

Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing Violence over Election Irregularities in the Niger Delta

February 26 - March 04, 2023

Description

This special edition of the weekly update spotlights rising tensions over alleged election irregularities in the Niger Delta. Historically, elections in the Niger Delta are high stake affairs, generally competitive and often characterized by violence. According to data (see map below), over 180 incidents of electoral violence including more than 100 related fatalities were reported in the region between January 2019 and December 2022. Political and communal tensions have seemingly intensified over alleged irregularities including reported incidents of intimidation and voter suppression during the February 25, 2023 presidential and National Assembly elections in the region. During the elections, for instance, two persons including a pregnant woman were reportedly killed in Emohua LGA, Rivers State. Separately, an electoral official was reportedly shot dead in Ukwuani LGA, Delta State. Also, hoodlums reportedly inflicted machete cuts on two voters and hijacked a voting machine in Onna LGA, Akwa Ibom State. Ominously, protests have been reported in Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, Edo and Imo states in the aftermath of the elections.

Why it Matters

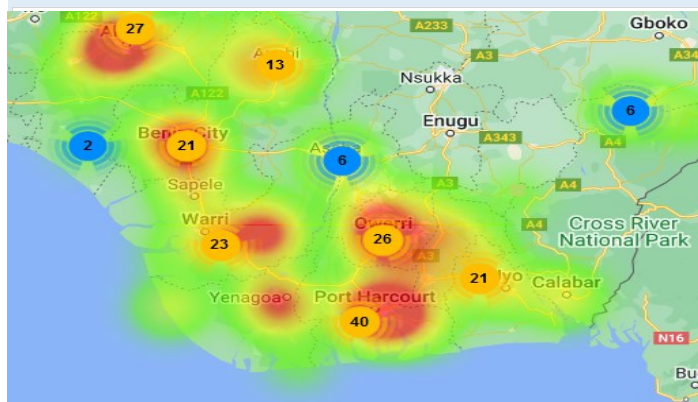
The level of violence that characterized the presidential and National Assembly elections and the ongoing protests over alleged election irregularities underscore an urgent need for measures to mitigate the risk of violence ahead of the March 11, 2023 governorship and State House of Assembly elections. As hinted by post-election protests, the current situation could escalate in ways that could adversely impact the peace and conflict dynamics in the Niger Delta. This could cause political instability and social and economic disruptions in the region.

Social: Protests over alleged election irregularities could negatively impact the regional dynamics of conflict and insecurity. Protests could be hijacked by hoodlums to perpetrate criminal violence including looting and indiscriminate destruction of properties. This could cause the deployment of security countermeasures that could result in human rights violations. This could cause civil unrest which could have devastating impact on communal stability and human security.

Economic: A tensed political situation could create a climate of insecurity that could disrupt the regional economy. It could provide an avenue for hoodlums to vandalize and loot properties. This could disrupt businesses, cause loss of livelihoods and weaken investors' confidence, and thus undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: Protests over election irregularities could evolve into mass demonstrations and backlash movements against the government. This could be exploited by dissidents and separatist groups to undermine the government and cause political instability in the region.

Incidents Heat Map of Election-related Violence in the Niger Delta of Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of election-related violence in the Niger Delta from January 2019 - December 2022. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

Recent incidents indicate rising tensions ahead of the governorship and State House of Assembly elections. The pattern of violence that marked the presidential and National Assembly elections could intensify during and after the next set of elections. Civil society organizations (CSOs) should intensify ongoing peace messaging and advocacy to defuse political tensions. Stakeholders should also work with the relevant government agencies including INEC and security agencies to mitigate election irregularities and violence.

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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