



ARMS PROLIFERATION AND KIDNAPPING IN NORTHWEST NIGERIA: CAUSES AND EFFECTS

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Keywords:

Arms Proliferation
Small Arm
Abduction
Crime
Hostage
Kidnapping
Ransom
Security
Northwest

ABSTRACT

Arms Proliferation and Kidnapping have become one of the security challenges in the Northwest Nigeria. It is an illicit practice in which human-beings are forcefully abducted to an unknown destination for the purpose of payment of ransom by relatives of victims or victims themselves. Kidnappers use gun to prosecute their operations. The predominance of this illicit practice has made the northwest geopolitical zone of the country to be ranked as the most security risk areas of the country. The major objective of this paper is to examine the causes and effects of Arms proliferation and kidnapping in the Northwest Nigeria. Many factors account for this development, prominent among which include Arms proliferation, social injustice, poverty, unemployment, corruption and insecurity etc. The methods used in this work are the descriptive and analytical methods. The use of library materials was employed. Related texts, journals, special publications and newspapers were analyzed using content analysis and Routine Activities Theory was applied as theoretical framework. The effects conclude social dislocation and internal displacement, destruction of schools and educational infrastructures, discouraged investment and triggered economic crises, deaths and fatalities etc. The paper recommends that governments of the zone should embark on policies and programmes that will address the causes of arms proliferation and kidnapping in the zone by addressing the high rate of poverty, creating employment opportunities for the youths, address the issue of drug abuse among the youths and ensure good governance at all levels of government. The governments of the zone should as a matter of urgency address the issue of out of school children as this forms the army of the unemployed, those of them who are still of school age should be enrolled into school and those who have out grown school age should be made to acquire skill.

Introduction

Nigeria's North West, one of the country's six geopolitical zones, comprises seven of the country's 36 states. These are Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. It covers an area of 216,065 sq km or 25.75 per cent of the country's total land mass. Its major ethnic groups are the Hausa and Fulani, who historically share strong cultural ties and are very much intermixed, with other smaller groups especially in Kaduna state. According to the National Population Census (2006) the zone's estimated population of 33 million is predominantly Muslim (Sunni). Most of the population, (80% per cent) are farmers, pastoralists, agro-pastoralists or small-scale entrepreneurs. The zone has substantial solid mineral deposits, including gold exploited by artisanal miners in open pit mines. Despite its economic potential, the North West has the highest poverty rate in Nigeria. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2019) all seven states in the zone had poverty levels above the national average of 40.1 per cent, led by Sokoto (87.7 per cent), Jigawa (87 per cent) and Zamfara (74 per cent). While the region has a long and proud history of Islamic and Arabic scholarship, apathy toward, and inadequate investment in, formal education over the decades have contributed to a literacy rate of 29.7 per cent and also UNICEF (2019) states that the zone currently has the highest number of out-of-school children in Nigeria. Over the last four decades, the zone has witnessed waves of violence including kidnapping, arms proliferation, sectarian clashes, Islamist militancy and electoral violence. Largely occurring in rural areas, the violence has spread from its epicentre in Zamfara state to Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi and Sokoto states in the North West and into Niger state in North Central Nigeria. The kidnapping of all manner of persons including school children and university students has gained ascendancy in northwest Nigeria.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is adjudged as the most immediate security challenge facing the zone, fuelling kidnapping, banditry, cattle rustling, organized criminal violence, and terrorist activities. Kidnappers use gun to prosecute their operations. When they make money, they buy more sophisticated weapons to perpetrate their actions. In northwest kidnappers are everywhere targeting

foreigners and non-foreigners, pupils and students alike.

Methodology

The methods used in this work are the descriptive and analytical methods. The use of library materials was employed. Related texts, journals, special publications and newspapers were analyzed.

