

ARMED BANDITRY IN NIGERIA'S NORTH-WEST AND COMMUNITY PEACE ACCORD: CONSEQUENCES ON STATE SECURITY

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Abstract: For over a decade now, armed banditry has become one of the major social and economic problems that characterized life among millions of the population around the North-Western part of the country. Despite the negative effects that banditry has caused, the government has been making concerted efforts to manage the excesses of the armed bandits through various combatant operations by both the military and other security operatives. Stakeholders believed the conventional operations, which were financed through budgetary supports running into trillions of naira since 2011, failed simply because of a combination of several social and economic reasons. While these operations failed, agitation have been on for the government to enter into reconciliation by way of a peace accord with the armed bandits for peace to prosper. The reconciliation measures, however, failed because of what many believed is attributed to a lack of sincerity by both the bandit criminals and the government. While the murderous activities of the armed bandits continue to resurface with grave consequences and dynamism, communities believe that, since peace is the only option, they could try the option of entering into an independent peace accord in isolation from the government. The independent peace accord has so far provided some relative peace to various communities in the North-Western part of Nigeria, even though there have been scores of armed bandit attacks that have been recorded. Despite that, many believed the idea of community dialoguing with the armed bandits in isolation from the government has produced some relative peace. The paper adopted a mixed research methodology of literature review and field interview with a view to ascertaining the extent of the facts and reasons behind the fresh community/bandits peace accord.

Keywords: Nigeria North-West, Armed Banditry, Community Peace Accord, State Security, Conflict Resolution.

Introduction

Armed banditry has been one of the social problems that characterized states in the NorthWestern part of Nigeria since 2011. This social problem, in the view of (Anka 2024), has become one of the major impediments that hinder the region's socio-economic and political development. Apart from the killing of thousands of innocent souls, including women and children, armed banditry over the years has resulted in the displacement of nothing less than (3) million people and, in effect, over 850,000 households have been displaced from their various ancestral homes. The social problems emanating from banditry have also resulted in the crash in economic activities, especially agriculture and livestock production, which has been the major pride of the people of the area for decades (Anka 2024).

Since the phenomenon started, the government of Nigeria, through the use of conventional security forces, has set up machinery to crush the armed bandits through various operations and counter-operations. (Anka 2023) argued that, from Operation Hadarin Daji to Operation Fansar Yamma and that of Harbin Kunama, hundreds of armed trained military soldiers, including the air force, have been deployed to fight armed banditry in states like Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, and Kaduna, and that close to N10tr has been expended to finance the military operations against the bandits. This he argued again, are different from the role played by the members of the joint civilian operatives that have been engaged

formally and informally by respective state governments in the North-West to support and compliment the fight against armed banditry by the conventional troops.

As a result of the multi-dynamic nature of the armed bandit operations, which lasted for almost a decade, the government's efforts toward addressing the insecurity ravaging the region have almost failed as more incidents of armed bandit brutality against innocent people have continued to occur over time, which demonstrated the inactivity of government strategies toward combating armed bandit criminalities. The effort by the joint civilian forces, which was also identified as instrumental in ending the tragedy, had again failed as a more complex security situation was created in such a way that people believed that a military or rather security approach toward ending the armed bandit brutality might not likely work for the better.

This is notwithstanding the efforts also put in place by the government toward executing various peace accords; hence, there has been serious public outcry as to the reason why the government should enter into a peace accord to end the menace of armed bandit brutality, since the strict approach has failed to yield any positive result. (Anka 2023) argued, even though people have the impression that war cannot be ended with war, the government of Zamfara state, for instance, has entered into first and second peace deals with bandit criminals. Even to the surprise of many people who shared the same sentiment, the bandit criminals instead turned the whole peace deal arrangement into a money-making venture,

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which led to the collapse of the idea. This development attracted mixed reactions as people believed both the government and bandits shared some portions of the blame, which negated the success of the initiative.

Despite the failure of the government's peace initiatives with the armed bandits, the community believed that the initiatives were lacking in sincerity, as bandits always claimed that the government failed in its commitment to addressing critical parts of its obligations. (Anka 2024) argued, the fact that parties agreed to the terms of the peace initiative entered into in order to restore peace, both bandit leaders and government actors were partly incapacitated to move toward fulfilling their parts of commitment, a circumstance that destroys the entire public hope toward restoring peace through consolidated peace arrangements between the two stakeholders. The development recently where the community entered into a peace accord with the bandits has become a giant step toward restoring a lasting peace. Communities like Shinkafi, Tsafe, and part of Birnin Magaji had, for instance, enjoyed some relative peace because of their initiative of restoring peace through alternative dialogue with the bandit actors directly.

