

Implications of Banditry on Security and Sustainable Development of Nigeria

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Abstract: The fact that banditry poses a serious threat not only to the security of Nigeria, but to the country at large in view of its ever increasing impacts and implications on sustainable development cannot be refuted. Armed bandits operate with impunity within the boundaries of the three Geo-political zones which has led to fling of kidnapping, loss of innocent lives, civil unrest, extortion from the victims and disruption of socio-economic activities in the affected areas. This paper therefore investigates the implications of banditry in Nigeria on security and sustainable development of Nigeria. The paper adopted historical research design which is qualitative and explorative in nature using relevant literature, books, articles and texts as the primary source of information. The paper posited that some factors such as poor security system, poverty, unemployment and poor governance are behind the sudden upsurge of these security threats which prompts negative responses in the Nigeria nation. The paper further contends that these negative influences have implications for security and sustainable development of the country. Therefore, the study concludes that banditry and other social vices, if not urgently curtailed present a great danger not only for Nigeria, but also portend a severe risk to the entire West African States. The paper thus recommended, among others, that there is urgent need for Government at all levels to create employment for the citizens in order to reduce poverty. Also, government should encourage and pursue proper orientation for the Nigerian Security system in order to brace them up for the challenges of insecurity to maintain peace and order.

Keywords: Banditry, Kidnapping, Nigeria, Implication, Security, Sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

National security is a premise for national economic growth and development of nations. This is because peaceful nations attract foreign investors while the domestic investors freely operate the economy with little or no tensions and apprehensions. According to Nwanegbo and Odigbo (Nwanegbo, C.J. & Odigbo, J. 2013), security is the pillar upon which every meaningful development could be achieved and sustained. Nigeria as a nation state has witnessed an unprecedented series of agitations in the form of kidnapping and abduction, armed robberies, bombing, and carnages of all forms and magnitude in the past decade and a half. The most dastard so far is the activities of a group of some Islamic militants that called themselves the 'Boko Haram', interpreted to mean 'western education is evil'. With the coming to the scene by Boko Haram in 2002, the insecurity situation in Nigeria seemed to have assumed higher and more complex dimensions. (BBC Africa News, 2010)

Apart from the frequency and intensity of deadly attacks and carnages, insecurity in Nigeria cuts across cities, towns and villages that there is hardly anywhere to run to for refuge. Lives and properties are not safe to urban and rural dwellers. People across the globe live in apprehension almost every day. Both developed and under-developed countries alike face the challenges of insecurity within their borders on a daily basis (Adejumo, A.A. 2011). The difference between these nations and Nigeria according to Adejumo is how they manage the threats.

The speed with which evil is growing in Nigeria and the merciless ways that lives of innocent ones are being wasted are worrisome. People are burdened on a daily basis with psychological and emotional trauma resulting from gory sights of lifeless and mutilated bodies of loved family members, close associates and colleagues littered on the streets, public squares and everywhere. The fact remains that a stable economy cannot be guaranteed in the face of insecurity.

The level of insecurity in the country is very high and this has made Nigeria to consistently rank low in the Global Peace Index (GPI) (Global Peace Index, 2020), signifying a worsened state of insecurity in the country. Azazi, Uhumwuangho & Aluforo are of the view that the efforts of the government have not yielded enough positive results.

Banditry has become the order of the day in Nigeria with no state left behind. Banditry counts as one of the critical challenges to Nigeria's contemporary national security. This is in view of its fatal consequences in various parts of the country over the years (Kuna, M & Jibrin I. 2016). The phenomenon has competed with insurgency and militancy as the albatross of Nigeria's embattled national security. Quite like Boko Haram insurgency, rural banditry has led to dire humanitarian consequences in Nigeria and beyond. Hand in glove with insurgency, banditry has transformed into an aggravated national security conundrum that can be rightly characterised as crime-terror convolution.

Common manifestations of banditry in contemporary Nigeria include cattle rustling, armed robbery, kidnapping, and criminal raids. Of all these patterns of banditry, kidnapping has been the most endemic and widespread in recent times (Adagba, O., Ugwu S.C. and Eme, O.I. 2012).

