Terrorism and Banditry: Implications for Nigeria's
Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

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Crossref

Abstract

Purpose: This research examines the implications of terrorism and banditry on Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Methodology: Employing a content analysis approach and drawing from qualitative data from secondary sources, the study highlights the extensive ramifications of terrorism and banditry, encompassing loss of lives and property, displacement of people, economic disruption, damage to Nigeria's reputation, and political instability. The research underscores the urgency for the Nigerian government to take decisive action in addressing these challenges, fostering economic growth, rebuilding investor trust, and enhancing the country's image.

Findings: The research findings hold practical implications for policymakers and security agencies, urging a unified and comprehensive approach in confronting terrorism and banditry in Nigeria. The research underscores the significance of addressing the psychological impact on affected individuals by providing essential mental health support, facilitating their recovery, and fostering social cohesion. The Realist theory guides the study, emphasizing the prioritization of state security and interests in an anarchic international system, offering valuable insights into comprehending the implications of terrorism and banditry on Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Recommendations: To effectively combat terrorism and banditry, the study recommends reinforcing national security through increased funding, improved intelligence gathering and addressing socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality through targeted policies. Emphasizing international cooperation and strengthening governance and accountability are identified as vital aspects in combating the cross-border nature of these threats. The recommended strategies offer a roadmap to effectively combat these security challenges, safeguarding Nigeria's stability, peace, and economic prosperity. By implementing these measures, practitioners can work towards restoring the nation's security, rebuilding confidence, and enhancing its position in the international community.

Keywords: *Terrorism, Banditry, Nigeria, Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is grappling with critical security challenges that pose significant threats to its sovereignty and territorial integrity. At global, regional, and local levels, terrorism and banditry have emerged as pressing concerns that demand immediate attention (Mutasa & Muchemwa, 2022; Ebonine, 2022). Terrorism, characterized by violent acts aimed at intimidating or coercing a government or civilian population, has not only affected Nigeria but also has broader implications for international security (Carpenter, 2018). Banditry, involving robbery and plundering with the use of violence, adds to the complexity of security issues within Nigeria's borders (Richardson, 2019). The impact of terrorism and banditry in Nigeria reverberates beyond its borders, drawing the attention of the international community (Yusuf & Mohd, 2022; Akingbe, 2022). Transnational terrorist organizations, such as Boko Haram and its affiliation with the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), have been responsible for heinous acts of violence and insurgency, creating security concerns not only for Nigeria but also for neighboring countries (Abiodun et al., 2019). This interconnectedness highlights the need for regional and global cooperation to combat terrorism and its spillover effects (Ehiane & Mngomezulu, 2018).

Regionally, the prevalence of terrorism and banditry poses a significant threat to stability and peace in West Africa (Badewa, 2022; Ejiofor, 2022). Nigeria's proximity to other fragile states in the region exacerbates security challenges, as these groups can exploit weak governance and porous borders to carry out their activities (Sunday & Emmanuel, 2021). The rise of armed groups engaging in banditry further exacerbates regional instability, leading to cross-border criminal activities, arms trafficking, and displacement of communities (Mukhtar & Abdullahi, 2022). Collaborative efforts among neighboring countries and regional organizations are crucial to address the cross-border nature of these threats (Ismail & Rabi, 2022; Samuel & Odunayo, 2019). Within Nigeria, the implications of terrorism and banditry have been deeply felt across various aspects of society (Nzubechukwu et al., 2022; Dami, 2021). These threats manifest in the form of bombings, kidnappings, armed robbery, and other violent activities (Sunday & Emmanuel, 2021). Apart from the immediate loss of lives and property, these acts of violence disrupt essential services, hamper economic development, and instill fear among the civilian population (Dami, 2021). Additionally, the threats posed by banditry impact agriculture, trade, and critical infrastructure, hindering Nigeria's progress and economic growth (Nte et al., 2021).

The Nigerian government has made considerable efforts to combat these security challenges; however, the effectiveness of these measures has been limited (Ugwueze & Onuoha, 2020). Factors such as corruption, inadequate security infrastructure, and socio-economic disparities have contributed to the persistence of these threats (Nte et al., 2021). Addressing terrorism and banditry requires a multi-faceted approach, including military response, intelligence sharing, socio-economic development, and community engagement to safeguard the stability, development, and security of Nigeria and its neighbors (Jah et al., 2022; Ubanu, 2022; Joshua & Chidozie, 2021).

Conceptual Clarification

Terrorism

Terrorism is a global issue that has caused significant harm to individuals, societies, and states worldwide. The statement "Terrorism refers to the use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims" is widely accepted and backed by empirical evidence (Carpenter, 2018). Terrorist attacks aim to create fear and panic among the population and achieve political goals. The impact of terrorism can be severe, leading to human casualties, economic damage,

and erosion of civil liberties and human rights (Repucci & Slipowitz, 2021). While counterterrorism measures can disrupt terrorist activities, they can also generate resentment among local populations, leading to further radicalization (Ilyas & Athwal, 2021). Preventing and responding to terrorism requires a nuanced and multidisciplinary approach that safeguards human rights and democratic values (O'Connor et al., 2021).

