



CRIME OF BANDITRY IN NIGERIA: BEYOND LEGALESE

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Abstract

The nation has come under unprecedented wave of criminality by bandits who have seized the nation by the jugular especially in the Northern part of the country. Although criminal statutes exist, the criminal justice system appears paralyzed to apprehend criminals and mete out deserved justice. The paper examined the legal framework, root causes and effect of banditry on society, victims and the nation. The doctrinal research methodology was deployed with reliance on primary and secondary materials. The study finds that while penal sanctions exist, the crime continues to flourish. Huge sums of money are being paid as ransom which indirectly supports illegal purchase of small arms and light weapons used by the bandits to carry out barbaric killings, razing communities and looting livestock. These activities violate constitutional rights of citizens: right to personal liberty, freedom of movement, and right to life under sections 35, 41 and 33 of the Constitution, violations of Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act of 2015. The study finds there exists poor arrests and prosecutions which encourages lawlessness. It recommended the swift arrest and prosecution of bandits to be based on new all encompassing federal Statute with dedicated courts in the criminal jurisdictions for speedy trials. Well armed and trained vigilante should be set up for communities and Government should establish early warning protocols for attacks with hot lines to nearest Police and Army formations. Victims should access trauma counselling, receive compensation and their communities rebuilt by Government. Special military and police tactical forces in crisis prone areas should be deployed to end the cycle of violence. Government should improve governance dividends and target vocational skills to reduce poverty and unemployment among the youths in the North.

Key Words: banditry, terrorists, intelligence gathering, security, vigilante

Introduction

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, as amended states that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.² Banditry has grown into a hydra headed monster the federal government is unable or unwilling to confront and overcome in Northwestern Nigeria. The area encompasses seven states namely Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kaduna, Zamfara, Jigawa and Sokoto. Five of these states, which are Katsina, Kaduna,

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² Section 14, sub section 2, paragraph (b) of Chapter 11, 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria(CFRN) (as Amended)

Zamfara, Kebbi and Sokoto, have been mostly affected by the scourge of rural banditry, and of these five states, Katsina, Kaduna and Zamfara have been the most critical hotspots.³ Bandits operate without let in these States and have now spread into North Central region especially Benue and Niger States controlling vast swathes of land. This paper examines the legal framework, existing penalties in the penal statutes which appear not to have curbed the incidents of banditry. This necessitates a review of underlying causes and the effects of Banditry on the nation in the expectation that the Government would roll out effective mechanisms to deal decisively with the crime of Banditry.

Conceptual Analysis

Crime is defined as an act which the Law makes punishable; the breach of a legal duty that is a subject matter of a criminal proceedings.⁴ However, it is important to settle the fact that while crime in the sense of a breach of a legal prohibition is a universal concept, what actually constitutes a crime and how seriously it should be regarded varies from one society to another.⁵ This fact is important because sometimes who is referred to as 'bandit' may be different from the local populace sentiments. In such situations, communities may refuse to feed Law Enforcement with necessary intelligence or in the extreme case shield such criminals. A bandit is an outlaw who unleashes mayhem, destruction and carnage on victims. Banditry is also defined as organized robbery, brigandage, a form of crime practiced by outlaws and plunderers⁶. Banditry is a form of Organised Crime(OC). It manifests in criminal activities such as cattle rustling, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug abuse, arson, rape and the brazen and gruesome massacres of people of agrarian communities with sophisticated weapons by suspected herdsmen and reprisal attacks from surviving victims.⁷ It also refers to incidences of armed robbery or allied violent crimes such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, village or market raids. It utilizes force or threat to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill.

Banditry can be classified based on the underlying 'intent' or 'motive'.⁸ 'Social banditry', is generally motivated by the intent to protest social inequality and to redistribute wealth within a locality. Likewise, one could talk of other forms of banditry that are principally motivated by 'political' or 'economic' reasons. Where 'location' of occurrence is relevant, a more apt phrase is 'Rural vs. Urban banditry' or 'Frontier vs. Countryside banditry', as the case may be.

Similarly, banditry can be 'Mercenary' or 'Autonomous'. Mercenary banditry is perpetuated by auxiliaries or mercenaries working for a principal in a sort of principal-agent relationship, while autonomous bandits are self-motivated and personally commissioned. 'Organized

³ Al Chukwuma Okoli & Anthony Chinedu Ugwu, „Of Marauders And Brigands:

Scoping The Threat Of Rural Banditry In Nigeria"s North West" *Brazilian Journal of African Studies*, Porto Alegre v. 4, Jul./Dec. 2019 , p. 201-222

⁴ *Black's Law Dictionary*, (6th edn, Centennial edition 1990)

⁵ 'States In Disarray, the Social Effects of Globalisation" (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)1995. <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org>> accessed 2 September 2022.

⁶ (fn 2)

⁷ Jasper C. Uche Chijioke K Iwuamadi, „Nigeria: Rural banditry and community resilience in the Nimbo community", *Conflict Studies Quarterly* 2018) (24) 71-82.

⁸ (fn 2) 203

banditry' thrives on a network of actors that are syndicated and coordinated while petty banditry is perpetrated by individual or group actors that are not so organized. 'Roving bandits' are more or less mobile or itinerant while stationary bandits are settled or sedentary. 'Maritime banditry' refers to offshore robbery (piracy) as compared to those that occur on the coast or mainland. Rural banditry simply means the prevalence of banditry in the rural sector. It can assume any of the characteristics highlighted above. More importantly, it thrives within the 'social ecology' of the rural sector characterized by gross governance deficits.⁹ Prominent instances of rural banditry in Nigeria include kidnapping, armed robbery, cattle rustling and village raids.

Abdulrahman opines that Banditry is a violent situation unleashed on rural communities.¹⁰ It is an organized armed violence through plunder, extortions, armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, raping of women and children, village raids after which they are set ablaze, terrorism, illegal mining, the rustling of cattle, and murder as a means of fluid occupation by criminals. Bandits today can: (i) strain government capacity by overwhelming police and legal systems through sheer audacity, violence, and numbers; (ii) challenge the legitimacy of the state; (iii) act as surrogate or alternative governments; (iv) dominate the informal economic sector, establishing a small business and using violence and coercion to compete with legitimate business while avoiding taxes and co-opting government regulators; and (v) infiltrate local police and non governmental organizations to further their goals and in so doing, demonstrate latent political aims.¹¹ Bandit operations have negatively affected the economic development of Nigeria, most especially in agricultural productivity as farms and grazing land have been destroyed or access to them denied as a result of the presence of bandits in those areas.

