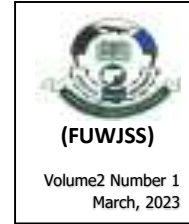


**COMPLICATING ROLE OF BANDITS  
INFORMANTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST  
BANDITRY IN ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA**

**Gerald E. Ezirim, Ph.D.**  
Department of Political Science  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka  
*ezirim@unn.edu.ng*



**Naziru Haruna**  
Department of Political Science,  
Gombe State University, Gombe  
*naziruharunagis@gmail.com*

**Fada Doupere Paul**  
Department of Political Science,  
Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State  
*kingdoupez83@gmail.com*

**Stanley Terkumbur Humbe**  
Department of Political Science,  
University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State - Nigeria  
*stanleyhumbe@gmail.com*

**Abstract**

The security forces and several willing individuals are strategizing to combat the menace of armed bandits in Zamfara State, Nigeria. However, some criminally-minded individuals in the state are crippling the efforts by providing information and other logistics to armed bandits. This development is a threat to national security and the effort to combat banditry in Zamfara State, Nigeria. Thus, this study investigates the role play by bandits-informants in the persistence of banditry in Zamfara State, Nigeria. The study used survey and documentary method of data collection and quantitative data were analyzed using simple descriptive techniques, while qualitative data were content analyzed. The study adopted the queer ladder theory (QLT) that holds that organized crime is an instrument for social climbing or socio-economic advancement. The study findings indicate that bandits-informants in Zamfara State, Nigeria supply information on security raids, attacks or counter attacks, food items, fuel, sale of stolen properties, arms and ammunitions supply, information revealing wealthy targets. The paper concludes that activities of bandits-informants are complicating ongoing efforts to combat banditry in Zamfara State, Nigeria. The paper recommends that

traditional leaders, religious leaders, NGOs, members of the press and willing individuals should embark on awareness creation within communities in the State on the danger of being informants to bandits.

**Keywords:** Insecurity, bandits, informants, security, arms

### **Introduction**

Insecurity is a serious setback to human and capital development of any society in the world. It does not only pose threats to security of human society but destroy lives and properties of citizens, displaced thousands of persons, and arrest the overall development of a nation (Ekene, 2015; Haruna, 2013). In Nigeria, issues of insecurities, has become worrisome to Government and society, for more than a decade, the country is in a serious security mess. This include but not only, Boko-Haram in the North East, IPOB (secessionist) in the South-East, militants in the South-South, religious crises and herder-farmer conflict in the North-Central, and armed bandits in the North-West, in fact for long, none of the six-geo-political zone of the country is safer and secured. These security challenges have continued to remain a major setback to achieving meaningful socio-economic development in the most affected areas (Mahmoud, 2019; 2). Therefore, security is the major challenge of Nigeria, especially in the Northern parts of the country were Boko-Haram and armed bandits are domicile. However, banditry occupies the center stage of North-West Geo-Political zone security challenges, which include; Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Kebbi, Sokoto, Kano and Jigawa states, with Zamfara state as the most critical hot spot. However, banditry had also spread to some part of the North-Central of the country in the states of Niger, Kogi, Plateau and Nasarawa, Benue to some extent (Kuna and Jibrin 2016). It became a serious challenge to the government and people of the affected states, in 2018 former Zamfara state governor was quoted to have said that, he resign his position as the chief security officer of the state due to banditry.

