

KIDNAPPING AND COMMODITIZATION OF HUMAN BEINGS IN NIGERIA

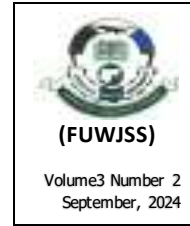
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Abstract

This paper examines the phenomenon of kidnapping for ransom and historicizes its nature and dynamics in Nigeria. The general security situation of the Nigerian-State has been multi-dimensionally complex and dangerous. This has resulted to increasing criminal activities of armed non-state actors (ANSA), who have overwhelmed the Nigerian security forces. This created ungovernable spaces at Dan-Sadau in Zamfara, Birnin Gwari axis of death, Okohia forest Owerri in Imo State, Sambisa forest in Borno State and Palgore forest in Kano State which causes the displacement of millions of people, and the loss of tens of thousands of Nigeria's human lives. The paper relies on secondary sources of data from books, newspapers, journal articles, document analysis and open resource materials and observations. The paper is anchored on Queer Ladder Theory (QLT) of organized crime as theoretical framework of analysis. The findings of the study reveal that factors that contribute to kidnapping in Nigeria includes: the country's poor economic situation and poverty, porous borders, the proliferation of small and light weapons, a lack of political will to enforce anti-kidnapping laws, and the availability and use of opioid drugs. The paper concludes that kidnapping is the new criminal economy in Nigeria where billions of Naira is paid as ransom to kidnappers. The study recommends the improvement of the economy to create jobs and opportunities; effective border security governance; inter-agency cooperation; political will to enforce laws on kidnappings; and a bottom-top approach to curb the menace of kidnapping through community policing.

Keywords: Commoditizing human-beings, insecurity, kidnapping, Queer Ladder, ransom

Introduction

Security and survival are the two major quests of every state globally. However, security challenges are always changing in patterns and magnitude based on the prevailing political and socio-economic conditions of the nation. This is why recently the Nigerian security architecture has been overwhelmed by the activities of criminals, kidnappers, bandits, terrorists, separatist groups, cattle rustlers, and farmer-herder conflicts (Mohammed, Yusuf, & Garba, 2019).

In the last decade, the biggest security challenge in Nigeria has been the Boko Haram insurgency. The United Nations Development Programme estimated the ugly development has left the country enmeshed in an asymmetrical warfare that has claimed the lives of more than 350,000 people, with over 2 million internally displaced persons (UNDP, 2021; Reuters, June 24, 2021).

The activities of armed non-state actors (ANSA) by militant groups in the Niger-Delta, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the Southeast, and the Movement for the Separation of the Southwest from the Nigerian State have all recently complicated Nigerian security. Hence, the political legitimacy and sovereignty of the Nigerian state have been challenged from within since the attainment of independence in 1960. Evidence of this assertion can be seen in the ungovernable spaces and the proliferation of arms in the country (Lenshie, 2018).

According to the Global Peace Index (GPI), the Institute for Economics and Peace ranked Nigeria 146th out of 163 countries assessed for 2021. The implication of this is that, Nigeria is among the league of less peaceful countries in the world, such as Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, and Iraq. On the other hand, Nigeria is ranked 8th among the less peaceful countries in Africa after South Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Mali, respectively. The GPI measures the state of peace in countries in three domains, including the level of societal safety and security, the extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict, and the degree of militarization (IEP, 2021).

The changing dynamics of insecurity in Nigeria now is the kidnapping for ransom, which has become like wildfire. This new trend could be explained within the context of organized crime, where local, regional, national, and international criminal groups establish links and exploit the turbulent security atmosphere to their advantage.

A recent study in Northwestern Nigeria, as one of the most affected areas by the activities of criminals and bandits, reveals that there are over 10,000 bandits operating in the state for one reason or another. Kidnapping for ransom has been the major criminal activity of the bandits (Rufa'i, 2021). The United State Institute for Peace has warned that Nigeria will lose a generation of children if it does not address the rising cases of school child abductions across the country, where over 600 schools have closed down (USIP, 2021).

It is against this backdrop of the security complex atmosphere that this paper will examine the nature, dynamics, types, and drivers of kidnapping for ransom and show its political economy impact and implications on national security in Nigeria.