Banditry

Banditry refers to organized criminal activities involving violence and coercion, such as robbery, kidnapping, and extortion (Richardson, 2019). Criminal groups engage in these activities to generate revenue, leading to significant social and economic consequences (Agnew, 2020). The use of violence and coercion is a common tactic used by criminal groups engaged in banditry (Okoli & Nwangwu, 2022). Counter-banditry measures, such as law enforcement and judicial reform, can have mixed results (Obi & Iwuoha, 2023). Overall, banditry is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that requires a nuanced and multidisciplinary approach to effectively prevent and respond to while safeguarding human rights and democratic values.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is a fundamental concept in international relations that refers to a state's authority to govern itself without external interference (Lee, 2018). Sovereignty is subject to internal and external constraints and has evolved over time, reflecting changing political, economic, and social conditions (Keohane, 2019). The impact of globalization on sovereignty is complex, with both positive and negative effects (Kobrin, 2020). The statement is widely accepted and empirically supported, and sovereignty requires a multidisciplinary approach to effectively understand and address its implications (Walter, 2021). Governments, policymakers, and civil society organizations must work together to develop effective strategies for promoting and safeguarding sovereignty while addressing challenges posed by the changing global landscape (Walker et al., 2020).

Territorial Integrity

Territorial integrity is a fundamental principle of international law that ensures the sanctity of a state's borders and territories (van der Vyver, 2021). Empirical evidence supports the significance of territorial integrity in preserving peace and stability in the international system, with violations often leading to conflicts and instability (Väyrynen, 2023). Territorial integrity is closely linked to the concept of self-determination, which is a subject of ongoing debate (Stavenhagen, 2019). The principle of territorial integrity is subject to external and internal constraints, with international law and norms as external constraints, and domestic political institutions and social factors as internal constraints (Danchin et al., 2020). The impact of globalization and technological advancements on territorial integrity is also a subject of ongoing debate (Agnew, 2020). A multidisciplinary approach is necessary to effectively understand and address its implications.

Research Question

What are the implications of terrorism and banditry for Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity?

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to examine the implications of terrorism and banditry for Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Theoretical Framework

This research will be guided by the Realist theory. The Realist theory is a dominant theoretical framework in international relations that posits that states are the primary actors in the international system (Holm & Sørensen, 2019). This theory asserts that the behaviour of states is driven by the pursuit of power and self-interest, which creates a competitive and conflictual environment in international relations (Sørensen et al., 2022). Realists believe that states are rational actors that seek to maximize their interests and security in a world of anarchy, where there is no global government or authority to regulate state behaviour (Walt, 2018).

In the context of this research, the Realist theory is particularly relevant as it provides a useful lens through which to understand the implications of terrorism and banditry for Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity (Kallah et al., 2022). Terrorism and banditry are major security threats to Nigeria, which have the potential to destabilize the country, undermine its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and challenge the authority of the Nigerian state (Abiodun et al., 2019). The Realist theory suggests that states will respond to such threats by prioritizing their own security and interests, and that they may resort to the use of force to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity (Azimov, 2022).

Moreover, the Realist theory emphasizes the importance of sovereignty and territorial integrity in maintaining international order and stability (Ahmed, 2020). Realists argue that the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is essential for preventing conflicts between states and promoting stability in the international system (Choi & Eun, 2018). Therefore, the Realist theory implies that any threat to Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be taken seriously, and that the Nigerian state must take appropriate measures to protect itself from such threats.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Terrorism and banditry are significant security challenges in Nigeria that pose threats to the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity (Sunday & Emmanuel, 2021; Abiodun et al., 2019). The root causes of terrorism and banditry in Nigeria have been attributed to poverty, inequality, and unemployment (Ighoshemu & Ogidiagba, 2022). These challenges are more prevalent in rural areas, where the lack of basic amenities and opportunities for economic growth have made it easier for extremist groups and bandits to recruit vulnerable youths (Adenike, 2021). The government's inadequate response to these challenges has also contributed to the persistence of the problem (Demi, 2021).

Boko Haram, an Islamist extremist group, has been responsible for numerous terrorist attacks in north-eastern Nigeria, resulting in the loss of lives, displacement of millions of people, and the destruction of property (Demi, 2021). The group has also expanded its operations to neighbouring countries, posing threats to regional security (Foyou et al., 2018). In response, the Nigerian government has launched counter-insurgency operations, but these have been met with limited success due to the group's resilience (Tella, 2018). Banditry, which is prevalent in Nigeria's northwest and central regions, involves armed groups responsible for kidnapping, robbery, and cattle rustling (Olapeju & Peter, 2021). These groups have formed alliances with terrorist organizations, making it difficult for the government to tackle the security challenges (Ojo et al., 2023). The increasing rate of banditry has led to the displacement of communities and an escalation of inter-communal conflicts (Demi, 2021).

To combat terrorism and banditry, the Nigerian government has implemented several strategies. These include military operations aimed at eliminating terrorist groups and bandits, the use of drones for surveillance and intelligence gathering, and the establishment of the

Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development to address the root causes of the problem (Ojo, 2020). Additionally, the government has increased its collaboration with neighbouring countries, such as Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, to address cross-border terrorism and banditry (Samuel & Odunayo, 2019). Several experts have recommended that the Nigerian government address the root causes of terrorism and banditry by creating job opportunities, improving basic amenities in rural areas, and enhancing intelligence gathering and sharing mechanisms. They also suggest that the government should prioritize human security and work towards building trust and collaboration between communities and the security forces (Vande, 2023; Aleyomi & Nwagwu, 2023).

