THE IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Williams John Adams, Onyedinefu, Mabel Chioma and Ajala Ebenezer Olorunsogo[1]

Abstract

This study is aimed at examining the scourge of terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and banditry in Nigeria. Several armed groups are operating in Nigeria today, amongst which are Boko Haram, regarded as one of the deadliest terrorist and insurgency groups in the world, pitching their tent in the Northeast, armed Militancy in the Niger Delta perpetrated by militia groups including Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the emerging threat of banditry in the Northwest. These have given rise to the security challenges besieging Nigeria today and have continued to dominate Nigeria's socio-political discourse. The study made use of secondary data including document analysis as its research methodology. Document analysis was used in describing the scourge of terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and banditry in Nigeria. The study adopted the frustration-aggression theory as its theoretical framework, additional theories of Poverty theory and theory of relative deprivation were also studied about the study. Findings from the study reveal that terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and banditry are caused by several factors including poverty, unemployment, weak political structures, border porosity, proliferation of small and light weapons, ethno-religious intolerance, etc. The impact of these armed insurgencies and banditry has resulted in loss of lives and properties, displacements, loss of livelihoods, destruction of critical infrastructure, fear, and economic destabilization, amongst others. This study therefore recommends that these root causes be decisively addressed through the

[1] Dr. Williams John Adams, Dr. Onyedinefu, Mabel Chioma and Ajala Ebenezer Olorunsogo are of University of Abuja, Department of Political Science, Abuja. Email: benchon001@gmail.com

provision of gainful employment, securing Nigeria's borders, strengthening of relevant institutions including the security agencies, infrastructural development in the rural areas, enshrining the principles of fairness, justice, social equality and accountability, amongst others, this would impact positively in curbing Nigeria's security challenges.

Key Words: Insecurity, Terrorism, Insurgency, Armed Militancy, and Banditry

Introduction

Terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and banditry fall under the ambience of insecurity which in recent times has remained issues of global discourse. While the 9/11 attack served as an eye-opener to global terrorism, terrorism, insurgency and armed militancy is no stranger on the world stage. According to the United Nations Development Programme report, six out of seven people worldwide are plagued by feelings of insecurity (UNDP, 2022). This situation has become prevalent in Nigeria with Nigeria ranking 8th in the 2023 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) with a record of 385 deaths (TheCable, 2023).

Insecurity in Nigeria has remained a reoccurring phenomenon that has continued to threaten the socio-economic fabric of Nigeria's development. Insecurity in Nigeria has continued to pose a threat to human lives and properties, distort business activities and dampen local and foreign investors, thereby leading to a deficit in the country's social and economic growth and development (Madobi, 2022). Insecurity in Nigeria can be traced to the 1960s when Nigeria gained its independence. The underlying ethno-religious divide in Nigeria paved the way for the Civil War of 1966 and since then insecurity in the country has continued to evolve. Recently, however, insecurity has assumed a more dangerous dimension in the country from Insurgency to banditry to kidnapping and violent extremism including militancy and terrorism. In recent times, Nigerians have woken up to Terrorism and Herdsmen attacks in the North East with Borno State being the worst hit, the South West region with a recent attack in Ondo State and part of North Central Nigeria, Banditry in the North West Region, the

prevalent Niger Delta crisis, Armed conflict in the South East allegedly perpetuated by the Eastern Security Network (paramilitary organization of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Almost every facet of the country has been hit by crime and violence. While some like Olaniyan and Yahaya (2017), and Dibia (2021) have linked the surge in insecurity to the staggering poverty, across the country with youth unemployment currently standing at 32.5% and the country in the middle of one of the worst economic downturns in 27 years (Aliyu, 2021), some have attributed it to failure in governance.

The security of lives and properties remains the responsibility of the government. The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria explicitly states that the Federal Government is primarily responsible for the security of lives and properties. However, States have taken to forming regional security networks including the Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) codenamed Operation Amotekun, formed on 9 January 2020 in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, a security outfit based in all the six states of the South West, Nigeria, primarily responsible for curbing insecurity in the region. This was a desperate attempt by the States to protect the lives and properties of its citizens. Many have blamed the government and its security apparatus for its failure to curb insecurity in Nigeria. Bankong-Obi (2012) attributed Nigeria's intractable security challenges to the government's apathy and inefficiency of the security agencies. Some also accused the government or government officials of having a hand in Nigeria's security situation, former Military Head of State Gen. Ibrahim B. Babangida via his Twitter handle in 2020 quoted the infamous speech of Late Gen. Sani Abacha "Any Insurgency that lasts more than 24 hours, a government official has a hand in it" (Ibrahim, 2020). This Statement became a trend with many accusing the government of being complacent in the security challenges bedeviling the country. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that insecurity is not common in Nigeria alone. Several African countries including the advanced countries of the United States, France, Britain, Spain, etc are faced with security challenges daily. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to

examine the scourge of terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and banditry in Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopts the historical method of research and analysis. The study data were collected through the documentation of secondary sources. Secondary data included books, journals, magazines, unpublished works, dailies, periodicals, and other online sources. Primary sources include observation and discussions with relevant stakeholders. The study also utilized the descriptive style as it built on the findings of already existing works about emerging security threats in the country.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

To give a clearer perspective of the study, it would be expedient to explain concepts such as Insecurity, Terrorism, Insurgency, Armed militancy and Banditry.

