

# Niger Delta Weekly: De-escalating Rising Criminal Insurgency & Gun Violence in Imo State

April 23-29, 2023

## Description

This weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on the resurgence of criminal insurgency and gun violence in Imo State. Criminal insurgency - insurgency perverted by criminal violence - has become a major driver of insecurity in Imo State over the years. According to data (see map below), criminal insurgency, government counter-insurgency operations and other gun related violence caused over 500 fatalities in Imo State between January 2021 and March 2023. Recent data shows a rise in criminal insurgency and gun violence in the State. In February 2023, for instance, gunmen allegedly killed a customary court judge during a court session in Ejemekwuru community, Oguta LGA. In March, gunmen reportedly killed 3 personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in Obiangwu Community, Ngor Okpala LGA. In April, gunmen reportedly killed 5 policemen and 2 civilians at Okpala Junction in Ngor Okpala LGA. More recently, on April 26, 2023, gunmen allegedly killed a community leader while he was addressing his kinsmen at a town hall in Logara community, Ngor Okpala LGA.

## Why it Matters

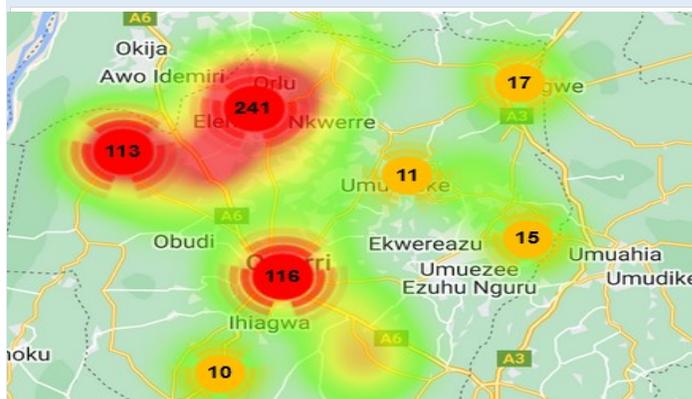
The current wave of criminal insurgency and gun violence has the potential to escalate in ways that could cause widespread hooliganism, a breakdown of law and order, and the deployment of repressive countermeasures by government security forces. This could adversely impact the dynamics of conflict and insecurity, especially against the backdrop of separatist agitation and rising political tensions in the lead up to the November 2023 governorship election in the State. This could cause political instability and socio-economic disruptions.

**Social:** The growing wave of criminal insurgency and targeted killing of residents could bring about serious psychosocial and health consequences that can undermine communal stability and social wellbeing of residents. Recurrent incidents of targeted killings could cause a general feeling of insecurity and a 'siege mentality' that can result in spontaneous criminal victimization and mob violence. Gun related deaths could cause post-traumatic stress disorder among residents

**Economic:** The prevalence of criminal insurgency and gun violence could create an atmosphere of insecurity that is inimical to economic development. It could disrupt economic activities, force businesses to relocate, and therefore cause loss of livelihoods and business opportunities. This could also reduce government's revenue from taxation, and consequently undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

**Political:** Criminal insurgency and targeted killings could weaken citizens' trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and property, and therefore undermine the authority of the government. This could cause unrest which could present new security challenges.

## Fatalities Heat Map of Criminal Insurgency and Gun Related Violence in Imo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of fatalities caused by criminal insurgency and gun violence in Imo State from January 2021 - March 2023. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org)

## Prognosis

The current wave of criminal insurgency and gun violence could dangerously alter the dynamics of conflict in a way that could adversely impact the social, political, economic, and security situation in the State. Stakeholders should collaborate with the relevant security agencies to deploy appropriate measures to de-escalate the situation. Peace and security stakeholders should work with the State government and community leaders to identify and address the underlying drivers and triggers of the current wave of violence.

## Contact Us

Inquiries: [PINDfoundation.org](http://PINDfoundation.org)

Contacts: [info@PINDfoundation.org](mailto:info@PINDfoundation.org) +234 (0) 9 291 0454

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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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