3.0 METHODOLGY

The research employed a content analysis approach to investigate the problem of terrorism and banditry in Nigeria (Renz et al., 2018). The methodology integrated conceptual evaluation, theme analysis, and theoretical presentation to analyse qualitative information gathered from secondary sources (Williams & Moser, 2019). The primary sources of data for this study were journals, websites, and written works, which were selected based on their relevance and pertinence to the research topic (Alexander, 2020). The data was analysed using a content analysis approach, which involved identifying themes and patterns in the data and interpreting them in light of the research question (Williams & Moser, 2019; Renz et al., 2018). In terms of ethical considerations, the study conducted a thorough examination of the relevant material to ensure the originality, credibility, and reliability of the research (Morgan, 2022).

4.0 FINDINGS

Terrorism and banditry are two major security challenges that Nigeria has been facing for several years. The implications of these challenges are numerous and far-reaching, affecting the social, economic, and political fabric of the country. Here are some of the implications of terrorism and banditry in Nigeria:

Loss of Lives and Properties

Terrorism and banditry have led to the loss of many lives and properties in Nigeria. For example, a total of around 1,635 terrorist attacks were reported to have occurred between 2018 and 2022 as shown in Figure 1 (TheCable, 2023; Akinloye, 2023; Sasu, 2022; Global Terrorism Database, 2018). In this period (2018 – 2022), thousands of people were killed (BusinessDay, 2022a), maimed, and injured in various attacks and kidnapping incidents (BusinessDay, 2022b; TheCable, 2022; Dataphyte, 2020), leading to widespread fear and insecurity among the populace (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). Furthermore, states such as Borno, Zamfara, Kanduna, Adamawa, Benue, Plateau and Yobe have been reported to be the most affected by deadly attacks carried out by the Boko Haram terrorist group between 2011 and 2022. The most affected of these states is Borno with 36,646 deaths, while the least affected was Yobe, with 3,176 deaths (Figure 4).
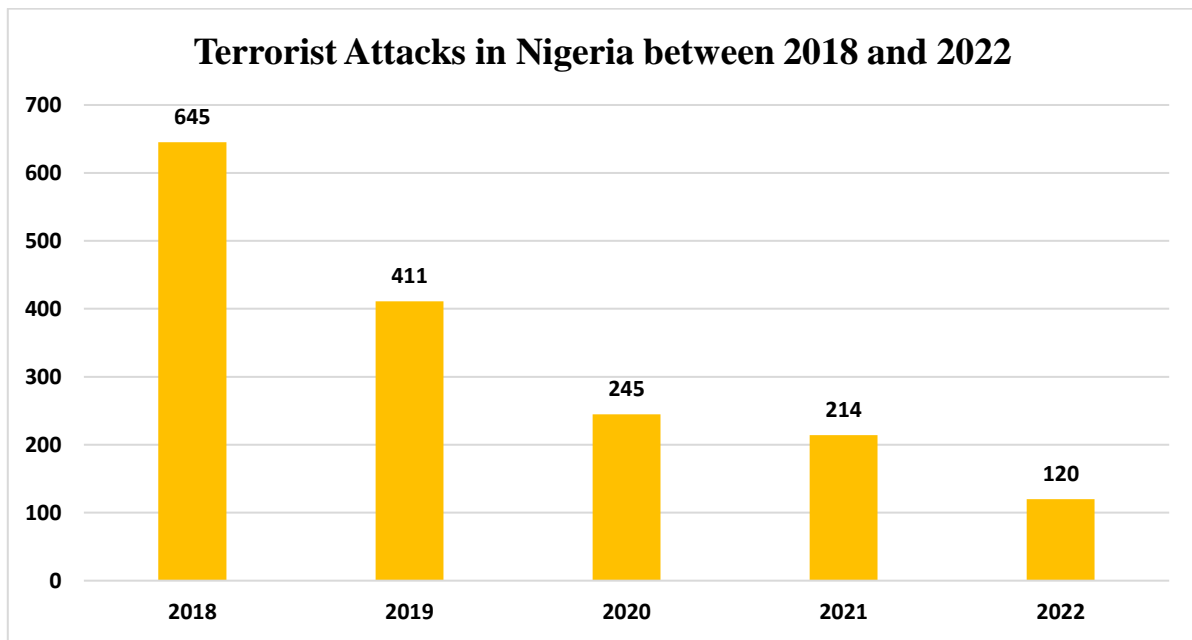
Terrorist Attacks in Nigeria between 2018 and 2022

Figure 1: Number of Reported Cases of Terrorist Attacks in Nigeria (2018 – 2022)

