

# Impact of Terrorism, Banditry and Kidnapping on Human Security in Nigeria

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DOI: [10.36348/sjhss.2021.v06i08.006](https://doi.org/10.36348/sjhss.2021.v06i08.006)

| Received: 12.07.2021 | Accepted: 17.08.2021 | Published: 27.08.2021

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## Abstract

The 2020 report of the Global Terrorism Index ranks Nigeria third among 163 countries on the scale of key global security trends and patterns of terrorism. This paper examines the impact of terrorism, banditry and kidnapping on human security in Nigeria. The paper posits that Nigeria continues to experience increasing insecurity and violence through frequent attacks by terrorist, bandits and kidnapers. These criminals continue to attack, rape and kill unarmed civilians, especially women, across the country, which has impacted negatively on human security in Nigeria. The paper then gives the primary purpose of government, which is to protect lives and property, our ranking on the global terrorism index 2020, the conceptual clarifications of human security, terrorism, banditry and kidnapping; factors that are responsible for such social ills and their impact on Nigeria and Nigerians. The documentary research method was used in gathering and analyzing data for this work. The paper asserts that between terrorists, bandits, and kidnapers, there is very little differences as one set of activities apparently service the other. The paper concludes that the indices that point to national security in which human security is the chief has been challenged seriously by terrorism, banditry and kidnapping.

**Key words:** Terrorism, Banditry, Kidnapping, Human Security, Security and Nigeria.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provided in section 14 (1) (b) that “the very security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government” [1]. Security remains a necessary pre-condition for the development of human beings and society. This underscores the significance of security as the pre-condition for survival of the Nigerian people and nation. Therefore, security is the most basic need of human beings and society [2]. Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs placed the physiological needs which comprise food, water, warmth and rest and safety needs that have security and safety as the basic needs of human beings. However, the contemporary Nigeria has become a theatre of genocide, bloodshed and insecurity over the past years due to the carnage activities of terrorists, bandits and kidnapers. These groups and camps unleash havoc on the Nigerian populace, which have become a subject of national security and public concern.

Citizens hardly sleep with two eyes closed as a result of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and ethno-religious violence spreading from states like Borno,

Yobe, and Adamawa up to Zamfara, Katsina and Kaduna. In recent years, the once calm Abuja-Kaduna highway has been described as a road to death due to the increasing level of daily kidnapping of travelers including security officials. The recent killing of five students of Greenfield University, Kaduna State a private University located 36km along Kaduna- Abuja road is a case in point. These criminals continue to attack, rape and kill unarmed civilians, especially women, across the country.

The paper proceeds from introduction to analyzing the 2020 report of the global terrorism index with regard to Nigeria, then the conceptual clarifications of human security, terrorism, banditry and kidnapping. The methodology used for this research is stated, the factors responsible for terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping are identified, and their implications on human security, and finally conclusions drawn.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research paper is historical method. The decision is also informed by the need to engage in critical investigation of events, developments and movements, with regard to the thrush

of this research across time and space in order to evaluate them given the current situation under investigation. It is in this context that the historical approach is considered to be appropriate to appraise the impact of terrorism, banditry and kidnapping on human security in Nigeria. The documentary research method will also be used in gathering and analyzing data for this work. Review of relevant textbooks, newspapers, internet and all relevant publications and journals on terrorism, banditry and kidnapping and human security are used in this work. Therefore, the method of data analysis is explanatory in nature.

### **Global terrorism index 2020: the position of Nigeria**

The 2020 report of the Global Terrorism Index ranks Nigeria third among 163 countries on the scale of key global security trends and patterns of terrorism. The first and second countries are Afghanistan and Iraq respectively. Nigeria has maintained the third position since 2015, suggesting that efforts targeted at mitigating security challenges have not produced optimal results. The report reveals that Nigeria accounted for the 9 per cent of all terrorism-related deaths globally in 2019. As far as the impact of terrorism is concerned globally, these three countries are rated very high. Afghanistan has 9.592; Iraq 8.682, while Nigeria is 8.314. The four terrorist groups responsible for the most deaths in 2019 were the Taliban, Boko Haram, ISIL and Al-Shabaab. Boko Haram, Nigeria's deadliest terrorist group recorded an increase in terrorist activity mainly targeted at civilians by 25 per cent from the prior year. Additionally, Fulani extremists were responsible for 26 per cent of terror-related deaths in Nigeria at 325 fatalities [3]. What is even more disturbing is that out of the first 10 countries, five are declared in a state of war, in which Nigeria is inclusive. Five of the ten countries that are classified as being in a state of war are: Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria, Somalia and Yemen [4].

