



THE IMPLICATIONS OF SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NORTH-WESTERN NIGERIA: A PROGNOSIS FROM ARMED BANDITRY

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Abstract.

This paper attempt to examine The Implications of Security Challenges in North-Western Nigeria: A Prognosis from Armed Banditry that has devastated effects on Nigerian corporate existence. Therefore, arms proliferation has significantly deteriorated the situations. Consequently, hundreds villages deserted, thousands of innocent people killed and hundreds thousands fled their homes. These arms proliferation has created a syndicate groups, supply chain and sales routes from Nigeria, Niger, Mali, and Libya, thereby increasing access to guns and other weapons to bandits and terrorists groups responsible for violent crimes, unrest and political instability in West Africa sub-region. The study employed qualitative research method through the use of secondary sources of data for proper analysis. To this effect, the study adopts, Broken windows theory by criminologists J, Wilson and G, Kelling, the theory states that signs of disorder will lead to more disorder, a building with a broken window that has been left unrepaired will give the appearance that no one cares and no one is in charge. However, the paper finds out that, in North-western Nigeria armed banditry have created a gun runners' syndicate groups who moved in and across states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto and Kebbi mostly bordered with Nigeria-Niger Republic, an informal security sector (Yan Sakai) emerged to checkmate the activities of bandits and politicians both at national and states levels engages in blame game. This paper recommends among others, enhancing intelligence gathering at Nigeria-Niger Republic borderlands, the informal security sector (Yan Sakai) should operates within the ambit of the law and coordinated approach by all stakeholders especially those from the zone to join hands together and find a lasting solution to the problem at hand instead of blame game which is totally diversionary and counter-productive.

Keywords: *Security, Armed Banditry, Violent Crime, Gun Runners, North-western Nigeria*

Introduction

The characteristics of Nigeria return to civil rule in 1999 is high and rising incidence of security challenges propelled by an outlawed armed gangs terrorizing innocent people, threatens National security and corporate existence of Nigeria. The North-western Nigeria which was known for peace has now become an operational base for armed bandits that involved in series atrocities of village raids, cattle rustling, illegal toll collections, kidnappings for ransom, rape, maiming, killings and population displacement (Idris, 2021). Over a decade Nigeria's Northwest has been wracked by security challenges begun as resources-based conflict involving clashes between rival communities over land, attacks by heavily armed criminal gangs and retaliation strikes from vigilante groups. The unrest, which experts say has been spurred by overpopulation and climate changes, has seen an estimated 8,000 people killed since 2011 and 200,000 fled their homes (FRANCE24 2020, November 6).



However, armed banditry is an ancient practice that is associated with societies suffering from social and economic upheavals and where the structures functioning of governance have collapsed or are significantly weakened (Rufai, 2017). Moreover, armed banditry has become an appealing method of income in Northwestern Nigeria where weak governance, youth unemployment, poverty and inequality have left people with depleted options for livelihood. Security services are often understaffed and lack the proper resources to effectively combat these criminal armed gangs. Vast areas of unregulated forests allow for their easy concealment, police and military forces have difficulty penetrating the rough terrain while under-policed borders also aided the proliferation of small and light weapons among bandits groups (Claire, 2021).

Populations in North-western Nigeria are facing the ever increasing menace of armed banditry a type of organized crime that includes kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, maiming, cattle-rustling and exploitation of environmental resources. They terrorized communities, hindered socio- economic development and threatened democratic governance. Thus, information has it that some Touareg and Fulani from Niger Republic formed part of the early bandits that established criminal armed gangs in Nigeria. Membership of said gangs received training around Birnin Gwari and Dansadau forests which is very large but extended thickest that cut across the states of Kaduna, Niger, Katsina, Kebbi, Zamfara and Sokoto down to some parts of Niger Republic (Jimi, 2011).

