

# Niger Delta Weekly: De-escalating Growing Criminal Insurgency in Imo State

April 04-10, 2021

## Description

This edition of the weekly update highlights insurgency and counter-insurgent violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on criminal insurgency in Imo State. According to data (see map below), insurgency and counter-insurgent violence caused over 100 fatalities in Imo State between 2016 and 2020. Recent data shows a rise in criminal insurgency - criminal subversion of state legitimacy - in Imo State. In February 2021, for instance, gunmen reportedly attacked a divisional police headquarters, killed two police officers and injured three others in Umulowe town, Obowo LGA. In March, gunmen reportedly attacked another divisional police headquarters, killed an officer and burned official documents in Umuelemai town, Isiala Mbano LGA. Recently, on April 05, 2021, gunmen reportedly attacked the state police headquarters and a correctional facility in Owerri, the State capital. More than 1,000 inmates were reportedly set free and over 38 vehicles burned during the incident. More recently, on April 08, 2021, gunmen reportedly attacked a police station, vandalized the building and abducted a police officer in Mbieri town, Mbaitoli LGA.

## Why it Matters

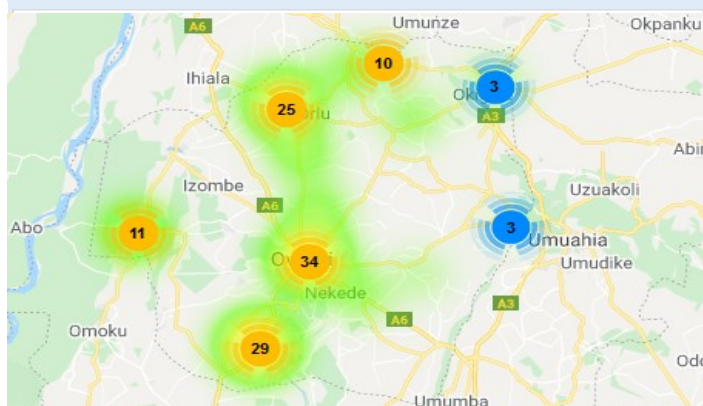
The growing wave of criminal insurgency could adversely impact the peace and conflict dynamics in the State. If not de-escalated, the ongoing situation could evolve into widespread hooliganism, spontaneous victimization, arbitrary killings and the deployment of repressive security measures in the State. This could have devastating socio-economic and political consequences at the state and regional levels.

**Social:** Recurrent attacks on security facilities including police stations could cause public unrest and a breakdown of law and order. This could result in the use of repressive security strategies that could result in human rights abuses and collateral damage among residents. This could also emasculate police-community relations, lower the morale of security operatives and embolden separatist agitations.

**Economic:** Targeted violence against security facilities and personnel could create an environment of insecurity that could be hostile to economic development in the State. Attacks on security personnel and destruction of public infrastructure could result in the restriction of human and vehicular movement and disruption of commercial activities. Recurrent incidents of criminal insurgency could also scare off investors and undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

**Political:** Criminal insurgency is a threat to law and order and public safety. It could erode the State's legitimacy and weaken citizens' trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and property. This could cause general insecurity which could be exploited by separatist groups to undermine the government and cause political instability.

## Fatalities Heat Map of Criminal Insurgency in Imo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of fatalities caused by criminal insurgency in Imo State from January 2016 - December 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org).

## Prognosis

The current wave of criminal insurgency has the potential to escalate in ways that could adversely alter the security situation in the State. Stakeholders should collaborate with the relevant security agencies to carry out vulnerability assessment and devise appropriate measures to protect security facilities and personnel against targeted attacks. Security agencies should also ensure that their modus operandi and action plans are safeguarded and all security facilities are equipped with surveillance and access control systems.

## 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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