### **Conceptual clarifications of human security, terrorism, banditry and kidnapping**

#### **Human Security**

Security is broadly viewed as freedom from danger or threats to an individual or a nation. It is the ability to protect and defend oneself, be it an individual or a nation, its cherished values and legitimate interests and the enhancement of wellbeing. Security could take different forms. There is human security, national security, and so on. National security implies the appropriation and deployment of state apparatus of coercive force to deal with situation of crisis, nationally or internationally. Human security involves protecting the citizenry from hunger, disease, poverty, unemployment, natural disasters, etc. however, all these can only take place where there is peace and stability in the polity [5].

According to the United Nation Development programme 1994, human security could be defined as protection from hidden and hurtful disruption in the daily activities, at homes, offices or communities. That is, security is the state of being safe and secure from danger, it could also be protection from chronic threat such as hunger, diseases and repression. Security is commonly associated with the alleviation of threat to the survival of individuals or groups. Thus, security can be equated with freedom from present and future danger, harm or anxiety.

In countries where appropriate development paradigm is in place and practiced, the citizenry enjoys high standard of living demonstrated by the willingness of government to provide the basic necessities of life in terms of jobs, portable water, electricity, affordable housing, foods, roads among others. Under these conditions, there could be national human security. Where there is security, there is likely to be absence of fear, threat, anxiety, tension and apprehension over loss of life, liberty, property, goals and values, among others [6]. From the foregoing, it is clear that security is vital for development in any human collectivity.

The word security has to do with freedom from danger, anxiety and fear; a situation that shows that a country is not exposed to internal sabotage or external attack. In the broader sense, security is seen as the struggle to secure the most basic necessities of life such as food, fuel, medicine and shelter. Any social unrest arising from the absence of these facilities can lead to human security problems [7]. National security is the aggregate of security interests of all individuals, communities, ethnic groups and political entities to guarantee safety and security, prosperity of individuals and institutes within a nation. It is the requirement for maintaining the survival of any nation through the use of economic, diplomacy, power projection and political power.

#### **Terrorism**

The African Union (AU) sees terrorism as: Any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a state party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any member or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage". Terrorism has been described as the "criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes that are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them [8].

The United States Department of Defense defines terrorism as “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear, intended to coerce or to intimidate Governments or Societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological”. In this definition, there are three key elements, violence, fear, and intimidation, and each element produces terror in its victim.

P. Wilkinson distinguishes terrorism from other forms of violence in the following ways: “It is premeditated and designed to create a climate of extreme fear; It is directed at a wider target than the immediate victims; it is considered by the society in which it occurs as ‘extra-normal’, that is, it violates the norms regulating disputes, protest and dissent; it is used primarily, though not exclusively to influence the political behavior of governments, communities or specific social groups” [9]. Wilkinson further provides typologies of terrorist movements or groups: Ethno-nationalistic groups, that is, those identified by ethnicity and political motivation; Ideological terrorist groups this includes terrorist groups that want to create a state based on an ideology (e.g. A Communist state). The other categories are religious-Political groups-such as Boko Haram sect in Nigeria, which aims to create an Islamic republic.

Nigeria is currently bedeviled with profound threat of terrorism, especially in the North-Eastern part of the country. In the last ten (10) years, the country has witnessed the vulnerability of terror, criminality and instability. The disheartening phenomena include, but not limited to devastation and annihilations of several towns, villages, churches, mosques, Police stations, schools and other public institutions with Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) bombs planted and small arms and light weapons (SALWs) by the Boko Haram insurgents in Niger, Bornu, Adamawa, Yobe, and Nassarawa states respectively [10].

### **Banditry**

Banditry refers to armed violence driven principally by the criminal intent to steal and plunder. It is motivated by the quest for economic accumulation. The victims are individuals and communities with material valuables. The most common examples of rural banditry in Nigeria are armed robbery, kidnapping, cattle rustling and village raids. Rural banditry in the northwestern states of Zamfara, Kaduna and Katsina has reached alarming heights in recent years. Bandits terrorise villages with impunity. They have actually settled in the Zamfara state, setting up fortified enclaves in the hinterland and on the frontiers, from where they plot and carry out their operations.