Theoretical Framework

The Routine Activities Theory

The Routine Activities Theory (RAT) pioneered by Cohen and Felson (1979) as used by Ojedokun and Ogundipe (2017) in an attempt to understand patterns and upward trends of predatory criminal events in the historical context of changing economy. The theory submits that crime is likely to occur when there is a spatial-temporal convergence of three essential elements of crime, namely a motivated offender, an attractive target, and the absence of capable guardianship. According to Maxfield (1987); Ojedokun and Ogundipe (2017) motivated offenders are individuals who are capable and willing to commit a crime- this time around kidnapers/bandits while suitable targets can be a person or object (farmers/villagers cum traders) that are considered by offenders as vulnerable or attractive. Applied to the purpose of the present study, the vast ungoverned settings of North west region and presence of heavy forests and the failure of the state governments to police the zone particularly the epicenter of this crisis; Zamfara, characterized by a high proclivity to criminal indulgence, attacks by different armed actors signifies the absence of guardianship which allows offenders to engage in kidnapping, rustling of cattle, razing down of barns and homes, illicit gold mining and acts of sexual violence. Such that women and girls are often kidnapped/ abducted and raped or gang raped by armed group members in the presence of family members.

Conceptual definition

The word kidnapper is derived from kid and napper, the two parts of the compound, were slang of the sort that criminals used. Kid, which still has an informal air, was considered low slang when kidnapper was formed, and napper is obsolete slang for a thief, coming from the verb nap, "to steal." Nap is possibly a variant of nab, which also still has a slangy ring. In

1678, the year in which the word is first recorded, kidnappers plied their trade to secure labourers for plantations in colonies such as the ones in North America. The term later took on the broader sense that it has today. Kidnapping consists of unlawfully or intentionally depriving a person of his liberty of movement or, in the case of a minor, depriving a parent or recognised guardian control over the child. Robertson (1968) viewed kidnapping as a crime of seizing, confining, abducting or carrying away of persons by force or fraud often subjecting him or her to involuntary servitude in an attempt to demand a ransom or in furtherance of another crime. In criminal law, kidnapping is defined as taking away of a person by force, threat or deceit with intent to cause him/her to be detained against his or her will (Asuquo, 2009). Thomas and Nta (2009) define kidnapping as robbery of the highest rank. According to them, it is an organized and systematic robbery which is not as deadly as armed-robbery, but more profitable than the former. Goldberg (2000) argues that kidnapping is a criminal act involving seizure, confinement, abduction, subjection, forcefulness, acts of threats, acts of terror and servitude. Similarly, Ngwama (2014) define kidnapping as false imprisonment in the sense that it involves the illegal confinement of individuals against his or her own will by another individual in such a way as to violate the confined individual's right to be free from the restraint of movement.

According to Ottuh & Aituf (2014) kidnapping is the wholesale taking away or transportation of a person against the person's will usually to confine the person in false imprisonment without legal authority. They state that this act may be done principally to extract ransom or in connection with a child custody as a fall out of marital dispute. Such kidnapping or abduction of a child is often labeled "child stealing" and "parental kidnapping", particularly when the act is carried with the intention of keeping the child permanently as against collecting a ransom or other things the 'child stealer' is agitating for. For an act to be deemed kidnapping, it must involve coercive movement of a victim from one place to another, detention or seizure of that person be it a child or an adult. Kidnapping means the taking away of a person against his will with the intent to holding him in illegal confinement in order to elicit a ransom, or in furtherance of another crime (Wikipedia 2013). In the

light of this definition, three elements are needed to establish the act of kidnapping. These elements are:

- (i) taking a person away without his consent;
- (ii) holding a person in false imprisonment or illegal detention/confinement;
- (iii) extortion of the victim (the kidnappee) through ransoming or forced acquiescence

Asuquo (2009) noted that the term "kidnapping" is difficult to define with precision, because it varies from State to State and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. It is the forceful seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will. According to him is a common law offence and the key part is that, it is an unwanted act on the part of the victim. It is a restriction of someone else's liberty which violates the provision of freedom of movement as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, where every other law takes its cue from. For this reason, Siegel (2002) sees it as a serious offence. Abraham (2010) defines kidnapping as an act of seizing, taking away and keeping a person in custody either by force or fraud. It includes snatching and seizing of a person in order to collect a ransom in return or to settle some scores of disagreement among people. Tzanelli (2009) views kidnapping as an exchange. According to him, kidnapping is "a form of transaction rooted in contemporary socio-economic and political structures of society" (2009:931). He further observes that "...kidnapping is the illegitimate counterpart of a legitimate exploitation system that has been around for centuries: that of capitalist exchange". Kidnapping occurs when a person is abducted and taken from one place to another against their will, or a situation in which a person is confined to a controlled space without the confinement being from a legal authority. Consequently, when the transportation or confinement of the person is done for an unlawful purpose, such as for ransom or for the purpose of committing another crime, the act becomes criminal. Kidnapping is an act of seizing, taking away and keeping a person in custody either by force or fraud with a view to gaining material or political benefits of sort.

