

Niger Delta Weekly: Highlighting Sexual Violence Against Children in Delta State

June 07-13, 2020

Description

This weekly update highlights the prevailing problem of sexual violence in the Niger Delta with special emphasis on sexual violation of children in Delta State. Data indicates an increase in incidents of sexual violence in the state, especially child sexual abuse. According to data (see map below), over 40 incidents of sexual violence were reported in Delta State between January 2016 and April 2020. Since the start of the COVID-19 lockdown in late March 2020, there has been an upsurge in incidents of sexual violence in the state. In April 2020, for instance, a 16-year old girl was reportedly abducted and raped by two men in Asaba, Oshimili South LGA. In May, a teenage girl was reportedly raped and shot dead by robbers at her residence in Bomadi town. In a recent incident, on June 02, 2020, a 12-year old girl was reportedly drugged and raped by a 38-year old man in Sapele town. As recent trends indicate, more girls are being exposed to the risk of sexual abuses and other forms of violence as a result of prolonged school closures, confinement at home and other restrictive measures associated with the COVID-19 lockdown.

Why it Matters

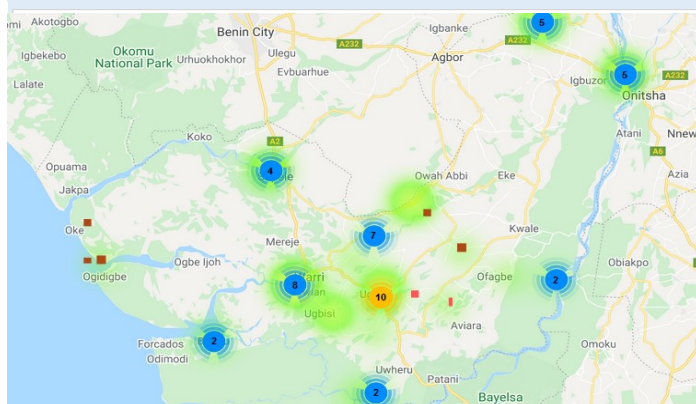
Emerging trends indicate a significant increase in incidents of child sexual abuse since the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown in the state. Pre-existing vulnerabilities and risks of sexual violence could be exacerbated as the coronavirus pandemic continues. This could cause far-reaching social, economic and political ramifications for the state.

Social: Child sexual abuse could have wide-ranging psycho-social and health impacts on victims and their families. It can cause injuries, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems including unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF). Sexually abused children could also grow up to be vulnerable, distrustful and frustrated. When cases of child sexual abuse are condoned, it can embolden perpetrators to commit more violations.

Economic: Child sexual abuse often creates huge economic burden for victims, families, government and the wider society. This could be the cost of healthcare and child welfare, or the cost of seeking criminal justice. Also, indirectly, child sexual abuse can impede the education of victims which can impact employment and a subsequent loss of earnings in adulthood. In extreme cases, it can cause death and consequently the loss of all the investment in a child's development.

Political: Child abuse is a human rights violation with serious political ramifications. The rise in cases of child sexual abuse could be seen as indicative of government failure to prioritize prevention of violence against children, and this could undermine any progress that has been made in safeguarding the rights of girls and women in the state.

Incidents Heat Map of Sexual Violence Against Children in Delta State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of sexual violence against children in Delta State from January 2016 - April 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Incidents of child sexual abuse have increased in Delta State since the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown. Prolonged confinement at home or school closures could exacerbate the situation unless these measures are implemented in a way that ensures children are duly protected. Stakeholders should work with the government and media outfits to raise awareness on sexual violence against children, and educate the public on appropriate preventive measures including parenting and child protection tips during lockdowns.

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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