

**BANDITRY AND KIDNAP FOR RANSOM IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR  
NATIONAL SECURITY**

**BY**

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**MATRICULATION NUMBER: PG/SSC/2015709**

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BENIN CITY**

**DECEMBER, 2023**

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**BEING A DISSERTATION WRITTEN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL  
SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL  
OF POST-GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER'S DEGREE IN SECURITY AND  
STRATEGIC STUDIES OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE,  
NIGERIA**

**DECEMBER, 2023**

## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this dissertation was carried out by **IGIEBOR OSARIYEKEMWEN GOD'STIME**, matriculation number PG/SSC/1119582, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, as adequate in scope, content, and quality in the attainment of a Master's Degree in Security and Strategic Studies of University of Benin

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**Supervisor**

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**Date**

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**Dr. Joseph O. Aihie**  
**Ag. Head of department**

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**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to God Almighty for His unending mercies and faithfulness that saw me through the completion of this study. I give all glory, honour, and praise to His Holy name. Amen.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

My appreciation goes to my beloved parents, Captain (RTD) and Mrs Samuel Igiebor both of blessed memory for their love and care.

My profound appreciation goes to my lovely wife Mrs. Caroline Igiebor and my dear children without whose support I could not have achieved academic progress.

I acknowledge and appreciate my gentle, humble, amiable and versatile supervisor, Prof. Musa Abutudu for his incisive and useful guidance throughout the study. Furthermore, I appreciate all the members of staff of the Department of Political Science for their moral support. Finally, my appreciation goes to all my friends for their encouragement and support. God bless you all.

## TABLE OF CONTENT

Title page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	i
Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ii
Dedication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Acknowledgment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Table of content	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	v
Table	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	vii
Abstract	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	viii

### CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Statement of the Problem	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Research Questions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Objectives of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Significance of the study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Scope of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7

### CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature Review	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Theoretical Framework-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Methodology of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26
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### **CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Analysis of Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom in Nigeria-	-	-	-							29
Analysis of Results and Implications for National Security --	-	-	-							43

### **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Summary of Findings -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	48
Conclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-48
Recommendation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-49
Contribution to Knowledge	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-51
Prospects for Further Research -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-51
References	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-52

**TABLE**

<b>Table No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table 4.3	Banditry and Kidnapping Activities: July 2021- June 2022- -	-29

## ***Abstract***

*The study examined the impact of banditry and kidnapping for ransom on the people of Nigeria with implications for National security. The general objective of the study was to examine the extent to which banditry and kidnapping activities have affected the right to life, personal liberty, freedom and progress of people in Nigeria and to determine the implication for Nigeria's National security. The scope of the study covered the period between 2014 and 2022. The paper posits that banditry and kidnapping for ransom activities have negatively affected the life and freedom of people living in Nigeria and thus are a problem for National security. The study adopted the critical discuss analysis approach in the analysis of the phenomena of the study. Themes were generated from the research questions and the phenomena of the study were thus examined under various sub-headings for patterns and analysis. The findings show that banditry and kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria have negatively and mostly affected the right to life, freedom and progress of people in Nigeria and hurt National security; hence, the Nigerian security architecture is weak. Consequently, the study recommends that the government security forces should be complemented by private security outfits and vigilantes in all towns and villages; the security and intelligence capacity of the military and the police forces should be built up for effective management of information; and that people in Nigeria should be allowed by an act of parliament to carry arms for self-defence among others.*

**Key Words:** Banditry, Kidnapping, Kidnap for ransom, National security, Unger-governed spaces.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.0. Introduction

National security is an embodiment of state-centric security and human security framework that ensures the stability, healthiness, prosperity, freedom and peace of a nation-state. The absence of mitigation or effective control of existential threats to the peace, security and safety of the citizens and the state indicates the incapability of the state's security architecture to manage its internal and external security challenges. This fact proposes that the level or degree of insecurity in the state and the harm to citizens will be minimal in a general atmosphere of order and stability. The existence of existential threats in the state that create an atmosphere of fear, insecurity and substantial harm to the citizens on the other hand presupposes the incapacity of the state's security architecture to ensure the peace and security of the state and its citizens. In this wise, an atmosphere of uncertainty of the security of the people and even the state and its institutions will become prevalent.

Banditry and kidnapping activities are a global scourge as the United States, United Kingdom, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, the Philippines and others, have had experiences of malaise (Simon, 2019; Hoinathy and Fru, 2022; ENACT Observer, 2023). Organized terrorist sets such as Al-Quaida and its allies, including Boko Haram also engage in kidnapping for ransom and collect large sums of money to facilitate their terrorist agendas (Callimarch, 2014 in UNODC, 2019; Institute for Economics and Peace, 2017 in UNODC, 2019). This scenario is the prevailing atmosphere in Nigeria. In Nigeria, insecurity activities such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping

for ransom and others have become prevalent across the state with most states in the North East, North West, North Central and South East the worst hit. The above assertions have been corroborated by Mayer (2021) and Aljazeera (2021).

The activities of armed groups have put the citizens in a state of perpetual fear and danger daily. These groups' activities have resulted in the control of some ungoverned spaces in some states in Nigeria like Niger and Katsina States; where the security apparatus of the armed forces has grown so thin and the renegade and non-state groups have taken advantage to subjugate and terrorize the citizens in these including subjecting them to the payment of royalties amid killings, maiming, rape and other atrocities. Banditry and kidnapping activities have become active occurrences in Nigeria regularly posing a threat to the safety of the citizens in their houses, farmlands, and highways. Some people have resorted to flying to their destinations to avoid being killed or kidnapped by bandits on the highways. Examples of banditry and kidnapping activities include the Chibok Secondary School Girls (204) kidnapped in 2014, the Dapchi Secondary School Girls kidnap in 2018, the Owo Catholic church killings in 2022, and the Kaduna–Abuja train kidnapped in 2022 to mention a few (Amnesty International, 2021; Channels Television, 2021; Sanni, 2022; Peterside, 2022).

Banditry and kidnapping activities have also extended to the demand and payment of ransom for kidnapped victims. The renegade groups have turned kidnapping activities into a lucrative business venture. Between 2014 and 2022, kidnapping for ransom has been in the rise and millions of naira have been lost to bandits and kidnapers as the victims and their relatives and at times the government are made to negotiate and pay various sums of money as ransom to secure the freedom of kidnapped victims (Sanni, 2022; Peterside, 2022). Thus, the lives of the citizens

of Nigeria have been plagued by the threat to the right to life, personal liberty, freedom of movement and association, freedom from an atmosphere of fear, and psychological and mental disorientation, all of which are guaranteed constitutional provisions in Nigeria. The federal government have made attempts to arrest the drift in security, but the efforts and impacts seem to be spread too thin which explains the ascendancy of criminals and armed activities in Nigeria despite the existence of the government and all its security architecture (Lenshie et al (2020); The Conversation (2022) and Barnett and Rufai (2021).

This study thus, focuses on the impacts of banditry and kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria and the implications for national security. The study posits that banditry and kidnapping for ransom have negatively impacted the right to life, personal freedom, freedom of movement and association and psychological disorientation of the people living within Nigeria. Studies by scholars and bodies such as Goodluck Jonathan Foundation (2021), Lawal (N.D.), Ebonine (2022) and others, have focused on banditry and terrorism and its economic and national security implications for Nigeria, but none have taken their research to the perspective and focus outlined in the present study. Thus, the study is novel in the sense that it not only seeks to determine the effectiveness of the state security architecture in ensuring the maintenance of human security, in general but focuses on specific physical, psychological and humanistic security frameworks that are vital for human existence and the good life.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

Banditry and kidnapping activities have been on the rise in Nigeria especially since the year 2014. Various renegade groups have risen and taken up arms against the members of society and the state. Several persons have been raided, robbed, raped, maimed and killed by bandits.

Kidnapping activities have been perpetrated by these renegade groups including terrorist groups who have now turned kidnapping for payment and ransom into a lucrative business. Though, the law against kidnapping was passed in March 2002, kidnapping and subjugation of victims to payment of ransom and still rife. Banditry and kidnapping activities have negative impacts on the security of the citizens and thus, on national security. Banditry and kidnapping activities have impacted negatively on the freedom, peace and progress of society. They lead to loss of economic goods, and money, harm to peace, safety, freedom of movement and association, and lives. Banditry and kidnapping activities impinge on the capacity of the state to fulfill its obligation to guarantee the right to life, peace, freedom of movement and association and engage in the production of economic goods and material wellbeing. The federal and other tiers of government are struggling to ensure the security of their citizens as these renegade groups have continued to carry out illicit activities despite government efforts to curtail them, to the extent that some local government areas in states such as Niger and Katsina states are under the control of bandits. This study is meant to critically analyze the activities of banditry and kidnapping for ransom and to determine the effects these illicit activities have on the security, peace, freedom and progress of the people within the Nigerian geographical space and on national security.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

### **To what extent**

- 1) To what extent have banditry activities affected the security, peace, freedom, and progress of the people in Nigeria?
- 2) Has kidnapping for ransom affected the safety, freedom, economy, psychology, and progress of the people in Nigeria?