The bandits are sophisticated as they no longer use knives, cutlass, and sticks previously used as weapons in farmers-herders conflict. They now use; (a) more powerful and sophisticated weapons to carry out their attacks, (b) use of roadblocks, (c) move into towns and homes of kidnap victims, (d) forcefully acquire goods and commodities (e) hold human beings for ransom, (f) engage in cattle rustling, (g) operate in groups under one or more leaders, (h) ambush, (i) attack soft target of unarmed villagers, (j) guerrilla warfare, (k) using motorbikes, (l) using women in carrying out attacks, etc.

Geographical elements play an undeniable role in the analysis of criminal activity. A region characterized by vast forested areas holds a distinct strategic value compared to savannah zones. Forests are particularly attractive to criminal groups, as they offer increased freedom of action due to the lack of human presence and low population density.¹² This explains the formation of criminal camps in forests. Sambisa Forest, located in northeastern Nigeria near the Cameroonian border, is a stronghold of the terrorist group *Boko Haram*, challenging

⁹ Olaniyan, A. & Yahaya, A. "Cows, bandits and violent conflicts: Understanding cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria". 2016 *African Spectrum*, 3, . 93-105.

¹⁰ Yusuf Barau Abdulrahman, „Banditry And Its Threat To Rural Economic Development Of Faskari,,*YamtaraWala Journal of Arts, Management and Social Sciences (YaJAMSS)* 2(1). p 6. December 2022.

¹¹ (fn 9)

¹² Alim, Bakari Yaya, „Adamawa Under the prism of Cross-border Rural Banditry“ <https://nbnresolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-94333-2> Accessed 27 June 2024.

Nigerian military access and illustrating the difficulties faced by public authorities in asserting sovereignty over these spaces.¹³

Similarly, forested areas in Nigerian states like Kaduna, Sokoto, and Katsina are under the control of criminal gangs operating in the northwest of the country.¹⁴ It is extremely complex to dislodge them from these areas that provide multiple refuges and protection against aerial operations. The armed forces struggle to pursue criminals within forests due to lack of terrain mastery, making sweep operations risky.

Thus, it is submitted that Banditry is the totality of armed robbery or allied violent crimes including highway raids which involves the use of force or threat to that effect to intimidate a person or group of persons in order to rob, rape, maim, kidnap or kill the victims.¹⁵

A kidnapper may not be a bandit but a bandit will likely carry out kidnapping as part of the group *modus operandi*. Banditry exacts a negative toll on National Security.¹⁶ National security comprises Physical Security, Economic and Environmental Security, Political Security, Food Security, Infrastructural Security, Health security.¹⁷ Economic and social activities are negatively affected and Foreign investors are scared off.

Abdulrahman submits that the concept of Securitization is the underlying theory to Banditry in the North West especially in Faskari Local Government Area of Katsina State.¹⁷ According to the theory, political issues are constituted as extreme security issues to be dealt with urgently when they have been labeled as ‘dangerous’, ‘menacing’, or ‘threatening’. ‘Alarming’, by a securitizing actor who has the social and institutional power to move the issue beyond politics. The theory asserts that issues are not essentially threatening in themselves, rather, it is by referring to them as ‘security’ issues that they become a security problem. Securitization theorists determined five sectors; the economic, the societal, the military, the political, and the environmental sector.

The Nigeria Police are unable to deal with banditry in Nigeria and the Armed Forces of Nigeria are stretched thin because for 13 years, the Nigerian Armed Forces has been locked in a grueling war with *Boko Haram* terrorist group and have made only some measured progress.^{18,19} This leads to the germane question of what is the nexus between banditry and terrorism, who is a terrorist and what constitutes terrorism. There are difficulties in agreeing

¹³ (fn 8)

¹⁴ (fn 2) 201-222

¹⁵ Rosenje M. Olapeju & Adeniyi Peter, “The Impact of Banditry On Nigeria’s Security In the Fourth Republic: An Evaluation of Nigeria’s Northwest” (*Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development*, 2021) 2(1).

¹⁶ Haruna I. Abdullahi, Ochigbo E. Ogbale & Agbor J. Esoso, „Banditry and National Security: Implications for Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria, *Ife Social Sciences Review*, 2022 / 30(2), 111-123. ¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁷ (fn 9)p 5-8.

¹⁸ ‘FG, heed Zulum’s warning on ISWAP’, Sunday Punch Editorial, February 27 2022, p16. The editorial stated that nearly 350,000 persons have been killed in the region 2009 and mid-February 2022, quoting the Council on Foreign Relations Global Conflict Tracker. Three million others have been displaced in the Lake Chad Region, while

¹⁹ ,000 are now refugees. The instability has spread to three other North-East states of

on a generic, universally valid definition of terrorism. Some definitions require these crimes to cause death or injury to persons, but others require only damage to certain types of property. Of the crimes involving damage to or destruction of property that may constitute acts of terrorism, most are required to cause damage to or destruction of public property used by the public. Some acts, including most crimes against civil aviation and crimes involving the use of bombs and other lethal devices, are defined as terrorist crimes *per se*, irrespective of the intent with which they are committed; other acts, including the taking of hostages, constitute terrorist crimes only if committed with a specific intent. Terrorism is thus defined as “the use or threat of violence to intimidate or cause panic, especially as a means of affecting political conduct”.¹⁹

The Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act of 2022 created terrorism offenses but is silent on the mode of prosecution.²⁰ The new Act sought to provide for an effective, unified and comprehensive legal, regulatory and institutional framework for the detection, prevention, prohibition, prosecution and punishment for acts of terrorism, terrorism financing, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in Nigeria and related matters. In view of the destabilizing effects of banditry on the nation's security outlay, it is important to examine concept of security briefly. It can be understood as being secure from fear of physical, psychological abuse, violence, persecution or death and from want such as food, Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba. Niger and Nassarawa States are menaced by Salafi and allied terrorists. Security has been described as stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income) predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect) protection from crime (feeling safe) freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress) which results from the assurance of being accepted in the neighborhood, community, State etc.²⁰ In essence, it is submitted that security is an all pervasive atmosphere, environment, an assured position of safety, serenity, protection from violence and access to basic needs of life including justice without fear or favor when crime is committed or rights are violated.

