

Weak State Performance, Kidnapping and Human Insecurity in the South-East of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

There is a groundswell of opinion informed by empirical evidence, that the Nigerian State has exhibited weakness in most if not all indices of state performance. It has perennially manifested an inability and unwillingness to provide the political goods to majority of the citizens. This weakness expectedly engenders legitimacy crisis for the state. Evidently, one of the disturbing fallouts of legitimacy crisis is the high incidence of domestic terrorism, a specie of which is kidnapping. Aside the Niger Delta region, the South-East geo-political zone has recorded the highest incidence of kidnapping in Nigeria. This paper aims at exploring the nexus among weak state performance, kidnapping and human insecurity in the South-East of Nigeria. The resource-curse and the rentier state theories are adopted as the theoretical underpinnings for the paper. For the research methodology, it adopts the qualitative method of data collection and analysis and the use of secondary sources of data. The paper contends that weak state performance coupled with the neglect of the South-East, occasions the high incidence of kidnapping in the zone, which in itself poses a serious threat to human security. The obvious policy implication is that so long as the Nigerian State continues in its weak performance profile, so long will its legitimacy crisis fester with the untoward consequence of domestic terrorism like kidnapping and the attendant threat to human security.

Keywords: *Weak State Performance, Legitimacy Crisis, Kidnapping, Neglect and Human Insecurity.*

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Background to the Study

There is a groundswell of opinion informed by empirical evidence that the Nigerian state has exhibited weakness in most if not all the indices of state performance. It has perennially manifested an inability and unwillingness to provide the political goods to majority of the citizens which Rotberg (2013), categorized as safety and security; rule of law and transparency; participation and respect for human rights; sustainable economic development and human development. The bottom line is that the state exists primarily to provide the political goods or what is popularly referred to as the common good, to its citizens, the most fundamental being safety and security of lives and property and economic well-being and the extent to which it is able to do this defines the nature of its relationship with the citizens. The weak performance profile of the state in meeting the basic expectations of the citizens has earned for it, the distrust of the governed with its consequence of legitimacy crisis. (Ogundiya, 2009a).

Evidently, one of the manifestations of legitimacy crisis in Nigeria is the incidence of domestic terrorism (Ogundiya, 2009b), which has its origins in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region. For years, the region and its peoples were victims of the combined exploitation and marginalization by the Nigerian state and international oil companies which extracted the region's oil wealth and in turn, left its peoples pauperized and neglected with their physical environments which supported their livelihoods, degraded (Okoro, 2009; Ogundiya, 2009b). As a last resort, the people took up arms against their oppressors real and imagined, hence the incidence of domestic terrorism and insurgency. (Ogundiya, 2009b; Osaghae, Ikelegbe, Olarinmoye and Okhomina cited in Ibaba, 2016). Domestic terrorism in the Niger Delta was undertaken through various means, but the most common and pernicious being kidnapping and hostage-taking (Balogun cited in Ogundiya, 2009b).

However, like a cancerous tumor, the incidence of kidnapping in particular from early 2008, began to alarmingly spread to the South-Eastern states of Nigeria particularly Abia, Anambra and Imo States and with time, the entire region acquired the unenviable notoriety as kidnappers den after the Niger Delta. The rising incidence of this specie of domestic terrorism has posed a serious threat to human security in this zone. This paper will therefore explore the inextricable nexus amongst weak state performance, kidnapping and human insecurity in the South-East of Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

State Performance

In trying to elucidate the concept of state performance, it is not intended here to dabble into the strong-weak-failed states debate. Nonetheless the whole idea of state performance has some important implications for locating the status of a state in terms of the foregoing. Scholars use state performance index to see which states are actually strong, weak, failing, have failed or in very extreme cases, collapsed (Rotberg, 2013; Ibaba and Okoye, 2014).

The inauguration of the Westphalia state system in 1648 has entrusted on the shoulders of sovereign states, responsibilities once assumed by monarchies (Rotberg, 2003), and which only they could discharge, given the claims they make over their citizens and territories. These responsibilities are in the form of political goods to be provided by the state given that it is foremostly, a political entity with primary political responsibilities. It follows that the citizens of a state judge its performance by the extent to which it is able to provide them with the requisite political goods. For Ogundiya (2009a), the performance capacity of a state is related to its

effectiveness in providing the common goods to its citizens while for Rotberg (2003), performance is related to the level of a state's effective delivery of the most crucial political goods.

Kidnapping

Literarily, the word kidnap is coined from 'kid' meaning child and 'nabs' which means to snatch. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010), kidnap or kidnapping means "to take somebody away illegally and keep them as a prisoner, especially in order to get money or something else for returning them". This implies that whenever a person is unlawfully taken away against his wish and with the intent to collect money or to extract some other benefit before his or her release, this is tantamount to kidnapping.

Generally, kidnapping occurs when a person, without lawful authority, physically transports (moves) another person without that person's consent, with the intent to use the abduction in connection with some other nefarious objective. Under the model penal code (a set of exemplary criminal rules fashioned by the American Law Institute), kidnapping occurs when any person is unlawfully and non-consensually transported and held for certain purposes.

In the context of this paper, we view kidnapping in the South-East from the perspective of young men driven to despair and desperate to make a living in the face of daunting economic challenges.

Human Insecurity

Various scholars have postulated differing viewpoints on the concept of security which of course is the opposite of insecurity. Williams (2008) who sees security from the socio-political perspective, avers that security involves the capacity to pursue cherished political and social ambitions. That is, security is socio-political in nature as without it, there can be no political stability and consequently, social activities. Palme (1992), on his part argues that there is a connection between security and survival. For him, security is a basic condition for the survival of human beings. Thus, security is synonymous with freedom from danger, fear and doubt amongst others. Generally, it could be viewed as freedom from threat or violence which could lead to the loss of lives and means of livelihood, safe from bodily harm, diseases, unemployment, etc.

A major component of security is human security. Indeed, any discussion on security inevitably revolves around the security of the human person. The issue of human security is inextricably linked to that of human insecurity because a proper understanding of the former will aid in the appreciation of the latter. According to the United Nations Development Programme (1994), human security could be defined as protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the daily activities at homes, offices or communities. Human security is a sine qua non for the continued existence, prosperity and realization of the potentials of human beings living in a society. Only human insecurity has the potential for threatening this. Given the nature, manifestations and consequences of kidnapping, there is no doubt that it is a worrisome and veritable source of human insecurity not only for people in the South-East but also elsewhere. For people in this zone which is ravaged by this menace, life in the Hobbesian parlance is short, brutish and nasty.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical compass for this paper will revolve around the resource-curse theory and the rentier state model which provides a political economy explanation for the former. (Di John, 2010; Ifesinachi and Aniche, 2014).

The resource-curse thesis also called the paradox of plenty first articulated by Richard Auty in 1993 (Ifesinachi and Aniche, 2014; Wikipedia, 2015), is to the effect that states rich in non-renewable natural resources like petroleum, tend to record lower economic growth than those less endowed. These states by a combination of domestic and external factors are unable to utilize the windfall in revenues associated with the export of their natural resources to grow their economies, hence the incidence of poor economic outcomes (Wikipedia, 2015). Closely associated with the resource-curse theory is the rentier state theory first postulated by Hossein Mahdavy in 1970 in respect of the pre-revolutionary Iran (Abada, 2013; Ifesinachi and Aniche, 2014; Wikipedia, 2015). A rentier state is one which relies heavily or almost exclusively on the revenues accruing from the export to the international market, of its natural resources like petroleum. The earnings from these natural resources are equated with rents.

In the view of Mahdavy (1970), cited in Ifesinachi and Aniche (2014), rentier states are enormously endowed with mineral resources like oil and gas and by virtue of this, rely heavily on economic rent-seeking by manipulating and exploiting these resources rather than earning income through productive ventures. Beblawi and Luciani (1990), cited in Wikipedia (2015), outlined four features of a rentier state which are that: (1) rent situations predominate (2) the economy depends substantially on external rent and on account of this, a strong domestic productive sector is not required (3) the generation of the rent is done by only a small percentage of the working population and (4) the central government is the major recipient of the rent. An added feature of a rentier state is that it breeds a parasitic political class that feeds ravenously on the rents.

A core assumption of the rentier state theory is that there is a disconnection between the huge earnings from the natural resources and positive economic outcomes. The rents do not translate into the development of the national economy as the productive sectors are abandoned because of inflow of cheap money. The explanation for this is that the inflow of huge rents engenders rent-seeking and corruption which in themselves generate poor economic growth only because corruption hampers investment in the productive sectors of the economy.

Another assumption of the theory is that because rentier states receive most of their revenues externally, they do not have the need to extract revenues domestically through levying taxes on their citizens and as a result, have no sense of obligation towards their citizens (Abada, 2013). In extreme cases, these states may adopt a dismissive or even hostile attitude towards the citizens because they do not rely on them for tax revenues (O'Neil, 2004).

The necessary connection between the two theories is that both point out the negative development outcomes of huge earnings from the non-renewable natural resources of a state. Their relevance to the study is that the Nigerian state is rich in petroleum resources from which it derives a substantial part of its revenues. The presence of petroleum has turned out to be more of a curse than a blessing because the huge earnings from oil over the past decades have not translated into economic prosperity for Nigerians. Rather, the national economy remains underdeveloped with the untoward consequences of mass unemployment and poverty. Low

level of economic development which has resulted in unemployment and poverty is certainly an indicator of weak state performance which is a source of legitimacy crisis for the state and the rising incidence of domestic terrorism of which kidnapping is a specie.

Some Indicators of Weak State Performance in Nigeria

The two major areas where the state has exhibited weak performance capacity are those of employment generation and eradication of poverty.

High Rate of Unemployment

The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria amongst those within the working age bracket is certainly a time bomb that may detonate any time. It is worrisome because the figure keeps rising geometrically as the higher institutions every year push out graduates into the already saturated labour market. More worrisome is the fact that it is having a telling effect on individuals, families and national development.

A recent report released in May 2014 by the National Bureau of Statistics put Nigeria's unemployment figure at 6.4 percent down from 28 percent. This figure was clearly misleading because it gave the erroneous impression that the unemployment rate in the country was lower than that of a country like France with 10.6 percent and slightly higher than those of the US and UK with 5.5 percent each (Premium Times, May 16, 2015). Expectedly, this disclosure drew the ire of Nigerians who saw through the deception. For instance, Hussain Abdu, the Country Director of PLAN International said:

Changing figure on paper does not reduce the number of the unemployed in the job market. It is a very unserious way to deal with a national problem. If we say unemployment is 6.4 percent in Nigeria, are we saying we are better of than France, UK and the US with higher unemployment figures? (Premium Times, May 16, 2015).

As has been indicated earlier, most of the victims of unemployment are the thousands of graduates who leave the higher institutions yearly with the vain hope of being gainfully employed on graduation. Regrettably, this menace has only succeeded in producing youngsters with a warped mindset. Ngwama (2014:139) captured this when he wrote that:

...this evil monster, unemployment, has succeeded massively in pouring into the minds of its victims, bright but negative thoughts and ideas on how to make fast cash, by ignoring all cautions. Today, the newest idea seems strongly to be 'kidnapping'...It must have slipped at some point into the minds of some group of unemployed buddies to want to experiment with kidnapping their own black brothers and sisters...The experiment obviously turned out to be a huge job offer for as much unemployed graduates who saw it as such.

High Rate of Poverty

With a burgeoning unemployment profile and a non-performing economy, it is not surprising that Nigeria has one of the highest rates of poverty globally. The World Bank in a report released in 2014 stated that Nigeria was one of the top five countries that had the largest number of the poor. India ranked first with 33 percent; China came second with 13 percent; Nigeria came third with 7 percent; Bangladesh ranked fourth with 6 percent while the Democratic Republic of Congo came fifth with 5 percent (Vanguard, April 11, 2014). Apart from the global

poverty index, on the domestic front, a report released also in 2014 by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), put the percentage of Nigerians living in poverty at 43.3 percent (This Day Live, November 16, 2014). Although the report was indicative of the high rate of poverty in Nigeria, it was by no means a true reflection of the poverty crisis in the country as the accurate figure of Nigeria's poor will make the 43 percent pale into insignificance. A data obtained from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), put the population of Nigerians in poverty at about 112 million representing about 67 percent of the country's 167 million population (Premium Times, June 1, 2015). Since the World Bank report, the country has not made any appreciable progress on the world poverty index as this menace continues to ravage the majority of the citizens. According to an illuminating report in the Premium Times (June 1, 2015):

Despite its (Nigeria's) Federal Government and 36 states spending a staggering N34.4 trillion in seven years, Nigeria is still rated one of the world's poorest countries as of 2015... While the Federal Government received more than N19 trillion between 2007-2014, the country's 36 states got more than N15 trillion during the period.

The country clearly fits into the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty. Over the years, she has earned very huge revenues from the sale of her crude oil. Although estimates by scholars slightly differ, all point to the unassailable fact that she has raked in huge petrodollars that if efficiently and effectively utilized, would bring economic prosperity to her citizens. For instance, Watts, Okonta and Kemedi (2004), estimated the value of Nigeria's oil exports from 1960 up to the time of writing to be worth US\$600 billion. It is a sad commentary that notwithstanding the enormous petrodollars, governments at all levels failed miserably to invest these in developing infrastructure, creating jobs and alleviating poverty. It is thus not difficult to establish the organic link between poverty and some social ills like armed robbery and kidnapping.

Neglect of the South-East

The South-East of Nigeria is one of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria comprising of the Igbo-speaking states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. However, this area had not originally been referred to as the South-East. It was part and in fact the nucleus of the defunct Eastern Region of Nigeria. With the re-structuring of the country into 12 states by the Yakubu Gowon military regime in 1967, the areas covering the present-day Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State were constituted into a South-Eastern state.

It is a truism that the presence of key infrastructure is pivotal to the rapid socio-economic development of any society. Since individuals given their limited capacities cannot provide for themselves this critical infrastructure, it is incumbent on the state to whom citizens pay their taxes and in the Nigerian context, controls the nation's natural resources, to provide this. In comparative terms however, the South-East of Nigeria has fared worse than other zones owing to the prolonged neglect by the Federal Government in providing the needed infrastructure to this zone.

There are a number of projects the Federal Government could have executed in the zone and given the legendary entrepreneurial and commercial bent of its people, could have propelled it into an economically developed and prosperous area. For instance, for years the dredging and conversion of the River Niger into a seaport has been so much politicized. Also subject to needless politicking is the construction of a second Niger Bridge given the decrepit condition of

the first bridge? Although the immediate past Jonathan administration awarded the contract for the construction of the bridge through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement, the people of the zone are adopting a wait-and-see attitude as previous administrations before Jonathan equally orchestrated their intentions to construct the bridge, which turned out to be mere ruse.

The power and road infrastructure in the zone is equally nothing to write home about. At a time, Aba in Abia State was regarded by many as the 'Japan of Africa' because of the presence of many industries. Today's Aba regrettably has been shorn of its glory as manufacturing concern after another closed shop due to poor power supply. The same goes for Nnewi in Anambra State. Although one could spot pockets of factories here and there, they are merely trudging on in the face of daunting challenges, a critical component of which is absence of regular power supply. Even those that are existing operate below capacity. The roads within the zone are appallingly bad. Most of them designated as 'federal roads' that link states within the zone and those linking with states outside of it, are decrepit. This is even as erosion is ravaging some parts of the zone with thousands of people displaced from their homes. The area has not felt the impact of the ecological fund statutorily designated to tackle this menace. This appalling neglect is captured by Chukwuma (2012: viii) when he wrote that:

...the Federal Government of Nigeria, since the end of the civil war in 1970 has not been fair to the South-East in rebuilding its infrastructure and services destroyed during the civil war, which would have enabled the region to rebuild its economy and provide jobs for its army of young people. The government has consistently short-changed the region in the sitting of major public works programmes such as construction of power stations, expansion of road networks, water and irrigation projects and other social investment that would have contributed in turning the economy around.

The tables below will further buttress this fact of neglect.

Table 1: Length of Federal Roads by Geo-political zone, 2006 & 2008r

Zone	Length in 2006	% in 2006	Length in 2008	% in 2008
North Central	7,831.20	22.8	7,874.20	21.0
North East	7,803.40	22.7	7,850.40	21.0
North West	6,668.90	19.4	6,876.20	18.4
South East	3,121.70	9.1	3,642.0	9.7
South South	4,150.89	12.1	6,066.60	16.2
South West	4,528.26	13.2	4,848.50	13.0
FCT	236.60	0.7	244.60	0.7
Total	34,340.95	100	37,402.5	100

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2009: 369-370), cited in Ukiwo (2012: 6).

Table 2: Ownership of Health Care Facilities by Geo-political zone, 2004

Zone	Public	Private
North Central	3,306	1,852
North East	2,225	353
North West	3,874	420
South East	912	2,416
South South	1,841	1,285
South West	2,439	2,481
FCT	10	225
Total	14,607	9,032

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2009: 183), cited in Ukiwo (2012: 7).

Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the South-East trails far behind in terms of federal presence. For instance in table 1, of the total percentage of federal roads in the six geo-political zones of the country by 2006 and 2008, South-East had a share of 9.1% and 9.7% respectively, trailing far behind other zones especially those in the northern part. This neglect is also in table 2 showing the ownership of health care facilities by geo-political zone as at 2004. The zone has the least public health facilities with 912 while the North-Central zone had the highest with 3,306. The South-East had the second highest number of private health facilities with 2,416 trailing behind the South-West zone with 2,481. But in terms of public health facilities, the South-West was far ahead of the South-East with 2,439 facilities. Although the figures in table 1 refer to the 2006 and 2008 periods and those in table 2 refer to the 2004 period, there is nothing on ground to show that the lot of the zone has improved overtime.

Aside the neglect by the Federal Government, the fortunes of the zone have over the years plummeted by the poor governance foisted on it by its so-called political leaders in the various states. It would seem that the golden era of the zone was during the years of the Eastern Regional Government when purposeful leaders were in the saddle at different times. Spurred by the healthy rivalry among the regions, these leaders developed the region with earnings from palm produce and other agricultural export commodities. But given the discovery of crude oil and dependence on its earnings, an oil rentier class has sprung up in the zone whose only motive for governance is to gain access to state power through any means possible so that they could partake in the sharing of the nation's oil wealth. Thus, in the unbridled, mad and selfish chase for cheap oil money, there has been a disconnect between these self-anointed leaders and the governed. The allocations coming from the centre to the states in the zone have been diverted to the private pockets of these unpatriotic leaders and their cronies leaving the zone underdeveloped and poor. For instance, it is appalling that most roads in the zone that fall within the jurisdiction of the various state governments are in a sorry state. This unfortunate state of affairs was appreciated in a communiqué by the South-East Summit (2011), cited in Ukiwo (2012: 2-3) when it remarked that:

The South-East has been afflicted by a group of political leaders who are mostly opportunistic, self-serving and lacking in vision for the public good. . . In most parts of the region, elections have become organized crime in which political actors deploy violence, bribery and subterfuge to hijack state power for the sole purpose of diverting public treasuries to satisfy personal ends. This creates an environment in which governments are neither accountable nor responsive to the aspirations of the people.

It is to be expected that given its neglect by both the Federal and State governments, the zone would certainly deliver poor economic outcomes. It is because it is economically underdeveloped that it experiences declining performance on human development indicators one of which is poverty reduction. In comparative terms, it has a higher poverty rate than others in Southern Nigeria. For instance, a 2010 poverty report cited in Ukiwo (2012:5) indicated that South-East had 67%, South-South 63%, and South-West 59%.

Given its poor economic profile, it is inevitable that majority of the graduates from the zone numbering in their thousands face the grim reality of unemployment and poverty. Some of them desirous of walking out of the poverty trap, have engaged in some criminal acts such as thuggery, advanced fee fraud, armed robbery and of recent, kidnapping for ransom. One of the authors of this paper who was kidnapped in 2012 was told by one of his abductors that he was forced into the act by joblessness. The inclination of these youngsters to engage in criminality has also been fuelled by the way and manner the politicians who have stolen from the public till display their ill-gotten wealth to the envy of these youngsters. It is within the context of the foregoing that we appreciate the high incidence of kidnapping in the South-East and its threat to human security.

Incidence of Kidnapping in the South-East

While there is certainty that the first kidnapping incident in Nigeria took place in the Niger Delta region in February 2006 (Ugwuoke, 2011; Ngwama, 2014), there is no such certainty as to when the menace commenced in the South-East, However, most accounts point to early 2008 as the commencement period (Vanguard, July 28, 2015; Sunday Sun, September 27, 2015). With the passage of time, the South-East states particularly Abia, Anambra and Imo, have acquired a notoriety as kidnappers playgrounds (Ngwama, 2014), because of the high incidence of this dastardly act.

A report by the Campaign for Democracy (CD), in August 2012 cited in Vanguard (July 28, 2015) and Sunday Sun (September 27, 2015), indicated that between January 2008 and August 2012, at least about 989 prominent indigenes of the zone were allegedly kidnapped and in the end, paid ransoms valued at N1.2 billion. The report also indicated that kidnappers collected substantial amounts from their victims, ranging from N5 million to N30 million per individual. Anambra State was said to have recorded the highest incidence while Imo State came second with 265 cases and Abia, Enugu and Ebonyi States coming third, fourth and fifth with 215, 95 and 90 cases respectively. In the particular case of Anambra State, the report stated that between late 2012 to 2014, kidnappers in the state fleeced about N1 billion from their victims.

As insightful as the CD's report may be, nonetheless, it would be misleading to rely on its figures alone for some obvious reasons. For security reason, many families whose relations are kidnap victims would rather not report the incident to the Police or make it public knowledge, preferring to deal quietly with the kidnappers as was the case with the family of one of the authors of this paper. This implies that because a good many of kidnap cases within the zone go unreported, the actual number of victims of kidnapping within the coverage period of the report would certainly outstrip the CD's figures. Besides, the CD's report covered up to August 2012. Beyond this period to the present, there have been so many other victims.

Commendably, the various states in the zone have evolved measures in a bid to stem this ugly tide. Apart from setting up joint task forces comprising of the Army, Police and Navy to give the kidnappers a good run for their bestial acts, they have gone ahead to enact laws which impose

death penalty on convicted kidnappers. Part of the provisions of these legislations which are similar, empowers the governments to revoke and demolish structures on the property used for kidnapping. In Anambra State, this approach worked as many buildings were destroyed during the era of Peter Obi as governor and continued with his successor, Willie Obiano who tagged his task force 'Operation Kpochapu' (Vanguard, July 28, 2015). Yet, despite these measures which to some extent curbed the menace, it is debatable if they hold the key to its long term solution. This view is justified on account of the resurgence of kidnapping in the zone which indicates that the measures are mere palliatives that do not really address the root causes.

Kidnapping as Threat to Human Security in the South-East

More than any other social menace, kidnapping poses the greatest human security threat in the South-East of Nigeria. This threat is best appreciated from the standpoint of its multi-faceted dimensions. The starting point here should be a consideration of the number of persons that had fallen victim to the menace in the zone. Evidently, the intimidating statistics of victims can only point to a very unsettling situation.

Apart from the inhuman conditions the abductees are subjected to, to secure their freedom, their relations have been made to pay huge sums of money running into millions of naira. Sadly, not all the victims return alive even with the payment of the demanded ransom. A few instances will suffice. A former Deputy Governor of Anambra State, Dr Chudi Nwike was killed by his abductors for not disclosing in full, his entire financial worth (Sunday Sun, September 27, 2015). In addition, his errand men were also killed by the kidnappers for having the audacity to bring what they regarded as a paltry sum of N5million out of the N30 million demanded (Vanguard, October 3, 2015). In Imo State, Architect Emenike Ihekwoaba, a former Principal Secretary in the Deputy Governor's office was kidnapped on his way to his country home in 2012 and since then, nothing has been heard about him in spite of the N10 million ransom paid by his family (Vanguard, July 28, 2015; Sunday Sun, September 27, 2015). In Abia state on August 10, 2012, a five-man gang of kidnappers abducted a 78 year-old woman, Mrs Martha Kalu. In spite of ransom paid to her abductors on August 24, who promised to release her sequel to the payment, the old woman was killed (Sunday Sun, September 27, 2015). In Enugu State, a traditional ruler, His Royal Highness, Igwe Uche Nwachime, was abducted and later killed because his relations had refused to pay the ransom demanded by his abductors on time (Nairaland, October 9, 2011).

