

Niger Delta Weekly: De-escalating the Rising Wave of Criminal Violence in Abia State

August 06 - 12, 2023

Description

This weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on targeted criminal violence in Abia State. According to data (see map below), criminal violence caused more than 200 fatalities in Abia State between January 2021 and June 2023. Recent data shows an upsurge in incidents of criminal violence in the State. In May 2023, for instance, gunmen suspected to be separatist militias reportedly killed two brothers and burned their house for allegedly working as informants for the Police in Ohanku community, Aba South LGA. Also, in May, gunmen reportedly killed a man at a drinking spot along Georges Street in Aba town, Aba South LGA. In June, gunmen reportedly kidnapped a traditional ruler in Amawo Nkwo-Ogu community, Osisioma Ngwa LGA. Separately, in June, gunmen reportedly attacked a commercial bus and kidnapped many passengers including a journalist in Umuahia, the state capital. Recently, on July 25, 2023, gunmen allegedly attacked the convoy of a government official, killed two policemen and burned a vehicle at Sameck Junction near Ariaria International Market in Aba South LGA.

Why it Matters

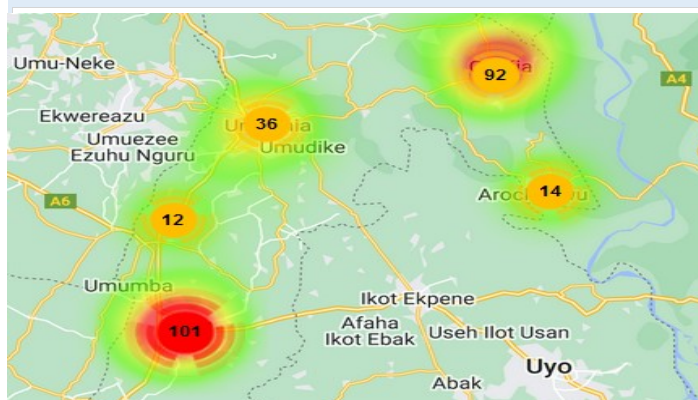
The growing wave of organized criminal violence has the potential to adversely impact the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in the State, especially against the backdrop of separatist agitation in the South-East region. If not de-escalated the situation could degenerate into widespread hooliganism, mob violence and reprisal killings that could result in the deployment of security countermeasures that could cause collateral damages. This could cause social unrest and consequently disrupt the local economy and undermine regional security.

Social: The prevalence of organized criminal violence could have a devastating impact on the social wellbeing of residents. It could create wider feelings of distrust and insecurity that could weaken social capital by undermining social relations and civic cooperation. This could embolden residents to adopt violent self-help strategies including mob justice which could cause human rights violations. This could create social tensions that can undermine the wellbeing of residents.

Economic: The current wave of organized criminal violence is inimical to economic development in the State. It disrupts the local economy by causing loss of lives and destruction of livelihoods. This could also restrict residents' access to vital resources for survival and economic recovery, especially against the backdrop of a weekly 'sit-at-home' order allegedly issued by separatist agitators in the South-East region.

Political: The rising wave of criminal violence could cause serious challenges for law enforcement, governance and politics in the State. It could constrain residents to adopt violent coping mechanisms and self-help strategies that could result in lawlessness and civil disorder.

Fatalities Heat Map of Criminal Violence in Abia State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of reported fatalities caused by criminal violence in Abia State from January 2021 - June 2023. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The current wave of criminal violence could escalate in ways that could adversely impact the economic and security situation at the state and regional levels. Stakeholders should collaborate with the relevant security agencies to devise strategies to curb the situation. Development actors should work with the national, regional and state governments to develop long-term developmental and institutional measures to address the underlying drivers. Peace actors should work with community leaders to de-escalate the situation.

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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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