Bandits Vs Organized Crime Group(OC)

Siddique asserts that organized crime is not only ‘more’ organized than ordinary or professional crime but it is also differently organized. One major characteristic is that in Organized crime, a group of persons of considerable size engages itself in continuous crime over a long, usually indefinite period of time²². It would appear what is manifesting in the Nigerian nation is organized gang criminality²³. He stated that in India lawlessness reached a level in the eighties with Organised Crime gangs where it appeared the country had lost the will to enforce the laws, a situation not too dissimilar from Nigeria today. In the United States, different Organized Crime groups operate²⁴. The Italian Organized crimes comprise four different groups²¹. It is alleged that the Salafi Jihadist faction, Islamic State-West African Province, otherwise known as ISWAP is fully operational in Nigeria.²⁷ It is a more dangerous force than *Boko Haram*. It is a militant and administrative unit of the Islamic State, a Salafi jihadist militant group. It is

²⁰ Siyet M. QuadriAhmad Siddique's *Criminology & Penology*, . (6th edn), Eastern Book Company Lucknow, 2011, 470-474.

²¹ Karen Hess et al, *Criminal Investigation*, (11th edn) CENGAGE 2017, 541. The Sicilian Mafia, the Neapolitan Camorra, the „Ndrangheta and Sacra Corona Unita. There is also the Asian organized crime who are involved in murder, kidnapping, extortion, loan sharking, trafficking in heroin e.t.c; the Russian crime group, The Latino organized crime groups which include Cubans, Colombians, Mexicans and Dominicans. Their groups are involved in drug trafficking and extends into the U.S and the African organized crime groups also. ²⁷ (fn 18)

active in the Chad Basin, and fights an extensive insurgency against Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger.^{22,23} It is now more closely tied to the Islamic State. ISWAP is better educated, tech savvy, with globally connected leaders and tested fighters. It is also better funded, better equipped and adept at Public Relations gimmicks and multi-media messaging.²⁴

Legal Framework

Robbery is an offence under section 401 of the Criminal Code²⁵ punishable under section 402. Stealing is an essential ingredient to prove the offence of Robbery. It must be accompanied by threat or actual use of violence to the person or property and must be capable of being carried out as held in *Babalola v The State*²⁶. After the Nigerian Civil War (1966-70) the crime of armed robbery was rampant in the country. Hence, Government promulgated the Robbery & Firearms (Special Provisions) Act of 1990²⁷. The Act defined Armed Robbery thus;

If any offender at the time of robbery is armed with any firearms or offensive weapon or is in company with any person so armed or immediately before or immediately after the time of robbery, the said offender wounds or uses any personal violence on any person, the offender shall be liable upon conviction to a sentence of death.³²

Another relevant Act is the Firearms Act²⁸ which regulates possession of and dealing in firearms and ammunition including muzzle - loading firearms. Constitutionally, security is the responsibility of Government as earlier stated under section 14(2)(b)²⁹. Bandits are thus in violation of the Firearms Act. The Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act(VAPP) 2015³⁰ is another legislation that is relevant for use for prosecution of bandits. Technically, the VAPP Act is mostly seen as applicable to sexual offenses like rape, incest, or to widowhood practices, Female Genital Mutilations(FGM), spousal battery etc. However, the explanatory Note to the Act states thus: An Act to Eliminate Violence in Private and Public Life, Prohibit All Forms of Violence Against

²² *ibid*. Common activities are bank robbery, hijackings, murder, kidnapping, automobile

and jewel theft. He stated that in India a disturbing phenomenon was the fact that in two states; Uttar Pradesh and Bihar where kidnappings for ransom and murder were rampant, it appeared the gangs had patronage of politicians and policemen, a fact not too far from the situation in Northern Nigeria. ²⁴ *ibid* 541

Bandits qualify to be charged and prosecuted under this Act.

²² Islamic State-West African Province, <https://en.wikipedia.org>. Accessed 15th July

²³ . They use explosives, bombs, suicide bombers. At a higher level, terrorists use biological and chemical weapons, nuclear terrorism, technology etc

²⁴ (Fn 18)

²⁵ CAP C38 LFN 2004

²⁶ (1970) 1 All NLR 44

²⁷ Cap 398 LFN 1990, now Robbery and Firearms Act, CAP R11 LFN 2004. Robbery without arms attracts 20 year jail term. ³² Section 1(2)

²⁸ CAP F28, LFN 2004

²⁹ (fn 1)

³⁰ Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act(VAPP) No 19 of 2015

It is clear therefore that activities of bandits constitute forms of violence against persons. Therefore prosecution can take place under the Act.³² Furthermore, activities of Bandits violate several constitutional rights of citizens. These include section 33 which guarantees right to Life; section 35 the right to personal liberty and section 41 freedom of movement.

Bandits As Terrorists

The Federal Government has declared bandits as terrorists. The court order was gazetted as Terrorism (Prevention) Proscription Order Notice 2021.³³ It proscribed the *Yan Bindiga Group*, *Yan Ta'adda* Group and other similar groups pursuant to sections 1 and 2 of the Terrorism (Prevention) Act 2011(now repealed by the 2022 Act).³⁴The legal framework for the prevention of terrorism in Nigeria is essentially embodied in two enactments: Terrorism (Prevention) (Amendment) Act 2013 and The Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act of 2022. Significantly, while both the Criminal code⁴⁰ and Penal Code³⁵ do not contain specific provisions for counter terrorism, they criminalize specific acts of violence e.g. murder, homicide, rape, riot etc.) as discussed earlier.