Historicizing Kidnapping in Nigeria

There is no exact or agreeable period when or who started kidnapping in Nigeria. However, what is known is that it is an organized crime that has manifested and become rampant in all parts of Nigeria recently. Historically, kidnapping started in 1673 in America when children were stolen to work as servants or slaves in the colonies. This practice continued to be known as the illegal capture or detention of a person or people against their will, regardless of their age (Chidi, 2006).

The first recorded kidnapping in Nigeria was that of the late Alhaji Umaru Dikko, the former Minister of Transport, during the administration of the late former President Shehu Aliyu Shagari in 1983–84. A group of Nigerian officials and Israeli hired personnel had successfully kidnapped Dikko but could not transport him back to Nigeria as planned. The Dikko affair was explained in the British media and reported in the Nigerian press indicated that Alhaji Umaru Dikko was abducted on July 5, 1984, in the garden of his London home by armed men who bundled him into a van after a desperate and violent struggle between Alhaji Umaru Dikko and his abductors:

The kidnappers, in a yellow van with their rear glass windows painted grey, had made themselves conspicuous as early as July 4, 1984; they were apparently on a surveillance mission. The British police, alerted to the abduction by Alhaji Umaru's secretary, Miss Elizabeth Hayes, who had witnessed the struggle, mounted a major rescue attempt which included a close watch on all sea and airports. At Stansted Airport, customs officials, already alerted by the police to the abduction, became suspicious of two wooden crates reportedly being loaded into a Nigeria Airways cargo aircraft at Stansted Airport and declared "diplomatic baggage." Emanating from one of the crates was a "powerful smell"

that assailed the sensitive nostrils of a customs official.. (Akinsanya, 1985, p. 602).

The aforementioned incident, dubbed the "Dikko Affair," has become the subject of international law disagreements and debates concerning Article 27(4) of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Immunities between Britain and Nigeria.

The second phase of kidnapping in Nigeria is the expansion of Lagos, the commercial center and former national capital of Nigeria, where kidnapping has become rampant as a result of urbanization, poverty, unemployment, corruption, inflation, and youth restiveness in the early 2000s (Tzanelli, 2006).

As a result of natural resource nationalism, deprivation, and marginalization, Niger Delta militants considered kidnapping as a means of fighting and negotiating with the government and oil companies about their plights in the areas of pollution, violence, and backwardness (Townsend, 2008; Turner, 2008; Chidi, 2006).

The phenomenon started as a freedom-fighting movement and later turned into a money-making venture through abductions of expatriates and those who can cough out money if abducted (Tzanelli, 2006). Hence, the ransom payment of millions of Naira has commoditized the human being into a thing of value for money, to be determined by criminals based on his or her social status in society. Kidnapping was not common in Nigeria's major cities during this period but it did occur on occasion. However, in the last five years, the activities of bandits and kidnapers have made life very difficult for even the ordinary man. This phenomenon has boomeranged to unimaginable proportions in Nigeria today.

Typology of Kidnapping

As mentioned above, there is no exact time when kidnapping started in Nigeria apart from the well-publicized Umar Dikko's case, which has ended in an international controversy regarding diplomatic immunity, among other contestations between Great Britain and Nigeria (Akinsanya, 1985).

Not all kidnappings are the same in nature, purpose, intent, and execution. However, for our purposes, we intend to look at the different dimensions and typologies of kidnapping. The first dimension is child kidnapping. According to Fass (1997; 2010) child kidnapping can be categorized into three major types.

1. Abductions by parents or family members

2. Stranger abductions by men for monetary ransom or physical exploitation and abuse;
3. Children are abducted by women who intend to keep and raise them as their own.

From the above classification, the second category describes and explains the nature of kidnapping usually found in the United States and Europe. It is important to note that even in Africa and Nigeria, the types are not mutually exclusive. In order to move beyond what has been identified by Fass (1997; 2010), we have to do that for two reasons. First is to go beyond child kidnapping to include adult kidnapping. Secondly, to capture the changing dynamics and what is applicable to kidnapping for ransom in the Nigerian context presently.

