

Niger Delta Weekly: De-escalating Violent Protests and Hooliganism in the Niger Delta

October 25-31, 2020

Description

This special edition of the weekly update spotlights the violent demonstrations in the Niger Delta in the aftermath of the 'EndSARS' protests in Nigeria. The protests which started as a campaign against police brutality has snowballed into mass demonstrations, crackdown by security forces and destruction of infrastructure by hoodlums who have hijacked the protests across the country. In the Niger Delta, there are several reported incidents of arson, vandalism, looting, killings and disruption of public peace and order by hoodlums under the guise of the protests, particularly in Abia, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers state. On October 21, 2020, for instance, over 10 persons including 5 soldiers, 3 policemen and 2 civilians were reportedly killed and property destroyed during clashes between security forces and supporters of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in parts of Oyigbo and Port Harcourt LGAs in Rivers State. Also, in the wake of the protest, the Reformed Niger Delta Avengers - a coalition of ex-militants - reportedly threatened to resume attacks on oil and gas facilities in the Niger Delta.

Why it Matters

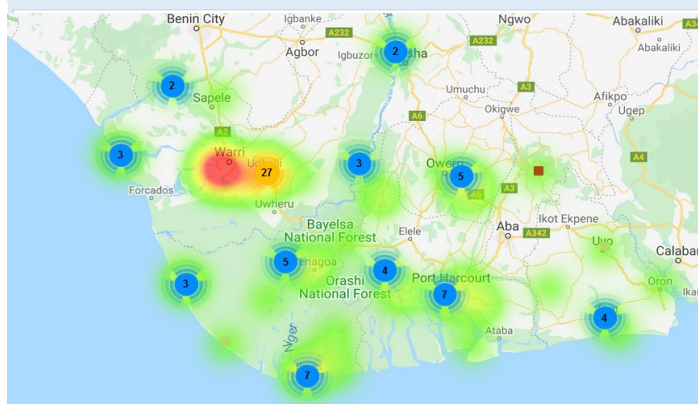
The spate of violent clashes and hooliganism in the wake of the 'EndSARS' protests could escalate in ways that can adversely impact the peace and conflict dynamics in the Niger Delta. As hinted by the reported threat of attacks by militants and clashes between Biafran separatists and security forces, the prevailing situation has the potential to escalate and intersect with ethnic tensions and organized criminality to cause socio-economic and political instability in the region.

Social: If not de-escalated, the ongoing spate of violent clashes, vandalism and looting could evolve into indiscriminate destruction of properties, spontaneous criminal victimization and arbitrary killings. This could cause public unrest and a breakdown of law and order with devastating security and health consequences for communities and residents. The situation could also be exploited by criminals and separatist groups to engage in organized violence and criminality.

Economic: Violent protests and hooliganism could have devastating impact on the economy. The destruction of public infrastructure, private properties and livelihoods, as well as the disruption of business activities and restriction of human and vehicular movement, have caused huge economic losses in the region. The economy could be destabilized if violent protest and vandalism continue unabated.

Political: Violent protests and hooliganism could cause chaos and weaken public support for government. Lengthy protests could also cause radicalism which can be exploited by dissidents and separatist groups to undermine the government and cause political instability.

Incidents Heat Map of Violent Protests and Attacks on Infrastructure in the Niger Delta



Heat Map shows the intensity of violent protests and attacks on public infrastructure in the Niger Delta from January 2016 - September 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

Incidents of violent clashes and hooliganism in the aftermath of the 'EndSARS' protests remain sporadic in the Niger Delta. The situation could escalate and cause a second wave of violence, as tension remains high in the streets and on the social media. Stakeholders should implore the protesters to stay off the streets, and work with state governments, opinion leaders and youth groups to rebuild public trust and dialogue with the citizens through non-partisan consultative town hall meetings to de-escalate the situation.

Contact Us

Inquiries: Afeno Super Odomovo, Research Coordinator

Telephone: 08172401595

Email: afeno@pindfoundation.org

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.



FOUNDATION FOR PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES IN THE NIGER DELTA



FOUNDATION FOR NIGER DELTA PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE