ARMED BANDITRY AND THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY OF CENTRAL NIGERIA, 2009-2023

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ABSTRACT
Violent conflict has gradually become one of the defining characteristics of the Nigerian nation, particularly in the recent history of central Nigeria. Banditry in particular and other acts of violence has become a recurring decimal in the central region of the country. This development has occupied contemporary debates among scholars, national security officials, public commentators and observers within and outside the country. It has also formed the subject matter and major focus of this paper. The paper's findings reveal that the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast of Nigeria has had far-reaching demonstration effects and repercussions on other geo-political zones of the country. This has been especially so in the central region of the country as armed banditry, kidnappings, assassinations, and other acts of violence have held sway. The problem of violence in this part of Nigeria has become more worrisome as the national security operatives and chief security officers of the states of the region have uniformly failed to protect and secure the lives and property of families and communities as well as the economy and society. The paper presents the argument that the displacement of population among both the defeated elements of Boko Haram, armed herders, bandits, criminals, armed robbers and free-booters has contributed to this ugly trend of events. Considered through the historical research method, multi-disciplinary approach, and scholarly assumptions of conflict studies and social crisis, the paper also used secondary sources to realise the objectives of its focus.

Introduction

This paper interrogates armed banditry and related acts of violence in the central region of the Nigeria from 2009-2023. With the insurgency on the doorsteps of Nigeria specifically in the Northeast region, it became necessary for the leadership of the federal government, state, national intelligence and security agencies to develop a military or armed organisation for resistance and struggle against the terrorist network. But with the war against the Boko Haram terrorist organisation, large populations were dislocated and displaced. Among these were possibly its former warriors, armed

bandits, and other criminal elements who took advantage of the chaos to unleash their brand of mayhem upon the Nigerian groups down the central region. It is against this backdrop and in the light of this understanding that the paper examines the violent and tragic turn of events in the central region of Nigeria and its impact upon the economy and society of the area.

With the outbreak of hostilities in the Northeast states such as Bauchi, Borno, Adamawa, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states, as well as other adjoining states, leaders both at the federal, state and local levels mapped missions to counter the activities of the insurgent group. Enormous Human and material resources were also expended by the federal government to end the war on terror in the Northeast, while fleeing elements of Boko Haram, armed bandits, armed robbers and criminals have continually escalated the acts of violence across the country.[i] These have also sometimes linked up or joined forces with armed militia groups behind herdsmen's attacks on communities and groups in the central Nigeria area. This is indeed the major part of the subject matter of the paper.

Geography, Economy and Society of Central Nigeria Area

The central region of Nigeria encompasses the Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau areas and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, bordered on the North by Kaduna state and on the East by Plateau and Taraba states. The region's main economic activities have been agriculture especially cash crops production such as yams, cassava, and melon. Production of minerals like salt is also another major economic activity. Nasarawa State in the area produces the largest percentage of the salt that is consumed in the country. The region also has a diverse range of ethnic groups and wide variety of languages that are indigenous to the area. This area also forms part of the Middle Benue Valley which encompasses both sides of the middle course of the River Benue. The area stretches from below Lau, where the River Lamorde joins the Benue, down to Umaisha, where the alluvial plain which marks the Niger-Benue confluence begins. The Middle Benue Valley's geographic area covers mainly the Muri plains and the Lower Benue plains below them downstream on the Benue. The area is located between latitudes 7.0 degrees and 9.30 degrees North and longitudes 9.0 degrees and 11.30 degrees East of Meridian. The area comprises the present-day central Nigerian states of Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, Kogi and the Northeast state of Taraba.[ii]

In addition, the two most dominant religions: Christianity and Islam are practiced side by side in the area. It is one of the most religiously pluralistic zones in Nigeria. This religious plurality has manifested oftentimes in worst forms of violent conflicts between Christians and Muslims in the area with devastating effects on the economy and society. The region is also perhaps one of the most prolific agricultural economic areas in the country and hosts large numbers of farmers, fishermen, cattle herders and other livestock users and breeders. The dependence of its population on land, water and environmental resources for agricultural purposes is thus outstanding and is often a source of conflict in the area in such a way that resource-conflict bordering on land, water, territory and cattle routes, grazing lands and citizenship have presented the worst forms of violent conflict in the area. The agricultural prospect of the region is supported by the prevalence of rivers in the area and large expanse of arable land.[iii]