In Nigeria, kidnapping was a cultural practice as shown in the study of anthropology of marriage especially in Northern Nigeria. It is very common in some cultures for example among the Tivs of North-central Nigeria where a groom will kidnap the bride in order to show his intent and love before marriage is formalize by cultural rites. According to Fyanka (2018) consensual kidnapping or elopement (*Yevisyem nom or Kwase u yeveseamin*) is a popular Tiv marriage cultural practice. If the girl involved was willing to risk all to marry her love then she conceded to be kidnapped. A variant of this form of marriage system was practiced in pre-colonial Tiv society especially between communities that had an *eye* peace treaty (an agreement not to go to war.). The purpose of the treaty was, however, to expand the scope of exchange to a higher lineage level. For instance, a man from *Ukum* whose *Ingol* (ward) was captured by a man from *Ugondo* would also capture a girl from *Ugondo*, thereby leveling the exchange (Bohannan & Bohannan, 1953).

It should be noted that consensual kidnapping as opposed to kidnap within the *eye* treaties of the pre-colonial era often had the secret consent of the girl's mother while the courtship was often facilitated through friends of both parties. Although the details of this practice have evolved considerably over the years, the market place which holds a key position in Tiv social and cultural structure was used as a meeting place, streams and bathing ponds also featured prominently. The couples avoided meeting at each other's homes since it was important that the affair is kept secret. The day of elopement was traditionally placed on the village market day since this was a day wards were allowed by parents and guardians to stay long hours away from home till the market closes at nightfall (Turkula, 2004; Fyanka, 2018).

Presently, consensual kidnapping is very pronounced in the rural areas of Tiv-land mainly because of the debilitating economic situation. Parents who are opportunist are cashing in on the bride price factor to enrich them and as a result, reducing the chances of low-income rural dwellers meeting bride price obligations. This narrows down the options available to them, making consensual kidnapping a more attractive option. Interestingly, this marriage cultural practice of kidnapping is similarly found in other cultures especially in South-Sudan and Kyrgyzstan (Fyanka, 2018).

Hence, in this study, we have identified six (6) major types of kidnapping that are prevalent in Nigeria as follows:

1. Kidnapping for ransom
2. Tiger kidnapping
3. Express kidnapping
4. Political kidnapping
5. Virtual Kidnapping
6. Kidnapping for Ritual

These are not the only types of kidnapping, but it has pointedly enumerated and demarcated the boundary of explanations in this research.

Kidnapping for ransom: It usually occurs when a criminal abducts a person or group of persons and takes them as a hostage or hostages in order to extort money from their family, employer, or even country in exchange for the victim's release (Birell, 2018). This is what is happening in Nigeria. The development has been described by Bukarti as the "great discovery" by criminals in Nigeria (Arvin, 2021).

Tiger kidnapping: This categorization of kidnapping is known as proxy kidnapping. It is a situation where the victim is asked to follow the kidnapper's directions to carry out their desired action. It is forceful, fast, and quietly done. The victim is made to develop fear and to obey instructions of his abductors for the fear of forceful violence or death. Usually, in tiger kidnapping two crimes are involved. First, the abduction of the victim. Second, the forceful crimes of either murder, planting of bomb, or robbery committed by the victim relations or any other persons on behalf of the abductors.

Express kidnapping: This is very common in Africa and Latin America, and happens when the kidnapper abducts their victims and takes them to

an ATM and forces them to withdraw cash. It is done very fast and without violence.

There is political/ideological kidnapping. It is one of the most dangerous types of kidnappings. The kidnapping is political due to the amount of ideology and political power the hostage has. The abductors may want to swap the hostage with other prisoners and demand the withdrawal of military forces. In some cases, the abduction is done with the motive of propaganda.

A "**virtual kidnapping**," which does not usually involve physical kidnapping, the criminal would call the victim's family and demand for ransom. The requested amount is usually smaller so that the chance of receiving payment is higher and more quickly. The main instrument of this type of kidnapping is threats without any proof.

Kidnapping for ritual: This type of kidnapping is very common in Nigeria. In this case, the categories of people commonly selected include babies, young children, teenagers, male/female adults, mad people, and people of other descriptions that match the choice of the ritualists are usually targeted. The victims are usually killed and their vital body parts are harvested to be used for ritual. These body parts can be; the eyes, tongue, private parts, heart, breasts, fingers, etc.

