# BORDER MANAGEMENT, ARMED BANDITRY AND TERRORISM MITIGATION IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT**
*The greatest social, human and economic challenge facing Nigeria today is the menace of both international, national and local terrorism that is adversely aided by strong force of religious extremism, porosity of borderline and cross-border security challenges and crime in its highest wave. Of a truth, the existence of porous border and cross-border frontier activities in Nigeria has given credence to crimes of diverse magnitude and utmost security challenges across Nigeria borders for long without any specific headway or solution. This paper is set to examine key security challenges and socio-economic effects of insurgency and Armed Banditry in Nigeria; seeing that the country as a nation state is under a severe internal socio-economic and security threat. In consequence, the paper dwells on key concepts of the work on border management and its demands, activities of armed banditry and how to mitigate terrorism in Nigeria, with case studies of North Central, North-West, North East and others, just to mention but few. The study data were collected through documentation of secondary sources, including review of related literature, journals, write ups, library research, even as it built on the findings of already existing works about emerging security threats in Nigeria. The study is concluded by recommending among others; that the country should in fact evolve a sustainable border management, and social security system which will discourage public office holders from engaging in corrupt practices of sponsoring of banditry, kidnapping, e.t.c as economic gains, and with good information network sharing techniques, and by providing gainful employment opportunities to the citizenry of which will curb, reduce or eradicate the social habits of armed bandit, cross-border security challenge and mores as enshrined in the work.*

## Introduction

Attacks by armed bandit groups as well as continued violence by Boko Haram and the Islamic state in West Africa province (ISWAP) leave civilians in Nigeria at risk of mass atrocity crimes across border regions within and outside border lane. (Global Centre for responsibility to protect 31st August, 2023.)

It was established that the issue of Armed banditry, and terrorism ravaging the peace of the country Nigeria, stems from cross-border porosity and other national and international loopholes in border governance, control and management, to some extent. Taking the main theme, trans-border movement is an integrative process that links people on both sides of the border. It breaks down artificially imposed barriers and generates interaction. Thus, movement of people across the international boundaries is a universal phenomenon. This type of movement can be illegal or illegal depending on the circumstances warranting such type of trip; when a national or foreigner passes across an international boundary without having the entire necessary document that back up his trips such movement is regarded as illegal and unconstitutional. These are the likes of the current wave of book haram, armed banditry and terrorists crossing the border to cause mayhems in the nation populace among communities, tribes, race, state, villages, hamlets in Nigeria states.

The spate of insecurity occasioned by terrorism, armed bandits and terrorists unleashing heinous act on the masses assumed to be caused by trans-border movement triggered this study on border management, Armed bandit and terrorism mitigation in Nigeria.

### What is Border Management?

Border management and terrorism mitigation among other measures, have gained recognition as ways to prevent or counter the spread of terrorism, armed banditry, boko-haram, organized transnational crime, and pandemics; it was established through research that, since November 11, 2001, Al-quedi terrorist assault in the USA have sparked a significant shift in border management-framework all over the globe; thus border security management has continued to acquire renewed importance as a safeguard against growing transnational security challenges in different parts of the world, despite growing commitment among states to the ideals of globalization, regionalism, and supra-nationalism with their differing degrees of emphasis on borderless communities due to some natural porosity in some cases; Ogbonna, Lenshie and Nwangwu (2023).

Border management, also known as border governance is the facilitation of the authorized movement of individuals for business, tourism, refugee resettlement, and so on, across the territorial-frontiers of nation states. According to Rubinskaya (2019) in Ogbonna, Lenshie and Nwangwu (2023), border management involves the use of strategies, such as the imposition of visa requirements, career sanctions against transportation companies bringing irregular migrants to the territorial interdiction at sea, and outright land-border closure, to direct and prevent the irregular entry of non-nationals (and unregulated goods) into a given country; this means that, the imperatives of and the tension between balancing the entry of legitimate travelers and preventing others from entering for inappropriate reasons or with invalid documentation are at the core of border governance or management. The author wishes to reflect here that, for instance, the 2019 land. border closure in Nigeria was putatively informed by the need to stem the rising inflow of arms smuggling, foreign fighters, drug peddling and others prohibited items into Nigeria's trade environment (The guardian, 2020).