In recent years, conflict in the central area has both escalated and expanded as tensions between farmers and herders have risen. This conflict is multi-faceted and complex. The conflict centers on agricultural households and nomadic cattle-herding groups who come into conflict over land access. As the population in central Nigeria increases, the amount of land used for farming also increases, often into areas that have traditionally served as cattle grazing areas. At the same time, climate change and the Boko Haram insurgency reduce the amount of land suitable for grazing in Northeast Nigeria, forcing herding communities to expand their routes into increasingly southern areas. This competition over land and resources is compounded by religion and ethnicity; herders are mostly members of the minority Fulani ethnic group and are generally Muslim. Farmer-herder conflicts often consist of attacks by one group and subsequent retaliation from the other community. Although attention to this issue has grown including the setting up of Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) camps, up to 2023 there have been largely little response directed towards affected parties and few resources allocated towards reconciliation and prevention of future conflict.

Clarification of Concepts

This paper is bound to apply terms from a wide range of academic disciplines, which may not be familiar in common application. Consequently, the need to bring into focus, their specific and relevant usage for clarification is imperative. There is no attempt here to be exhaustive, neither in the available concepts nor the meanings, but as applicable and relevant for this study. The following terms are conceptualised for better understanding of the key words as used in this study. There are: 'insurgency' and 'armed Banditry.'

Insurgency

Insurgency is an ambiguous concept. The United States Department of Defence defines it as an organised movement that has the aim of overthrowing a constituted government through subversive means and armed conflict.[iv] This definition suggests that insurgent groups employ unlawful means towards achieving an end, which could be political, religious, social or even ideological. The goal of insurgency is to confront and overthrow an existing government for the control of power, resources or for power sharing.[v] The Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria caused population displacement and the escalation of banditry which encroached upon the economy and society of central Nigeria.

Armed Banditry

Armed banditry refers to the practice of stealing cattle and animals from herders or the raiding of animals or cattle from the ranches. Chris Kwaja noted that this development has increasingly become an economically viable means of criminality in many parts of the country including the central Nigerian geo-political zone.[vi] According to Samuel Egwu, banditry is also most commonly associated or accompanied with kidnappings, rape, organised attacks on villages and communities, as well as acts of thuggery, extortion and looting.[vii] Saleh Momale as cited by Egwu has stated that banditry involves cattle rustling which is the stealing of cattle from herders or entire households with the use of arms. This breeds conflicts and social insecurity especially between herders and farmers. The attendant weaknesses in the institutional capacity of the state to address the problems of insecurity, joblessness and acute poverty have compounded these problems.[viii]

The Boko Haram Insurgency's Influence on Armed Banditry in Central Nigeria since 2009

Boko Haram as a terrorist group which began largely in Northeast Nigeria, promotes a version of Islam which makes it "haram", or forbidden, for Muslims to get involved in any form of political or social activity that is linked with western education. These include voting, putting on or wearing shirts and trousers or attending or receiving any form of secular education. The Boko Haram sect loosely translates as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad first appeared in the public domain in 2002, although some widely believe that the terrorist organisation had its origins in 1995 when it was a Muslim youth group called Shabaab. The group believed that Nigeria is a country governed by infidels and so has attempted to create their own Islamic state within the boundaries of Nigeria. The group, after the death of their leader Mohammed Yusuf, turned violent employing the use of suicide bombers, frontal assaults, killings, raiding, and other methods. With these the federal government adopted a repression strategy against the Boko Haram insurgents in the Northeast. The strategy of repression came with the massive mobilisation of security apparatus most especially the military and police which led to the arrest and killing of the then leader of the insurgent group Mohammed Yusuf alongside hundreds of his followers.[ix]

This strategy of repression though looked effective by driving the insurgents to a hide. It did not however quell the insurgents it rather served their opportunity to lie low to re-strategise on their operational methods and tactics. It is on this note Ahmed and Albert posits that the strategy looked effective because it made the members of the sect who escaped the security crackdown to flee. The period between July 2009 and July 2010 witnessed almost zero activities from the sect. This act of silence by the insurgents made the government to evaluate their strategy to be a success for it believed that the sect had been eliminated. This thinking was just a blip that lasted only for a little while as it has rightly been observed by the work of Ahmed and Albert. The insurgents after a year of silence resurrected with greater momentum with more violent tactics in making their presence known. They attacked strategic places: the market squares and places, mosques and churches, as well as schools and other public institutions and

important places. According to Ahmed and Albert:

> *The resurgence in the sects' violent attacks…. played to the illusion that the sect had been destroyed. As it turned out, the one-year lull in the activities of the sect was a well thought out response to the high-handedness of the security forces. The sect put the one-year interlude to good use by totally transforming itself to ubiquitous underground movement devising guerrilla tactics as all along the federal government was congratulating itself on its summarily destruction of Boko Haram.*[x]

But the great and joint operations against Boko Haram in the Northeast has had huge impact and effects upon the massive population dislocations and displacements that has led to the migrations of herding communities, cattle rustlers, armed robbers, bandits, and several other criminals into different geo-political zones of the country including the central area. This has compounded the problems of the already existing conflict relations in the central region of Nigeria. Thus, due to the violent confrontations resulting from Boko Haram attacks, there have been uprisings among the people as extreme suffering has been fostered upon the people of the Northeast zone down to those living in the central region of Nigeria. This has rendered many homeless and to seek refuge in the neighbouring communities including in the central Nigeria area with serious economic and societal destabilisation.

The Expansion of Conflict and Crises in the Central Region of Nigeria

According to Jibo, land issues are the common leading cause of conflict, especially between herders and farmers in the central area of Nigeria. Thus, access to land has been shown to be important to poverty reduction, economic growth and the empowerment of the poor. The struggle over land therefore, becomes a major source of conflict in the area and these land conflicts are so prevalent and more difficult to resolve than other conflict issues. However, with the rise and development of the Boko Haram insurgency, this conflict has attracted the meddling attention of violent groups both within and without the central geo-political region who operate with more sophisticated weapons. These were moved into the central region through Small Arms and Light Weapons' (SALWs) proliferation from the Northeast.[xi]

According to Shettima, while it is difficult to establish a single explanatory variable responsible for the conflict, social and environmental factors has acted in tandem to perpetuate the conflict. Based on his findings, he observed that the decline in the water level of Lake Chad (a major wetland in the semi-arid Sahel corridor) and its other aquatic resources as serious problem with short and long term social, political, economic and security implications for the whole of the West African sub-region. Several categories of persons from the Lake Chad Basin Area have moved and with them some harboring fundamentalist ideologies.[xii] As Olayoku also observes, scholars have identified the source of the conflict as: Climate change, the migration further south, the growth of agro-pastoralism, the expansion of farming on pastures, the invasion of farmlands by cattle, blockage of stock routes and water points, freshwater scarcity, burning of rangelands, cattle theft and rustling, inadequate animal health care and disease control, overgrazing on fallow lands, defecation on streams and roads by cattle, extensive sedentarisation, ineffective coping strategies, ethnic stereotyping, and the breakdown of conflict intervention mechanisms.[xiii]

Therefore, the central Nigeria region with its vast natural resources to support human and animal life became the next destination for those so displaced. With the farmer-herder crisis already in the region, the infiltrators into the conflict necessarily took sides along social, political, ethnic and religious lines. A leading scholar in this field Roger Blench, has also argued that the conflict has been associated with land resource use exacerbated by dwindling resources further North. He observed that land hunger in the semi-arid zones has caused a major migration of farmers southwards, both seasonally and permanently. Many uncultivated areas in river flood-plains are now farmed by migrants, leading to disputes with their traditional 'owners.' Blench contends that the ecological dynamics engendered by climate change tend to drag various land users into conflictive relations in the context of resource scarcity and want. This situation has been made worse by claims and contestations over land ownership or tenure rights.[xiv]

