

Niger Delta Weekly: Deescalating Rising Criminal Violence and Targeted Killings in Imo State

December 03-09, 2023

Description

This weekly update spotlights organized crime in the Niger Delta with a focus on criminal violence and targeted killings in Imo State. Organized criminal violence including targeted killing of community leaders and government security personnel is a major driver of conflict and insecurity in the State. According to data (see map below), criminal violence caused over 900 fatalities in Imo State between January 2021 and September 2023. Recent data indicates a resurgence of criminal violence in the State. In September 2023, for instance, gunmen allegedly ambushed and killed eight government security personnel including soldiers and policemen in Umualumaku community, Ehime Mbano LGA. In October, the deputy registrar of a polytechnic was reportedly killed by gunmen suspected to be separatist militias in Ezeala/Ezike community, Ehime Mbano LGA. In November, a traditional ruler was allegedly abducted and killed by gunmen in Mbutu community, Aboh Mbaise LGA. Also, in November, two police officers and a civilian were reportedly killed by gunmen suspected to be separatist militias at Ahiara Junction in Ahiazu Mbaise LGA.

Why it Matters

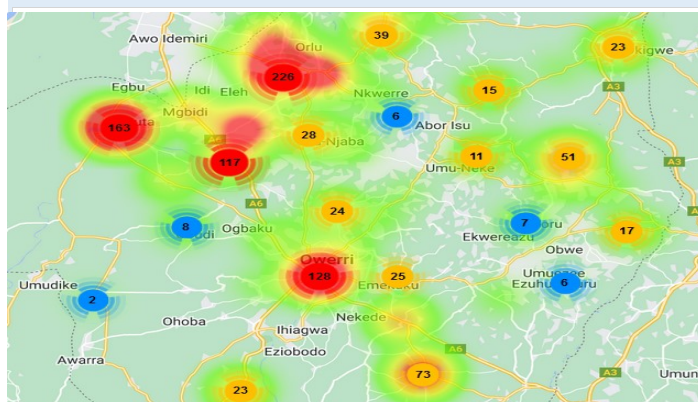
The continuing prevalence of organized criminal violence and killings could negatively impact the dynamics of conflict risks and insecurity in the State, especially against the backdrop of ongoing separatist agitation and political tensions in the aftermath of the November 2023 governorship election. If the situation is not appropriately deescalated, it could intensify in a way that could bring about serious socio-economic, political and security consequences in the State.

Social: The prevalence of criminal violence and killings could bring about serious psychosocial and security consequences for residents. It could engender a general feeling of uncertainty that could force residents to adopt violent coping mechanisms and self-help strategies including the creation of vigilantes and militias, and the deployment of security strategies that could be seen by residents as human rights violations. This could undermine the social wellbeing of residents.

Economic: Organized criminal violence including targeted killing of government security personnel and community leaders could create a climate of insecurity that could destabilize the local economy. The situation could disrupt businesses, cause loss of livelihoods, undercut household income, and restrict residents' access to vital resources for survival. This could undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: The recent spate of organized criminal violence including targeted killing is a serious threat to law and order, and public safety. It could weaken citizens' trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and property. If not deescalated, the situation could cause unrest which could disrupt politics and governance in the State.

Fatalities Heat Map of Criminal Violence and Targeted Killings in Imo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of fatalities caused by criminal violence and targeted killings in Imo State from January 2021 - September 2023. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The prevalence of organized criminal violence could dangerously alter the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in a way that could negatively affect the socio-economic and political situation in the State. Stakeholders should collaborate with the security agencies to devise strategies to deescalate the situation. Stakeholders should also work with other relevant government agencies to develop appropriate institutional, political and developmental strategies to tackle the underlying drivers of organized criminality in the State.

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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