

Migration and Security Challenges in Zamfara State Nigeria, 20 11-2020

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Abstract

The current challenge in Zamfara State poses a serious threat not only to the internal security of Zamfara State, but to the National Security of Nigeria. Migration has changed the concept and practice of security, and the rules of human interactions. Its threats or perceived threats have made nations, states, individuals and governments to formulate policies and strategies to regulate and control the way people move across their borders. The main objective of the work is to assess the security situation in Zamfara State interfacing it with migration. Documentary method of data collection was adopted and content analysis, while Frustration-Aggression theory was used as framework of analysis. Some of the causes of the present security situation in Zamfara State include changes in land ownership, encroachment and sales of grazing land to farmers and environmental factor, the herders, on the other hand, perceive themselves to be victims of political marginalization, lacking a voice within the Nigerian state system. A large number of innocent Fulanis and bandits have been killed and, in most cases, their properties confiscated, criminality perceived as perpetrated by Fulani migrants, increased after renewed violence in post 2011 elections. Over five hundred and thirty-five (535) people have been kidnapped and over 15,000 cattle and other livestock also rustled by bandits. An estimated 4,983 women were widowed, 25,050 children orphaned, and 190,340 others internally displaced.

Keywords Migration, security, arms proliferation, arms bandits, Zamfara state, Nigeria

Introduction

Zamfara State is one of the states in North West geopolitical zones of the country. It was created in 1996 out of the then Sokoto State. It shares an international border with the Republic of Niger to the North, and interstate boundaries with Katsina to the East, Sokoto State to the West, Kebbi, Niger and Kaduna States to the South. Zamfara State comprises fourteen local government areas namely; Gusau, Tsafe, Bungudu, Maru, Kaura-Namoda, Zurmi, Shinkafi, Birnin-Magaji, Talata-Mafara, Bakura, Maradun, Anka, Bukkuyum, and Gummi. The State has a land mass of thirty-nine thousand seven hundred sixty-two square kilometres (39,762km²). Its major ethnic groups are the Hausa and Fulani, who historically share strong cultural ties and are very much intermixed, with other smaller groups. The estimated population of Zamfara State is three 3 million two hundred and fifty-nine thousand eight hundred and forty-six (3,259,846 based on figures

from the 2006 census) is predominantly Muslim (Sunni). Most of the populations (about 80 per cent) are farmers, pastoralists, agro-pastoralists or small-scale entrepreneurs. According to International Crisis Group (2020) the state has substantial solid mineral deposits, including gold exploited by artisanal miners in open pit mines. Despite its economic potential, Zamfara state is one of the states with the highest poverty rate in Nigeria. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2019) poverty level in Zamfara State was 74 per cent above the national average of 40.1 per cent. More than 2.5 million lack access to basic health care and clean water, and immunisation coverage is far below national goals. Only one child in ten receives all recommended vaccines, while six in ten receive none at all. The state also has some of the country's highest rates of maternal and child mortality. According to UNICEF (2019) Zamfara is one of the states with the highest number of out-of-school children in Nigeria. In Zamfara State more than 30 per cent of school-age children are not in school. On top of those who do not attend school at all, millions of children are in the poorly resourced and ill-supervised Quranic school system, or *almajiranci*, which produces cohorts of unskilled youth. The state also suffers very poor local governance, characterised by the mismanagement of public funds. The state's geography and climatic conditions pose serious challenges for federal and state authorities. Much of Zamfara State is savannah, but the state is also interspersed with vast forests, some of which are home to thousands of mostly Fulani herders (also known as pastoralists-migrants). Once under the watch of forestry authorities, these forests gradually became hideouts for criminals including cattle rustlers, highway robbers, kidnappers and cannabis growers and bandits.

