

# Niger Delta Weekly: Mitigating Herder-Farmer Clashes and Criminal Violence in Ondo State

April 09-15, 2023

## Description

This edition of the weekly update spotlights the herder-farmer conflict in the Niger Delta with a focus on the criminal aspects of the conflict in Ondo State. According to data (see map below), the herder-farmer conflict caused over 100 fatalities in Ondo State between January 2020 and December 2022. Recent incidents indicate a rise in communal tensions as the conflict is becoming increasingly intertwined with organized criminal violence including kidnapping for ransom and armed banditry. In February 2023, for instance, six residents including farmers and traders were reportedly killed and over 30 hectares of farmland destroyed during clashes between herders and farmers in Arimogija, Molege, and Ute communities in Ose LGA. In March, bandits reportedly abducted a 19-year old girl from her residence in Imoru community, Ose LGA. Recently, on March 24, 2023, three residents were reportedly kidnapped by suspected armed herdsmen in Ayede-Ogbese community in Akure North LGA. The incident triggered a series of protests by residents in Uso and Ayede-Ogbese communities in Owo and Akure North LGAs respectively.

## Why it Matters

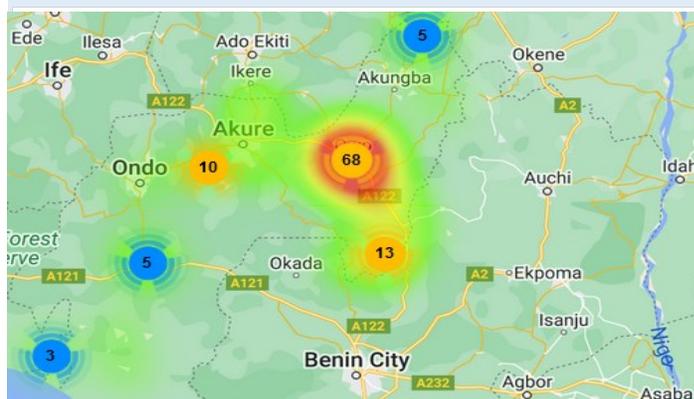
The criminal dimensions of the herder-farmer conflict are symptoms of growing grievances and tensions between pastoral and farming communities in the State. If not appropriately mitigated, the situation could intensify in such a way that it could degenerate and take on very dangerous ethnic, religious, and criminal dimensions. This could cause serious socio-economic disruptions and political instability with far-reaching security consequences at the communal and state levels.

**Social:** The criminal aspects of the herder-farmer conflict could cause a general feeling of insecurity that could compel residents to adopt violent coping mechanisms including the proliferation of community vigilantes and ethnic militias. This could cause arms proliferation which could make the conflict more lethal and protracted as it could result in cyclical violence whereby attacks against pastoral or farming communities would result in punitive reprisals. This could further deepen communal tensions and make the conflict more protracted.

**Economic:** Rising communal tensions and criminal violence associated with the herder-farmer conflict could be economically devastating. Recurrent clashes and criminal violence including vandalism could disrupt farming and livestock production, cause loss of livelihoods and occupational displacement, and consequently undermine the agro-allied sector. This could cause food insecurity and rural poverty.

**Political:** The criminal aspects of the conflict including kidnapping for ransom could present additional security challenges for the state. It could cause the spread of militias and vigilantes as self-help strategies. This could cause human rights violations including mob violence.

## Fatalities Heat Map of the Herder-Farmer Conflict in Ondo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported fatalities caused by the herder-farmer conflict in Ondo State from January 2020 - December 2022. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org)

## Prognosis

The herder-farmer conflict in Ondo State is increasingly becoming interconnected with organized criminal violence including banditry and kidnapping. Stakeholders should work with community leaders to leverage local conflict management structures to de-escalate the situation. Interestingly, peace actors are already using local peace-building structures to mitigate the herder-farmer conflict in some communities. Peace and development actors should continue to support local peace actors with relevant skills, data and platforms.

## 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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