Moreover, large communities of herders in the Northeast have been dispossessed and displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency and were forced to migrate down south towards the central region thereby expanding the conflict within the area. Hence, as farmers take up more of the river-bank for farms, they come into conflict with the other users, especially the herders and fish-folk. The herders have been coming to the river for many years for the grass and tend to consider that they have ownership rights. When they arrive and find their grazing now covered by tomatoes and other products, they become angry. The farmers, often desperate to feed their families in a situation where the old rain-fed systems no longer work, regard the herders as dangerous and intrusive. In such conflict situation, cases of armed banditry, rape, kidnappings, cattle rustling, destruction of lives and property became highly acute.[xv]

Abugu and Onuba have revealed that between the years 2000 and 2015, there have been reported cases of conflicts between the herdsmen and farming communities. They maintain that the media is awash with reported cases of clashes between the herdsmen from the North and the inhabitants of the Plateau, Kogi and Benue in the middle belt region of the country and some parts of the eastern areas. But the nature of the weapons used in these conflicts has aroused suspicion of a terrorist connection with some parties to the conflict.[xvi] Abbass has opined that climate change which puts great pressure on the land has also provoked conflicts between farmers and herdsmen. Bur prior to the advent of the Boko Haram insurgency, these conflicts were resolved without recourse to such weapons of destruction. He observed that the desertification, droughts and climate change in Northern Nigeria have worsened the trends of pastoralists' relationship with farmers giving rise to various criminal actions of those dislocated from the Northeast and appealing to their bestial tendencies. Also, the decrease in the annual rainfall and shortening of the wet season are responsible for the southward movement of herdsmen to the central and southeast zones.[xvii]

These seemingly mass movements from the northern parts and the search for pasture and land have caused widespread conflicts and destruction of human and animal lives as well as farmlands with adverse implications for the national security and the economy and nature of society. In addition, with the expansion of population, the rate of food production would naturally increase and to meet that increasing demand, it is natural for the farmers to encroach into marginal lands that had been the traditional pasture routes for the cattle. This has therefore heightened struggle between livestock and agricultural production which, more often than not, result in the escalation of conflicts, as the vast population with its external or infiltrated elements continue to expand.[xviii]

Hence, as population grows, more land is being cultivated and less is available for pasture; forcing herdsmen to migrate and trample upon crops cultivated by farmers. People tend to move from Northern Nigeria into the middle belt or central region especially in remote from town areas where population is relatively low and where there is availability of vast arable land. But this population has now become mixed with Islamists, militias from the Northern parts fleeing from counter-insurgency operations, armed bandits and armed herders. The consequent rapid growth and ethno-religious and insurgent groups' mix in population has caused the farmers to struggle for farmland which is becoming scarce by the day. With this development, grazing areas that were hitherto abundant are being taken over by scattered small farms, making grazing in these areas difficult. This mix in the population and being armed with the instruments of violence have reacted with aggression causing gross imbalances in livelihood, economy, and the stability of society.[xix]

The varied nature of the conflict in this region has led to the gradual decline of economic and social cohesion, ethnocentric and religious intolerance of community leaders who are themselves sedentary farmers, as well as conflict and clash of cultures both internal and external. In similar view, scholars have identified some of the factors responsible as lack of access to resources, ethnic marginalisation and cleavages, degradation of resources and stunted rainfall which are magnified by farmers, outside infiltrators and herders' struggle for natural resource in the form of water, land and pasture use. These factors lead to intense and continuous competition for economic and natural resources which have resulted to violent conflicts in the central Nigeria area.[xx]

Boko Haram-Influenced Armed Banditry and Other Acts of Violence in the Central Nigeria Region, 2015-2023