Migration has changed the concept and practice of security, and the rules of human interactions. Its threats or perceived threats have made nations, states, individuals and governments to formulate policies and strategies to regulate and control the way people move across their borders. Despite its dominant gains, the challenges of migration have become a part of human existence and a matter of survival for many countries including Nigeria, most especially in the light of globalization. The dramatic increase in migration and violent clashed between herders and farmers in many parts of Nigeria has created a new group of security threats. These are armed banditry, kidnapping for ransom, arms trafficking, human trafficking, cattle rustling, illegal mining of solid minerals, smuggling, terrorism; cross-border crimes, illegal migration, sharp socio-economic differences, refugee and internally displaced persons (IDPs) amongst others. The Fulanis in Northern

Nigeria are transhumant by nature. Transhumance is a system of animal production characterized by seasonal and cyclical migration between complementary ecological areas as a means of adapting to unfavourable conditions. As an enduring system of livestock production, transhumance is based on practical and economically viable management of pastoral resources. Transhumance has not only enabled pastoral people to survive the major ecological and climatic crises that periodically occur, it has also enabled groups to affirm and maintain their cultural identities. According to Takaya (2017) ever since they started their Eastward movement from Futa Jallon highlands of Senegal as early as 16th century, the Fulanis are known to be perpetually on the “wings of the season” as they move their livestock in search of suitable grazing areas and watering points. This practice has already become deeply ingrained into their culture, making it difficult for them to be convinced of getting resettled permanently in one place. With climate change, the movement pattern has been markedly altered. As the migration intensified so also have security challenges and violent clashes over grazing lands between host communities and the migrants. Transhumant pastoralists are perceived as violent and deliberately armed to deal with unsuspecting crop farmers; the farmers allege intentional crop damage by animals. The herders, on the other hand, perceive themselves to be victims of political marginalization, lacking a voice within the Nigerian state system. The exclusion of nomadic Fulani herders from the policy process and their lack of voice are so acute that the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBA), an urban-based Fulani pressure group, stands as the only known civic group that engages in policy advocacy on their behalf. Zamfara State is one of the states in the North West that is presently affected by migration and security challenges which include banditry, cattle rustling and kidnapping which started since 2009 to date. The main objective of this paper is to assess the current security challenges and find out the root cause (s) in Zamfara State.

Methodology

The documentary method of data collection was adopted and content analysis was equally used to analyse the data collected. The study is also descriptive in style as it is built on the findings of already existing works about the security threats in Zamfara State. The Frustration-Aggression Theory was used as the frame work of analysis.

Conceptual Clarification

Various scholars have postulated differing viewpoints on the concept of security; according to the United Nations Development Programme (1994) human security could be defined as protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the daily activities, at homes, offices or communities. That is, security is the state of being safe and secure from danger, it could also be protection from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression. For the Commission on Human Security (2003), human security is the protection of important aspect of human lives in a way that would enhance human freedoms and fulfillment. Human security encompasses freedom from want, harm, fear and the freedom to take appropriate actions without any form of hindrance. It is also the assurance of future well being and freedom from threat. Williams (2008) averred that security involves the capacity to pursue cherished political and social ambitions. That is, security is socio-political in nature as without security there can be no political stability and consequently social activities will be in chaos. Palme (1992) argues that there is a connection between security and survival. For him, security is a basic condition for the survival of human beings. Thus, security is synonymous to freedom from danger, fear and doubt among others. Security, Nwagboso (2012) argues is an essential concept which is commonly associated with the alleviation of threats to the survival of individuals or groups. Thus, for him, security can be equated with freedom from present and future danger, harm or anxiety however, security may not be the absence of threats but it is the ability to respond to these threats with appropriate skill and expertise. According to Otto and Ukpere (2012) security relates to the presence of peace, safety, happiness and the protection of human and physical resources or the absence of crisis. According to Akin (2008) security is any laid down procedures toward the protection of persons and property against hostile persons. It is a situation where by a conducive atmosphere is created within which people in the state can go about their normal daily activities without threat to either their lives or properties. Thus, security encompasses all approach toward safeguarding human as well as material resources in the state against all forms of aggressions or violent conduct. Critically appraising Nigeria's security problems Omoyibo and Akpomera (2012) avowed that security in Nigeria is synonymous to an individual who put iron bars across his or her windows which eventually prevents the individual from escaping a fire outbreak. For them, the only condition for the maintenance of peace and the guarantee of security is by upholding law and order. By this, state could be

secured against threats which may include low-level civil disorder, crime, organised violence, or even an armed insurgency (El-Rufai, 2012). According to Imam (2014) Security is the state or condition of being free from danger or threat in the daily activities of human beings. Security represents a situation when an individual, group or community can move freely to carry out their daily activities without fear of danger, injury to the body or destruction of properties. Ensuring the security of lives and properties is the primary responsibility of the Government. It is because of this that Governments have establish several security forces to ensure and maintain security within a country and even to respond to external aggressions and threats. Lippman (2009) defines security to mean: “When a nation is secure to the extent that it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war. Obasanjo (2009) defines national security as the: “Aggregation of the security interests of the individuals, political entities, human associations and ethnic groups, which make up the nation. The security interest includes safety of life and property, economic, psychological and mental well-being and the freedom to pursue the attainment of legitimate objectives without hindrance”. Samaddar (2005) defines security as: ‘a physical situation and a psychological condition where citizens have full freedom and opportunity to develop their potentials in their designed fashion; and, in the most fruitful manner without resistance’. Therefore, security is the feeling of being secured from hunger, threats or violence. Many States in Nigeria are facing one form of insecurity or the other and as such insecurity appears to be a national issue. According to Divsallar, (2015) the global community is also under increasing insecurity around the world. This threat ranges from emerging new terrorist groups, to arms proliferations, armed banditry, kidnapping for ransom and power struggles in many states of Nigeria.

Theoretical Assumptions:

This paper is anchored on frustration-aggression model. It was propounded by Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowrer, & Sears (1939). The major assumption of the model is that “aggression is always a consequence of frustration”, and “that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression”. They also defined frustration as “an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal response at its proper time in the behaviour sequence”. The interrogations and disputations that

the perspective generated led one of the proponents to intervene with some modifications of the central thesis. Thus, Miller (1941) noted that it was too general to assume that frustration must always lead to aggression or that aggression is always propelled by frustration. His intervention led to the second lap of the hypothesis which reflected a more acceptable reality thus: frustration produces instigations to a number of different types of response, one of which is instigation to some form of aggression. However, years later, a significant modification came from Berkowitz (1989) who argued that aggression can be driven by inherent personal benefits to the aggressor and not necessarily by past wrongdoings and that people are more akin to attack when they discover that they are willfully sabotaged or denied what it's legitimately theirs than when the interference is an accidental occurrence. He surmised it as "frustrations are aversive events and generate aggressive inclinations only to the extent that they produce negative effect". As already noted, the unending attacks between pastoralists and sedentary farmers across the country are largely driven by frustrations and struggles to protect the economic assets of land, cattle and farm products. Herders were pressured to provide pastures and water to their flocks in the light of climate change realities, while crop farmers were in dire need of lands for increased agricultural production. Thus, the ensuing cattle rustling, physical attacks and encroachments on farms bred frustrations between the two groups, which got effused in violent clashes and the manifest weakness of the state in curbing the menace made resort to self-help fashionable. Frustration aggression reflects the reasons for the current security challenges in Zamfara State because men who want to live beyond their social means do not accept their limitation in defeat this results into violence as the last resort in order to live beyond their social means. Frustration aggression theory addresses the current feud between farmers and herders /Hausa and Fulani migrants over farm/grazing lands. In case of the Fulani migrants frustration and aggression comes into play because they feel that they have been marginalised and excluded from governance and even their grazing lands have been taken from them (Tamuno, 1991). The relevance of the frustration aggression theory to this current study shows that political actors resort to violence as a means to achieving their aims and exercising power, out of feelings of frustration that leads to aggression, especially when the desired end seems not tenable. This theory helps in understanding the psychological behaviour of persons in the use of violence to achieve selfish interest.

Aggression may develop as a consequence of having been exposed to an extremely frustrating condition sufficient to provoke the experience of hopelessness.

