

Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting Targeted Killings of Security Personnel in the Niger Delta

February 14-20, 2021

Description

This edition of the weekly update spotlights targeted killings of security operatives by criminals in the Niger Delta. According to data (see map below), targeted violence against security personnel caused over 50 fatalities in more than 35 reported incidents in the Niger Delta between 2018 and 2020. Recent data shows that security operatives are increasingly being targeted by criminals looking for arms. In January 2021, for instance, gunmen reportedly killed 3 policemen and stole their guns in Ekiugbo town in Ughelli North LGA, Delta State. Separately, in January, gunmen reportedly attacked a security checkpoint, killed two security operatives and escaped with their firearms in Oton community in Sapele LGA, Delta State. Also, in January, criminals reportedly killed a policeman and stole his weapons in Borokiri town in Port Harcourt LGA, Rivers State. In February, vandals reportedly killed a soldier and stole his rifle in Apoi community in Southern Ijaw LGA, Bayelsa State. Recently, on February 16, 2021, gunmen reportedly killed two policemen and stole their rifles along Ugbolu-Illah road in Oshimili North LGA, Delta State.

Why it Matters

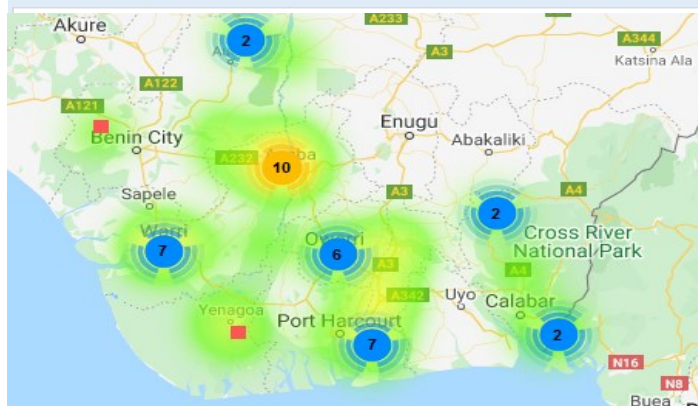
The upsurge in targeted killings of security personnel by criminal gangs is an early warning sign of a rise in gun violence and organized criminality in the Niger Delta. The recent wave of targeted killings comes amid a spike in gun violence in the region. A rise in targeted killings and increase in arms proliferation could cause socio-economic and political instability at the local, state and regional levels.

Social: Targeted killings of security personnel by criminal gangs could intensify arms proliferation and increase the intensity and lethality of criminal violence. This could threaten the security of residents and undermine police-community relations. In addition, the targeted killings of security personnel could lower the morale of security operatives and damage the public image of the security agencies.

Economic: Targeted killings of security personnel could create an environment of insecurity that could be detrimental to economic development. Weapons stolen from security personnel could be sold, traded and used to facilitate violent crimes including armed robbery and kidnapping for ransom. This could scare off investors, reduce government's revenue from taxation, increase expenditure on public security, and undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: Targeted killing of security personnel by criminal gangs is not only an act of violence against public officials but also an attack against government security agencies, and a challenge to the rule of law. The recent wave of targeted killings of security operatives by criminals could escalate into criminal insurgency in the Niger Delta.

Incidents Heat Map of Targeted Killing of Public Security Operatives in the Niger Delta of Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of incidents of targeted killing of security operatives in the Niger Delta from January 2018 - December 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

The current wave of targeted killings of security personnel by criminals could escalate in ways that could adversely change the security environment in the Niger Delta. Stakeholders should work with the relevant security agencies to devise appropriate measures to protect security personnel against targeted violence. Security agencies should also ensure that their modus operandi and action plans are safeguarded and all firearms assigned to security personnel are equipped with tracking devices to reduce theft and proliferation.

Contact Us

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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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