Nigerian security forces have utilized a variety of tactics over the years to combat criminal activities of armed bandits. Initially, the Federal government embraced an aggressive approach by deploying police and military operations to the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger and Sokoto. While the security response has pushed back attacks, destroyed some hideouts, killed and arrested hundreds of assailants, attacks have continued (Clair 2021). Also, in "2019", a peace deal was secured between the bandits and the governors of Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara. The deal encompassed disarmament, the release of kidnapped civilians and pardoning for the bandits but has failed to end the bloodshed. Although the number of fatalities decreased from August to November due to reconciliation initiatives, attacks picked up again in 2020 (Claire, 2021).

Therefore, the insecurity in the zone is not only a security threat but an impediment to national development as well as Nigerian corporate existence. "The question s, what are "the Pervasive security challenges in north-western Nigeria resulting from armed banditry as well as effective measures that may be taken to tackle it? ". These rhetorical questions will investigate "The Implications of Security Challenges in North-western Nigeria: A Prognosis from Armed Banditry" because it is mind-boggling despite effort claimed by Government to curtail the menace yet, the situation still remains uncontained. The study employed a qualitative research method through the use of secondary data sources, which included books, newspapers, and official government documents. The data were analyzed using content analysis. Accordingly, subsequent sections of this paper adopt the Broken Windows theory, which posits that a building with a broken window that has been left unrepaired will give the appearance that no one cares and no one is in charge. The paper proceeded to discuss Armed Banditry as Pervasive Security Challenges in North-western Nigeria, as well as effective measures that may be taken to tackle it, before offering concluding remarks.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

Due to the magnitude of this study, the theoretical underpinning that can best explain the analysis on the said topic could be said to be Broken windows theory by criminologists (James Q. Wilson and George Kelling, 1982). The theory states that signs of disorder will lead to more disorder. A building with a broken window that has been left unrepaired will give the appearance that no one cares and no one is in charge.



Also, Broken Window theory holds that lingering visible evidence of crime, anti-social behavior and civil unrest in densely populated urban areas suggests a lack of active local law enforcement and encourages people to commit further, even more serious crimes. Furthermore, consider a building with a few broken windows. If the windows are not repaired, the tendency is for vandals to break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building, and if it's unoccupied, perhaps become squatters or light fires inside or consider a pavement. Some litter accumulates. Soon, more litter accumulates.

However, Broken window theory related to the Implications of Security Challenges in North-Western Nigeria: A Prognosis from Armed Banditry could said to have strong connection from its nature, development and consequences. The North-western Nigeria has at different point been affected by drought, food insecurity, flooding and shrinking of rivers due to changes in climatic condition. These changes influenced herders and farmers' movement from one area to another in most cases beyond their communities in search of water resources and grazing land. Where this movement coincides with the harvesting period, it becomes a source of clashes between farmers and herders. So, the criminal activity of armed bandits begun as a minor community clashes between farmers and herders over grazing lands, cattle rustling and destructions of farm outputs, but it's poor handling by local authorities, who have been accused by both sides of bias, resulted in distrust that partly led to its escalation and later metamorphosed into a deadly violent crimes (www.Jazeera.com 2019, May 15). Since 2011, series of violent attacks by armed criminals (bandits) in Zamfara state had left hundreds of villages deserted, thousands of innocent people killed, hundreds thousands fled their communities and thousands of cattle rustled. Meanwhile, the violent crimes by armed bandits continued to spread and deteriorate like wildfire across neighbouring states of Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Kebbi in the zone as contagious factors due to fragile state institutions and nonchalant attitude of those in authority.

Armed Banditry as Pervasive Security Challenges in North-Western Nigeria

Violent Attacks of Criminal Activity

As Nigeria already struggling to contain the terrorists insurgencies in the Northeast and communal violence over grazing rights in central states, an organized and simultaneous attacks in villages of Danmusa, Dutsenma and Safana Local Governments of Katsina state in North-western Nigeria by armed bandits left hundreds of people been killed in 2019 in different forms of criminality such as village raids, armed robberies, kidnapping and cattle rustling. (REUTERS 2020, April 19).

