

Niger Delta Weekly: Highlighting the Threat of Gun Violence in Akwa Ibom State

March 20-26, 2022

Description

This edition of the weekly update highlights violent criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on the growing threat of gun violence in Akwa Ibom State. According to data (see map below), more than 130 gun related fatalities were reported in Akwa Ibom State between January 2018 and December 2021. Recent incidents indicate an upsurge of gun related violence, including targeted killing of chieftains of major political parties and other residents in the State. In January 2022, for instance, gunmen suspected to be assassins reportedly killed a chieftain of a major political party in Ikot Udoma community, Eket LGA. Separately, in January, gunmen suspected to be militants reportedly ambushed a vehicle conveying staff members of an oil company, killed an oil worker, and injured two others in Unyenge community, Mbo LGA. In February, gunmen reportedly killed a chieftain of another major political party in Uyo, the state capital. Recently, on February 23, 2022, gunmen reportedly attacked a fishing settlement, chop off the hand of a fisherman, and carted away seven speed boat engines in Ini-Ikwe community, Onna LGA.

Why it Matters

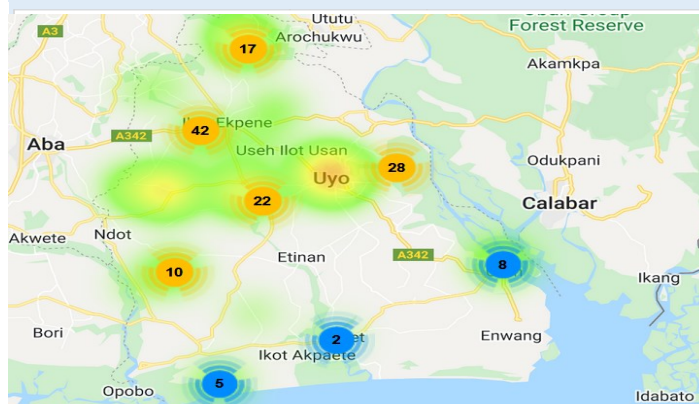
The growing threat of gun violence has the potential to intensify insecurity in the State, especially within the context of rising political tensions in the lead up to the 2023 general elections. The emerging situation could cause a breakdown of law and order which could result in hooliganism, spontaneous victimization, reprisal killings and deployment of repressive measures by security forces. This could cause socio-economic disruptions and political instability in the State.

Social: Gun violence could have long-lasting devastating impact on residents, especially considering its destructive nature and fatal consequences. Gun related deaths and injuries could bring about wide-ranging physical, psychosocial and health consequences for individuals and communities, including lifelong disabilities among survivors. The prevalence of gun violence could also increase the proliferation of arms which could intensify violent criminality and insecurity.

Economic: Besides the human cost of gun related deaths, the prevalence of gun violence could create an atmosphere of insecurity that is inimical to economic development. Gun violence could disrupt economic activities, scare away investors and cause loss of livelihoods and business opportunities. This could reduce government's revenue from taxation and undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: The prevalence of gun violence could present additional security challenges for the State. It could weaken citizens' trust in the capacity of government security agencies to protect lives and properties. This could cause civil unrest and political instability in the State.

Fatalities Heat Map of Gun Related Violence in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of gun related deaths reported in Akwa Ibom State from January 2018 - December 2021. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The current spate of gun violence has the potential to escalate in ways that could intensify insecurity in the State, especially against the backdrop of heightened political tensions in the lead up to the upcoming 2023 general elections. Stakeholders should work with the State government and the relevant security agencies to address the underlying drivers. Law enforcement agencies should also work with local residents and civil society organizations (CSOs) for early warning alerts and reports to reinforce proactive incident response.

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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