It is evident that the deteriorating situation of Nigerian security accounts for the increasing incidents of banditry in the North-West sub-region of the country. Banditry has become a harsh reality in today's Nigeria society (Adegoke, 2020). The presence of security personnel's in the trouble areas had not yield the desired result as the bandits still steal or loot farm produce, livestock, kidnapped women and children, commit other crimes such as robbery and rape, attack villages among others(Gadzama, Siddiq and Dariya, 2018). This act may not be unconnected with the present of bandits' informants living within the

society. However, Governor Bello Matawalle of Zamfara state said that some persons working with bandits have confessed they are being sponsored by politicians and other individuals, (Today Online newspaper, 2021). In a parallel interview he (Zamfara state governor) also claimed that politicians are sabotaging their efforts in the fight against bandits, to show the people that they failed. In the same vein, Niger state governor Abubakar Sani Bello has revealed that some politicians in government are aiding and abetting criminals engaged in kidnapping and banditry by providing information to them, (Leadership Newspaper, 2021). Nwannah (2021) argued that, Informants are the most dangerous people in banditry, as they live within. Therefore, the incessant war against bandits and its persistence in Zamfara state and its beyond is not un-connected with the role of their informants within the society in which they operate. It has been alleged that bandits operate and acts base on the information's they gathered from and within the society, most especially on the issues kidnapping, rustling, retaliations and other related militia operations. It is evident in the series of arrest by the security operatives within and outside the state of both the bandits and their informants. Several measures were put in place to curtail the conflict, ranging from community effort by establishing Yan-Sakai, to the use of police and civil-defense and lastly, the military; using land army and air force. Yet the result was not encouraging as it was not been able to contain armed banditry in the state. However, Maishanu (2021) report that Zamfara state Commissioner of Information Hon. Ibrahim Dosara, claimed to have arrested over 2,000 suspected informants of bandits, since the cut-off the telecommunication services, weekly markets bans and restricted the sale of petrol, among other measures and the military launched off the offensive operation to contain armed banditry in the state, the report also alleged highly placed individuals are supporting Bandits.

Moreover, there are avalanche of opinions that bandits informants have contributed immensely to the persistence of armed banditry in Zamfara state and its beyond. The role plays by bandits-informants are crucial to the fight against banditry in Nigeria, to some extent they are more dangerous than the bandits, this is because bandits acts based on the information they provided with. Unfortunately, these informants are part of the society; they live within and interact with people around. However, as fascinating as the studies on banditry most of the literature on bandits, do not analysed and explored the role of the bandits informants in the persistence of the conflict and fight against Banditry in the state, aimed at containing it. These formed a serious academic gap in the studies of armed banditry in northern Nigeria and Nigeria at large.

Therefore, this study interrogates the role of informants in the persistence and the spread of banditry in Zamfara state, Nigeria. However, security is the absence of threats to acquire values, peace, stability, safety, national cohesion, freedom, political and socio-economic objectives of a society or country, Igbuzor (2011) and Oche (2001). In this respect the relationship between informants and Bandits can be described as the presentation of threats to peace, stability, safety, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of the country. Therefore, the Nigerian government, the security forces and several willing individuals are strategizing to control and contain the menace of Armed bandits in the country and Zamfara state, but people among and within the society are crippling the effort by providing information's and other logistics to bandits either at their hide outs or when going for operation, this development is a threat to national security and security of human society. The act and the people who do such are describe by the people of Zamfara state as informants. These informants are mostly people among the society, people live with them, and they knew in and out of the people, have knowledge of people movement, especially the Yan-Sakai and the security. They posed a threat to the success of the fight against bandits in the state and Northern Nigeria at large. Therefore, the study tend to investigate the relationship between bandits and the informants aimed at assessing the role they play in the persistence of fight against banditry in northern Nigeria and the challenge to national security. Therefore, this study examines the extent to which armed bandits and their informants account for the persistence of armed banditry in Zamfara state, Nigeria.