The TPA (as amended) carefully avoided the definition of terrorism as a concept. Rather, it defines 'acts of terrorism'. Section 1(3) of the TPA (as amended) defined an 'act of terrorism' as an act which is deliberately done with malice aforethought which may seriously harm or damage a country or an international organization. Any act also amounts to terrorism when it is done deliberately with malice aforethought and is intended to unduly compel a government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any acts. A terrorist act is committed when done with the requisite intent; it seriously destabilizes or destroys the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structure of a country or international organization by intimidation or coercion. It also amounts to a terrorist act where it involves or causes an attack upon a person's life that possibly results in serious bodily harm or death. Intimidating or coercing a government or international organization is a terrorist act where it involves or causes: the kidnapping of a person, or destruction of a government public facility, or private property among others. This is particularly so where the act is likely to endanger human life or result in major economic loss. The Terrorism Act 2013 is an amendment which dwelt on the offenses regarded as constituting terrorism under the Act. The Act provides that 'all acts of terrorism and financing of terrorism are hereby prohibited.' and a person or body corporate who knowingly in or outside Nigeria directly or indirectly willingly commits acts of

³¹ *ibid*

³² It must be stated that the VAPP Act is a federal legislation applicable only to Federal Courts and the Federal Capital Territory. Each State is expected to domesticate it as Law in its criminal jurisdiction.

³³ Volume 108 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette.

³⁴ Kayode Oyero, „Finally,FGG declares bandits as terrorists, 5 January 2022 <<https://punchng.com>>. Accessed 7 August 2023. ⁴⁰ (fn 18)

³⁵ Penal Code(Northern States) Federal Provisions Act, Cap 30, Laws of Northern Nigeria.

terrorism. It is therefore confounding why the Government is unable nay unwilling to make arrests or prosecute successfully any of such lawless groups.

On the evening of 28 March 2022, gunmen laid mines on the tracks of an Abuja-Kaduna bound train conveying 362 passengers. The train was attacked at Katari village, seven passengers killed and 62 passengers kidnapped despite the train having armed guards on board.³⁶ It was the second time the train service was being attacked. Again terrorists struck a train in Edo State kidnapping no fewer than thirty passengers of the Nigerian Railway Corporation.³⁷ Government alerted the nation that ISWAP working with local bandits were behind the bombing of rail tracks of AbujaKaduna train. It was said that the group was also responsible for the bombing of a Catholic church in Owo in May 2002 and the Kuje Correctional Center attack. Recently, there has been yet another attack on villagers in Plateau State with the death toll of over 150 deaths-women, men and children even babies.⁴³ Their tentacles are wide and they are able to strike at targets all over the country. This is quite a worrisome development.

The Nigeria Police Force(NPF)

It is apposite to consider who exactly is responsible for the maintenance of public safety and Law and order in the country. Constitutionally, the Nigeria Police Force is the primary organ invested with powers to maintain law and order, public safety, investigate crime and criminality, arrest and prosecute offender etc.⁴⁴ Constitutionally, the Nigeria Police is a federal agency, there is no State Police nor Local Police nor Community police despite the fact that Nigerian runs a federal system of government. Section 214 sub section 1 states that:

There shall be a police Force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section no other police force shall be established for the Federation or any ³⁸part thereof.⁴⁷

The Inspector- General of Police(IGP) heads the Force and is an appointee of the President.⁴⁸ There is a Commissioner of Police (COP) for each State appointed by the Police Service Commission³⁹. Section 215(4) couched in a long winded manner the fact that the COP takes instruction not from the Governor of a State he superintends the policing but from the President. The section concedes Governors can give 'lawful directions with respect to the maintenance and securing of public safety and public order within the State'. The next paragraph derogates from this power by stating:

Provided that before carrying out any such instructions under the foregoing provisions of this sub section, the Commissioner of Police may request that

³⁶ Abuja-Kaduna train attack: Passengers killed after Nigeria gang hits rail link,<[https://www. bbc.com news>world](https://www.bbc.com/news/world)> 29 March 2022.accessed 4 September 2022. ⁴⁴ Ozioruwa Aliu & Ezra Ukanwa, Edo Train Kidnap: Terrorists struck because there is no security in Station-Witnesses.<vanguardngr.com> 9 January 2023 ⁴³ The attacks occurred on Christmas Day December 25 & 26th 2023 and affected Mangu, Bokkos and parts of Barkin Ladi Local Government areas of Plateau State.

³⁷ Section 4, PART 11 Nigeria Police Act 2020. The Act repealed the Police Act P19 Laws of Federation of Nigeria(LFN)

³⁸ Constitution As Amended 48 Section 215, sub section 1.

³⁹ Section 215, sub section 1, paragraph b.

the matter be referred to the President or such Minister of the Federation as may be authorized in that behalf by the President for his directions.

It is submitted that this is a distortion of Federalism. It is more of unitary arrangement, no doubt a reflection of long years of military interregnum.⁴⁰ In practice, it has exhibited a distortion of policing whereby a sitting Governor really has no powers over security in his State except such as may be approved by the 'powers in Abuja'. Aside from this structural imbalance affecting policing, it has affected policing effectiveness and efficiency in the country. The Federal Police are overwhelmed, understaffed and under-funded.⁴¹ Corruption makes the bad situation worse. When it comes to policing, the problem is compounded when officers are posted right across the country to areas where they do not know the terrain, understand the language, customs or mores of the people. The local populace do not trust men of the NPF and are often unwilling to give out intelligence to enable the police apprehend bandits. It has also become apparent that the Police alone cannot deal with Banditry. The Government recently directed citizenry to link their National Identity Number (NIN) to their mobile lines. One of the reasons advanced was to enable security agencies track the mobile lines of kidnappers and bandits. There does not appear to have been any noticeable impact of the policy in dealing with bandits. While some argue against State Police⁴² others vociferously advocate for it.⁴³ Now that State Police will relieve the Federal Government of financial burden of catering for policing of the Federation exclusively.

Community Policing

It cannot be overstated that community policing philosophy is a bedrock to effective response to the wave of criminality and terrorism threatening to drown the Nigerian State. By its nature, Community policing is a very welcome initiative but the variant being advocated by the Nigerian Government is a 'hand in glove' arrangement to mask the rejection of State police. This type will be controlled by the NPF from Abuja. In what way then is it communal? Issues that are still begging for questions is the issue of staffing: who sets criteria for employment; training etc? The question of reporting obligations, if any, by the State Police needs to be settled. Enhanced community policing brings closer ties between communities and their police force thereby fostering trust and cooperation. Therefore, we submit that local communities must be allowed to set up well armed vigilante groups properly networked with modern communications system to reach the nearest Police or Army Units. Armed groups should be disarmed by State actors and where needful, reconciliation moves be set up. Such reconciliations should not debar prosecution for criminal offenses that have been committed else it sends a negative message that crime pays.

