

Nigerian State and the Rising Waves of Armed Banditry in Northwest, Nigeria, 2015-2022

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Abstract

The incessant attacks, killings and raiding by bandits have continued unabatedly and seems to have become a worrisome attribute of socio-cultural and political life in North West, Nigeria. Some say the challenge has degenerated as a result of the influx of criminal elements into the country. The most worrisome aspect is the existence of hostile manifestation in cattle rustling, killings, kidnapping, raping and arsons. The existential threat posed by this phenomenon in North West, Nigeria has left many in doubt about the capacity of the Nigerian State to perform its constitutional responsibility of providing security for lives and property and other groups in the State. The impression is that the State has become overwhelmed by the activities of armed bandits in the region. Therefore, this paper seeks to explain how cultural affinity between Nigerian State and her neighboring States induce insecurity in Northwest, Nigeria. This study is anchored on opportunity-structure theory and argued that the outbreak of violence is predicated on the presence of opportunity structure such as cultural affinity that favours the mobilization and organization of violent attitude. The study found that the presence of cultural homogeneity between Nigeria and her neighbors induce rural banditry in Northwest, Nigeria. The study relied on secondary sources whereby data were gleaned from books, newspapers, and government official documents among others. The data were analyzed using content analysis. We recommend stringent migration laws that would take proper record of every entry and exit and strict border policing to checkmate criminally minded migrants leveraging on the ECOWAS free movement protocols to perpetrate crime.

Introduction

For over a decade, Northwest, Nigeria has been embroiled in arrays of tension and insecurity. The region has been the hotbed of banditry, raping, abduction, armed robbery, cattle rustling and destruction of lives and property. Villagers are kidnapped, slaughtered and burnt daily and most often, these destructive activities happened outside areas of police and security control (Ceccato & Ceccato, 2017). Northwest, Nigeria is one of the six geopolitical zones with seven States which include Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Jigawa, Sokoto and Zamfara. Meanwhile, Nigerian State is an imposed and peripheral variant of the capitalist type. This has implications for security, stability and development. The connotation and composition of reforming the Nigeria State is inseparable from the nature and formation of the State (Mbah, 2014).

Consequently, in retrenching the State, as canvassed by the Washington Collective, the State also rolled itself away from providing the most basic of its functions, the security of citizens and development, among others. As such, there tends to be a decisive swing in the development of security strategies away from government initiatives on public security to private ownership and market-based allocation of resources and remote-based security provisioning (Mbah, 2014). This has primarily undermined the commitment of resources to general security policies for the country. Security of lives and property of the people has continually assumed a vital responsibility of the State from time immemorial till date.

It is believed that the primary impetus for State formation according to the social contract theory was to save society from existential threats occasioned by inordinate human tendencies. However, the nature and character of security and how a State secures the citizens' lives and property have broadly been called into question. This is because the State seem to have lost battle over the rising wave of banditry in the region. The ongoing rural banditry in Northwest, Nigeria emanated due to struggle over scarce resources between crop farmers and migrant Fulani pastoralists from neighboring countries coupled with the dynamics in human ecology, climate change, and identity politics entrenched by social inequality, economic marginalization, and political exclusion (Nnoli, 1978). Most worrisome in this development is cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, raids on villages, markets and communities, rape, killing and destruction of means of livelihood.

The incessant attacks by bandits have continued unabated and become a disturbing attribute of socio-cultural and political life in Northwest Nigeria. Combined with the nationwide challenges, poverty, illiteracy, depleted livelihood options and unemployment, the struggle for scarce resources has profoundly polarized the two rival groups. Therefore, the present violent dynamic in the Northwest, apparently started when the vigilante groups of Hausa ethnic extraction known as 'Yan Sakai' extra-judiciously killed some Fulani pastoralists as hostility mounted with growing attacks and reprisal attacks which coincided with an increase in cattle rustling in the region by armed criminal syndicate. This hostility between the two groups, which degenerated into rural

banditry, has implanted a gridlock and caused the Nigerian security apparatus to be bolted in a perpetual security standoff.

