

Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting Child Sexual Abuse in Rivers State

September 13-19, 2020

Description

This weekly update spotlights sexual violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on child sexual abuse in Rivers State. According to data (see map below), over 160 incidents of sexual violence, including more than 80 incidents of child sexual abuse, were reported in Rivers State between January 2016 and July 2020. Recent data shows the prevalence of child sexual abuse in the State, especially defilement and incestuous child abuse. In February 2020, for instance, a 4-year old boy was reportedly sexually abused by a 24-year old female nanny in Port Harcourt, the state capital. In May, a 10-year old girl was reportedly raped by a male neighbor in Diobu community, Port Harcourt LGA. In August, a 13-year old girl was reportedly raped by a 30-year old commercial motorcyclist in Barayira community, Tai LGA. Recently, on September 10, 2020, three girls aged 10, 7 and 5 years, were reported to have been serially defiled by their 38-year old father in Elekahia community, Port Harcourt LGA. According to the mother of the victims, the man has been sexually abusing one of their girls since 2012, when she was only 2 years old.

Why it Matters

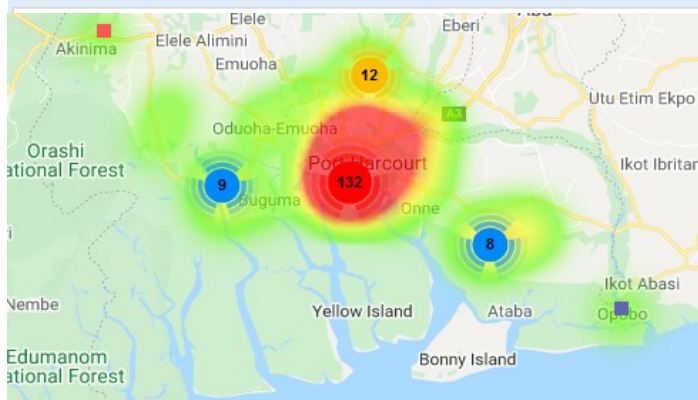
Child sexual abuse is a serious crime and a public health problem that could have long-term consequences for victims and the wider society. Spotlighting the prevalence of child sexual abuse and its various dimensions is crucial for stakeholders to understand the severity of the problem and its socio-economic and political ramifications.

Social: Child sexual abuse could have serious psycho-social and health impacts on victims which could last into adulthood and result in a variety of problems with intimacy and relationships. Sexually abused children could grow up to be frustrated and vulnerable, and could develop age inappropriate sexual behaviors, especially given that in many cases children are abused by persons they know and trust, and on whom they are dependent. Child sexual abuse could also cause death and sexual and reproductive health challenges.

Economic: Child sexual abuse could impose economic burden on victims, families, communities and government. These could be the costs of healthcare, child welfare and criminal justice services. Child sexual abuse can cause death and therefore the loss of all the investment in a child. It can also inhibit the education of victims, which could reduce employment opportunities and productivity in adult life.

Political: Child sexual abuse is a fundamental human rights violation with significant political ramifications. The prevalence of child sexual abuse could be construed as indicative of government failure to protect the rights of children. This could cause a loss of public confidence in the capacity of government to protect human rights in the State.

Incidents Heat Map of Sexual Violence in Rivers State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of sexual violence in Rivers State from January 2016 - July 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Child sexual abuse remains prevalent in Rivers State. Stakeholders should work with media outfits to spotlight child sexual abuse, and raise public awareness of its various types and dimensions in the State. Stakeholders should also educate parents and caregivers on the risk of child sexual abuse and appropriate preventive measures including parenting and child protection guidelines. Stakeholders should also devise appropriate remedial and punitive measures and draw up strategies to encourage reporting of incidents of abuse.

Contact Us

Inquiries: Afeno Super Odomovo, Research Coordinator

Telephone: 08172401595

Email: afeno@pindfoundation.org

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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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