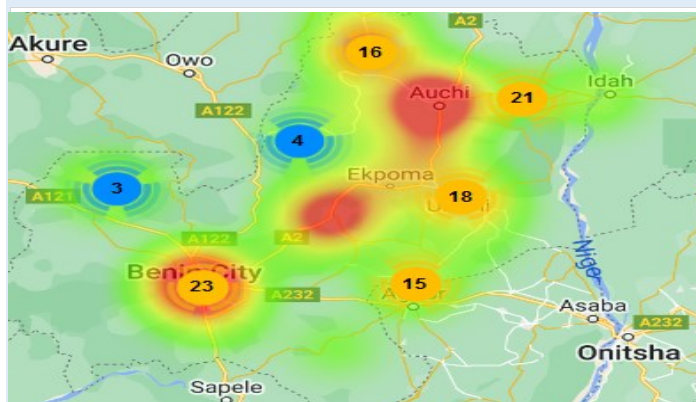
Why it Matters

Kidnapping is a major security challenge confronting individuals, communities, businesses and organizations in Edo State. The emerging trend and pattern of kidnapping in the State is alarming, especially the mass kidnapping of travelers and targeted abduction of government officials. If not mitigated, the situation could escalate in ways that could intensify communal tensions and insecurity which could cause serious social, economic and political disruptions in the State.

Social: The emerging trend and pattern of kidnaping could be socially disrupting especially in terms of the threat it poses to the lives of victims, the anguish it causes families, and the feelings of uncertainty it creates in society. This could force residents to adopt hostile countermeasures and self-help strategies including mob justice and vigilante violence. This could raise social tensions and intensify insecurity in ways that could undermine the health and wellbeing of residents

Economic: The growing prevalence of mass kidnapping could create a climate of fear and insecurity that could disrupt economic activities in the State. Kidnapping for ransom could impose huge financial burdens on families, businesses and the government, including the cost of ransom and additional expenses on private and public security. Payment of ransom could also deplete household savings and cause serious economic distortions that could subvert the local economy.

Political: The emerging trend of targeted abduction of government officials could adversely impact governance in the state. It can cause a feeling of insecurity among public officials which could reduce their productivity and thus disrupt governance and public service delivery.

Incidents Heat Map of Kidnapping for Ransom in Edo State, Nigeria

Heat Map shows geographical concentration of reported incidents of kidnapping in Edo State from January 2021 - November 2022. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

Kidnapping for ransom is a prevailing security threat in Edo State. The emerging trend of mass kidnapping and targeted abduction of public officials could intensify the situation. Stakeholders should collaborate with the State government and the relevant security agencies to intensify ongoing efforts to mitigate the situation. Peace and development actors should also team up with the relevant government agencies and community leaders to address the underlying drivers of the current trend of kidnapping in the State.

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