Nigeria’s Northwest is gradually becoming another major regional theatre of violence, much like

the Northeast where Boko Haram terrorists have wreaked havoc in the past ten years. A problem, which initially appeared as localized disputes between herders and farmers over access to land, has morphed into an intractable crisis posing a major threat to national and regional security. The level of rural banditry escalated between 2014 and 2019 attracting a lot of attention, while assuming increased political undertones in the run-up to the 2019 Nigerian elections.

In Zamfara and parts of neighboring Katsina state in the Northwest, rampaging gangs of armed bandits have engaged in violent acts, attacking, abducting, killing, and robbing villagers and travelers, and engaging in cattle rustling. Although sometimes exaggerated or underestimated by some political actors, casualty figures are quite alarming. The former Governor of Zamfara state, Abdulaziz Yari, is reported to have said that nearly five hundred villages and thirteen thousand hectares of land have been devastated, and two thousand eight hundred and thirty five people killed between 2011 and 2018. It is also estimated that there are at least ten thousand armed bandits and cattle rustlers operating out of eight major camps in Zamfara state. Also, some reports put the number of children orphaned as a result of such attacks at forty four thousand since 2010. In Anka Local Government Area of the state, over sixteen thousand people have been internally displaced [11].

### **Kidnappings**

Another security concern spreading across Nigeria like wildfire is kidnapping. When it began in the creeks of the Niger Delta region some years ago, nobody thought it would become a nightmare [12]. Gradually, it has even become a lucrative business for many of Nigeria’s jobless youths in the South East, South West and other parts of the country. Initially, it was the kidnapping of expatriates that was predominant in the South but today, the situation has gotten so bad that —nobody is safe. Serving government officials are not spared in the kidnapping menace, as their family members, relatives and friends have become worthy targets’. Interestingly, armed robbers and other sorts of criminals are fast abandoning their trades for the more lucrative business of kidnapping [13].

Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben have defined kidnapping as the “act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom. It involves taking a person from their family forcefully without their consent with the motive of holding the person as a hostage and earning a profit from their family” [14]. From the foregoing, the definition of kidnapping has no one best way to describe it, but it is clear that for an act to be deemed kidnapping, it shall involve coercive movement of a victim from one place to another,

detention or seizure of that person be it a child or an adult.

This form of organized crime has become widespread and has dented the hallowed image of Nigeria and Nigerians. Of all forms of crime, kidnapping seem to have become so widespread and lucrative, yielding speedy and high returns to perpetrators of the crime through payment of ransom by victims or their families. Kidnapping is defined as an organized crime that has its essence in the unlawful intentional deprivation of a person's freedom of movement in an attempt to exploit the situation to extort money or other advantages [15]. Hardly does a day pass by in the Nigeria of 21<sup>st</sup> century that kidnap cases are not reported. It is no longer news that kidnapping is a heinous but lucrative business for criminals in several parts of Nigeria. Jan Birni, a community in Birnin Gwari Local Government area of Kaduna State, which lies on the border between Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara States, is one of the areas that have been in the grip of cattle rustlers and armed bandits. Little wonder the traditional ruler of the area and Emir of Birnin Gwari, Alhaji Zubair Maigwari, was reported to have lamented that his community had completely been taken over by rustlers and bandits who kill, maim, rape and kidnap their victims before dispossessing them of their hard-earned investments [16]. These rustlers also carry all sorts of small arms and light weapons in executing their evil machinations. The threats posed by the existence of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) to Nigeria's internal security are fast becoming uncontrollable [17].

#### **Factors responsible for terrorism, banditry and kidnapping in nigeria**

Kidnapping: Several factors could be held responsible for the emergence and spread of cases of kidnapping in many parts of democratic Nigeria. Odama Samuel has identified some of them that are bad leadership, endemic poverty, weak correctional agencies, lack of synergy among agencies of social control, and failure to arrest and punish offenders. Leadership failure arising from bad leadership in Nigeria is no doubt responsible for rising wave in crime and criminality in a country adjudged to be one of the richest in human and material resources in Africa. Rather than harnessing the resources of the nation for the development of its citizens, successive leadership of this country have further impoverished the masses through corrupt enrichment and fraudulent practices at various level of governance [18]. Another factor is endemic poverty, the ultimate aftermath of financial impropriety and recklessness of our leaders is widespread poverty in the land, while a few privileged individuals who looted our commonwealth are daily parading themselves in affluence and are so celebrated by the society. Today, majority of Nigerian citizens live below poverty line of one Dollar per day, suffer from