Kidnapping and Abduction for Ransom in Nigeria

The word "kidnap" was derived from two English words: "kid" meaning "infant" and "nap" meaning "sleep". Literally, it is the abduction of person or people as hostages for ransom payment. Kidnapping was defined as child abduction in 1874, when children from wealthy families were kidnapped for ransom while sleeping (Tzanelli, 2009).

Kidnapping has today emerged as the number one security problem in Nigeria. The Boko Haram terrorists in the northeastern parts of the country engage in it for three major reasons. They execute some of the captives for demonstrating how brutal they are and could be. The summary executions are usually recorded on video and posted in social media for everybody. They also engage in kidnapping for making political demands: most especially the release of some of their members in detention. The third reason for engaging in the kidnapping is to fund their activities. In this last case, they take some people and ask the

government or the family members to pay some ransoms for their release (Albert, Danjibo & Albert, 2020; Ibrahim, 2017).

Asuquo (2009) argues that the term "kidnapping" is very difficult to define with precision because it varies from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Kidnapping is the forceful seizure, taking away, and unlawful detention of a person against his or her will. So it is a common offence that violates the victim's right to freedom of movement as enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

In their view Thomas and Nta (2009) sees kidnapping as a robbery of the highest rank. It is an organized and systematic robbery that is not as deadly as armed robbery, but more profitable than the former. Even though kidnapping is illegal, the profitability of it has made criminals indulge in it despite the consequences of their action.

Abraham (2010) conceived kidnapping as the act of seizing, taking away, and keeping a person in custody, either by force or fraud. It includes snatching and seizing a person in order to collect a ransom in return or to settle some scores of disagreements among the people. It can be rightly argued that kidnapping is a criminal offence perpetrated by criminals.

Kidnapping refers to situation of abduction "where the location of the subject and victim are typically unknown" while "hostage-taking" refers to situations "where the subject and the victim are contained within a police perimeter" (Fuseliern.d.cited in Albert et al, 2020). Both kidnapping and hostage-taking are included among the forbidden military tactics identified as terrorism in different parts of the world. They are basically violence against civilians and therefore a major human security question.

According to Lipsedge (2004) identified and tried to differentiate between the expressive and instrumental dimensions of the phenomena. The "expressive" motive, according to him, refers to the use of kidnapping or hostage taking as a supplement tactic for ventilating and/or publicizing a grievance or expressing frustration. The "instrumental" motive, on the other hand, has to do with the use of the act to obtain a particular benefit such as ransom. He argued that in many cases, the two motives are interlinked. For example, a terrorist group could take hostage both to express a grievance while at the same time using the opportunity to generate the needed financial resources for continuing their violent extremism (Lipsedge, 2004: p.24-26).

Albert et al (2020) kidnapping, whether done for political or economic reasons, constitutes both state and human security questions.

As a state security problem, it tarnishes the image of a country and makes it unattractive to foreign investors and tourists. As a human security problem, it traumatizes the larger population as their physical safety, social and economic wellbeing are endangered. Okoli and Agada (2014) reported that kidnapping is motivated by criminal motive for material accumulation by the perpetrators. In general, kidnapping constitutes threat to national security and sustainable development of Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework: Queer Ladder Mobility Theory

This study is anchored on Queer Ladder Mobility Theory (QLMT) as theoretical framework of analysis. Today the world is experiencing increasing impact of established organized crime, local, transnational crime and gang violence. The perpetrators of organized crime believe in coercion, corruption, violence to achieve their aim. Crime has a functional and instrumental role in society especially for the urban rackets. The illicit activity organized for continuing profit, rather than individual illegal acts. This argument explains the activities of mafias, godfathers, multifunctional brotherhoods, and gangs that were found in Italy, America, Canada and other countries (Bell, 1953;2013; Landesco, 1968; Paoli, 2008).

The queer ladder theory was influenced by an American sociologist, Daniel Bell (2013), who coined the idea of “queer ladder” in an attempt to explain the instrumental essence of organized crime as a desperate means of economic survival and social climbing. The basic assumptions of QLT can be highlighted thus:

- i. Organized crime is an instrumental behavior; it is a means to an end.
- ii. It is an instrument of social climbing and/or socio-economic advancement
- iii. It is a means to accumulate wealth and build power (Mallory, 2007; Okoli & Orinya, 2013).