- 3) How has banditry and kidnapping for ransom affected the capacity of the Nigerian state to guarantee the safety, freedom, peace and progress of the people in Nigeria?

### **1.3. Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study are:

- 1) To determine the extent to which banditry activities have affected the security, peace, freedom, and progress of the people in Nigeria.
- 2) To examine the extent to which kidnapping for ransom has affected the safety, freedom, economy, psychology, and progress of the people in Nigeria.
- 3) To determine the extent to which banditry and kidnapping for ransom have affected the state's capacity to guarantee the safety, freedom, peace and progress of the people in Nigeria.

### **1.4. Significance of the study**

The study is significant for several reasons. First, banditry and kidnapping activities are an affront to the state and its capacity to guarantee the safety and progress of its citizens. It is necessary to examine the issues of these activities and determine the extent of danger they pose to the people and the Nigerian state and also, to decipher the possible solutions to the malaise. Second, banditry and kidnapping affect the lives, safety, freedom of movement and association, economic goods and peace of the people. Thus, the freedom to lawful movement, association, production of economic goods, means of livelihood and peace in a safe environment can be eroded. These are basic rights of the people backed by constitutional provisions and guaranteed by the state. If these provisions are breached and cannot be guaranteed, the people become

vulnerable citizens because of the failure of the state to protect them. Third, banditry and kidnapping affect the psychological build of people. The victims who survive become traumatized, insecure and lack trust in the ability of the state to ensure their security and thus, emotionally detached from the state. This scenario may affect their patriotism and support for the state's administrative and political activities. These vulnerable victims may also quickly switch allegiance to their oppressors (bandits) on the failure of the Nigerian state to adequately protect them. It is therefore necessary to study these phenomena, analyze them and suggest possible solutions because the existence of these renegade groups constitutes a danger to the peace, progress and stability of the people and the state. Furthermore, the study is an attempt to equalize studies on banditry and kidnapping for ransom that have focused on areas of the Northwest and north-central of Nigeria as the victims of banditry and kidnapping activities by examining cases from across the length and breadth of Nigeria. Finally, the study is necessary because these aspects of the research have not been critically studied and analyzed by authors to examine and bring to the fore the level of harm to the right to life, freedom, liberty, and psychological dispositions of the citizens. The study is novel; it will contribute to extant literature in the field and will be useful for policy.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

The study is limited to the activities of bandits, kidnapping and kidnapping for ransom from selected cases between 2014 and 2022 in Nigeria. The study's scope thus, encompasses selected cases of banditry and kidnapping for ransom from affected states in Nigeria especially, where the incidences of kidnapping and banditry are rife.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

#### 2.0. Conceptual Elucidation

Contemporary security (rural or urban) referred to as banditry has become a major problem in Nigeria particularly, in the northern part. This has led to a serious security threat to the lives, freedom, infrastructure, environment, and economy of Nigeria and Nigerians. Incidences of banditry have become a daily occurrence and conversation in Nigeria. The term of reference of the study constitutes two concepts. These are banditry and kidnapping for ransom. These concepts are explained within the context and operational understanding of the study.

A bandit according to Gustafson (2017:14) is an individual “who methodically acquires capital through the process of robbing others, typically within a gang or an organization that distributes wealth within its internal structure”. Thus, armed banditry represents the threat to or the actual employment of arms or other instruments of violence or coercion to deprive or rob people of their material belongings and inflict psychological harm on them. The use of arms and force by the bandits very often leads to the killings of people, destruction of properties and displacements of people leading to refugee crises (International Crisis Group, 2020). Typically, armed banditry represents the gang phenomenon even though some bandits can operate as lone brigands without associating with other networks of criminals (Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014).

According to Barnett and Rufai (2021)

*Nigeria’s bandits are not easy to categorize “because there are so many of them and their conflict is constantly evolving. The bandits may number up to 30,000, spread across*

*dozens of gangs ranging from 10 fighters to more than a thousand, most of whom are based in Zamfara state. They are driving humanitarian crises through their brutal raids on civilians and mass kidnappings while using heavy weapons to combat overstretched security forces.... They seem to fight for personal wealth and influence- and they fight each other as much as the government- but they live in the bush rather than in gilded villas.*

It can be thus inferred that banditry is an organized crime directly aimed at illicit wealth acquisition amidst the destruction of lives and properties occasioned by it. Kidnapping on the other hand represents or connotes the act of taking people hostage (away from the kidnap point) to achieve a particular objective (Abdullahi, 2019). Kidnapping for ransom thus connotes the act of taking people hostage or abducting them to demand and collect ransom. The abductee is released after such ransom has been paid (Okoli and Ugwu, 2019). Bandits and insurgents are most often associated with the activities of kidnapping and kidnapping for ransom. According to Murtala (2021), bandits are involved in the mass killings of mostly civilians, kidnapping, sexual violence, rustling of cattle and other associated human rights abuses. These various atrocities committed variously by bandits have harmed the safety, freedom of movement, and association; led to psychological dysfunctions, trauma from family separation and economic disarticulation of Nigerians and political instability in Nigeria. The above scenario termed the political economy of banditry and insecurity in Nigeria by this study continues to thrive despite the efforts of the state security apparatus to stern the tide. In line with the above assertions, Mutarla (2021) avers that structures and mechanisms put in place to arrest the upsurge of banditry activities in the Northern part of Nigeria by both state and non-state actors have been futile.

## **2.1. The Embodiment of National Security**

The term national security can be construed as the safeguarding of the sovereignty of a state which includes the citizens, economy and institutions seen as the responsibility of the state or government. Originally, National security was construed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the protection against military attacks. However, the scope and definition of national security have been expanded to include non-military aspects such as political security, economic security, energy security, cyber security, human security and environmental security (Romm, 1993; Paleri, 2008). According to Paleri (2008), national security means the ability of a state to overcome a range of multi-dimensional challenges that threaten the well-being of the people and the existential survival of the state. This is ensured by sound state policy and governance to maintain internal and external security.

In the same vein, Ammerdown Group (2016) sees national security as shared freedom from an atmosphere of fear, want and indignity; aside from the absence of risks, it concerns both the social and ecological well-being of a state. These definitions point to the fact that the concept of National security encompasses the issues of physically securing the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a state including its borders and the well-being- physical, social, economic, mental, and environmental- of the people. Thus, the embodiments of national security are both military (physical) and non-military security concerns that ensure the stability and security of the state both internally and externally. The embodiment of national security is briefly discussed hereunder

Physical security- this primarily concerns the management of physical threats to the state with the enforcement of military might. This entails the capability of the state to mobilize its forces

militarily to guarantee, defend or deter any physical threats such as military attacks from state and non-state actors (U.S. White House, 2015). Political Security- this involves the protection of government and political system including the security of society from unlawful threats or pressures, internally and externally. Economic Security- this refers to the extent to which the state and its people have freedom to control their economic and financial activities including the ability of the state to safeguard the economy to sustain or provide for its citizens. Environmental Security- this idea has assumed several meanings. The first is the traditional concept of environment which connotes the ability of a state to respond to environmental challenges such as energy disruption, shortage of water and severe climate change that can cause conflict between states. The second idea is the protection of the environment and climate from degradation caused by man.

The other elements of national security are the following. Energy and natural resources security- this refers to the extent to which a state or the people can access energy resources like oil, gas, minerals, and water and the freedom of these resources to be determined by the market. Free from external interference whether military or political. Cyber Security- this involves the protection of the computer, data processing apparatus and operating systems of government and the people from harm and interference internally and externally (Makeri, 2017). Human Security- involves a broad definition that includes the safety of people from hunger, want, disease, oppression, repression and any threat that disrupts the day-to-day life of people. It also encompasses such concepts as food security, environmental security, economic security, personal security, health security, political security and community security including the protection of minorities and women, (United Nations, 2018). Thus, human security embodies the execution of good governance to ensure human rights, equal access to education, health care

access to equal opportunities that result in poverty reduction and freedom from fear and want. These are the correlates of security and therefore natural security.