It must be stressed that since the advent of the Boko Haram terrorist group's activities, and the resultant federal counter-insurgency operations, the intensity of violent acts have been increased and perpetuated throughout the northern parts of the country including in central Nigeria. Scholars have revealed that the attacks by militia herdsmen in recent years have taken more sophisticated dimensions with the use of new types of weapons and communication devices. The presence of herdsmen in the affected areas creates a climate of fear as they possess sophisticated arms and ammunitions with which they unleash terror on the host communities and other perceived enemies. According to this line of thinking, the dimension of militancy in the conflicts is associated with the advent of the aggressive pastoralists which further led to the emergence and introduction of guns and other sophisticated weapons in the conflicts as well as the use of new communication devices, accompanied with acts of armed banditry.[xxi]

Some scholars are of the view that the current situation leading up to 2023 might be as a result of the activities of Boko Haram insurgency in the North which compound the resolution of the conflict. In this view, Omitola contends in his work that evidence abound of the involvement of the Boko Haram group in various skirmishes involving Fulani herdsmen and their host communities in Jos, Plateau state and other parts of the central Nigeria area, including places such as Taraba State in the Northeast. He states that the consistent denial by the umbrella of the herdsmen: Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN), that their members are not responsible for the wanton killings and destruction going on in various areas of conflicts has to be taken seriously. This has given further evidence to suggest that the transhumance Fulani from neighboring countries and their connection and exposure to terrorist ideas and organisations are interested in opening up new fronts of operation for Boko Haram in central Nigeria. Hence the resultant armed banditry in rural communities as well as kidnappings, rape, extortion, cult activities, cattle rustling, looting and other acts of violence.[xxii]

It has been reported that the herdsmen engage in transporting small arms to Nigeria through their cattle. The *Nigerian Defence Magazine* quoting military sources, has claimed that "most of the small arms came to the Boko Haram insurgents through Libya and the Malian rebels on the backs of camels and donkeys desperate to exchange arms for money."[xxiii] These arms further spread to other conflict zones of Islamist and banditry interest such as the central Nigeria area. He further revealed that this has been made possible to a great extent by a combination of both internal and external factors such as Nigeria's porous borders, corruption of immigration officers, inadequate records of immigration and emigration, and the problem of identifying who is a Nigerian, since the country lacks any means of identifying her citizens. He concludes that the current escalation and recurrent attacks on various farming communities in the central zone was as a result of the infiltration of foreign herdsmen and armed bandits from neighboring countries and from the areas hitherto held by Boko Haram in the Northeast. The herdsmen-infiltrators who have been exposed to fundamentalist thinking and terrorist ideas also operated as mercenaries demobilised from various conflicts in the Sahel and have been pushing the front of Boko Haram's operations in the central states of Nigeria through various violent acts which chiefly include banditry.[xxiv]

Membership of Boko Haram has become highly diffused and scattered as the sect's hierarchy may have learnt from previous experiences, especially the massive killings of its members in 2009. The exact numbers of its members are not known, although its followers cut across the 19 northern states of Nigeria, Niger Republic and Sudan.[xxv] Membership cuts across all spectrum of society but a majority of members come from the poorest groups. The Almajiri group is largely a source for the indoctrination of young people into believing the extremists' ideology and fundamentalists like Boko Haram. For many observers, the actual objectives of the Almajiri system has been taken over by dwindling economic and political system; for instead of becoming a breeding ground for Islamic scholars, it has become a veritable avenue for mass orientation of miscreants, thugs, and even vagabonds among whom a large number have been moved to the central states of Nigeria.[xxvi]

Aside the Almajiri, Boko Haram has as members some well-educated, wealthy and influential people such as business men, university lecturers, politicians, well-wishers within and outside Nigeria. Their mobility across Nigeria has been high. Others are drug addicts, vagabonds and generally lawless people. As a matter of fact, Boko Haram's structure,

organisation and hierarchy are difficult to figure out as its members keep scattering, spreading and expanding across the geo-political zones including the central Nigerian region. The sect has not hidden its disdain and distrust of the Nigerian media and Christian and moderate Muslims of central Nigeria as their violent operations in the area have demonstrated. Shortly after its 28th September, 2011 threat to deal with the media reporters and attack the FCT and states of the region, the sect in a display of its maniacal fury, pumped bullets into Isah Zakari, a reporter with Nigerian Television Authority and Bernard Akogwu, a photographer with Channels television. The condemnation that greeted the killings had hardly died down when it bombed the offices of *Thisday, The Moment* and *Daily Sun* newspapers in Abuja and Kaduna on 26th April, 2012. The sect cited reasons ranging from lack of objectivity to blasphemy on the side of the media for the attacks. The sect's members continue to operate in the rural areas of the central region through acts of armed banditry.[xxvii]

