

Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting Cult and Gang Related Killings in Delta State

August 09-15, 2020

Description

This weekly update spotlights gang violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on cult and gang related killings in Delta State. According to data (see map below), over 140 cult and gang related fatalities were reported in Delta State between January 2016 and June 2020. Recent reports indicate an increase in cult and gang related killings in the State. In February 2020, for instance, 4 persons were reportedly killed and 8 others shot during a clash between members of Aiye and Arrow Baga cult gangs over mobilization of support for candidates of two major political parties in Amekpa and Ekredjebor communities, Ughelli North LGA. In March, a gang of cultists reportedly killed 3 persons and injured several others at a birthday party in Agbarho town, Ughelli North LGA. In July, 2 persons were reportedly killed and several residents injured during reprisal attacks by rival cult gangs in Mosogar town, Ethiope West LGA. Recently, on August 09, 2020, 2 persons were reportedly killed and 2 others fatally injured during a clash between members of two rival cult gangs at a birthday party in a hotel in Orhuwhorun town, Udu LGA.

Why it Matters

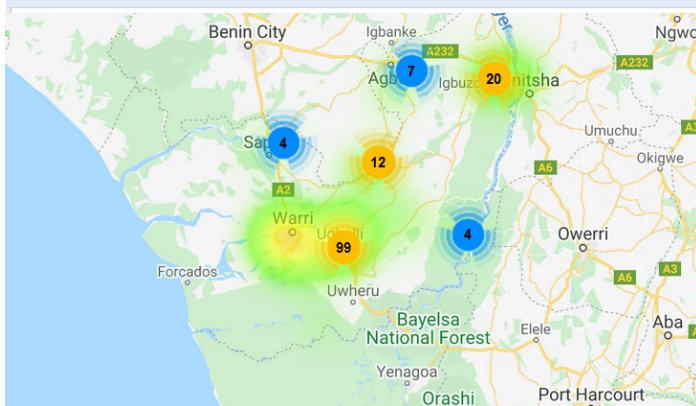
Rising incidents of cult and gang related killings could trigger a sequence of armed clashes and reprisal killings by rival cult gangs. This could further degenerate into battles for supremacy and territorial control among the numerous cult gangs in the State. Recurrent incidents of cult clashes could undermine peace and security, with serious social, economic and political consequences for the State.

Social: Increasing incidents of cult related killings could elevate arms proliferation and embolden cult gangs to recruit more youths to help defend their territory. This could promote a culture of violence which could threaten communal peace, especially considering that cult gangs are increasingly permeating communities and the streets. In addition, since cult gangs and criminal groups overlap, rising cases of cult related killings could intensify criminality in the State.

Economic: Cult clashes and associated violence could create an atmosphere of insecurity that could be hostile to economic activities. Some of the recent cult clashes in the State occurred in business premises including hotels, bars and restaurants. This could result in low patronage for businesses in areas where cult clashes are prevalent. This could cause businesses to shutdown or relocate, and therefore bring about loss of livelihoods and economic opportunities.

Political: Cult violence could present additional security challenges for the State. Recurrent cult clashes could drive up government spending on public security. Cult gangs could also cause political instability as they could be deployed to cause violence during elections.

Fatalities Heat Map of Cult and Gang Related Violence in Delta State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported cult and gang related fatalities in Delta State from January 2016 - June 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Cult and gang related Killings are increasingly becoming frequent in Delta State. Peace and development actors should collaborate with the State government to identify and address the underlying drivers of cult violence. Stakeholders should also coordinate with community leaders, relevant government agencies and media outfits to carry out peace education and raise awareness on the negative consequences of cult activities, encourage renouncement of membership, and prevent recruitment into cult gangs.

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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