### **Banditry and National Security in Nigeria**

There are avalanche of research on the effects and impact of Banditry in Nigeria. This study reviewed relevant literature on the effect of banditry on security, both national security and the security of human person. Okoli and Ugwu (2019), Rufa'i (2018), Ezirim and Haruna (2021), observed that, the factors responsible for herder farmer conflict transformation to Banditry include but not limited to the Failure of the Traditional Methods of Resolving Herder-Farmer Conflict, rise in the price of cattle in the market, both national and regional; influx of Small Arms and Light Weapons; displacement of some nomadic herdsmen from traditional pastoralism due to incidences of conflicts, diseases, drought etc in the Sahel; involvement of opportunistic criminals and militants in the stealing of cattle; the emergence of local and trans-local networks and markets for groups and sale of cattle stolen; involvement of transnational syndicates in the criminal business; and rise of criminal

franchise, opportunism and impunity in the country coupled with the increasing failure of the security to prevent such are the most facilitating factors to the persistence of Banditry (Okoli 2017, p. 9; Rufa'i 2018, p.60, Ezirim and Haruna 2021, p.7).therefore this paper dwell beyond these factors to see the role of informants in facilitating the persistence of Banditry with its Dangerous effect on human security.

According to Crisis Group Africa Report (2020; 16), on the effects of the crises, the report argued that, thousands of men and boys have been kidnapped or killed, robbed of their cattle or possessions, destroyed their properties, leaving thousands of women as widows. However, the report stated that, women and girls have been the targeted for attacks, which frequently involve gender-based violence. The report further stated that, many have been kidnapped and raped, sexually assaulted during raids or forced into "marriage", especially to members of the herder-allied armed groups whose attacks on farming villages are partly motivated by communal vendettas. Some of the women raped in captivity suffer doubly: even if they survive and are released or escape, they are often rejected by their husbands. If women are impregnated by their abductors, the babies they deliver are similarly shunned by their communities. This report further explains the dangerous effects of Banditry on security of human persons and national security. The report is apt in describing the effect of Banditry. However, the report did not explore the tendencies of community individual involvement in the attacks, as there are claims by media, think-tanks, government and the communities on the involvement of individuals from the communities who provide the bandits with information and the bandits reward them in cash or either kind.

However, Muhammad and Abdullahi (2021), in their work on Armed Banditry and the socio-economic development of the people of Zamfara state, observed that devastating effect of armed banditry to the socio-economic development of the people of Zamfara State is that, since 2011 the State has been deteriorating in both social and economic sphere owing to the persistent and heinous activities of bandits ravaging the communities and villages within and around the state. The writers observed that, these dastardly acts by the bandits have reduced the people residing in those areas helpless, the vicinity lawless and ungovernable. Therefore they argued that, people leaving in those affected communities and villages had forcefully migrated and/ or displaced relegating their economic activities. They further argued that, people leaving in the towns and cities cannot socially visit their relatives in the villages neither gain access to their farm lands in those villages and forest within and around Zamfara State. The consequences of this

were that, food scarcity is on the rise and some animal species is being decimated and lost in the state and Nigeria in general. Above all, lots of human lives whom were expected to till these lands were lost. However, as fascinating as these observations and argument, the researchers were not been able to explain why the persistence of banditry in the communities and villages? What are the aiding factors? What role the unpatriotic community members play in the persistence? Therefore, this paper will explore and interrogates the role of people who supplier information and logistics to Bandits in the persistence of the crises in Zamfara state.

In another regards, Gadzama, Saddiq, Oduehe, and Dariya (2018), in their studies on appraisal of rural banditry in kamuku forest in Birnin Gwari Local Government of Kaduna State. They observed that poverty, greed and poor security to have facilitated rural banditry in Birnin Gwari. They also argued that rural banditry has effect on human security situation of the people of Birnin Gwari since banditry activities restricted their movement. On the same vein, Okoli and Okpaleke (2014) argued that Banditry constitutes a serious threat to Nigeria's public safety and national security. On same page, Garba (2021), argued that, Armed banditry has increasingly become a major threat to security in the borderlands between Nigeria and Niger Republic in the last decade, with far reaching political, economic, and social consequences. He further argued that, All efforts to end this security menace have remained fruitless as the banditry continues to thrive with impunity in the borderlands.