## **2.2. Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom in the Global Space**

Banditry activities and kidnapping for ransom is a global scourge; it is not peculiar to one continent alone. The rate of occurrence and endemic nature of these malaises are influenced by the socio-economic and political environment and state capacity to mitigate or ensure effective social control. Kidnapping for ransom has been defined by the International Convention document or treaty of 1979 thus:

*Any person who seizes or detains and threatens to kill, to injure or to detain another person in order to compel a third party, namely, a State, an International Organization, a natural or juridical person or a group of persons, to do or abstain from doing any act as an explicit or implicit condition for the release of hostages (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019- UNODC).*

In line with UNODC position, countries of the world such as the United States, United Kingdom, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, the Philippines and others have various laws prohibiting the act of kidnapping; they have also made determined efforts to mitigate the incidences of such crimes through the state the security apparatus (Simon, 2019; Hoinathy and Fru, 2022; ENACT Observer, 2023). However, banditry and kidnapping for ransom activities continue to plague states around the world due to the socio-economic composition of the crime mostly done financial benefit (Simon, 2019). According to UNODC (2019), bandits, terrorists and other criminal gangs carry out the activities of kidnapping for ransom to generate funds for the

purchase of arms and ammunitions and to replenish their provisions. For instance between 1970 and 2010, the global incidents of terrorist attacks recorded a 6.9% of kidnapping activities, 15.8% in 2016 and 27% in 2017 (Global Terrorism Database, 2018 in UNODC, 2019)

Furthermore, from 2008 to 2014, Al- Quaida and its allies collected the sum of \$125 million as ransom from kidnapping activities. Also, Boko Haram had a specialized force that carry out kidnapping for ransom activities targeting politicians, foreigners, business people and chief civil servants to raise money for their terrorist activities Callimarch, 2014 in UNODC, 2019; Institute for Economics and Peace, 2017 in UNODC, 2019). In the Philippines, the terrorist organization Abu Sayyaf has employed the tactic of kidnapping for ransom to generate funds to prosecute its activities. In Europe, kidnapping and ransom insurance companies in the 1930s reimbursed the victims of kidnapping for ransom payment (Simon, 2019). The insurance companies started catching-up from the 1960s as the spate of kidnappings for ransom gradually increased with groups such as the Red Army Faction in Germany, ETA in Spain and the Red Brigades operating in Italy (Simon, 2019). In the mid-1970s, a British Company, K&R Insurance, influence by Julian Redcliffe created a subsidiary to focus on hostage response and help to negotiate ransom payment on behalf of kidnapped victims; this company served the needs of clients' across Europe (Simon, 2019). By the Beginning of the 1980s, hostage taking had risen in Europe, especially in Latin America that required the services of K&R hostage response insurance policy. In 1986, the wife of a banker, Jennifer Guinness, was kidnapped in England, and a £2m ransom was demanded by the kidnappers. Although she was rescued by the British police eight days into her abduction, the K&R Insurance had already been contracted to negotiate her release even though the British laws do not permit negotiations with terrorists, make concession or ransom payment (Simon, 2019). The above scenario led the Thatcher administration to state that the

kidnapping epidemic was fuelled by the activities of the insurance industry since they facilitate ransom payment in negation to British no-concession policy (Simon, 2019).

The African continent is worst hit by the scourge of banditry and kidnapping for ransom. The socio-economic environment plagued by poverty, corruption, weak security structures and capacity creates opportunities for criminal gangs to operate against the developed world with strong institutions, economy and security architecture (Rotberg, 2004). Several countries in Africa, such as Ethiopia, Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Nigeria and others, have been experiencing the scourge of banditry and kidnapping activities. In Ethiopia, ENACT observer (2023) states that: “Kidnapping and extortion have been on the increase in Ethiopia. Following the 2018 transformation, armed dissidents previously based in Eritrea established themselves in Ethiopia after the new political leadership assumed office”. These spates of kidnapping activities in Ethiopia include the abduction of 21 University students in 2019, out of which 12 students were still not released as of 2022; the kidnap of 50 employees of Dangote Cement Factory in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia in 2019, and the payment of ransom in cash (EBACT Observer, 2023). The banditry and kidnapping activities in Africa have become transnational as bandits and terrorists engage in cross-border kidnappings and other criminal activities. ENACT Observer (2023) reported that gunmen from Ethiopia entered Sudan and kidnapped three merchants in 2021 and demanded a ransom of SDG 5.4 million (US\$9,000). Furthermore, armed gangs from South Sudan abducted 275 children in Ethiopia’s Gambella Region in five years. Furthermore, the Institute for Security Studies and Association Sembe stated that criminal gangs consisting of Cameroonians, Nigerians, Chadians and Nigeriens carry out kidnapping for ransom in Cameroon, especially in the northern parts (Hoinathy and Fru, 2022).

*Kidnappings are more frequent in the dry season when communities are accessible. The attacks often occur late at night. Armed groups of about 10 people storm houses, sometimes firing shots in the air to dissuade residents from resisting. Many victims are taken across the border in Nigeria, Chad and the Central African Republic or kept in Cameroonian hideouts. ...The most targeted villages are situated in rural areas with little or no state presence, including police, gendarmerie or military. It takes time for information to reach the security forces when incidents occur (Hoinathy and Fru, 2023).*

Hoinathy and Fru (2023) stated further that the areas most affected by banditry and kidnapping for ransom activities in northern Cameroon include Bourrha, Hina, Mogode, Mokolo and the Touboro subdivision being the most affected with more than a dozen cases between January and October, 2022. Most of these cases of kidnapping are not reported to the security forces as relatives of kidnapped victims prefer to negotiate the release of their family member themselves. They fear that if the security forces get involved, their kidnapped family member may be killed (Hoinathy and fru, 2023). Thus, the activities of bandits and kidnapers are causing extreme hardship in affected African communities, who are affected by poverty, climate change and insecurity.

### **2.3. Banditry, Kidnapping for Ransom and the Nigerian Security Dilemma**

The phenomenon and history of banditry in Nigeria predated the emergence of Nigeria as a political unit. Jaafar (2018) avers that before colonialism and as far back as the 1930s, incidences of banditry were prevalent in Nigeria especially Northern Nigeria.

According to Jaafar (2018:2):

*In those days, warfare and merchants travelling along our local economic roads usually faced the threats and dangers of ambush from nondescript bandits. Armed bandits and criminals were known to be targeting goods ferried on the back of donkeys, camel and ox carts. Those bandits on our routes would forcefully take those goods and disappear into the bush. That is just one dimension of the problem then. In other instances, the bandits would sometimes raid farming communities and villages with the intent of willful killing and wanton destruction of property. During such raids, the bandits would destroy virtually everything in their path, including valuables, farm produce, etc. This subculture has been in existence even before the coming of colonialism to the territories of northern Nigeria.*

Banditry in Nigeria has evolved from its rudimentary stage in scope and dimensions into more complex and sophisticated patterns of criminal engagements (Akinyetun, 2022). As noted by Ellis (2006), post-independence banditry activities in Nigeria can be traced to shortly before the Civil War due to the political problems and breakdown of government machinery in the western region which resulted in political violence, organized crime and insurgency. The crime situation was further exacerbated by the mismanagement of combatants' demobilization after the war by the Gowon administration. This development left many erstwhile combatants' without sources of livelihood. This development leads to pockets of armed robbery, banditry and kidnapping in parts of Nigeria. For example, a notorious armed robber known as Ishola Oyenusi became a bandit terror to cities in Lagos (Odinakalu, 2018); Shina Rambo terrorized the Southwest in the 1990s (Osifadunrin, 2007); Otokoto and his sect kidnapped for ransom, and killed their victims before getting arrested by the joint task force (Okoli 2010); while in the South-South, the Niger Delta militants took control of the pipelines, killed government security personnel and kidnapped

expatriates for ransom before the Amnesty programme introduced by the Ya' adua administration resolved the crisis (Aghedo, 2013, 2015).

Contemporarily, banditry in Nigeria especially the Northern part (Northwest region) has taken sophisticated and diverse patterns which make scholars use name differentiations like urban banditry, armed banditry, rural banditry and others associated with the magnitude and scope of its activities (International Crisis Group, 2020). The activities of bandits have been prevalent in the Northwestern state of Kebbi, Niger, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Katsina, with incidences like killings, kidnapping for ransom, cow rustling, rape, school kidnaps and others (International Crisis Group, 2020). Few academic studies relevant to the present study conducted in Nigeria, are worth discussing at this stage. Although they address similar topics, that is banditry and insecurity in Nigeria, their focus differs which points to the gap in knowledge and hence, the contribution of the present study to extant knowledge.

Research conducted by the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation (2021) examined the linkage between terrorism and banditry and the security implications in Nigeria's Northwest and North central States of Niger, Zamfara, Kaduna and Katsina. The study adopted qualitative and descriptive methods including desk review and key informant interviews to generate data for analysis. Findings from the study show that banditry activities are motivated by the quest to get wealth in regions plagued by poverty and this has endangered public safety and security gravely in the studied states. In the same vein, Lawal (N.D.) conducted a study to unravel the causes and consequences of armed banditry in Nigeria focusing on Kebbi, Katsina, Zamfara and Sokoto States. The descriptive Survey via in-depth interviews was adopted for the study and the analysis was done using percentages and frequencies. Findings reveal that banditry as a social evil has

harmful to lives, and properties, and caused grief, fear of being victimized and pain among the citizens. Furthermore, Ebonine (2022) conducted a qualitative study that drew data from the works of scholars, and newspapers to examine and establish the link between the rising spate of banditry and the quest to destroy Western Education and facilitate the Islamization agenda in Northern Nigeria.

The studies examined among others (to the best of my knowledge) are quite different from the present one. First, they did not focus or deal specifically on banditry and kidnapping for ransom and the impact on the right to life, liberty, freedom of movement and association and progress of people in Nigeria but generally on the causes, consequences and security challenges of banditry. Second, the studies focused on areas of the Northwest and North central or North of Nigeria as the victims of banditry and kidnapping activities presenting an erroneous idea that other parts of the country are not also affected. Thus, the present study tends to balance this narrative by selecting, discussing and analyzing cases of banditry and kidnapping for ransom activities from affected states across Nigeria. Finally, the study is not oblivious to available data which show that banditry and kidnapping activities are rife in the Northern parts of Nigeria; however, the scourge is also felt substantially in the West, East and South of Nigeria.

