WEEKLY REPORT FROM ANAMBRA WSRN EARLY WARNING CENTER ON PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ELECTIONS.

In the past few weeks we’ve recorded series of violence ranging from gunmen attacks, kidnappings and abduction which have further deteriorated the level of security in the state. With the state’s gubernatorial election coming up in few months there is need to address the level of insecurity to ensure lives and properties are safe and secured. This week (9th of May to 17th May 2021) we highlight reports of communal clashes, other forms of violence and political activities. This data is from the media monitoring and field reports from our trained volunteers.

FORMS OF VIOLENCE RECORDED IN THE REPORTING PERIOD

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<th>INCIDENCES</th>
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<th>PERPETRATOR</th>
<th>VICTIM</th>
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<td>Physical Violence</td>
<td>Ekwusigo LGA</td>
<td>Unknown gunmen</td>
<td>A man</td>
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<td>Physical Violence</td>
<td>Awka North</td>
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<td>Physical Violence</td>
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POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

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<td>INEC meeting with stakeholders on the</td>
<td>INEC</td>
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expansion of voters
access to polling units

SUMMARY OF INCIDENCES

- On Sunday evening, around 7pm, 9th of May 2021, unidentified hoodlums attacked a vigilante office in Ozubulu Ekwusigo LGA of Anambra state where they killed one vigilante officer and 5 other persons. They also allegedly razed down the office building with some vehicles parked in the premises. The spokesperson of Anambra police Mr Ikenga acknowledged the attack and said the purported hoodlums came in sienna cars and motorcycles and attacked the vigilante office. We gathered that police men have been deployed to the location to maintain normalcy.

- On Sunday 9th May 2021 at Awka Road, Onitsha, in Anambra State, cartons of live ammunition were said to have been discovered after a truck conveying them fell into drainage and spilled its content. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that the incident created fear among the residents of the area, who later drew the attention of the Police. Eye witness reports stated that police personnel were immediately deployed to the area and the driver of the truck, who sustained injury, was arrested. “The driver and his assistant, who also was injured, tried to gather and conceal the content of the truck but could not do much due to the arrival of the police operatives,” the source added. The source said the assistant driver fled the scene on sighting the police, leaving behind the driver. Confirming the incident, the state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Tochukwu Ikenga, said the police had recovered the vehicle and its contents.

- Some residents of rural communities of Omor and Anaku, both in Ayamelum Local Government Area of Anambra State may have fled their homes following a clash over disputed land. Similarly, there are palpable apprehension in Isuanocha community and neighbouring towns of Mgbakwu, Amanuke and Urum all in Awka South Local Government Area and Okpuno in Awka North Local Government Area of the state after a truck allegedly dumped scores of Fulani herdsmen at weekend. In the fracas that ensued
between Omor and Anaku, about 14 persons were injured, while four of them, according to an eyewitness account were in critical conditions.

- Ahead of the states gubernatorial election, the INEC has commenced move to relocate polling unit from inappropraite places to help solve the challenges of enhancing access to polling units. The Forum which brought together the Governor who was duly represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Solo Chukwulobelu, Religious Leaders, Government Actors, Civil Societies, Women Groups Community Leaders, Security Agencies was aimed at reviewing the process of expansion of voter access to polling units which has three components
  a. Establishing more Polling Units
  b. Relocating Polling Units that are not properly located
  c. Renaming Polling units that were relocated.

To this end, the commission has proposed the creation of 1,112 additional polling units in AnambraState ahead of the November 6 gubernatorial election in the state.

CONCLUSION

This is an urgent call for critical stakeholders including diverse women groups to have dialogue on actions that need to happen to douse the level of tension and insecurity in the state.

In this report we have highlighted two impacts that urgently need to be addressed in the short and long term.

Psychological impacts: With the presence of large illicit ammunitions in the state as discovered along Onitsha this could stir a form of trauma for women and girls as they are usually the most affected in terms of experiencing violence against women and girls, sexual assault and also lead to an increase in social vices. In as much the truck was immediately intercepted by the police force, the possibility of high ammunitions in the state is still very high given the high cause of violence’s being perpetrated daily in the state.
Additionally, the issue of the ongoing communal clash in Awka South and North LGA of the state can further lead to an increase in the number of displaced persons affecting both genders disproportionately but with women and girls more likely to.

**Political Impacts:** Building on last week’s action point on the political impacts of the high level of insecurity, aside women voters not willing to come out as election is seen as conflict triggers more so when there is already a high level of insecurity, this can further lead to vote buying /selling of votes by voters. Voters could be threatened to sell their votes or to vote for a particular party. Furthermore, the community members who might have been displaced and seeking means of survival will readily sell out their votes for survivals thus affecting the credibility of electoral process.

To this end, it is no doubt that the need for an urgent stakeholders involvement cannot be over rated.

*N.B Do you wish to support the WSRN center with information, you can reach the WSRN early warning center toll free line on - 080034259776 to report any incidence of violence or political activities within Anambra State.*