The objective of this paper is to examine the historical perspective and dynamics of armed banditry violence and why conventional operations to tackle it failed. It also aimed at assessing the previous peace accords entered between armed bandits and the government and also explained the reasons behind the failure of the initiative. The paper explained the reasons why communities in states like Zamfara opted to enter into independent peace accords with the bandits and its implications on sustainable security in the region. The paper adopted a mixed research methodology of literature review and field interviews with a view to ascertaining facts and relating them to the subject matter under discussion.

Armed Banditry: An Over-view

Zamfara State has been one of the front-line states affected by the menace of armed banditry violence since the year 2011. In the arguments of (Anka 2023), the causes of this banditry are multifaceted, ranging from scarcity of arable land and its equality in its distribution among both the locals, who are basically farmers, and Fulani herders, who needed the land for their livestock grazing. (Anka 2023) is of the opinion that banditry was caused by inequality and marginalization demonstrated by the Fulani ethnic race over distribution and allocation of state resources, especially in the areas of education, health, and access to basic social amenities.

The banditry crisis started as merely a conflict between Fulani herders and local farmers but transformed into a full-blown social conflict that resulted in the killings of thousands of innocent people with attendant consequences of the destruction of valuable government assets and those that belong to private individuals (Anka 2023). Though there are no clear statistics as to the actual number of people killed since armed banditry violence started, (Anka 2023) argued that between 5,000 and 15,000 people have been killed both in Zamfara and other neighboring states of Katsina, Kebbi, Kaduna, and Sokoto, with a grave financial loss valued at over N50b.

Armed banditry in Zamfara, for instance, resulted in forcing people to embark on forceful migration to settlements they are not very familiar with and also rendered thousands internally displaced. Using the 2021 data from the Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs Gusau, Zamfara State, (Anka 2023) argued that there are over

120,000 households that have been displaced in Zamfara since 2011 and that the estimate can be approximated to 1,000,000 internally displaced persons when the number of wives and children of these households were added into the figures.

The tragedy of armed banditry violence has also resulted in the forceful migration of Fulani herders with their large herds of livestock out of the banditry frontline states such as Zamfara, Katsina, and Kaduna to areas like the North-East and, as a result, livestock scarcity continues to impact on the basic demands of meat, milk, and other sources of protein for human consumption.

As argued by (Barau 2023), over 70% of livestock that were reared before the banditry started in Zamfara have been moved to other non-conflict and safer states in the North-East as the Fulani ethnic race continues to be targeted by some organized local vigilantes for reprisal attacks.

Evidently now, farmers in states like Zamfara, in the wake of the banditry violence, no longer go to their farms due to threat or "placement of fines for access to farm." This, in the arguments of (Shamsiya 2023), affected most of the agriculturally productive areas like Dansadau, Bokolori areas, including of local governments like Maradun, Bakura, and Talatar Mafara, who were basically known to be very active and productive in rice, maize, and soya beans production. This eventually affected both the availability and affordability of the farm products, which usually facilitated adequate food security which states like Zamfara are known for.

Conventional Fight against Banditry Since 2012

From 2011 to date, the Nigerian government has been taking steps toward matching the excesses of the armed bandits and their murderous operations in the states of the North-West, especially Zamfara. From military to other conventional security operations, the federal government has, for instance, launched various counter-operations against armed bandits, leading to the killing of an uncountable number of bandit kingpins and their lieutenants in various states of the NorthWest. Despite the success of these major operations, banditry has been on the increase in the region because the number of bandits as well as bandit enclaves has continued to rise beyond imaginable proportion (Maradun 2023). At the very beginning of banditry, President Muhammadu Buhari, for instance, visited Zamfara and launched Operation Harbin Kunama in Dansadau forest. Many more of these operations were launched by both President Muhammad Buhari and now Asiwaju Tinubu, aimed at saving the North-Western parts of Nigeria from falling into the hands of the criminal bandit elements.

