

Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting Rising Gun Violence and Targeted Killings in Imo State

June 18-24, 2023

Description

This weekly update spotlights organized criminal violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on gun violence and targeted killings in Imo State. Gun violence and targeted killing of residents including government security personnel are major drivers of insecurity in Imo State. According to data (see map below), gun violence and targeted killings caused over 100 fatalities in the State between January 2022 and April 2023. Recent data shows the growing prevalence of gun violence and targeted killings in the State. In April 2023, for instance, five police officers and a couple were allegedly killed by gunmen in Okpala community, Ngor-Okpala LGA. In May, two community leaders were reportedly killed by gunmen in Izombe and Mgbele communities, Oguta LGA. In June, a chieftain of a major political party was reportedly killed by gunmen on his way from a meeting in Awomama community, Oru East LGA. More recently, on June 16, 2023, gunmen suspected to be assassins reportedly attacked the convoy of a former governor of Imo State and killed a police officer along the Okigwe-Enugu Expressway in Ihube community, Okigwe LGA.

Why it Matters

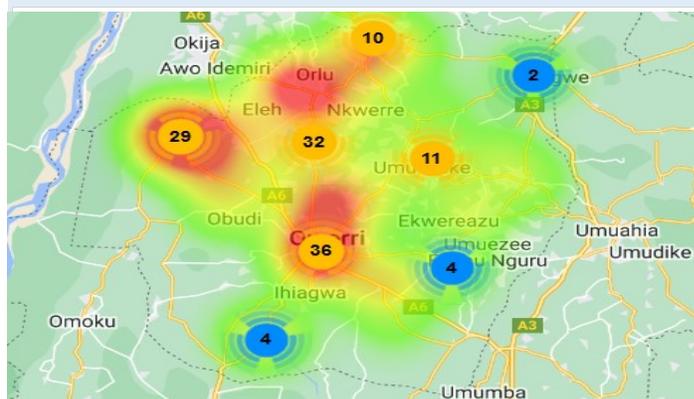
The current wave of gun violence and targeted killings has the potential to escalate and worsen insecurity in the State, especially against the backdrop of separatist agitation and rising political tensions in the lead up to the November 2023 governorship election. This could cause a breakdown of law and order which could result in unrest, hooliganism, vigilante justice, arbitrary killings and the deployment of repressive measures by government security forces. This could bring about serious socio-economic, political and security consequences.

Social: The prevalence of gun violence and targeted killings could have devastating impact on the social wellbeing of residents. It could cause a general feeling of uncertainty and a 'siege mentality' among residents. This could bring about serious physical, psychosocial and health consequences including internal displacement and humanitarian crisis. The situation could also compel law enforcement agencies to deploy security measures that could cause human rights violations.

Economic: In addition to the human cost of gun related deaths, the prevalence of gun violence could create a climate of insecurity that is detrimental to economic development. Gun violence could disrupt economic activities, scare off investors and cause loss of livelihoods and business opportunities. This could undercut government revenue from taxation and undermine the economic wellbeing of residents.

Political: The growing prevalence of gun violence and targeted killings could weaken citizen's trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and properties, and thus undermine the authority of the government. This could bring about unrest and political instability.

Fatalities Heat Map of Gun Related Violence and Targeted Killings in Imo State, Nigeria



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

Prognosis

The wave of gun violence and killings could worsen the security situation in the State, especially within the context of separatist agitation and rising political tensions in the lead up to the upcoming governorship election. Stakeholders should work with the relevant government security agencies to deploy appropriate strategies to mitigate the situation. Stakeholders should also work with the federal and state governments to initiate long-term political, security, developmental and institutional measures to mitigate the situation.

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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