

# Nigeria Conflict Bulletin: Imo State

Patterns and Trends, January 2012 - June 2015

Violence per capita in Imo is among the lowest in the region, as is the number of fatalities per capita. Incidences of violence largely occurred in the LGAs surrounding the capital city of Owerri, many of which were inter-personal in nature. Between January 2012 and December 2013, incidents reported included criminality, abductions and vigilante/mob justice. There were also a number of fatalities associated with public unrest and reports of ritual killings in the state. The first half of 2014 was the most violent of the two-year period with clashes that reportedly killed dozens.

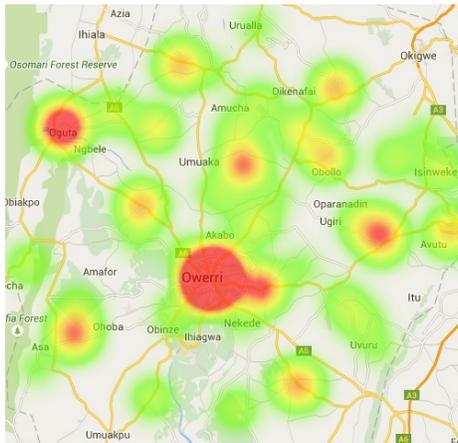
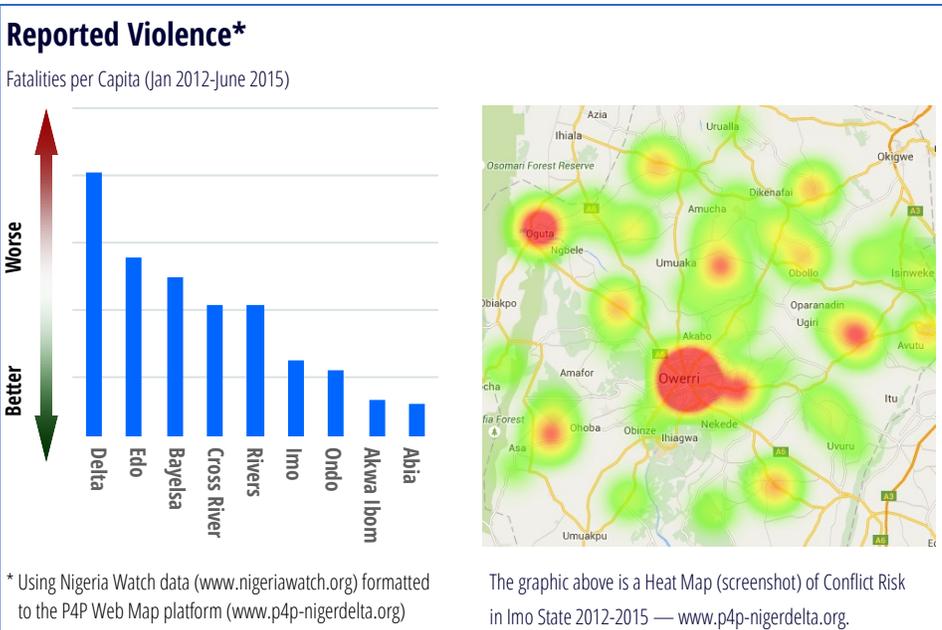
Owelle Rochas Okorocha has been the governor of Imo since May 2011. In 2011, he left the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to run for governor with the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). The Independent

National Electoral Commission (INEC) initially declared the election inconclusive due to reports of irregularities but later confirmed Okorocha's win. After being elected, Governor Okorocha fired all 27 local government chairmen and replaced them with a transition committee. In a politically risky move, Okorocha later switched from APGA to APC, but nevertheless emerged victorious in the second round of the 2015 elections, the first round of which were initially declared inconclusive.

This Conflict Bulletin provides a brief snapshot of the trends and patterns of conflict risk factors at the State and LGA levels, drawing on the data available on the P4P Digital Platform for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement. It represents a compilation of the data from the sources listed below, not

necessarily the opinions of FFP or any other organization that collaborated on the production of this bulletin. The screenshot of the heat map shows the relative distribution of incidents from one LGA to the next from January 2012 to June 2015. The trendline shows the number of incidents and fatalities over time. The bar chart shows the relative trend of incidents of insecurity by LGA per capita.