When people experience a difference between what they perceive and what they desire as the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen in Nigeria, especially in Zamfara State, they seek to reduce this by reducing this gap through actions filtering information or altering perceptions". Whenever there is a discrepancy between preferred value and actual value states. Such a situation has the tendency to produce hatred, anxiety, fear and the desire to hurt or eliminate the source. This is exactly what is happening in the Zamfara State now. The discrepancies could manifest within economic, social, cultural, political and religious spheres as these issues form the micro level of analysis that could be regarded as the structural background conditions operating at the individual or societal level (Alao, Alao & Atere 2012:3). Therefore, the frustration aggression theory provides an explanation for the security challenge that has been occurring in different parts of Zamfara State. The theory stipulates that events surrounding insecurity in Zamfara State are as a result of fear of defeat exhibited by both the Hausa community (farmers) and the migrant Fulani herders which triggers frustration and then transfer of aggression, through the employment of human mercenaries in perpetrating violence.

Historical Over-View of Security Challenge in Zamfara State

According to Olayoku (2014) the genesis of security threat in Zamfara State started since around 2009, but it became out of control in 2011 after the general elections. During that period, there were frequent thefts of domestic animals by local bandits across many local government areas of the state. The bandits used to carry Dane guns, cutlasses and sticks for their operations and most of their activities were targeted on cattle owners/rearers found in isolated villages and forests. This unpleasant act triggered the affected communities that are predominantly in disperse rural settlements to organise a local vigilante group known as "YANSAKAI" in order to counter or checkmate the activities of the bandits. The first operation of this 'Yansakai vigilante group took place on the 7th July, 2011 at Chilli market in Dangulbi District of Maru Local government area where three persons namely; Alhaji Ishe Bello - Chairman Meyetti Allah Dansadau District, Ex-Police Samaila Yakubu, and one unidentified Fulani man were brutally murdered by the 'Yansakai Vigilante group. The corpse of Alhaji Ishe was burnt inside

his pick-up van. The ruthless pounce on the aforementioned Fulani men further gave the vigilante the impetus to expand their operations to cover the entire Local government areas of Zamfara State and in the process, a large number of innocent Fulanis and bandits estimated over five hundred (500) men were killed and, in most cases, their properties confiscated by the vigilantes. In the year 2013, sequel to the unlawful and barbaric activities of the 'Yansakai vigilante group in the rural areas and some isolated Fulani camps, the Fulanis organized themselves into different groups, acquired sophisticated weapons such as AK 47 rifles, assault rifles, Double- and Single-barrel guns, Dane guns, General Purpose Machine gun (GPMG), etc. and planned a reprisal attack on some targeted villages which they presumed to have participated in the massacre of the Fulanis. This led to the scores of deaths in some villages such as; Kizara, Lilo, Kwokaya, Gidan kaso, Lingyado, Bagega, Unguwar Galadima, Tungar Baushe, Guru, Badarawa, Rakumi Mallamawa, Kagarawa, Cigama, Malmo, 'Yargada, Jangeme, Madaba, Mutunji, Mashema, Dangulbi, Birnin-Magaji, Filinga, Kabaro, Tungar Rakumi, and Wonaka where a total of about 729 persons including two police officers were killed. On what would be referred to as counter attack after the 2013 reprisal killings by the Fulani, the people of Kizara village and environs were later said to have murdered over One hundred (100) Fulanis neighbouring them as a result of which the survivors escaped to different thick forests (Hideouts) across the state and formed cells (Daba). Others relocate to other neighbouring states such as Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kaduna, and Niger States. According to Anka (2017) the dialectics has since 2011 created a big enmity between Fulani herders, farmers and rest parts of the communities in Zamfara which led to the large number of Fulanis moving out of the state to other alternative places. The movement is characterized by many problems ranging from reprisal attacks before departing or re-arranging for counter attacks targeting members of 'Yansakai Vigilante group in particular. Anka (2017) also is of the view that the brutal attacks on 'Yargaladima community which led to the destruction of the entire community and killing over two hundred (200) people including women and children, and other villages such as Dumburum in Zurmi, Badarawa in Shinkafi, Kizara in Tsafe and Dangulbi in Maru Local government areas were all linked to an insinuation of reprisal attacks, well arranged by members of the Bandits/Fulani herders. It is therefore pertinent to note that these attacks, counter attacks and reprisal attacks occurred almost in every part of the state

and are mostly accompanied with wanton killings, destruction of properties, Theft, Cattle rustling, Abduction and Kidnapping.

