

Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing a Resurgence of Criminal Violence in Bayelsa State

July 30 - August 05, 2023

Description

This weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on rising criminal violence in Bayelsa State. According to data (see map below), violent criminality caused more than 160 fatalities in Bayelsa State between January 2021 and June 2023. Recent data shows a rise in incidents of criminal violence in the State, especially robbery and kidnap for ransom. In May 2023, for instance, a 20-year-old girl was reportedly shot dead by robbers in Azikoro community, Yenagoa LGA. In June, gunmen reportedly attacked and robbed a businesswoman at her shop in Opolo community, Yenagoa LGA. The woman was allegedly robbed of several valuables including a Point of Sale machine and a large sum of money. Separately, in June, a staff member of a commercial bank was reportedly abducted by suspected kidnapers in Yenagoa, the state capital. Recently, on July 26, 2023, a five-man criminal gang that has been scamming individuals and businesses was reportedly arrested by vigilantes in the state capital. The syndicate allegedly hypnotized and swindled a Point of Sale (POS) operator out of 400,000 naira.

Why it Matters

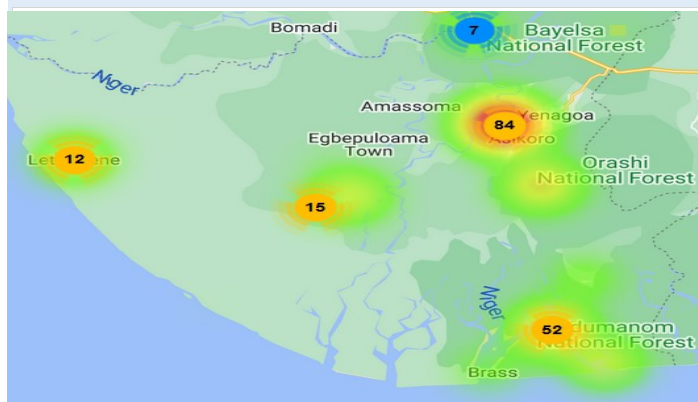
The resurgence of criminal violence has the potential to dangerously impact the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in Bayelsa State. The prevalence of robbery and kidnap for ransom could present serious security risk to individuals, businesses and organizations in the State. If not mitigated, the situation could cause serious socio-economic and political disruptions, especially in the context of rising tensions in the lead-up to the November 2023 governorship election in the state.

Social: The resurgence of violent criminality could bring about serious psychosocial and security consequences for residents. It could create a general feeling of insecurity that could compel residents to adopt violent coping mechanisms and self-help measures including the formation of local vigilantes and militias that could cause social strife and human rights violations. This could create communal tensions which could undermine the health and social wellbeing of residents.

Economic: The prevalence of criminal violence could create a climate of insecurity that is detrimental to economic development. Robbery and kidnap for ransom could cause economic disruptions that could destabilize businesses and undercut household income. An increase in incidents of robbery and kidnap for ransom could impose huge financial burdens on individuals, families and businesses in the State.

Political: The current trend of criminal violence including kidnap for ransom and armed robbery is a serious threat to law and order, and public safety. It could weaken citizens' trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and property. The situation could also cause unrest which could disrupt politics and governance in the State.

Fatalities Heat Map of Criminal Violence in Bayelsa State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of fatalities caused by criminal violence in Bayelsa 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 has the potential to intensify in ways that could adversely impact the dynamics of conflict and security in the State. Stakeholders should work with the security agencies to devise strategies to mitigate the situation. Development actors should collaborate with the relevant governments' agencies to develop lasting developmental strategies to address the underlying causes. Interestingly, several civil society organizations are collaborating to mitigate the drivers of criminality in the State.

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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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