The Northwest region is home to diverse and most frequented global transhumance routes in West Africa and the Sahel, playing host to the migration of thousands of alien Fulani pastoralists who follow seasonal patterns along traditional and statutory migration routes (AFDB, 2015). Northwest Nigeria, which is made up of seven States include Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara, is also homogeneous in terms of religion, ethnicity and language except the southern Kaduna and parts of Kebbi States. It is equally characterized by heavy forest space seated astride porous borders across State frontiers that bandits have colonized and made heavily ungovernable. The forested landscape, which has remained ungovernable where statehood is either absent or at best fitful, has become a shelter for bandits who desperately seek an operational bridgehead in the area that makes it difficult and impossible for the Nigerian security forces to penetrate (Ojewale, 2021).

Similarly, the policing system in rural communities and villages in the region is indigent and even more so, arms proliferation in West Africa which is aggravated by the collapse of the Libyan State in 2011, made it possible for small arms and light weapons to illicitly be at the disposal of bandits that have continued to make rural communities and villages vulnerable (Barnett & Rufai, 2021). The Nigerian State, in order to combat rural banditry and control insecurity in the Northwest, deployed military forces under the tactical operation known as “Operation Harbin Kunama” (Scorpion Sting) in 2016, which further worsened the crisis and forced the bandits to relocate, reorganize, and also aided the bandits in the recruitment of the disgruntled locals due to colossal damages done by the military (Brenner, 2021). In the same vein, poor knowledge of the rural communities and terrain, especially without the use of modern technology for intelligence gathering, compelled the Nigerian security forces to frequently rely on the rural dwellers or the vigilante groups who often harbor their grievances and preconceptions for intelligence (Ojewale, 2021).

According to Omakoji, Igoli & Mbah (2024) banditry can be defined as an organized violent crime embarked upon by criminals engaged in raiding, armed robbery, killing, rapping or allied ferocious crimes such as cattle rustling, kidnapping on communities, villages or markets. It involves using force or threat to intimidate a person or group of people to rob, assault, rape or liquidate such a person or group of persons (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). Uche & Iwuamadi (2018) defined banditry as the practice of marauding and assaulting a vulnerable person or group of persons by members of an armed group, whether or not premeditated, using weapons of offence or defense, especially in semi-organized groups to overpower the person and obtain loot or to achieve some political gains. Kuna & Ibrahim, 2016, Okoli and Okpakele, 2014, Abdullahi, 2019, Brenner, 2021, Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). Liman (2021) identified factors such as inequality, weak government, and chronic problems of youth unemployment, poverty and unregulated forest lands as drivers of rural banditry. Consequently, the study examined the link

between Nigerian State and the rising wave of armed banditry in North West, Nigeria, 2015-2022. This is because of the rising waves of armed banditry within the period under review.

Cultural Homogeneity and Rural Banditry

The power of culture to impact human society cannot be overemphasized. It influences society and is also affected by it. This is because people are not only influenced by culture but also influence culture and its dynamics through geographical location, religion, science and politics. Culture is accountable for most people's enlightened behaviour as individuals and equally govern societal standard or norms on spousal relationships, sex, childbearing, and other different issues of life. The impacts of culture on individuals are not only behavioral but also has a cognitive and psycho-dynamic effect on individuals. Culture is the beliefs, values, orientations, ideas, behaviours, attitudes, and traditions within large groups, usually of a common language, history, religion, family, or something similar. These beliefs, values, attitudes, ideas, orientations, behaviours and traditions are transferred from one generation to another and are maintained, revised and improved through education and socialization. On the other hand, cultural homogeneity is one aspect of national identity which implies a consciousness of pride in one's culture, nationality and common heritage with fellow nationals. It is defined as a state, society, or group having only a singular or similar primary culture (Leach & Worden, 2008).

Societal security, the cognizance of security derivable from cultural homogeneity, explains why the nation-state, since its development in the eighteenth century, is based on a narrative of cultural and ethnic homogeneity. However, migration and ethnic heterogeneity threaten this position, and the growth of multicultural societies poses major challenges to national identities (Castells, 2001). Similarly, the inclination to development of multinational societies is a further challenge to the nation-state. This is because contemporary means of transportation and communication make it possible for migrants and their posterity to keep long-term connections with their ancestral country of origin or with diaspora groups across the globe. Consequently, the absorption of migrants has been part of the myth of nation-building for many countries. However, countries that place a shared culture at the heart of their nation-building process have found it difficult to resolve this contradiction.

