

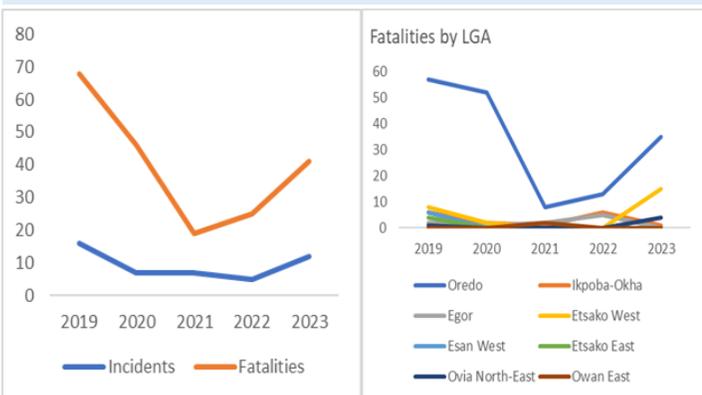
Niger Delta Weekly: Deescalating Rising Wave of Cult Gang Related Killings in Edo State

January 07-13, 2024

Background

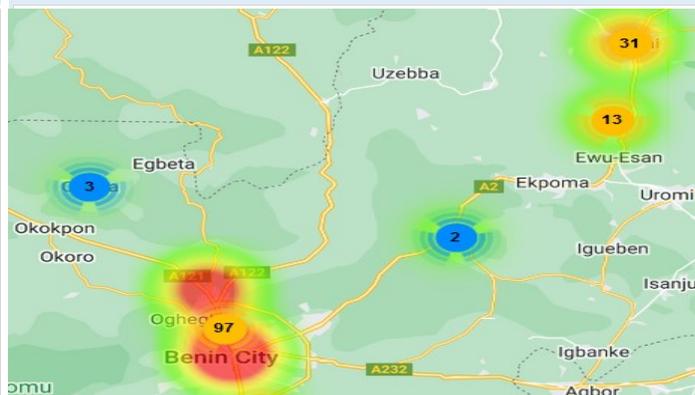
This weekly update spotlights organized criminality in the Niger Delta with a focus on cult gang related killings in Edo State. Gang violence is a major cause of insecurity in the State, mainly driven by struggle for supremacy and territorial control among rival cult gangs as well as vigilante violence, conflict over the collection of illegal levies, and general criminality. According to data (see map below), gang violence caused over 180 fatalities in the State between January 2021 and December 2023. Recent incidents indicate a resurgence of killings by cult gangs. In December 2023, for instance, over 30 persons were reportedly killed in clashes between rival cult gangs in the State. During the period, a woman was allegedly killed by a gang of cultists at Ogiso quarters in Benin City, the state capital. Also, three persons including a journalist and the leader of a local vigilante were allegedly killed during clashes between rival cult gangs at different locations in Oredo LGA. More recently, on December 31, 2023, the head of a vigilante group was allegedly killed by a gang of cultists at a motor park in Ekosodin community, Ovia North East LGA.

Key Facts and Figures: Cult Gang Related Killings in Edo State



Data shows that Oredo Local Government Area (LGA) had the highest number of gang related fatalities during the period. Sources: ACLED and Nigeria Watch data formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Fatalities Heat Map of Cult and Gang Related Violence in Edo State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows the geographical concentration of fatalities caused by gang violence in Edo State from January 2021 - December 2023. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Why it Matters

The recent wave of killings by cult gangs has the potential to escalate in ways that could negatively impact the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in the State. It could trigger a cycle of violence that could degenerate into extended battles for supremacy among cult gangs. This could also take on various criminal, communal and political dimensions, especially in the context of rising tensions in the lead-up to the September 2024 governorship election in the state. This could cause serious socio-economic and political disruptions in the State.

Anticipated Trends and Dynamics

The recent wave of killings by cult gangs could significantly impact the dynamics of conflict and insecurity in the State. It could set off a cycle of reprisal killing and criminality. Stakeholders should work with the security agencies to intensify ongoing anti-cultism efforts. Stakeholders should team up with media outlets to carry out peace education to discourage membership of cult groups. Peace actors should collaborate with the State government and community leaders to address the underlying drivers of the current wave of killings.

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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