decayed infrastructure, lack access to medical services, qualitative and affordable education, safe drinking water and sanitation, etc. Average Nigerians daily live in unpredictable and hopeless conditions. Weak Correctional Agencies, The strength of police and other policing agencies in Nigeria to prevent the occurrence of crime before they are committed and detect or arrest crimes when committed have inhibited the control of crime and by extension encouraged criminal activities in the country. The popular perception of Nigerians is that, the policing agencies have failed the nation in protecting lives and property. Also lack of synergy among agencies of social control provision of security all over the world is a herculean task. It is costly, multifaceted and complicated. Yet, it is generally considered a necessity because, without it any other thing desired by man becomes secondary. Regrettably, this popular expectation has not been realized in Nigeria, as security operatives have at different times been involved in unhealthy operational rivalries. This explains the serious security challenges faced by the nation in recent times. It is argued in Nigeria for instance that: Such rivalry has been noticed between the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) over security duties in several parts of the nation as well as between the Nigeria Police Force and Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) over the management of vehicle registration and licensing. The Nigeria Police and State Security Service (SSS) have had contentions over the management of criminal cases. It is still the problem of status and command or who is best to handle criminal cases. Failure to arrest and Punish Offenders One of the factors that have escalated crime cases in Nigeria today is the inability of government and governmental agencies saddled with the right and power to detect arrest and prosecute criminals to perform their duties. Because offenders and criminals are not speedily detected, tried and if found guilty punished accordingly, most of the citizens found it difficult to see reasons why they must not deviate from acceptable social norms.

Hazen and Horner observe that hostages have been taken for two primary reasons: political bargaining and economic gain. This broad classification of kidnapping is very important for understanding the underlying factors for the problem, especially kidnapping for ransom. But beyond these broad typologies, persons are kidnapped and abducted by criminals for various reasons and intentions, such as for adoption, begging, camel racing, illicit intercourse, marriage, prostitution, ransom, revenge, sale, selling body parts, slavery, unlawful activity, murder and for other purposes [19].

Banditry: Although, the causal factors for banditry and terrorism differ, both phenomena locally thrived on exploiting the fragile or weak State capacity evident in human rights abuses, inequality, poor service

provision and unemployment. While banditry, predominantly in the North-West contrasts the predominance of violent extremism in the North-East, both constitute a common thread of the overlapping nature and characteristics of organized crime as well as its mirrored impact on peace and human security in the affected States [20]. Beyond this, it further poses significant challenges to focused strategies to counter Violent Extremist which increasingly requires broader initiatives to address organized crime. For instance, cattle rustling attributed to bandits are also a strategy applied by Boko Haram to support their operations. In addition, robbery and kidnapping constitute a dominant criminal enterprise that is similar in the operations of bandits and extremist group [21].

Factors that drive banditry in the region such as cattle rustling, illicit artisanal gold mining, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), youth unemployment, inequality and poverty, indicates a weak governance and security capacities across the States. The situation is further complicated by the existence of large unregulated and poor government-controlled forest areas in the region, some of which are situated within under-policed border areas between Nigeria and neighbouring countries. The porosity of these borders aid Cross-border criminality [22].

#### **Implications of terrorism, banditry and kidnapping on human security**

According to the Nigerian Police Force, 685 people were kidnapped in the first quarter of 2019 and there were 1071 deaths caused in crime-related events, with Northwest region topping the death list [23]. Security is the foundation of everything ever desired by man. It takes security for the aspiration, worth and dreams of citizens to be actualized. In fact, in the absence of security, every other thing becomes secondary [24]. Furthermore, it is only when there is adequate security that there can be peace and without peace, people live in fear, not able to go about their legitimate duties. This ensures that life and events becomes grossly unpredictable [25]. There is no doubt that the spate of kidnapping in Nigeria since the beginning of our third democratic experiment in 1999 is quite alarming. No state in Nigeria is safe. The young, aged, rich and clergy are equally affected as everyone appears obsessed with the fear of kidnapers. Yet, security agencies appear ill-equipped to combat the scourge as even the security operatives and their family members are sometimes victims [26]. The fear of kidnapers in Nigeria is further worsened by the fact that, a few success stories in the arrest of culprits by security operatives indicates that security operatives are themselves members of kidnap gangs. The ultimate implication of these cases of insecurity in Nigeria is that, an average Nigerian is afraid of his neighbours and agencies of social control. With this state of affairs,

there will be no confidence and commitment of citizens to national issues and by extension, dismal economic development.