Alumona (2022) reported that beyond the veil of president Muhammadu Buhari's government's justification based on economic and security reasons, the border closure was partly designed to profile the immigrant population and securitise migration in Nigeria. There is no doubt that the Nigeria state has demonstrated its inability to secure the country's territorial integrity and guarantee the safety of its citizen's lives and properties. Instead, so to say, various state actors have found solace in securitizing border management and migration using Nigeria's land border closure as a smokescreen or the state's failure to provide internal security governance. Nwagwu (2022) even president Buhari had disclosed that the enormous security challenges, banditry, kidnapping, peasant farmer-herders conflict, and insurgency the country is experiencing are consequences of the fallout of the Libyan conflict and the influx of foreign mercenaries trained and armed by late Muamman Gadaffi of Libya (Shahara Reporters 2022). On this, was the

allusion to president Buhari's assertion was made by the department of State Services, Nigeria's domestic intelligence when its attributed Nigeria's security challenges to the activities of Islamic state in west African province (ISWAP) fighters who had infiltrated central parts of Nigeria (Wakili 2013). Therefore, to mitigate the influx of foreign mercenaries undermining Nigeria's national security, the Buhari led government directed the then comptroller General of Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Muhmman Babande to protect the border against foreign invaders (Agbakwuru, 2021).Concluding this segment, border management or governance is the facilitation of authorized flows of persons, individuals including business people such as tourists, refugees, migrants, travelers, across a country's border with the goal to detect and prevent the admission of irregular entry of non - nationals or citizens into the country. Measures to manage borders include the imposition by states of visa requirements, carrier sanctions, against transportation companies bringing irregular migrants to the territory, interdiction at sea. International standards require a balancing between facilitating the entry of legitimate travelers and preventing that of travelers entering for inappropriate reasons or with invalid documentation.

**Armed Banditry Menace in Nigeria.**
**A conceptual clarification**

Armed banditry has been used to describe situations where innocent citizens are attacked, killed, kidnapped, ransomed, raped and their properties destroyed and cattle rustled. It can be considered as a form of criminal activities that is typically motivated by economic opportunity (Okole and Ugwu 2019). It can also be viewed as a form of organized crime perpetrated by syndicate groups that are involved in intimidation, dispossession, and killing of civilians and destruction of properties. Accordingly, armed bandits can be referred to as gangs of criminals who terrorize and take valuable possessions of the local populations and travellers, such as their merchandise, money, livestock, camels and sheep. (Abdulahi 2019). The author in his perception conceived of armed bandits has been characterized by cattle rustling, attack, kidnapping, ransoming, and killings of innocent citizens and rapes as a form of sexual-violence against the victims.

## Categories of Armed Banditry

From their activities being carried out one can reason that, they include local-rural-urban frontiers, countryside, mercenary, organized, maritime and petty banditry. By their origin and definition(s) according to Uche (2018) relative deprivation, social inequalities, and grievances often trigger armed banditry. Locational operation defines the rural and urban banditry and the frontier and countryside banditry. Mercenary banditry can be characterized as either an agency or a master-servant relationship, as a master who provides necessary logistics. Organized banditry operates across borders through an efficient network and command structure. Martine banditry on the other hand operates along the coastal belts, whereas petty banditry is a lone criminal act characterized by robbing citizens of their belongings (Ojo and Sunday 2020).

According to Ojo/Sunday (2020), in most cases, armed bandits often live in ungoverned or under-governed spaces, where government presence is mostly limited or absent. These includes remote areas and forest enclaves, which are used as hid places to plan and execute attacks; this is because such an environment provides bandits with the opportunities for operational advantage.

Accordingly, armed bandits often operate in rural settings, such that their attacks, kidnapping, and cattle rustlings, looting among other criminal activities are carried out, in, from and against villages. Their operational control can therefore revolve around rural and border communities, and uninhabited or less populated spots along major roads or water ways: (Uche 2020).

According to Uche (2020) the primary victims of armed banditry in this manner, are innocent citizens residing in or travelling along remote parts of the country. Although, armed bandits generally live and act in anonymity, they commit violent crimes in the open. This reflect a tactic employed by common criminals, who consider theft as a means to an end, which is often defined in private terms.