Insecurity

In the national sense 'insecurity' refers to the condition of a nation which is inadequately defended against dangers or aggression threatening its independence or territory from the outside (Union of International Associations, 2020). Insecurity is a feeling of unprotectedness and helplessness against manifold anxieties arising from an all-encompassing uncertainty about one's self. Insecurity is largely fostered by unpredictable fluctuations in which there is no cohesion. The resultant insecurities may be personal (insecurity regarding one's goals and ideals, one's abilities, one's relation to others, and the attitude one should take toward them) or societal (disintegration of society's values and mores, societal responsibilities, and societal cohesiveness). The ability of a state to uphold its sovereignty, defend its territorial integrity, protect the lives of its citizens and ensure peace and stability, fall under the ambience of security.

Terrorism

Terrorism as defined by Pearsall & Trumble (2006) is the systematic use of violence and intimidation to coerce a government or community into acceding to specific political demands. In its Convention on the Prevention and Combating Terrorism article 1 (3), the African Union (AU) defines terrorism as any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to:

1. intimidate, put in fear, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint or to act according to certain principles; or
2. disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public to create a public emergency; or
3. create general insurrection in a State (Oyeniyi, 2010).

Article 2 of the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism defined terrorism as:

any person who commits an offence within the meaning of this Convention if that person, by any means, unlawfully and intentionally, causes: death or serious bodily injury to any person; or serious damage to public or private property, including a place of public use, a state or government facility, a public transportation system, an infrastructure facility or the environment; or damage to property, places, facilities, or systems referred to in paragraph 1 (b) of this article, resulting or likely to result in major economic loss, when the purpose of the conduct, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act (Adedire, Ake, & Olowojolu, 2016).

Insurgency

Defining Insurgency is a little problematic. However, Insurgency can best be defined by what it is not. Insurgency is not conventional war or terrorism, for example, but it shares with them the use of force to achieve a political end. The crucial difference is the scope and scale of the violence. Terrorism rarely results in political change on its own while insurgency attempts to bring about change through force of arms. The principal difference between irregular and conventional war is relatively simple: the latter involves adversaries more or less symmetric in equipment, training, and doctrine. In an insurgency, the adversaries are asymmetric and weaker, and almost always a sub-state group attempts to bring about political change by administering and fighting more effectively than its state-based foe through the use of guerrilla tactics. These tactics are characterized by hit-and-run raids and ambushes against local security forces. Confusion often results from insurgent movements using terrorist tactics to achieve local results. Insurgency, unlike terrorism, is characterized by the support and mobilization of a significant proportion of the population (Kiras, 2012).

Insurgency as defined by Haviland (2012), is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict. By this definition, insurgency is described as unlawful means employed by insurgents to achieve specific goals which could be either political, religious or ideological. The goal of insurgency is to confront and overthrow an existing government for the control of power, and resources or for power sharing (Olanrewaju, Folarin, & Folarin, 2017). The Counter-Insurgency Initiative defined insurgency as the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region. Insurgents seek to subvert or displace the government and completely or partially control the resources and population of a given territory. They do so through the use of force (including guerrilla warfare, terrorism, coercion or intimidation, propaganda, subversion, and political mobilization) (Adedire, Ake, & Olowojolu, 2016).

Armed Militancy

Militancy can be understood as the acts of individuals, groups, or parties displaying or engaging in violence, usually for a cause, whether religious, political, economic, ideological, or social (Dialoke, 2017). Militancy can therefore be seen as the use of violence or aggressiveness, usually in support of a cause. It is the act of participating or readiness to engage in war or armed aggression. Militancy has also been described as a violent response by an individual, group or sect in a region, community, state or nation due to claims of underdevelopment, political oppression, religious beliefs and segregation.

Militia according to Hornby (2009) is an organized group of people comparable to a military force. Quamruzzaman (2010) cited in (Dialoke, 2017) defined *militia as* a "paramilitary force motivated by religious or political ideology, especially one that engages in rebel or terrorist activities in opposition to a regular army" is associated with the US usage in the early 1990s as applied to several rightwing groups opposed to gun control and distrustful of the federal government. Oftentimes, a militant uses violence as part of a claimed struggle against oppression such that in today's society, Militants are often associated with terrorists.