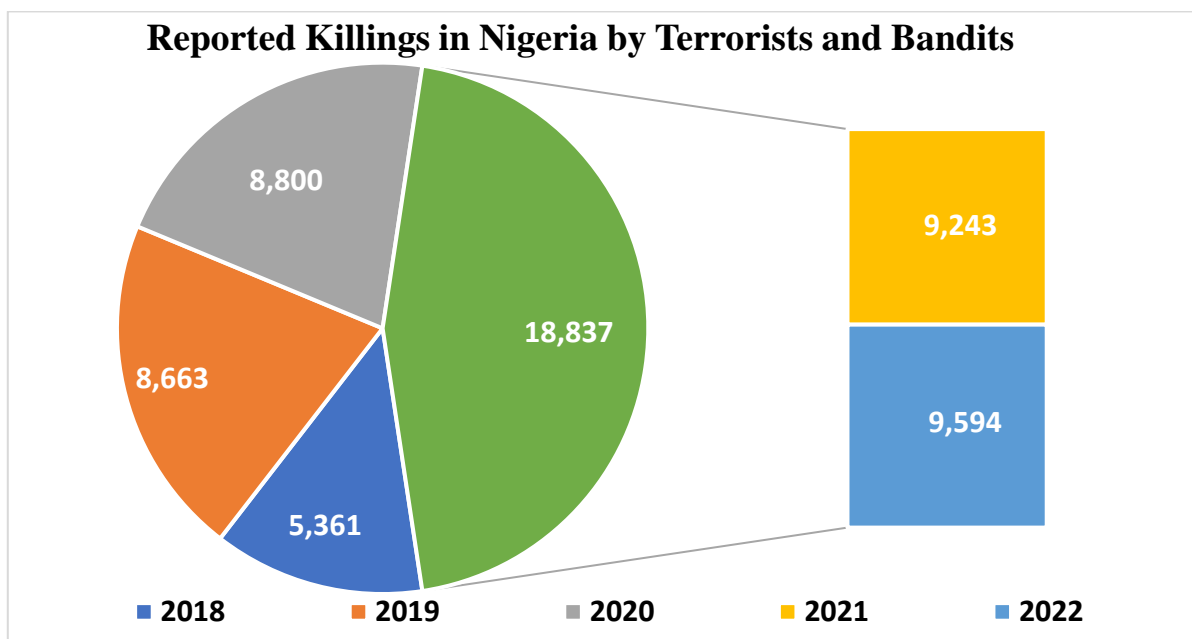## Reported Killings in Nigeria by Terrorists and Bandits

Figure 2: Number of Reported Cases of Deaths Caused by Terrorist and Bandit in Nigeria (2018 – 2022)
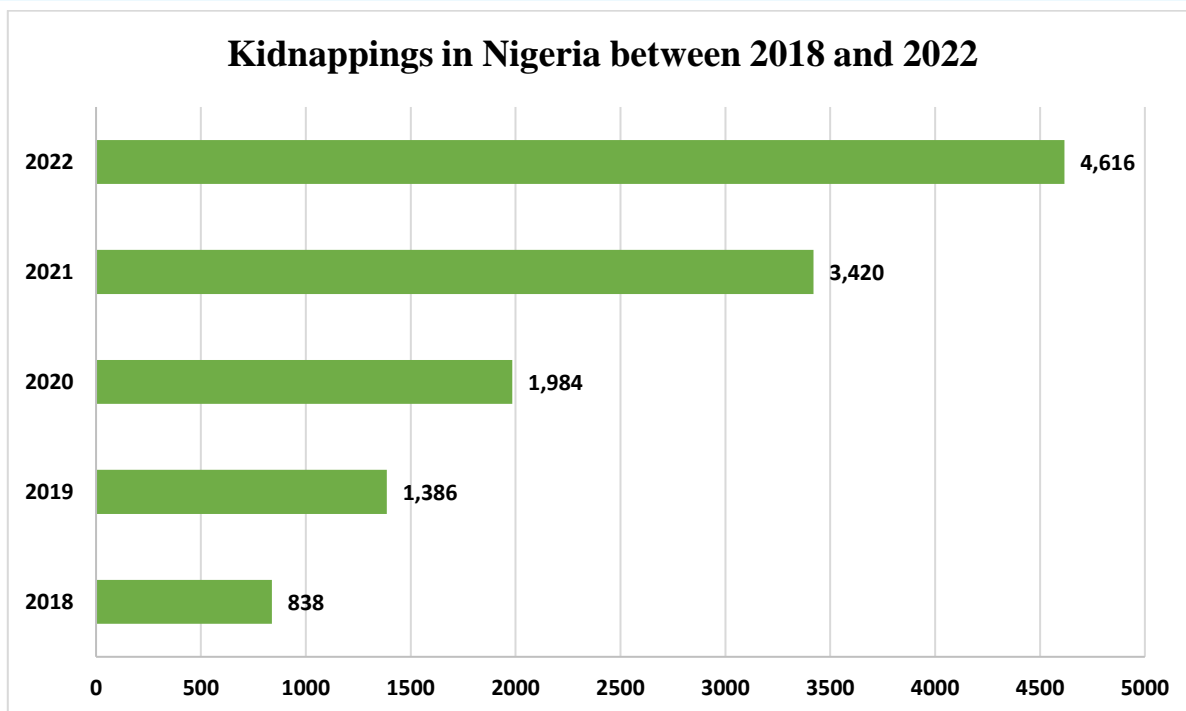
www.ajpojournals.org

