

Niger Delta Weekly: Highlighting the Resurgence of Kidnapping in Bayelsa

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Description

Recent trends indicate a resurgence of kidnapping for ransom in Bayelsa state. Kidnapping is increasingly becoming frequent and geographically dispersed in the state. According to data (see map below), over 70 incidents of kidnapping were reported in Bayelsa state between January 2016 and March 2020. Since January 2020, there has been an upsurge in the number of kidnapping cases in the state. In January 2020, for instance, the wife of a businessman and her neighbor were reportedly abducted by gunmen in Imiringi, Ogbia LGA. In March 2020, an 80-year old mother of a local government chairman was reportedly kidnapped by gunmen in Agudama-Ekpetiama, Yenagoa LGA. In April 2020, 15 kidnapped victims were reportedly rescued by operatives of the joint military task force code-named 'Operation Delta Safe' in Nembe LGA. Recently, in May 2020, an 80-year old father of a local government chairman was reportedly abducted by gunmen in Agbere, Sagbama LGA. More recently, on May 9, 2020, a prominent news blogger was reportedly abducted by hooded gunmen at his residence in Yenagoa, the state capital.

Why it Matters

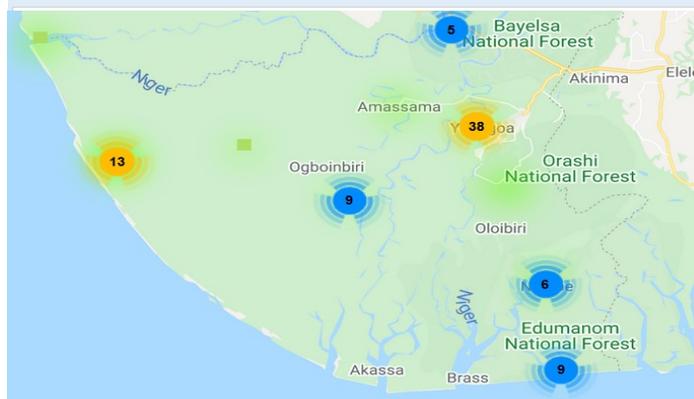
The emerging trend and pattern of kidnapping for ransom in the state is alarming. It is increasingly becoming recurrent and intense, including targeted abduction of family members of businesspersons and government officials. It is thus a serious threat to human security with severe socio-economic and political repercussions for the state.

Social: The impact of kidnapping for ransom could be socially devastating in terms of the threat it poses to the life of victims, the agony it causes family members and the social disruptions it cause in society. The fear of being kidnapped can cause anxiety and distrust among residents, and create a general feeling of insecurity. Kidnapping could also exacerbate insecurity as the proceeds can be used to fund other criminal activities such as militancy, piracy and illegal oil bunkering.

Economic: Kidnapping for ransom imposes heavy financial burdens on individuals, families, businesses, and organizations. It can cause an increase in the cost of doing business which could be the cost of paying for extra security or ransoms. The threat of kidnapping can also force businesses to relocate, scare off investors, reduce government's revenue from taxation, and increase expenditure on public security.

Political: The prevailing trend of abducting government officials and their family members for ransom, could adversely impact governance in the state. It can cause a feeling of insecurity among government officials, reduce their productivity and disrupt governance. The situation could further degenerate into politically motivated kidnappings which could destabilize governance and fuel political instability.

Incidents Heat Map of Kidnapping for Ransom in Bayelsa State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of kidnapping for ransom in Bayelsa state, from January 2016 - March 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Kidnapping for ransom is a major security threat in the state. It is increasingly becoming frequent and intense, especially the abduction of close family members of government officials. The situation could worsen, unless preventive actions are taken by stakeholders. Stakeholders should work with relevant security agencies to strengthen ongoing efforts to mitigate the problem. Stakeholders should also ensure that the proposed South-South regional security outfit is structured to effectively deal with the threat of kidnapping.

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Incident Details: Kindly include the State, LGA, Town, Date, and Brief Incident Description.



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