#### **2.4. Factors Responsible for Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom in Nigeria**

Some factors account for the existence of banditry and kidnapping for ransom activities in Nigeria. These factors or divers enumerated by scholars include poverty, poor governance, high level of unemployment (Adagba, Ugwu and Erne, 2012; Epron, 2019); the existence of scarcely governed spaces in the North Western hinterlands (Rabasa et al (2007); the influx of small arms

and light weapons and the weak security apparatus (Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Rabaro, 2013; Offun and Ichoku, 2015) of the Nigerian state.

## **2.5. Impact of Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom on Society and the Implications for National Security**

Security and existential threats to life, peace and safety have engulfed most parts of Nigeria especially the North West as a result of banditry and kidnapping activities by crime lords and their gangs. For instance, in the North West, 1,100 were killed as a result of banditry in 2018; about 2,200 people lost their lives to bandits in 2019 and over 1,600 deaths took place in six months- between January 2020 and June 2020 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). These attacks produced about 160,000 internally displaced persons and over 41,000 refugees (World Food Programme, 2019; United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2020) and by late 2020, it raised to over 247,000 internally displaced persons and about 60,000 refugees (Selim, 2020). Banditry and kidnapping activities have also affected agriculture and animal husbandry in Nigeria and North West region especially as targeted attacks on farms either lead to deaths or kidnapped for ransom (Muhammed, 2020). Cattle rustling activities by bandits have also affected animal husbandry in Nigeria and the Northern part of the country (Anka, 2017).

These activities by bandits have increased the security risks of the lives of the people, the farming and pastoral communities leading to heightened food insecurity for the displaced persons and the rest of the population who are barely striving for subsistence (World Food

Programme, 2019). The Nigerian Security Tracker (NST) as reported by Sahara Reporters (2021) outlines the cases of kidnapped persons according to the geopolitical zones of the country as follows – Northwest, 1,405, North central; 942; Northeast, 210, Southwest, 169; Southeast 77; South-South, 140. The refugee crisis resulting from the activities of bandits in Nigeria according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) 2020), is increasingly becoming a huge burden to neighbouring states and countries. Also, the internationally displaced person camps (IDPs) are crisis-ridden and lack existential amenities such as safe water, bedding and blankets, tents for sleeping, toilets and others (Abdulrasheed, 2021).

The Federal Government of Nigeria and state governments have taken various measures to curtail the onslaught of banditry and other criminal armed activities in Nigeria. However, these efforts so far have recorded fewer gains given the daunting challenges faced by security personnel in the fight against banditry and other crimes. According to Barnett and Rufai (2021), the federal and state Governments have launched several military operations to fight banditry and other crimes in Nigeria especially, in the worst-hit areas of the Northwest. These operations include the task force on Cattle Rustling and Association Crime launched by the then Inspector General of Police. (Suleiman Abba) in 2014, operation Sharan Daji by the Niger State Government in 2016; Operation Harbin Kunama (scorpion sting) by the Nigerian military in 2016 and several anti-banditry campaigns in 2021 (Yusuf, 2015; Channels TV, 2016; Barnett and Rufai, 2021).

The military operations embarked upon by both the states and federal government have achieved some gains in reducing the level of banditry activities in Nigeria, especially the Northwest, but the gains recorded only produced brief periods of peace and normalcy as the bandits are often

constrained to relocate to areas not well covered by security or surveillance and regroup to further their criminal activities (Barnett and Rufai; 2021). The challenges faced by these military efforts to fight banditry and other crimes in Nigeria include severe resource constraints, and overstretched military personnel (deployed to compensate for the inadequate police force) amidst fighting insurgency in the Northeast and other parts of Nigeria. Also, the North Western part of Nigeria is large with a dispersed population across small settlements which make it very difficult for the military to protect everybody in these localities (Barnett and Rufai, 2021).

In addition to the military operations, some state governments in the Northwest such as Zamfara from the year 2016 have initiated amnesty measures to persuade bandits to lay down their arms in exchange for their freedom and some in cases, material incentives. However, according to Anka, (2017), Mustapha (2019) and Barnett and Rufai (2021), each of these amnesties have failed to last because both the bandits and state government accused the other of mistrust insincerity and bad faith. The efforts at curbing banditry activities in Nigeria by the various tiers of government and the often temporary gains recorded notwithstanding, the fact remains that people living in Nigeria especially the Northwest are daily in danger as a result of ineffective security mechanisms to ensure their safety and protection. This is a serious threat to the peace and stability of society and therefore a national security problem. The government owes it as a duty and as enshrined in the various statutes and the constitution to ensure the safety, freedom, peace and security of the citizens. The government thus far has failed to uphold this pledge.

The literature analyzed above discussed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in terms of the killings, displacements, cattle rustling, the refugee crisis and government efforts to curtail the criminal activities and the impact on national security. However, the available literature did not

(to the best of my knowledge) examine the impact or effect of banditry and kidnapping for ransom on peace, freedom of movement and association, progress, psychology, and the right to life of the people in Nigeria. It is therefore the unexamined issues by extent literature in the Nigerian academic space that this study intends to fill in.

## **2.6. State Fragility and Banditry Activities**

As a concept, State fragility has become an important aspect of international political tools for explaining the existence of various criminalities by stakeholders and scholars in the field. Several plausible generalizations have been put forward in this regard. For instance, the character of a collapsed state was described by Torres and Anderson (2004) while Rotberg (2004) conceptualized states that have either failed or are failing. Morcos (2005) conceptualized fragile states as countries that exhibit less capacity to evolve and execute public development-oriented policies and less capacity for political development. According to the Crisis States Research Centre (2007), state fragility is exemplified by countries exhibiting sub-systems vulnerability and are predominantly conflict-ridden internally and externally. In addition to the above, the term ‘failing state’ typified a country whose government has performed poorly in providing for the public good and achieving economic and people-oriented development (CRISE, 2009).

The Nigerian State typically fits into the above descriptions of a weak and failing state that lacks an effective security network to curb or mitigate banditry, kidnap for ransom and other criminalities. This position is corroborated by Falayi (2014) and Okoli and Lenshie (2018). The Nigerian State cannot exercise control over some areas of their territory (such as in Niger and Katsina) in combating internal threats of banditry, kidnapping and other forms of criminalities or insurgency (Stepputat and Engberg-Pedersen, 2008; Stewart and Brown, 2010; Lenshie et’ al,

2020). The Nigerian state is confronted with the challenge of providing effective security for its citizens mostly in the Northern parts where bandits have seriously undermined the military capacity of the security apparatus of the state despite the military efforts (Olokor, 2014; Okoli, 2019a). The inability of the state to evolve a superior strategy to counter the bandits and kidnapping network and operations portends the state as failing.

## **2.7. The Ungoverned Spaces Thesis and Banditry Activities**

The conceptual framework of the ungoverned spaces thesis was developed from the fallout of the September 9/11 (2001) terrorist bombing of the World Trade Centres in the United States of America. According to Rabasa et al (2007), the theoretical perspective of ungoverned spaces is a paradigm that seeks to explain the spatial territorial dimensions of a state's security problems, particularly from a fragile or weak state perspective. Lenshie et' al (2020) avers that the deficiency in weak or fragile states presents the context and environment for anti-state forces to usurp and dominate certain parts of a state's territory. Organized crimes and insurgencies find expressions within ungoverned territories to carry out illicit activities (Ojo, 2020). The existing conditions or environment of ungoverned, poorly governed and under-governed spheres within a state creates the enabling environment for the evolution and activities of non-state actors that often compete with the state or contest its authority (Okoli, 2019a). In the evolving scenario of ungoverned spaces, the absence of strong or formidable control by the authority of a state, according to Olayoku (2014), is that the people living within the affected territory become gradually overwhelmed by an illicit governance system of the anti-state forces. In such instances, the state authority is usually subverted and usurped by irregular government established by bandits and insurgent groups.

The ungoverned spaces thesis applies to Nigeria. Nigeria's jurisdictional environment or territorial sphere is acutely under-governed in some remote areas. This assertion becomes apparent from the existence of under-controlled or under-policed hinterlands, forestlands, borderlands and international frontiers, especially in the Northern parts that anti-state groups have occupied (Albert, 2018; Okoli and Ogayi, 2018). In the Northwestern and North central parts of the Nigerian state, scores of bandits have taken over and authoritatively controlled several local communities in Zamfara, Niger, Katsina, Benue, Kaduna and Plateau states (Onwuzuruigbo, 2020). The weak or fragile state structure of the Nigerian state has manifested in various dysfunctional ways through poor management of the hinterland, and borderland, prevalence of communal, sectarian and extreme violence (Okoli and Ogayi 2018); and has become a safe place for organized criminality (Olaniyan, 2017; Okoli, 2019b). These poorly managed territories have provided the avenue for violently organized crimes like cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom and rural raids to thrive (Okoli and Lenshie, 2018). These scenarios have accounted for the evolution of a criminally sustained economic environment within which armed banditry is produced and reproduced.

