

The botched kidnap of a six-year-old and a cripple in Obudu²⁸ and similar incidents in Ikom, Boki, and Bekwarra, the kidnap of a former governorship aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Cross River State, Princess Filia Henshaw, and five others in Calabar²⁹, the kidnap of the Cross River State chairman of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Mr. Ben Ukpepi, in Akpabuyo Local Government Area³⁰, are just a few recent instances of kidnapping for ransom. In three cases, a Bekwarra community relations officer, farmers, supermarket owner were all abducted for ransom³¹. The armed robbery³² case of 28th March 2020 that resulted in the death of a teenage girl, Favour Kalu in Bekpam layout, Obudu is another example in this regard. Similar violence and loss of lives are recorded in places including Ogoja and Yakurr. Reports of armed robberies which have caused the loss of lives have also been recorded in locations across all senatorial districts, with the recent case culminating in the death of four robbers at the hands of the police. Cases of cult-related gun violence in Okundi and Oku in Boki LGA have also been identified, including the burning of about 12 persons in Oku village on May 19, 2020, by some youths on allegations of witchcraft³³. Oku is home of a self-acclaimed repentant militant leader turned peace ambassador, Thomas Obi Tawo (popularly known as ‘General Iron’), who is Special Adviser on Forest Security to Governor Ben Ayade.

On October 22, 2019, in Okundi community, Boki Local Government Area, four young men were killed in a clash between cultists in the community. There is an episodic but recurring crisis related

²⁸Affe, M. (2017). Kidnappers abduct cripple in Obudu, demand N5m ransom. Retrieved from punchng.com/kidnappers-abduct-cripple-obudu-demand-n5m-ransom, Ugani, E. (2018). Obudu massacre: KJ Agba mourns police officer, civilians killed by daredevil robbers. Retrieved from crossriverwatch.com/2018/09/obudu-massacre-kj-agba-mourns-police-officer-civilians-killed-by-daredevil-robbers

²⁹ Wodu, A. (2020, April 28). Cross River: Gunmen kidnap ex-PDP gov aspirant, others. *Punch*. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/cross-river-gunmen-kidnap-ex-pdp-gov-aspirant-others/>

³⁰ NAN. (2019, December 18). NLC chairman in Cross River kidnapped. *Premium Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/368702-nlc-chairman-in-cross-river-kidnapped.html>

³¹Wodu, A. (2019). Three abducted in Boki cocoa farm in C’River. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/three-abducted-in-boki-farm-in-cr-river>, Jeremiah, A. (2018). Breaking news: Bekwarra community relations officer kidnapped, Police unaware (updated). Retrieved from crossriverwatch.com/2018/12/breaking-news-bekwarra-community-relations-officer-kidnapped-police-unaware

³² HRH Patrick Ishoja informs that cases of criminality are common in Obudu.

³³Mob sets alleged witches ablaze in Cross River State after orders from Governor Ayade's Adviser. Accessed at <http://saharareporters.com/2020/05/28/mob-sets-alleged-witches-ablaze-cross-river-state-after-orders-governor-ayades-adviser>