

# Niger Delta Weekly: Highlighting the Threat of Kidnapping in Edo State

July 12-18, 2020

## Description

This weekly update highlights kidnapping in the Niger Delta with a focus on the evolving threat of kidnapping for ransom in Edo State. According to data (see map below), over 70 incidents of kidnapping were reported in Edo State between January 2016 and May 2020. Recent data indicates that incidents of kidnapping are becoming more frequent and lethal in the State, especially the abduction of politicians for ransom. In April 2020, for instance, a Commissioner in the State was reportedly abducted by gunmen who also killed his two police orderlies along the Benin-Auchi Road, Ovia North-East LGA. On May 07, 2020, a 41-year old lawyer was reportedly abducted and killed by gunmen in Benin City, the State capital. Separately, on May 16, 2020, a prominent politician, who was a former Commissioner and local council chairman, was reportedly kidnapped and killed by gunmen in Utese village, Ovia North-East LGA. His corpse was found in a forest after a 5 million naira ransom was paid. More recently, on July 10, 2020, gunmen reportedly killed two policemen during a failed attempt to abduct a businessman in Benin City.

## Why it Matters

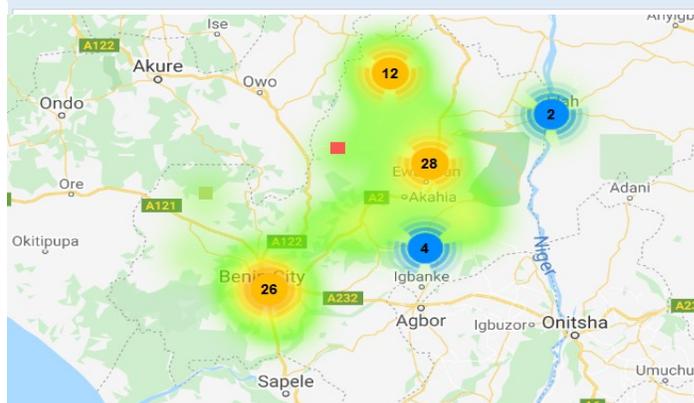
Kidnapping is gradually becoming a serious threat to peace and security in Edo State. Recent data indicates a rise in reported incidents of kidnapping for ransom, including killing of kidnap victims and security operatives. If the risk of kidnapping is not mitigated it could cause significant socio-economic and political consequences for the State.

**Social:** The prevalence of kidnapping for ransom could be socially distressing, not only in terms of the financial burden of ransoms, but also the threat to the lives of victims, the anguish it causes families and the feeling of insecurity it creates in society. Moreover, profits from kidnapping activities could encourage other forms of unlawful behaviors and reinforce other criminal ventures such as robbery and drug trafficking. This could further exacerbate insecurity in the State.

**Economic:** Kidnapping activities could create an atmosphere of insecurity that could disrupt economic activities. Kidnapping for ransom could cause significant economic distortions and damage to legitimate business activities. The risk of kidnapping could also have huge financial impact on businesses as companies budget for additional security costs. Furthermore, payment of ransoms could undercut household income and cause serious economic hardship for families.

**Political:** The emerging trend of kidnapping public officials for ransom could cause anxiety among government officials and disrupt governance. The situation could further degenerate into politically motivated kidnapping to intimidate political opponents, especially in the run-up to the September 2020 governorship elections in the State.

## Incidents Heat Map of Kidnapping for Ransom in Edo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of kidnapping for ransom in Edo State from January 2016 - May 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org).

## Prognosis

Kidnapping for ransom in Edo State remains frequent and intense. Kidnapping of public officials and politically exposed persons could intensify, especially in the run-up to the governorship elections, scheduled for September 2020. Stakeholders should work with security agencies and the State government to reinforce ongoing efforts to mitigate the risk of kidnapping. Peace and development actors should also work with relevant government agencies to identify and address the underlying drivers of kidnappings 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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