According to a recent report by West African Network for Peace building (WANEP), no fewer than 3, 312 persons were kidnapped in various states of Nigeria between January and December, 2020. The report adds that a total of 1, 181 persons have fallen victim of kidnapping in the country from January to February, 2021 alone (p.1). With particular reference to Nigeria, a report by Sahara Reporters (July 2021, para.7) indicates that a total of 2,557 people were abducted in the region between January and June 2021 (Sahara Reporters 2021).

Kidnapping has been prevalent in the various parts of Nigeria. In that context, it has opportunistically intersected with insurgency to engender an exacerbated security crisis. (Rufai, M. 2021)

Banditry refers to the actual or threatened use of arms (any instrument of force/coercion/violence) to dispossess people of their material belongings. Banditry is, more often than not, a gang phenomenon, although some bandits have been known to operate as lone brigands not associated with any criminal networks.

The predominant threat and security challenges are emanating from unabating attacks on Nigerian citizens, individuals, public and government installations, kidnapping and destruction of properties. The effect of banditry activities is a serious crime against the Nigeria state, which has threatened its national security and socio-economic activities. (Kuna M. & Jibrin I 2016). This has posed great challenges to the ground strategy for national security of which the primary aim is to strengthen the Federal Republic of Nigeria to advance her interest and objectives, to curtail instability, control crime, ensure good quality life for every citizen, improve the welfare and enhance sustainable development. (Bello, M. and Oyedele D. 2012).

National development is impeded in the forms of bombing, killing as well as banditry. How can Nigeria's economy be positioned to withstand the forces of banditry and guarantee security as well as sustainable development of the nation? This study therefore investigates the implications of banditry

in Nigeria on security and sustainable development of Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The seemingly increased nature of insecurity in the country occasioned by the activities of criminal gangs, terrorist organisations, bandits, unrests from the civil society and marginalised ethnic groups, and most importantly, the designated regionalised forms of insurgencies and criminalities, and modus operandi have been the sources of concern to the government and security agencies in the country over the years. Several attempts have been made to reduce the influx of these menace in the Nigerian society,; the Nigeria government has tried using a counter insurgent force as policy deterrence, with the imposition of sanctions, to curb actual attempts by putting appropriate measures in place to reduce the menaces of banditry in the country. The Nigeria economic rating with major focus on growth has witnessed an increase in spending on military hardware as well as equipping the personnel security systems and training to make them efficient to cope with the insurgent phenomena and ensuring sustainability of economic growth. Nigeria is considered to be an emerging power house, annual growth rates have averaged more than 7% per year, making the Nigeria economy one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

A study carried out by Salami and Fatimah (2012) shows that one unit of Foreign Direct Investment increase in the oil sector will increase the GDP by 15-16 units. As a result of the insurgency, foreign direct investment (FDI) has declined. It has been consistently dropping by 21.3% in 2021 from \$8.9 billion in 2018 to \$7 billion in 2021, (World Investment Report, 2021). It was recognized that this high dependency ratio is a centre of weakness for Nigeria's economy. Over the few years, banditry has created widespread insecurity across regions in Nigeria, increased tensions between various ethnic communities, interrupted development activities, frightened off investors, inflamed religious tensions and upset the nation's social cohesion (Eme and Ibietan, 2012) and Muzan, 2014 and this has generated concern among the Nigerian citizens

Chukwurah, Eme and Ogbeje (Chukwurah, D. C.; Eme, O. & Ogbeje, E. N. 2015) have argued that the activities of bandits as well as Boko Haram in particular had created the impression that Nigeria is a safe haven for terrorist organisations and by implication brought dishonour and dented the image of the country. Undoubtedly, this

classification has not only affected economic activities and social development in Nigeria, but that of the entire nation, a situation that is quite perturbing and effected the foreign direct investments (FDI) not only in Nigeria but in the entire country from inception, they argued. In the same manner, Adewumi cited in Amalu argued that Nigeria's situation has become so terrible to the extent that any contemporary discourse on Nigeria is nothing without a mention of the escalating and frightening issues relating to insecurity, militancy, insurgency and terrorism. (Adewumi, A. 2014).