The summaries draw on data collected by ACLED, FFP's UNLock, the Council on Foreign Relations' NST, WANEP Nigeria, CSS/ETH Zurich, NEEWS2015, and Nigeria Watch integrated on the P4P platform. They also draw on data and information from "Violence in Nigeria: Patterns and Trends," by Patricia Taft and Nate Haken (Springer Press, April 2015).

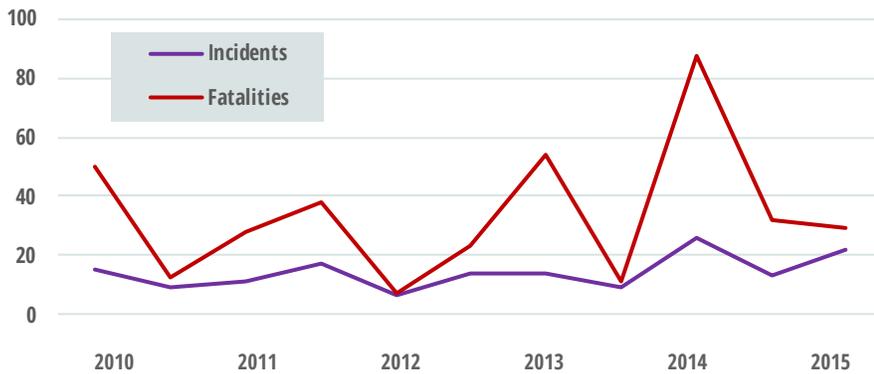


The graphic above is a Heat Map (screenshot) of Conflict Risk in Imo State 2012-2015 — [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org).

### Overview of Imo State

Imo state has a population of approximately 3.9 million people, according to the 2006 census. The population is predominantly Igbo (98%). The capital city of Owerri is the largest in the state. Imo is made up of 27 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Natural resources include palm oil, mahogany, crude oil, and natural gas.

### Conflict Risk Factors in Imo State\*



\* Using Nigeria Watch data ([www.nigeriawatch.org](http://www.nigeriawatch.org)) formatted to the P4P Web Map platform ([www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org))

### Aboh Mbaise

(Imo East Senatorial District)

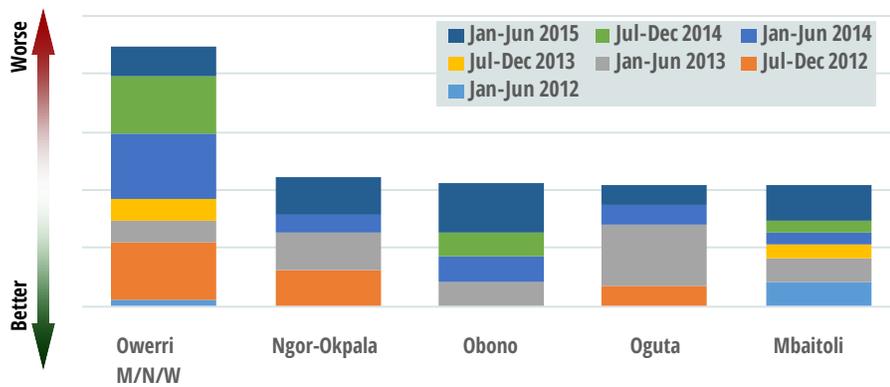
#### Key LGA Risk Factors

- > Kidnapping
- > Protest
- > Sexual violence
- > Murder

Sexual violence, child abuse, abductions, and killings were reported in the first half of 2014. In the first half of 2015, a woman was reportedly raped and killed. In a separate incidents, a man was reportedly strangled to death in his apartment.

In May 2012, a local church leader was reportedly abducted for a ransom of 500,000 Naira and later killed by his captors, despite the family reporting that the ransom had been paid. In February 2013, the murder of a local doctor triggered a protest rally by women and youth that lasted for several hours, blocking the main highway.