The employment of state fragility and ungoverned space perspectives to explain the criminality of banditry activities in Nigeria is very apt. the theories succinctly capture the dysfunctional and weak networks of institutions, resulting in poor governance, poor policy implementation, poverty, corruption and weak state capacity to respond to security threats such as bandits and other anti-state forces. This scenario thus leads to the evolution of various criminalities and organized criminal groups that have outstretched the state's capacity to authoritatively manage, control, and ensure the safety of the people within the Nigerian territory. The failure of government to

properly coordinate the social institutions and ensure equity, effective participation and good governance, resulted in the fragility of these institutions, especially the state security architecture. This failure led to the emergence and volatility of criminalities buoyed by the lack of effective control of the territorial spheres that have left some spaces either poorly governed or scarcely without government or security forces' presence. These poorly governed spaces have thus been taken over by bandits and other organized criminal groups. The pervading security threats in Nigeria have thus, impacted negatively on the right to life, freedom of movement and association, psychological orientation, safety and economic progress of the people.

These scenarios of ungoverned spaces controlled by bandits now create a situation where Nigerians live under the control or at the mercy of criminals and anti-state forces within the territorial spheres that the Nigerian government swore to protect and administer. There are no more appropriate and apt theoretical explanations of the Nigerian security dilemma than the above-exposed theories.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

#### 3.0. Methodology

The study adopts the thematic analysis approach in the study of the phenomena. The data were carefully examined to identify common themes (ideas and patterns of meaning) for analysis. The deductive strand of thematic analysis was adopted as data were examined with prior structured themes for analysis and validation. Six steps thematic analysis structure developed in 2006 by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (Caulfield, 2019) were adopted to analyze the phenomena of discourse. As a qualitative research method, thematic analysis is used in this study to examine the effects of banditry and kidnapping for ransom on the abuse and dominance of society by renegade groups. The six steps thematic analysis includes- Familiarization, coding, themes construction, review themes, define themes and write a thematic analysis. The study is qualitative and relies on both primary and secondary sources of data from newspapers, articles, television and the Internet for analysis. The operationalization of the thematic analysis approach for the study objectives are done below.

##### 1) Familiarization

The data gathered were carefully and critically examined to have an overview of the issues before a step-by-step analysis of the phenomena.

##### 2) Code the data

In this regard, codes were created to represent the patterns and meanings in the data; these represent the concepts of banditry, kidnapping for ransom and National Security.

3) Themes construction

The deductively generated themes were matched with recurring thoughts, opinions and issues in the study.

4) Review themes

In this wise, the analysis of the data was carefully reviewed and the themes generated were compared against the data to make sure that the themes represents the core issues of discourse pertinent to the study.

5) Define themes for analysis

The selected cases of banditry and kidnapping for ransom that have to do with killings, robbery, rape, maiming, dislocation, displacements, kidnapping, and kidnapping for ransom were the themes selected for examination in the study.

6) Write-up the thematic analysis report

In this section, the data on the activities of banditry and kidnapping for ransom, gathered through primary and secondary data were employed to write-up the analysis using the deductively generated themes and discussed under relevant subheads and patterns. The discourse produced the study's results that were linked with the research questions and objectives to determine the validity of the study.

The themes were hypothesized and discussed under the following subheads.

1. Banditry and kidnapping for ransom have impacted negatively on the security and right to life of people in Nigeria.
2. Banditry and kidnapping for ransom have negatively affected the right to personal liberty and freedom of movement of people in Nigeria.

3. Banditry and kidnapping for ransom have created an atmosphere of fear, psychological disorientation and food insecurity in Nigeria.
4. Banditry and kidnapping for ransom have negatively impacted the economy of households in Nigeria.
5. The capacity of the Nigerian security apparatus to ensure adequate protection for people in Nigeria is weak.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### **4.0. Analysis of Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom in Nigeria**

This section is discussed and analyzed according to the hypothesized themes constructed from the cases and activities of banditry and kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria. The generated themes are discussed hereunder

#### **4.1. Banditry and kidnapping for ransom impact the safety and life of people in Nigeria.**

Banditry and kidnapping activities in Nigeria have resulted in a high degree of insecurity and safety for the people in Nigeria. Armed bandits and other criminal gangs have carried out unprecedented acts of kidnapping, killings cattle rustling and targeted attacks on the public that have led to displacements and socio-economic disruptions in Nigeria, especially the Northern parts.

These gangs have contributed to widespread violence leading to looting, rape, kidnapping, murder, and others. In line with the above assertions, the International Organization for Migration (2022) reported that between 2018 and 2020 about 4,900 people were killed by bandits and hundreds of thousands internally displaced in the North-West of Nigeria. Between January 6 and 8, 2022, bandits raided and killed over 200 people displacing over 10,000 of them in several villages in Zamfara state. According to the International Crisis Group (2020), banditry attacks in the northwest led to the death of about 1,100 persons in 2018; over 2,200 in 2019 and over 1,600 deaths between January and June 2020. In parts of the country, between January and

June 2021, 1,405 persons were kidnapped in the Northwest; 942 persons in the North-Central; 210 persons in the Northeast; 169 persons in the Southwest; 140 persons in the South-South; and 77 persons in the Southeast (Sahara Reporters, 2021).

From 2014 to 2022, a host of people have been attacked and kidnapped and often made to pay ransom for their release. For instance, in 2014, 276 secondary school girls were kidnapped in Chibok, Borno state; 110 secondary school girls were kidnapped in Dapchi, Yobe state; in 2020, over 300 secondary school boys were also kidnapped from Kankara in Katsina state (Amnesty international, 2021; Orjinmo, 2021). According to Thisdaylive (2022), between July 2021 and June 2022, about 653.7million naira was paid as ransom for kidnapped victims in Nigeria, The report stated that over 500 cases of kidnapping were recorded, 3,420 victims of kidnapping were abducted while about 540 others lost their lives to violence associated with kidnapping (Thisdaylive 2022).

The above-reported and analyzed cases of banditry and kidnapping are among the many instanced and incidences in Nigeria. A cursory examination of the above analysis shows that the acts of banditry and criminalities have caused the deaths of several thousands of people loss of property and destruction and displacements of/from homelands of many people in Nigeria, especially the Northern parts. With these criminalities, where people are killed and kidnapped variously almost without restraint, the question to ask is how sure and how safe are the lives of people living in Nigeria? The question of safety and protection of lives in Nigeria led the Zanfara state Government Bello Matawalle in 2022 to order the insurance of licenses to residents in the state to carry guns to protect and defend themselves against bandits, and other criminal gangs.

The action by Matawalle was a result of the escalating attacks, criminal levies enforced on communities and kidnapping activities by bandits and criminal gangs (Asadu, 2022),

In the same vein, Governor Aminu Masari of Katsina State in 2021, asked residents of the state to buy licensed guns to defend themselves against banditry and kidnapping activities as the security forces alone cannot provide adequate security for the state (Babangida, 2021). Thus, the action by the respective state governors lays credence to the fact of the weak capacity of the security forces to tackle criminality in Nigeria and that security management has gone beyond the state-centric perspective to that of collaboration and cooperation between the state, private security networks and members of society to ensure the safety and security of lives and property.

#### **4.2. Banditry and kidnapping for ransom: impact on personal liberty, freedom of movement, and educational development in Nigeria.**

The activities of armed bandits and kidnapers in Nigeria between 2014 and 2022 seriously limited and threatened the liberty and freedom of people in Nigeria to move from place to place. It also curtailed or disrupted mainly secondary educational development especially, in the Northern parts of Nigeria. Across the Nigerian states several roads, constituted death traps as bandits frequently attack and kidnap victims who travel along these roads. For instance, it was estimated that over US \$18 million was paid as ransom between January 2011 and March 2020 (The Conversation, 2022). In 2019, several travellers were abducted by gunmen on the Owo-Benin road including the killing of Oba Adeusi- the Olufon of Ifon by gunmen (Alagbe, 2021). Furthermore, in 2020, many travellers were abducted on the Akure Road and Owo-Benin Road which were released after the payment of ransom (Alagbe, 2021). Likewise in 2021 scores of travellers were abducted by gunmen in Akure-Oyo express-way; these people were also released

after the payment of ransom to the abductors. These incidences can result in a phobia of travelling on the roads (Alagbe, 2021; Mayer, 2021). Some of the roads considered highway risks and death traps in Nigeria include-Kano-Kaduna, East-West, Ibadan-Ilesha, Akoko-Kogi-Lokoja-Abuja, Akure-Benin, Akure-Lagos, Ife-Ibadan, Owo-Benin, Lagos-Ibadan and others (Sahara Reporter, 2020; Omorogbe, 2021; Alagbe, 2021). Travellers and transporter were robbed, abducted, raped and killed by bandits and criminal gangs on these roads (Omorogbe, 2021). These heinous activities by bandits and other criminal elements across the Nigerian state have limited and threatened the liberty and freedom of people living in Nigeria to move about and travel to conduct their legitimate businesses. For example, between July 2021 and June 2022, a total of 500 incidences of kidnapping occurred in Nigeria leading to the abduction of 3,420, with 564 people killed (Obiezu, 2023). The breakdown of incidences of kidnapping and casualties as stratified by geo-political zones are tabulated below.