Despite these obvious scenarios, the government and the security agencies are yet to identify those behind these nefarious behaviours. This gives the impression that the nation is at war with itself and nothing more. It is on the backdrop that this study is poised to investigate the impacts of the activities of the bandits as well as those of other criminal gangs in Nigeria on security and sustainable development of Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to investigate the implications of banditry on security and sustainable development of Nigeria, while the specific objectives are to:

1. examine the causes and forms of banditry in Nigeria,
2. investigate the impacts of banditry on security and sustainable development of Nigeria.
3. proffer panacea to the challenges caused by banditry on Nigerian security and sustainable development.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What are the causes and forms of banditry in Nigeria?
2. What are the impacts of banditry on security and sustainable development of Nigeria?
3. What are the factors that could address the challenges caused by banditry on Nigerian security and sustainable development?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted historical research design which is qualitative and exploratory in nature, to examine the causes of banditry on security and sustainable development of Nigeria. The study also investigated impacts relating to the challenges of insecurity on Nigerian security and sustainable development. This presumes that historical research design is effectively utilised through

related and relevant data collected from existing literature. Additionally, secondary sources such as articles, textbooks and other relevant sources were also used.

The Concept of Insecurity and Banditry

The concept of insecurity would be best understood by first presenting the concept of security. In the view of Akin, security refers to "the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions". It is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or properties. It embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence. (Ogunleye G.O., Adewale O.S, Alese B.K., Ogunde A.O. 2013). According to Abiodun (, it demands safety from chronic threats and protection from harmful disruption (Abiodun, T. 2016).

Security, however, can be described as stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income), predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect), protection from crime (feeling safe), and freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress which results from the assurance of knowing that one is wanted, accepted, loved and protected in one's community or neighbourhood and by people around. It focuses on the emotional and psychological sense of belonging to a social group which can offer one protection). This description structured the concept of security into four dimensions. However, these dimensions can be weaved together to give a composite definition of security as the protection against all forms of harm whether physical, economic or psychological. It is generally argued that security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the ability to rise to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency and expertise. (Achumba I.C., Ighomereho O.S. & Akpor-Robaro, M.O.M, 2013)

Insecurity, on the other hand, is the antithesis of security. However, because of the many ways in which insecurity affects human life and existence, the concept of insecurity has usually been ascribed different interpretations in association with the various ways in which it affects individuals. Some of the common descriptors of insecurity include: want of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; want of confidence; doubtful; inadequately guarded or

protected; lacking stability; troubled; lack of protection; and unsafe, to mention a few. All of these have been used by different people to define the concept of insecurity. These different descriptors, however, run into a common reference to a state of vulnerability to harm and loss of life, property or livelihood. Online Wikipedia defined insecurity as "the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection." It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity, and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity such as economic security and social security.

Conceptually, banditry is a derivative of the term bandit meaning an unlawful armed group terrorising people and confiscating their properties. It is synonymous with the establishment of gang groups who use small and light weapons to carry out attacks against people. In this regard, banditry could mean a set-up criminal activity deliberately designed and carried out for personal gains. Due to the complex nature of bandits' activities, Egwu in a restricted manner, described banditry as a practice of stealing cattle and animals from herders or raiding of cattle from their ranches (Egwu, S. 2016). In the same vein, banditry is reflected in criminal escapades like cattle rustling, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug abuse, arson, rape and the brazen and gruesome massacre of people of agrarian communities with sophisticated weapons by suspected herdsmen and reprisal attacks from surviving victims, a development that has been brought to the front burner of national security. (Uche J.C. & Iwuamadi C.K. 2018)