WANEP NEWS (2019) states that additionally, an estimated 4,983 women were widowed, 25,050 children orphaned, and 190,340 others internally displaced between June 2011 and May 2019 in Zamfara State. Further reports also revealed that over 10,000 cattle were lost, while 2,688 hectares of farmlands and 10,000 houses destroyed within 2011 and mid-2018 in Zamfara State. Also, the State recorded the loss of 147,800 vehicles and motorcycles between June 2011 to May 2019.\

Internal Security Situation in Zamfara State

According to Olayoku (2014) armed banditry has become a major problem in Zamfara State. This menace has been on the increase since 2011 after General elections, leading to violent conflict between the Fulanis and their allies from within and outside the country on one side and their host community on the other. Bello (2017) is of the view that the outcome of this conflict has claimed thousands of lives and caused destruction of properties worth billions of naira in the state. It could be noted that there is no village in the state that has not witnessed the impact of armed banditry. As expressed by Rufai (2018) in Mada district in Gusau local government area, over 12 different attacks by bandits which claimed the lives of over 20 people and 1500 herds of cattle stolen at different times from 2014 to 2016 were witnessed. This has affected economic development with the growth of unemployment and democratic setback through rise of groups of armed bandits. According to FMOIAC (2018) from 2011 to date, over 4000 lives have been lost. About five hundred and thirty-five (535) people (reported cases) were kidnapped and over 15,000 cattle and other livestock were rustled by bandits. In addition, not fewer than 36 communities along Dansadau, Zurmi, Shinkafi, Bakura, Maradun, Birnin Magaji, Anka, Gusau, Bukkuyum and Tsafe towns were burnt to the ground with their inhabitants displaced to alternative safer places. Notwithstanding other violent crimes such as rape, kidnapping, Abduction, and causing grievous hurt were also recorded within the period. Hence, incidents of this nature are common occurrence in virtually all the villages in the state with little or no efforts from the security agencies towards preventing it or even countering it. According to IOM (2019) Shiyar Rafi, Birnin Magaji and Lilo Village in Gummi and Gusau Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Zamfara State have recorded the arrival of 6,419 displaced individuals (1,126 households). 4,734

arrivals were recorded in Shiyar Rafi_ community and 1,645 arrivals in Birnin Magaji, both in Gummi LGA with Lilo Village in Gusau LGA recording 40 arrivals. The movements were triggered by banditry attacks in the early hours of the morning on 17 and 18 November 2019 in Bantsa and Rafin Tsawo communities in Wonaka ward of Gusau LGA; Karaye and Gwali communities in Bardoki and Birnin Magaji wards of Gummi LGA. Over 28 people were reportedly injured in the attacks, with 14 casualties recorded and 7 individuals abducted by the armed bandits. It is estimated that 52 houses were razed and belongings worth millions of Naira destroyed in Karaye community during the attack. The displaced individuals include 3,590 children, 1,126 adult men, 1,510 adult women and 193 elderly persons. Over 71 per cent of the displaced population is taking refuge in unfinished government buildings in the host communities of arrival, with the remaining 29 per cent staying with friends and relatives. They are in immediate need of shelter, food items, Non-Food Items (NFIs), WASH and health care services. Daily Trust (2018) reports that currently, in Zamfara state, towns and villages are being attacked by bandits almost on daily basis. People are killed, kidnapped for ransom, women raped, hundreds of cattle rustled, traders robbed, houses and markets destroyed, farming proscribed by bandits; those who cultivated crops have been warned not to venture near their farms. There is wanton destruction of lives and properties and high level of human rights violation going on in Zamfara State. According to Rufai (2018) armed banditry has created a large number of destitute, orphans, widows and internally displaced persons in the rural areas of Zamfara state due to constant raiding, theft, raping and kidnapping. The village of Badarawa in Shinkafi Local Government Area is another area hit by the bandits' attacks. The village head compiled a list of 318 widows, orphans and destitute who lost loved ones in the various attacks carried out by the bandits in 2015 alone. The levels of attacks in these areas are less compared to Anka, Maru, and Tsafe that witnessed frequent attacks and recorded casualties, as a result of so many villages that were being raided, so many people killed, indiscriminately, women raped, and livestock carted away by the bandits. As it is presently, the lack of adequate internal security due the threat of armed banditry has put Zamfara State at the top of list of major flash points of rural violence in Nigeria.