In Egwu's study, the Boko Haram-led insurgency in the northeastern part of Nigeria, the frequent ethno-religious combustions in different parts of the country and the activities of ethnic militias, cult groups and rural bandits have made Nigeria the 20th saddest country in which to live, according to the latest ranking by *Forbes Magazine*. Nigeria's global ranking along these dimensions is a consequence of the debilitating state of poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy, all of which are compounded by the failure of democratic governance and state inadequacies. It is plausible that deepening poverty in rural and urban areas may have turned people away from the contemporary social order and predisposed them to appeals of extremist groups such as the Boko Haram, who have offered alternate social orders.[xxviii] The extremist groups have gained ground in the northeastern region of the country; the escalation of such sectarian uprisings may have provided an additional fillip to incidences of rural banditry and cattle rustling and other acts of violence in the central region of Nigeria. This is all the more plausible considering the huge economic benefits of the cattle trade which could boost the economic base of insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and others.[xxix]

Scholarly Perspectives for Mitigating Armed Banditry Impact on the Economy and Society of Central Nigeria

Egwu has noted that international collaboration in addressing the problem should be strengthened in the light of the trans-border connections that exist within the milieu of rural banditry. Most important is cooperation with the Lake Chad Basin Authority member countries, as it will help to curtail the sale and transfer of arms from elements of Boko Haram to the bandits. Such cooperation can be implemented most effectively through a multi-stakeholder framework in which the federal government's security agencies, local organisations and associations and community leaders are involved. One pressing area of research for security needs involves properly defining the dynamic connections between rural banditry and violent social conflict. The advantage of such an exercise he stated, is that it will serve as a background resource for both practitioners and policy makers in developing practical and results-oriented policies and programs to address the problem of rural banditry more effectively.[xxx]

Scholars have suggested that the Nigerian government should take concrete steps towards addressing the immediate effects associated with incidents of rural banditry. Some of these effects include the destruction of property, the loss of livelihoods, population displacement, disruption of social processes, and the loss of lives. The government should endeavour to deliver relief materials to those displaced, institute schemes to help victims cope and reclaim their livelihoods and provide trauma counseling that will enable them to return to normal life as quickly as possible. Addressing these effects will provide the stability necessary for concrete developmental programmes to flourish and for economic stability to regain its foothold. In addressing these problems, it is also crucial that the Nigerian government adopts the best practices that have worked in other countries, so as to develop a robust architecture for addressing the problem of violent rural banditry.[xxxi]

Information is a crucial tool in national security and its timely dissemination is critical for the maintenance of law and order; however, Albert has asserted that agencies do not always share relevant information with their national security partners. Sharing and integrating national security information is critical to assessing and responding to current threats to national security such as influenced armed banditry. At the same time, agencies must balance the need to share information with the need to protect it from widespread access.

Security sector reforms should be carried out which target collaboration. Thus, according to the peace and conflict studies scholar, the National Assembly and the administration will need to consider the extent to which agencies' existing structures, processes, and funding sources facilitate inter-agency collaboration and whether changes could enhance collaboration. Therefore, strategic direction is required as the basis for collaboration toward national security goals.[xxxii]

Without having the strategic direction that overarching strategies can provide, agencies may develop their own individual efforts that may not be well-coordinated with that of inter-agency partners, thereby limiting progress in meeting national security goals. Defining organisational roles and responsibilities and mechanisms for coordination, one of the desirable characteristics for strategies that have been identified can help agencies clarify who will lead or participate in which activities, organise their joint activities and individual efforts, facilitate decision making, and address how conflicts would be resolved. Agencies can enhance and sustain their collaborative efforts by establishing compatible policies, procedures, and other means to operate across agency boundaries, among other practices. Joint training and retraining workshops and seminars are needed for the consolidation of this practical effort.[xxxiii]

