

# Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing Communal Clashes over Land Disputes in Akwa Ibom State

March 21-27, 2021

## Description

This edition of the weekly update spotlights communal conflict in the Niger Delta with a focus on clashes over land and boundary disputes in Akwa Ibom State. According to data (see map below), clashes over land disputes caused over 400 fatalities in the State between 2016 and 2020. Recent incidents indicate a resurgence of clashes over boundary disputes between communities in Akwa Ibom State and neighboring Cross River and Abia States. In January 2021, for instance, three persons were reportedly killed and four others abducted during a clash over a boundary dispute between Nkari community in Ini LGA, Akwa Ibom State and Usaka Ukwu in Ikwuano LGA, Abia State. In February, a resident was reportedly killed and 15 others abducted during a clash over a land dispute between Ikpanya community in Ibiono Ibom LGA, Akwa Ibom State and Ugbo in Arochukwu LGA, Abia State. Recently, on March 22, 2021, several persons were reported missing and houses burned during a clash over a land dispute between Oku Iboku community in Itu LGA, Akwa Ibom State and Ikot Offiong in Odukpani LGA, Cross River State.

## Why it Matters

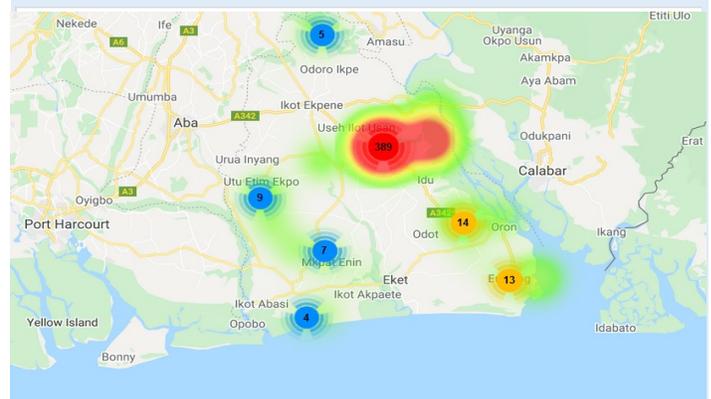
Recurrent clashes over land and boundary disputes could intensify communal tensions and hostilities which could trigger a cycle of violence and reprisal killings. This could adversely impact the peace and security landscape at the local and state levels which could have wide-ranging socio-economic and political consequences for the State.

**Social:** Clashes over land and boundary disputes could have a devastating impact on peace and security in the State. It could intensify ethno-communal hostilities which could result in killings, plundering and internal displacement. Recurrent clashes over land disputes could also impact the local conflict dynamics by encouraging the creation of ethnic militias and the proliferation of arms. This could intensify insecurity and make conflicts over land disputes more intractable.

**Economic:** The prevalence of land disputes could be economically devastating, especially given that land is the mainstay of the local economy. Land disputes could discourage farming by limiting access to land. This could impede economic activities by disrupting agro-allied businesses and livelihoods. Also, given the importance of agricultural livelihood to the economic wellbeing of rural communities, recurrent land disputes could reduce agricultural productivity, undercut household income and deepen rural poverty in the State.

**Political:** Recurrent conflict over land and boundary disputes could destabilize local politics and governance in the State, especially considering that land is not only an economic asset, but also the basis of communal identity, social legitimacy and political representation.

## Fatalities Heat Map of Communal Clashes over Land Disputes in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported fatalities caused by clashes over land disputes in Akwa Ibom from January 2016 - December 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org).

## Prognosis

Conflict over land and boundary disputes in Akwa Ibom remains sporadic with intermittent violence and killings. Stakeholders should work with the State government to address the underlying drivers of land conflicts, and also collaborate with the National Boundary Commission (NBC) to clearly demarcate the boundaries of the State. Peace actors should also work with the State government to establish a community-based early warning system to proactively identify and respond to potential triggers of land conflict.

## 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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