Owing to the spate of kidnappings, many people in the zone sleep with their eyes half opened. Worse still, the menace has driven some businessmen and other well-to-do persons away from their original places of residence. Some have relocated to other states in Nigeria. For instance, when one Obioma Nwankwo alias *Osisikankwu* and his gang held sway in Aba, the commercial nerve centre of Abia State, many businessmen and other wealthy persons including people within the middle class were forced to flee the city to escape being kidnapped.

The human security threat of kidnapping is also seen in the drastic reduction in the number of Diaspora south-easterners coming home every year. It is common knowledge that these people relish the prospect of coming home every Christmas and New Year to celebrate and fraternize with their kith and kin. Regrettably, some of these people preferred staying put at their places of domicile to coming home to be kidnapped. To the people of the zone, kidnapping is tantamount to a declaration of war on them (Nnaji, 2009).

Because of the palpable human security threat kidnapping poses in the zone, most people whose family members have been kidnapped are reluctant to report the incidents to the Police for fear of a possible backlash arising from the criminal collusion of some police officers with the kidnapers. An instance was a report by Henry Umahi and Uche Onwuchekwa of the Saturday Sun cited in Ugwuoke ((2011), about the abduction in Imo State, of the father of a Port Harcourt-based businessman who reported the incident at a police station in the state. Barely fifteen minutes after the entry, the kidnapers called him on phone and told him the content of his statement. It is really a sad commentary that some officers of an institution that should be in the vanguard of combating crime would collude with criminals. The degree of threat to human security posed by this criminal alliance is anybody's guess.

Overall, the human security threat arising from kidnapping has had a debilitating economic impact on the zone. If anything, the menace has scared away potential investors. It has also led to the mass exodus of indigenous entrepreneurs from the zone. Moreover, the remittances from those in the Diaspora, a substantial part of which is used to develop the zone, have decreased considerably. The foregoing has only worsened the zone's poor economic outcomes with their consequence of mass unemployment and grinding poverty.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This paper has set for itself the task of exploring the relationship amongst weak state performance, kidnapping and human insecurity in the South-East of Nigeria. Any perceptive observer of the governance process in the country would readily agree that the Nigerian state has not lived up to its responsibilities. In a land of plenty, the majority of the citizens are pauperized with an uncertain future hanging over them like the sword of Damocles. Because the state has exhibited a weak performance capacity, they do not recognize it as a legitimate political authority to which they should owe their allegiance and repose their trust. One of the clear manifestations of this legitimacy crisis is the incidence of domestic terrorism which has its origins in the oil-rich Niger Delta region arising from years of neglect and oppression by the Nigerian state and international oil companies. Domestic terrorist acts were carried out through kidnapping and hostage-taking by means of which the distraught and oppressed Niger Deltans registered their grievances.

Incidentally, like a raging inferno, the menace of kidnapping spread ferociously to the South-East zone of Nigeria and ever since, the kidnapers have not looked back. The case of the south-east could be located within the context of weak state performance and the peculiar neglect of the zone by the Federal Government and the various state governments in the area. This menace has posed the greatest human security threat to the indigenes and non-indigenes alike and in spite of the measures put in place by the states concerned, the menace has worryingly persisted.

In view of the foregoing analysis, a number of policy implications are evident. First, because the measures put in place to eradicate the menace have proved to be mere palliatives, holistic and long term measures should be fashioned out. This will entail identifying the root causes of this menace which are mainly the high rate of unemployment and poverty. This calls for sincere and committed leadership on the part of the governing class to institute people-oriented reforms that would enhance the economic fortunes of the nation and those of the various states. With a flourishing economy and opportunities for all, unemployment and poverty will be reduced to their barest minimum and with them, the incidence of kidnapping and other poverty-induced criminal acts. Second and finally, so long as the Nigerian state continues in its

weak performance profile and shows callous indifference to the plight of the pauperized citizenry, so long will its legitimacy crisis fester with the untoward consequence of domestic terrorism like kidnapping and the attendant threat to human security.

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