On Tuesday in early June 2020, they attack by roughly 150 armed bandits on six remote communities in Katsina state, in which they opened fire on residents, looted shops, and stole cattle. The assaults lasted for about five hours, and at least 57 people were killed across the affected villages, the worst-hit village of Kisadau every shop was looted, over 200 cattle rustled and then moved to opened fire on a football pitch where young men were watching a local match and in a nearby village 24 people more people were killed. While across the villages of Hayin Kabalawa, Garke, Marke, Kwakwere and Maigangun the assailants left two dozen people with bullet wounds (FRANCE 24 2020, November 6). Furthermore, dozens of armed criminal gangs on motorcycles launched an attacked and killed 21 people in Tsawa and another 19 in nearby village of Dankar of Katsina state, most of those killed were old people and children who couldn't escape while in Kaduna state armed bandits burnt to death 21 people including 16 of members of a single family in a reprisal raid to avenge a vigilante attacked on their hideout (ARABNEWS 2020, February 16).

However, in July 2020 armed bandits raided 5 villages in North-western Nigeria, the bandits stormed five neighbouring rural communities in Maradun district of Zamfara state, firing indiscriminately and stealing livestock, 30 people were killed, seven persons in Sakkida, four in Farin Zare, eight in Orawa, seven in



Gyadde and four in Sabon Gari, while seven other missing and presumed to have drowned in a nearby river while trying to escape the carnage. They attacked the villages simultaneously and took away a lot of cattle, sheep and goats, police in Zamfara confirmed the attacks through its spokesman Mohammed Shehu but said “only three people were killed” (Firstpost, 2020, July 29).

Meanwhile, Nigerian security rescued 80 students kidnapped by armed bandits in Katsina state of North-western Nigeria. The kidnapping and rescue came just days after armed criminal gangs released more than 300 schoolboys in Kankara Local Government Area from a week in captivity which underscores serious concerns about security in the zone which drew global condemnation. The Islamiyya school students, mostly girls were ambushed in Dandume Local Government Area of the state during a school procession to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The military said it rescued all the students including four others held by the bandits and recovered 12 cows (V.O.A 2020, December 21).

Again, armed bandits killed at least 25 people during deadly raids on six communities in Zamfara state while dozens of people including women and children were reportedly missing, houses, shops as well as private and public buildings had been burnt by the assailants. The criminal armed gang first laid siege on ‘Yar Doka a village about 7km west of Magami on motorbikes and shot any one at sight, then proceeded to Kango village and shot dead at least 11 people, 13 people in Ruwan Dawa community along Gusau-Dansadau road a 58km south of Gusau the state capital, 7 people at Madaba, 2 people at Mairairai, and 5 people at Arzikin Da communities. This occurred after simultaneous attacks by recalcitrant bandits on Gobirawa, Gora, Rini and Madoti Dankule villages of Maradun and Bakura Local Government Areas of the state on Tuesday 20th April, 2021 leading to the loss of lives of innocent members of the above mentioned communities (Daily Trust 2021, April 22).

Emergences of Informal Security Sector

Thus, the inability of the North-western Nigeria States government to adequately address the security challenges resulting from armed banditry created an opportunity for the informal security sector to have a stake in the security apparatus of the state. A militant vigilante group (MVG), called "Yan Sakai" just firstly emerged in Zamfara State and the ideas later spreads to Katsina, Kaduna etc. The word "Yan sakai" simply means volunteer, people committed to protecting the territorial integrity of their community against hoodlums, bandits and armed robbers. Some members of the MVG were disenchanted members of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) as well as other people in the community who are uncomfortable with the nonchalant attitude of the state government to the entire security situations in their states.