Banditry

Deriving from the term Bandit which means a robber or an outlaw who lives by plundering, looting, killing, etc. Banditry can be defined as an unlawful group terrorizing people and confiscating their properties or possessions. It is the prevalence of armed robbery or violent crimes. It often involves the use of force, threats, and intimidation, to rob, rape or kill. Okoro (2012) gave an explicit definition of banditry to mean;

a violent organized crime carried out by either a person or group of persons who are outlawed, proscribed and marauding elements called bandits. They move from place to place, town to town (translocational) and across nations (transnational) causing mayhem, destroying properties, and farmlands, looting and carrying out heinous crimes such as kidnapping, rape, killings, arson and so on. They would often commit these acts with the use of machetes, bows and arrows,

fabricated rifles, axes and in this present time automatic sophisticated weapons such as rifles and guns. They carry out these acts while operating from government unoccupied spaces often called ungoverned spaces which include forests, mountainous regions, highlands and gullies of difficult terrain as well as invaded empty villages whose citizens have migrated to safe havens and possibly remain displaced due to the presence of these bandits/outlaws.

Bandits, however, have not always had a bad connotation, a bandit in the 19th century, Europe and the Americas was seen as a freedom fighter whose sole purpose was partly to ensure the emancipation of the downtrodden from the bourgeois or colonized from the colonizers. Thus, Bandits like Chucho el Roto, Santanon, and Herachio Bernel were often celebrated as heroes of Mexican Independence. Thus, the government viewed them as outlaws and a nuisance, Mexicans had great respect for these 'social workers' termed bandits. In pre-industrial societies, peasants see bandits differently from the State not as Outlaws and hoodlums but as 'avengers' and 'breadwinners' (Abdullahi & Mukhtar, 2022). The situation is however different from the African clime where bandits specialize in armed robbery, kidnappings, killing, raping, maiming, destruction of properties and other related crimes.

Theoretical Framework

Several theories have been investigated as causes of Terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and banditry in Nigeria, including, poverty theory, relative deprivation theory and social identity theory, have been attributed to causes of insurgency and terrorism (Dim, 2017). While poverty theory argues poor economic conditions such as lack of employment opportunities and poverty create the conditions for people to join terrorist organizations, the theory of relative deprivation explains that when people feel deprived of something they are expected to have, they become discontent, hence could resort to violence to express their grievances (Dibia, 2021).

This study, however, adopts the frustration-aggression theory. Frustration–aggression theory, more commonly known as the frustration-aggression hypothesis ranks among the most seminal and prolific theories in research on aggression. Frustration-aggression theory or frustration-aggression hypothesis ranks amongst the most seminal and prolific theories in research on aggression. The original formulation of the frustration–aggression hypothesis by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears (1939) cited in (Breuer, 2017) stated that "the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression" This theory states that aggression is as a result of frustration which results from an individual's inability to attain their goals (Adegoke, 2020). It is important to note, however, that the existence of frustration does not always lead to aggression, given that frustration may have other consequences other than aggression. However, it is a cause of social upset derived out of governments' alienating policies.

In Nigeria, the endemic poverty, youth unemployment, unequal distribution of resources, environmental degradation, lack of fairness and justice, corruption, ethnic and religious conflicts, lack of infrastructure, lack of political will, etc., have continued to fuel insurgencies and insecurity in Nigeria. Accordingly, violent terrorism, Insurgency, and banditry are products of aggressive behaviour which result from frustration, oppression, social inequality, and exploitation. The use of terror and violence by terrorist groups is aimed to intimidate or coerce the government and the public to promote political, social ideological and religious or philosophical objectives whose aim was partly to ensure the emancipation of the downtrodden from the upper class or colonised over the colonizer.

Terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and banditry in Nigeria

Violent extremism, insurgency, and armed conflicts have dominated Nigeria's politics since the 1960s, however, in recent times these conflicts have intensified. Terrorist activities perpetrated by Boko Haram a group whose activities were initially perceived as civil unrest

when it began has today metamorphosed into one of the deadliest terrorist groups in the world. According to Blanchard and Husted, (2016), Boko Haram emerged in the early 2000s as a small, radical Sunni Islamic sect that advocated a strict interpretation and implementation of Islamic law for Nigeria. Calling itself Jama'a Ahl as-Sunna Li-da'wa wa-al Jihad (JASLWJ; roughly translated from Arabic as "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad"), the group is more popularly known as Boko Haram ("Western education is forbidden"), a nickname given by local Hausa-speaking communities to describe its view that Western education and culture have been corrupting influences. Boko Haram is a Salafi-jihadist group fighting for the replacement of the secular Nigerian state with an Islamic one based on strict compliance with the Sharia law, throughout the country. It operates in the North East of Nigeria, exerting violence against Westerners, Christians, and Muslims considered 'infidels' (EUAA, 2019). The indiscriminate killings of civilians and in particular of Muslims caused divisions within Boko Haram, this resulted in its split in 2016 with a breakaway faction with sworn allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the second faction remained under the late Abubakar Shekau (Jama'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Daw'ah wal-Jihad or JAS), who was reportedly killed in a conflict with other terror faction and has since been succeeded by Bakura Modu. The third faction, known as the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), was formed under Abu Musab alBarnawi, one of the sons of the founder of Boko Haram, ISWAP is considered to be more active near the border with Niger, in the areas north and west of Damboa and Yobe state around Buni Yadi. (GJF, 2021) (EUAA, 2019). Their activities which include suicide bombings, massacres, abductions and kidnappings, beheadings, etc. have had devastating effects on Nigeria's socio-economic development. Prominent among its attack is the 2011 suicide bombings of police buildings and the United Nations office in Abuja, massacres or killing by the fire of 59 schoolboys in February 2014, April 2014, mass abductions including the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno State and the mass abduction of 300 schoolboys in Kankara, Katsina State in December 2020. These attacks