Similarly, Nadama (2019), observed that, Armed banditry poses a serious threat not only to the Internal Security of Zamfara state, but to the national security of Nigeria at large, in view of its impacts and implications. He argued that, the level at which armed bandits were operating within Zamfara State needs to be given its rightful attention by both the Federal and the State governments. He stated that, armed banditry has led to general and complex social violence and insecurity in the State for almost a decade. There occurs, destruction of lives and properties, displacement of people from their communities; and a growing numbers of widows; widowers and orphan children, mostly in camps where IDPs reside following armed bandits' continued attacks on both farming and pastoral communities across different areas of the state (Nadama, 2019). He further discovered that, armed banditry in the state, viz; Unemployment, Poverty, Injustice by traditional fathers, Drug abuse, Vulnerability, Disperse settlement, Huge financial benefits, Proliferation of fire arms, Poor nature of security at the border, cultural conflict and Out of Court/Police settlement, are the factors responsible

to its persistence. He finally, recommends, among other things, adoption of Conflict Resolution Mechanism and Amnesty as well as Socio-economic policies that would lead to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected communities.

Bello and Abdullahi (2021) also observed that, the recent upsurge of the problem of Cattle rustling in Gusau. The acts which is one of the different forms of rural banditry, involves attacking rural communities with dangerous weapons and the stealing of their livestock by the gang of cattle rustlers. These result in the indiscriminate killings of innocent livestock owners, farmers, rural traders, vigilante group members, rape and abduction of young girls and married women and burning of hamlets/settlements by the various gangs of cattle rustlers operating in the affected areas. He argued that this resulted in mass migration of innocent rural dwellers out of the conflict areas of Gusau to safer regions. And also affected the area economically and undermined the social fabric of the rural communities. He concluded that the upsurge in cattle rustling could be attributed to factors which include proliferations of fire arms among the Fulani herdsmen, activities of the rural vigilante groups, influence of violent culture, and lack of adequate or complete absence of security personnel in the affected districts. He finally recommends that, government should as a matter of urgency embark on comprehensive disarmaments of all parties' involved and adequate security to be immediately provided to the affected communities and other vulnerable areas prone to attack and generally uplift the standard of living of the people.

However, Rufai (2018) in his work on "vigilante groups and rural banditry in Zamfara state: excesses and contradictions" he observed that, North-western Nigeria has witnessed high levels of cattle rustling and rural banditry in recent times. He argued that, virtually all states in this zone have faced one form of violence or the other as a result of cattle rustling. To him, Zamfara State experience seems to be amongst the worst incidences, with rural dwellers at the receiving end. In the same vein Ezirim and Haruna (2021), describe Zamfara state as the epicenter of the violence. Rufai (2018) also observed that most of the newspaper reports about banditry in Zamfara seem to be one-sided or passing statements. While rural banditry and cattle rustling in the state is quite different from other states. To him, this is because of the active involvement of the vigilante groups in the conflict. However, Rufai (2018) confessed that in other areas, the vigilante contributed in cushioning the effect of banditry while in Zamfara, some of the vigilante members seized the opportunity of the conflict to 'witch-hunt their old foes'. With the increase in the spate of the conflict in 2014, the vigilante

group had divided opinions on how to approach the menace. Some were of the view that the bandits should be violently fought while others advocated for a peaceful approach. He observed that the difference has led to the emergence of parallel vigilante groups in the state: the militant and non- militant wings. This division and violent approach to the bandits triggered the conflict to a certain proportion in 2015. He finally discovered that, whenever and wherever the bandits strike, their explanation is that they are on a 'vengeance mission' or 'reprisal attack' against the vigilante members that carried out extra-judicial killings on their fellow members.