Therefore, to create an inter-agency platform in security operations, Caslen and Loudon have admonished agencies to break down the cultural barrier, which hinders efforts to build a cohesive and focused whole of the government and a strong leadership to coordinate the integration of various agencies.[xxxiv] Walter Sasser has greatly acknowledged the need for a whole of government approach, that is to say an integration of all elements of information, national power and inter-agency collaboration in an effort to deal with present security challenges which poses itself in an irregular form. According to him there seem to be wide recognition and acknowledgment that each department and agency relies on the other to accomplish varied missions and that there are no independent actors achieving national objectives in isolation.[xxxv]

Conclusion

In its interrogation of armed banditry and the economy and society of central Nigeria, the paper identified a connection or nexus between the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group in the Northeast and its economic and societal effects and repercussions in the central region of Nigeria. This negative development was carried out through armed banditry and other related violent acts. These problems and challenges have persisted in spite of the military operations in the Northeast, and the national security operations of the police and various agencies, traditional institutions and community policing activities of vigilantes in the central Nigeria area. But without the political will on the side of the federal government and commitment on the side of the states and local government areas and the community leadership of the areas, solutions to this major humanitarian and national security crisis will continue to persist and will remain an affront on the moral and collective conscience of many Nigerians. The paper also laid out the foundation and the causes for the analysis of the development and expansion of a crisis situation that has led to the deaths and destruction of many lives and property and the devastation of the economy and society of the central region of Nigeria. It has also been observed that almost all military, police, security, civilian and humanitarian agencies involved in this development are branches of the same tree who share the prospects for peace and security in the region. Thus, the need for inter-agency cooperation and support for each other cannot be over-emphasised.

Notes

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[v] See Jacob N. Shapiro and David A. Siegel, "Underfunding in Terrorist Organisations," in *International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 2,* (2007), pp. 405-429

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[vii] Samuel Egwu, "The Political Economy of Rural Banditry in Contemporary Nigeria," *Rural Banditry and Conflicts in Northern Nigeria Series,* Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development, 2015, pp. 309-313.

[viii] Saleh Momale's work cited in Egwu, "The Political Economy of Rural Banditry in Contemporary Nigeria," pp. 312-313

[ix] See Adam O. Ahmed, and Isaac O. Albert, "National Security and Insurgency in Nigeria 1999-2012: A Preliminary Assessment of Federal Government Strategy of Containment," in Mbachu and Bature, (eds.), *Internal Security Management in Nigeria: A study in Terrorism and Counterterrorism,* Kaduna: Medusa Academic Publishers, 2013, pp. 18-31.

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[xiii] Philip A. Olayoku, "Trends and Patterns of Cattle Grazing and Rural Violence in Nigeria," in *IFRA-Nigeria Working Paper Series,* (2006-2014), pp. 23-29

[xiv] Roger Blench, *Natural Resource Conflicts in North-central Nigeria: A Handbook and Case Studies,* London: Mandaras publishing, 2004, pp. 106-113

[xv] Blench, *Natural Resource Conflicts in North-central Nigeria,* pp. 109-115

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[xvii] Isa Mohammed Abbass, "No Retreat No Surrender: Conflict for Survival between the Fulani Pastoralists and Farmers in Northern Nigeria," in *European Scientific Journal, Vol. 8, No. 1,* 2012, pp. 331-346

[xviii] Abbass, "No Retreat No Surrender . . ." pp. 341-343.

[xix] Egwu, "The Political Economy of Rural Banditry in Contemporary Nigeria," pp. 313-315

[xx] See Alhassan U. Bello, "Herdsmen and Farmers Conflicts in Northeastern Nigeria: Causes, Repercussions and Resolutions," in *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, Vol. 2, No. 5,* 2013, pp. 129-139

[xxi] Abbass, "No Retreat No Surrender . . ." pp. 343-344.

[xxii] Omitola, "Between Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen. . .," pp. 9-17

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[xxiv] Editorial, *Nigerian Defence Magazine,* 2014, p. 10

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