This applies to many Western nations, including numerous post-colonial nation-states such as Nigeria. Therefore, societal security derived from cultural homogeneity is not likely in multicultural, diverse, plural societies like Nigeria. The argument here is that in as much as cultural homogeneity is valued along with a strong identity and certainty in the continuance of traditional patterns of language, custom, value, lifestyle, and norms of life, migrants may be seen as interlopers and foreigners who are capable of threatening the existence of nation-states (Jamali, 2020). In the same vein, since the cardinal mechanisms of globalization are trans-border flows and multinational networks, the flows of people are understandably as important as flows of goods and services, ideas, and finance. However, while nation-states welcome the flows of goods, services, ideas

and finance because of the economic benefits, states are always wary of migrants, whom States perceive as threats to national culture and identity, and hence as a major factor challenging the security of nation-states.

Scholars such as Kuna & Ibrahim (2016) identified factors which trigger rural banditry to include environmental and climate change, constant displacement of the human and livestock population, expansion in non-agricultural use of land, weak state capacity and the provision of security, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs); rise of criminality and insecurity in rural areas; and weakening or collapse of informal conflict resolution mechanisms. However, Kuna & Ibrahim (2016) did not establish a connection between porous or ungoverned borders and rural banditry. Egwu (2016) attributed the underlying causes of rural banditry to a deteriorating state of human security, poverty, unemployment, the fallout of ethno-religious conflict, desperate desire for primitive accumulation of wealth, armed robbery and mental issues as well as the problem of small arms and light weapons (SALW) that have found their way into the hands of non-state actors. However, Egwu (2016) did not explain how consistent human population displacement could trigger rural banditry.

Momale (2016) argues that the changing methods of animal husbandry, especially as it relates to pastoralism which involves movements of both people and livestock in search of feeds, water and pleasant grazing regions, failures in the institutional capability of the State to tackle the problems of insecurity; joblessness and chronic problem of poverty are causes of rural banditry. Notwithstanding this excellent line of argument, Momale (2016) failed to attribute the reason for rural banditry to greed and psychological needs. Ibrahim (2014) associated the phenomena of rural banditry with the failure of the state to provide security of lives and property as well as essential services to the general populace. Ibrahim (2014) did not see the collapse of informal conflict resolution mechanisms which could resolve social group conflicts leading to banditry as a factor responsible for rural banditry. Kusa & Salihu (2016) argued that rural banditry occurs due to the availability of motivated offenders whom cattle, goats and sheep attract because of their high economic value, the availability of suitable targets which represent the unprotected citizens, and the absence of authority (state) to prevent the attack from taking place. Nevertheless, Kusa & Salihu (2016) ignored expose how the chronic problem of poverty and unemployment could trigger rural banditry. Mohammed & Alimba (2016) posit that uncontrolled or poorly governed rural environments and the availability of vulnerable populace citizens in rural areas and along the highways are factors responsible for rural banditry. Nonetheless, Mohammed & Alimba (2016) did not look at the proliferation of small arms and light weapons as a driver of rural banditry.

Hobsbawm (1969 in Mohammed & Alimba, 2016) enumerated two primary conditions essential for the existence of rural banditry to include a rural or social situation established by a 'traditional peasantry' and a 'pre-industrial' geographical area. Hobsbawm (1959) shows a link between rural banditry and violence by associating banditry with terrorism rooted in peasant society. Blumell (2007) connected rural

banditry with hunger, economic disorder, social hardship, and general societal breakdown due to civil war or uprising. Sztompka (1993 in Mohammed & Alimba, 2016) asserts that rural banditry mainly occurs in periods of social conflict when accepted ways of life, rules and laws are sabotaged, governing elites are not respected, and customs are jilted. For Sztompka (1993), rural banditry has a bearing on the internal dynamics of a state occasioned by social instability, poverty, politics, corruption, economic crisis, and environmental challenges that often precipitate rural banditry. Sztompka (1993) further posited that these internal dynamics directly undermine a State's security and stability, enabling a plurality of criminal activities across the State.