The most important thing is to understand their motives and how they achieve their goals (Mallory, 2011). Criminal syndicates have existed whether local, natives by birth or transnational always participated within the political and socio-economic system because of the demand of their products or services (Albini, 1971). Abadinsky (1990) asserted that organized crime is non-ideological enterprise involving a number of persons in close social interaction, organized on hierarchical basis, with at least three levels/ranks, for the purpose of securing profit and power by engaging in illegal and legal activities.

Arguably, there are some common characteristics of organized crimes that include; structure, continuity, centralized authority, membership, team work, criminality, planning, secrecy, specialization, division of labour, violence, power/profit goal, monopoly, protectors, conspiracy, reserved fund (More, 2023).

As applied in this paper, the queer ladder theory established the links between crime and social mobility where groups sought to move out of poverty and powerlessness by embarking on lucrative and risky crime activities. Kidnapping has become a business and the commodity for capture and sale is the human being.

Drivers of Kidnapping in Nigeria

The recent spike in kidnappings in Nigeria has been horrendous for the populace. One reason for this fear is the fact that Nigerians of all social classes are affected by the scourge. Victims of kidnapping for ransom include politicians, businessmen, farmers, civil servants, traditional rulers, passengers, pastors, imams, and students. Nobody is spared irrespective of social status, sex, age, or any other classification in society. However, there are many identified drivers or factors that precipitate kidnapping in Nigeria from direct observations and open-source intelligence in the conventional media and social media. It should be noted that these are just the major ones, and have been identified for the purpose of this research work.

Economic Hardship and Poverty

The National Bureau of Statistics in May 2020 released its 2019 report on "Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria" and put the figure of Nigerians living in extreme poverty at 89.2 million. This represents 40 percent of the entire population. The World Poverty Clock, however, contradicts the latest figures from the NBS. The WPC indicated that Nigeria has a total population of 205,323,520 people, with 105,097,856 (or 51% of the population) living in extreme poverty. An individual is classified as living in extreme poverty if they earn less than \$1.90 or N855 a day. Hence, whatever the argument on the methodology between the two bodies, Nigeria is the poverty capital of the world (NBS, 2020; WPC, 2020).

According to Campbell (2019), economic hardship and poverty in Nigeria push the criminal elements to look for alternative sources of money and resources to perpetuate crime. He claims that the Boko Haram committed kidnappings in order to obtain labor, soldiers, wives, and, in

some cases, money. On the other hand, militants in the Niger Delta kidnap their victims for ransom.

Ibekwe and Alabi (2021) kidnapping has also become a huge money-spinner, creating a thriving criminal economy that attracts more assailants like ants to sugar. Research by SB Morgen, a Lagos-based intelligence firm, reveals that between June 2011 and March 2020, Nigerians paid kidnappers an estimated \$18.34 million as ransom (N8.98 billion).

Bulama Bukarti, a senior analyst at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, said the nature of kidnappings in Nigeria is carried out by economically motivated groups, locally referred to as bandits, which have recently been infiltrated by some elements of Boko Haram. Bandit groups have been operating in the Northwestern part of Nigeria for over a decade. But they have grown in strength and sophistication in the last few years, especially during the previous eight months. Official estimates from the affected states indicate that there are about 30,000 members. They operate primarily from the Northwestern and central parts of Nigeria, where there are vast mountainous forests that have been mismanaged for years (Bukarti cited in Arvin, 2021).

Porous Border: The porous nature of West Africa's countries borders, which owes its origin to the hasty way the colonialists carved up the African continent as well as the nature of their management by post-colonial states, has become a serious issue in human trafficking, money laundering, and other related crimes (Akinyemi, 2019). The issue of the porosity of Nigeria's borders, spanning a total land mass of 923, 768 square kilometers, has remained a source of concern over the years.

The former Comptroller-General of the Nigerian Immigration Service, Mr. David Parradang, made the disclosure while addressing the National Conference Committee on Immigration.

