

# Niger Delta Weekly: Preventing Targeted Attacks on Election Facilities in the Niger Delta

May 23-29, 2021

## Description

This edition of the weekly update spotlights vandalism of government facilities in the South-East and South-South regions of Nigeria with a focus on targeted attacks on offices of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the Niger Delta. According to data (see map below), more than 16 offices of the electoral commission were reportedly attacked and vandalized in the Niger Delta between January 2019 and December 2020. Recent incidents indicate an upsurge in targeted attacks on INEC offices and facilities in the South-East and South-South, including the Niger Delta area. Recently, more than three offices of the electoral commission were reportedly vandalized in the Niger Delta. In May 2021, for instance, hoodlums reportedly attacked and vandalized INEC office in Essien Udim LGA, Akwa Ibom State. Ballot boxes and voting cubicles were reportedly destroyed during the incident. Separately, in May, gunmen reportedly set ablaze INEC office in Ohafia LGA, Abia State. More recently, on May 23, 2021, hoodlums reportedly attacked and attempted to vandalize INEC office in Ahiazu Mbaise LGA, Imo State.

## Why it Matters

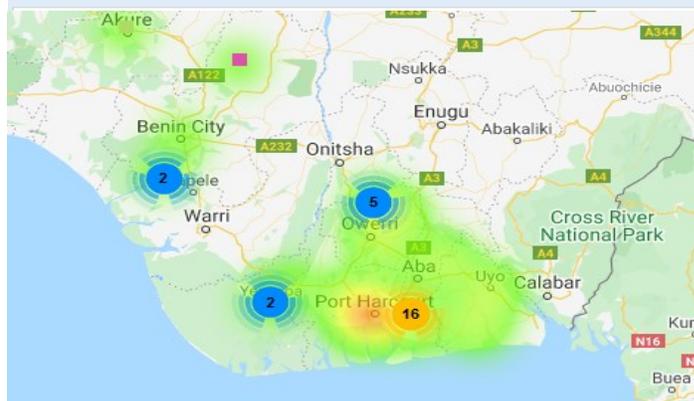
The current wave of arson and vandalism targeting offices and facilities of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has the potential to escalate in ways that could undermine the capacity of the commission to organize credible elections in the affected States, and eventually jeopardize the upcoming 2023 general elections. This could disrupt the electoral process and cause political instability with far-reaching social and economic consequences.

**Social:** The ongoing spate of vandalism and arson targeting election facilities could evolve into indiscriminate destruction of public infrastructure, spontaneous criminal victimization and arbitrary killings. It could also weaken citizens' trust in the capacity of the government to protect lives and properties. This could trigger widespread civil unrest and a breakdown of law and order with wide-ranging security, psychosocial and health consequences for communities and residents.

**Economic:** Vandalism of election facilities could impose huge financial burden on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the government at the local, state and federal levels. Recurrent attacks on election facilities and other public infrastructure could also create anxiety and insecurity which could disrupt commercial activities and impose huge economic costs on individuals and businesses.

**Political:** Targeted attacks on election facilities could threaten electoral activities including voter registration and preparations for upcoming elections. It could also weaken citizens' trust in the electoral system, increase voters' apathy and undermine the electoral process.

## Incidents Heat Map of Attacks on Election Facilities in the Niger Delta of Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of attacks on Election facilities in the Niger Delta from January 2019 - December 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org)

## Prognosis

The ongoing spate of interrelated attacks on security facilities and vandalism of election infrastructure in the South-East and South-South regions has the potential to intensify and spread to more states in the Niger Delta. Peace actors should work with INEC, the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), and the national and state governments to devise appropriate strategies to curb the current wave of attacks on election facilities and improve the security of election infrastructure in the region.

## 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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