

Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing a Resurgence of Criminal Violence in the Niger Delta

December 10-16, 2023

Description

This weekly update spotlights the prevalence of organized criminal violence in the Niger Delta. Organized criminality including clashes between cult gangs, kidnap for ransom, and targeted killing of government security personnel by criminals is becoming increasingly prevalent in the region. According to data (see map below), criminal violence caused over a thousand fatalities in the Niger Delta between January 2020 and October 2023. Recent data shows the prevalence of criminal violence in the region. In November 2023, for instance, four children of the same parents were allegedly kidnapped on their way to school in Umuagu community in Umuahia North LGA, Abia State. Also, in November, gunmen reportedly killed a Deputy Superintendent of Police in Asaba, the Delta state capital. In December, gunmen allegedly ambushed a convoy, killed four soldiers and two civilian drivers, and abducted two South Korean expatriates along the East-West Road in Ahoada East LGA, Rivers State. More recently, on December 14, 2023, a 42-year-old man was reportedly killed by members of a cult gang in Benin City, the Edo state capital.

Why it Matters

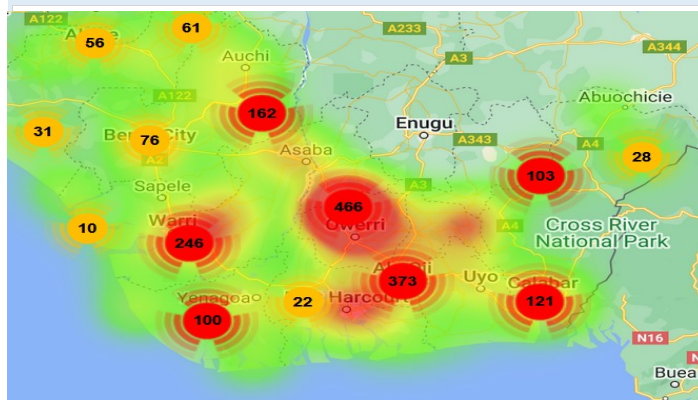
The growing prevalence of criminal violence could adversely impact the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta. The current wave of criminal violence including targeted killing of government security personnel could escalate in ways that could cause lawlessness. It could cause widespread hooliganism, unrest and the deployment of repressive strategies by the security forces. This could bring about severe socio-economic, political and security consequences.

Social: The situation could have a devastating psychosocial impact on residents. It could compel residents to adopt violent coping strategies and aggressive self-help mechanisms including the formation of local vigilante groups and a recourse to mob justice. The proliferation of unregulated vigilantes could result in human rights violation including extrajudicial killings. This could cause a breakdown of law and order which could undermine the health and social wellbeing of residents.

Economic: The prevalence of criminal violence including kidnap for ransom and targeted killing of government security personnel could create a climate of heightened insecurity that could destabilize the local economy. The situation could create a general feeling of insecurity that could disrupt businesses and cause loss of livelihoods and income. This could undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: The current wave of organized criminal violence including targeted killing 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. If not mitigated, the situation could cause unrest which could disrupt politics and governance in the region.

Fatalities Heat Map of Criminal Violence in the Niger Delta of Nigeria



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of fatalities caused by criminal violence in the Niger Delta from January 2020 - October 2023. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The prevalence of organized criminal violence could change the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in ways that could adversely impact the socio-economic and political situation in the region. Stakeholders should work with the security agencies to devise strategies to mitigate the situation. Peace and development actors should also work with the relevant government agencies to develop appropriate institutional and developmental strategies to mitigate the underlying drivers of organized criminality in the Niger Delta.

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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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