In his perception, Shalangwa regards banditry as the practice of raiding and attacking victims by members of an armed group, whether or not premeditated, using weapons of offence or defence, especially in semi-organised groups for the purpose of overpowering the victim and obtaining loot or achieving some political goals (Shalangwa M.W. 2013). Such bandits are usually perceived as outlaws, desperate and lawless marauders who do not have a definite residence or destination but roam around the forest and mountains to avoid being identified, detected and arrested. However, where the term banditry is connected to rural, it implies a group of rural outlaws involved in illicit activities such as raiding of villages, kidnappings and cattle rustling for primitive accumulation of wealth. Thus, bandits are gang groups terrorising and dispossessing local people or travellers of their valuable items or

properties such as merchandise, money, cattle, camel, and sheep, among others. They operate within and along rural borders with the assistance of their local collaborators including in some cases, estate agents deployed to work for the safety and security of the people (Abdullahi A. 2019).

Thus banditry, in the context of this paper, is defined as the totality of incidences of armed robbery or allied violent crimes, such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, village raids as well as highway raids which involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape, kidnap or kill the victims. Banditry is a product of insecurity which has bedevilled this country for a while now.

In spite of government efforts, the security situation in Nigeria is deteriorating. Indeed, the lingering conflict between herders and farmers in Nigeria which metamorphosed into full time banditry has been rated to be much deadlier than the Boko Haram insurgency. The recent abductions of schoolboys in Kankara community, Katsina State and in Niger State are more examples of the deplorable state of security in the country. Notably, the unprecedented increase in violent attacks is defying the sustained narrative among analysts.

Causes of Banditry in Nigeria

Primary causes include:

1. Porous Nigeria-Niger borders and difficult terrain. Nigeria's border with Niger spans 1,497 km and is poorly policed by the Nigeria Custom and Immigration Services. The porous nature of these borders heightens the potential spread of terrorist activities into Nigeria from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. The vulnerability of the border to the infiltration of terror groups is compounded by the forest reserves in the region. The vast, rugged terrain, sparse population, and dense vegetation make surveillance difficult-making the forests ideal hiding places and operational bases for the bandits (Ogbonnaya M.U. 2020).
2. Arms and weapons trafficking factors helped make it easier for these groups to act: the first one is that borders inherited by Africans are badly demarcated; hence, they are easily crossed. These boundaries inherited by African states were arbitrarily drawn by European imperialists who colonised almost the entire continent. A tour of the Nigerian borders in September 1984 by Nigerian Immigration officials in Sokoto revealed that there were

over 1,500 illegal entry points along Nigeria's border with Benin and Niger. Thus, small arms and light weapons are spread as a result of the influx of refugees from especially other neighbouring states. In other words, unregulated movement of people facilitates the circulation of such illegal weapons (Small Arms Survey 2004). By the way, these arms are precisely 'small'. They are circulated easily because they are small arms, easy to buy, easy to use, easy to transport and easy to conceal (Reports of UN experts on Arms, 2017)

3. The groups terrorising Nigeria are known to deploy sophisticated weapons in their operations; again, often due to the porous Nigeria-Niger border and subsequent arms trafficking. The illicit proliferation of weapons exerts a considerable impact on peace and security and increases the incidence of terrorists' activities in the region (Nweke P. and Berman, E. (1985).
4. Poor governance, poverty and climate change-fragility nexus (Salwu, B. (2010); In many instances, the rising incidents of violent attacks are symptoms of weak, exclusionary, or exploitative governance systems in northwest Nigeria. Compounding factors include weak institutional capacity within the police; extreme inequality, poverty, unemployment; and citizens' alienation from the government. Indeed, five of the country's 10 poorest states-Sokoto, Katsina, Zamfara, Kebbi, and Jigawa-are in the northwest region. Evidence suggests that population explosion, poor governance, and high incidence of poverty could render many unemployed youths more vulnerable to recruitment by terror groups in the region. Closely connected to this is the intensive desertification of the Sahara. Climate change is wreaking havoc on people's livelihoods and facilitating the recruitment of poor farmers and vulnerable youths into terrorist groups in the region.
5. Overburdened security apparatus and diminishing presence of the federal government: The state securities response to the rising insecurity in the region is compromised by the decade-long war with Boko Haram in the northeast, deteriorating security in the Niger Delta, farmer-herder conflicts in north-central and southern Nigeria, and other forms of criminality across the country. In fact, the Nigerian military services

are on active deployment in no fewer than 30 states of the federation, tackling internal security threats that ordinarily should have been left to the police to contain. With security forces stretched, terror groups have been able to operate with little resistance in the northwest. Furthermore, terrorists and criminals appear to be emboldened given the federal government's weakening engagement.