Ibrahim & Dabugat (2016) submit that the intense struggle over scarce tillable land and water resources between crop farmers and pastoralist Fulani herders, which often leads to conflict, and the seemingly weak capacity of the state to effectively exercise control and authority over its territory evidently in the absence or lack of security forces as well as the apparent lack of infrastructural facilities gives room for the rise of rural banditry. Kwaja & Abdul (2016) linked rural banditry to the nomadism crisis involving colossal losses for pastoralists, weak policing and poor justice administration. They further see economic greed, poverty, unemployment, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in a state, which indicates a tendency in the denationalization of aggression that has resulted in a situation whereby non-state actors' own weapons beyond state control as drivers of rural banditry. For Kwaja & Abdul (2016), there is an organic connection between rural banditry and livelihood rather than social grudges. In contrast, Jumare & Surma (2016) argued that rural banditry is caused by the problem of inter-state boundary security, unemployment, abject poverty, violent conflicts between sedentary crop farmers and nomadic Fulani pastoralists resulting from either grazing on crops or incessant cattle rustling by those herdsmen who lost their cattle.

Scholars such as Gaye (2018), Olaniyan & Yahaya (2016), Suleiman (2017) and Mustapha (2019) have advanced different factors responsible for and preponderance of rural banditry in Nigeria, including the vulnerability of the Nigerian state, weak institutions of the state, particularly the security agency, accessibility of total ungoverned territories, weak leadership porous borders, corruption, chronic poverty, unemployment, and arms proliferation. Gaye (2018) argues that inaccessible forested areas and inadequate presence of security operatives are motivators of the rise in criminality like rural banditry. Olaniyan & Yahaya (2016) asserted that collusion of nationals, lack of sophisticated weapons, and poor motivation of the state security forces promote rural banditry in Nigeria. Okoli & Ugwu (2019) posit that the existence and preponderance of an avalanche of 'ungoverned', 'under-governed' and 'ungovernable' spaces within a territorial area have provided a tremendous opportunity for rural criminality. They also argued that a feasible but assailable rural economy based chiefly on animal husbandry, crop production and informal mining, such as cattle, cash, and treasure, provides an avalanche of convenient crime targets. Okoli & Ugwu (2019) further argued that the crime environment is not only a motivating factor but also enticement for criminal pampering.

For them, under this condition, crime determent takes flight, and all forms of marauding crime persist. Other scholars such as Okoli & Atelhe (2014) averred that ethno-communal hostility complicated by the Faultiness of identity conflict encourages crime committal like banditry. Arguing from the perspective of criminological undercurrents of terror, McGregor (2014) and Olayoku (2014) see the predatory wanderers as offenders entirely driven by criminal intents. Accordingly, The Humanitarian (2018) stated that small-scale illegal and non-industrial mining in states like Sokoto and Zamfara has provided an abiding material inducement for criminals, including bandits who occasionally booty mining sites into stealing gold and cash.

Okoli & Lenshie (2018) assert that the ailing regulated livestock production has resulted in its attack by criminals, manifesting in the increased rustling leading to banditry. Akanle & Omobowale (2015) argued that the goal of integration of the people of the ECOWAS member-nations in the ECOWAS Charter, which allows for the free movement of persons, goods and services, promotes banditry in the West African sub-region. However, Akanle & Omobowale (2015) did not link economic depression to banditry in the West African sub-region. Mohammed & Abdullahi (2021) emphasized that rural banditry in Nigeria is economically driven by the desperate desire among unemployed youth to accumulate wealth and politically motivated by the quest to intimidate and kill a person or group of persons for political and ideological reasons. Thus, Mohammed & Abdullahi (2021) did not see the issue of identity politics and inter-group relations as drivers of rural banditry. Abdulrahman (2020) maintains that the weak capacity of the state, poverty, unemployment and failure of leadership drive rural banditry in Nigeria. However, Abdulrahman (2020) did not look at the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons, goods and services as a contributory factor to explaining rural banditry in the West African region.

Ademola (2021) enumerated poverty, conflict over depleted land resources between farmers and pastoralists, inequality, weak security forces, arms proliferation, the failure of local justice, and ethnic division as motivators of criminal activities such as rural banditry. Nonetheless, Ademola (2021) did not see the politics of cattle warlordism as an explanatory variable that promotes rural banditry. Suleiman (2019) argues that the effects of climate change, which result in decreasing amount of rainfall, scarcity of arable land and pasture, de-industrialization, abject poverty, porous borders, collapse of state institutions and conflict over illegal gold mining in Sokoto and Zamfara as causes of the rise in criminality and banditry in Northwest Nigeria.