Considering the nexus between membership and this criminal tactic: Slatter (2020) describes armed banditry as forceful and illegal takeover of property by groups of men. It is appalling that, considering the growing evidence from Nigeria

that both men and women are involved in modern armed banditry. Shows no gender discrimination or sex disparity in armed banditry.

Ojo and Sunday (2020) although the operational tactical strategic roles of individual members of armed groups may be shaped by gender differences, the growing sexual diversity of armed bandits and criminal violence can no longer be ignored. By their nature, women are more suitable employed, counter-intelligence and logistics. Therefore, armed banditry is a synthesis of criminality, and local embedded conflicts, containing inter-ethnic and terrorism. Its dynamic are ever changing depending on the individual actors and dimensions: This then explained that, armed banditry constitutes a form of non-state armed group which often capitalizes on existing societal grievances as among communities and ethnic groups and against state to terrorize civilians. They often demonstrate their capacity to target the vulnerable and pressurize state authorities to conform to their demands. They usually live and operate in ungoverned territories within limited state presence, especially in terms of social infrastructure and security forces. These among others do provide fertile ground for societal governances' which originate from resource competition, social displacement, unfavorable government policies, marginalization and injustices, (Holmes 2014).

Their strong ego according to Auwal (2021) lies on the availability of small and light weapons, and other interrelated factors which often worked to the advantage of armed bandits. Consequently, then, armed banditry could be considered as criminal activities that are often driven by personal interests as triggered by multifaceted challenges in state security relations, including weak state institutions, political alienation, poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption and other ethno-communal grievances: (Auwal 2021).

Armed banditry therefore, constitute a threat to security of the nation Nigeria.

However, the danger of armed banditry goes beyond national security. It equally has implication for human security, which involves human/people-entericof security. Therefore, both national security and human dimension of security are relevant to this paper. It should be noted that human security revolves around personal, community, food, environmental, health, political and economic dimension of security, and the protection of minority groups. In this manner, the threat of armed banditry has impacted the welfare of general citizenry and the capacity of state to enforce internal security, peace and order in Nigeria.

**Terrorists and Terrorism Mitigation in Nigeria**

Throughout human history, there have been many threats to the security of the nations. These threats have brought about large-scale losses of lives, the destruction of property, widespread illness and injury, the displacement of large numbers of people and devastating economic loss. (Vanguard 09/2020).

**Terrorism**

Terrorism continued to pose a major threat to both international, national peace and security and undermines the core values of United Nations. Nigeria on the other hand continues to face multiple challenges posed by various terrorist groups with devasting human coast in terms of lives lost or permanently altered, internally displaced persons and immensely negative consequences for economic and social development.

Terrorism is the use of force or violence against persons or property in violation of criminal laws of the land for the purpose of intimidation, coercion, or ransom. It is an organized violent attack on a target with the aim of undermining a lawfully constituted authority and to cause fear among the populace in furthering of some social-political objectives; (Olademeji 2019). It is an act that had been bedeviling Nigerian state since 2003, and the adverse effect of these act on Nigeria has been a heavy humanitarian crisis on one hand, and challenges of insecurity on the other hand. Despite the enactment of terrorism provision Act 2011, which was enacted to prosecute, punish those citizens that will be engaging in the Act of terrorism in Nigeria, and finally prevent such Act, quite a number of Nigerian citizens still engaged in the Act of terrorism. Terrorists often use threats to create fear among the public.

Several causes have been attributed to the rise in insurgency in Africa and Nigeria, among them are poverty, political failure, illiteracy, unemployment and the influx of uncontrolled arms into the Nigeria and African spaces. vanguard 09/09/2022.

According to Oladimeji (2019) the major threat of terrorists are;

i. Create fear in among the public

ii. Try to convince citizens that the government is powerless to prevent terrorism

iii. Get immediate publicity for their causes.

Acts of terrorism include threats of terrorism, assassinations, kidnappings, bomb scares and bombings, cyber-attacks (computer-based), and the use of chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological weapons; it should be noted that, high-risk target acts of terrorism include military and civilian government, facilities, international airports, large cities and high-profile landmarks, terrorist might also target large public gatherings, water and food supplies, utilities, and corporate centers. Further, terrorists are capable of spreading fear by sending explosives or chemical or biological agents through mail.