Triggers of Security Challenge in Zamfara State

There are divergent views on the causes of this menace. There are many who linked armed banditry in Zamfara State to long term human conflicts between Fulani

herders and farmers due to struggle for ownership of farmland and grazing reserves. On the other hand, some view it as a direct effect of reaction against socio-political and economic marginalization of Fulani by their Hausa counterparts. It is presumed that majority of those involved in this heinous act are Fulani who stay in the forest areas and who rear cattle. However, it is pertinent to know that in some cases other people who have the knowledge on cattle rearing are directly involved. Other triggers include the following: Changes in land ownership, encroachment onto grazing routes and environment and climate factors led to relations shifting. Sale of grazing land to farmers by government officials and community leaders escalated tensions. Fulani communities, particularly in rural areas, felt marginalised by government and aggrieved by perceived injustice in dispute resolution.

1. Injustice by Traditional Rulers: Lack of transparency in the Traditional leadership, and those involved in the dispensation of justice in matters relating to migrants/ host communities disputes.

2. Long Historical Factor: There exists an antagonistic relationship between the migrants and their host community in the state long before now.

3. Drug Abuse: Among the teeming youths especially the migrants in the state which has bearing on criminal behaviour.

4. Unemployment: The large teeming migrant youth populations in the state are unemployed, so armed banditry, Kidnapping and cattle rustling seem to be lucrative despite the risks involved. The problem of unemployment is further worsened when cattle rearers lose their herds to Bandits. This situation makes many of them to become bandits/cattle rustlers and Kidnappers in order to make up for their loss.

5. Vulnerability: Cattle owners in most cases prefer locations that are remote and often away from the usual settlements for grazing purposes. This makes them vulnerable to attack by bandits.

Dispersed Settlement: Most of the victims of banditry, Kidnapping and cattle rustling in the state are based in remote areas of the state without access roads or communication, and this makes it difficult for them to give timely information about any difficult situation; thereby hindering prompt response in times of distress. These remote and isolated settlements are far apart and further away from Divisional Headquarters/ Police stations or out posts.

7. **Huge Financial Benefits:** Cattle are easily marketable and costly commodities. This has encouraged more criminally minded Fulanis and other tribes to enter into the illicit activities of banditry.

8. **Proliferation of fire arms:** The aftermath of series of makes it possible and easy for the nomads and other criminally minded persons to possess firearms unlawfully.

9. **Arbitrary use of power by Vigilante groups (YANSAKAI):** The vigilantes are not only known to be involved in extra judicial killings and amputations, they are also involved in the confiscation of the properties of their victims. The Fulanis sometimes attack communities and rustle their cattle to avenge the ill treatment meted out on them by the Yansakai.

10. **Out of Court settlement:** The Fulanis are fond of settling cases of cattle rustling internally "FALAKU". They often do not report such cases to the Police. This act encourages the young and unarmed into big time armed bandits.

Porous Borders: Achumba et al. (2013) observe that the porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of the porous borders there is an unchecked inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country which has aided militancy and criminality in Nigeria (Hazen and Horner, 2007). Available data show that Nigeria host over 70 percent of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa (Edeko, 2011). Also, the porosity of the Nigerian borders has aided the uncontrollable influx of migrants, mainly young men, from neighboring countries such as Republic of Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin responsible for some of the criminal acts (Adeola and Oluyemi, 2012).

