

Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls in Imo

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Description

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is increasingly becoming prevalent in Imo state. Recent trends indicate an increase in incidents of violence affecting women and girls in the state, especially domestic violence, rape, girl child abuse, child trafficking, abduction and targeted killing of women and girls for ritualistic purposes. According to data (see map below), over 90 incidents of violence affecting women and girls were reported in Imo state between March 2016 and March 2020. In January 2020, for instance, a 62-year old woman was reportedly killed by her 42-year old son in Umuobom community, Ideato South LGA. In February 2020, a 2-year old girl was reportedly defiled by a man, a director in a government agency, in his office in Owerri, the state capital. More recently, in April 2020, a 15-year old girl was reported to have been serially raped by her 44-year old father and three of his friends in Orji community, Owerri North LGA. According to the victim, her father and his friends have been raping her for two years, since she was 13 years old. He usually invites his friends to his house to rape his teenage daughter.

Why it Matters

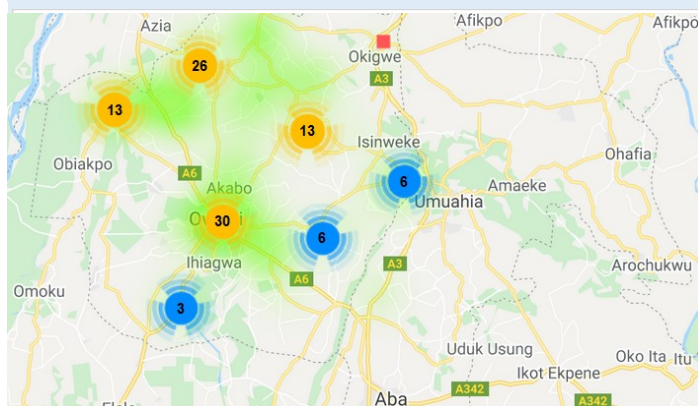
Emerging data indicates an increase in the frequency of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Imo state, especially domestic violence including girl child abuse and sexual violence. The prevailing trend of VAWG in the state is alarming, especially in the context of the current COVID-19 crisis. The situation could worsen with far-reaching socio-economic and political repercussions for the state.

Social: Victims of VAWG often suffer lifelong emotional and psychological trauma as well as health challenges. Abused children can grow up to be solitary, insecure and distrustful. VAWG is not only devastating for victims and their families, it also has damaging impacts on society. When cases of VAWG are condoned, it can embolden perpetrators to commit more violence. This can engender a feeling of injustice and insecurity on the part of victims and society in general.

Economic: VAWG imposes economic burdens on victims, households, private and public sectors, and the wider society. These could be the costs of seeking healthcare services or legal expenses. Victims also experience physical and psychological consequences that can affect their productivity in their homes, community and workplace. This can cause loss of jobs and undercut household income.

Political: VAWG is a human rights violation with serious political implications. It can impede the participation of women in politics including elections. This can undermine efforts to promote gender equality and empowerment of women and girls which are prerequisites for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Incidents Heat Map of Violence Affecting Women and Girls in Imo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of Violence Affecting Women and Girls in Imo state, from March 2016 - March 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

The emerging VAWG situation in Imo state could worsen, especially in the context of the current COVID-19 crisis, unless appropriate actions are taken by stakeholders. Stakeholders should collaborate with the government to strengthen existing measures to address the societal and structural drivers, and to tackle the different forms and manifestations of VAWG in the state. Stakeholders should also engage with media outfits to raise awareness and advocacy, and to publicize cases of VAWG to counter the culture of impunity.

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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