Types of Kidnapping

There are basically two main types of kidnapping, namely:

1. Criminal kidnapping: This where the main motive is to obtain a ransom from the family

or business of victims. This category also includes instances where criminals take hostages as a shield to help them escape from the scene of a crime, or use them to obtain money or valuables, or the keys or secret codes needed to access areas where these are stored.

2. Political kidnapping: This is the type of kidnapping, where the foremost objective is to further the political aims of a particular political group or movement. In this case, a ransom is usually demanded to obtain money for the group to fund their activities. Such kidnappings are distinct from emotional or pathological kidnapping, which involves, for instance, the kidnapping of children by estranged parents or relatives or, in the case of the latter, kidnappings motivated by individual pathologies, such as kidnapping for the purposes of rape or other sexual aberration. They also differ from unlawful detentions, where people are held illegally by law enforcement personnel; or political blackmail, which involves holding individuals against political ends, such as the release of comrades from prison (Siegel, 1992).

Also Emst Kahlar (2013) identified fifteen (15) categories of kidnapping as follows:

- (i) Hostage situation
- (ii) Domestic relation kidnapping
- (iii) Plot or abortive ransom kidnapping
- (iv) Developmental ransom kidnapping
- (v) Miscellaneous kidnapping
- (vi) Kidnapping for robbery
- (vii) Kidnapping for murder (or other non-sexual assault)
- (viii) White slavery
- (ix) Child stealing
- (x) Ransom skyjacking
- (xi) Romantic kidnapping
- (xii) Ransom kidnapping hoax
- (xiii) Ransom threat for extortion
- (xiv) Classic ransom
- (xv) Kidnapping for rape or sexual assault.

Suffice it to note that the kidnapping situation in the northwest has more or less been reflective of the afore-stated typologies. Other forms includes 'kidnapping for hate' whereby a member of a 'target

family' is kidnapped with a view to cause anguish and terror to the family. Another one is 'kidnapping for ritual' in which the victim is used for ritual purposes, dead or alive and this type of kidnapping is rampant in different parts of the country.

Causes Arms of proliferation and Kidnapping in Northwest Nigeria

The proliferation of arms in Nigeria and kidnapping in northwest in particular could be attributed to a number of factors, prominent among them were: the surplus arms that were provided during the civil war in Nigeria these arms were pumped to serve inter-and intra ethnic and religious conflicts; Massive flow of weapons from central and Eastern Europe and the loosening control of arms industry as a result of the collapse of Soviet Union. Also, the accelerated pace of globalization facilitates both legal and illegal cross-border transfers of weapons, while a sudden upsurge in intra-and inter ethnic and religious conflicts created an overwhelming demand for the small arms and light weapons. The rise of kidnapping in Northwest between 2001 and 2020 shows that the main causes of kidnapping are poverty, terrorism, lack of stiffer punishment by government, negligence on the part of the well-to-do in families and quick money. According to Usman (2017) a few government officials and politicians have been previously accused of utilizing humans for rituals with the goal of maintaining their affluence and remain in power. Other causes include:-

Proliferation of dangerous weapons

The proliferation of arms as a result of political patronage of miscreant who were dumped after elections may indirectly encourage and enhance kidnapping (Marshall, 1998). Such miscreants who no longer have access to their political masters may resort to using the arms at their disposal to take to kidnapping as an alternative source of livelihood.

Social Injustice

Many people today who are desperate in economic and social needs are often the ones who commit kidnappings. So, where the gap between the rich and the poor is constantly widening and where the possibilities to earn money in an honest way are often difficult to attain kidnapping turns out to be a lucrative

means to fall back on and to draw attention to what is considered an intolerable situation (Chidi and Uche, 2015).

Indiscipline and Moral Decadence

The issue of “moral decadence” and the “quest to get rich quick” syndrome have been identified as some of the causative factors of kidnapping. Nobody asks questions on how people make their wealth. According to Inyang (2009), a poor person today can show up with an expensive car tomorrow and nobody dare to question the sudden wealth. Also, people who have donated money to develop their communities are rewarded with chieftaincy titles thereby creating a wrong impression in the minds of Nigerian youths who thereafter take to kidnapping. Recently a traditional ruler from northwest zone was dethroned for conferring chieftaincy title to a known bandit.

