

Niger Delta Weekly: Responding to the Resurgence of Criminal Insurgency in Abia & Imo State

May 22-28, 2022

Description

This weekly update spotlights insurgency and counter-insurgent violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on a resurgence of criminal insurgency in Abia and Imo State. According to data (see map below), criminal insurgency including targeted violence against government security personnel caused over 300 fatalities in Abia and Imo State between January 2020 and March 2022. Recent incidents indicate a resurgence of criminal insurgency and gun violence in the two States, especially targeted killings of government officials and private citizens. In March 2022, for instance, gunmen reportedly killed four residents in Amangwu community in Ohafia LGA, Abia State. In April, suspected separatist militias reportedly attacked a team of soldiers and burned an armored vehicle at a security checkpoint along the Enugu-Aba-Port Harcourt expressway in Osisioma Ngwa LGA. In May, a Nigerian Army couple were reportedly killed and decapitated by gunmen suspected to be separatist militias in Orlu LGA, Imo State. Also, in May, gunmen reportedly killed a police officer at a security checkpoint in Agwa town in Oguta LGA, Imo State.

Why it Matters

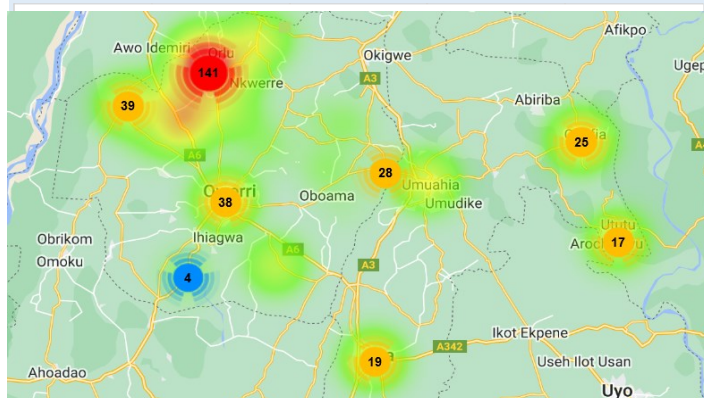
The ongoing criminal insurgency in Abia and Imo has the potential to escalate and spillover into adjoining States in the Niger Delta. If not de-escalated appropriately, the situation could degenerate into hooliganism, collective victimization, arbitrary killings and deployment of repressive security measures. This could have devastating social, economic and political consequences, especially in the context of heightened political tensions ahead of the 2023 general elections.

Social: Recurrent killings of security personnel and private citizens could cause unrest and a breakdown of law and order. This could result in the use of repressive security measures that could result in human rights abuses and collateral damage among residents. Also, the horrific nature of these killings that mostly involve decapitation could have severe psychosocial and health consequences for individuals and communities, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

Economic: Criminal insurgency and targeted killings could create an atmosphere of insecurity that could be hostile to economic development. It could result in the destruction of public infrastructure, restriction of human and vehicular movement and disruption of commercial activities. This could cause relocation of residents, scare away investors and thus 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 disrupt politics and governance at the state and regional levels.

Fatalities Heat Map of Criminal Insurgency and Targeted Violence in Abia and Imo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of fatalities caused by criminal insurgency in Abia and Imo State from January 2020 - March 2022. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The ongoing wave of criminal insurgency has the potential to escalate in ways that could adversely affect the security situation at the state and regional levels. Stakeholders should collaborate with the relevant security agencies to devise appropriate strategies to counteract the current wave of criminal insurgency in the south-eastern region. Stakeholders should also work with the national and state governments to develop long-term political, developmental, human rights and institutional measures to discourage criminal insurgency.

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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