

Niger Delta Weekly: Responding to Rising Criminal Violence in Bayelsa State

June 12-18, 2022

Description

This weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on criminal violence in Bayelsa State. According to data (see map below), criminal violence caused over 250 fatalities in Bayelsa State between January 2019 and April 2022. Recent incidents indicate a rise in violent criminality in the State, including kidnapping for ransom and clashes between rival cult gangs. In May 2022, for instance, gunmen reportedly kidnapped three residents including a traditional ruler and a 50-year-old woman in Otuabula community, Ogbia LGA. Separately, in May, gunmen reportedly attacked and killed two policemen and three civilians, and inflicted injuries on many others along Idema- Otuabagi Road in Ogbia LGA. In June, four persons were reportedly killed during clashes between cult gangs at different locations in Yenagoa, the state capital. The clash was allegedly triggered by a disagreement over the sharing of cash gifts from politicians in the area. More recently, on June 13, 2022, suspected sea robbers reportedly abducted eight passengers from a speedboat along the Brass-Yenagoa waterways in Brass LGA.

Why it Matters

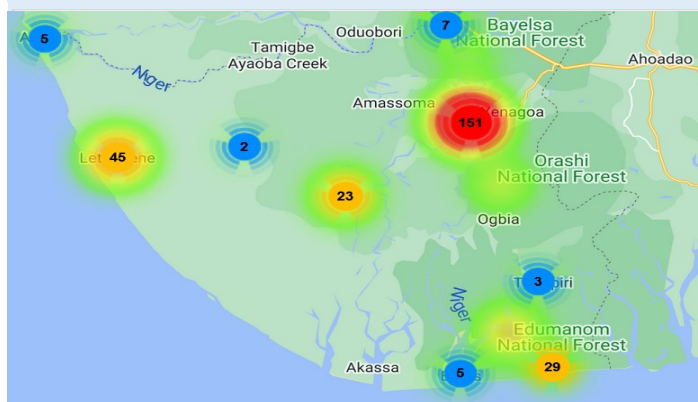
Criminal violence is currently one of the greatest security challenges facing individuals, families, businesses and organizations in the State. The growing prevalence of piracy, kidnapping for ransom and armed clashes between rival cult gangs presents serious security risk to residents. The security situation has the potential to cause serious socio-economic and political disruptions in the State, especially within the context of rising tensions in the run-up to the 2023 general elections.

Social: The prevalence of criminal violence could have serious psychosocial impact on residents. Rising incidents of piracy, kidnapping and gang violence could heighten insecurity and consequently compel residents to adopt aggressive coping strategies and self-help measures including criminal victimization and mob violence. This could negatively affect mobility and social activities with far-reaching consequences for communal stability and the wellbeing of residents.

Economic: Rising incidents of criminal violence could adversely impact the economy of the State. Piracy, kidnapping for ransom and clashes between cult gangs could cause serious economic disruptions that could undermine business activities and undercut household income. Robbery and kidnaping for ransom could impose huge financial burdens on individuals, families and businesses in the State.

Political: The growing prevalence of criminal violence could weaken citizen's trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and properties, and consequently undermine the legitimacy and authority of the State. This could disrupt politics and governance in the State.

Fatalities Heat Map of Organized Criminality in Bayelsa State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows geographical concentration of fatalities caused by criminal violence in Bayelsa State from January 2019 - April 2022. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

Criminal violence is increasingly becoming prevalent and lethal in Bayelsa State. Stakeholders should collaborate with the State government, community leaders and the relevant security agencies to identify and address the underlying drivers and enablers of the current wave of criminal violence. Stakeholders should also work with law enforcement agencies to devise appropriate measures to curb the proliferation of arms, counteract violent cult activities, and reinforce 'hot spot' policing to curb criminal violence in the State.

Contact Us

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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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