### Reported Insecurity Per Capita in Imo State (by LGA)\*



FFP is committed to promoting sustainable human security around the world, and is the International Coordinating Partner on Partners for Peace (P4P), an initiative supported by PIND. FFP has been working with local civil society in Nigeria to develop the UNLock network since 2010.



One of the data sources utilized in the summary was derived from the UNLock network in Nigeria, a partnership between The Fund for Peace and the Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (IHRHL).



The data used in this analysis was pulled from the integrated digital platform for multistakeholder engagement developed by P4P, an initiative supported by Partnership Initiatives for the Niger Delta (PIND). For a deeper understanding of the conflict risk factors, visit [www.p4p-nigerdelta.org](http://www.p4p-nigerdelta.org).

**Disclaimer** The content of this report represents a summary of the incidents reported in the data, not the opinions of the organizations that collaborated on the compilation of this information.

## Ehime-Mbano

(Imo North Senatorial District)

### Key LGA Risk Factors

Intra-communal violence  
Political violence  
Protests

Issues such as the high rate of youth unemployment and political marginalization were cited in an interview with one self-described “youth leader” who participated in the protest. In March 2014, violence surrounding disputed Government Community Council Elections occurred, although no was reported injured or killed.

In late 2013, there was a reported incident of intra-communal conflict that led to the death of at least one person. In November of the same year, it was reported that youth took to the street to protest unfulfilled political promises in a rally that turned violent, with the death of a police officer as well as property damage reported.

## Mbaitoli

(Imo East Senatorial District)

### Key LGA Risk Factors

> Kidnapping  
> Criminality  
> Sexual violence

In the first half of 2015, reports included a case of the sexual assault of two secondary school girls, a student who stabbed her boyfriend in the course of an argument, and a man who was accused of killing his nephew (a police officer) in a land dispute.

In June 2014, a suspect was reportedly killed by police after an attempted robbery. A political candidate was reportedly killed in September 2014.

In January 2013, the deputy governor’s director of protocol was reportedly murdered and the body mutilated by gunmen who later claimed the attack was not politically motivated. In August 2013, the leader of an armed robbery gang was reportedly killed by police during an exchange of gunfire while others were arrested in connection with a variety of robberies and other criminal activities that had occurred throughout the year.

In May 2012, it was reported that two men on motorcycles stormed a ceremonial residence and abducted and killed a local monarch. Also in 2012, there were reports that a police station was attacked by gunmen, killing one police officer.

## Ngor-Okpala

(Imo East Senatorial District)

### Key LGA Risk Factors

> General criminality  
> Kidnapping  
> Protest

Reports in the first half of 2015 included a suspected ritual killing of a motorized tricycle operator, a woman who was stabbed to death, and women protesting the murder of the Labour candidate following the election.

From 2012-2013, there were three reported cases of murder related to domestic disputes and a robbery. In June 2013, a security guard for a lawmaker living in a residence owned by an international financial institution was allegedly shot and killed. In March 2014, a man was killed when violence escalated during an election for the Community Government Council.

## Obowo

(Imo North Senatorial District)

### Key LGA Risk Factors

- > Political violence
- > Kidnapping
- > Murders

In 2014 and the first half of 2015 several other murders were reported. In March 2013 the former majority leader of the State House of Assembly was reportedly kidnapped and murdered.

## Oguta

(Imo West Senatorial District)

### Key LGA Risk Factors

- > Kidnapping
- > Political Tension
- > Sexual violence

In January 2014, a woman was reportedly raped and murdered whilst a reported clash occurred between youths in two communities over access to an oil wellhead. No one was reported killed in the latter incident. In May of 2015, a man killed his 16-year-old girlfriend in a domestic incident.

In early 2013, there were reports of abductions and killings of hotel managers and businessmen. In a sign of increased political tension in Imo, thugs reportedly attacked the governor's convoy in June 2013. There were also several reported deaths towards the end of the year related to foiled robbery attempts and clashes between police and suspected robbers and kidnappers.

October 2012 was marked by floods that displaced more than 8,000 people, destroyed crops and livelihoods and reportedly caused an increase in food prices in the months that followed.