⁴⁰ Nigeria was ruled by a long line of military rulers after the civilian Government of President Shehu Shagari was overthrown in December 1983 until 1999 when President Olusegun Obasanjo was elected as civilian President under the 1999 Constitution.

⁴¹ Shajobi-Ibikunle G: „Desirability of State and Local Police for an Efficient Criminal Justice System In Nigeria“, Beyond Shenanigans: *Jos Book of Readings on Critical Legal Issues*, Dakas, C.J.D. et al. (eds)(Faculty of Law University of Jos, 2015 Chap. 39, 778-793.

⁴² Braeye Ekiye, Examining Usefulness of State Police, punchng.com. Accessed 12 July 2024 The Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun is of the view the nation is not yet mature for State Police.

⁴³ Sunday Aborishade www.thisdaylive.com. As 36 State Houses of Assembly, CSOs Back Creation of State Police, 20 May 2024. Accessed 4 August 2024

Armed Forces of the Federation

Section 217(1) of the Constitution established the Armed Forces of the Federation. It comprises the Army, Navy and Air Force. The power to determine the operational use is vested in the President.⁴⁴ However its primary duty is to protect the nation from external aggression, maintain its territorial integrity and secure its borders from violation on land, sea and air.⁴⁵ It may be called in to suppress insurrection and act in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President, but subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly.⁵⁶ However, the Armed Forces have increasingly been drawn into local conflicts to suppress bandits, kidnappers, etc within the nation. This is to a large extent as a result of the inability of the Police to handle lawlessness of armed gangs. It has discharged this duty creditably but the flip side is that the Armed Forces is now stretched thin in terms of deployment of personnel, weaponry and technology to tackle banditry.

Activities Of Bandits

Banditry is said to have arisen from herders and farmers clash in Northern Nigeria. Livestock herders alleged their cows were rustled and their people attacked. They alleged that Law enforcement agents did little to abate the practice or apprehend the rustlers. In retaliation, they allegedly started attacking villages where these cattle thieves lived. The bandits would invade villages, burn houses, steal food, kidnap women and children and murder persons. Law Enforcement proved incapable of apprehending them though the leaders of the bandits even when their hideouts were known. In frustration, state governments reached out directly to the leaders of the bandits for direct negotiation and declaration of amnesty. Other States responded with different measures. Markets were closed, filling stations in rural areas close to theaters of operations of bandits were closed. Since bandits operated in droves on bikes, use of bikes were outlawed. What has become apparent in the Northern part is the bandits collude with local

chiefs known as district heads. State governments have reacted by suspending or dismissing such persons. There are also paid informants within communities who keep the bandits informed of security agencies moves to arrest them. It is alleged that sympathizers and informants also exist within Police circles.

Causes Of Banditry

Certain factors have aided the rise of bandits in the Northern part of the country. In Zamfara State, so many conflicting views and assertions with regards to the cause and nature of the armed banditry exist. Abdullahi⁴⁶ states that one factor is that cattle rustling led to the reprisal attacks on Fulani herders by the organized vigilante group in the state. Another view is that it was the unending attacks against some Fulani herders that instigated the conflict; thereby rendering helpless the Fulani herders in the hands of the organized vigilante groups. In turn, Fulani herds men resorted to inviting external support from their peers in the neighboring state of Chad and Cameroun.⁴⁷ Closely related to the elite's conspiracy is the argument that the

⁴⁴ Section 218(1)

⁴⁵ Section 217(2) ⁵⁶Ibid sub section (d)

⁴⁶ Muhammad Abdullahi, „The Impact of Armed Banditry And Human Displacement On Sustainable Human Development in Zamfara State“. *Zamfara Journal of Politics And Development*, Vol 2 No 1(2021). 9-12.

⁴⁷ ibid Dauran, A. M, Commissioner for Security And Home Affairs, Zamfara State. 2020 ⁵⁹Zugu, Y. A. (2020) Special Adviser on Local Govt & Chieftaincy Affairs, Zamfara State cited in (fn 44). ⁶⁰ (fn 14)

presence of mineral resources in the state had contributed to the lingering armed banditry in the state. The presence of large quantity of Gold deposit in the state greatly influences the menace of banditry in the state; which was believed to be masterminded and remotely controlled by the elites within the state. Bandit activities enables continuous free access to these mineral deposits via illegal mining, so they provide support for banditry in the state. An added incentive to them is that bandits ensure the rural community keep off the sites of their activities mining sites.⁵⁹

Other factors include ⁶⁰:

I. Vast swathes of ungoverned spaces

By this is meant the fact that vast spaces of Northern rural landscapes bear no touch of socio-economic development due to poor governance with scattered rural settlements. They are under policed and under developed. This is coupled with the fact of natural geographic locations with natural hiding places for bandits in forests, wetlands, rocks and caves connecting States. The forests are vast and hazardous. Most attacks occur in remote villages close to the forested region like Mahanga Forest,⁴⁸ Sambisa forest which is a known hide out of *Boko Haram* is located in Borno State but stretches to four Northern States and Cameroun is another well known hide out of bandits.⁴⁹ It is believed the Chibok school girls abducted by Abubakar Shekau faction in 2009 were hidden in the forest for years.⁵⁷ State owned forest reserves are not excluded such as kamuku, kiyanbana and Fagore forests in the North.⁶⁴ Nigerian security operatives are often unwilling or unable to storm these hide outs.

II. Local Connivance

Sometimes, there is incitement or instigations by some elites within the state who fuel the conflict. Such persons took advantage of the security situation currently in the state by creating another dimension to the conflict resulting to human abduction and kidnappings.⁵⁰ Some communities are sometimes bribed to give misleading intelligence reports to Law Enforcement.

III. Lack of Credible Intelligence Gathering

Bandits fight asymmetrical warfare which do not follow strategies and tactics of regular warfare the Armed Forces and Police Force are better suited for. This type of warfare depends on accurate well coordinated attacks based on good intelligence. Law enforcement and security need to work more closely with the communities they serve to open lines of communication

⁴⁸ Sunday Isuwa, James Kwen Igbo Oyoyo et al, „Middle Belt Forum to FG: Security Agencies Know Plateau Killers Hideout“, Friday 29 December 2023. Mahanga forest lies at the foot of the hills of Bokkos Local Government Area of Plateau State. It is alleged to be the hiding place of bandits-suspected fulani herdsmen. It borders Wamba LGA of Nassarawa to the south. From there, attacks are launched on communities regularly.