**4.3. (Table) 1: Recorded Accounts of Banditry and Kidnapping Activities between July 2021 and June 2022**

<b>Geo-political Zones</b>	<b>Frequency of Kidnapping</b>	<b>Numbers Kidnapped</b>	<b>Number of casualties</b>
Northwest	177	2,199	331
Northeast	29	54	17
North Central	108	719	106

Southwest	54	199	37
South-South	67	194	37
Southeast	62	112	51

Source: Tabulated by the Author from Obiezu (2023).

According to Anyadike (2023: online)

*Zamfara is the center of a kidnap-for-ransom industry worth millions of dollars each year. In just the last three months of 2022, 1,090 abductions were recorded. . . . Virtually everyone in Zamfara knows somebody who has been kidnapped. The bandits are extremely violent, killing their captives when ransoms aren't paid. The kidnappings are not only an emotional burden on families, (but) they also have a long-lasting economic impact on Northwestern households.*

Apart from the threats to liberty and freedom of movement, banditry and kidnapping activities have also disrupted the education system through targeted abductions of school children to the extent that some schools closed down their boarding facilities and even their sessions for fear of kidnapper's activities. Aside from the 2014 Chibok secondary school girls abduction and the 2018 Dapchi school girls abduction, Aljazeera stated that between 2020 and 2021, over 700 students were abducted, especially in the northern parts of Nigeria (Aljazeera, 2021; Amnesty International, 2021). Aljazeera (2021) quoting a report from UNICEF noted that the massive student abductions have disrupted the academic activities of more than 5 million children. In

2021 Shiklam, Shuaibu, Sadauma and Dipo (2021) reported that 618 schools were closed down in six Northern states for fear of kidnappers, abducting the children. The states included Sokoto, Zamfara, Kano, Katsina, Niger, and Yobe. These incidences and actions have further exacerbated the already low enrollment and standard of education in the Northern parts of Nigeria.

From the cases of banditry and kidnapping analyzed above, it is evident that the people living within Nigeria have had their liberty and freedom curtailed by daring banditry activities that have not only affected their right to personal liberty and freedom of movement but also their socio-economic, cultural, political and educational opportunities. The phobia of being kidnapped and deprived of economic resources or killed has stalled the progress, liberty and freedom of people living in Nigeria.

The Abuja-Kaduna 2021 train attack and kidnapping have also shown that those who travel by train are not free from attacks and kidnapping. The only exceptions are those people who can afford to travel by air. However, only a few wealthy people can afford to travel by air and pay the high ticket fares. The poor cannot afford air tickets and are thus faced with the psychological and emotional trauma of an environment of fear and insecurity.

#### **4.3. Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom in Nigeria; A Creation of Extreme Fear, Psychological Disorientation and food insecurity in Nigeria**

Banditry and other criminal elements have turned the various highways and society, especially the Northern parts of Nigeria into a theatre of fear, apprehension and psychological disorientation. Travellers and commuters have been thrown into a state of commotion as they

daily live in fear of being killed, kidnapped or raped as they travel daily along the Nigerian roads. According to a report by Omorogbe (2021), in the East, West, North and South of Nigeria, commercial drivers and travellers decried the spate or rate of attacks by bandits and kidnappers that have resulted in the loss of lives, economy and valuables. Thus, motorists and travellers have been subjected to a constant state of fear as the attacks continued without stiff opposition from the security forces, Omorogbe, 2021). For instance, the interview conducted by the Nigerian tribune revealed that a commercial driver (Daniel Aibinuori) plying the Akure-Lokoja route stated that kidnapping on that route was a daily occurrence as empty vehicles are frequently seen on the roads with the occupants abducted. Another driver interviewed (Wale Adenrele) plying the Ikare-Akoko route recounted how he and others including a military officer were kidnapped and spent ten days in the forest before a ransom was paid for their release (Omorogbe, 2021).

Banditry has also affected people living within the various communities especially the rural people in Nigeria. For instance, Anyadike (2023), stated that Zamfara state, especially the rural areas has a high incidence of kidnapping activities and the criminal gangs usually threatened the communities who resorted to paying protection money and negotiating with warlords to avoid being raided. Furthermore, in 2021 bandits in Zamfara state demanded a N37, million cumulative ransom from Bawaganga, Hayin Uda, Ruguza, Dumuyu, Zigau, Mai-Rerai and Gidan kado to avoid being attacked. The bandit's leader Hassan Bamumu was said to have hitherto made a peace deal with the Zamfara state government which failed (Bello, 2021). According to Peterside (2022), in 2022 about 45 people were kidnapped during a vigil of the cherubim and seraphim church in Zamfara State. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of N200 million from their relatives for their release. These situations were very traumatic for the abductees and relatives who had to go scrabbling to meet the demands of the abductors in an already prevailing

condition of poverty and food security crisis. The Zamfara state government stated that between 2011 and 2019, about 6,319 people were killed and 3,672 were kidnapped while over 500 villages were raided by bandits in the state (Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, 2021).

The security operatives are not also immune from the threats and attacks by bandits and criminal gangs in Nigeria. According to research conducted by intelligence firm SB Morgan Intelligence that accessed attacks on combatants between Q4 of 2020 and Q3 of 2021, 322 police officers and 642 soldiers were killed during the period in Nigeria. However, the report had it that 1,989 bandits, 973 Boko Haram members, 290 cultists, 129 vigilantes, and 100 IPOB members were also killed during the period (Bello, 2021). These developments imply that both the citizens and security operatives have become vulnerable to attacks by bandits and criminal gangs. The fear of attack by bandits being kidnapped on the roads or in the communities or abduction of children from schools has made people living in Nigeria traumatized. They are not sure of their safety or government security and thus are suffering daily from psychological disorientations, which can harm their physical and mental wellbeing. For example, in an interview conducted by Premium Times in Katsina state, Abdulaziz a journalist who had interviewed the bandits in their hideout stated that “The bandits don’t want resistance when they attack a community to kidnap residents for ransom, When they are resisted or they lose a member, or they are attacked by the vigilante or the military, they re-mobilize to sack the community” (Ibekwe, Alabi, Adebayo, and Sanni, 2021). Anyadike (2023) stated that over 453,000 people in the North West have been driven from their homes, displaced and traumatized by banditry and kidnapping attacks. These attacks have also resulted in food and humanitarian crises for almost 3 million people. From the foregoing, it is evident that the scourge of banditry and kidnapping activities has adversely affected the people living in Nigeria, especially in the rural areas.

Banditry activities have also affected the agricultural sector negatively. As a result of the attacks and raids by bandits in most rural areas of Nigeria especially the Northern parts, the killing and displacements of people by bandits not only reduce the capable hands to engage in agriculture but renders people homeless turning them into IDPS with no means of livelihood that increases the crisis of food security. Furthermore, those kidnapped for ransom are thrown into a state of penury after making payment for their release thus depleting their economic and agricultural empowerment. For instance, between January 2013 and March 2022, bandits killed 8,300 people in six states – Zanzara, 4,114; Jigawa, 7; Kaduna, 1,917, Sokoto, 644, Kebbi, 202; Katsina, 1,416; and more than 1,000 kidnappings for ransom took place in the Northwestern and North central states of Nigeria in 2021 (Ojo, Oyewole and Aina, 2023)

Furthermore, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the National Commission for Refugee, Migrants and Internationally Displaced Persons stated that 210, 354 people have been, displaced from 171 communities as of March 2020 in the Northwest of Nigeria (UNHCR, 2020). The Nigeria National Bureau of statistics stated that the disruption of agricultural activities affected 26.95% of Nigeria's GDP in 2020 (The Guardian 2021). In line with the above, it has been stated that in Katsina State, over 5,884 farmlands estimated at 58,330 hectares have been left or abandoned to insecurity as of March 2020 (Premium Times, 2021). Apart from farming, animal husbandry has also been negatively affected by banditry activities as herders are killed, kidnapped and their cattle stolen. Between June 2017 and January 2018 over 1,000 Fulani pastoralists with their families were killed and more than 2 million cattle were stolen in Nigeria, especially in the Northern parts (International Crisis Group, 2018). Thus, banditry and kidnapping activities have adversely harmed agricultural activities in Nigeria. The terror campaign by the bandits has cumulated in the killing and kidnapping for ransom of farmers and

pastoralists, destruction of rural communities, cattle rustling and destruction of farmlands that have further worsened food insecurity, poverty and inequality.

The above scenery has been made worse by the fact that the forests where agricultural activities take place have been taken over by bandits and other criminal gangs in many places in Nigeria especially, the Northern parts. To support this assertion, the Kano state governor, Abdullahi Ganduje in the year 2021, appealed for help from President Muhammadu Buhari to counter terrorists, armed robbers and bandits who have occupied forests within the state (Agbakwuru, 2021). Thus the occupation of forests by bandits and other criminal gangs poses a serious threat to farming and animal husbandry in Nigeria, especially in the Northern parts. This scenario can lead to a serious food security crisis.