He said that though the country has only 84 approved land border control posts, there are more than 1,400 illegal borders in the country. Across the over 4,000 square kilometers of coverage, we have illegal routes which are not manned (The Cable, 2014, April 24).

Nigeria's porous border is another aggravating factor in the problem of general insecurity. The National Security Adviser (NSA), Major-Gen. Babagana Mungono (Rtd), stated this in Abuja during the Eighth Session of the Cameroon-Nigeria Trans-border Security Committee. He maintains that both ISWAP and Boko Haram bandits have continued to exploit the porous border areas to disrupt the livelihoods of innocent citizens in their communities.

According to Babatola (2015), Nigeria is situated (1497 km) between Niger, Chad (87 km), and Cameroon (1690 km), and has a coastline of at least 853 km. Nigeria's claim to territorial sea (offshore space) rose from 3 miles of the continental shelf and about 200 miles of exclusive fishing zones from 1958 to 1978 as a country signatory to Conventions on the Continental Shelf despite its inability to determine the extent of its claim.

Similarly, Marenin (2010) identified several types of borders. He mentioned that not all borders are alike, and they are managed in different ways. The areas, the space, the nature, threats that have to be controlled, the types of equipment needed and the skills to use them, the personnel required to make the borders differ from one country to another.

A report by United Nations expert groups on arms embargoes in Somalia (2008) is a case in point. The report indicated that in wartime, the members of armed groups sometimes transported weapons across borders to sell them in exchange for food or other commodities. Also, individuals who engage in arms trafficking often use the same routes and itineraries as those used to transport other illicit goods across borders. Within a short period of eight months (specifically, January 22, 2017, May 23, 2017, September 11, 2017, and September 21, 2017), the Nigerian Customs Service intercepted a total of 2,671 pump-action rifles illegally imported into the country, along with other seizures totaling N12.7 billion (Premium Times, 2018). With government officials admitting that approximately 1,479 illegal routes exist in Nigeria (National Daily, 2018),

It implies that all manner of illegalities, such as illegal migration, drug trafficking, contraband goods movement, and their attendant implications exist at our national borders. Weapons from the Sahel and neighboring countries like Niger, Mali, and Libya are brought in by local merchants known as "conflict entrepreneurs" (Rufa'I, 2021).

A former Head of State, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar (rtd), has raised an alarm over the proliferation of weapons in the country, saying an estimated six million arms are circulating illegally. Abubakar, who is also the chairman of the National Peace Committee (NPC), raised the alarm at a dialogue session of the committee with key stakeholders in Abuja on Wednesday, April 7, 2021. According to reports, the proliferation of weapons has heightened insecurity in the country and led to over 80,000 deaths. In his words:

The proliferation of all calibers of weapons, not only in our sub-region in general and in Nigeria in particular, is worrying. It is estimated that there are over six million such weapons in circulation in the country. This certainly exacerbated the insecurity that led to over 80,000 deaths

and close to three million internally displaced persons (Dailytrust, 2021, April 7).

Corruption within and among the Nigerian law enforcement agencies: Corruption is a worldwide phenomenon, but particularly prominent in countries of the third world, particularly in Africa. Johnston and Rose-Ackerman (1997) pointed out that the wide spread of corruption is a symptom of a poorly functioning state, and a poorly functioning state can undermine economic growth.

The World Bank (1997) defines corruption as the abuse of public office for private gains. A public office is abused through rent-seeking activities for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. Public office is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Through patronage and nepotism, the theft of state assets, or the diversion of state resources, public office can also be abused for personal benefit, even if no bribery occurs. A public official is corrupt if he accepts money for doing something that he is under duty to do or that he is under duty not to do. Corruption is a betrayal of trust resulting directly or indirectly from the subordination of public goals to those of the individual.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, direct bribery requests by a public official accounted for 60 per cent of all bribery transactions in Nigeria in 2019, representing a moderate decrease from the 66 per cent recorded in the 2016 survey. As in 2016, indirect requests for bribes accounted for 20 per cent of all bribery transactions, while spontaneous payments to facilitate or accelerate a procedure accounted for 8 per cent. Some 5 per cent of bribes were also paid with no prior request from the bribe-taker as a sign of appreciation to a public official for services rendered.