The idea behind the formation of the MVG was to checkmate the activities of the bandits, it was begun in Maru, Anka and Birnin Magaji local governments in 2013. This was because of the high rate of criminal activity by armed bandits in these places. The MVG was emanated from traditional rulers who believed that ‘the only end to this perpetual violent attacks of criminal activity by bandits is to counter it with a greater violence’ and the best approach was to fight the bandits back. Instead of apprehending them and handing them over to appropriate authorities, they should rather be brutally killed instantly. The Village heads, District heads and some Emirs have the feelings that in a situation where the state fails to carry out its primary responsibility, it is better for people to take that responsibility into their hands. In this light, many people who are the victims of armed banditry supported this view and worked towards its actualization. The outcome was the adoption of MVG as radical wing of the VGN with serious ideological difference on how to approach issues of security challenges bedeviled the state (Rufai, 2018).

Furthermore, Informal security actors (vigilantes) have played an increasing role in protecting their communities from armed bandits in Northwest Nigeria. Vigilante groups are often preferred over the



police because official security agencies are often unavailable when rural communities most need them. Although these informal security providers play essential roles in providing safety and security to their communities, many lack proper security training and often compete against each other. Many vigilante groups are been accused of human rights abuses, armed robbery, corruption and extortion against bandits and members of the communities they vow to protect (Claire, 2021).

Rufai (2018) argued that, the MVG shares certain features in common with the bandits when it comes to the issue of violence. Just as the bandits possessed certain supernatural powers so also the MVG. Both of them are mostly youth at their prime ages and possessed local charms that made some of them invisible. Sharp objects like knife, sword, machete and dagger could hardly penetrate these people. They brought to the fore orthodoxy warfare system, most of the confrontations between the bandits and members of MVG revolve around the use of different and assorted charms against each as a defense system. These MVG came with a comprehensive list of accused armed bandits, and the moment they were identified, they faced the consequences. Therefore, methods of the execution varies from people to people, for those that have charms that could not be killed with gun, the MVG used sword, dagger or machete on them. While in a situations where all these failed they will resort to the use of heavy stone to smash their heads. What this means by extension is that the moment one is apprehended and taken there, they must ensure that he is killed. After which all the bodies will be assembled in one place and set a blazed. This execution center is known in Shinkafi as 'Human abattoir' at the apex of this criminal activity in late 2015 and early 2016. Most of the villagers see the members of MVG as heroes, true defenders of their father's land. It is highly prestigious for one to be a member of this radical wing because generation yet unborn will remember him as a great warrior. The most pertinent question concerned are asking about this gross miscarriage of justice is that where is the government, what is the role of the formal security personnel.

However, the Emir of Anka and chairman of Zamfara State Council of Chiefs, Alhaji Attahiru Mohammed Ahmad in recent time reiterated for informal security sector as he appealed to the state government to again allow people of the state to carry arms and defend themselves against bandits. The state Governor had banned the Vigilante Group since he assumed office in 2019 as part of his move for negotiations with the bandits. Since the bandits have refused to surrender, for him the government should allow everyone to carry weapons for self-defence, the peace accord and reconciliation process initiated by governor would not end banditry in the state, the bandits would never give up and one cannot make peace with people who are not ready to embrace peace and reconciliation. Therefore, urged governments at all levels to give the security operatives the chance to deal with the bandits, stressing that security operatives could handle the situation if given the chance and weapons. (www.lindaikisblog.com, 2020, December, 21)

Political Chess Game

The political "chess game" between the People Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) in zamfara state regarding the issue of banditry has continued, with both parties trading accusations and the security situation remaining a significant challenge. The zamfara state Chapter of the All Progressives Congress has called on Governor Dauda Lawal to stop blaming his predecessor, Bello Mattawalle, and the APC for his inability to address the issue of banditry in the state but rather has been accusing Bello Mattawalle and the APC for his failures. The PDP-led government, under Lawal, has continued to accuse the state's immediate past APC government over its (Dauda government's) inability to meet its campaign promises to end the insecurity (The Punch Newspaper 2024, September, 13th). Meanwhile, the Zamfara State chapter of the People Democratic Party (PDP) has strongly rejected allegations by the All Progressives Congress (APC) that Governor Dauda Lawal is sponsoring bandits in the state. They described the APC's accusation as baseless and hypocritical, accusing the opposition party of presiding over the "darkest years" of banditry in Zamfara's history. "The party and its leaders openly



dined and negotiated with bandits, granting them legitimacy while the people of Zamfara buried their loved ones” (The Guardian, 2025, September 6).

