

Niger Delta Weekly: Highlighting Child Trafficking in Rivers State

July 05-11, 2020

Description

This weekly update highlights child trafficking in the Niger Delta with a focus on illegal breeding and selling of babies in Rivers State. According to data (see map below), over 25 child trafficking incidents were reported in Rivers State between January 2015 and May 2020. Recent incidents in the State indicate increasing 'Commodification of Babies' - breeding of babies for sale - and expansion of 'Baby Factories' - illegal maternity homes or orphanages - where young women and girls are kept and made to get pregnant to produce babies for sale, mainly for illegal adoption by couples and for ritualistic purposes. In February 2020, for instance, the police reportedly rescued 24 babies and 4 pregnant teenage girls from an illegal orphanage in Woji, Obio/Akpor LGA. Recently, on July 3, 2020, the police reportedly arrested 5 women while they were negotiating the sale of a baby in Rumuokuta, Obio/Akpor LGA. Separately, on July 4, 2020, the police reportedly rescued 3 pregnant teenagers, 3 babies and their mothers, and arrested a couple who bought 2 babies from an illegal maternity home in Rumuolumeni, Obio/Akpor LGA.

Why it Matters

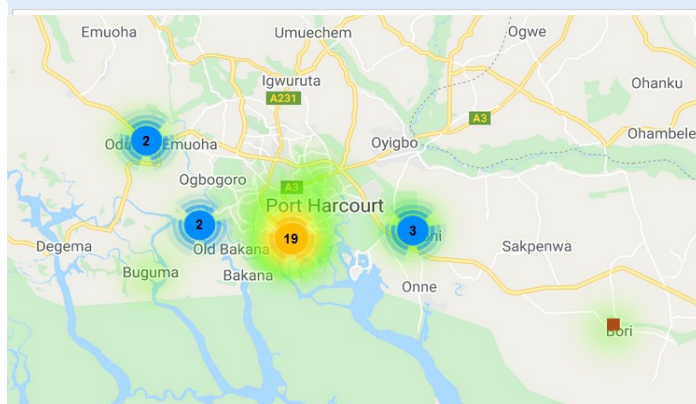
Recent data indicates an increase in child trafficking in Rivers State. The current trend of child trafficking in the State is disturbing, especially the illegal breeding and selling of babies by child trafficking syndicates. This could have wide-ranging social, economic and political implications for the State.

Social: Child trafficking could have far-reaching impact on victims and society. It devalues human dignity by treating babies as commodities. Trafficked babies could be denied birth registration, illegally adopted or killed for ritualistic purposes. Proliferation of 'Baby Factories' could encourage unplanned pregnancies and kidnapping of pregnant women and babies for financial benefits. Children born in 'Baby Factories' could also face serious health challenges as a result of induced labor and early separation from their biological mothers.

Economic: As a result of its illegal and hidden nature, operators of 'baby factories' and child traffickers could distort the economy by diverting human and financial resources from legitimate businesses into criminal networks. Illicit financial benefits from child trafficking could be used to fund other criminal activities. This could undermine legitimate businesses and reduce government revenue from taxation.

Political: Child trafficking is a human rights violation with significant political implications. It violates several international conventions and national laws such as the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' and the national 'Child Rights Act'. Thus, rising cases of child trafficking could damage the image of the State, nationally and internationally.

Incidents Heat Map of Child Trafficking in Rivers State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of sale and trafficking of children in Rivers State from January 2015 - May 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Illegal breeding and selling of babies are emerging dynamics in child trafficking in the State. The situation could degenerate unless appropriate preventive measures are taken, especially within the context of poverty and growing demand for babies for illegal adoption and ritualistic purposes. Stakeholders should collaborate with the relevant government agencies to formulate policies to regulate orphanages and maternity homes, and develop measures to mitigate illegal adoptions and commodification of babies.

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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