# Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing a Resurgence of Organized Criminal Violence in Ondo State

October 22-28, 2023

## Description

This weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on criminal violence and killings in Ondo State. Organized criminal violence including robbery, kidnap for ransom and killing for ritual purposes is a major driver of conflict and insecurity in Ondo State. According to data (see map below), criminal violence caused over 300 fatalities in the State between January 2022 and August 2023. In July 2023, for example, armed kidnappers reportedly killed a police officer at a security checkpoint along Ifon/Isobe Road in Ose LGA. In August, a 45-year-old woman was allegedly killed and dismembered by her ex-boyfriend at Oke-Aro area in Akure South LGA. Separately, ritualists who allegedly disguised as laborers reportedly killed a 45-year-old pastor at his farm in Ipele community, Owo LGA. In September, a woman was reportedly robbed and raped at gunpoint by a 22-year-old man in Bolorunduro town, Ondo East LGA. Recently, on September 30, 2023, about 25 choristers who were on their way to a funeral ceremony were reportedly abducted by kidnappers along the highway in Ifon town, Ose LGA.
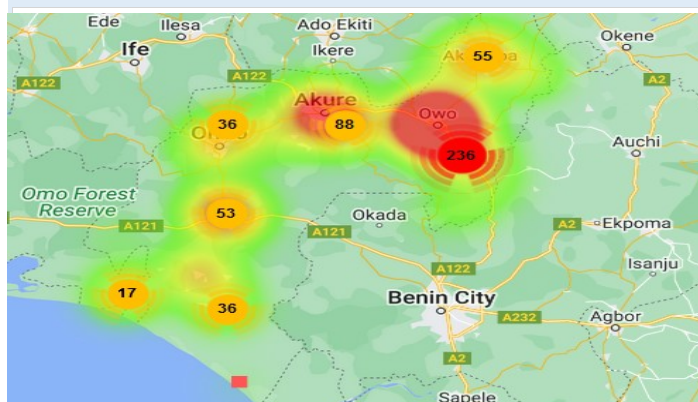
## Why it Matters

The continuing prevalence of organized criminal violence and killings could negatively impact the dynamics of conflict risks and insecurity in the State. The current trend of criminal violence including kidnap for ransom and killing for ritual purposes has the potential to cause a breakdown of law including vigilante violence and extrajudicial killing. If not mitigated the situation could intensify and bring about severe socio-economic, political and security consequences in the State.

**Social:** The growing prevalence of organized criminal violence and killing for ritual purposes could force residents to embrace violent coping strategies and aggressive self-help measures including the proliferation of local vigilantes and mob justice. This could cause a breakdown of law and order including human rights violations. This could create a general feeling of insecurity which could undermine communal stability and the health and social wellbeing of residents.

**Economic:** The continuing prevalence of kidnap for ransom and killing for money-making rituals could create an atmosphere of heightened insecurity that could destabilize the local economy by disrupting businesses. Ritual killings and kidnap for ransom impose huge financial burdens on families and communities. This could deplete household income and thus undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

**Political:** The current trend of organized criminal violence including ritual killing and kidnap for ransom is a serious threat to governance and public safety. It could weaken citizens' trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and property. This could cause protests and unrest which could disrupt politics and governance in the State.

## Fatalities Heat Map of Criminal Violence in Ondo State, Nigeria



*Heat Map shows geographical concentration of fatalities caused by criminal violence in Ondo State from January 2022 - August 2023. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org*

## Prognosis

The prevalence of organized criminality 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 institutional and developmental strategies to address the situation. Interestingly, several civil society organizations are collaborating to mitigate the situation through peacebuilding and economic development programs.

## 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.