Government's Efforts to Curtail the Menace

The governments at both the Federal and State levels have made efforts towards tackling the present insecurity facing the state. The Federal Government through its various security agencies that involved military and paramilitary agencies has made various efforts to end the banditry and kidnapping plus other criminal activities that brought insecurity in the State. The Federal government deployed troops and Units of Mobile Police to the State. According to Premium Times (2017) president also ordered a Military crackdown on bandits operating in rural communities in Zamfara State in a renewed operation-*HARBIN KUNAMA*, following fresh attacks on some communities in Shinkafi and Maradun Local government areas. To enable the Military carry out this new

mandate, the president has approved the request of the Minister of Defence, Gen. Mansur Dan-Ali (rtd), for the stationing of the full Battalion of Special Forces in Zamfara State, and operationalizing of the newly established 8 Division of the Nigerian Army in Sokoto in the new order of Battle (OBAT). The President has also approved the movement of the 1 Brigade of the Nigerian Army from Sokoto to Gusau upon take-off of the 8 Division. Apart from the effort made by the presidency, the upper legislative chamber has also passed a resolution mandating its standing committee on security to ascertain the cause of the fresh killings in Zamfara State and recommend ways to avert its re-occurrence. Also New Telegraph (2018) reports that in June 2018, apart from the additional troops and mobile police men deployed to the state, another operation was also launched by the Nigerian Air force called *OPERATION-DIRANMIKIYA* which has led to heavy bombardment of the bandits' hideouts in sububu forests as a result of which large number of bandits killed and their camps destroyed. Also, Vanguard (2018) even with the drastic measures taken through the military might, more than twenty communities were thereafter attacked by these hoodlums. And despite the Breaking news of the sudden death of the notorious bandits' leader, Buharin Daji, who was later confirmed to have been killed during an encounter with another rival group led by Dogo Gide, the spate of attacks by the bandits on rural communities persist with even greater magnitude resulting to wanton killings and many communities becoming internally displaced. The State government also assisted by providing logistics such as operational vehicles (437 Toyota Hilux) and financial support (N17 billion) in spite of all these, the killings and brutality continue to take a new dimension as the bandits continue to adopt some new strategies in perpetrating their barbaric acts, thus, making it very difficult for the security agencies to curtail their criminal activities as the bandits understand the terrain more than the security agents because there is no access road in trying to reach out to these villages whenever there is report of attack and communication by the security agencies operating along the forest is virtually impossible.

To alternatively manage the situation, the idea of peace deal and amnesty was initiated between Zamfara State government and the Leadership of these bandits in 2016. The State government, having reviewed the impacts of the cohesive measures especially the use of Military and Mobile Police, come to the conclusion that, the operation has not yielded the much-desired result in spite of huge amount of funds expended. According to Tangaza, (2014) hence, the State government opted for negotiations with the armed

bandits with a view to surrendering their weapons to the State government as the best option for ensuring sustainable peace. The State government delegation led by the Deputy governor, Malam Ibrahim Wakkala Liman and the bandits under the leadership of Buharin Daji (a.k.a. Tsoho) had their first meeting on the 15th December, 2016 at Gobirawar Chali in Dansadau Emirate under Maru Local government Area, with emphasis on three major issues during the dialogue especially with the demands from the bandits clearly spelt out; **(1)**. ‘Yansakai Vigilante must stop the wanton attacks on their communities, **(2)**. Security agents and Vigilante groups must stop seizing their cattle and **(3)**. The government should not continue to neglect their communities in the area of developmental projects. The government agreed to their demands and emphasized that, for the amnesty to deal to be perfected the bandits must surrender their arms and should promise not to invade any community while the peace deal lasted. The government also proposed some strategic measures of integrating the bandits back to their communities by providing soft grant for them to commence business as well as bringing some of them closer to the government. Having enjoyed about nine (9) months of relative peace in the state as a result of the peace deal entered into with the bandits and Amnesty programme introduced by the State government, the peace deal was however breached most especially with the resurgence of fresh killings in some communities along Shinkafi, Tsafe, Maru and Maradun Local government Areas, with multiple number of death and loss of Properties worth millions of naira. The new violence was characterized with brutal and wanton killings, sexual intimidation among women and children and kidnapping for ransom. It was described as the most tragic in the history of the State and the most inhuman maltreatment against humanity. This ugly development emerged at a time when people believed that, the peace deal entered into between the State government and the bandits would serve as a panacea to the crises. The failure of the peace deal was attributed to many factors among which include; Absence of the political will from the side of the State government to implement the agreement it has entered with the bandits, Non-implementation of rehabilitation and reconstruction measures to bring succour to the victims of this conflicts, as well as re-arresting of some members of the bandits by the operatives of the Department of Security Service (DSS) after they have signed the peace deal with the State. Shehu (2017) stated that, the peace pact was jeopardized after a close associate of Buharin Daji called “Dogo Bangaje” was intercepted, arrested and detained by the DSS. Also, Anka, (2017) is of the view that others blamed the **operation-SHARAN**

