Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing and Mitigating Electoral Violence in Bayelsa and Imo State

November 05-11, 2023

Description

This special edition of the weekly update spotlights the strategic application of Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) systems in monitoring and mitigating electoral violence in the Niger Delta, with a focus on the November 11, 2023 off-cycle governorship elections in Bayelsa and Imo States. Historically, elections in the Niger Delta are high stake affairs, highly competitive and often characterized by violence. According to data (see map below), over 350 incidents of election violence and more than 150 fatalities were reported in the region between September 2019 and September 2023. Election irregularities and clashes between supporters of political parties could be prevented or mitigated through the tactical deployment of community-based, multistakeholder EWER systems for monitoring and reporting. PIND's integrated SMS EWER platform has proven to be very effective in collecting data on potential incidents and indicators of electoral violence from people on the ground which are then analyzed and transmitted to specialized response actors for targeted interventions to prevent and mitigate violence during elections.
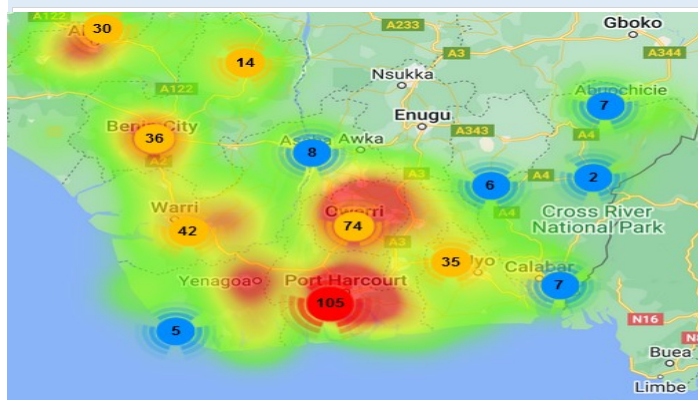
Why it Matters

The situation in Bayelsa and Imo states is extremely tense. Several incidents of violence, threat of violence, assault, protests and inciting statements by key actors have been reported. The situation could escalate and cause widespread political and criminal violence during the elections and beyond. The deployment of community-based, multistakeholder EWER systems to monitor, report and proactively respond to potential incidents of electoral violence could help defuse tensions by directing grievances to dedicated agencies for resolution.

Social: Political tensions and electoral violence could negatively affect the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in Bayelsa and Imo States. The situation could cause social polarization and a breakdown of law and order which could intensify criminality and insecurity. A community-based EWER system could help local response actors and civil society organizations to monitor the situation and proactively respond to potential incidents and indicators of violence before they escalate.

Economic: Electoral violence could trigger violent protests and mass demonstrations that could disrupt the local economy. Election monitoring and incidents reporting using community-based EWER systems could provide individuals, businesses, and the government with data and information to forecast the potential for violence, identify likely hotspots, and respond proactively to prevent or minimize damage.

Political: Election irregularities and violence could destabilize the electoral process and cause political instability. Election monitoring and incidents reporting could help stakeholders to transmit information to the relevant agencies and local actors for timely

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 September 2019 - September 2023. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

Electoral violence is a major driver of instability in the Niger Delta. Peace actors should deploy existing EWER infrastructure to monitor the off-cycle elections in Bayelsa and Imo States, and proactively respond to all potential incidents and indicators of violence. This should include measures to address misinformation, fake news, and election irregularities. Civil society organizations should work with the relevant government agencies to set up election situation rooms to improve early response to potential incidents of violence.

Contact Us

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What do you think about the report? - We value your feedback

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.