Poverty

According to the World Bank’s Nigeria Economic Report (2013) average poverty rates for the North West areas was 58 per cent. There is a high level of poverty in zone which is responsible for the insecurity situation. According to Kabiru and Arshad, (2018) there is abject poverty in the rural areas of the zone. It is this abject poverty that made some people to work as informants or logistic suppliers to the kidnapers/ bandits operating from the Rugu forest. Also according to Zakariya’u (2019) the rate of kidnapping is alarming in the northwest including Katsina State because of high rate of poverty. The more the poverty, the more the rate of crime will increase in both rural areas and urban centres. From the years 2010 to date, kidnapping and the rustling of cattle particularly in the Zamfara, Kastina, Kaduna and Niger states has deepened the vicious cycle of poverty in rural areas of the geo-political zone (Abdulrashid et al., 2018).

Corruption and Insecurity

Corruption within the law enforcement agencies sometimes thwarts serious effort in crime prevention. Nwaorah (2009) noted that, in a situation where government officials, especially top ranking persons in civil services who are custodian of government resources spend recklessly or loot, it could automatically encourage few of the dissatisfied

persons to vent their anger on them and their relatives. Alemika (1999) observes the negative relationship between the police and the public due to police corruption and brutality.

Unemployment

There is high rate of unemployment in northwest zone due to lack of large number of industries to employ the teeming youths and others. The governments of the zone remain the largest employer in the zone and the governments have failed to adequately replace staffers that have retired or died. Most of the industries that employ large number of workers in the zone have either been privatized or closed down leading to the sacking of many workers. According to Ladan and Ladan, (2011) from the 1980s to date a number of industries in zone have stopped functioning as a result of some problems. The rates of unemployment may further increase as farming activities are presently threatened by kidnapping. The problem of kidnapping in the northwest is often associated with youth unemployment.

Failure of Government to Provide Basic Amenities

There is visible lack of amenities especially in the northwest rural communities. Clean water is hardly available; government water supply is virtually not existent in many communities, even in some state capitals. Power supply has become so rare and the roads are also bad. People are being owed months of unpaid salaries while the leaders build multiple mansions with mobile police unit commanders and men in the same city guarding them. This invokes anger and frustration and will eventually lead the people into kidnapping.

Dirty Politics

Kidnapping is situated and common in ‘countries with high levels of crime and corruption, poorly resourced or trained police personnel, a weak judiciary and/ a history of political or social instability’. Retired Anglican Bishop of Akure, Bolanle Gbonigi maintains that the nation’s democracy which is characterized by rigging has given birth to poverty, frustration, anxiety and anger (Raheem, 2010). The electoral process is viewed as a form of war and politicians now use cult groups and

militias to fight the electoral war (Joab Peterside, 2007, Okengwu, 2004). The aftermath of politicians arming these criminal gangs during the electoral process is that political opponents are kidnapped or even assassinated. These gangs and militias are armed by the politicians and given financial and logistics support by politicians. The problem is that when the electioneering process is over, they cannot retrieve the arms or even control the activities of these groups and individuals.

Traditional Rulers and Communities Encouraging Crime

It is generally believed that in areas where crimes such as kidnapping and armed robbery thrive, the perpetrators sometimes receive the blessings of the paramount rulers of the community. This usually ranges from a passive acceptance and permission to operate, to active participation and sponsorship of these criminals (Editor, Sun 2010). The Abia State Government, in July 2010, dethroned a traditional ruler and suspended three others believed to have been involved in sponsoring kidnappings and armed robbery in the State (Onuoha, 2010).

To Finance Militias, Cults and Criminal Gangs

Kidnapping has been identified as one major source by which terrorist organizations have been known to obtain funding. It is mind-blowing to consider that criminal gangs are estimated to make up to \$500million a year in ransom payments from kidnapping (Ashaye, 2009). So many cults, militia, ethnic vigilante, gangs, political ethnic and religious militia abound in the northwest.