intensified and became more audacious amidst claims by the government of winning the war against terrorism such that on 5th June 2022 a mass shooting and bomb attack occurred in broad daylight at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Owo, Ondo State, killing no fewer than 40 people and injuring 80 others (Mayaki, 2022), the government placed the blame on ISWAP.

Insurgency in any form is considered a serious threat to a nation. Insurgency is often associated with peoples' dissatisfaction with the State or State Institutions. Insurgency in Nigeria has mostly been driven by ethnicity and religious intolerance, this has given rise to ethno-religious conflicts birthing copious ethnic militias such as Bakassi Boys, O'dua People Congress (OPC), the Egbesu Boys; the Ijaw Youth. Congress (IYC); the Arewa People's Congress (APC), the Igbo People Congress (IPC) and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), amongst others (Olanrewaju, Folarin, & Folarin, 2017).

The Militarization of the Niger Delta Crisis has been attributed to the rise of many ethnic militias including Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) led by Henry Okah, and Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Ateke Tom, Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Alhaji Asari Dokubo and the Bush Boys amongst others (Oluyemi, 2020), (Olanrewaju, Folarin, & Folarin, 2017). Agitations by these groups were for the greater control of the oil resources in the Niger Delta region, fair allocation of the revenue, from oil exploitation, ending the oil spills and gas flaring, compensation for the decades of ecocide, as well as ensuring the physical and infrastructural development of the region. However, the Nigerian government saw their protests as acts of sabotage to the revenue generation of the nation (Olanrewaju, Folarin & Folarin, 2017).

Deriving its name from the River Niger, the Niger Delta comprises the states of Ondo, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Imo, Abia, Akwa Ibom and Cross River. Niger Delta is considered to be the engine room of Nigeria's economy due to the high concentration of crude oil in the region, generating around 80% of total Government Revenue, over

80% of National Wealth, and 95% of Foreign Exchange. It also plays host to Multinational Oil corporations including Chevron, ELF, Texaco, Agip, SPDC, Exxon-Mobil, Total, and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). The region contains more than 600 Oil Fields, 5,284 onshore and offshore Oil Wells, 10 Export Terminals, 275 Flow Stations, four Refineries, and a Liquefied National Gas Project. Since the discovery of crude oil in 1956, it has become the most significant part of Nigeria playing a pivotal role in the politics, economy, and security of the country (Oluyemi, 2020).

The most active militant group in the Niger Delta today is the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (**MEND**). MEND is an umbrella organisation whose political objectives have focused on demanding local control over oil resources and the development of the region. The group's Modus Operandi included kidnapping killings, and car bombing with the aim of kidnapping expatriates, attacks against oil pipelines and facilities, and oil bunkering. The activities of these militants in the Niger Delta have had adverse effects on the economy especially as oil contributes largely to Nigeria's foreign exchange and government revenue, it also created a general feeling of insecurity in Nigeria. The crisis led to higher prices and tighter supplies of energy. It also led to the downsizing of the oil company workers. It led to several hostage-taking, and attacks on oil installations and oil companies in the region which invariably crippled business activities. According to a report by the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Nigeria lost 643 million litres of crude oil or N51.28 billion as a result of 3,000 incidences of pipeline vandalization in 2015 (Dialoke, 2017). NNPC reports also indicate that between 2010- 2015, 18,000 incidences of pipeline vandalization were recorded, while from January to May 2016, no fewer than 1,447 incidents led to the loss of 109 million litres of petroleum products and 560,000 barrels of crude oil to refineries were recorded (Dialoke, 2017). Precisely on 11th January 2006, the hostage-taking of oil workers started in Bayelsa State after the declaration of 'Operation Orido Danger" by MEND, this led to the kidnapping of four expatriates (Bassey, 2018). On May 1 and 3, 2007 14 expatriates were taken hostage, On May 10, MEND abducted nine expatriates of

WILBRO. As of 2008, records indicated that about 200 expatriates have been kidnapped through militant activities (Dialoke, 2017). 16 Pipeline vandalization by NDA has been recorded as of July 2016. There was also disruption of telecommunication activities in the region as many base stations were shut down including that of Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) making communication inaccessible. The crisis also contributed to the thriving of illegal bunkering which is also a source of funds to the militias operating in the creeks of the Niger Delta. According to a Brussels-based international crises group, Nigeria lost about 30,000 to 70,000 barrels of oil per day to illegal bunkering. Attacks on the Armed Forces led to loss of lives. A reprisal attack by the military against the predominantly Ijaw town of Odi in Bayelsa State popularly known as the 'Odi massacre' of November 1999 following the murder of twelve members of the Nigeria police, saw the death of hundreds of unarmed civilians.

