

Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting Politically Motivated Killings in Akwa Ibom State

May 15-21, 2022

Description

This edition of the weekly update spotlights political violence in the Niger Delta with a focus on politically motivated killings in Akwa Ibom State. According to data (see map below), over 50 incidents of election-related violence, including more than 25 related fatalities, were reported in Akwa Ibom State between January 2015 and March 2022. In the lead-up to the upcoming 2023 general elections, the political situation in the State is already charged with several reported incidents of politically motivated killings, especially the targeted killings of chieftains of major political parties in the State. In January 2022, for instance, gunmen suspected to be assassins reportedly killed a chieftain of a major political party in Ikot Udoma village, Eket LGA. In February, gunmen reportedly killed a chieftain of another major political party in Uyo, the state capital. More recently, on May 15, 2022, the former chairman of the local chapter of a major political party was reportedly assassinated by gunmen at his residence in Ekparakwa community, Oruk Anam LGA. These series of targeted killings have heightened political tensions in the State.

Why it Matters

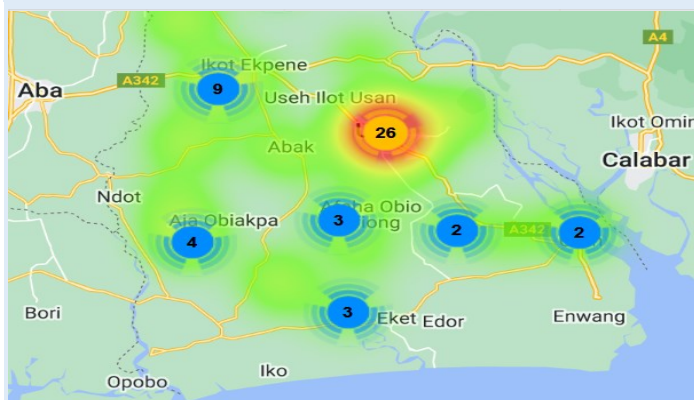
The growing wave of politically motivated killings has the potential to escalate in ways that could trigger widespread reprisal violence and killings in the lead-up to, during and after the upcoming 2023 general elections in the State. This could cause a general feeling of insecurity which could lead to a high level of voters' apathy. This could undermine the legitimacy of the electoral process and threaten public security, with wide-ranging socio-economic and political consequences.

Social: Politically motivated killings could negatively impact the local conflict and security dynamics in the State. It could intensify arms proliferation, violent criminality and rival cult clashes. Political thugs and armed groups employed to carry out political assassinations could metamorphose into militias and criminal gangs after the elections. Political assassinations could also deepen political polarization which could undermine social cohesion and communal stability.

Economic: Political assassinations could create a climate of insecurity that could negatively affect the economy of the State. It could cause fear and uncertainties which could disrupt business activities, weaken investors' confidence and consequently cause loss of revenue, livelihoods and economic opportunities. The situation could also provide avenues for hoodlums to rob, loot and vandalize properties.

Political: Political violence could have long-term consequences for political attitudes, behavior and participation. It could cause voters' apathy which could distort the formal mechanisms of political competition and thus undermine the electoral and political processes.

Incidents Heat Map of Political & Election-related Violence in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported incidents of election-related violence in Akwa Ibom State from January 2015 - March 2022. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org

Prognosis

The current political situation in Akwa Ibom has the potential to escalate in ways that could intensify political tensions and violence before and during the upcoming general elections and beyond. Stakeholders should continue to advocate for non-violent elections through popular media outfits. Stakeholders should also create relevant infrastructure for peace messaging, grassroots peace advocacy and facilitation of peace accords between key political actors, to defuse tensions and mitigate political violence in the State.

Contact Us

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Incident Details: Kindly include the State, LGA, Town, Date, and brief incident description.



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