Similarly, Rufai (2018), on explaining vigilante group in Zamfara state and how they are help and sponsored by their respective communities, argued that,

"It is a common knowledge that for members of group to effectively carried out their assigned duties they need the working tools like local gun, machetes, knife, whistle, daggers and more importantly means of transportation from one place to another for vigilantism. It is not realistic for the members to provide both the services and also procure small arms and light weapons. Therefore the entire community has to pay the price of the services provided. The main source of this funding is the village and district heads, without which the whole process will be fruitless. These people mobilised resources through fund raising for the up keep of the union. Rich and wealthy individuals were also taxed certain amount of money. The poor farmer is not left behind because provision of security is a collective responsibility he most either form part of the Vigilante or provide material support to the operation of the militant vigilante."(Rufai, 2018: p65)

In this regards, the researcher, explored how vigilante group are fund and maintaining by the affected communities, skipping the responsibilities of the informants among and within the affected societies. Despite all these efforts by the communities, there are still some community members who work for the bandits, for a reason known to them, possibly economic gain.

However, the above researches observed the facilitating factors of rural banditry in their respective study areas, as fascinating as these scholars, none of them explored the role of people supplying them (bandits) with information and logistics within the society as facilitating factor responsible for the persistent of armed banditry in North west and Zamfara state as well as a threat to fight against bandits in the country, nor did they explore the nexus between Bandits-Informants and the persistence of banditry. Therefore this paper takes its departure from this academic gap to explore the role play by their informants.



### **Theoretical Framework**

The research adopted queer ladder theory (QLT). The theory was coined by an American sociologist, Daniel Bell (1953), in his explanation to the entry of Italian Americans criminals into organized crime in 1953. Prohibition and personal choice not frustrated and blocked ladders of opportunities propelled small-time hoodlums into nationally syndicated confederation of crime (Lupsha, 1981, cited in Lyman and potter, 2007: p59). Bell (1953) attempted to explain the instrumental essence of organised crime as a desperate means of socio-economic empowerment and social climbing. (Mallory, 2007; Okoli & Orinya, 2013). There are three major tenants of the QLT:

- (i) Organized crime is an instrumental behavior; it is a means to an end
- (ii) Organized crime is an instrument of social climbing or socio-economic advancement
- (iii) Organized crime is a means to accumulate wealth and build power

Often ascribed to this theory is the notion that organized crime thrives in contexts where the government's capacity to dictate, sanction and deter crime is poor; where public corruption is endemic; and where prospects for legitimate livelihood opportunities are slim (Nwoye, 2000; Lyman, 2007; Okoli & Orinya, 2013).

Therefore, organized crime is a desperate means of economic advancement, social climbing and means to wealth accumulation. In this respect, banditry thrives in Zamfara state due to; inability of the government to control the menace of the bandits, poverty, insecurity, corruption, and unemployment. With these criminal mined individual aligned with the bandits secretly, provide them with information and other necessities to accumulate more wealth and advanced their socio-economic status. These acts become threat to the fight against bandits and the complicating role of the vigilante has been worsened by the prevailing socio-economic discontent and attendant livelihood crisis in the state.

### **Research Methodology**

The study used survey and documentary method of data collection. It uses both Primary and secondary sources of Data through the use of Key-Informants Interview KII and Documentaries. The target populations of the study were the security personals which including but not limited to arrested informants/bandits, the police, civil defense, and vigilantes. The arrested bandit-informants, and the arrested bandits were

interviewed, the Zamfara state police public relation officer (PPRO), the Nigerian civil defence public relation office Zamfara state, and the leaders of the Vigilante/Yan-sakai in the five most affected local government of Shinkafi, Maru, Gusau, Bukuyum and Birnin magaji using purposive sampling techniques. The duration of this study is 2017-2022, this is because there was relative peace in 2019 as the result of re-introducing amnesty by the state government then and in 2021/2022 there was a breach of trust that led to the reemergence of the conflict in a more dangerous manner. The government device means to handle the bandits, yet the informants within the society were crippling the effort. However, the respondents were selected snowballing, the first contact led to the next up to last contact more especially the vigilante leaders.

