

Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting Communal Conflict in Cross River State

July 19-25, 2020

Description

This weekly update spotlights communal conflict in the Niger Delta with a focus on inter-communal clashes over land disputes in Cross River State. According to data (see map below), communal clashes over land disputes caused over 800 fatalities in Cross River State between January 2016 and June 2020. Recent incidents indicate a resurgence of communal clashes over land ownership and boundary disputes between communities in Cross River and neighboring Abia, Akwa Ibom and Ebonyi States. In February 2020, for example, 2 persons were reportedly killed and 10 others declared missing during a clash over a land dispute between Utama community in Biase LGA, Cross River State and Isu community in Arochuku LGA, Abia State. In May 2020, 15 persons were reportedly killed and several houses destroyed during clashes between Afono and Ibini communities in Biase LGA. Recently, on June 30, 2020, 2 persons were reportedly killed and 5 others abducted during a clash over a boundary dispute between Erei community in Biase LGA, Cross River State and Ekoli Edda community in Afikpo South LGA, Ebonyi State.

Why it Matters

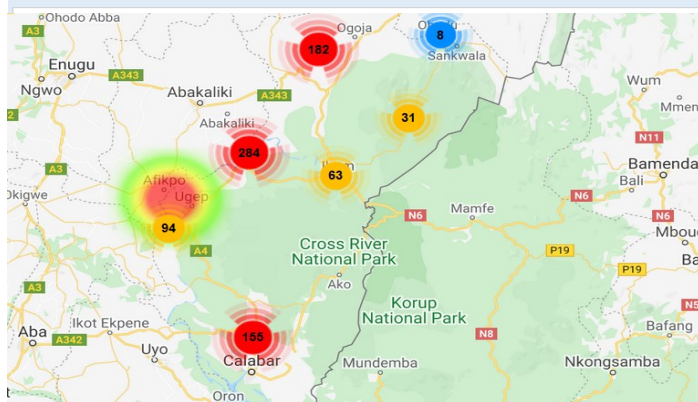
The location of Cross River State - bordering Abia, Akwa Ibom, Ebonyi and Benue States - makes it susceptible to land and boundary disputes, which tends to be recurrent with intermittent clashes and killings. Recent data indicates a resurgence of communal clashes over land disputes. The emerging situation could impact conflict dynamics in the State with serious socio-economic and political repercussions.

Social: Communal conflict over land disputes could cause social disruptions including displacement of residents. Prolonged land disputes could hinder inter-group relations, deepen ethnic and communal hostilities, encourage arms proliferation, creation of ethnic militias, and promote a culture of violence. This could cause general insecurity and make the underlying drivers of the conflict more intractable.

Economic: The impact of land disputes could be economically devastating, as land is the mainstay of the local economy. Unresolved land dispute can impede investment and economic development, as it can create uncertainty about who has the right to lease or sell property. Communal land conflict could also cause destruction of livelihoods, loss of lives and property, and disruption of trading and agricultural activities. This could reduce agricultural productivity, cause food insecurity, undercut household income and deepen rural poverty.

Political: Rising communal conflicts could create deep-rooted animosities that could be exploited by politicians to cause ethno-political conflict as a means of mobilizing for political support during elections. This could negatively impact politics and governance in the State.

Fatalities Heat Map of Clashes over Land and Boundary Disputes in Cross River State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported fatalities caused by clashes over land disputes in Cross River State from January 2016 - June 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Communal conflict over land disputes in Cross River State remains frequent with intermittent clashes and killings, driven by interrelated socio-economic and political factors. Stakeholders should work with the State government to adopt a systemic approach that holistically addresses the underlying drivers of the conflict. Stakeholders should also collaborate with the State government to create a community-based conflict early warning system to proactively identify and respond to potential triggers of communal conflict in the State.

Contact Us

Inquiries: Afeno Super Odomovo, Research Coordinator

Telephone: 08172401595

Email: afeno@pindfoundation.org

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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