Table (1) Showing Number of Military Operations Conducted against Armed Bandits in NW

S/No	Operation(s)	Area(s)
1	Operation Harbin Kunama	North-West
2	Operation Hadarin Daji	North-West
3	Operation Sharan Daji	North-West
4	Operation Fansar Yamma	North-West
5	Operation Haven	North-West and North Central
6	Operation Diran Mikiya	North-West

Source as Compiled by the Author

These conventional operations, which have been funded by the government at the center in collaboration with the state governments across the North-West, have significantly shown

manifestation of positive results. Despite rescuing hundreds of people as a result of these operations, weapons were equally recovered as captured by (Anka 2024) in the table below:

Table (11) Showing the Some Number Bandits Neutralizes/Killed and Weapons Recovered

Date	Local Government	Bandits killed & those Neutralizes	Arms/Items Recovered
09/02/2021	Dumburum/Zurmi LG	Nil	(22) Assorted Weapons Surrendered and (19) Ripples recovered
04/09/2021	Sububu Forest, Maradun LG, Zamfara State	Nil	(2) AK47 Rifles, FN & LMG Rifle recovered.
05/09/2022	Zamfara State	Nil	(6) Calibre of Assorted Automatic Rifles Including CPMG & AK47 Rifles received
15/09/2022	Magami-Gusau LG	(2) Bandits Neutralizes	(1) AK47 Rifles, 37.62mm Special Rounds, (6) Grenade Launcher Bombs, (2) Magazines recovered.
09/09/2022	Anka/Bukkuyum LGA's	(1) Suspect Arrested	AK47 Rifles, Fabricated Guns and Amunitions recovered.
06/06/2022	Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara	Nil	(706) Assorted Weapons were recovered
30/04/2023	Anka LG	(2) Bandits Neutralizes	PKT Gun, (48) Rounds of 7.62mmX54 ammunitions, (3) magazines with (63) Rounds of 7.62mm Special Amunition and (3) Motorcycles were recovered
26/05/2023	Anka LG	Several Bandits Neutralizes	Many Weapons were Recovered
09/05/2023	Gusau-Tsafe LG.	(2) Bandits Kills	AK47 Rifle and (1) Pump Action Gun were recovered
22/06/2023	Maradun LG	(3) Bandits Neutralizes	(1) GPMG, (1) FN Rifle and (123) Rounds of Special Ammunitions & (3) Motorcycles were recovered
05/07/2023	Gusau LG.	(7) Bandits Neutralizes	(1) Machine Gun, Amunitions, and (6) Motorcycles were Recovered
25/07/2023	Kango, Bungudu LG.	(7) Bandits Neutralizes	(1) Machine Gun, Ammunitions, (6) Motorcycles & (6) AK47 Rifles were recovered.
09/08/2023	Gadar Zaima, Bukkuyum LG.	(10) Bandits killed	(1) PKT Machine Gun, (5) Magazines, (20) Rounds of 7.62mm Special Ammunitions, (3) Mobile Phones, (2) Solar Panels, (1) Sewing Machines were recovered.
15/10/2023	Zamfara	12 Suspects arrested	(4) Locally Fabricated Guns, Some parts of AK47 Rifles (100) rounds of AK47 Live Ammunition, (7) Cartridges, a Cutlass and Bunch of Charms were recovered.
15/10/2023	Zamfara	(2) Bandits Informants Arrested	(1) AK47 Rifle and (100) Rounds of Ammunitions recovered
15/10/2023	Tsafe-Funtua Road	(3) Suspected Bandits Arrested	(2) Motorcycles (4) Hnadsets, (1) Walkie-Talkie, and (140,000) Cash Recovered
15/10/2023	Damri-Bakura LG	(3) Armed Bandits Neutralizes	(1) AK47 Rifle with Quantity of 7.62mm Special Amunition & (5) Motorcycles amd some Weapons Recovered.
06/11/2022	Yar-Tasha, Maru LG	Nil	(1) Motorcycle and some Weapons recovered

Source: Anka (2024) As cited in Kaduna Journal of Humanities Vol. 8(2)

These successes recorded as highlighted may not be unconnected with the government's commitment to ensuring sustainable financing of the operations against the armed bandits in the region. This financing commitment can be traced from the yearly onward review of the nation's defense budget and to a larger extent the

efforts made by the military to use the budget in achieving some greater part of the successes as highlighted above. Anka (2024) highlighted the summary of Nigeria's defense budget from the year 2010 to 2021 in the table below:

