

Niger Delta Weekly: Spotighting Gang Violence in Cross River State

May 24-30, 2020

Description

This weekly update looks at gang violence in the Niger Delta with particular focus on Cross River state. Gang violence is a prevailing security threat in Cross River, driven largely by supremacy battles among rival cult gangs. Cult gangs permeate public institutions and communities, involving students, lecturers and other public officials. Data indicates that gang violence is becoming increasingly brutal and taking various criminal and political dimensions. According to data (see map below), cult clashes caused over 180 fatalities in Cross River between January 2016 and April 2020. In March 2020, for instance, 8 persons were reportedly killed in a series of cult clashes at different locations in Calabar, the state capital. In April 2020, 2 persons including, a notorious cult leader, were reportedly killed during clashes between Vikings and Black Axe cult gangs in Ugep, Yakurr LGA. Lately, in May 2020, over 6 persons including a lecturer, a councillorship candidate, and a former chairman of a local chapter of a major political party, were reportedly killed by cultists at different locations in Calabar Municipal and Calabar South LGAs.

Why it Matters

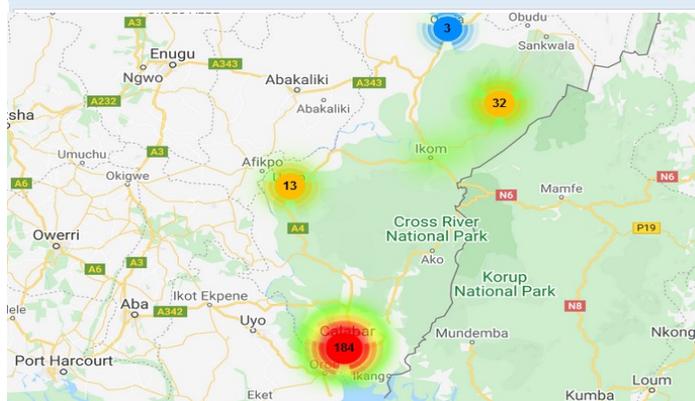
Recent incidents indicate that gang violence in Cross River state is becoming increasingly intense and predatory, and taking different criminal and political dimensions including targeted killings of public officials. The prevailing situation could degenerate with far-reaching socio-economic and political repercussions for the state.

Social: Recurrent cult clashes could promote a culture of violence, especially given that cult gangs permeate neighborhoods and public institutions in the state. Frequent clashes could also embolden cult gangs to recruit more youths into their ranks to help expand and defend their territory. Moreover, considering that cult gangs overlap with criminal syndicates, membership of cult gangs could serve as a gateway to other criminal activities such as robbery and kidnapping.

Economic: Insecurity caused by gang violence and allied criminal activities could have negative impacts on the economy of the state. Shop owners could be robbed or killed during gang violence. Cult clashes could also provide an avenue for criminals to rob markets and loot shops. This could cause businesses to shutdown or relocate, and thereby result in loss of livelihoods and economic opportunities.

Political: The ongoing cycle of gang violence could have serious implications for politics in the state, especially in the context of the upcoming local government elections scheduled for May 30, 2020. Due to the political underpinnings of gang violence, cult gangs could be deployed by desperate politicians to destabilize the electoral process through intimidation of voters and attack or killing of opponents.

Fatalities Heat Map of Gang Related Violence in Cross River State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported fatalities caused by cult and gang violence in Cross River state from January 2016 - April 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Recent data shows that rival cult clashes and reprisal attacks are becoming increasingly intense and predatory, especially targeted killing of public officials. Peace actors should collaborate with security agencies and the state government to intensify ongoing efforts to clampdown on cultism and address underlying drivers of gang violence. Stakeholders should also work with the state government to ensure the proposed South-South regional security outfit is organized to effectively deal with various dimensions of gang violence.

Contact Us

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



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