6. Controversial peace agreements between some state governments and criminal groups. In an attempt to stop these attacks, and due to larger failures on the part of the federal government, the state governments of Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara initiated direct negotiations with these criminal groups. As part of these negotiations, the governors offered the criminal groups amnesties and other incentives to end violent attacks. Some have even agreed to release all arrested persons from such groups in exchange for hostages. So far, these agreements have failed for a number of reasons: First, these criminal groups lack central command and a common goal, so it has been difficult to bring them all to a common negotiation. Moreover, agreements made with one group are not binding on others. Second, the dialogues excluded the local communities that bear the brunt of violence and expect the state to deliver forms of compensation, justice, and protection as a condition for durable peace. Collapsed negotiations have led to renewed attacks by the criminal groups, while the farmers and vigilantes acting on their behalf have also remained completely unaccountable. Beyond these negotiations is the problem that the state governments have no capacity to enforce the agreements and are barely equipped to address many of the underlying causes of insecurity, including shrinking space for grazing and porous borders.

Illegal mining activities. Illegal mining leads to violent local conflicts in two ways in the North West. First, those funding the mining fight over control of the minefields. These 'sponsors' are protected by some state governments, and act as if they're above the law showing the level of political connectedness and state protection they enjoy. Competition over access to mineral resource deposits in Katsina and Zamfara states exacerbates already-existing tensions. Often terror groups control the minefields and are able to act with impunity because of the undue patronage they

benefit from the authorities through connivance. The syndicates also fund banditry and cattle rustling in mining communities, displacing and inciting violence among Fulani pastoralists and farming communities. Around 80% of mining in the North West is carried out illegally and on an artisanal basis.

Forms of Banditry in Nigeria

Kidnapping as a Form of Banditry in Nigeria

Kidnapping for ransom is taking a centre stage in the increasing wave of crime in the country. Kidnapping is gaining more grounds as compared to a few decades back when it used to be experienced mostly in Southern and Western Nigeria. Kidnapping has now become a national epidemic. Campbell further noted that "kidnapping has become a business, with whispers of involvement by politicians and the police as well as entrepreneurs in it, simply for the money"

Kidnap cases in Nigeria have become so rampant that the country was ranked high in the global index for worst countries to live in (Global Peace Index 2020). It was further discovered that "kidnapping is a dreadful challenge that disrupts the tranquillity and harmonious cohesion of the country and has spread to nooks and crannies of Nigeria as a result of poverty, unemployment, and so on (Abdulkabir, O.S. 2017). Studies have revealed that because of its spate of occurrences in the country, kidnapping is no longer a scary phenomenon, because people have gotten used to its scary face. This is evident in Nigeria's record of 3, 216 kidnap cases from 2019 to 2021 (WHO 2018).

Armed banditry as a Form of Banditry in Nigeria

Armed banditry and cattle rustling has become rampant especially in more recent times in Nigeria's history. Basse and Ubi, noted that there are more cases of cattle being stolen without harming anyone, even in broad daylight. For over a decade now, armed banditry has become prominent not only in Northern Nigeria, but even among the Niger Deltans. However, these past years have ushered in a set of criminal gangs who specialised in armed banditry and so a new style of banditry emerged which involved not only rustling the cattle but killing the owners and scaring people away from their communities. The farmer-herder conflict perspective maintains that armed banditry is a logical consequence of the conflict between the sedentary farmers and migrant herders in parts of Africa. It links armed banditry to herders' militancy occasioned by the imperative of self

defence. Resonating with this perspective is a narrative to the effect that the bandits originated from the rank of hired militants (mercenary fighters) who hitherto fought on the side of the herders in their confrontation with crop farmers. The narrative holds that these militants later defected to opportunistic criminality, beginning with cattle rustling and thereafter kidnapping for ransom. The crux of this perspective, therefore, is that banditry is a collateral complication of the perennial farmer-herder conflicts in Africa.

