ARMED BANDITRY IN ZAMFARA STATE: AN EVALUATION OF MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

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Keywords

Arms Banditry, Military Operation, Zamfara State, Insecurity

Abstract

After a decade of arms bandits activities in Zamfara State and the choice of military majors as most efficient strategy in addressing the conflict, this study evaluates the effectiveness of military intervention in curbing arms banditry activities in Zamfara State. Primary data in form of perception of 88 respondents that includes member of security personnel, security analysts, academics, government officials and community leaders was sourced with the help of a structured questionnaire. STATA Vision 19.0 was employed for the analysis while Kruskal–Walli's rank tests, Spearman's rank-order correlations, chi-square tests of association, descriptive statistics for key Likert-scale items, and one-sample t-tests comparing item means against a neutral benchmark of 3 test were conducted. The study indicates that military intervention in Zamfara State is perceived to have limited positive effect. The intervention was discovered to be challenged by structural, institutional, and socio-political factors. Stakeholders across occupations and education levels congregate in their perception showing strong supportfor a hybrid strategy in curbing arms banditry, integrated approach that combines kinetic operations with non-kinetic measures. The study recommends strong governance reforms, improvement in coordination, enhanced personnels morale and welfare, robust intelligence and border control, and community engagement, in addition to both kinetic and non-kinetic measures rather than reliance on military alone.

Introduction

Concern for peace and security is the basic primary responsibility and a preoccupation of every nation and indeed of every human being world over. Peace refers to a condition of social harmony in which there is no social conflict and individuals or groups are able to meet their expectation. Therefore, peace is an important indicator of harmonious development of any nation, as such security becomes necessary. It is only under a secured atmosphere that individual within the state can engage in productive and meaningful activities to meet their potentials.

Armed banditry involves criminal act of coercion or threat to steal, abduct, and intimidate people. Crimes that could be categorized as armed banditry include, cattle rustling, terrorism, armed banditry, drug trafficking and kidnapping, (Anka and Ajayi, 2017). These acts are perpetrated by individuals to unsettle the security dynamics of a nation. This is because, with the persistent and uncontrolled activities of armed banditry, various aspects of national life such as economic, farming, political stability social development population dynamic were affected negatively. Thus, undermining the national security.

Armed banditry and other social-political unrest have become a pandemic in some of the developing countries of Aisa and Africa, for instance, in 2016 Pakistan alone recorded 749 violent incidents with 1887 reported deaths and scores of various degrees of injuries related to politics, elections, armed banditry and other related terrorisms attack. Pakistan security landscape is characterized by sectarian and ethno politicaltension in the country, terrorist and militants' groups coupled with comparable population. Pakistan resorted to policy of hitting the various criminals' elements causing insecurity hard and fast, this approach was successful not only on mitigating the incident but also putting a clear deterrent in place and enhanced their national security. (Tap, 2021).

Moreover, Since the year 2000 Kenya has lost an average of two people per day to the activities of armed civilians operating as bandits and criminal groups. Kenyan government initiated several strategies beside increase in intelligence collection, surveillance and visibility of police in the cities. In most nations, crimes ranging from the spate of armed banditry, cattle rustling, economic sabotage, ethnic violence, human trafficking characterized by inter communal relation and religion among various pastoralists communities over time.

Since the year 2000, Nigeria had continued to witness a tremendous setback in its socio-economic development fueled by continued resurgence of different kind of security threat particularly armed banditry, pastoralist/ famers herder's conflicts thereby posing a serious threat to the NS. (Akinbi, 2015). The global terrorism Index Report (2022) ranked Nigeria sixth an improvement from the fourth position in 2020 among 163 countries on the scale of key global security trend and the pattern of terrorism ranging from cattle rustling, farmers herders' conflicts and armed banditry among others. The North West (NW) region of Nigeria comprising States of Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states are grappling with armed banditry in different capacities.

According to Abdullahi (2019)&Obinna (2021). The NW zone is dry but fertile and agrarian for farming and livestock development. Since the returned of democracy in 1999, the region has experienced series of devastating rural armed banditry which claimed thousands of lives and properties as localized farmer's herder's conflicts over

scarce resources of land and water. However, poor handling has significantly contributed to its transformation into deadly conflicts representing a major threat to National Security (NS). Specially, from the year 2010 the North West region has come under severe security threat resulting from the menace of armed banditry in rural communities and villages in different parts of the States across the zone.

The state mostly affected is Zamfara, it has experienced frequent series of attacks by armed bandits than any other State in Nigeria. Some of the worse remembered incidence includes; Massive abduction of over 300 female students at Jangebe 2021, kidnapping of over 150 people, killing of 42 people and burning of over 338 houses from Kurya, Keta, Kware, Badarawa, Marisuwa and Maberaya by Turji's gang 2021.

The assassination about 90 people Kadawa, Kwata, Maduba, Ganda Samu, Saulawa and Askawa Zurmi local government on 12th June 2021 as reported by Aljazeera.Reports from various security agencies and governments as confirmed by Beacon Consultants (2025) shows bandits have sacked over 633 village with about 725 under their control of bandits in 13 out of 14 local government of the state.

In its response Nigerian Federal Government (FGN) deployed military troops to Zamfara in its efforts to combat banditry, alongside other security measures such as aerial bombardments, ground operations, and negotiations with local leaders in various operations such as Sharan Daji (OPSD) (2015-2019), Operation Habin Kunama (OPHK) (2015-2019), Operations Hadarin Daji (OPHD) (2015 to 2024) and most recent inaugurated Operation Fansan Yamma (OPFY) October 2024 which have recorded some success in some areas and circumstances. This resulted in elimination of hundreds of bandits including some of their notorious leaders such as; Halilu Sububu, Dutse Maiasaura, Idda and mallan Saleh Umaru.

Despite military interventions, time and huge resourcesexpended banditry persists as evidences by their recent attacks: massive kidnapping of 100 to 150 residents from Bukkuyum and Tsafe Lacoal Governments in October ,2025. Abduction of over 40 whispers in Gidan Turbe Tsafe. Ambush of joint security team, including the Kunchin Kalgo–Danjibga road January, 2026. Escalating attacks in Maru where miners were killed at a mining site in Gobirawar Chali (2026) and planting landmines on Gusau magami road 2026. It is in view of the above discussion this study aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the military intervention in curbing arms banditry activities Zamfara State, challenges hindering the performance of these military interventions and proffer strategies to strengthen mechanism in place for combating armed banditry in the State.

Statement of the Problem

Over 120 Villages have been destroyed, 12,000 killed while approximately 1,000,000 people were either forcefully displaced from their various villages and settlements or made refugees in the neighboring Niger Republic since the outcome of the violence conflicts by armed bandits in the NW. This has impacted negatively on the livelihood of the affected communities, constituting adverse effects on National Security. Effort are being put in place by FGN and Governors of the region and adopted for kinetic approach through the deployments of military troops and other security agencies for enhanced security (Kwajara, 2019). Part of these measures adopted include: Operation Sharan Daji (OPSD) (2015-2019) and Operation Habin Kunama (OPHK) (2015-2019), and Suluhu (Negotiations with the bandits by various State Governments at different time) which have recorded some victory in some areas, but still

flailed to secure the region against the menace of banditry in spite of enormous resources and time taken. Moreover, security expertise opened that, these operations and efforts may have failed due to a number of issues and challenges such as; limited manpower, insufficient state -of - art weapons, equipment's and technology, corruption, flow of illicit small arms and light weapons, and human right abuses among other reasons Babakatun and Abdulrahman (2021) and Ainaa, John, Ojob and Oyewole, (2023).

However, in an attempt to address the shortcoming of these pervious operations and mechanism adopted, the FGN Mainstreet all the pervious operation into a one bigger operation called "Operation Haadarin Daji" (OPHD) . It was formally commenced on 10th May, 2019. The theatre of operation covers Kaduna, Kebbi, Katsina, Kano, Niger, Sokoto and Zamfara states respectively. The mandate of the operations was to decimate and destroyed armed bandits and cattle rustlers operating in the NW and some parts of north central (NC) zones. Since the commencement of the operation, tremendous success was recorded as thousands of cattle's have been recovered while dozens of armed bandits and cattle rustlers have been neutralized during the engagements, intercepting and arrest of bandit's informants, resecuring of kidnapped hostage, elimination of higher profile bandits' leaders and degrading and dismantling of bandit's assets and camps across the NW.

Furthermore, despite time taken (2019-2025), enormous resources spend, Presidential directives, additional personnel, weapons, equipment and budgetary provisions, the established 8 Division in Sokoto with the support of 1 Brigade in Gusau and Forward operation Base in Kanfanin Doka village of Birnin Gwari local government area, Kaduna state. In addition to the existing routine patrol operation by Nigerian Air Force (NAF) and operation PUFF ADDER by Nigerian police force all toward same purpose. The suspension of mining activities in Zamfara State NW region of Nigeria with immediate effect. Similarly, ban the sale and supply of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) 20 Kilometres away from border towns amid of growing concerns of illegal mining and armed banditry activities in the NW part of the country. However, these efforts have proved to be inadequate in curtailing the menace of armed banditry in the NW and Zamfara State in particular. As evidence by increasing escalation in the level of insecurity and banditry activities in the zone as contained in the monthly security situation briefs by Nigerian army, Nigerian police and Beacon Consultants (2023 to 2025) reports. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to achieve the following objectives: To evaluate the effectiveness of military intervention in curbing Banditry activities (Bandits attacks, Kidnapping, Killings and Cattle rustling) in State. (successes and failures). To assess challenges faced by the military in curbing banditry State. To determine other alternatives or complementary strategies could be adopted to address armed banditry in State.

Review of the Literature

The concept of armed banditry has attracted the attention of many scholars with several definitions based on their background and understanding. Conceptualizing armed bandit may constitute issues while trying to delineate the difference between armed banditry and armed robbery, because each involved the use of force and weapons of both offence and defense with the aim of dispossessing their victims of their belongings. According to Slatter (1978) armed banditry is defined as the forcible taking away of property by group of people who usually operates in the shadow, often on the fringes of society in geographical isolated areas. This definition lacks key attributes of armed banditry activities of today which characterize by massive killings, destruction of properties,

kidnapping and adductions for ransom. Hence not suitable for present situation. Anka and Ajayi (2017) opined that armed banditry as an act by group, members or gangs that intentionally intimidate or carry out attacks, raids and forcefully deprive people of their belongings with the use of arms and other weapons and the group can either be psychotic or amateur. According to him, the psychotic armed bandits are typically hardened and pathological criminals that operate with the terrorist mindset with no regards for their lives same way they kill in their nefarious activities. While the amateur to him they tread with care and considerable regard for their private safety and life and economy/ properties are the major concerned. This definition distinguished between the categories of armed bandits their modes of operation and the consequences of their actions differ. The definition further outlined the types of banditry to be either psychotic or amateur armed bandits. His definition is suitable for this study and therefore adopted.

Moverover, several studies offer different reasons as root cause of banditry in the north-west region of Nigeria (Zamfara State inclusive). Babakatun and Abdulrahman (2021). They identified the root course of the insecurity in the state long-term unresolved dispute and struggles over land and forest resource between farmers and nomads in the state. Which according to them gradually metamorphosed to attacks between communities, arm-robbery, cattle rustling and later to kidnapping. Folahanmi, John, and Samuel. (2023) using data obtained from reports, journal, books, military briefings and local ,and international press releases hold that despite numinous successes recorded by military operations in north west, However, the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations are facing a lot of challenges that includes but not limited to limited personnel, the activities of local vigilantes groups, porous borders, proliferation of small arms, founding, lack of state-of the art technology, equipment, facilities and weapons. Similarly, Mustapha (2023) summarized root causes of the violence which includes Changes in land ownership; encroachment and sales of grazing land to farmers; and environmental factors that led to a largely absence of peaceful coexistence. While another key factor the study found was the increased in cross-border flow of arms as a result of bunkering of armed warehouse from Libya when the Ghaddafis' administration overthrown as secondary factors.

Furthermore, on the issue of assessing the effectiveness of military intervention on curbing banditry limited studies existed with various limitations.Yusuf (2023) assessed the role of the security in tackling insecurity (banditry)in the North-Western region for sustainable national development in Nigeria.Utilizing data from both primary (questionnaire and interview). The study established that security agencies intervention made a significant positive impact in tackling banditry in the region. According to the study the security intervention has brought normalcy in among of the effected communities.Aina, Ojo & Oyewole (2023) Utilized secondary sources from previous studies, military press briefings, official reports and reputable media coverages concludes that, even though the military have recorded some sources in fighting against bandits, but the mismatch of using military a (convention security) against unconventional (banditry) internal security matters as the major obstacleto military in the north west. Additionally, funding, adequate technology, proliferation small and light arms, porous borders, activities of unregulated local vigilantes' groups as part of the change to security in the region. Anthony,Sunday&William (2024). examines the capability of the Nigerian military in combating armed banditry activitiesin Birnin Gwari. Using primary data obtained from questionnaire and key informant interview with peoples and key shareholders in charge of

the security in the area. The study confirmed that Nigerian military possessed the capacity to tackle arms banditry in the area, it found that the military have conducted series of clearance operations, ambush, cordon and search operation in different location. Among other issues the study affirmed poor funding, lack of commitment, poor tactics, training and deployment as the challenges to the capacity of the military effort. Considering the complexity of banditry and the expected role to played the military , a study on Birnin Gwaria single local government in Kaduna state is considered inadequate.

Similarly, Cleen Foundation (2024) according to the reportthe relationship among security agencies and between security forces and communities are poor. activities of the informants were regarded as one of the major obstacles to military operation in the state. Finally, the report holds the military intervention successful but not adequate to overcome the bandits' activities in the Zamfara State. However, although these studies provide basic empirical and literature bases the continue changes in the dynamic's banditry activities more especially, the used of landmines rampant villages sacking and attacks as indicated by Beacon Constants reports (2026)

Methodology

The study is descriptive survey research aims at evaluating the effectiveness and challenges of Nigerian Army interventions in curbing army banditry activities in Zamfara State Northwestern Nigeria, as well as chosen the best strategy between kinetic and non-kinetic approach in resolving the conflict. The study collected primary data with the help questionnaire on a sample 88 respondents that includes; Security Personnels (Nigerian police Force, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigerian army and members intelligent Community) involved in the operation, Security Analysts (Journalists and academic experts who are covering and following security issues in the country), Community Leaders (leader in Zamfara communities who suffered bandit's activities) and finally, official of Zamfara State Government who are charged with security matters.

These respondents were selected purposively as in Yusuf (2023) and Anthony, Sunday & William (2024)because they were believed to have adequate knowledge and insight, therefore stands to answer various questions related to armed banditry and military intervention in Zamfara State. The data was generated with the help of a 5-point Liker-scale presented in tables and analyzed. Non-parametric (not assuming a normal distribution) as the population of the study is not normally distributed. The analysis includes; Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis H Test, Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation and Chi-Square Test of Independence that focused on comparing groups or relationships between opinions were conducted with help of STATA 19.0.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This section presents interpretation of descriptive and non-parametric analysis conducted on survey data assessing the perceived effectiveness and challenges of military intervention in Zamfara State. The results of the analyses include Kruskal–Wallis rank tests, Spearman's rank-order correlations, chi-square tests of association, descriptive statistics for key Likert-scale items, and one-sample t-tests comparing item means against a neutral benchmark of 3. The goal is to understand how different stakeholder groups perceive the outcomes and limitations of military intervention against banditry, and to synthesize these results into coherent empirical conclusions.

The data and results of the analysis were presented based on the objectives of the study

(Evaluate impact of military intervention in cubing arm banditry in Zamfara State, identifying the challenges meditating the military intervention and assessing the best strategy for cubing banditry in Zamfara State)

5.1 Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Military Intervention in Cubing Banditry in Zamfara State

In this section the effectiveness of the military intervention was measured by eleven (11) variables item on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 3 = Neutral, 5 = Strongly agree). One-sample t-tests were conducted to test whether the mean response differs significantly from the neutral value of 3.

Table 1. **Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Military Intervention in Cubing Banditry in Zamfara State**

sec_improve (security situation improved): Mean = 3.05, SD = 1.12
reduce_rustling (reduced cattle rustling): Mean = 2.90, SD = 1.23
reduce_raids (reduced village raids): Mean = 2.75, SD = 1.15
decline_kidnap (decline in kidnapping): Mean = 2.57, SD = 1.14
control_highway (control of highway attacks): Mean = 3.06, SD = 1.01
improve_confidence (improved public confidence): Mean = 2.83, SD = 1.01
cordial_relation (cordial military-community relations): Mean = 2.99, SD = 1.03
recovery_livestock (recovery of livestock/property): Mean = 2.88, SD = 1.19
restore_activities (restoration of economic/social activities): Mean = 2.43, SD = 1.05
positive_impact (overall positive impact): Mean = 2.88, SD = 1.07

Author's Computation: 2025

Table 1 shows the overall Security t- test vale of 0.38, p = 0.71 which signified no significant difference from neutral benchmark 3 points means scores. Respondents are, on average, neutral to very slightly positive on whether security has improved. Cattle rustling: t = -0.78, p = 0.44 indicates absence of significant difference from 3. Perceptions of cattle rustling reduction are approximately neutral, with no strong evidence of improvement. Village raids: t-value of-2.04, p ≈ 0.044 which is significantly below 3. Respondents tend to slightly disagree that village raids have reduced, indicating that this outcome is viewed as inadequate. Kidnapping been the most discussed issue associated with banditry in Zamfara have a t= -3.55, p <0.01 Mean significantly below 3. Respondents disagree that kidnapping for ransom has declined, suggesting a perception of continued

or insufficiently reduced kidnapping incidents.Moreso, Highway attacks show reveals t = 0.53, p = 0.60 still indicates no significant difference from 3. Highway attack control is viewed as neutral to slightly positive, but not strongly significant.

Furthermore, on the possibility of recovery of stolen assets, especially, livestock the test discloses a t-value of -0.98, p = 0.33 no significant difference from 3. Perceptions of recovery of stolen assets are approximatelyneutral. So also, the level of relationship between communities and military personnels still considered to be rough with t-value of t = -0.10, equivalent to 0.92 p-value. The same negative pattern was revealed on the level of public confidence that the current military operation will resolve banditry in Zamfara State. The test indicates t = -1.59, p = 0.12 absence of statistically significant difference at 5% (borderline at 10%). Public confidence is slightly below neutral, indicating mild skepticism but not overwhelming rejection.

Additionally, possibility of restoration of economic and social activities in most of the affected communities is not encouraging as t = -5.08, p < 0.001 mean significantly below 3. Respondents disagree that normal economic and social activities have been restored, highlighting this as a major area where intervention has not met expectations.

Consequently, on the overall impact of the military intervention t – value = -1.10, p = 0.28 pointing no significant difference from 3. This viewed the military intervention as neither haven clearly a positive nor clearly negative impact, but with a tendency slightly below neutrality.

5.2 Challenges of Military Intervention in Zamfara State

This section presents the descriptive statistics of the eleven (11) challenge variables measured on a 5-points Likert Scale degree (5=Strongly Agree) of the 88 respondents.

Table 2.**Challenges of Military Intervention in Zamfara State**

Challenge Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Interpretation
Weak Federal-State Coordination	4.07	1.11	1	5	Highest concern
Porous Borders (Bandit/Arms Infiltration)	4.00	1.16	1	5	Very high concern
Political Interference	4.00	1.19	1	5	Very high concern
Corruption Undermining Credibility	3.93	1.21	1	5	High concern
Poor Management/Leadership	3.68	1.16	1	5	High concern
Logistical Inadequacies	3.53	1.32	1	5	Moderate-high concern

Challenge Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Interpretation
Low Military Morale	3.48	1.15	1	5	Moderate-high concern
Insufficient Welfare for Military	3.47	1.21	1	5	Moderate-high concern
Lack of Inter-agency Synergy	3.47	1.17	1	5	Moderate-high concern
Inadequate Intelligence/Surveillance	3.41	1.33	1	5	Moderate concern
Lack of Community Cooperation	3.00	1.31	1	5	Neutral concern

Authors Computation 2025

Aggregate Mean: M = 3.67 (SD = 0.42 across all items), indicating moderate-to-high agreement that challenges significantly constrain military effectiveness.

The overall challenge mean across all 11 variables is 3.67, indicating that respondents, on average, perceive challenges as exceeding the neutral midpoint toward "agree." This aggregate figure, combined with individual item patterns, demonstrates that challenges are not peripheral concerns but rather fundamental constraints recognized across professional and educational constituencies.

However, all the 11 challenges variables demonstration moderate-to-high mean scores (M=3.00 to 4.07), indicating that respondents generally acknowledge substantial obstacles against the military intervention across multiple dimensions.

Governance Dominance: Weak Federal-State coordination (M = 4.07), porous borders (M = 4.00), and political interference (M = 4.00) represent the most universally endorsed challenges, with governance barriers constituting the primary concern.Factor Structure Stability: Orthogonal rotation produces clean, interpretable factors with high internal consistency (communalities 0.59-0.81 for most variables) and zero inter-factor correlations, validating the three-factor solution.Community Cooperation as Distinct Challenge: Community cooperation deficits (M = 3.00) load uniquely on Factor 2 and require specialized interventions distinct from governance reforms alone.

Comprehensively, the results of factor analysis reveals that military intervention challenges in Zamfara State exhibit a three-dimensional structure:Governance and Institutional Failures dimension which includes; political interference in security operations, institutional corruption and coordination and logistics deficiencies which explained (24.85%) variance. Second dimension is the Human Capital and Community Relations; Military personnel morale and welfare, Community engagement and cooperation and Leadership and management quality it accounts for (22.88%) variance. Third dimension has to do Tactical-Operational Security (17.76% explained variance). It includes; Border security and cross-border coordination,

Intelligence/surveillance capabilities and Inter-governmental cooperation mechanisms

5.3 Preferences Strategy for Curbing Banditry Intervention in Zamfara State

This section presents reports of analysis of the stakeholder strategic preferences regarding optimal approaches to combat banditry in Zamfara State, examining 88 respondents' endorsement of four distinct intervention strategies: hybrid (kinetic + non-kinetic), dialogue-only, military-only, and no intervention.

Table 3. Pearson chi-square Test Results on Preference Strategic for Curbing Banditry in Zamfara State

Strategic Preference	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Hybrid (Kinetic + non-kinetic)	76	86.36%	86.36%
Military Only	8	9.09%	95.45%
Dialogue Only	2	2.27%	97.73%
None (No Intervention)	2	2.27%	100.00%
Total	88	100.00%	—

Authors Computation 2015

The analysis from Table 3 revealsthe overwhelming consensus (86.36%) supporting integrated hybrid strategies that combine military operations with non-kinetic interventions such as; dialogue, governance reforms, and community engagement. While occupational variation in strategic preference exists, a Pearson chi-square test ($\chi^2(9) = 8.5121$, $p = 0.483$) indicates this variation does not achieve statistical significance. Nonetheless, practical patterns demonstrate near-unanimous support among security professionals (100%) and security analysts/academics (93.33%), indicating convergence between operational experience and scholarly expertise on integrated strategy superiority.

Conclusions

Based on the statistical evidence the study conclude that military intervention in Zamfara State is perceived to have limited effectiveness, but not entirely ineffective.The military operation has failed to address kidnapping, cattle rustling, highways attacks, villages raid, recovery of stolen properties and restoration of economic and social activities to the minimum levels.

The operation is heavily constrained by structural, institutional, and socio-political challenges; weak Federal-State coordination, porous borders, political interference in security operations, institutional corruption and coordination and logistics deficiencies, poor military personnel morale and welfare,

lack of proper community engagement , cooperation, Leadership and management quality, poor border security and cross-border coordination, Intelligence/surveillance capabilities and Inter-governmental cooperation mechanisms. Furthermore, stakeholders across occupations and education, especially, among security, professionals and analysts concurred in their perception, that reliance on force (military operations) alone cannot overcome banditry in Zamfara State.

