

Niger Delta Weekly: Highlighting Vigilantism and Mob Violence in Imo State

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Description

This weekly update highlights mob justice in the Niger Delta with a focus on vigilantism and mob violence in Imo State. According to data (see map below), vigilantism and mob violence caused over 45 reported fatalities in Imo State between January 2016 and June 2020. Recent data indicates an increase in reported incidents of mob violence in Imo State. In March 2020, for instance, a mob reportedly lynched a man for allegedly killing his younger brother in Umuduru village, Ehime Mbanjo LGA. In April, two young men, including a police constable, were reportedly stripped and beaten by a mob over alleged homosexual acts in Umueze community, Orlu LGA. In May, a 34-year old man was reportedly beaten to death by a gang of cultists hired to deal with him for allegedly having an intimate relationship with a married woman in Ihie community, Ohaji/Egbema LGA. Following the incident, a mob of youths reportedly burned six houses belonging to the families of the suspected cultists. Recently, on July 21, 2020, two male robbery suspects were reportedly burned to death by a mob in Obodo-Ujichi town, Ahiazu Mbaise LGA.

Why it Matters

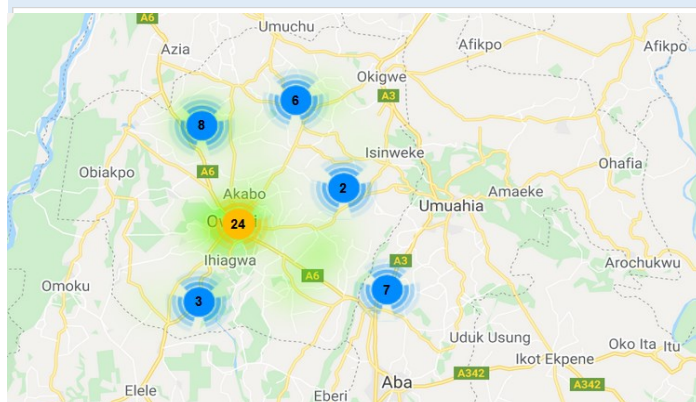
Mob lynching is increasingly becoming a serious security threat in Imo State, driven largely by vigilantism - the tendency by individuals or groups to take the law into their hands to dispense justice summarily without recourse to legal procedures - as a way of responding to criminality and other misconducts. The emerging situation could cause lawlessness, human rights abuses and extra-judicial killings, with grave socio-economic and political consequences for the State.

Social: Vigilantism and mob lynching could encourage a culture of collective violence which could cause social disorder and embolden human rights violations. The dehumanizing nature of mob violence - stripping, lynching and burning of victims - devalues human life and dignity. Also, punitive mob violence could evolve into spontaneous acts of criminal victimization and arbitrary killing of residents. This could cause unrest and undermine human security in the State.

Economic: The prevalence of vigilante violence and mob lynching could create a climate of fear and insecurity that could be detrimental to economic development. Lynch mob attacks could result in looting, arson and vandalism, which could disrupt business activities and cause loss of livelihoods and economic opportunities.

Political: Vigilantism and mob justice could undermine the criminal justice system in the State. This could create a domino effect where mob lynching and extra-judicial killings become the new normal in law enforcement and criminal justice system. This could constitute serious security, administrative and political challenges for the State.

Fatalities Heat Map of Vigilantism and Mob Violence in Imo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported fatalities caused by vigilantism and mob violence in Imo State from January 2016 - June 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Mob violence is a prevailing threat to peace and security in Imo State, driven mainly by public distrust in the judicial and penal system and perceived policing vacuum amidst rising criminality in the State. Stakeholders should work with the State government to address the underlying drivers of mob violence. Stakeholders should also engage with relevant government agencies and media outfits to raise awareness on vigilantism and mob violence, and advocate for appropriate punitive, preventive and remedial measures.

Contact Us

Inquiries: Afeno Super Odomovo, Research Coordinator

Telephone: 08172401595

Email: afeno@pindfoundation.org

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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