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Kidnapping and the Incidences

In May 2015, Prof. James Adichie was kidnapped and ₦50m demanded, an undisclosed amount paid. Similarly, in September 2015, Mr. Olu Falae (Former Finance Minister) was Kidnapped and ₦100m demanded, undisclosed amount paid March 2016: Sierra Leone's High commissioner to Nigeria was kidnapped, and 40m dollars demanded, undisclosed amount paid.

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime 2013 survey on global crime trends, the Nigerian police recorded the following number of kidnappings at the national level between 2014-2019:

277 in 2014
309 in 2015
703 in 2016
738 in 2017
NA in 2018
600 in 2019 (UN, 2020).

Freedom House reports that Nigeria recorded one of the highest rates of kidnapping in the world in 2014 (Freedom House 2014). The US Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 indicates that kidnapping and related violence were "serious" problems in Nigeria (27 Feb. 2014, 52). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Executive Director of the CLEEN Foundation, a Nigeria-based NGO that promotes public safety, accountability, and justice, and that conducts an annual National Crime and Safety Survey in Nigeria, indicated that kidnapping for ransom has become "rampant" in the last decade. The CLEEN Foundation's 2014 National Crime and Safety Survey sampled 11,518 Nigerians who were interviewed, and found that nationally, three percent of respondents had been victims of kidnapping or attempted kidnapping. According to the survey, the south-west region and Lagos had the highest incidence (five percent), followed by

the south-east and south-south (four percent). It is important to know that kidnapping is underreported, according to CLEEN.

Nigeria in its 2020 budget, spent a whopping sum of ₦195 billion for security, specifically for police formations, and commands around the country. In Lagos, about 3 billion Naira has been spent on security alone (Soyombo, 2009) as cited in Inyang & Abraham

The huge amount paid as a ransom for the kidnapped person is enough to relieve Nigeria of major socio-economic developmental issues. The implication being that if Nigeria continues to spend such amount annually, it may not have sufficient funds to embark on important infrastructural development projects

Armed Banditry and Incidences

15 June, 2019: 34 killed in Tungan Kafau and Gidan waya, Zamfara state (Altine, 2019) [12].

27 July 2018: 42 killed in the villages of Mashema, Kwashabawa and Birane districts of Zurmi local government area of Zamfara state.

December 2018: 17 people in an attack on Magami Village of Faru District in Maradun Local Government Area (LGA) of Zamfara State (plus tv, 2018) [50].

May 2019: 23 persons killed in Tunga and Kabaje villages, Kaura Namoda Local Government Area by suspected bandits, Zamfara state.

Implications for Nigeria's Security and Sustainable Development

There are several reports indicating the flourishing of bandit groups, whose members were seen displaying automatic weapons, terrorising herders' settlements, farms, villages and the highways with the mission of killing people, kidnapping and pillaging cows and looting of other valuables. This new wave of crisis emerging in Nigeria with the ongoing activities of armed groups, referred to as bandits, is worrisome (Olaniyan A. 2018). It was reported that between October, 2013 and March, 2014, 7,000 cattle were rustled from commercial livestock farms and traditional herders in Nigeria, while about 330 attacks were made by bandits and 1,460 deaths were recorded between January and July, 2019 (Abdullahi, A, 2019). The numbers of fatalities and displaced people have continued to increase. In most cases, the bandits killed and maimed the people and raped the women before dispossessing them of their cows while in some instances, they also kidnapped girls or women in the process (Adeniyi, T, 2015) (Yusuf, V. 2015).

