

Niger Delta Weekly: De-escalating Criminal Violence and Targeted Killings in Imo State

September 03-09, 2023

Description

This weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on rising criminal violence and targeted killings in Imo State. Organized criminal violence and targeted killings are becoming increasingly prevalent in Imo State. According to data (see map below), organized criminality caused more than 300 fatalities in Imo State between January 2021 and June 2023. Recent incidents indicate the growing prevalence of criminal violence and targeted killings in the State. In July 2023, for instance, gunmen reportedly killed a traditional ruler during a meeting in Nguru Nweke community, Aboh Mbaise LGA. In August, gunmen reportedly attacked and burned the residence of a traditional ruler in Okwuru Orsu-Ihitte-Ukwa community, Orsu LGA. Separately, in August, a 30-year-old man who was withdrawing money from a point of sale (POS) machine was reportedly killed by armed robbers at World Bank Junction in Owerri, the state capital. More recently, on August 20, 2023, gunmen suspected to be robbers reportedly killed a retired police officer and his wife at their POS shop in Owerri, the Imo state capital.

Why it Matters

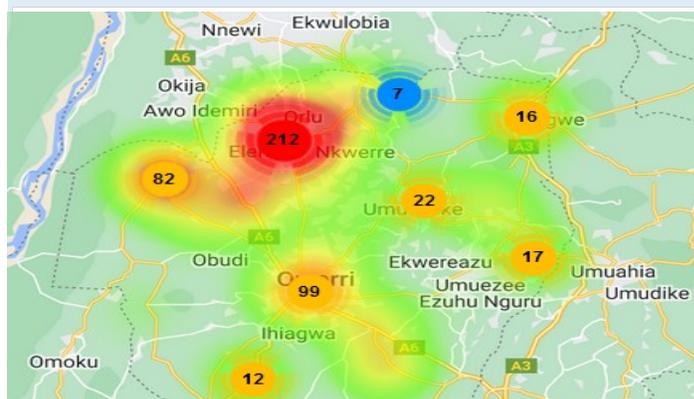
The growing prevalence of organized criminal violence and targeted killing could negatively impact the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in the State, especially against the backdrop of ongoing separatist agitation. If not appropriately de-escalated the situation could intensify and cause serious socio-economic and political disruptions and security risk, especially in the context of rising political tensions in the lead-up to the November 2023 governorship election in the State.

Social: The current spate of organized criminal violence and killings could bring about troubling psychosocial and security consequences. It could create feelings of uncertainty that could embolden residents to adopt aggressive coping mechanisms and self-help measures including the formation of local militias and the deployment of security strategies that could be seen by residents as human rights violations.

Economic: The recurrence of criminal violence and targeted killing of residents could create an atmosphere of insecurity that is hostile to economic development. It could cause serious economic disruptions that could destabilize businesses, cause loss of livelihoods, undercut household income, and restrict residents' access to vital resources for survival. This could also reduce government's revenue from taxation and consequently 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 de-escalated, the situation could cause unrest which could disrupt politics and governance in the State.

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



Heat Map shows concentration of fatalities caused by criminal violence and targeted killings in Imo State from January 2021 - June 2023. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The prevalence of organized criminal violence could gravely alter the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in a way that could negatively impact the socio-economic and political situation in the State. Stakeholders should work with the security agencies to devise strategies to de-escalate the situation. Stakeholders should also collaborate with other relevant government agencies to develop appropriate institutional, political and developmental strategies to mitigate the underlying drivers of organized criminality in the State.

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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