## Ohaji/Egbema

(Imo West Senatorial District)

### Key LGA Risk Factors

- > Protests
- > Inter-communal violence
- > Cult Clashes

In the first half of 2015, there was a cult clash between members of Deywell and Deybam groups that claimed four lives. There was also a revenge mission by cultists that resulted in the stabbing of a man and the burning of goods and property.

In May of 2014, in what appeared to be a weeklong clash between two communities that started over a disputed market barricade, property was destroyed and at least seven people reportedly lost their lives. From July through October 2014, clashes over community oil rights and cult-related violence killed a reported seven people.

In October 2012, flooding caused a spike in food prices and displaced hundreds. In April of 2013, up to 1000 people reportedly gathered to protest attacks and invasions by pastoralists on village farmlands.

## Owerri Municipal/North/West

(Imo East Senatorial District)

### Key LGA Risk Factors

- > Kidnapping
- > Inter-Communal Violence  
(Traders vs. Pastoralists)
- > Cult Clash
- > Protests
- > Political Tensions
- > Sexual violence

Between January 2012 and June 2015, the LGAs around the city of Owerri had the highest number of reported incidents of insecurity per capita in the state, often related to kidnappings, mob justice, and protests. In April 2012, it was reported that indigenes protested a government land seizure intended for development. A clash of rival cult groups reportedly left several people dead in December 2012.

Issues during the first months of 2015 included many reports of protests in Owerri.

- A group of widows were attacked while protesting the Minister of State for Education.
- In February, April, and June, there were protests by labor contractors, lawmakers, and staff members of Imo Broadcasting Corporation respectively over issues of compensation.
- There were also several political protests in the lead-up to elections and after. APC-affiliated women barricaded the entrance to the State Secretariat of Imo State Council of Traditional Rulers to block the way of President Jonathan, PDP supporters protested the alleged voting irregularities after the election, APC supporters blocked roads in protest of delayed election results, protesters from the Women Wing of the Obiangwu Development Union protested the murder of the Labor Party candidate for the House of Assembly, and a youth volunteer group protested their alleged non-inclusion in the Federal Government's Amnesty Program.
- In June, the leader of the Black Axe gang was killed in a shoot-out with the police.

Various protests occurred in the first half of 2014. In January, people protested in front of the Government House in Owerri after the chief of their village was reportedly murdered. In February 2014, a women's group protested during a PDP meeting. Other protests that have taken place in the first half of 2014 include pensioners demanding pensions be paid, transport workers demanding their salaries, and teachers and women's groups protesting the abduction of the schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno State.

In 2013, there was some political controversy as the local government chairmen (who had been fired by the governor in 2011) and their supporters protested peacefully in the streets, claiming that the democratic process had been undermined. Also throughout 2013, there were reported clashes between police, individuals and gangs suspected to be kidnappers. During the year, the number of student protests also increased. In early 2013 youth staged several protests including one in January where an estimated 2,000 youths took to the streets to protest violence in Owerri.

Also, in October, thousands of women reportedly took part in a peaceful demonstration protesting the alleged intimidation and harassment of state government officials by federal anti-corruption agencies. Specifically, according to local newspapers, the women alleged that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) had been unfairly targeting the administration of Governor Rochas Okorochoa.

Other reported issues included:

- In January 2015, a serving commissioner in the Imo State House of Assembly Commission was reportedly killed amidst a climate of rising political tension.
- In May 2014, former governor of Imo

State, Chief Ikedi Ohakim, and his family escaped after their home was petrol bombed by unknown assailants.

- In June a clash between rival cult gangs reportedly left about a dozen people dead. In the second half of 2014, an attempted armed robbery in August reportedly led to the death of four robbers by police officers.
- In September, it was reported that an aide to the Imo State Speaker was found dead, following a public session at the House Assembly.
- In October, oil workers from a station in Ohaji gathered in Owerri to reportedly protest nearly two years of unpaid salaries at the Imo State House.
- In November, there was an increase in violent incidents, including a reported attack and reprisal between traders and pastoralists that reportedly left at least two dead.
- Also in November, women from the Irete community gathered to protest a rise in sexual assaults in their community while at the end of the month, a businessman from Lagos was reported killed by gunmen assumed to be robbers.