Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting Kidnapping for Ransom in Abia State

September 06-12, 2020

Description

This weekly update spotlights kidnapping in the Niger Delta with a focus on kidnapping for ransom in Abia State. According to data (see map below), over 50 incidents of kidnapping, including more than 25 related fatalities, were reported in Abia State between January 2016 and July 2020. Recent data indicates a rise in kidnapping incidents in the State. In May 2020, for instance, kidnappers reportedly abducted a radio journalist in Umuahia, the state capital, and demanded a 20 million naira ransom. In July, the 75-year old father of a commissioner in the State was reportedly abducted by gunmen at his residence in Ugwuati community, Ukwa West LGA. Separately, in July, a former customary court judge was reportedly abducted by gunmen along Azumini-Obehie road in Okeikpe community, Ukwa West LGA. Also, in July, a businessman was reportedly kidnapped at Ariaria International Market, Aba North LGA. In August, a commercial bus driver was reportedly kidnapped by gunmen along the Enugu-Port Harcourt expressway in Uzuako community, Ukwa West LGA. The kidnappers demanded a 10 million naira ransom.
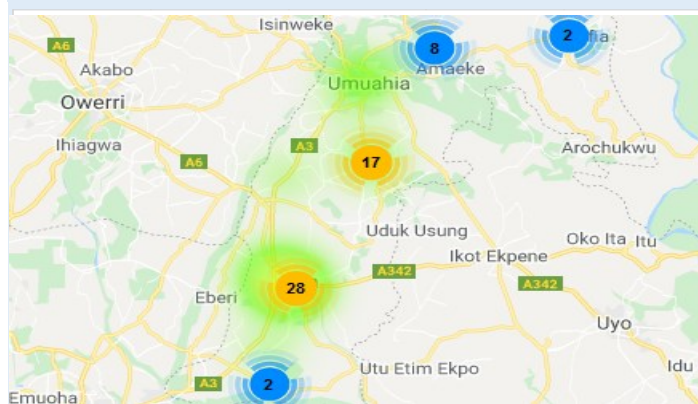
Why it Matters

Abia State has seen a spike in kidnap incidents in the past six months, including targeted abduction of businesspersons and family members of politically-exposed persons. Rising cases of kidnapping for ransom could present serious security risk to individuals and businesses, with worrying socio-economic and political consequences for the State.

Social: Rising incidents of kidnapping could cause anxiety, distrust and a general feeling of insecurity among residents. Kidnapping for ransom could worsen insecurity in the State, as the proceeds could be used to fund other criminal activities such as robbery, drug and human trafficking. Increased kidnapping incidents could disrupt social activities with far-reaching consequences for communal stability.

Economic: Kidnapping for ransom could create an atmosphere of heightened insecurity that could be detrimental to economic development. Increased kidnapping incidents could undermine legitimate business activities and impose heavy financial burdens on individuals, families and businesses. Payment of ransoms could cause significant economic distortions, increase the cost of doing business, scare off investors, and cause serious economic hardship for families.

Political: The prevalence of kidnapping for ransom could cause public dissatisfaction with government efforts to provide security for residents. This could result in the proliferation of vigilante groups which could increase mob violence and human rights violations. Kidnapping of government officials and their family members could adversely impact governance and trigger political instability in the State.

Incidents Heat Map of Kidnapping for Ransom in Abia State, Nigeria

Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of kidnapping for ransom in Abia State from January 2016 - July 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Kidnapping for ransom in Abia State remains frequent and unpredictable. Kidnapping could intensify in the State, especially in the context of the current economic situation, and as the Christmas season approaches. Stakeholders should collaborate with the relevant government agencies to identify and tackle the underlying drivers of kidnappings. Stakeholders should also devise appropriate remedial and punitive measures, and draw up an effective strategy to make kidnapping more risky and less profitable for perpetrators.

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.