Table (3) Showing 22 years Nigeria’s Defense Budget

Year	Billions of US \$	% Of GDP
2021	\$ 4.47B	0.97%
2020	\$2.57B	0.63%
2019	\$1.86B	0.46%
2018	\$2.04B	0.51%
2017	\$1.62B	0.43%
2016	\$1.72B	0.42%
2015	\$2.07B	0.41%
2014	\$2.36B	0.47%
2013	\$2.42B	0.50%
2012	\$2.32B	0.58%
2011	\$2.38B	0.54%
2010	\$1.99B	0.51%
2009	\$1.50B	0.49%
2008	\$1.62B	0.37%
2007	\$0.97B	0.35%
2006	\$0.78B	0.40%
2005	\$0.67B	0.49%
2004	\$0.64B	0.57%
2003	\$0.59B	0.95%
2002	\$0.90B	0.78%
2001	\$0.57B	0.54%
2000	\$0.37B	0.86%
1999	\$0.49B	0.55%

Source: Macro-Trend (Online)

Not only in the area of the defense budget, government has ensured adequate funding for the police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps and other sister security agencies to compliment the work of the Nigerian soldiers in tackling insecurity in the North-

West. This can be justified through the review of some important facilities required for police internal management of security , such as banditry in the 2021 budget as captured below:

Table (4) 2021 Showing Budget of the Nigerian Police Force

S/No	Budget Item	Amount Appropriated
1	Provision of Specialized/Operational vehicle double cabinet-pick up van for patrol	N7,600,000,000
2	Procurement of Arms and Ammunitions	N1,000,000,000
3	Procurement of Personnel Protective Gear (Bullet Proof Vest and Helmet)	N469,338,550
4	Procurement of Riot Control Equipment (Teargas)	N1,362,814,243
5	Provision of Covid-19 Protection Kit for Police Personnel	N358,379,191
6	Supply of Drugs and Medical Equipment for Police Hospitals	N533,894,117
7	Office Furniture and Equipment	N29,031,000

Source: Premiums Time 2021

State governments in Nigeria are also not left behind in terms of making substantial provisions for monetary allowances, operational vehicles as well as digital equipment required to end armed banditry violence and other forms of internal criminality in the country. Anka (2024) captured an overview of the picture of the

security votes budgeted by the thirty-six (36) states in relation to providing complementary roles for the success of internal security management, especially the fight against armed banditry criminalities in the country.

Table (5) Showing Allocation of Security Votes by States

S/No	State(s)	Geo-Political Zone	Security Votes Per Month	Security Votes Per Annum
1	Imo	South-East	N333.333 Million	N4 Billion
2	Enugu State	South-East	N600 Million	N7.2 Billion
3	Anambra	South-East	N850 Million	N10 Billion
4	Abia	South-East	N700 Million	N8.4 Billion
5	Ebonyo	South-East	No Record	No Record
6	Cross Rivers	South-South	N500 Million	N6 Billion
7	Rivers	South-South	N1,500 Million	N18 Billion
8	Akwa Ibom	South-South	N1,800 Million	N21.6 Billion
9	Edo State	South-South	N900 Million	N10.8 Billion
10	Delta	South-South	N2 Billion	N24 Billion
11	Bayelsa	South-South	No Record	No Record
12	Lagos	South-West	N17.149 Billion	N17.149 Billion
13	Ondo State	South-West	N600 Million	N7.2 Billion
14	Osun	South-West	N400 Million	N4.8 Billion
15	Ogun	South-West	N900 Million	N1.2 Billion
16	Ekiti	South-West	N100 Million	N1.2 Billion
17	Oyo	South-West	N1 Billion	N12, Billion
18	Borno	North-East	N806.25 Million	N9.67 Billion
19	Yobe	North-East	N316.667 Million	N3.8 Billion
20	Taraba	North-East	N200 Million	N2.4 Billion
21	Bauchi	North-East	N1.417 Billion	N17 Billion
22	Kano	North-West	N0.00	N0.00
23	Kaduna	North-West	N804.8	N4.8 Billion
24	Katsina	North-West	N17.583	N211 Million
25	Zamfara	North-West	N600 Million	N7.2 Billion
26	Benue	North-Central	N3.092 Billion	N37.1 Billion
27	Niger	North-Central	N1.308 Billion	N15.7 Billion
28	Plateau	North-Central	N216.66 Million	N2.6 Billion
29	Kogi	North-Central	N400 Million	N4.8 Billion
30	Nasarawa	North-Central	N100 Million	N1.2 Billion
31	Kwara	North-Central	No Record	No Record

Source: Wikipedia

Government/Bandits Peace Accord

Since around 2015, there has been an extensive call for a dialogue between the bandits and the government; hence, some stakeholders are of the view that the government cannot end the banditry uprising through the use of force alone and therefore has to resort to using an alternative means of re-engaging the bandit criminals by means of genuine dialogue. Even though some people have contrary views, for a government to surrender its sovereignty to criminals by accepting a peace accord without taking proactive measures to deal with their excesses through the use of force is a clear indicator that it has surrendered its supremacy to violent non-state actors. (Maradun 2024) argued that even though there is nothing wrong with entering into a peace accord with the bandit criminals, it will result in an act of cowardice for the government to lobby for dialogue even when it has the machinery to crush the bandits and manage their excesses.