According to the 2019 survey, around two thirds of bribes (67 percent) are paid before a service is provided by a public official, a proportion only slightly smaller than the 70 percent recorded in the 2016 survey. The consistently large share of bribes paid in anticipation of a service to be rendered by a public official is an indication that bribes are often requested before action is taken to deliver a service. Overall, it is estimated that a total of roughly NGN 675 billion was paid in cash bribes to public officials in Nigeria in 2019, corresponding to 0.52 percent of the entire Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria. The economic cost of bribery becomes even more palpable when considering that, on

average, bribe-payers pay an amount equivalent to 6 per cent of the average annual income of Nigerians (UNODC, 2019).

Lack of implementation and enforcement of anti-kidnapping laws:

The phenomenon of kidnapping has necessitated some states in Nigeria enacting laws on the criminalization and punishment of kidnappers, but yet implementation has been a problem due to a lack of political will. According to Section 14(2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government." The government fulfills this provision by enacting and enforcing, through its arms, various laws to maintain peace and order. One of the laws includes the Terrorism Act of 2011, which prescribes 10 years of imprisonment for hostage-taking. Since 2008, many state governments have introduced their own anti-kidnapping laws in an attempt to combat the crime. In September 2017, the National Assembly passed into law the Kidnapping Abduction Act, which provides for 30 year terms of imprisonment for anyone caught colluding with an abductor to receive ransom for any person. At least 15 states have so far made kidnapping a capital offense.

The following have criminalized kidnapping with different punishments that range from death sentences to life imprisonment and 25-year jail terms. These states include Anambra, Delta, Enugu, Abia, Oyo, Imo, Edo, Bayelsa, Bauchi, Cross River, Rivers, Lagos, Taraba, Ebonyi, and Katsina State, respectively.

Governance and weak state-society relations: According to Nzongola-Ntalaja, isolating three main types of governance is quite apt and relevant here. First, political or public governance, whose authority is the state, government, or public sector. It relates to "the process by which a society organizes its affairs and manages itself. Second, economic governance authority is in the private sector and relates to "the policies, processes, or institutional mechanisms that are germane to service delivery." Then last, social governance, whose authority is "civil society, including citizens and non-profit organizations, and relates to a system of values and beliefs that are necessary for social behavior to happen and for public decisions to be taken" (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2003).

In his view, Aning (2016), most of these security challenges have emerged partly as a result of "multiple socio-economic injustices," including but not limited to "marginalization, social inequality, political exclusion, corruption, economic deprivation, unequal allocation and

distribution of state resources, among others. Shanum (2003) no nation can enjoy lasting peace if its citizens live in abject poverty, particularly if that nation is acknowledged as having the ability and substantial means to provide development and guarantee a good standard of living. Unfortunately, that is the tale of Nigeria. It is a tale of poor governance, insecurity, and poverty in the midst of plenty.

According to Brig. Gen. Buba Marwa, the Director General of the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), he encapsulated and established the link between drugs and criminality in Nigeria using his experience and empirical data: His lengthy statement is found below for emphasis:

Equally, bandits, insurgents, and other criminals use drugs before launching their nefarious missions. History bailed us out. It is not something that started in Nigeria. And indeed, all students of military history will remember that, in the initial stages of World War 2, Nazi Germany's military offensive against Czechoslovakia in 1938, against Poland in 1939, the conquest of the lower countries in the early 40s, and the invasion of France, the armed forces and the crewmen were actually issued methamphetamine. They were issued drugs as an official military issue to propel their advance. As a result, you had German soldiers who were chemically enhanced, fearless, tireless, and could go for days without sleeping.

Marwa lamented that the situation is grave and constantly changing. This is what we are facing in Nigeria today. The insurgents, the bandits, and these people kidnapping hundreds of schoolchildren are all working under the influence of drugs. We know from our colleagues in the armed forces that when they secure a camp from Boko Haram, there are remnants of drugs everywhere.

The insurgents have been asked. What is their worrisome fear in their operations? And they have not said that their fear is running out of ammunition, or running out of food, or weapons. Their greatest fear, as they always say, is running out of drugs. Today, over 10 million Nigerians use cannabis. That is marijuana. Most of it is smoked in pepper soups, and other stuff. I didn't make this up. This was from the UNODC survey (Vanguard, 2021, May 26).

Inter-Agency Rivalry and Competition: According to Omogui (2006:66), agency rivalry is a state of competition, contention, or emulation that exists within and between agencies for something of perceived value to the contending interest. This could be tangible or

intangible recognition, as well as other perceived "benefits to self-esteem" that can be positive (good-natured) or negative (associated with harmful consequences, such as an inability to cooperate optimally in support of national defense and security objectives).

Moreover, Weiss (1987) argued that agencies will not cooperate solely to address shared problems, but mostly to comply with complex community and legal demands that merit cooperation, as organizations seek to maintain their functional autonomy. Mohammed, Garba, and Yusuf (2020) unfortunately, the absence of effective interagency cooperation has not only led to the deaths of hundreds of civilians at the hands of armed bandits, but it has also claimed the lives of scores of military, para-military, police, and civilian joint task forces (C-JTF). This shows that it is not only in the interest of the nation that enhanced interagency cooperation is needed, but also in the interest of each of these agencies and their operatives.

The current security situation in Nigeria has deteriorated with the emergence of various challenges ranging from cattle rustling, kidnapping, separatist movements, Boko Haram, farmer/herder conflicts, militancy, sea pirates, yahoo-yahoo, ethno-religious conflicts, and electoral violence that require joint operations by security agencies (Mohammed, et al., 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined the nature and dynamics of kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria by historicizing the phenomenon and its trajectory. As stated above in the report of SB Morgen Intelligence Firm and other studies, kidnapping in Nigeria has become a big industry where billions of Naira are transacted between victims and their abductors in the name of ransom. This security situation has undermined the freedom of movement and the conduct of lawful businesses in the entire country with the already impoverished and pauperized citizens.

While the world is moving towards a knowledge based economy for national development, Nigeria is fast moving backward to a new economy known as the "criminal economy". Kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria was reported in Lagos, the largest commercial center and former capital city of Nigeria. The discovery of oil in the Niger Delta region and the activities of the oil companies, coupled with relative deprivation in the area, make kidnapping a big business and a bargaining strategy for militants in the guise of resource nationalism. There is empirical evidence

that the Nigerian state is weak in handling the various security challenges across the country by armed non-state actors (ANSA), from the Boko Haram insurgency, farmer-herder conflicts, banditry and kidnapping, to separatist movements in the south-east (IPOB) and south-west Oduduwa People's Congress and other Yoruba nationalist groups, and Niger Delta militants. The security agencies are over-stretched and overwhelmed by these emerging security challenges.

Therefore, this paper concludes that the lack of full implementation of the kidnapping law at both Federal and State Governments in Nigeria embolden the kidnapers to continue to go on rampage across the Nigeria. It is actually important to buttress the fact and uphold a key finding of this study that there is a criminal economy in Nigeria called kidnapping for ransom, of which both the government and the people are well aware. The criminals operating under different names and guises have understood the weak capacity of the Nigerian state to handle or deal with the situation. The line of distinction between insurgency, militancy, banditry, cattle-rustlers, and kidnapers is blurred as all of them are involved in this big business for various reasons to advance their cause. The kidnapping serves many purposes including but limited to generating money, as a means of exchange with government for the release of their members, recruitment of new members among others. The stock in trade is human beings, and the "great discovery" is that being human has become a commodity that can be bargained and freed at all cost.

Drawing from the above findings of this study, we recommend that government should improve the economy so that it can provide opportunities and jobs for citizens to dissuade them from criminality in the name of making quick money; effective border security governance and management so as to prevent the proliferation of arms and ammunition into Nigeria from neighboring countries; inter-agency cooperation to monitor, use, and to share intelligence on criminals. This act will be use in the areas of movement, transportation, communication, and cut-off all supplies of food items; a bottom-top approach to security governance through community policing with the local population to fight the menace; a political will to enforce the law on the punishment of kidnapers and other offences; and use of sophisticated technology gadgets to detect, deter and respond (DDR) to criminal threats and attacks by kidnapers. Finally, it is very important to boost the morale of the security forces that fight criminals by providing them with weapons and improving their general welfare.

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