Apart from zamfara state, the immediate past Katsina state Governor, Rt. Hon. Aminu Bello Masari, has also attributed the prevailing cases of banditry and Boko Haram insurgency bedeviling the North to the activities of some politicians who want to contest the 2023 general election. He says "such politicians believed that by sponsoring violence and other acts of criminality, they would be blackmailing the Buhari administration to contest in the forthcoming general election". Also, reiterated that politicking at that period would derail the APC administration in fulfilling pledges made to the electorate in the 2019 general election. Finally, urged vigilantes and party leaders especially those that leaves in the rural communities to inform security agencies of any suspicious characters or movements” because military and the police cannot do it alone, they don't have the numbers, neither do they have all the equipment required to complete the fight alone. Community members have all what it takes to inform and support the fight against insecurity. (THISDAY Newspaper 2020, July 20).

At National level there are accusations and countered accusations between the two major political parties linking each other with the pervasive security challenges bedeviled the North- western Nigeria. Both parties through their spokesmen regularly issues press statements accusing each other of sponsoring armed bandits that causes havoc in the zone. For instance, the ruling party All Progressive Congress (APC) former Acting Deputy National Publicity Secretary Yekini Nabena alleged that a Northwest Governor is behind the heightened cases of banditry, abductions and other related violent crimes in that zone but didn't name the governor and the state. According to the party, the increased spate of banditry in the Northwest was politically- motivated and not unconnected to the unnamed governor's alleged sponsorship of armed banditry and other related violent crimes. Stated that “Our security agencies have intelligence reports linking one of the Northwest governor to collusion and sponsorship of violent and criminal activity of armed bandits, I won't give details because of the sensitivity and security nature of the issue” (The Nation Newspaper 2020, December 18).

During the era of Bello Matawalle as zamfara state governor (2019-2023) before he decamped to All Progressives Congress (APC), was accused of being behind and sponsoring banditry terrorizing Northwest by the ruling party. Therefore, countered them. “It is very uncharitable due to political differences to attribute the semblance of peace enjoyed in Zamfara state to criminality of harbouring bandits to terrorise the state and neighbouring states”. Further, stated that "It is a commonly held view that Zamfara State, under the APC, was among the states most affected by banditry in the North-west until May 2019, when a new administration took office." Our peace initiatives, which is in tandem with proven records in history across the globe as a viable and necessary option to ending guerilla warfare and similar menace of its kind, is hated and rejected by those who fail or lack the capacity to implement it with honesty, resilience and tact” (Daily Nigerian 2020, December 18). Moreover, Matawalle ad also on some occasion alleged sabotage in fight against banditry in the state and attributed the abduction of schoolgirls in Jangebe as politically motivated. The students were abducted from Government Girls Secondary School Jangebe in Talata Mafara Local Government Area of Zamfara state on early March, 2021. Added, that while the state was in negotiation with (the) abductors for the release of the schoolgirls, other persons offered money to the armed bandits to keep the girls in captivity. (Premium Times 2021, March 5).

The People Democratic Party (PDP) former National Publicity Secretary, Kola Ologbondiyan alleged that the All Progressive Congress (APC) was a party in league with bandits, insurgents and terrorists ravaging the country and Northwest in particular. The party also asks why the APC is always showing sympathy and canvassing understanding for bandits, insurgents and terrorists. The PDP further wondered why the ruling



party is not always forthcoming in condemning acts of terrorism and banditry, seeking to know what are they gaining from the activities of bandits vandals, insurgents and kidnappers. It is also very worrisome that our government under APC can no longer battle bandits and insurgents and now has to rely on nascent groups coordinated by APC leaders to negotiate and pay ransom to assailants (The Guardian Newspaper 2020, December 19).

