

Niger Delta Weekly: Mitigating the Risk of Electoral Violence in the Niger Delta

March 05-11, 2023

Description

This weekly update spotlights political and election violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on the risk of electoral violence during the upcoming governorship and State Assembly elections in the region. According to data (see map below), over 180 incidents of election-related violence were reported in the Niger Delta between January 2019 and December 2022. During the February 25, 2023 presidential and National Assembly elections, over 50 incidents of electoral violence including eight fatalities were reported in the Niger Delta. In Abia State, for instance, two persons were reportedly killed in Arochuku LGA. In Edo State, political thugs allegedly killed two voters at their polling units in Ikpoba Okha LGA. In Delta, an electoral officer was reportedly shot dead in Ukwuani LGA. In Ondo, a resident was reportedly shot dead by a security personnel at a collation center in Idanre LGA. In Rivers State, two persons including a pregnant woman were reportedly killed at a polling unit in Emohua LGA. In the aftermath of the elections, several incidents of violence and threat of violence including intimidation of voters have been reported.

Why it Matters

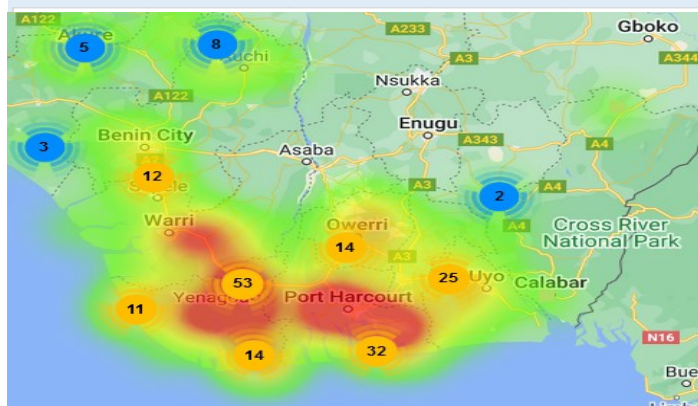
The political situation in the Niger Delta is highly charged ahead of the rescheduled governorship and State Assembly elections. Several incidents of protest, violence, threat of violence and inciting statements by political actors have been reported. If not mitigated, the situation could intensify and cause violence and irregularities during the rescheduled elections, especially against the backdrop of uncertainties caused by the sudden postponement of the elections. This could cause political instability and socio-economic disruptions.

Social: Electoral violence could negatively impact the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in the region by intensifying social tensions. This could increase criminality and communal tensions as individuals and groups employed to cause election violence could transform into militias and criminal gangs that could endanger public security. Also, politically motivated hate speeches and inciting statements could spur polarization with far-reaching consequences for social cohesion.

Economic: Electoral violence could result in violent protests which could provide avenues for hoodlums to vandalize and loot properties. It could cause public disturbance which could disrupt the economy. This could impose huge economic costs on individuals, businesses and the government, and thus undercut the wellbeing of residents.

Political: Election irregularities and violence could erode public trust in the electoral and political process, and cause voter apathy. Election violence could also cause disputes over election results which could trigger violent protests, mass demonstrations and political instability.

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

The current political situation in the Niger Delta could intensify in ways that could cause lethal violence during the rescheduled governorship and State Assembly elections. Stakeholders should devise measures to mitigate the situation. Peace actors should intensify ongoing advocacy and peace messaging to defuse political tensions. Civil society organizations (CSOs) should also work with the relevant government agencies including INEC and security agencies, as well as party leaders 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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