⁴⁹ Moki E. Kindzeka, „Sambisa Forest: An Ideal hiding Place for Boko Haram“, 25 May 2016<[https://reliefweb.int. Report.nigeria](https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria)> accessed 14 September 2022.

⁵⁰ Balarabe (2018) cited in Anka, S. A. (2018) New Dimension to Zamfara Conflict, abduction and Human Kidnapping: Implication on State Security. *International Journal of Advance Research*. 6. (10): 913-921 and generate information to address crime and criminality in local domains.⁵⁰ Intelligence is of three types:⁶⁰

- (a) Strategic Intelligence-This is a detailed overview of criminal group activities, threats, etc. It keeps officials alert to threats and potential crimes.
- (b) Operational intelligence-used by Law enforcement to help them maintain public safety. It is used to justify monitoring individuals.
- (c) Tactical intelligence- this helps in formulation of an on-going criminal investigation or threat mitigation during a crisis situation.

Every intelligence received will need to be selected, evaluated and well analyzed before action is taken to avoid the disaster of tactical error which led to death of innocent civilians in Kaduna recently.⁵¹

IV. Lack of Sophisticated weaponry By Law Enforcement

This may sound surprising due to huge special and normal budgetary provisions for purchase of fighting equipment for the armed forces. It may very well be due to corruption that these weapons are not available in sufficient number and quality for the troops. To add to this is poor and late remuneration for soldiers especially allowances for those at theatres of war. Complaints of late payments of death benefits in the event of death also exist. All these are capable of leading to low morale leading to poor motivation for the forces.⁶² There are also allegations of ethnic, religious and communal bias by security forces.

V. High Level of Unemployment

There is high level of unemployment in Nigeria, and it is worse in Northern Nigeria. The unemployment rate stood at 33% in Q4 of 2022⁷⁰, aside from under-employment. These are factors that aid incentives to criminality ordinarily and it is more combustible when mixed with poverty and lack of governance.

VI. High Poverty Rate

Forty percent of people are poor in Nigeria. The poverty rate is the ratio of the population whose level of income fall below the poverty line.⁷¹ According to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in Nigeria, as of 2022, 63% (that is 133 million Nigerians) are said to be multi dimensionally poor⁶³. 65% of these poor (86 million people) live in the North while 35% (nearly 47 million) live in the south.⁵² Multi-dimensional poverty is higher in the rural areas where 72% are poor compared to 42% in urban areas. What this portends is the carrots dangled by the bandits from their ill gotten wealth is a strong incentive to attract youths to their fold especially in the areas Bandits control in the Northern part of the country.

⁵¹ Civilians killed in Nigerian drone attack in north-officials, witnesses.4 December 2023. <https://www.reuters.com>. Accessed 21 December 2023. 85 civilians killed. Over 600 were hospitalized.

⁵² Ibid. This ranges from a low 27% for Ondo State and 91% for Sokoto State.

VII. **Proliferation of Small Arms & Light Weapons(SALWs)** The proliferation of Small(Little) arms⁵³ and Light weapons⁵⁴ have led to an alarming increase in armed conflicts, displacement of people, banditry and acts of terrorism in the nation.⁵⁵ Banditry is perpetrated with sophisticated weapons. Corruption, porous borders and bad governance fuel smuggling of these weapons. Several factors contributed to this since the end of the Cold War.

i. Light weapons have moved to recently delivered ones that numerous nations are presently equipped for creating light weaponry. This is made conceivable because of the dissemination of arms delivering innovation during the Virus War.

ii. Arms producing nations outside the districts of intrastate clash have less requirements for the weapons in their munition's stockpiles, and have downsized their military. Monetary need compels them to trade the excess, not new creation.

iii. The rising number of bans forced by the Unified Countries on SALW has made the bootleg market providers turning into the main wellspring of arms and ammo for such nations under ban. iv. Similarly, underground political associations, and criminal associations like medication cartels, are additionally compelled to depend on this method for procurement.

v. Also the fall of Libyan government led by Muammar Ghaddafi, led to small and light weapons finding their way from the Sahel into the country.

vi. Politicians greedy for power import such arms, train thugs to steal ballot boxes and cause mayhem during election cycle. Afterwards, the thugs are left free to roam.

Effects Of Banditry

There are direct victims and indirect Victims of Banditry in the nation. The direct victims are those directly affected by their activities: the dead and living, and the latter are the larger society and the nation. The United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power defines victims as,

Persons who, individually or collectively have suffered harm, including mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment

⁵³ As per UN Board of Administrative Specialists on Small Arms, little(small) arms are those classifications of weapons which incorporate pistols and self-loading guns, rifles and carbines, sub automatic rifles and attack rifles, light automatic weapons and their ammo. Little arms are both solid and versatile, seemingly perpetual. They are versatile and somewhat simple to disguise, making them simple to exchange, move, stow away or take. Little arms are light, little and simple to utilize.

⁵⁴ Light weapons are bigger and more military in plan than little arms. They are conveyed by one individual or a little team (Grasp, 2017). Light weapons incorporate weighty automatic weapons, hand-held under-barrel and mounted explosive launchers, convenient enemy of airplane firearms, versatile enemy of tank weapons, recoilless rifles, compact launchers of hostile to tank rocket and rocket frameworks; versatile launchers of hostile to airplane rocket frameworks; mortars of types of under 100 mm, and light weapon ammo. Little arms and light weapons, truncated 'SALW', are frequently utilized reciprocally with 'little arms', particularly in research on the impacts of these weapons in clashes.