The study used simple descriptive-qualitative analysis that combines content analysis with logical inductions. As such tables were used in data presentation and analysis. While logical induction and the use of tables helped us make sense out of data generated using survey, the content analysis method was instrumental in analyzing the contents of documents. This method is mainly associated with textual and contextual analysis of already existing information on the phenomenon being investigated. It involves the presentation, reading, analysis, critique and discussion of relevant information gathered from the different categories of sources, from which conclusion can be drawn (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; McNabb, 2005).

#### **Complicating Role of Bandits-Informants in Zamfara State, Nigeria**

The gap identifies above shows the hypocrisy of some community members despite the effort to contained banditry in Zamfara state; they prefer to sell information to the bandits for a reason. This becomes a serious challenge to fight against banditry in Nigeria and Zamfara state in particular. There are many incidences and lots of allegations on the role of informants and the service they provide to the Bandits, below are some of the identified incidences, the arrested persons, the role the person played, his contract with the Bandits, where the person was arrested, what Bandits compensate him with whenever he/she provided information or his service, and the effect of such attitudes in containing armed banditry in Zamfara state as.

**Table 1. Some Incidences on the Role of Bandits-Informants in Zamfara State**

S/N	Arrested informant/ incidents	Role he/she played	Information extort from him by bandits	Location of arrest and area of operation	benefits	effects on security	Summed from KII & other source
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			<b>and/or his contract</b>				
1	Salamatu Umar	<b>Supply of women (sex hawkers)</b>	Supply women for sex, and other information like, "vigilante plans to attack bandits at their hide out" etc.	Gusau	money "they triple money of your service or even more"	when they are inform on, raid, attack, or arrest by security agents or vigilante, they run, prepare for the attack etc.	KII at Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Headquarters Gusau
2	vigilante kill 11 informants	<b>Alleged information supplies</b>	inform the bandits on the movement of vigilante and security forces	Gada, and Tuskudu Communities of Bungudu LGA.	Monetary	one of the arrested Informants called Ada, was responsible for the supply of information of this attack	<a href="http://saharareporter.com/2022/01/05/angry-vigilantes-kill-11-bandits'-informants-arrested-zamfara-market">http://saharareporter.com/2022/01/05/angry-vigilantes-kill-11-bandits'-informants-arrested-zamfara-market</a>
3	woman called Dabo Bokanya, Her husband and two sons are killed by vigilante	<b>Conspired with bandits against their community</b>	Information and other alliances (witchcraft alliance)	Kauran-Namoda LGA	monetary	undermined security efforts	KII with PPRO NPF Headquarters Gusau
4	Bello Abdulrahman	<b>Information supplier</b>	Information to bandits on troops' movement and identifying persons to be kidnapped for ransom	Anguwan Abuja area of Bena town	monetary	Involvements in cattle rustling activities at Kwaya, Sabon Birni and Baure villages.	<a href="https://www.blueprint.ng/troops-arrest-notorious-bandits-informants-in-zamfara/">https://www.blueprint.ng/troops-arrest-notorious-bandits-informants-in-zamfara/</a>
5	Rabi'u Usman	<b>Selling properties stole by the bandits</b>	Transporting the animals (goats and sheep)	Wanzamai village in Tsafe	monetary and Middle men	generating income to bandits	NPF Zamfara State Headquarters
6	Sa'idu Shu'aibu	<b>Selling properties stole by the bandits</b>	Transporting the animals (goats and sheep)	Wanzamai village in Tsafe	monetary and Middle Men	generating income to bandits	NPF Zamfara State Headquarters

