

Niger Delta Weekly: De-escalating Communal Tensions over Land Dispute in Delta State

October 18-24, 2020

Description

This weekly update spotlights communal conflict in the Niger Delta with a focus on inter-communal clashes over land disputes in Delta State. According to data (see map below), inter-communal conflict over land ownership and boundary disputes caused over 300 fatalities in Delta State between January 2016 and August 2020. Recently, communal tensions escalated following a resurgence of communal clashes over land disputes in parts of the State. In February 2020, for instance, 3 residents were reportedly killed during a clash over a land dispute between Obinomba and Umusume communities in Ukwuani LGA. In March, 2 residents were reportedly killed and properties destroyed during a clash over a land dispute between Ukpiovwi and Oghior communities in Udu LGA. More recently, on October 16, 2020, 9 residents were reportedly killed during a clash over land ownership and boundary dispute between two communities in Oleh and Ozoro towns, the headquarters of Isoko South and Isoko North LGAs, respectively. The incident has reportedly intensified communal tensions in the area, raising fears of reprisals.

Why it Matters

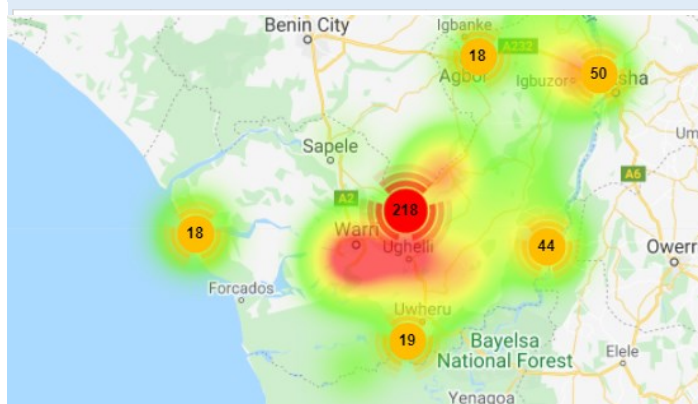
Violent clashes over land and boundary disputes could intensify inter-communal tensions in ways that could negatively affect the peace and security landscape at the state and regional levels. Escalating communal tensions could intensify ethno-communal hostilities which could trigger a cycle of violence and reprisal killings in the State. This could have lasting socio-economic and political ramifications.

Social: Communal clashes over land disputes could have devastating impact on communal peace and security. It could intensify ethno-communal aggression which could result in killings, plundering and internal displacement. Communal land disputes could also impact the local conflict dynamics by encouraging the creation of communal militias and the proliferation of arms, which could make the underlying drivers of communal conflict more complicated and intractable.

Economic: Given that land is the mainstay of the local economy, land disputes could be economically devastating. It could prevent or discourage farming by limiting access to land. This could disrupt livelihoods and agro-allied businesses and cause food insecurity. Also, given the importance of agricultural livelihood to the economic well-being of rural communities, land disputes could deepen rural poverty by reducing agricultural productivity and household income.

Political: Communal conflict over land disputes could destabilize local politics and governance in the State, especially considering the fact that land is not only an economic asset, but also the basis of communal identity, social legitimacy and political representation.

Fatalities Heat Map of Communal Conflicts over Land Disputes in Delta State, Nigeria



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

Prognosis

Communal conflict over land and boundary disputes in Delta State remains recurrent with intermittent lethal violence. Stakeholders should work with the State government to holistically address the underlying drivers of land conflicts, including efforts to redress historical grievances. Stakeholders should also work with the relevant government agencies to set up a conflict resolution committee and create a community-based early warning system to proactively identify and respond to potential triggers of communal conflict.

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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