Collapse of the amnesty programme and peace deal

On May 2015, with the coming to power of the governments of All Progressive Congress (APC) at both the Federal and State levels, concerted efforts were made to end kidnapping and cattle rustling that were inherited from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governments. In line with this the Federal Government Policy launched the Nigerian Army Operation Sharan Daji (sweeping the Forest) that carried out ground offensives against bases/hideouts of the kidnappers. This leads to a reduction of kidnapping and cattle rustling in the States like Zamfara, Kaduna and Sokoto. In January 2016, the State Government organized an amnesty

program/peace deal at Kankara, Kankara LGA where the kidnappers under the leadership of Buharin Daji and other leaders led their members to lay down and handed over their weapons to embrace peace. However, by July 2018 the kidnapping and cattle rustling re-surfaced again with even a new kind of criminal activity that involve abducting people and holding them captive till large sums of money are paid to secure their release. This was as a result of the collapse of the Amnesty Programme/ Peace deal due to the death of the leaders that organized the peace deal.

Desire to acquire wealth

Some people in zone have an insatiable desire to acquire wealth at all cost even if it means committing heinous crimes. The Fulani and Hausa kidnappers in the Zone fall into this category as they kidnap or steal the cattle of other people in a bid to acquire wealth or to be seen to be wealthy. Based on the Fulani tradition, a person is considered wealthy and influential when he owns large herds of cattle. In the last few decades, some of the Fulani people have lost cattle through conflicts and court or police cases between themselves and other people over land, grazing routes and even women so they have the desire to own cattle be wealthy once again (IRIN, 2013). According to Okoli and Okpaleke, (2014) cattle rustling and kidnapping that occur in some LGAs of Katsina State is motivated by quest for capital acquisition.

High levels of illiteracy

The level of illiteracy is high in the zone as many children and youths do not go to school or have not been able to continue their studies due to poverty. Data on literacy index published by National Bureau of Statistics (2018) revealed that the zone is among the States where majority of the people can neither read nor write (Amzat, 2017). It is mostly the illiterate youths that are lured to work for the kidnappers and even the kidnappers themselves lack the basic education that will enable them to distinguish between what is right and wrong. Illiteracy among the youths also does not allow them to weight the risk of engaging in criminal activities that threatens the peace and security of the geo-political zone.

High rates of drug abuse

There is high rate of drug abuse in the North West geopolitical zone. Many youths in the zone engaged in the abuse of drugs which affect their health and push them to commit crimes which bring insecurity. According to a national survey the zone ranked second in terms of drug abuse nationwide with 2,173 cases of arrest by National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) (Gambo 2017 in Mu'azu, 2018). Even the bandits that engage in kidnapping take drugs, in fact one of the victims kidnapped in May 2019, in Kurfi LGA revealed that he was able to escape when the kidnappers became intoxicated after taking drugs. Also one person was arrested at Chabas-chabas in Jibia LGA with drugs in sacks that are meant to be supplied to the kidnappers based in Gurbin Baure Forest.

Porous borders

The northwest geo-political has an international boundary to the north, bordered by Niger, Republic with six LGAs namely Baure, Zango, Mai'adua, Mashi, Kaita and Jibia sharing the boundary. This land border like other borders in the country is porous which makes it easy for criminal elements, arms and ammunition including drugs to be smuggled into the country. The residents of Yar-Santa village in Kankara LGA and those of Gobirawa in Safana LGA revealed that the kidnappers in their LGAs invited other kidnappers from Niger Republic that moved through the borders to join other kidnappers to carry out the attacks in April 2019. Also Yahaya *et al.*, (2018) observed that the widespread availability of small and light weapons in Kano State has its genesis from imported weapons that mostly passed from various porous borders that are located in the neighbouring states of Katsina and Jigawa. (Danjuma, 2013).

Limited security presence

There is limited presence of security personnel in Katsina State like other States in the zone. The security personnel such as the police and security and civil defense corps are not in adequate supply in the LGAs in order to combat the numerous criminal activities carried out by kidnappers and other miscreants, Umar and Shittu, (2017) observed that while the country's population has increased progressively over the years, police manpower has not improved to match it, to at least meet up the expected global standard for effective policing. This

glaring shortage made it practically impossible for the police force to effectively control and curbs the ever rising wave and rate of crimes and insecurity. The limited security presence in these isolated areas have created an ungoverned spaces where the kidnappers have taken over.

Presence of forest areas

The zone has a long stretch of forest vegetation that runs from Jibia to Batsari to Safana to Danmusa to Kankara, to Faskari to Dandume to Sabua where the forest extends to Birnin Gwari forest in Birnin Gwari LGA of Kaduna State. This long stretch of forest has since the year 2010 become the hideout and operating bases for kidnappers and bandits from where they come to the villages and along roads to launch attacks. Okoli and Ochim, (2016) have argued that Nigeria's forestlands have been poorly managed and secured, which makes them vulnerable to criminal habitation and activities.