⁵⁵ Benjamin Isah, , Baiyi V. Luka & Umar Philip, „Proliferation of Small Arms, Light Weapons and Nigerian Security: A Case Study of North-Eastern Nigeria,“*Kashere Journal Of Politics And International Relations* (2) 1. June, 2024, 171-180.

of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws operative within Member States.⁵⁶

A victim must have suffered such things as personal injury, death, loss or injury to personal or real property as a result of crime which may include: ⁵⁷ :

I. Loss of Life

When bandits invade communities they maim or kill people. The Abuja-Kaduna train attack led to death of eight passengers.⁵⁸ Most persons especially the elite had been attracted to the train rides due to incessant attacks on the Abuja- Kaduna road by bandits and because the armed guards on board were thought to provide adequate security.⁵⁹ Section 33 of the Constitution firmly guarantees Right to Life of a Nigerian citizen so this is brazen deprivation of their right.

II. Loss of Goods & Property

Properties like houses, cars, barns, livestock are destroyed when they attack households in communities. These bandits aim to annihilate social and economic livelihood of the community. The right to own moveable property or an interest in immovable right is forcibly taken from them when their properties, grains and produce burnt. This is contrary to section 44(1) of the constitution.

iii. Loss of Means of Livelihood

Northern Nigeria is largely agrarian. Bandits attack villages demanding payment of levies and tax before farmers are allowed to farm. Failure is met with slaughter of the farmers on their farms.⁶⁰ Law Enforcement Agents are already spread thin due to insurgency battles in the nation and so are caught flat footed in these attacks. Worse, some of these communities are located in difficult terrains and un-serviced parts of the State without roads or access to communication.

IV. Disruption Of Family Life

Bandits attack schools and ferret away the young and vulnerable children from school. On 28 August 2021, two hundred students were kidnapped from Bethel Baptist Secondary school in Kaduna and were only released when ransom was paid.⁶¹ This is a derogation of their fundamental human right to Liberty enshrined in section 35. Their right to private and family life in section 37 is similarly breached. Isah states that the Borno state government noted that

⁵⁶ G.A. RES. 45/111, annex 45 U.N. GAOR Supp(No 49A) at 200, UNN. Doc./45/49(1990).

⁵⁷ Abdulrahman B Dambazau, *Criminology and Criminal Justice* (Spectrum Books Ltd 2007) 212

⁵⁸ (fn 11)

⁵⁹ ibid

⁶⁰ Dozens of farm workers killed in insane Nigeria attack, The attack took place in a village near Maiduguti, Borno State North East Nigeria.15 women were kidnapped in the attack <<https://www.Bbc.com.news>>accessed 4 June 2023.

⁶¹ “32 more students of Bethel Baptist High School regain freedom-CAN. The school is located in Labaran Damishi, Chikun Local Government, Kaduna State.<<https://www.premiumtimesng.com>>accessed 17 November 2023

the genuine casualties of Boko Haram activities in the North East are ladies and youngsters. Up to this point the insurgency have produced 54, 911 widows and 52, 311 displaced and orphaned young persons.⁶² Indeed, bandit activities exact a terrible toll on innocent citizens.

V. Sexual Assault

Bandits who attack communities cater away young women to use as cooks, sexual slaves in their hide out. Chibok girls who so far returned came back with babies as they had been forcibly married off to Boko Haram fighters.⁶³

VI. Loss of Income

Due to staggering amounts of money paid as ransom to these bandits, families are sometimes forced to sell off properties to raise kidnap sums. In rural communities, villagers are asked to contribute huge sums to ‘buy off’ their freedom to access their farms during harvest seasons. As earlier stated, recalcitrant ones are slaughtered whilst on the farms⁸⁵.

VII. Threat to Existence of the State

Continuous lawlessness by these terrorists invites calls for self-help by the citizens to defend themselves attractive as was enunciated by former Zamfara State Governor.⁷⁶ Aside, Armed forces and other Law Enforcement cannot continue to lose officers to these criminals who revel in senseless killings.

VIII. Threat to Confidence of Populace in Government

As earlier stated, Section 14(2)(b) of the CFRN states that ‘the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government’. With bandits running riot all over the place causing mayhem it can be argued this is tantamount to failure of government. It can be said that if a person is under no obligation by law to act and so does not act, the person will not be said to have committed any offense, even if the person’s omission caused considerable harm to another person.⁸⁷ In this case, it is a Constitutional requirement on Government to secure its citizens, having failed so woefully, we submit that it be held to account for lives lost and property destroyed due to its inaction or political paralysis to halt the killings. The continued siege is a gradual slide to anarchy and loss of faith of citizens in government’s constitutional duty to assure their safety. Activities of bandits is trying to make the country ungovernable and entrench in citizens the feelings of being unsecured more especially in Zamfara State.⁷⁷ Human security here, refers to, naturally the value of life of the people of a particular society. Therefore, anything that reduces the quality of life, infringes on human security, and as such should be considered a threat to human security.

IX. Threat To Food Security

Escalating food prices threatens food security of Nigerian citizens. The largely agrarian North and middle belt which supply the nation food needs is facing enormous challenges. Bandits deliberately target and kill farmers.⁷⁸ Sometimes, it may be as a result of inability to pay ‘protection’ ransom to the bandits or because their communities were allegedly feeding the

⁶² (fn 76) 178

⁶³ (fn 46) 85

Why 78 Nigerian farmers were murdered.<<https://www.economist.com> 3 December 2020>accessed 5 April 2022

Military information on their activities as claimed in recent killings in Ijuwa fringes of Alawa community of Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.

Abdulrahman asserts that In most affected communities of Faskari, farming as the major economic activity is disrupted for several farming cycles. Farmers suffer the most, as their wealth is tied to their farms; they depend upon farms for survival.⁷⁹ In many cases, the rural farmers in Faskari in Katsina State are terrorized. They are prevented from going to their farms by bandits who hide in the forest and behind the rocks. They render the rural communities and their primary occupation vulnerable through banditry activities. The incidence of rural banditry that is bedeviling the rural communities is taking another dimension. Previously the bandits employ a strategic approach in attacking their targets such as guerrilla warfare, but now they attack at will, in broad daylight, without fear of security since they already know that the presence of security is limited in the rural communities. In Faskari LGA, agriculture is the single economic activity that provides 80% of the population with employment. Thus, bandit activities has practically pauperized the populace.

X. Refugee Crisis

Incessant attacks on communities where their properties are razed to the ground, villagers sacked, inhabitants massacred has created refugee crisis in the nation. The inhabitants become refugees in their country through no fault of theirs. Family life and education of children is disrupted and hunger and deprivation walks the land. Nigeria is not officially at war but is suffering effects of war.