Currently, MEND has a limited presence due to the imprisonment of some of its leaders and due to a large-scale amnesty and Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programme introduced in 2009 by the Yar'Adua/Goodluck Jonathan's Administration. The DDR has also provided financial benefits for approximately 30,000 former militants. However, in 2015 the cut to the DDR programme funding, including the failure of the government in improving the socio-economic conditions in the Niger Delta region, and further actions by security guards of oil installations, saw the emergence of a new insurgency in 2016 and to the emergence of several militant groups, especially the Niger Delta Avengers (**NDA**). NDA is currently active in the Niger Delta. Although it shares the same objectives as MEND, it distances itself from the latter and calls for the autonomy of the region. In 2016, the group launched a large number of attacks on oil infrastructures. The tactics of the NDA mainly focus on attacks on oil and gas installations (EUAA, 2019).

While Terrorism, insurgency and armed militancy are driven by Ideological or political reasons, banditry has no ideological persuasion besides theft, extortion and violence. It is driven by the appealing prospects of wealth in a region blighted by poverty and poor

socioeconomic outcomes. Banditry is not a new phenomenon in global discourse, it has existed since the 19th Century. In Europe, bandits have existed in mainly mountainous areas of Italy, Spain, Greece and Turkey. In Asia, bandits have existed in several countries such as Iran, the Philippines and India. In India, bandits are called Daku in the Hindi Language which the British colonialists coined as dacoity during the colonial period. Thus, dacoity has become a term for banditry in the Indian subcontinent where bandits have operated for many years in north and north central India. One of the notable dacoits was Gabbar Singh who inspired the famous 1975 Bollywood film Sholay (Flames) based on his life. Therefore, banditry has a rich and lucrative history throughout South Asia and despite continued anti-banditry efforts, the problem of banditry persists in India presently (Tahir & Bernard, 2012). Today, Banditry is a major security challenge in Africa where bandits have continued to ravage the Horn of Africa, East and Central Africa, the trans-Saharan trade routes from Niger Republic to Libya, and parts of Chad and Southern Africa (Tahir & Bernard, 2012). In Nigeria, Banditry has become a major security challenge with States in the Northwest Region including Kaduna, Katsina, Niger and Zamfara States being the most affected.

Scholars (Tahir & Bernard, 2012), (GJF, 2021), have traced the origin of armed banditry to the four decades of unresolved conflicts between settled cultivators and nomadic herding communities that wander on the high plains of northern Nigeria particularly the North West geo-political zone of Nigeria. Armed Banditry has also been linked to the activities of illegal miners operating in the region. In Zamfara State alone, at least 10,000 armed bandits and cattle rustlers operate in eight major camps. Those who sponsor illegal mining also fund banditry and cattle rustling in mining communities to incite violence among cattle breeders and rearers (GJF, 2021). Bandit groups utilize motorcycles to raid border communities and then return to the forest after an attack. These illicit and violent acts have had devastating effects on communities. Attacks by bandits have included killings, cattle rustling, kidnapping, rape, burning of an entire village, extortion, village raiding and looting of valuables. According to a 2019 report by

the Zamfara State government, between 2011 and 2019, bandits killed at least 6,319 people, kidnapped 3,672 people and burnt more than 500 villages in Zamfara State alone. The activities of bandits have displaced more than 200,000 people. About 35,000 people were forced to relocate to the Niger Republic due to the destruction of their communities. Bandits have reportedly killed more Nigerians than Boko Haram, robbers, kidnappers and cultists combined and were reportedly responsible for 47.5 per cent of all violent deaths in 2019.

Causes of terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and banditry in Nigeria

Studies have examined the root causes of terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and banditry in Nigeria. While some experts have advanced rational, psychological and cultural factors at the individual level as causes of insurgencies, others have investigated the environmental influence at the group level as a cause of insurgencies (Adedire, Ake, & Olowojolu, 2016).

Causes of Terrorism, banditry and armed militancy have been attributed to several factors including; prevalent poverty, rising youth unemployment, high level of illiteracy, endemic and widespread corruption, and religious and political tensions, amongst others (Adegoke, 2020), (Dibia, 2021), (Onuoha, 2014), and (Tahir & Bernard, 2012). The theory of relative deprivation explains that when people feel deprived of something they are expected to have, they become discontent and, hence could resort to violence to express their grievances. However, it is argued that poor economic conditions such as lack of employment opportunities and poverty create the conditions for people to join terrorist organizations (Dibia, 2021). In northern Nigeria, there is a common perception that violent extremism is entrenched in the socioeconomic problems of the country. For example, Ayegba (2015) argued that poverty and unemployment are the driving forces behind the insurgency in Nigeria. Further in the study, Ayegba (2015) claimed that the high rate of youth unemployment has resulted in poverty and insecurity in the country.

