

# Niger Delta Weekly: Mitigating Targeted Violence Against Community Leaders in Imo State

November 13-19, 2022

## Description

This weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on targeted violence against community leaders in Imo State. According to data (see map below), targeted violence caused over 500 deaths in Imo State between January 2019 and September 2021. Recent data shows a resurgence of targeted violence against community leaders in the State. In January 2022, for instance, a traditional ruler was reportedly abducted by gunmen in Ubomiri community, Orlu LGA. The monarch was reportedly abducted from his car while he was traveling in the company of his daughter. In September, the traditional ruler of Isiala Umudi community in Nkwerre LGA was reportedly abducted by gunmen in Owerri, the state capital. The community leader was reportedly abducted at the premises of one of his businesses in the State. Recently, on November 14, 2022, a traditional ruler was reportedly killed by gunmen during a meeting at his palace in Obudi Agwa community, Oguta LGA. The monarch was allegedly killed along with four others including two chiefs. Several others were wounded during the incident.

## Why it Matters

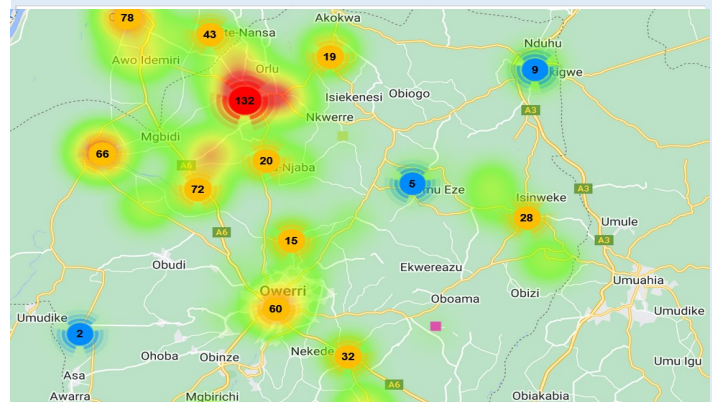
The recent wave of targeted violence against community leaders has the potential to escalate in ways that could intensify communal tensions and increase insecurity in the State, especially within the context of ongoing criminal insurgency and separatist agitation in South-Eastern Nigeria. If the spate of targeted violence is not mitigated, it could weaken the traditional institutions and consequently destabilize local governance in the State. This could cause far-reaching social, economic and political repercussions at the state and regional levels.

**Social:** Violence against community leaders could have far-reaching and destabilizing social impacts. It could erode public reverence for traditional rulers, weaken the power and authority of traditional institutions, and endanger the custom and cultural values of the people. Attacks on traditional rulers and other community leaders could also bring about a breakdown of law and order, and intensify insecurity.

**Economic:** Recurrent attacks on community leaders could create an atmosphere of insecurity that could destabilize the local economy. The current wave of targeted violence could escalate into civil unrest and mob violence which could result in looting, arson and vandalism. This could disrupt businesses, cause loss of livelihoods and revenue, and consequently undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

**Political:** The resurgence of targeted violence against traditional rulers could destabilize the traditional political structure in ways that could undermine local governance in the State. This could weaken citizen's trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and properties, and consequently undermine the authority of the State.

## Fatalities Heat Map of Targeted Violence in Imo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of targeted violence and killings in Imo State from January 2019 - September 2022. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org)

## Prognosis

The recent wave of targeted violence against community leaders could escalate in ways that could negatively impact the social, political and security landscape in the State. Stakeholders should work with the relevant security agencies to deploy appropriate counter-measures to mitigate the situation. Peace and security actors should also collaborate with the State government and reputable community leaders to identify and address the underlying drivers and triggers of the current wave of targeted violence in the State.

## 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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