7	Awwalu Abdullahi	<b>Selling properties stole by the bandits</b>	Transporting the animals (goats and sheep)	Wanzamai village in Tsafe	monetary and middle men	generating income to bandits	NPF Zamfara State Headquarters
8	20 Bandit Informants arrested in Gusau	<b>Houses for hiding weapons and its suppliers</b>	Logistics to bandits	Gusau	money	hiding weapons used to unleashed mayhem on innocent citizens	TVC News
9	Fatima Lawalli, age 30	<b>Supplying arms and ammunition to bandits</b>	Supplying arms and ammunitions	K/Namoda LGA and arrested at Gada Biyu Bungudu LGA	business partner	to deliver to one Ado Alero who has been terrorizing the state and beyond	NPF Zamfara State Headquarters
10	Babuga Abubakar	<b>Collaborating with notorious bandits</b>	Conspired against their community and provide the bandits with information on wealthy targets	Mayana area of Gusau LGA.	monetary	Bandits act on the information given to them by babuga to terrorized people	NPF State Headquarters
11	Lawali Kabiru	<b>Purchase the items to be used by bandits</b>	Purchaser	Garejin Mailena area Gusau LGA	money	terrorizing different communities	NPF State Headquarters
12	Troops Ambush Bandits, Arrest 18 Informants in Zamfara	<b>Collaborating with notorious bandits</b>	Providing information and logistics to bandits	Kirsa and Sunke in Anka	monetary	threat to containing banditry	<a href="https://dailynewstimeng.com/2019/04/22/troops-ambush-bandits-arrest-18-informants-in-zamfara/">https://dailynewstimeng.com/2019/04/22/troops-ambush-bandits-arrest-18-informants-in-zamfara/</a>
13	Village Heads of Doka and Mutu villages were arrested.	<b>Collaborating with notorious bandits</b>	Conspired against their community and provide the bandits with information	Gusau	monetary and security	providing information to bandits undermine dealing with bandits/banditry	KII with SA to Zamfara state Governor
14	Fatima Binta and Balkisu, sisters were arrested	<b>Sex hawking</b>	Bandit girl friends who provide them with information	Bagega Road in Anka LGA	money	undermined the fight against Bandits	Nigeria Security and Civil Defense

							Headquarters Gusau
15	Shafiu Abdullahi	<b>Assisting cattle rustling and kidnapping gang</b>	Supplying arms and other items	Anka LGA	Monetary	rustlers terrorizing residents of Anka	Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Headquarters Gusau
16	informant from Government officials	<b>Collaboration</b>	Bandits disclosed it during a peace meeting with Islamic cleric, sheikh Ahmad Gumi,	Bungudu forest	-----	government officials provide information to bandits (allegations)	<a href="https://www.google.com/amp/s/austinmedia.com/secret-revealed-zamfara-sokoto-govt-officials">https://www.google.com/amp/s/austinmedia.com/secret-revealed-zamfara-sokoto-govt-officials</a>
17	Isiya Abdullahi and musa gwashi	<b>Supply fuel</b>	Supply fuel	Anka and Bungudu	money	undermined fight against bandits	NPF Headquarters Gusau
18	Aliyu and Abubakar Bala	<b>Supply food items</b>	Purchaser	Shinkafi and Maru	money	undermined fight against bandits	NPF Headquarters Gusau

**Source:** Authors, 2022

The above table presents some arrested informant/incidences, role he/she played, information extort from he/she by bandits and/or his contract with the bandits, were the informant was arrested and area of his operation, the benefits derive from the bandits, and the effects on security. The table shows that, the bandits-informants mostly engaged with the bandits through. Supply of women for sex, information suppliers like, vigilante plans to attack bandits at their hide out movement of vigilante and security forces, conspired with bandits against their community information and other alliances such as (witchcraft alliance), information supplier to bandits on troops' movement and identifying persons to be kidnapped for ransom in, selling bandits stole properties, transporting stole animals (goats and sheep), given rented houses for hiding weapons and its suppliers, supplying fueled and other logistics to bandits like 'arms and ammunition', conspired against their community and provide the bandits with information on wealthy targets, buying items to bandits such as food, cloths, and other logistics, sex hawking, among other dubious act by the informants. Based on the above findings, it becomes evident that the bandits informants contributed to the persistence of fight against

banditry in north-west Nigeria. These findings corroborates with a report from Sahara reporters that: when Ada one of the notorious informants, was apprehended by the vigilante as:

“When the vigilantes got him, he listed some other informants and asked his executors to spare some of the suspects wrongly arrested. He confessed to them that he was really among the attackers and was giving them vital information on individuals. The report further stated that, among those killed also was one woman called Dabo Bokanya. She told the vigilantes that she was aiding the armed criminals. Her husband and two sons were also slain (Sahara reporters, 2022).