Figure 3: Number of Reported Cases of Kidnappings by Bandits in Nigeria between 2018 and 2022
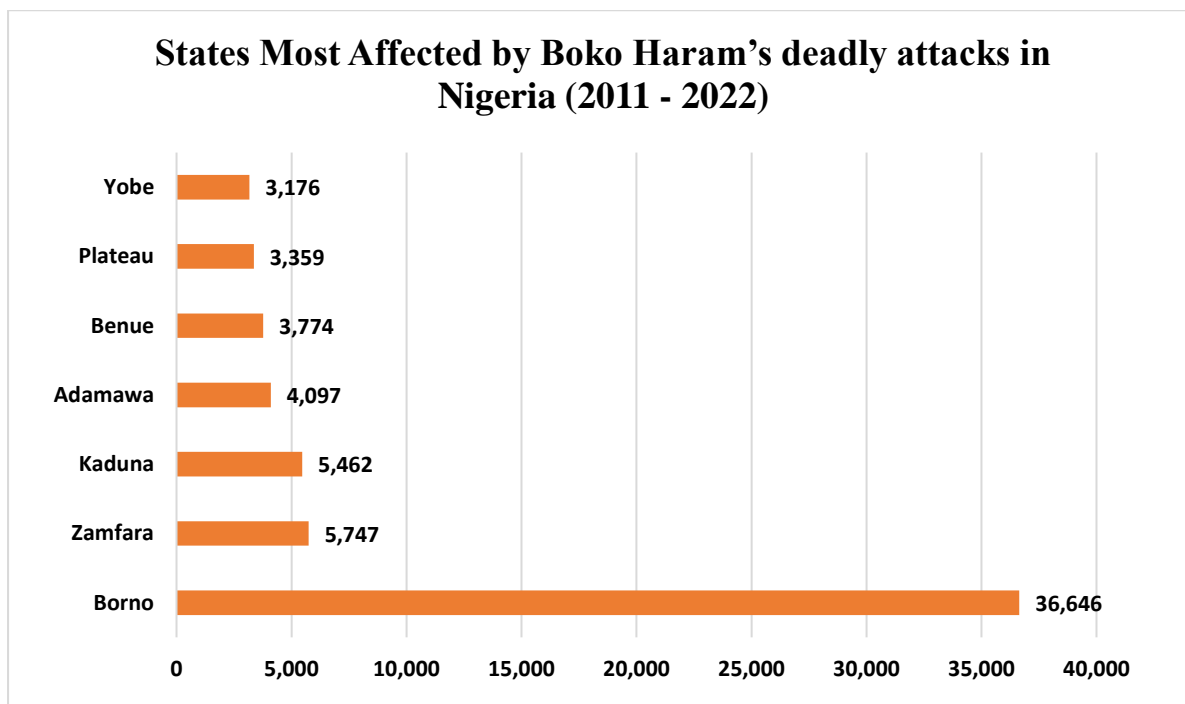

Figure 4: Number of Deaths Resulting from Boko Haram's Deadly Attacks in Nigeria
Source: Council of Foreign Relations © Statista 2022

Displacement of People

The displacement of people in Nigeria, caused by terrorists, bandits, and kidnappers, has become a humanitarian crisis (Dami, 2021). In the north-eastern part of Nigeria, over 2.2 million people were reported to have been displaced internally by Boko Haram conflict as of July 2022 (Figure 5). Over 1.8 million of the displaced persons were in Borno State as evident

by the areas of Boko Haram activities in Nigeria (Figure 6). In addition, the conflict resulted in the displacement of over 280,000 refugees from the Northeast into Cameroon, Chad, and Niger (UNHCR, 2022). In the north-west and north-central geopolitical zones of the country, around 1,087,875 individuals were reported to have been displaced internally by banditry and kidnapping incidents as of December, 2022 as shown in Figure 5 (OCHA, 2022). This made Nigeria the country with the highest number of IDPs in Africa and the second-highest globally (Ejiofor, 2022). Many are forced to live in overcrowded, makeshift refugee camps with limited access to basic amenities, leaving them vulnerable to diseases and health problems (UNHCR, 2022; OCHA, 2022). Children are among the most affected, forced to drop out of school (Ebonine, 2022). The crisis has also left many vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (Dami, 2021). The Nigerian government and international organizations are working to address the problem, but the efforts have been insufficient (Igbini, 2020).
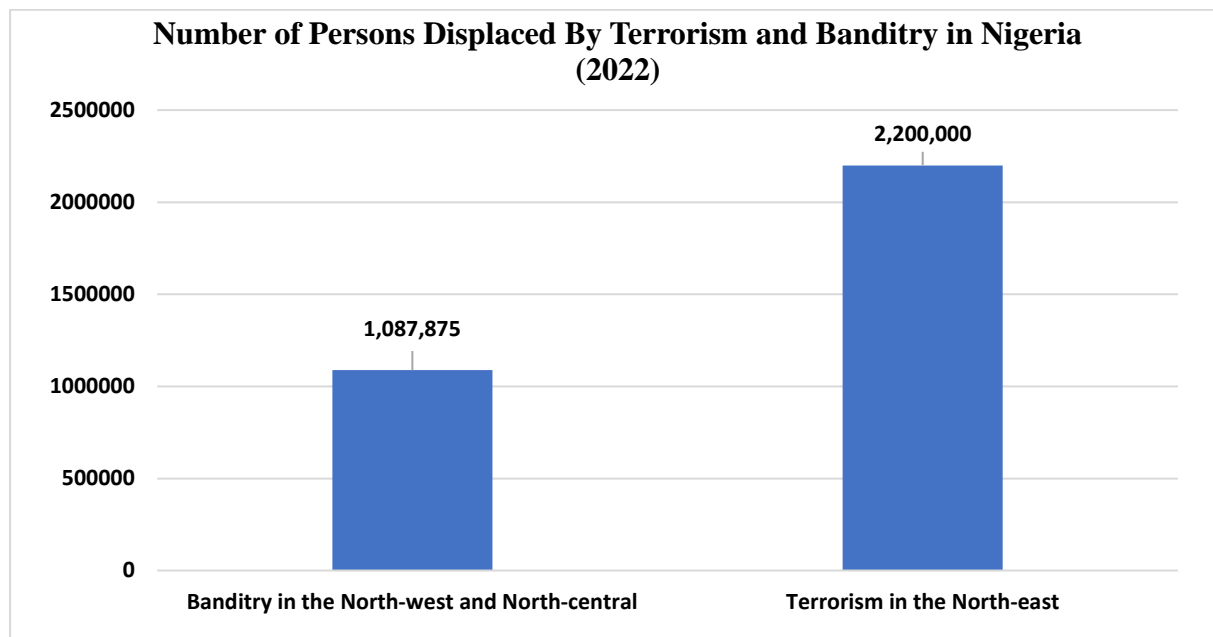