Recommendations: Based on the conclusions the following recommendations were offered;

1. For the military operations to successful in curbing banditry Zamfara State, the military in collaboration with State Government should Establish Specialized Security Operations Centers for major threat domains, each with dedicated personnel, intelligence resources, and operational authority enabling focused attention on specific threats rather than diluted generalized approach as follows:

    A. **Kidnapping**: establish a specialized intelligence driven operations targeting criminal networks, ransom payment interception systems, and victim recovery protocols

    B. **Cattle Rustling**: Intelligence on trafficking routes, border checkpoint strengthening, livestock registry systems, and regional cooperation mechanisms should establish by the military.

    C. **Village Raids**: Community based early warning systems, rapid response protocols, and village defense capability building should launch

    D. **Highway Attacks**: checkpoint modernization, Persistent patrol presence, commercial partnership systems for incident reporting.

2. To address governance, border Security, corruption and related challenges, the Federal Government of Nigeria and Zamfara State Government should establish integration governance mechanism create inter-agency coordination ensuring genuine support systems (intelligence, logistics, inter-agency coordination and border security). This will be achieved as Follows:

    A. **There should an establish a Federal - State security** coordination council and integration operations command. Higher powered official meetings to resolve coordination disputes between Federal and Zamfara State Government should be organized. A monthly coordination meeting with fixed agendas prioritizing identificationof obstacles and secretariat managing inter-agency communications and follow-up should be created.

    B. **Improve border security infrastructure and regional cooperation.** Border security infrastructure development is necessary for permanent security improvements. Searching, inspection facilities and patrol across Zamfara and other affected States borders. This will prevent bandits defeated in military operations retreat across borders with relative ease and continuous movement of arms across these porous States boundaries.

C. **Enhance personnel welfare, leadership development, and community engagement.** Military personnel operating in operational theaters require adequate food, housing, medical care, regular and adequate training and payment of allowance and rest facilities.

D. **Implement anti-corruption measures and transparent financial management**through an establish independent anti-corruption agencies with constitutional authority insulated from political manipulation to investigation, prosecution, and disciplinary powers over security personnel access to all security institutions records and financial systems. Also seeking for international cooperation capacity for complex corruption cases whistleblower protection enabling security personnel to report corruption public transparency in investigation outcomes and sanctions.

E. **Develop intelligence capabilities and community-based intelligence systems.** There should be adequate provision and deployment of surveillance systems (radar, sensors) monitoring threat movements. Provision of drone and aircraft reconnaissance capabilities electronic surveillance systems (communications interception). Ground-based sensor networks and data management systems processing intelligence with analytical tools supporting intelligence assessment. Secure communication systems protecting intelligence and integration of information and communication technology facilities in the military operations.

F. **Establish Community Liaison and Engagement Infrastructure;** through community liaison officers permanently stationed in each local government. Area office facilities enabling regular community access, community advisory committees bringing together community leaders. regular community meetings discussing security and development.

3. Military intervention in Zamfara State cannot successfully combat banditry through force alone as shown the all the respondents. Therefore, stakeholder strategic preferences grounded in challenge recognition, field experience, scholarly analysis, and effective assessment overwhelmingly endorse integrated approaches combining kinetic (military) operations with non-kinetic dimensions that includes; governance reforms, personnel development, and community engagement. The hybrid strategy support, combined with security personnel unanimity, security analyst consensus, and comprehensive challenge structure analysis, provides robust empirical foundation for policy frameworks moving beyond conventional military approaches toward sophisticated, evidence-based integration of security operations with civilian governance initiatives. This strategy could be achieved as follows:

A. Conducting a real military operation with all the commitments and patriotism that will address the immediate security threats and create operational space for non-kinetic initiatives

B. Then followed by Dialogue, governance reforms, and community engagement to address root causes underlying banditry with the sense of patriotism seriousness and commitment from all the stakeholders.

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