Proliferation of Small and Light Weapons

The growing intensity of armed banditry in Nigeria has affected the country's efforts to protect its borderlands. This could be seen in the way Nigeria has turned into a transit route as well as the destination for the supply and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Arms proliferation has contributed significantly to the radicalization of youths and the creation of gun runners' syndicate who moved in and across the Nigeria-Niger and Chad borderlands to cause and involved in violent crimes. These syndicate groups create supply chain and sales routes from Nigeria, Niger, Mali, and Libya, thereby increasing access to guns and other weapons to bandits and religious extremist groups. An ECOWAS expert reported that Mali had become an established transit route for weapons heading from West Africa's increasingly to active violent crimes in west and central Africa (IRIN, 2018).

Therefore, the gun-runners resorted to use of camels to smuggle weapons into Nigeria when it became pressure to smuggle weapons on vehicles, "banditry and terrorism are not peculiar to Nigeria, but West African sub-region and Niger Republic is also facing the same from multiple fronts, that internal strife in the kind of banditry and crimes are not new especially from Boko Haram and the insurgency from Mali border down to Burkina Faso" (Daily Trust 2020, August 27).

Furthermore, Nigerian soldier and his girlfriend were caught supplying ammunition and military uniforms to bandits in the state at a press conference through the state governor deputy chief of staff Bashir Maru. The military arrested an army officer and his girlfriend who were engaged in assisting bandits with military uniforms and ammunition in active connivance with other saboteurs, the arrest was only possible by the military through community-driven intelligence. The development has further proved the governor earlier position that unless the fight against banditry is cleansed of bad eggs and saboteurs, we may not record the desired success in the fight (PremiumTimes, 2021, March 5).

In a similar vein, a Niger national Haruna Yusuf 47 and his two sons Ibrahim Haruna, 20 and Shu'aibu Haruna, 18 for alleged banditry and gun-running. Mr Yusuf a resident of Maduru village in Mani Local Government Area of Katsina state led a syndicate supplying arms from Niger Republic to bandits in Katsina and Zamfara states. Other suspected members paraded were Murtala Haruna, 20 described as a nephew of arms dealer, Ibrahim Dabo 19, from Natsinta village, Kandamau, of Maradi, Niger Republic, Sambo Muhammadu, 22, Jabir Adamu, 20 and Basiru Usman, 18, in Tsanni village, of Batagarawa Local Government Area of Katsina state who was described as brother of the suspected arms supplier.

Also, sourcing arms and ammunition from Niger Republic for Lawan Zayyana, Haruna Adamu, Kamaradini Ja'afaru, and Auwal Abubakar of Maduru village of Mani Local Government Area of Katsina state who supply it to bandits in the forests. Auwal Abubakar and Haruna Adamu have sold over 10,000 arms and ammunition to bandits and severally trafficked these arms and ammunition to Gurbi and Dan-Magaji areas of Zamfara state. The items recovered from the suspects include two General Purpose Machine Guns (-GMPGs), one LAR rifle and 179 Anti-Aircraft (AA) ammunitions and N3 -4 million CFA Franc and sevenmotorcycles said Katsina state Police commissioner-Sanusi Buba (Premium Times 2021, January 25).



The above discussion revealed that The Implications of Security Challenges in North-Western Nigeria: A Prognosis of Armed Banditry have created a gun runners syndicate, that moves in and across states Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto and Kebbi mostly bordered with Nigeria-Niger republic, an informal security sector (Yan Sakai) emerged to checkmate the activities of bandits and politicians both at state and national levels engages in blame game. Consequently, many communities raided, weapons proliferated among bandits, thousands of people killed, hundreds thousand of livestock rustled, thousands of people maimed or abducted for ransom and nearly 200,000 people fled their homes and remain internally displaced. An approximately 77,000 Nigerians fled to neighboring countries (Claire, 2021).