DAJI launched against the bandits by the Nigerian Army as responsible for the fresh violence while others were of the opinion that, as some of the armed bandits' leaders heard about the huge amount of money being dashed out to Buharin Daji and his camp plus the juicy appointment by the State government, they decided to establish their own popularity so that their plight can equally be considered by the State government.

The Challenges of Combatting Current Security Situation in Zamfara State

There are numerous challenges that have brought a setback in the fight against current security situation in Zamfara State and they include;

1. **Unemployment:** There is high level of unemployment in Zamfara State especially among the youths in the rural areas. So many youths are staying idle and are leaving at the mercy of begging. There are too many young people in the villages that are jobless and without any means of livelihood. The frustration that results from this and the need for survival makes the youths vulnerable to manipulation into committing various crimes even for a little pay.
2. **Poverty:** The rate of poverty in Zamfara State is quite alarming and the result of this is an increase in crimes and other social vices that add to the problem of internal security in the state.
3. **Inefficient government intervention:** Failure and lack of political will on the side of the government to fight crimes squarely are among the major impediments affecting the fight against armed banditry in the state.
4. **Lack of Faith in Security Agencies:** Most of the village communities or masses that were badly affected by the activities of criminals have lost faith in the security agencies in the state and in many cases opt to protect themselves as been exhibited by different vigilante group activities across different communities. The security agencies most especially the Police are ill equipped and ill prepared to combat the level of crimes due to the myriad problems facing the organization, among which are; Inadequate logistics, Inadequate manpower, Poor welfare package, Inadequate training and retraining, Poor intelligence gathering mechanism, Inadequate communication gadgets, corruption among others.
5. **Corrupt government officials:** Corruption is a term commonly associated with government officials. Stealing public funds has become a norm. In a bid to get or stay in

power, some of them fund criminal gangs as there is a political undertone to the activities of these hoodlums. Aspirants of political offices mostly, have been known to create armies of political thugs during election periods and this usually results in eruption of violent related offences such as the ones currently being experienced in the state.

6. Unbalanced development: The parity in development of areas across the state is one of the major causes of crimes in Zamfara state. There is a feeling of partiality and marginalization amongst some Fulani communities in Zamfara State due to the imbalance in development of their various communities across the state. This causes disaffection and grievance in the people occupying such areas.

7. Loss of sociological and communal value system: History bears record of a time when the traditional value system of the Nigerian society as multi - ethnic as it is, was characterized by collectivism, loyalty to local authority and community, hard work, mutual harmony and coexistence, abhorrence for theft, and high value for life, a time when guns were meant for hunting animals and cutlasses or machetes for farming. Most of these communal values which made society safe and made citizens feel secure have been lost gradually over time and since the penetration of western culture. In the face of these security challenges, economic growth and development cannot be sustained.

Conclusion and Recommendation

No doubt the current security situation in Zamfara State portends a dangerous trend not only to the state but to the entire country. It has worsened the relationship between the Hausa-host communities and Fulani- migrants. It has equally led to further underdevelopment of the state especially in the area of formal education as schools have been shut down and crippled economic activities of the state as farmlands have been destroyed and many farmers either killed or fled their communities to IDP camps. The government should revisit the amnesty programmes, find out why it failed in the first instance and take necessary corrections. There is also the need to refine the Quranic school system, or *almajiranci*, and incorporate it into western education to address the issue of out-school children. The state government should partner with National Orientation Agency and embark upon massive and aggressive education campaign. Religious and Community leaders should also partner with both state and local government to provide security as security is now everybody's business.

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