In 2019, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) put Nigeria's unemployment rate at 23.1%, of which youth unemployment is 55.4%. this figure has continued to witness a significant increase as the number of graduates with no jobs keeps increasing. This according to (Adegoke, 2020) has also contributed to youth restiveness and engagement in illegal activities. Unemployment and poverty are factors that make youth vulnerable to radicalization. Unemployment according to (Dibia, 2021) causes social frustration, dejection, dependency on family and desperation that forces youths to embark on bad social attitudes toward violent crimes, assault, burglary, extortion, kidnapping, militancy, destruction of lives and terrorism

About religious tensions and religious fundamentalism as factors that have been attributed to the causes of violent extremism in Nigeria, the extreme religious ideology of the Boko Haram sect including enshrining Sharia Law and establishment of Islamic State in Northern Nigeria has been used as an excuse to perpetuate heinous crime. This has created the notion that terrorism is linked to religious fundamentalism. Onuoha (2014) opined that "ignorance of religious teaching is the leading factor influencing the adoption of extreme religious views, especially among youths" in all the northern states surveyed. Onuoha (2014) further added that religious and ethnic tensions are found to cause terrorism.

Concerning the political root causes of terrorism, several studies have indicated that the lack of civil liberties, corruption, weak political institutions, political instability, weak government, high levels of repression, and civil wars can foment the incidence of terrorism (Dibia, 2021). The elite politics run in Nigeria has also been attributed to causes of terrorism as the divide between the elite and the poor continues to widen. There have also been accusations of elites sponsoring terrorism as weapons of destruction he re-election of Jonathan in 2011 led to the use of Boko Haram as an instrument of destruction by the northern political elite. However, these claims cannot fully explain the emergence of Boko Haram, since another political and social phenomenon could contribute to the rise of the group (Dibia, 2021).

Human Rights Watch (2011), described corruption in Nigeria as "massive, widespread, and pervasive,". the high level of poverty in Nigeria has been attributed to the high level of corruption. In 2022, Transparency International ranked released the 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) with Nigeria ranking 150 out of 180 countries (Ejike, 2023). The majority of Nigerian agencies and ministries were found guilty of corruption and the police were ranked as the most corrupt agency among them which gave chance to the Boko Haram insurgency to expand its militant activities.

Struggle for Resources in the Niger Delta and Zamfara have informed armed militancy and banditry in both States. While the Niger Delta Militants seek better control of the oil, the gold in Zamfara has become the major reason for the struggle for control of the mineral resources found in the state. This has further aggravated the crime rate in the State. In some rural areas of Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara States, competition over limited access to land between farmers and pastoralists continues to devolve into violence.

Another factor that accounts for the increase in insurgency in Nigeria is the proliferation of weapons. The access to Small and Light Weapons (SALWs) in Nigeria, the sources of which have been linked to stockpiles of weapons seized by militants in Libya, and the Sahelian States such as Mali, have continued to fuel terrorism. The availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) has created an avenue for nonconventional or non-state actors to possess weapons, in some cases even beyond state control. These weapons are available to criminals and terrorists at relatively cheap prices and are used in illegal operations like terrorism, banditry, militancy and kidnapping in Nigeria.

Border porosity within West Africa has also contributed to an increase in the crime rate. Cases where individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of the porous borders, there is an unchecked inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country which has aided militancy, terrorism and criminality in Nigeria (Tahir & Bernard, 2012). In Birni Gwari, the border forest that links Kaduna State, Katsina State and Zamfara State served as an escape route and equally, a source of

migration of bandits to the local government whenever they wanted to rustle cattle and kidnap women into the forests. These free movements of people and goods across borders in the country continue to contribute to the influx of illegal weapons which fosters armed banditry (Abdullahi & Mukhtar, 2022)

Ungoverned spaces in the Northwest and Northeastern regions have made it possible for crime and victimization to thrive in several rural areas and forestlands. one of which is the Sambisa Forest in Northeast Borno State which has been completely occupied as the territorial area of Boko Haram. The inability of the Federal Government to control these territories contributed to insecurity by creating an 'ungoverned heaven' favourable for criminal opportunities. Northwest Nigeria's forestlands are vast, rugged, hazardous and as well grossly under-policed (Abdullahi & Mukhtar, 2022).

The impact of terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and banditry on Nigeria

Terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy, and banditry have had a significant impact on Nigeria, affecting its security, economy, and social fabric. These forms of violence have posed serious challenges to the country's stability and development, leading to loss of lives, displacement of populations, destruction of infrastructure, and hindering economic growth. Below is an examination of the impact of these security threats on Nigeria.