An Effective Measures That May Be Taken to Tackle the Security Challenges In North - Western Nigeria

Firstly, government has core responsibilities to its citizens, the greatest being good governance which political leaders pledge to provide but renege at all levels. There is no doubt; this could be remotely connected to the disaffection in the polity. Therefore, government should put all political options on the table and nothing should be left out in the search for political solution. Akpobibibo (2003) posited that there is a need to reorder priorities and to seek better understanding of the underlying causes and dynamics of the security challenges in the country with the aim of providing effective prevention measure and management strategies. The formulation and effective implementation of policies and programmes capable of addressing the root causes of security challenges in Nigeria are crucial, especially with regard to poverty; unemployment, environmental degradation, injustice, corruption, porous borders and proliferation of small and light weapons.

Secondly, the intelligence gathering and surveillance by law enforcement agents could be proactive and reasonably predict potential security threats with near perfect accuracy rather than being reactive. As noted by Adagba, (2012) the menace of insecurity no doubt calls for a new approach that will be founded on credible intelligence gathering". Government must not only continue to engage the security personnel, it must be more than ever before, recognize the need to devote more attention to security intelligence, capacity building to meet the global best practice standard and acquisition of modern technology. Also, modernize the security agencies with training, intelligence sharing, advanced technology, logistics, motivation and change of orientation. This effort will enhance the operational capabilities of the Nigeria security agencies by identifying avenues that would enable them respond appropriately to internal security challenges and other threats and there should be a complete overhaul of the security institutions in the country to reflect international standards of best practices so as to pre-empt these security breaches.

Thirdly, the consistent pattern of post damage responses to national security has been attributed to the dearth of pre-emptive intelligence among security personnel. There should be an institutionalized approach rather than the episodic and reactive response adopted by the government at the aftermath of attacks. In addition, to effectively tackle the menace of armed banditry Federal and North-west states government should not compromise in enforcing the law and cases that will tackle things that undermine national security at all, let alone adjourning them endlessly.

Finally, the judiciary ought to have, at this stage in our development, evolved time scales for cases, a time to determine a case; time to close that case and time to deliver judgment and pass sentences. In Nigeria, cases that bother on security challenges and corruption have most often been compromised and thus the law is no longer acting as a deterrent. Our law enforcement agencies must therefore be incorruptible and fair to ensure all this, there must be incentives, good conditions of service and social security.



Conclusion/Recommendations

It is certainly obvious, North-western Nigeria have become a prevalence centre of multiple forms of bandits attacks, hardly a week passes without report of violent attacks by heavily armed criminal gangs that operates in most cases unchallenged. However, the criminal activity of armed bandits have created a gun runners syndicate that moves in and across states Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto and Kebbi mostly bordered with Nigeria-Niger republic, an informal security sector (Yan Sakai) emerged to checkmate the activities of bandits and politicians both at state and national levels engages in blame game. Consequently, many communities raided, weapons proliferated among bandits, thousands of people killed, hundreds thousand of livestock rustled, thousands abducted for ransom and hundreds thousands fled their homes and remain internally displaced.

Therefore, the security agencies should enhancing intelligence gathering especially at Nigeria-Niger republic borderlands, so that security agencies could be proactive and reasonably predict potential security threats with near perfect accuracy rather than being reactive. Furthermore, logistics, motivation and change of orientation to reflect international standards of best practices given more priority. Also, the informal security sector (Yan Sakai) be trained to operate within the ambit of the law to avoid human rights abuses. Finally, coordinated approach by all stakeholders especially those from the zone to join hands together and find a lasting solution to the problem at hand instead of blame game which is totally diversionary and counter-productive.

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