However, Suleiman (2019) ignored how the failure of local justice and ethnic division could drive crime like banditry. According to the report of the United Nations Office for West Africa and Sahel (2018, cited in Olapeju & Peter, 2020), the struggle over water resources, pasture and animal feeds accounts for the spread of banditry in Mauritania. The UNOWAS report, as quoted in Olapeju & Peter (2020), also stated that weak state institutions, insurrection, and anarchy compelled pastoralists into religious extremism, leading to banditry in Northern Mali. Olapeju and Peter (2020) submit that bad

governance, acute unemployment problems, weak security system, poverty and arms proliferation are promoters of rural banditry. Nevertheless, Olapeju & Peter (2020) did not view scarcity of land, pasture and de-industrialization as factors responsible for rural banditry.

Methodology

This article is predicated on how cultural homogeneity between Nigeria and her neighbors induce armed banditry in Northwest, Nigeria. The study adopted qualitative approach through rapid review of available security reports, reports of international development agencies, and other secondary literature on cultural homogeneity and armed banditry. The participants in FGD were community and youth leaders/victims of kidnapping and robbery. The FGD were conducted in order to have an in-depth grasp of the impact of cultural homogeneity on rural banditry in Nigeria. Each of the FGD comprised 5–10 persons, hence, there were a total of 104 participants in the FGD. The FGDs were adopted to glean information on how cultural homogeneity between Nigeria and her neighbors induce rural banditry in Northwest Nigeria. Data were collected between January and June, 2022. We made use of table for the presentation of data and analysis. The final manuscript was subjected to check by the co-authors in order to improve the credibility and validity of qualitative interpretations.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for explanation adopted for this study is anchored on opportunity-structure theory. The theory is a branch of structural-functional theory linked to the works of Tilly, 1970; 1978; McCarthy & Zald, 1973; Gamson, 1975 Marx, 1976 and Scocpol, 1979 Horowitz, 2001; Wilkson, 2004; Scaccol, 2007; and Orji 2018 etc. these scholars associated the possibility of outbreak of violence to the presence or absence of opportunity structure that favours the organization and mobilization of violent attitude. In other words, scholars of this perspective observe that no matter how discontented or disenchanting a group of people may become they won't engage in violence unless and until opportunity structures that triggers violent behaviours present themselves. These include; those who are willing to participate in violence, weak State capacity to provide security, proliferation of small arms and light weapons and availability of well-connected elites to the social network of violence.

Therefore, the possibility that individuals could or could not be mobilized to take part in violence is dependent to a greater extent on the presence or absence of relative structures such as socio-cultural, economic and political that favours violence. As such where these conditions are not available; aggrieved individuals may decide to seek or explore some other peaceful options to address their annoyance. The theory is suitable for this study because it aptly explains the conditions that provided the avenue for the mobilization and the rise of banditry in Northwest, Nigeria which this study investigates. The study found that availability of cultural homogeneity between Nigeria and her neighbors attracts criminal elements to Nigeria and the availability of unmanned forests encourages the perpetration of crime such as kidnapping, robbery and rape.

Findings and Discussions

Nigeria has become vulnerable to threats than any African country. Probably because Nigeria is the most populous and economically attractive country in Africa therefore people of different works of life come into Nigeria for socio-economic purposes from across the globe. Virtually all migrants and security stakeholders agree that its frontiers are porous and unsecured. It has become a daily occurrence as we read on national dailies of migration related crime committed by Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike at the borders and off the borders. Geography, demography, political and socio-economic circumstances are advanced for the peculiar nature and process of the threats facing the nation. The inherited frontiers have been a major challenge facing its security to monitor, to recognize and to defend it against unacceptable incursions, migration or activities. Beginning from political independence in 1960 the country's internal and external frontier has come under siege by trans-border crime such as child/drug trafficking, vehicle theft, gun running, smuggling, illegal migration, illegal lumbering, bunkering of petroleum products and the transhumance of cattle across national boundaries regardless of regulatory laws. Others include trans-border terrorism, hostage taking of expatriates, expatriate quota abuse violation of migration laws and money laundering.