XI. Inflicting harm on the Security Officials

The Nigerian military forces, other law enforcement agencies are losing men and weaponry.

XII. Deepening Ethnic Tensions

When bandits attack communities across State or Local Government, it sparks off ethnic and religious hostilities which may spiral into reprisal attacks. This weakens the fragile unity of the nation.

XIII. Attack On Societal Cohesion

No one is spared the scourge of Banditry all over the nation including traditional rulers. These are supposed to be the repository of cultural values and societal stability but once kidnapped by bandits, they are murdered if ransom is not dispatched quickly.⁶⁴Protesting youths declared that ‘This depicts manifest incompetence and utter demonization of our cultural and religious

⁷⁶ Abubakar A. Maishanu, „Terrorism: Buy guns, defend yourselves, Zanfara Govt tells residents“ <www.premiumtimesng.com> 26 June 2022. accessed 6 November 2022. ⁸⁷ Gloria Shajobi-Ibikunle & Chidinma T. Ibekwe, „A critical Analysis of the Concept of Crime“ „(Islamic University in Uganda Journal of Comparative Law,)Vol 5,Issue 1, July 2018 98

⁷⁷ (fn 44)

⁷⁸ Bandits kill 13 farmers in Niger State. www.channels.com. The Chairman of Shiroro Local Government Area , Akilu Isyaku confirmed the killing of 8 farmers on their farms while 4 others were were killed at a different location. ⁷⁹ (fn 12)p 8

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⁶⁴ Ernest Nzor, „CNG condemns abductions, killing of Emir Bawa In Sokoto“ www.the-guardian.ng. Accessed 22 August 2024.

heritage from the Government that is supposed to promote preservation of our tradition and pedigree'. How apt indeed.

XIV Rise In Internally Displaced Persons

Victim Compensation

Dambazau submits that the costs of criminal victimization are enormous to the individual and the society. These costs can be tangible such as property damage and losses, medical care, legal costs, police and fire services, productivity (wages, fringe benefits, school days etc) He further argues that such affected citizens deserve compensation. The fact that they have suffered psychological, social and economic losses, pains and suffering in the hands of others within the society, indicates that the State is unable to satisfy its own part of the social contract as earlier mentioned. He states that :

The State has some responsibility to compensate victims of crime. It is indeed a major requirement of the State to establish a victim assistance programme, which should be concerned with claims processing, and ensuring that victims are compensated adequately. The programme should also be interested in post trauma counselling, education and re-integration of victims into normal life.⁶⁵

We couldn't agree more.

Criminal Justice Statutes lean towards compensation for victims today especially for horrendous crimes as is being committed in the nation by bandits.⁶⁶ Section 319, Part 32 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 provides states same.⁶⁷

Restitution

Section 321(b) of ACJA states that the court may order for the restitution or compensation for the loss or destruction of the victim's property. In other words, imprisonment is the sole criminal punishment for bandits. This is very important because some of the bandits have sponsors. The sponsors should be prosecuted as codefendants for the heinous crimes they perpetrate.

5. Conclusion

Bandits are not spirits. Security organizations know their handouts mostly and so do the local communities. Organized gang criminality is dangerous and extremely violent. It poses a grave danger to communities who often flee their villages, homes, farms to escape continuous

⁶⁵ (fn 78) 214-215

⁶⁶ „Another cycle of violence in Plateau State, Editorial, Leadership, Friday December 29 2023 p3. On December 24 2023, bandits sacked communities in Bookos, Mangu and Barkin Ladi LGA of Plateau State in a killing spree, looting, killing, then burning men, women and even babies strapped to backs of mothers. An estimated number of 100-190 people were brutally killed.

⁶⁷ Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 is a federal statute only applicable to Federal Courts and the Federal Capital Territory. However, more States have domesticated same.

attacks. It is also an affront to the rule of law and order and challenges the very basis of the existence of the State. Endemic poverty, unemployment, lack of employment, lack of opportunities to better their lot and poor governance which has not delivered dividends of democracy continue to plague the North. Their foot soldiers are themselves victims of a dysfunctional social system. It is a system that has bred untrained, illiterate, homeless youths with the connivance of the Northern elite and gross irresponsibility of past Northern State governments using religion as a cloak. To stamp out banditry will entail a *pot pourri* of approaches with a strong and robust legal framework to enthrone Law and order and a just society where ‘No man is oppressed’. ⁶⁸

Recommendations

1. Existing criminal legislation should be strictly enforced. There are a plethora of criminal statutes that can be utilized for arrest, prosecution and conviction of bandits. However, this paper recommends a new Federal legislation specifically for the offence of Banditry and Allied Offenses.
2. Whilst the policy thrust of ‘re-integrating’ repentant bandits’ is being pursued it should not mean that penalty for past criminality should not be enforced. Victims dead and buried, victims whose livelihoods have been destroyed, victims who have been forced into living a life of refugees in their homeland deserve better. Rehabilitation should be at conclusion of incarceration.
3. Prosecution of terrorists should be certain, swift and without delays common to criminal trials whether due to defense tactics or prosecutorial inefficiency. To this end, it is urged that dedicated courts for crimes of terrorists, bandits, kidnappers and other related offenses be established by State Judiciary.
4. In the same vein, maximum security correctional centers should warehouse bandits during and after their conviction. This is in view of past attempts by Boko Haram to free their colleagues from incarceration.
5. Banditry operate in droves in attacking communities. So, police and military presence in ‘flash points’ should be deployed with modern communication and technology gadgets.
6. The Northern Governments should roll out incentives for education of its out of school children and invest in vocational skills for its unemployed youth. Governments and public spirited individuals in the North should ramp up social intervention programs aimed at programs for sustainable livelihoods. This will prevent jobless youths from succumbing to the temptation of bandits who recruit these youths.
7. Organised crimes like Banditry differ from Boko haram which are manifestations of violent religious extremism. Therefore, government should unequivocally strip them of all economic gains and proceeds of crime totally. Their collaborators, informants and conspirators should also be prosecuted and suffer similar fate.
7. Early warning systems and air, ground surveillance should be rapidly deployed by the Armed forces and the Police working with well trained and well armed local vigilante groups.

⁶⁸ Last stanza of the newly introduced National Anthem-Nigeria, we hail thee.