

Niger Delta Weekly: Targeted Attacks on Political Actors and Election Facilities in Imo State

January 15-21, 2023

Description

This weekly update highlights political violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on targeted attacks on political actors and election facilities in Imo State. According to data (see map below), over 100 incidents of political and election related violence were reported in Imo State between January 2020 and December 2022. Recent data shows an increase in politically motivated violence including attacks on offices and personnel of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the State. In December 2022, for instance, gunmen reportedly attacked an INEC office with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and killed a police officer in Owerri, the state capital. Also, in December, the State House of Assembly candidate of a major political party was reportedly killed by assassins at his residence in Umucheke community, Onuimo LGA. In January 2023, gunmen reportedly killed a ward chairman of a political party in Ibeme community, Isiala Mbano LGA. Recently on January 14, 2023, gunmen allegedly attacked a voter's card collection center, killed a police officer and injured several residents in Afor-Oru town, Ahiazu Mbaise LGA.

Why it Matters

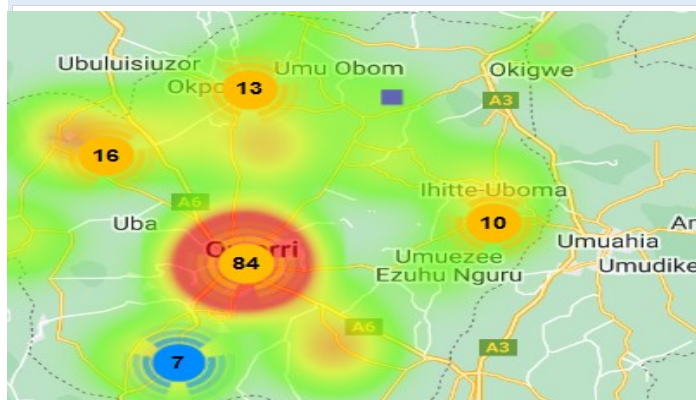
The current wave of violence including attacks on voters, political actors and election facilities could negatively impact the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in the State. This could impede preparations for the 2023 general elections and weaken the capacity of the electoral commission to organize credible elections in the State. This could undermine the credibility of the elections and set off series of violence during and after the elections. This could cause serious political, economic and social instability at the state and regional levels.

Social: Politically motivated violence could intensify the proliferation of arms, gang violence, communal tensions, and political polarization in the State. Destruction of public infrastructure and targeted killing of public officials, voters and key political actors could trigger civil unrest and a breakdown of law and order. This could bring about serious psychosocial, security, and health consequences for residents.

Economic: The current situation could cause uncertainty that could destabilize the local economy. It could provide avenues for hoodlums to loot and vandalize properties. Recurrent violence could scare off investors, disrupt livelihoods, and cause loss of revenue for businesses. This could impose huge economic costs on individuals, businesses and the government, and thus undermine the wellbeing of residents.

Political: The destruction of election facilities and attacks on political actors and voters could have long-term consequences for political socialization and civic participation in the State. It could cause voter apathy which could undermine the formal mechanisms of political competition, and thus subvert the electoral and political processes.

Incidents Heat Map of Political and Election Related Violence in Imo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of political and election related violence in Imo State from January 2020 - December 2022. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The current wave of violence has the potential to escalate in ways that could intensify targeted attacks and killings before and during the 2023 general elections and beyond. Peace actors including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) should work with INEC, the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), and the national and state governments to devise strategies to mitigate the current wave of violence. This should include security for voters and election officials, and measures to safeguard election facilities.

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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