This heinous crime has aggravated existing ethno-religious and political crises in the country. Several lives and property worth millions have been lost. The more recent was banditry. Foreign nationals are seen among those perceived to be embarking on banditry in Nigeria and the Nigeria police have alleged that the criminals got their supply from Afghanistan. Conflicts induced by migration have resulted in the reduction of revenues accruable to the government, also foreign direct investment, infrastructural facilities and the capacity of the state to provide dividend of democracy to its citizens. Many Nigerians and immigrants now live in constant fear of insecurity especially armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom and other forms of criminality, thus has led some Nigerians to call for state and community police in a bid to reducing the mounting threats especially in rural areas. Diaspora Nigerians has become hesitant to visit home due to the state of insecurity, this is not unconnected to how a few of them have either been killed or kidnapped while visiting home.

The mere fact that Nigeria and her neighboring countries, such as the Republic of Niger, Chad and Mali, shared common cultural identities such as similar religious beliefs (Islam), languages (Hausa, Fulani and Fulbe), common occupation (pastoralism) and shared ethnic identity account for the increased in rural banditry in North West Nigeria. This is because the states in the North West, our focal area, are more homogeneous regarding religion, language and ethnicity. For instance, the Republic of Niger, which borders Nigeria from the North West, has the Hausa and Fulani as the largest ethnic groups. The Hausa constitute 54.1%, while the Fulani constitute 9.2% in Northern Nigeria, especially the North West. Therefore, there is a strong religious affinity between Northerners and the bandits and terrorists threatening Nigeria's security, as General Tukur Buratai, former Nigerian Chief of Army Staff made us believe, then it is logical to argue that there is a nexus between cultural homogeneity and the rural banditry ravaging

the North West. For instance, between 2011 and 2018, over five hundred (500) communities and villages, thirteen thousand (13,000) hectares of land have been devastated, and two thousand eight hundred and thirty-five people lost their lives to bandit's attacks, and over two hundred thousand (200,000) people have been internally displaced (Suleiman, 2019).

Furthermore, from 30th October to 5th November 2022, Nextier reports that the bandits ravaged North West and had the second highest casualties by region, with 15 deaths, representing 21.4 per cent of the casualty toll for the week (Nextier, 2022). Similarly, between March 31, 2018 and January 2022, over 7000 cattle were rustled across the five hot-spot states of bandits' attacks. For example, in Zamfara state alone, on 9th January 2022, bandits attacked Rafin Danya, Barayar Zaki, Rafin Gero and Kurfa villages of Anka and Bukkuyum Local Governments Area of the state. They rustled about 2,000 cattle, killing over 140 people (This-Day, 2022). Therefore, it is common sense to believe that it would be very difficult if not impossible, for bandits seen as alien Fulani to rustle such many cattle without the collaboration of the local Fulani. Therefore, the common preoccupation with cattle rearing between Northerners and Nigeriene Fulani contributed to the spread of cattle rustling in North West Nigeria. Table 1 indicated the number of attacks and casualties emanating from bandits in North West, Nigeria.

Table 1: Reported Incidences of Major Bandits Attacks in North West Nigeria, 2018-2022