#### **4.4. Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom in Nigeria; Impact on the Economy of Households in Nigeria**

The activities of bandits and kidnappers have adversely affected the economy of households across states in Nigeria. Millions of Naira has been lost through ransom payments for victims of kidnapping. Sani (2022) stated that research conducted by S.B. Morgan Intelligence published in August 2022, indicated that incidences of banditry and the associated cost of kidnapping for ransom are huge for both people and the country. According to the report, a recorded N6, 531 billion was demanded by bandits as ransom while the sum of N657.3 was paid between July 2021 and June 2022. In addition to the above sum, N100 million was collected from eight Nigerian hostages and N200 million from a Pakistani hostage on July 25, 2022 (Sani, 2022, Peterside, 2022).

According to The Conversation (2022), between January 2011 and March 2020, an estimated US\$18 million was lost to ransom payments to free victims from kidnappers' dens. The cost of kidnapping implies that reasonable resources that could be used to empower individuals- human capacity- and grow the economy are lost to kidnappers making the individual victims economically and financially vulnerable, deprived of livelihood and in a helpless condition. In line with the above assertions, the mass abduction of students such as that of Chibok girls (2014), Dapchi (2018) and others have rendered most parents penniless, indebted and even homeless as some had to sell their belongings and houses to pay for the release of their children from the hands of their abductors (Arvin, 2021; Mayer, 2021).

#### **4.5. Banditry and kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria; The Effectiveness of Government Security Forces Response**

Banditry and kidnapping activities pose a threat to the peace, stability, progress and security of the people in Nigeria and to national security. It is the duty of the Nigerian state by extension the government of Nigeria to ensure the safety of life and property and to ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of the people in Nigeria as provided by the constitution. However, the rate of banditry, kidnapping activities and other criminal vices across Nigeria has placed a big question mark on the capacity of the Nigerian security forces to provide adequate security for the life and property of the people within Nigeria. The conversation (2022) stated that more than 3,000 people were kidnapped in the first six months of 2021 and 571 in January 2022. Thus, banditry and criminal elemental activities cut across Nigeria.

Several military operations have been launched by both Federal and State Governments to curtail and mitigate the criminalities of banditry and kidnapping for ransom. The capacity of the

Nigerian police force to contain criminality in Nigeria is limited. According to Arvin (2021), in a country of about 200 million people, there are only 350,000 police officers; about 50 per cent of them are attached to VIPs (Governors, Companies and Private Citizens); 20 per cent, attend to administrative duties leaving about 30 per cent to fight crime across the country. Moreover, in Katsina state, there were only 30 police officers to police in 100 villages in August 2020 (Arvin, 2021). Thus, the capacity of the police to fight crime in Nigeria is grossly limited. The limited personnel of the police force give more room for the bandits and other criminal gangs to operate in mostly rural areas in Nigeria. In line with this notion, the New Humanitarian reported that the bandits operating in the Northwest of Nigeria in 2020 were about 30,000 divided into over 100 separate gangs with sophisticated weapons such as the AK 47 rifles (Anyadike, 2023). Because of the limitations of the police force in terms of shortage of personnel, the military was drafted in to help. The Nigerian federal Government has launched several military operations to fight banditry, kidnapping and other forms of criminality in Nigeria.

In March and July of 2016, two separate operations were launched by the Nigerian military. Operation Habin Kunama was launched to target bandit groups in the Dansadau forest in Zamfara state and Operation Sharan Daji was launched to fight bandits in the Northwest of Nigeria. These two military operations yielded some successes as several bandits were killed, several others were captured while dozens of bandits' camps were destroyed. Similar successful operations were also conducted between 2016 and 2019 (The Guardian, 2021; Barnett and Rufai, 2021). In June of 2020, military operation Accord was launched which established a joint task force that incorporated local vigilantes and the military. The joint task Force killed over 70 bandits and destroyed multiple bandits' camps in the Northwest of Nigeria (The Guardian, 2021). Apart from these measures, in 2018, the military operations used aerial bombardment against

bandits in occupied forests. The efforts were strengthened by the seizure of telecommunication services in parts of the Northwest in the last quarter of 2021 for several weeks to limit the ability of the bandits to communicate among themselves and to rescue information about the activities of the military (The Conversation, 2022).

These operations failed to weaken the bandit groups as the air raids resulted in civilian casualties that worsened the crisis. Also, the lack of ground troops' support enabled the bandits to move from one location to the other evading the aerial attacks (The conversation, 2022). These combat activities have recorded losses on both the side of the government forces and the bandits and other armed groups. For instance, a report from SB Morgan Intelligence Services study stated that in the Q4 of 2020 and Q3 of 2021, 322 police officers, 642 soldiers, 1,989 bandits, 973 Boko Haram, 290 cultists, 129 vigilantes and 100 IPOB lost their lives to combat and criminalities in Nigeria. Considering the limited number of the police force and other security agencies, these loses are further strains on the capacity of Nigeria's security forces to combat criminality effectively in Nigeria (21<sup>st</sup> Century Chronicle, 2021).

Several state governments such as Niger and Zamafara have also initiated joint task forces of the Nigerian military, police and local vigilantes to mitigate the crisis of banditry and kidnapping activities. For instance, in 2016, some state governments- Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto and Kaduna initially sought settlements and peace missions to resolve the banditry, kidnapping and killings by armed gangs. Monetary compensations and amnesty measures were offered by the state governments in return for the surrender of weapons and peace in the region. According to The Conversation (2022), the various settlement and peace initiatives between the bandit warlords and governments failed because of mistrust between the respective governments and the bandits

and mismanagement of the peace missions. The failure of the peace deals prompted states like Niger and Zamfara to launch military joint-task operations against the bandits. In 2020, the Niger state government launched operation Faraoutar Bushiya comprising over 1,000 personnel from the army, police, gendarmerie and National Guard (Kone, 2022).

The efforts also included a cooperation and collaboration approach to fight banditry and kidnapping between the states of Niger, Zamfara, Katsina and the Republic of Niger due to the transnational nature of the threat posed by the non-state actors (Kone, 2022). On the part of Zamfara state, the government in 2021 embarked on an anti-banditry onslaught by introducing several restricting measures such as a ban on the sale of fuel in jerricans, placing limits on the use of motorbikes including shutting down of cellular networks. This initiative was later complimented by states like Sokoto, Kaduna and Katsina state (Barnet and Rufai, 2021).

These measures by the state governments yielded successes momentarily as the restriction on fuel hurt the bandits causing them to abandon their bikes and to disperse into the neighboring states searching for supplies. These efforts only produced a brief period of calm. The bandits were forced to relocate to other areas and regroup (Barnet and Rufai, 2021). The capacity of the Nigerian security forces to combat banditry and kidnapping has been further compounded by the existence of a large expanse of poorly governed or under-governed spheres within the Nigerian state, especially the North West. The sparsely governed or under governed spaces have provided bandits and other criminal gangs the opportunity to carry out their criminal acts and hide or have the advantage of relocating from place to place to avoid the government security forces (Albert 2018).

The bandits have taken advantage of the poorly governed spaces and assumed control of several communities in Zamfara, Katsina, Benue, Kaduna and Plateau states extorting royalties and oppressing and raiding the communities at will (Onwuzuruigbo, 2020). These scenarios and development project the Nigerian state as weak because of the inability or incapacity to protect the lives of the people living in Nigeria and to ensure their economic, social, physical and mental wellbeing. Lenshie et al. (2020) in support of the above assertion, aver that a weak or fragile state presents an opportunity for anti-state forces to dominate certain parts of the state due to poor governance and security capacity.

#### **4.6. Analysis of Results and Implications for National Security**

This section contains the analysis of results on the impact of banditry and kidnapping for ransom on the rights to life, personal liberty, freedom of movement and association of people in Nigeria and the implication on National security between 2014 and 2022.

Three questions were proposed to be answered by the study. These were: (1) To find out if banditry activities have negatively affected the security, peace, freedom and progress of people in Nigeria; (2) To also find out if kidnapping for ransom activities have negatively affected the security, peace, freedom, and progress of people in Nigeria; and (3) To find out if banditry and kidnapping activities have affected the capacity of the Nigerian state to guarantee the safety, freedom, peace and progress of people in Nigeria. In line with the above research questions, the objectives of the study were thus, to determine the extent to which banditry and kidnapping activities have affected the security, peace, freedom and progress of people in Nigeria; including the capacity of the Nigerian security forces to guarantee security. To this end, five themes were

structured out of the research questions under which the various subjects of the study were analyzed.

The results of the analysis of theme one shows that incidences of banditry and kidnapping have resulted in the deaths of thousands of people in Nigeria. People are being kidnapped daily and killed, villages are raided and razed. Thus, the activities of bandits and kidnappers have posed an existential threat to the generality of people in Nigeria. These results have achieved research objectives one and two and research questions one and two.

The results of the cases and incidences of banditry and kidnapping for ransom examined in theme two shows that banditry and kidnapping activities have grossly limited the rights to personal liberty and freedom of movement of people in Nigeria. Due to the high rate of kidnapping in towns and villages and on the highways in Nigeria, people's liberty has been curtailed as they live in fear and secluded. Thus, freedom of movement has been limited as they seldom travel for fear of being kidnapped, robbed and killed by bandits. These results achieved and answered research objectives and questions one and two.