Grievances over security operations

There is grievance over one of the security operations that were listed above which has become one of the factors responsible for the kidnapping in the zone. This security operation named *Dirar Mikiya* (Eagle landing) that was carried out by the Nigerian Air force that involved dropping bomb in the forest hideouts of the kidnappers at Zurmi forest of Zamfara state. Some of the kidnappers ran across the state boundary from the Zurmi forest to Gurbin Baure to escape the aerial bombardments. They mixed up with other Fulani to come to the Gurbin Baure weekly market. It was reported that the Navy came to kill any Fulani at the market whether he is a kidnapper or not. After these killings the remnants of the kidnappers plus other aggrieved Fulani regrouped to carry out revenge attacks on the settlement of Jibia LGA and along roads those travelers pass through. These kidnappers even informed some of their kidnapped victims that they are ready to negotiate to stop the attacks if the Emir of Katsina will intervene in the matter (Ladan, 2019).

Incidences of Kidnapping in Northwest Nigeria

According to Abdulkabir (2017) kidnapping rates have 'geometrically increased', in that between 2014 – 2017, it was reported that over 2000 people including government officials, politicians and kings were subjected to kidnap. On the 7 May a Lebanese

national was kidnapped in Kaduna State and his Lebanese colleague was mercilessly killed during the abduction. Kidnapping is active in states like Zamfara, Kano, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto and Niger. In February 2018, another set of students were abducted in Kankara Zamfara state by bandits. Egbejule (2018) revealed that one expatriate engineer working on a project in Zamfara state was kidnapped and kept for 12 days until a ransom of ₦30 million equivalent to \$83,100 was paid by his employer. Similarly, two foreign expatriates, together with their police escort, were kidnapped and killed on their way to their project site in Sokoto state. UNICEF (2018) claimed that more than 1,000 children have been abducted by bandits since 2013. According to Ogbuechi, (2018) and Eagle, (2017) Nigeria recorded 1,177 kidnap cases most of them in northwest in just a period of 14 months from (2016 to 2017) and also New Telegraph (12 October 2019) states that between June 2011 and May 2019, at least 3,672 were kidnapped in Zamfara state alone. Kidnapping for ransom increased from 290 fatalities in 2017 to 358 in 2018, mainly in Sokoto, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kebbi, Kastina and Kaduna states maintained its status as the most dangerous states in respect to kidnapping incidents. Abuja-Kaduna expressway and Birnin Bwari LGA also remained hotspots for kidnapping activities. Between September and October, 2018, about 30 kidnappers were killed by soldiers in Kamuku forest, Kidandan, Unguwan Bilya, Sofa and Unguwan Nakuli areas along Abuja-Kaduna Expressway.

According to Ibrahim (2020) one of the most recent cases of kidnapping was at Mallamawa village of Jibia LGA on 4th October 2020, where 22 farmers working on the farmlands were kidnapped. He lamented that:

“In these villages, we depend mostly on two things as source of livelihood farming and cattle rearing. Farming has become difficult due to insecurity. Domestic animal rearing has also become difficult as bandits have rustled our cattle and presently they are abducting us on our farms. Am calling on the government to come to our aid as we cannot migrate to the cities since we have no job to do in the cities and all that we have are in the villages. Anybody that is used to village life cannot stay in the city as the city consumes wealth”. (Ibrahim (2020 p; 22)

On Sunday 5th January 2020, the bandits blocked a section of Jibia to Batsari road to kidnap 38 traders returning from Jibia weekly market. Onovo (2010) states that it is a known fact that most kidnap cases are not always reported to the police authority for the fear of murder of the victims. Most families always prefer to pay ransom than to lose one of their own. He gives the following instances, in Kano state, N80 million ransoms was allegedly paid to kidnappers for the release of a Kano -based multi- millionaire businessman, without recourse to the police authorities. On 28th March 2022, a passenger train along Abuja- Kaduna Railways was attacked and several passengers were abducted while several others were also killed.