S/N	Place/ LGA of attacks	State	Dates	Casualties	Daily
1	Bawan Daji village of Anka LGA	Zamfara	Mar 31, 2018	30 people killed	The Punch
2	Kawaye village in the Bagega community of Anka LGA	Zamfara	Mar 1, 2019	21 people killed 40, Others kidnapped	The Nation
3	Klahu, Tsage and Geeri Communities in Rabah LGA	Sokoto	June 9, 2019	25 people killed	The Punch
4	Kankara and Danmusa LGA	Katsina	July 4, 2019	11 people killed	The Punch
5	Tsayu village of Jibiya LGA	Katsina	Aug 19, 2019	Four persons killed	The Nation
6	Babban Rafi village in Gummi LGA & Makosa village of Zurmi LGA	Zamfara	Jan 17, 2020	31 persons killed	The Punch
7	villages in Igabi and Giwa LGA	Kaduna	March 2, 2020	50 people killed Many injured	Tribune
8	Kankara, Danmusa, Dutsinma, Masawa & Safana LGAs	Katsina	April 18, 2020	40 persons were killed, several others injured	The Punch
9	Kurechin Atai, Kurecin Giye, Kurechin Duste, Makauwachi and Daule Villages	Kastina	April 20, 2020	47 people killed in all the attacks	The Punch
10	Akwunakwo, Kabirasha and Damba villages in Chikun LGA	Kaduna	April 24, 2020	7 persons killed, 1 person Abducted	The Nation
11	Villages in Danmusa, Dutsinma & Safana LGAs	Katsina	May 2, 2020	36 people killed, 3 abducted, several others injured & property worth millions of naira destroyed	The Punch
12	Faskari and Sabuwa LGA	Kastina	May 6, 2020	5 persons killed, 1 abducted & a DPO shot	Tribune
13	3 villages in Tsafe LGA	Zamfara	May 20, 2020	12 people killed & several cattle rustled	The Punch
14	Maru & Talata-Mafara LGA	Zamfara	June 5, 2020	12 persons killed	The Punch
15	3 villages of Jema'a & Kaura LGA	Kaduna	July, 26, 2020	10 people killed	The Nation
16	Zamfarawa community in Batsari LGA	Kastina	Aug. 9, 2020	2 persons & 8 Bandits killed	The Punch
17	Udawa farming village	Kaduna	Sept. 13, 2020	16 persons were Kidnapped	Vanguard
18	Police Station in Tangaza LGA	Sokoto	Sept. 18, 2020	DPO, 1 Inspector Were killed & 2 Women kidnapped	Vanguard
19	Kaduna-Abuja highway & Gidan Zaki, Zangon Katf LGA	Kaduna	Nov.17, 2020	8 ABU students abducted, District Head & son killed	Vanguard
20	Kanoma District, Maru LGA	Zamfara	Nov.23, 2020	11m,17worshipers abducted	Vanguard
21	Tashar Bama, Dogun Muaze & Unguwar Maigayya communities in Sabuwa LGA	Kastina	Dec. 1, 2020	8 people killed, 30 others kidnapped	Vanguard
22	Kasuwan Magani town in Kajuru LGA	Kaduna	Dec. 5, 2020	1 person lost his life	Vanguard
23	Government Science Sec. Sch (GSSS) in Kankara LGA	Katsina	Dec.11, 2020	about 344 students were kidnapped	Guardian
24	Villages in Idasu, Giwa LGA	Kaduna	Feb. 24, 2021	18 persons killed	Premium Times
25	3 villages in Danmusa LGA	Katsina	Feb. 25, 2021	20 people killed Several others injured	Premium Times
26	Govt. Girl Sec. School Jangebe, Talata Mafara LGA	Zamfara	Feb. 26, 2021	317 students were Abducted	Guardian
27	Federal College of Forestry Mech. Afaka, Igabi LGA	Kaduna	Mar 11, 2021	39 students were Kidnapped	Daily Trust
28	Greenfield University, Kasarami village in Chukun LGA	Kaduna	April 20, 2021	20 students & 2 staff were abducted	Vanguard
29	Koro, Zutu, Kimpi, Gaya Dimi, Rafin Gora & Iguenge villages in Danko/Wasagu LGAs	Kebbi	June 3, 2021	88 people killed	Vanguard
30	5 villages of Zurmi LGA	Zamfara	June 11, 2021	50 people were killed, and over 1000 persons were Displaced	Blueprint
31	Fed. Govt. College, Birni Yauri	Kebbi	June 14, 2021	1 policeman killed, 80 students abducted	Guardian

