Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting the Threat of Kidnappings in Cross River

April 26-May 2, 2020

Description

Kidnapping for ransom is a prevailing human security threat in Cross River state. Recent trends indicate an increase in the frequency of kidnappings for ransom in the state, particularly in Calabar, the state capital. According to data (see map below), over 30 incidents of kidnappings for ransom were reported in Cross River state between March 2015 and March 2020. There has been an upsurge in the frequency and intensity of incidents of kidnapping in the state since January 2020. In February 2020, for example, over six residents, including a lecturer, were reportedly abducted for ransom in different parts of the state. In March 2020, members of the Cross River state chapter of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) reportedly embarked on a strike over the abduction of the wife of one of their colleagues in the state. On April 26, 2020, for instance, six residents including a businessman and a former female governorship aspirant in the state were reportedly abducted at different locations in the state.
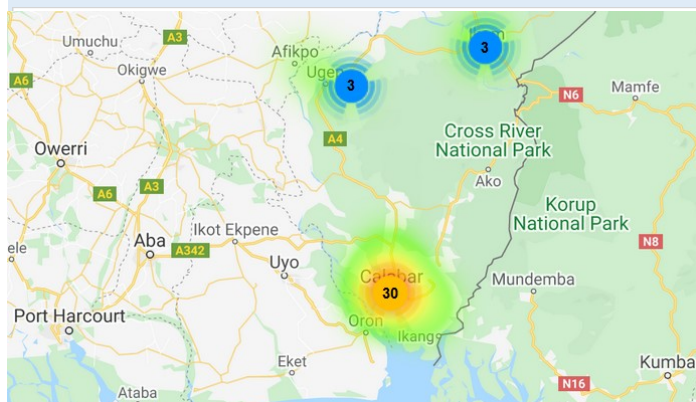
Why it Matters

Kidnapping for ransom is currently one of the greatest security risk confronting individuals, families, organizations and businesses in Cross River state. The situation coukd become more intense and violent, especially in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown, with serious socio-economic and political repercussions for the state.

Social: The impacts of kidnapping for ransom are often socially devastating and far-reaching. The agony is not only in the cost of the ransom, but also the threat it poses to one's life, the trauma it causes family members and the disruptions it cause in society. The fear of being kidnapped creates anxiety and high level of mistrust among residents, and create a general feeling of insecurity among residents.

Economic: Increase in cases of kidnapping for ransom create an atmosphere of insecurity which could undermine economic development. Kidnapping can increase the cost of doing business which could be the cost of paying for extra security or ransoms. When kidnapping is prevalent, residents could become worried in the way they conduct their businesses. This can force businesses to relocate, scare off tourists, and reduce the state government's revenue from taxation.

Political: One of the implications of the prevalence of kidnapping for ransom in the state is that residents could lose confidence in the capacity of public security agencies to provide public safety. This could induce residents to establish vigilante groups as a coping mechanism. This could result in the prevalence of vigilante justice and mob violence and can cause political instability in the state.

Incidents Heat Map of Kidnapping for Ransom in Cross River State, Nigeria

Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of kidnapping for ransom in Cross River state, from March 2015 - March 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Recent trends indicate an upsurge in kidnappings for ransom in the state. The situation could worsen, especially in the context of the current COVID-19 crisis, unless proactive actions are taken by stakeholders. While there are ongoing efforts by the national security agencies and the state government to combat criminality, the government could also collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure that the proposed regional security outfit by the South-South governors is structured to effectively tackle the threat of kidnapping.

Contact Us

Inquiries: Afeno Super Odomovo**,** Research Coordinator

Telephone: 08172401595

Email: afeno@pindfoundation.org

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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.