While more than 1,100 people were reportedly killed in 2018 in Nigeria, over 2,200 were killed in 2019, and more than 1,600 fatalities were recorded between January and June 2020 (Council of Foreign Relations, 2020). By September 2019, such attacks had internally displaced over 160,000 people and produced more than 41,000 refugees. Displacement numbers now stand at over 247,000 IDPs and some 60,000 refugees (Selim, M.H. 2020)

Large-scale farming and animal husbandry have been acknowledged to be the main economic activities in Nigeria, with trading as an alternative source of income. Most farmers cultivate yams (in Niger state), legumes, beans, millet, tomatoes, and rice in Zamfara, Katsina and Sokoto (Council of Foreign Relations, 2020). Targeted attacks on farmers throughout the year have made cultivation and harvest impossible. Bandits have warned farmers to stay away from their farms, and about 26 farmers who ignored this order were killed in Batsari LGA of Katsina state. Farmers have been kidnapped for ransom, while bandits in Shiroro LGA have demanded payments of up to \$1,100 before farmers could access their farmlands. Cattle rustling has also hampered animal husbandry in these areas.

Violence and forced displacement had left affected communities unable to rely on own-produced cereals for subsistence and commercial farming, thus heightening the risk of food insecurity for displaced and non-displaced populations. About 70% of the 309,000 IDPs in the northwest being part of Nigeria has insufficient food, with global acute malnutrition rates among children reported to be as high as 18% and 31% in Sokoto and Zamfara states respectively. In like manner, the over 30.6 million people living in the six affected states face increased protection concerns due to the continued escalation of the crisis. Since 2016, almost daily attacks by bandits have been recorded in Nigeria prompting the Nigeria government to institute various security operations in the northwest. There are risks of getting kidnapped specifically for ransom. Women and girls are susceptible to kidnap, sexual violence, and abuse, including rape. As banditry attacks have continued, the affected population has expressed a lack of trust towards the army and police and their ability to prevent the recurrence of this ugly development. Residents and survivors in affected states have complained that response from the police and army was slow, and sometimes non-

existent when they are attacked (Council of Foreign Relations 2020).

Thus, banditry by all accounts is undermining security, peace and development in Nigeria. While the unfolding crises could be linked to a set of factors, the threat to security and the sustainable development of Nigeria which is just coming out from the effects of a decade-long Boko Haram insurgency in the northwest cannot be overstated. Therefore, affected communities started relying on local vigilantes for protection as a result. In certain cases, people arm themselves to resist attacks and the government's focus on fighting Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast may also be hindering the strength of its response to insecurity in the northwest.

CONCLUSION

The security situation in Nigeria is highly volatile and unpredictable. The presence of bandits coupled with the instances of tactical cooperation between bandits and jihadists as documented in this study constitute an unfortunate dynamic in an already complex area. Nigeria's sustainable development has been hampered by these emerging security threats which are insurgency, armed banditry, kidnapping among others. The findings of this study revealed some factors that are behind the sudden upsurge of these security threats in Nigeria and these include among others poor security system, poverty, unemployment and poor governance. These factors could be said to have significant influence on people either directly or indirectly which prompts negative responses. The negative responses later turned out to have implications for socio-economic development in the country. Banditry and other social vices, if not urgently curtailed, present a great danger not only for the security and economic development of Nigeria, but also portend a severe risk to the entire West African region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made to curb armed banditry and its consequential effects on Nigerian security and sustainable development:

1. There is an urgent need for governments at all levels to create employment for the citizens in order to reduce poverty.
2. It is important for the government as well as private companies' management to establish a commission that will be empowered to create a social security system that will guarantee

employees of their future in order to discourage corruption among the populace.

3. Government should encourage and pursue proper orientation for the Nigerian Security system in order to brace them for the challenges of insecurity to maintain peace and order.
4. The Federal Government should equip the security forces with modern and up to date equipment and necessary incentives to enable them carry out their duty without hindrances.
5. Government should put in place a proactive measure to tackle armed banditry both tactically and institutionally.
6. Nigerians should owe their nation the duty of reporting any strange event or persons if suspected to engage in such an act.

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