32	Bethel Baptist High School, Damishi village in Chikun LGA	Kaduna	July 5, 2021	121 students were kidnapped	Vanguard
33	Goran Namaye village of Maradun LGA	Zamfara	Aug. 23, 2021	4 persons killed, 50 others kidnapped	This-Day
34	Sabon Garin Tsaskiya village in Safana LGA	Katsina	Nov, 12, 2021	11 villagers abducted several others injured	Vanguard
35	Gidan Duka village, Kankara LGA	Katsina	Nov, 14, 2021	Several domestic animals rustled	Premium Times
36	Geba, Gidan Kaura, Kura, Bayauri, Gana & Duma Villages, Gusau LGA	Zamfara	Dec. 27, 2021	33 people abducted Hundreds of villagers were displaced	Vanguard
37	Rafin Danya, Barayar Zaki, Rafin Gero & Kurfa Villages in Anka and Bukkuyum LGAs	Zamfara	Jan 9, 2022	Over 140 people killed, about 2000 cattle were rustled	This-Day
38	Dankade town in Danko, Wasagu LGA	Kebbi	Jan 14, 2022	17 people killed Several others were Abducted	Premium Times
39	Guya village & Galadima Community, Bakori LGA	Katsina	Feb 8, 2022	8 persons killed, 4 injured, village Head & 3 others kidnapped	Guardian
40	Kaduna bound train	Kaduna	March 28, 2022	8 persons killed, 168 others kidnapped	Vanguard
41	Damri, Kalahe & Sabon Garin villages of Bakura district	Zamfara	May 8, 2022	48 people killed	Vanguard
42	Dogon Noma, Ungwan Sarki & Ungwan Maikori villages of Kajuru LGA	Kaduna	June 10, 2022	32 persons murdered	The Nation
43	Kango & Dangulbi communities in Maru LGA	Zamfara	July 10, 2022	18 people were killed & several others displayed	Premium Times
44	Mosque in Ruwan Jema town, Bukkuyum LGA	Zamfara	Sep. 24, 2022	15 persons killed	Reuters
45	Shantalawa village in Dutsin-Ma LGA	Katsina	Oct. 16, 2022	15 people lost their lives, 6 injured & 191 others displayed	Daily Trust

Source: Compiled by the researcher with data generated from Nigerian Dailies (2022)

From the data generated for this study, it could be deduced that between 2011 and 2018, over 1,100 people lost their lives to several bandits' attacks in the North West. Similarly, between March 1, 2019 and February 8, 2022, about 4180 people were killed by bandits in five states of the North West: Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. Similarly, between 2011 and December 27, 2021, over four hundred and forty-eight thousand (448,000) people have been internally displaced, and more than 3,560 cattle were rustled across North West states. Again, Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina and Kaduna recorded the higher incidences of bandits' attacks in the North West region. The prevalence of attacks in Sokoto and Zamfara could be attributed to the forested lands that make it difficult to penetrate, poor governance, and high poverty rate, rendering many unemployed youths vulnerable to recruitment by bandits groups in the region. In the case of Kaduna and Katsina states, the frequency of bandits' attacks is attributable to porous borders between the states that make bandits flee from Sokoto and Zamfara in search of haven. In another development, in Kaduna state, bandits' attacks have mainly occurred in Chikun, Giwa, Birni-Gwari, Igabi and Kajuru local government areas. In Katsina state, attacks have occurred mainly in Kankara, Dutsinma, Faskari, Masawa, Barsari, Safana and Danmusa local government areas. In the case of Sokoto state, most attacks have occurred in Goronyo, Gada, Isa, Sabon Birni, Tureta and Rabah. While in Zamfara state, bandits were more offensive in Anka, Maru, Maradun, Bukkuyum, Talata-Mafara and Zurmi local government areas.

Conclusion

The attacks by bandits on the Nigerian State have continued unabated and have become a disturbing attribute of socio-cultural and political life in the North West. The hostility ranging from cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, raids on villages, markets and communities, raped, killing and destruction of means of livelihood associated with the violence is most troublesome. The increasing humanitarian crisis arising from the rural banditry in the North West left many in doubt about the capability of the Nigerian state to control insecurity in the country. This has led to poor deployment of security surveillance and personnel by the Nigerian state in managing insecurity in the country, leading to rural banditry in the North West. Therefore, this paper found that cultural homogeneity between Nigeria and her neighbours induced the rural banditry in the North West. This paper also found out that the Nigerian state's poor deployment of security surveillance and personnel in controlling insecurity in the country increased rural banditry in the North West. The paper concludes that Nigeria, as a post-colonial capitalist state, lacks the decisive swing in the development of security strategies away from government ingenuities and public security to private ownership and market-based allocation of resources and private-based security provisioning which has undermined the commitment of resources to public security policies for the nation. From the preceding conclusion and on the strength of the findings, this paper recommended that there should be formulation and enforcement of the stringent policy on migration by the Nigerian State to check the influx of migrants, which encourages groups to promote and uphold their cultural identities, leading to organized crime such as rural banditry. There should also be adequate policing of Nigerian borders by deploying borderline security surveillance systems and personnel to prevent and control arms proliferation.

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