Figure 5: Number of People Displaced Internally by Terrorism and Banditry in Nigeria (2022)
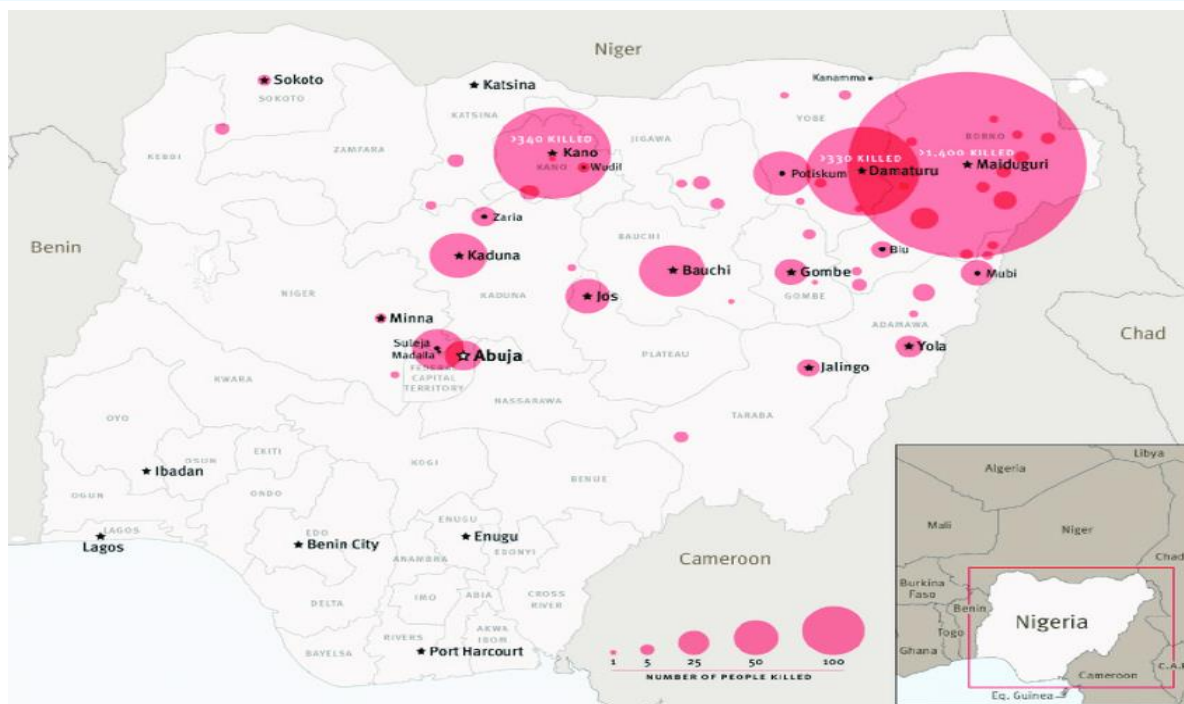
Figure 6: Map of Nigeria Indicating the Concentration of Boko Haram Attacks

Sources: John Emerson/Human Rights Watch

Economic Disruption

Terrorism and banditry in Nigeria have severe economic consequences, including direct and indirect costs such as the destruction of infrastructure and business disruptions (Yusuf & Mohd, 2022). This is particularly evident in the northern, north-central and some southern parts of the country, where farmers have been unable to cultivate their crops due to the activities of bandits and terrorists as shown in Figure 7and Figure 8 (Atim & Gbamwuan, 2022). The resulting food shortages and price hikes have had a significant impact on the economy (Ojo et al., 2023). According to Business Day (2020), violence by terrorist and bandits has cost Nigeria 1.3 trillion naira ($3.5 billion) over 13 years. In 2019, the economic cost of terrorism in Nigeria was estimated at $1.7 billion, as noted by Statista (2021). The worsening insecurity situation in Nigeria has further exacerbated the economic impact, forcing businesses to shut down and leading to job losses (Yusuf & Mohd, 2022). It is crucial for the government to address the security situation and restore investor confidence to promote economic growth and development in the country.