However, the security agents and the informants believed that “Working for bandits is a lucrative side hustler”. In this respected the informants go to any mile to provide to their clients (Bandits) the necessary needed. According to Bello Matawalle the executive governor of Zamfara state said that:

The informants and suppliers of logistics are our main target, not the bandits because, without the informants and logistics suppliers, the bandits cannot operate effectively. Therefore we want to flush them out (cited by daily post, 2021). "I have instructed for serious punitive measures including the demolition of any house where informants, weapons suppliers and people who are aiding banditry activities are found in the state (Bello Matawalle, 2022).

Similarly, the table present that the bandits are comfortable with the informants as they provide and deliver to them the necessary services. The informants are compelled to provide such to the bandits because of the monetary aspect of the alliance, while in the case of traditional leaders found wanton in the process are claimed to be because of monetary and security to their people, whether this is true or not the monetary aspects are involved. Therefore, these act seriously undermined security efforts in the effort to contain banditry in Zamfara state.

However, the bandits-informants mostly engaged with the bandits through, supply of women for sex, information suppliers like, “vigilante plans to attack bandits at their hide out” movement of vigilante and security forces, conspired with bandits against their community information and other alliances such as (witchcraft alliance), information supplier to bandits on troops’ movement and identifying persons to be kidnapped for ransom in, selling bandits stole properties, transporting stole animals (goats and sheep), given rented houses for hiding weapons and its suppliers, supplying fueled and other logistics to bandits like ‘arms and ammunition’, conspired against their community

and provide the bandits with information on wealthy targets, buying items to bandits such as food, cloths, and other logistics, sex hawking, among other dubious act by the informants. Based on the above findings, it becomes evident that the bandits' informants contributed to the persistence of fight against banditry in Zamfara state Nigeria.

Furthermore, when bandits are informed on raids by the security agents or the vigilante, the (bandits) will device a means to repel the attacks, prepare for it, hide or run, depend on the gravity of the informed raids. However, the bandits informants generate money to the bandits by selling their rustle cows, goats, sheep's, camels, etc., they are also for buying them necessities like foods, cloths, and women at their hideouts, these undermined security efforts in the fights against banditry seriously. Similarly, emir of Maru (2021), confessed that, informants are worse than the bandits, he stated that, 'Most of the informants are within our communities and they are known by people. They move freely in communities carrying out ugly activities unchecked (Premium Times 2021, July 9). While Police Public Relation officer was optimistic that, "most, if not all the information available to bandits and terrorists before they attack villages to abduct people, destroyed properties or even killed are predicated on information they secure from people living within the communities" (Interview, 2022). Therefore, these act seriously undermined security efforts in the effort to contain banditry in Zamfara state.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The Zamfara State Government acknowledges that the activities of informants is creating a lot of problems in the ongoing war against banditry in the state and called for the support of all citizens in the state to win the war. Bandits-informants are responsible for the lingering security challenges in Zamfara State, Nigeria. Therefore, the study concluded that the bandits-informants pose a serious threat to the security of the people of Zamfara state and their activities complicate the fight against banditry in the State. Thus, the paper recommends that anybody selling information to bandits or conspiring to provide them with security plans should be served with the same punishment given to the bandits. The bandits-informants should severely be punished or killed, and the punishment should be publicized by media to serve as deterrent to others. The traditional leaders, religious leaders, NGOs, members of the press and willing individuals should embark on awareness creations to show and inform the citizens on the dangers of

collaborating with criminals to earned living and its consequences in the society.

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