The economic and financial impact is about the most critical area that the ever increasing cases of kidnapping has negatively affected and still affecting Nigerian citizens. Where insecurity looms as has been the case with many parts of the country in recent times, virtually every economic and commercial activity will be grounded. Foreign and domestic investors only invest in the economy considered safe, friendly and fairly stable, because it require stable and conducive environment for economic activities to thrive. A hostile environment scares prospective investors who find it difficult to predict the future of their investment. Another impact of banditry which has affected the North-East is also the wider economic cost. The flow of illicit firearms in communities of North-West region is also a cause for security concern. Apart from fatalities recorded, bandits' attacks on communities increased social risks, discouraged investment and triggered economic crises for individuals and communities. The conflict is causing a spillover effect on other neighbouring communities and local government areas of Niger State in the North-Central region, hindering inter-communal and inter-state trade.

The insecurity has a significant impact on other economic activities in the region, as a number of major local markets such as Iiella, Dandume, Maidabino, Kankara (Katsina State) and Bardoki, Shinkafi (Zamfara State) markets have been shut down due to incessant attacks [27].

These social ills have social implications also, this is one area that nations identified with serious crimes such as kidnapping, terrorism, and human trafficking and their likes have suffered in relation with other countries of the world. Irrespective of the type of kidnapping and the motive for its perpetration, the psychological and financial impact of the problem can be quite devastating, both for the victims and their significant others. Not only does forceful removal of a child from his/her family traumatises the victim, it also unravels the lives of his/her parents, family, and community. Child sexual abuse as a result of kidnapping also exposes child to the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Apart from psychological trauma on the victim and the victim's family, as well as physiological implications, kidnapping is also accompanied with huge economic or financial implications [28].

Armed banditry, facilitated the emergence of a complex informal security sector in the region, including the growth of armed local vigilante groups established to protect communities against bandits. Many of these groups lack adequate security training

and often compete against one another. They have been implicated in acts of criminality including human rights abuses, armed robbery, extortion and appropriation of livestock and other properties from both bandits and their victims, which led a public commentator to label their activities as 'legalized armed banditry' [29].

Also, accusations have been leveled against some traditional rulers for providing protection and intelligence support to bandits in exchange for financial gratifications [30]. In April 2019, the Nigerian Military arrested two traditional rulers in Zamfara accusing them of collaborating with bandits to undermine the effort of the Government to end banditry in the State [31]. Four others were also suspended by the Zamfara State Government [32]. An investigative committee set up by the Zamfara State Governor, Bello Matawalle in July 2019 revealed that five traditional rulers (Emirs), 33 district heads and several village heads were complicit in the wave of banditry that spanned from June 2011 to May 2019 [33].

One of the most visible impacts of armed banditry in the North West involves internal displacement of community residents. According to a 2019 report issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Nigerian Government, over 200,000 persons were internally displaced in several communities of Zamfara, Katsina and Sokoto States between January-August 2019. Majority of these IDPs were women, children and the elderly taking refuge in neighbouring Republic of Niger, Cameroun and Chad [34]. Reports obtained from the Zamfara State Government revealed that banditry led to an estimated 22,000 widows and 44, 000 orphans in Zamfara State since 2011 [35].

The criminal activities perpetuated by bandits in the North West heightened the vulnerability of women and girls in the region. Some women in the affected communities were faced with early widowhood or death of their children, while some children were orphaned and forced to flee their villages for safety. This remains a critical human security concern as they also suffer varied forms of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV). Several cases of rape by bandits were reported in Katsina [36] and Niger State [37].

The impact on education is also felt; education deprivation in the North-West region has been exacerbated by armed banditry, due to the mass displacements in affected communities. However, the escalation of banditry contributed to a high number of out-of-school children in the region. Out of the 10.5 million out-of-school children in Nigeria, 30 percent are in the North-West (Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kano) and Niger States in the North Central region [38]. Besides, insecurity in the communities had a negative impact on young boys and girls, as school

activities in vulnerable areas were disrupted. The few existing schools were unable to operate properly for fear of kidnap of students or attacks and killing by bandits [39]. Parents prevented their children from attending schools due to insecurity on major roads. This in turn increased the job turnover of teachers in these communities.

## CONCLUSION

The paper concludes that the indices that point to national security in which human security is the chief has been challenged and threatened seriously by terrorism, banditry and kidnapping in Nigeria. The government needs to rise to the occasion to provide security and safety to its citizens. The various factors responsible and how these social ills have affected the nation economically, financially, socially, psychologically, educationally, internal displacement of communities and the vulnerability of women and children were all highlighted.

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