*States affected by clashes between herders and farmers
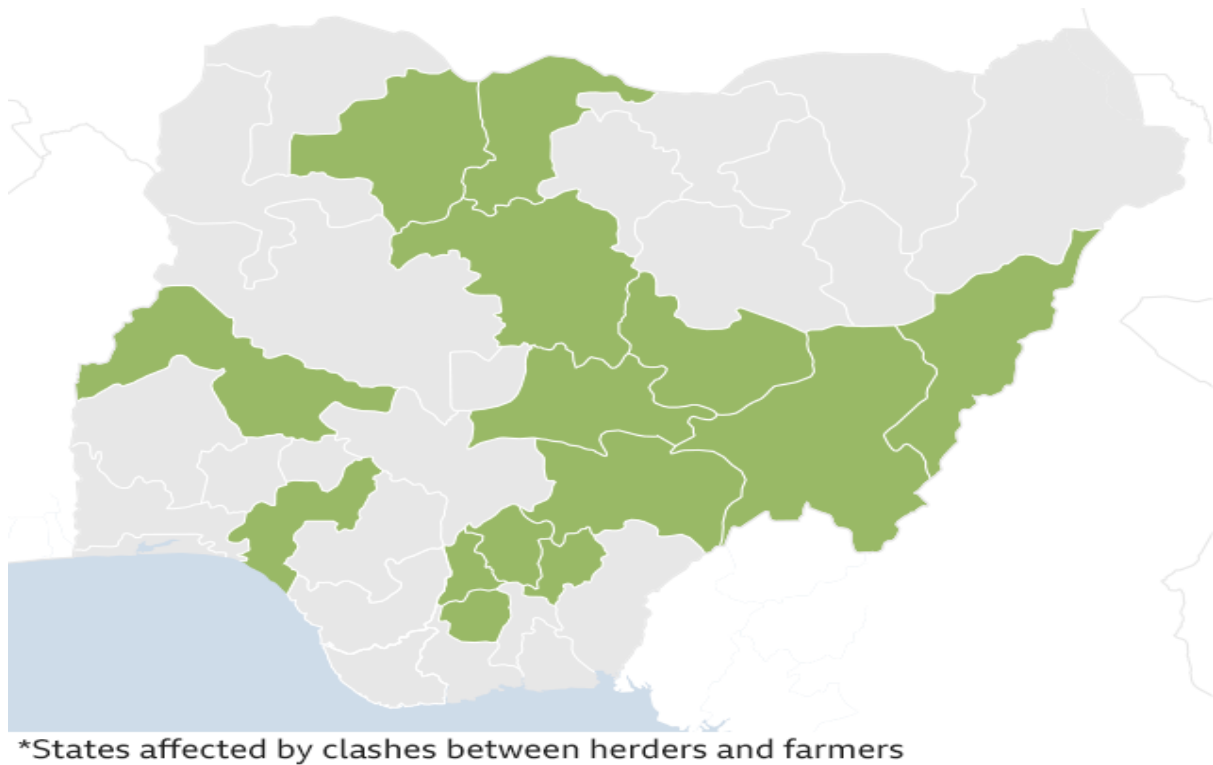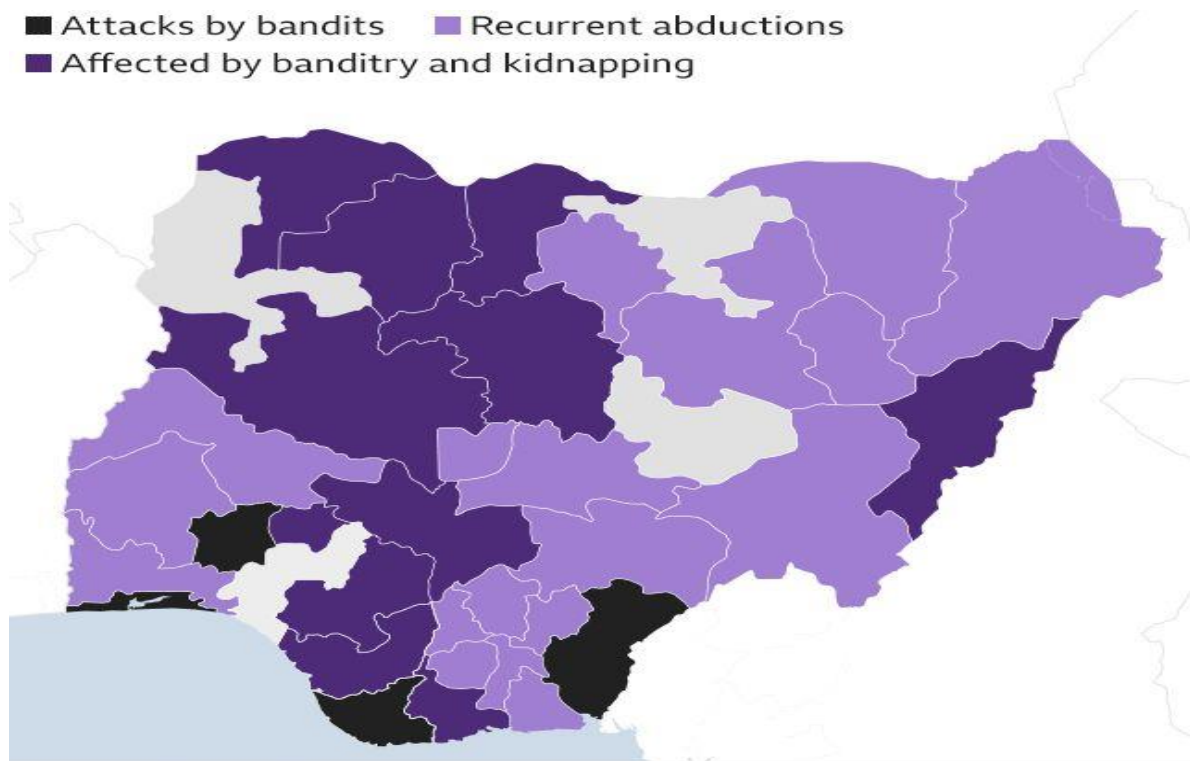
Source: ACLED, BBC Research