The results of the theme three analysis show that banditry and kidnapping for ransom activities have caused the people in Nigeria to live in a disoriented state of perpetual fear and agricultural retardation. The victims of kidnap and their relatives pass through agony, as the victims are subjected to torture, rape, hunger, death and more. Even after their release, their experiences continue to hunt them. On their part, the kidnap victims' relatives pass through a lot of trauma as a result of the incident and the process of raising the ransom payment. Thousands of people have fled several rural areas, especially in the North West, displaced and put in IDP camps as a result of bandits attack. Many schools in the Northwest were closed down in 2021 because of the

incessant banditry attacks and mass abductions of secondary school students. Banditry and kidnapping activities have also, negatively affected agricultural activities. Farming activities have suffered neglect as people in Nigeria are afraid of being kidnapped in the farms and many people in the Northwest have fled their homes and have been displaced and turned IDPs while many able-bodied men and women have been killed. The farming communities have thus been depleted causing a serious food security crisis in Nigeria, especially in the Northern parts. Pastoralists' economic power has been depleted as bandits and other criminal elements rustle cattle, especially in Northern Nigeria. These activities of bandits have affected the livelihood of cattle owners, members of the public and the economy negatively as a result of cattle loss, money loss and shortage of beef; thus increasing food insecurity. The analysis shows that the activities of bandits have caused colossal damage to the Nigerian economy and agriculture. These scenarios posed an existential threat to the peace, and physical and mental well-being of people in Nigeria. These results thus, achieved the research objectives and research questions one and two.

The results of the analysis of theme four show that the activities of bandits and kidnappers have negatively and grossly affected the economy of households in Nigeria. Billions of naira have been lost by people in Nigeria to kidnappers. The payment of ransom to kidnappers has depleted the purchasing power of households affected by the kidnapping and reduced their investment capacity. The ransom payment could lead to bankruptcy as some victims' relatives or parents have sold houses, properties or borrowed to pay the humungous amount usually demanded by the bandits. The billions of naira lost to kidnappers could harm the Nigerian economy because the kidnappers would not normally invest the money gotten from kidnapping in projects that

would bring growth to the economy but on arms, ammunition, drugs and other wasteful ventures. The results thus answered and achieved research questions and objectives one and two.

The results of the analysis of theme five show that the Nigerian security architecture and capacity to guarantee the security, peace and well-being of the people in Nigeria is weak, fragile and limited. The Nigerian police force suffers from inadequacy of personnel and is thus ineffective in fighting banditry and kidnapping activities. Although the military has been brought in to complement the police, the various joint operations and air bombardments have only yielded momentary success. The military lacks adequate manpower to commit to fighting banditry as they are almost in every part of the country fighting criminal gangs, terrorism, oil thieves and others. The existence of large ungoverned areas especially in the Northern part of the country has provided a haven for bandits and criminal gangs to inhabit breed and carry out their activities. It also provided the bandits the opportunity to relocate from one place to the other and to evade and avoid attack by the Nigerian security force. Thus the incapacity of the Nigerian security forces to effectively check banditry and kidnapping in Nigeria has left the state fragile and has created an environment and sense of insecurity in the people living in Nigeria. The results of these five align with research question and objective three.

The results from the thematic constructs have dire implications and consequences for Nigeria's National security. National security in the context of the study encompasses the state-centric security and human security frameworks. National security encompasses the concepts of military security, economic security, environmental security, cyber security, political security, and energy and natural resources security (Longley, 2021). It is the responsibility of the state to ensure the

provision and management of the above-mentioned elements or variables of security. It is from these elements that the concept of human security is gleaned. The concept of state-centric security expanded to accommodate the provision of security to encompass all spectrums of human well-being. Thus, human security embodies the individual and the society in areas of economy, environment, food, health, personal security, community security, and political security (United Nations, 2018).

These core elements of human security are categorized into three broad divisions. These are the assurance or provision of security to ensure that human survival is protected and promoted, thus ensuring freedom from fear, the provisions for human's daily needs, that is, freedom from want, and the protection and promotion of human dignity (United Nations, 2018). As shown from the results of the study, it is apparent that the security forces and by extension the Nigerian state have failed to provide effective military protection to the people living in Nigeria. This failure has resulted in a myriad of crises and problems of human environmental insecurity, economic insecurity, personal insecurity, physical insecurity, and others. Banditry and kidnapping activities in Nigeria have caused many people to live in constant fear of attack, death, or being kidnapped and exploited to pay ransom. These criminal activities have limited the freedom of people to move from place to place in Nigeria and have hampered economic and agricultural activities.

The problem of insecurities is thus, the bane of National security. The reality is that Nigeria is faced with challenges of economic insecurity, environmental insecurity, natural resources insecurity, and human insecurity that could result in political instability and legitimacy crisis. A state that cannot ensure and assure the protection and promotion of peace, safety and progress of society, cannot earn the loyalty and support of the people.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.0. Summary of findings

The findings from the analysis of the cases of banditry and kidnapping for ransom and the implication for National security covering the period 2014 to 2022 are outlined below.

- 1) Banditry and kidnapping for ransom have negatively affected the right to life and personal safety of the people of Nigeria.
- 2) Banditry and kidnapping for ransom activities have impacted negatively on personal liberty, freedom of movement and association of people in Nigeria.
- 3) Banditry and kidnapping for ransom activities have negatively affected the psychology of people in Nigeria creating an atmosphere of fear and disorientation impacting their mental wellbeing.
- 4) Banditry and kidnapping for ransom activities have negatively affected farming and pastoral activities leading to displacement, loss of farmlands, loss of economic power, loss of money and the existence of hunger and food security crisis.
- 5) The state's capacity to provide effective security to people in Nigeria is weak. There is the challenge of inadequate personnel and the inability to effectively manage the poorly governed or “ungoverned spaces’ in Nigeria.

#### 5.1. Conclusion

The study examined the impact of banditry and kidnapping for ransom activities on the right to life, personal safety and freedom of movement of people in Nigeria between 2014 and 2022. It also examined the effect of the criminal activities of bandits on Nigeria’s national security. The

study set forth basic research questions and research objectives which have been successfully answered and achieved. The results from the analysis show that banditry and kidnapping for ransom have negatively affected the rights, freedom and progress of people in Nigeria and National security. The analysis from relevant literature shows that thousands of people have been killed by bandits, thousands of others displaced, thousands kidnapped and billions of naira lost to kidnappers. The Nigerian Federal government and various states government have made several efforts to curtail the activities of the bandits and other criminal gangs operating in Nigeria, but their efforts have been retarded by inadequate personnel and the existence of very large and poorly managed or governed spaces that have provided a haven for various criminalities. Thus, the Nigerian state is faced with various human security and military security challenges that pose serious threats to socio-economic progress, political stability and Sovereignty.

## **5.2. Recommendation**

Given the above submission and in line with the findings of the study, the following suggestions towards mitigating the problem of banditry and kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria are made below;

1. The government security forces should be complemented by private security outfits and local vigilantes in all towns and villages in Nigeria. Security management is no longer the exclusive preserve of the state as criminal actors and their activities have become more complicated and sophisticated. The Nigerian state should thus regularize and support the private and local security outfits.

2. The security and intelligence capacity of the military and the police forces should be built up to effectively manage information and to check the activities of bandits, kidnapping and other criminal activities in Nigeria. Without adequate and effective intelligence and information management, the fight against banditry and kidnapping for ransom would be very difficult to mitigate.

3. The state government should run their security outfits to complement the federal government security forces. The various state governments in conjunction with the federal government should establish a joint state security network in each State; comprising of the federal security forces, state security forces, private security forces and the vigilantes or community security networks to simultaneously launch attacks against criminalities from every state-based joint security outfits. Thus a simultaneous security operation would flush out the bandits and other criminal gangs inhabiting the Nigerian forests.

4. The personnel capacity of the military and police forces should be improved to ensure that more security personnel are drafted to combat crime since a portion of the forces, especially the police force, perform other duties like protecting government officials, political elites, companies and private individuals.

5. The Nigerian state should enact a law that would allow people living in Nigeria to carry guns for self-defence. The guns should be licensed. The possession and right to carry guns would limit the incidences of banditry and kidnapping in Nigeria. This would break the monopoly of illegal possession of guns by criminals who usually attack defenseless people at will.

### **5.3. Contribution to Knowledge**

The contributions of the study to extant literature and knowledge are outlined below.

Generally, the study of banditry and kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria linked with national security is a contribution to knowledge. Specifically, the study of the impact of banditry and kidnapping for ransom on the right to life, personal liberty, progress and freedom of movement of people in Nigeria is a contribution to the extant literature and knowledge.

### **5.4. Prospects for Further Research**

The study was mostly based on desk research. It is envisaged that academics will adopt field research to study the variables of this research in the future. Such a study would help to further reveal the psychological and emotional trauma suffered by victims of banditry and kidnapping in Nigeria as it concerns the right to life, liberty and freedom of people in Nigeria.

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