

Niger Delta Weekly: Spotighting Cult and Gang Related Killings in Akwa Ibom State

June 27 - July 03, 2021

Description

This edition of the weekly update spotlights gang violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on cult and gang related killings in Akwa Ibom State. According to data (see map below), over 90 cult and gang related fatalities were reported in Akwa Ibom State between 2018 and 2020. Recent incidents indicate an upsurge in cult and gang related violence and killings in the State, driven largely by battles for supremacy and territorial control among rival cult gangs, as well as criminality. Over the last three months, more than 16 persons have been killed in a series of armed clashes between rival cult gangs in the State. In April 2021, for instance, six persons were reportedly killed and many properties destroyed during a clash between rival cult gangs in Mbiabong Ikot Essien community, Uyo LGA. In May, eight persons were reportedly killed and two houses burned during a clash between two rival cult groups in Esit Eket town, Esit Eket LGA. More recently, on June 21, 2021, three persons were reportedly killed during a clash between members of two rival cult gangs over a call girl at a clubhouse in Idong Afianwe community, Eket LGA.

Why it Matters

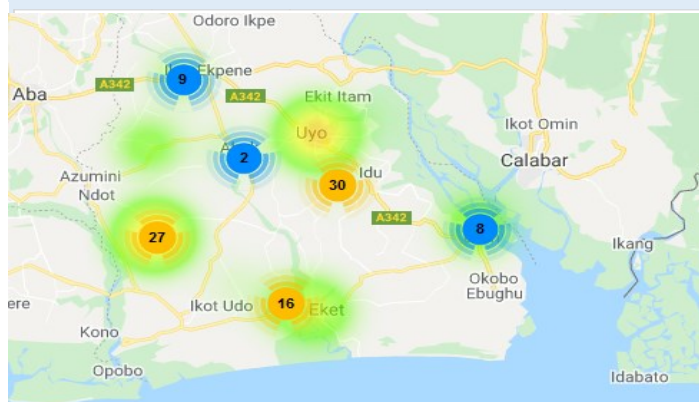
The recent upsurge in cult and gang related killings has the potential to trigger a sequence of armed clashes and reprisal killings in the State. It could take on various communal and criminal dimensions and degenerate into extended battles for supremacy and territorial control among rival cult gangs. This could bring about serious socio-political and economic repercussions in the State, especially considering the socio-economic and political underpinnings of cult gangs.

Social: Cult clashes could intensify arms proliferation and criminality in the State, especially considering that cult groups and criminal gangs overlap. Recurrent clashes could embolden cult gangs to enlist more youths to defend their territory. This could intensify ethnic and communal tensions which could make it easy for cult gangs to pervade more communities and threaten communal peace and stability.

Economic: Recurrent cult clashes and related criminal activities could create an insecure environment that is unfavorable for economic development. Properties could be destroyed, markets and shops looted and residents robbed or killed during cult clashes. Cult clashes could also prevent residents from patronizing businesses in areas dominated by cult gangs. This could cause the closure of businesses and loss of business opportunities, livelihoods and revenue.

Political: Cult clashes could have adverse impact on governance in the State. It could present additional security challenges and drive up government spending on public security. Cult gangs could also evolve into politically connected militias that could cause political instability.

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



Heat Map shows concentration of reported cult and gang related fatalities in Akwa Ibom State from January 2018 - December 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

Gang violence is becoming increasingly prevalent in Akwa Ibom State, driven mainly by battles for supremacy among rival cult gangs. Stakeholders should work with the State government to address the underlying drivers of the recent wave of cult violence. Peace actors should collaborate with media outfits to raise awareness on the negative effects of violent cult activities. Law enforcement agencies should also work with local residents for early warning and intelligence gathering to reinforce 'hot spot policing'.

Contact Us

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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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