Terrorist activities by groups such as Boko Haram in the Northeast and ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province) have caused widespread fear, insecurity, and instability in the region. They have targeted civilians, security forces, and public institutions, resulting in a large number of fatalities and injuries (U.S. Department of State, 2021). The persistent threat of terrorism has hindered investment and economic development in the affected areas, leading to a decline in agricultural productivity and trade (Al Jazeera, 2019). The insurgency by groups like the Niger Delta Avengers in the South-South region has disrupted oil production and distribution, impacting Nigeria's economy as oil accounts for a significant portion of its revenue (Council

on Foreign Relations, 2021). Frequent attacks on oil installations have led to revenue loss, decreased foreign investments, and reduced government resources for development projects.

Armed militancy in the Niger Delta has resulted in environmental degradation and pollution due to attacks on oil facilities and illegal oil bunkering (Oxford Research Group, 2017). This has negatively affected agriculture, fishing, and other livelihoods, exacerbating poverty and contributing to social unrest in the region. Banditry, particularly in the Northwest and North-Central regions, has led to a rise in kidnappings, armed robberies, and attacks on communities (BBC News, 2021). The prevalence of banditry has created a climate of fear and insecurity, leading to the displacement of communities and disruption of agricultural activities.

The impact of terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy, and banditry on Nigeria is far-reaching and multidimensional, affecting the security and livelihoods of its citizens, economic growth, and social cohesion. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies, including robust law enforcement, community engagement, socio-economic development initiatives, and regional cooperation (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). Failure to effectively tackle these security threats can undermine Nigeria's stability and hinder progress towards sustainable development and prosperity.

Conclusion

In recent times, terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and armed banditry have become a harsh reality in Nigeria's political clime. While Boko Haram terrorist and Armed militias in the Niger Delta are ideologically driven with formalized structures and identities, bandits are primarily a variety of non-ideologically driven criminal gangs involved in large-scale cattle rustling, sexual violence, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, pillage, attacks on gold miners and road users in the focal states. They operate in independent clusters that are neither cohesive nor consist of formalized command structures. Little unites these gangs, but opportunities for pillage, intergroup conflicts and turf wars.

However, these groups whose activities range from bombings, kidnappings, killings, lootings, hijacking, shootings, massacre, vandalization, rustling, raping, and destruction of public properties, amongst so many others, the impact of which has resulted in deaths, displacement of people and destruction of properties and means of livelihood, decline in agriculture and agricultural activities, etc, have continued to pose a challenge to Nigeria security architecture. The study also identified some of the causes of insurgency, banditry and armed militancy to include socio-economic, psychological, institutional irregularities and geographic factors. Most affected are rural dwellers who are today living in fear. The escalation of intergroup has continued to affect agricultural development as well as the general economic well-being of Nigeria.

These nefarious activities which the Federal Government have failed to tackle despite several attempts including granting Amnesty to Militants, establishing joint security patrols along the borders with countries like Niger, and using multilateral mechanisms such as Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to tackle terrorism and insurgency, insecurity has continued to thrive such that some of these assailants have considered faceless and described as 'unknown gunmen'.

Recommendations

The following recommendations may be considered in other to address the scourge of terrorism, insurgency, armed militancy and banditry in Nigeria;

1. Government must make conscientious efforts to address some of the root causes of insurgency including youth unemployment, this can be achieved through job creation. This would in turn make engaging or joining these groups less attractive to youths
2. Conscientious efforts should also be made to address rural poverty and illiteracy, this can be achieved through empowerment programmes, the development of educational institutions, and access to free basic education.

3. Government must encourage religious, ethnic and political tolerance through social inclusion, fairness and justice, free and credible elections, equal distribution of state resources
4. The government should improve border security through the use of digital technologies like sophisticated surveillance and detection devices to control the influx of illegal arms and control the movement of persons
5. Nigeria's institutions should be strengthened including the Judiciary, special courts should be set up to quickly and effectively try cases of terrorism, insurgencies, banditry and militancy. Convicts should be dealt with according to the statutes of his crime, this would serve as a deterrence to others.
6. Accountability measures must be put in place to curb corruption including a sustainable social security system to discourage public holders from engaging in corruption.
7. Nigeria's security architecture including the police, army, navy and air force must be well orientated, trained and equipped in understanding and maintaining peace in the country.

References

Abdullahi, A. S., & Mukhtar, J. I. (2022). Armed Banditry as a Security Challenge in Northwestern Nigeria. *African Journal of Sociological and Psychological Studies, 2*(1), 45-62. doi:10.31920/2752-6585/2022/v2n1a3

Adedire, S. A., Ake, M., & Olowojolu, O. (2016). Combating Terrorism and Insurgency in Nigeria: An International Collaboration against Boko Haram. *Fountain University Journal of Management and Social Sciences, 5*(1), 67-74. Retrieved July 12, 2023, from https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/162155808.pdf

Adegoke, S. G. (2020). Insurgency, armed banditry and corruption in Nigeria: The bane of socio-economic underdevelopment. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Studies, 2*(1), 17-26.