**How to Mitigate Terrorism in Nigeria**

Mitigation is defined as measures aimed at reducing the impact of natural or man-made disasters in a nation or the community It is the reduction of something harmful, or the reduction of its harmful effects (Carler 1991). Mitigation according to Wikipedia is also refers to measures take to reduce the harmful effects of the hazards that remain a potential, or to manage harmful incidents that have already occurred. It is a state or component of emergency management and risk management.

**Strategies to Mitigate Armed Banditry and Terrorism In Nigeria**

To combat armed banditry and terrorism, government must first ensure effective border control. There should be provision of a reliable and unique identification number of each individual such as National ID card, driver's license, and voter cards for tracking the culprits of armed banditry and terrorists.

According to global centre for responsibility to protect Nigeria, 31st August 2023, the government of Nigeria needs to investigate all attacks against civilians and hold perpetrators of atrocity crimes accountable. The chief prosecutor of legislative coordinating commission(LCC) must immediately request authorization to open investigation into alleged crimes committed by armed banditry extremist groups and government security forces.

In addition towards efforts to mitigate armed banditry and terrorism, homeland security (2016) reported as follows; while the lack of adequate military protection for vulnerable populations needs to be urgently addressed, social initiatives and political reforms remain crucial for confronting the root causes of conflict, armed banditry, terrorism, including poor governance, corruption poverty, youth unemployment and environmental degradation.

Equally local peace commissions be established to mediate inter-communal tensions and build early warning system in the high-risk regions.

Utilizing the economic community of West African States early warning system, the government should increase police and military deployments to vulnerable areas while ensuring strict adherence to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) during operations.

The government also needs to urgently reform the security sector, including by incorporating IHL and IHRL into all the military and police training and ensure human rights violations.

To combat armed banditry by way of mitigations, homeland security on national prevention framework (2016) documented the following strategies to mitigate armed banditry and terrorism in Nigeria.

A well-established capacity to quickly collect, analyze and further disseminate intelligence becomes critical in an imminent threat situation. To accomplish this, law enforcement, intelligence, local security professionals and members of the whole community must form engaged partnerships. The partnerships allow for the seamless acquisition and passage of information. In addition to Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) and Field Intelligence Group (FIG) as well as State and urban area Fusion Centers, a variety of analytical and investigative efforts support the ability to identify and counter terrorists' threats by executing these prevention support activities. These efforts include other local, state, tribal, territorial, and Federal law enforcement

agencies, and various intelligence centers and related efforts such as High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas. Regional information sharing systems centers, criminal intelligence units, real-time analysis centers and others.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

Armed banditry and terrorism remain an emerging security threat in Nigeria. Its' dynamic and trends are still evolving and noticeable in all states of Nigeria, in the six geo-political regions, including Niger, Cameroon borders and all other international borders in Nigeria. This paper explains the multiple factors that are fueling the reign of terror by armed bandits and terrorist in Nigeria and its spill over to all regions; it was found out that bad governance, poverty, inequalities, youth unemployment marginalization, and weak institutional capacity of the state in local governance, forest management justice system and security are the root causes of armed banditry and terrorism in Nigeria. The negative consequences of armed banditry and terrorism in Nigeria has been felt on security of lives and properties, human freedom, local and national economy, agriculture, environment, food security, education, gender, political stability, national security and defense, and image in the international community. To address these crises, the study, recommend as follows:

i. There should be effective border control as a measure to mitigate acuities of armed banditry and terrorism

ii. Committed and concerted efforts are required towards improving human welfare, with keen emphasis on poverty alleviation, reducing inequalities as well as access to justice with human development and security.

iii. Youth unemployment needs to be urgently addressed. Such an approval will mitigate the motivations that are driving criminal violence and resistance that characterize of the security landscape of the regions and Nigeria at large.

iv. In addition, the capacity of the security agencies should be improved to neutralize and deter armed banditry and associated crises.

v. Early dissemination of intelligence information on threat situations in villages, sub-urban and urban areas:

vi. All security network and stokeholds to be in the forefront and vanguard of security report to mitigate the menace of armed banditry and terrorism in Nigeria.

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