

Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing Escalation of Organized Criminal Violence in Rivers State

October 23-29, 2022b

Description

This weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on criminal violence in Rivers State. According to data (see map below), criminal violence caused over 200 fatalities in Rivers State between January 2020 and September 2022. Recent data shows that criminal violence including kidnapping, cult clashes and vigilante related violence is increasingly becoming a major driver of insecurity in the state. In September 2022, for instance, gunmen reportedly killed a commercial bus driver and abducted eight passengers along the Abonnema-Emohua-Buguma axis of the East-West Road in Emohua LGA. Separately, in September, gunmen reportedly attacked a commercial bus and abducted five passengers along the Emohua-Kalabari axis of the East-West Road in Emohua LGA. In October, a member of a disbanded local vigilante reportedly killed a community leader for allegedly exposing illegal oil bunkering activities in Mgbuola community, Emohua LGA. More recently, on October 20, 2022, suspected cultists reportedly killed two members of a local vigilante in Ompova Ibaa community in Emohua LGA.

Why it Matters

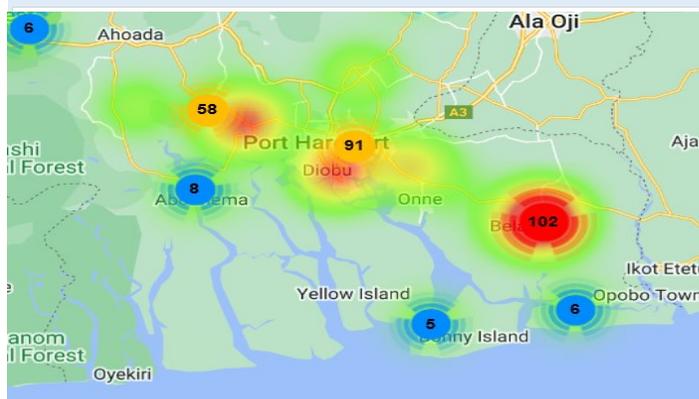
The recent upsurge in organized criminal violence has the potential to intensify insecurity in ways that could adversely impact the peace and security dynamics in the State. If not appropriately deescalated, the situation could degenerate into hooliganism and lawlessness. This could result in arbitrary killings and deployment of repressive security measures that could cause collateral damage. This could cause social and economic disruptions in the State, especially in the context of heightened political tensions ahead of the 2023 general elections.

Social: An escalation of criminal violence could create wider feelings of insecurity and distrust that could weaken social capital by undermining social relations and civic cooperation. This could embolden residents to adopt violent self-help measures including vigilante and mob violence, and the deployment of security strategies that could be viewed by residents as human rights violations. This could create tensions that could undermine the social wellbeing of residents.

Economic: The prevalence of criminal violence could heighten economic instability by causing loss of livelihoods and discouraging investment, and consequently restricting residents' access to vital resources for survival. This could also undercut government revenue from taxation and undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: The current wave of criminal violence is a threat to law and order, and public safety. If not deescalated, it could erode the authority and legitimacy of the State, and weaken citizens' trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and property. This could cause unrest which could disrupt politics and governance in the State.

Fatalities Heat Map of Criminal Violence in Rivers State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of fatalities caused by criminal violence in Rivers State from January 2020 - September 2022. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The recent upsurge in criminal violence has the potential to intensify in ways that could adversely impact the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in the State. Stakeholders should work with the security agencies to devise strategies to mitigate the situation. Stakeholders should also collaborate with other relevant governments' agencies to develop lasting developmental and institutional strategies to address the underlying causes. Interestingly, several organizations are working to address the various forms of insecurity in the region.

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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