Aliyu, T. (2021, July 19). *Nigeria's security crises - five different threats*. Retrieved from BBC: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57860993

Bassey, I. (2018). Militancy and Youth Restiveness in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *Journal of Contemporary Research, 15*(4), 194-214.

Breuer, J. E. (2017). Frustration-aggression theory. In P. Sturmey, *The Wiley Handbook of Violence and AggressionPublisher: .* Wiley Publishers. doi:10.1002/9781119057574.whbva040

Dialoke, I. &. (2017). Effects of Niger Delta Militany on the Economic Development of Nigeria (2006-2016). *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Research, 3*(3).

Dibia, I. I. (2021). The Effects of Terrorism on Peace and National Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law*. Retrieved from https://www.jopafl.com/uploads/issue22/THE_EFFECTS_OF_TERRORISM_ON_PEACE_AND_NATIONAL_DEVELOPMENT_IN_NIGERIA.pdf

Dim, E. E. (2017). An Integrated Theoretical Approach to the Persistence of Boko Haram Violent Extremism in Nigeria. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 36-50.

Ejike, S. (2023, February 1). *Nigeria ranks 150 out of 180 on corruption index - Transparency International*. Retrieved from ZAWYA: https://www.zawya.com/en/economy/africa/nigeria-ranks-150-out-of-180-on-corruption-index-transparency-international-ucpdtsct

EUAA. (2019, February). *Militant groups in the Niger Delta.* Retrieved from European Union Agency for Asylum: https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-nigeria/122-militant-groups-niger-delta

GJF. (2021). Terrorism and Banditry in Nigeria: The Nexus. *Goodluck Jonathan Foundation Report*. Retrieved from https://www.gejfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Terrorism-and-Banditry-GJF-Doc.pdf

Haviland, S. (2012). *Defining terrorism.* New York: American Diplomacy Publishers Chapel Hill NC.

Hornby, A. S. (2009). *Oxford Advanced Learner"s English Dictionary of Current English. New 8th Edition.* London: Oxford University Press.

Ibrahim, B. B. (2020, October 21). Retrieved from Twitter: https://twitter.com/General_Ibbro/status/1318964366792888322

Kabir, A. (2022, June 2). *The Different Factions of IPB Insurgents Tormenting Nigeria's Southeast.* Retrieved from HumAngle: https://humanglemedia.com/the-different-factions-of-ipob-insurgents-tormenting-nigerias-southeast/

Kiras, J. D. (2012). *Irregular Warfare: Terrorism and Insurgency*. doi:https://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/baylis3e_ch09.pdf

Madobi, M. Y. (2022, October 22). *In search of a panacea for Nigeria's insecurity.* Retrieved from The Cable: https://www.thecable.ng/in-search-of-a-panacea-for-nigerias-insecurity

Mayaki, B. (2022, August 12). *Nigeria: Suspects in Owo Church attack apprehended.* Retrieved from Vetican News: https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2022-08/nigeria-owo-attack-arrest-catholic-church-military-ondo.html

Okoro, A. (2012). Banditry and National Security in Nigeria: A Conceptual Discourse. *Benue Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies (BENJOPCS)*. Retrieved from https://www.bsum.edu.ng/journals/benjopecs/vol1n1//files/5.pdf

Olaniyan, A. &. (2017). Cows, bandits, and violent conflicts: Understanding cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria. *Africa Spectrum, 51*(3), 93-105.

Olanrewaju, F., Folarin, O., & Folarin, S. (2017). Insurgency and National Security Challenges in Nigeria: An Introductory Analysis. *Ante Portas – Studia nad Bezpieczeństwem, 2*(9). Retrieved July 12, 2023, from file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/AP.IX_._Folarin.pdf

Oluyemi, O. A. (2020). The Military Dimension of Niger Delta Crisis and Its Implications on Nigeria National Security. *Sage*, 1-13. doi:0.1177/2158244020922895

Onuoha, F. C. (2014). *Why do youth join Boko Haram?* Washington, DC: United Nations Institute for Peace.

Oyeniyi, A. B. (2010). Terrorism in Nigeria: Groups, Activities, and Politics. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance, 1*(1).

Tahir, T. A., & Bernard, U. O. (2012). Curbing Armed Banditry in Nigeria: A Panacea for Good Governance. *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development* .

TheCable. (2023, March 15). Borno remains worst hit as Nigeria improves by two places on global terrorism index. Retrieved from https://www.thecable.ng/borno-remains-worst-hit-as-nigeria-improves-by-two-places-on-global-terrorism-index

UNDP. (2022, February 8). 6 in 7 people worldwide plagued by feelings of insecurity, reports UN Development Programme. Retrieved from https://www.undp.org/latin-america/press-releases/6-7-people-worldwide-plagued-feelings-insecurity-reports-un-development-programme

Union of International Associations. (2020). International insecurity. *Potential, Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human*. Retrieved April 13, 2023, from http://encyclopedia.uia.org/en/problem/international-insecurity