

Niger Delta Weekly: Mitigating the Herder-Farmer Conflict in the Niger Delta

March 26 - April 01, 2023

Description

This special edition of the weekly update spotlights inter-communal conflicts in the Niger Delta with a focus on the herder-farmer conflict in the region. According to data (see map below), the herder-farmer conflict caused more than 400 fatalities in the Niger Delta between January 2020 and February 2023. Recent incidents indicate a resurgence of clashes between herders and farmers over access to land for farming and grazing as well as criminality including kidnap for ransom. 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, Ondo State. In March, two residents including a community leader were reportedly killed during clashes between herders and fishers in Okumoni and Zarama communities in Yenagoa LGA, Bayelsa State. Recently, on March 27, 2023, a man was reportedly killed, some residents abducted and properties destroyed during clashes between farmers and armed herdsmen in Sobe community in Owan West LGA, Edo State.

Why it Matters

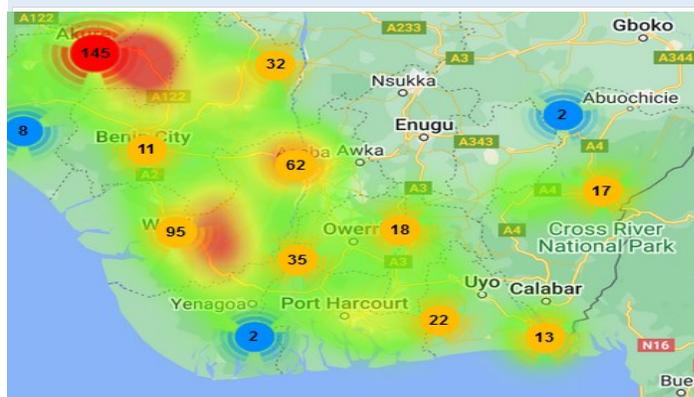
The recent clashes between herders and farmers indicate important changes in the context and dynamics of the lingering conflict. The conflict is evolving from spontaneous clashes to planned attacks involving targeted killing, destruction of properties, and criminality including kidnap for ransom. If not mitigated, the conflict could intensify and take on dangerous ethnic, religious, and criminal dimensions. This could adversely impact the dynamics of insecurity in the region, with significant socio-economic, political and security consequences.

Social: The recent trends in the farmer-herder conflict could intensify ethno-religious and communal hostilities and violence in the region. The organized criminal aspects of the conflict could trigger a cycle of violence whereby any attack against farmers or herders would result in punitive reprisals. It could also cause the spread of illicit arms and the proliferation of local militias and vigilantes which could result in communal and criminal violence as well as human rights violations.

Economic: The impact of the lingering conflict could be economically devastating. Recurrent clashes could cause internal displacement, deplete agricultural labor force, and disrupt farming and livestock production. This could reduce agricultural output and undermine the agro-allied sector. This could cause food insecurity and rural poverty.

Political: Recurrent clashes between herders, farmers, and fishers could present additional security challenges for government in the region. It could cause the proliferation of local vigilantes and ethnic militias as self-help mechanisms. This could cause human rights violations, civil disorder, and mob violence including extra-judicial killings.

Fatalities Heat Map of the Herder-Farmer Conflict in the Niger Delta of Nigeria



Heat Map shows the cluster of reported fatalities caused by herder-farmer clashes in the Niger Delta from January 2020 - February 2023. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The herder-farmer conflict is a serious threat to regional security. Government should start a gradual transition to ranching to reduce clashes. Stakeholders should work with community leaders to leverage local conflict management structures to mitigate the conflict. Interestingly, peace actors are already leveraging traditional institutions to facilitate dialogue between herders and farmers in some communities. Stakeholders should strengthen the existing local structures through early warning systems and capacity building.

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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