B B C

Figure 7: States Affected by Farmer-Herder Clashes in Nigeria

Source: ACLED, BBC Research

Source: ACLED, BBC Research

B B C

Figure 8: States by the Activities of Bandits in Nigeria

Source: ACLED, BBC Research

Damage to Nigeria's Image

The activities of terrorist groups, bandits, and kidnappers in Nigeria have negatively impacted the country's image both locally and internationally (Demi, 2021). This decline in image has led to several economic consequences, including reduced foreign investment, tourism, and other economic activities (Ibrahim et al., 2021). The damaged image of Nigeria has caused a decline in foreign investment as foreign investors fear losing their investments due to the heightened insecurity in the country. This has led to a significant reduction in foreign investment inflow, resulting in an adverse effect on the economy (Nwagboso, 2018). Additionally, the tourism sector has also been affected as the country's reputation as an unsafe destination has discouraged foreign tourists from visiting, leading to significant revenue loss (Ojo et al., 2023). The transportation of goods and services across the country has also been made more challenging, increasing costs and reducing productivity (Ladan, & Matawalli, 2021). As a result, the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has declined, further exacerbating the economic impact of the crisis (Epron, & Nwokeoma, 2019). The negative impact of these security challenges on Nigeria's image has also had far-reaching implications for the country's economic and social fabric (Mukhtar & Abdullahi, 2022).

Political Instability

The rise of terrorism, banditry, and kidnappings in Nigeria has caused political instability as the government has failed to address these security challenges (Demi, 2021). Citizens have lost faith in the government's ability to protect them, leading to widespread discontent and a sense of insecurity, which has resulted in political instability as citizens question the government's leadership and ability to protect their interests (Majekodunmi et al., 2022). The instability has negatively impacted the economy, causing a decline in foreign investment, tourism, and other economic activities (Epron & Nwokeoma, 2019). It has also caused societal fragmentation along ethnic and religious lines, undermining social cohesion (Sam-Ateki & Obomanu, 2022). The government's response to the security challenges has been criticized as inadequate, leading to calls for change (Ejiofor, 2022). The lack of political will to address the security challenges has further eroded trust in the government and the political system, perpetuating a vicious cycle of political instability and lack of security (Demi, 2021).

Psychological Impact

The impact of terrorism, banditry, and kidnappings in Nigeria is not limited to physical harm but also has a significant psychological impact on individuals and communities. People living in areas affected by violence often experience fear and insecurity, which can lead to mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] (Enokela, 2022). In Nigeria, the prevalence of mental health issues has risen due to the insecurity crisis, particularly in northern Nigeria, where PTSD rates have been found to be as high as 29.3% (Jörns-Presentati et al., 2021). Children are particularly vulnerable to the psychological impact of insecurity, with constant exposure to violence leading to developmental delays, behavioural issues, and difficulty in forming relationships (Odia, 2023). Furthermore, the lack of access to education due to the closure of schools in affected areas has also negatively affected their psychological well-being (Ebonine, 2022). The psychological impact of insecurity is not limited to those directly affected by violence, as the constant news of bombings, kidnappings, and attacks can lead to a sense of helplessness, fear, and hopelessness among the wider population, resulting in a breakdown of social cohesion (Demi, 2021).

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In conclusion, terrorism and banditry have significant implications for Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The research findings demonstrate that the impact of terrorism and banditry on Nigeria's economy, political stability, and social cohesion cannot be overstated. These threats have manifested in the form of bombings, kidnappings, armed robbery, and other violent activities, resulting in significant loss of lives and properties, displacement of people, economic disruption, damage to Nigeria's image, and political instability. Although the government has made several attempts to tackle these issues, the effectiveness of their efforts has been limited.

Recommendations

The problem of terrorism and banditry in Nigeria is a multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address. Strengthening national security through increased funding and improved intelligence gathering is crucial. Socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality should be addressed through policies aimed at reducing them, as they are major drivers of terrorism and banditry. Enhancing international cooperation and improving governance and accountability are also essential. It is crucial that the psychological impact of insecurity is addressed alongside the physical and economic impacts. Providing mental health support to those affected by insecurity is essential in helping them to recover and rebuild their lives. These recommendations require political will and commitment from the government, as well as the participation and support of civil society and other stakeholders.

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