The Effects/implications of Arms proliferation and Kidnapping on Northwest Nigeria

Arms proliferation and kidnapping, 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 kidnappers. 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. Other implications include:-

Social Dislocation and Internal Displacements

One of the most visible effects of arms proliferation and kidnapping in the North West involves internal displacement of community residents. According to UNHCR (2019) over 200,000 persons were internally displaced in several communities of Zamfara, Katsina and Sokoto States between January-August 2019. Also WANEP (2020) reported that 190,340 others were internally displaced between June 2011 and May 2019 in Zamfara State. According to UNHCR (2020) more than 309,000 people have been displaced by the northwest kidnapping crisis as of 30 June. Zamfara state accommodates about 69,000 IDPs, Kaduna 71,000, Katsina 61,000, Sokoto 45,000, and Niger 3,000. About 60,000 people displaced from Sokoto, Katsina and Zamfara have crossed the border to Maradi, in the Republic of Niger. More than 30,000 of the refugees arrived in Niger between May and June 2020 alone.

Effect on Education

It is worth mentioning that the destruction of schools and other educational infrastructures in the northwest has worsened access to educational services in the region. Since the inception of the current kidnapping the situation has only grown worse as situation has made the limited access to quality education difficult. Education deprivation in the North-West region has been, exacerbated by kidnapping due to the mass displacements in affected communities. The escalation of kidnapping 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. 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 kidnappers. 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.

Wider Economic Costs

Apart from fatalities recorded, kidnap attacks on communities increased social risks, discouraged investment and triggered economic crises for individuals and communities. The conflict is causing a spillover effect on inter-communal and inter-state trade. A number of major local markets, such as Ilella, Dandume, Maidabino, Kankara, Bardoki and Shinkafi markets have been shut down due to incessant attacks by kidnappers. The proximity of these markets to the forest reserves made them vulnerable to attacks. According to Daily Trust (2019) trailers of foodstuff at the market reduced from eight (8) trailers weekly to half a truck in two months', while the revenue earning reduced from five hundred thousand naira (#500,000) to less than hundred thousand naira (#100,000).

Deaths and Fatalities

The level of criminalities in northwest geopolitical zone had reached a boiling point as team of kidnappers attacked towns and villages within the zone. The attacks had left no fewer than 143 persons killed while hundreds of others sustained various

degrees of injuries with property worth millions of naira destroyed. It also left 40 peoples killed at Mararrabar Maigora, 27 killed in Maigora, 71 in Sabon Layin Galadima and 7 in Unguwar Doka all in Kastina State. However, the worst attacks were in Faskari, Sabuwa, Kankara, Dandume, Batsari and Jibia Local Government Area of the same state. In 2018, the zone recorded 3,425 fatalities in 1,191 incidents. Zamfara state was most hit with fatalities from kidnapping incidents as it recorded 896 victims, seconded by Kaduna state with 262 casualties. Also, 582 fatalities were recorded in bandit and kidnapping attacks on 10 LGAs in Zamfara. In Katsina State, over 2,000 people have been killed, 500 communities destroyed (Nigeria Watch 2018).

Livelihoods and Food Security

Large-scale farming and animal husbandry are the main economic activities in the northwest, with trading as an alternative source of income. Targeted attacks on farmers throughout the year have made cultivation and harvest impossible. Kidnappers have warned farmers to stay away from their farms, and about 26 farmers who ignored this order were killed in Batsari LGA of Katsina state (BBC 07/07/2020). Farmers have been kidnapped for ransom, while kidnappers in Shiroro LGA have demanded payments of up to \$1,100 before farmers can access their farmlands and Cattle rustling has also hampered animal husbandry in these areas (HumAngle 22/06/2020). About 70% of the 309,000 IDPs in the northwest have insufficient food, with global acute malnutrition rates among children reported to be as high as 18% and 31% in Sokoto and Zamfara states respectively (W FP 09/2019).

Conclusion

Arms proliferation and Kidnapping have had adverse implications on the business environment in northwest region of Nigeria discouraging potential investors. Factories are closing up, villages are deserted, schools are closed, social and economic activities are grinding to a halt, high level of deaths, undermine state security, kidnapping of farmers etc. The government of the region should take pragmatic step in addressing these fundamental causes of arms proliferation and kidnapping, like poverty, massive unemployment, drug abuse, corruption, possession of small arms by illegal hands. The government of the region should as a matter of urgency address the issue

of out of school children as this forms the army of the unemployed, those of them who are still of school age should be enrolled into school and those who have out grown school age should be made to acquire skill.

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