

# Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting Child Trafficking in Akwa Ibom State

March 15-21, 2020

## Description

Trafficking of babies is increasingly becoming prevalent in the Niger Delta, especially in Rivers, Edo, Delta, Cross River, Imo, and Akwa Ibom states. It has taken various criminal and economic dimensions, involving kidnapping of babies, proliferation of 'Baby Factories' and a growing black market for the sale of babies. Over the years, there has been an increase in 'Baby Factories' - illegal orphanages, maternity homes, clinics, or buildings - where young girls and women are kept for the purpose of getting them pregnant to produce babies for sale in black markets, mainly for adoption by infertile couples and for ritualistic purposes. According to data (see map below), over 100 child trafficking incidents were reported in the Niger Delta between 2015 and 2019. The trend has become alarming with frequent media reports of mothers selling their babies. On February 5, 2020, for instance, operatives of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) reportedly arrested two suspects who offered to buy a baby from a pregnant woman for five hundred thousand naira in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom state capital.

## Why it Matters

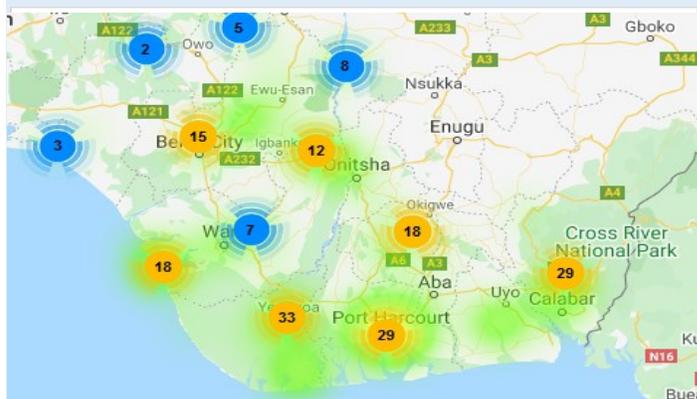
The prevailing trend of child trafficking in Akwa Ibom state is worrying, especially the selling of new born babies by their mothers or parents. The situation threatens to become more prevalent with far-reaching social, economic and political implications for the state.

**Social:** The emerging trend of child trafficking and selling of babies to couples or individuals could generate paternity disputes that can lead to broken homes. Moreover, young women in 'Baby Factories' are often exposed to different men which increases their chances of contracting sexually transmitted diseases which are major causes of infertility. Increase in infertility can also increase patronage for 'Baby Factories'. Victims of child trafficking could also feel exploited and debased, and end up as child traffickers or prostitutes in the future.

**Economic:** Child trafficking could negatively impact economic development in the state. As a clandestine business, child trafficking can distort the economy by diverting human and economic resources from legitimate businesses into criminal networks. By diverting resources into criminal networks, child trafficking can undermine legitimate businesses and reduce government revenue from taxation.

**Political:** The prevalence of child trafficking highlights the seeming ineffectiveness of existing anti-human trafficking laws and lack of political will by the government to prioritize the fight against child trafficking in the state. This can cause loss of confidence in the government, which can engender a culture of impunity, undermine public security, and cause political instability in the state.

## Heat Map of Child Trafficking Incidents in the Niger Delta, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported Child Trafficking incidents in the Niger Delta from January 2015 – December 2019. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org).

## Prognosis

The prevailing trend of child trafficking in Akwa Ibom state has the potential to intensify, if appropriate actions are not taken by stakeholders. While the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) is making efforts to address the situation nationwide, the state government must work with other relevant stakeholders to develop a multi-faceted approach that combines appropriate legislation with suitable policy measures that address the root causes and drivers of child trafficking 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.



FOUNDATION FOR PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES IN THE NIGER DELTA



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