Despite these arguments and counter-arguments, the government and indeed some critical actors, especially Islamic religious scholars, opted to try the option of the peace accord. The government of Zamfara State, led by former Governor Abdulaziz Yari, for instance, has set up a committee under his Deputy Governor, Malam Wakkala to negotiate a sustainable route that would influence the criminal bandits to surrender their arms. Malam Wakkala's committee worked out a strategy to reach out to the bandit kingpins and open up a negotiation. Even though the peace accord worked, it was shut out of the plan because the peace accord could not last for long as bandits renewed their fresh violence against the Zamfara community, citing insincerity on the part of the government as the basis. (Anka 2024) argued that the peace accord led by the Wakkala committee could not last long because there was no clear blueprint provided to regularize the peace accord and also provide room for genuine reintegration of the bandit actors into the larger society.

The same administration in Zamfara led by Sen. Yari also set up another committee led by Sheikh Abdullahi Tureta to also work on the key lapses discovered in the Wakkala-led committee and not only ensure that the peace accord has ended the bloodshed, but also provide headway for the sustainability of lasting peace between the herdsmen and local farmers, who are considered principal actors in the banditry violence. (Gulubba 2024) argued, "Our committee worked to develop strategies to find out the key principal causes of the banditry violence. We have developed a comprehensive report and forwarded it to the government and all actors were willing to embrace peace only if the government is ready to adopt the peace framework we have proposed." He argued further that lack of commitment from the government and implementation of arbitrary decisions from the committee report made the entire initiative fail and fresh violence resurface.

Different from this development, former Governor Yari also developed a new template of arms for money as a strategy of de-escalating the excesses of bandit criminals by getting them to surrender their arms for retrieval. As argued by (Gulubba 2024), "The idea of gun-for-money which was developed by Yari was a nice initiative as it helped encourage communities to provide intelligent information regarding movement and ownership of illegal arms, but it failed in realistic sense because people took advantage of that strategy to recycling guns/arms in exchange for monetary rewards."

Yari's predecessor, Bello Muhammad Matawalle in Zamfara, still opted for an additional peace accord despite the discrepancies detected by his successor, and the peace accord went as far as organizing cultural re-union between the Fulani and Hausa communities. The Fulani-Sharu annual cultural festival was organized in Gusau, the capital city of Zamfara, and was attended by the Governor and all the members of his cabinet, simply in order to strengthen the re-union between the Fulani and the rest of the Hausa communities. That peace accord, in the view of (Mudi 2023), worked in bringing some relative peace for some time, but it failed because many believed there was a lack of sincerity on the side of the government. The allegation of the government providing illegal lodges for the bandit criminals, illegal financial inducements, as well as prioritizing the demands of the Fulani bandit criminals over those of the locals, were among the major factors that frustrated the success of the peace accord led by Bello Matawalle, the then governor of Zamfara state.

In the neighboring state of Kaduna again, the government of Malam Uba Sani tried to adopt the same strategies adopted by the Zamfara state government. Various peace accords were initiated which brought a temporary peace but insecurity bounced back due to lack of a sustainable framework that could help sustain peace among the warring communities. (Maradun 2024) argued, the recent peace accord entered into between the government of Uba Sani and some selected bandit leaders operating along Birni Gwary and Give forests was a right step as people required some relative sense of hope, but as predicted, the peace accord collapsed because of lack of a sincere framework which defines some clear boundaries between the government and bandit actors.

Different from the peace accord negotiated by the government directly, some individuals such as Sheikh Ahmad Abubakar Gummi as well as Sheikh Musa Asadus Sunnah, using the mandate of the governments and some states, initiated similar moves and went to forests in Zamfara, Sokoto and Kaduna, despite the fact that genuine grievances emanating from the concern of the Fulani bandits were drafted, the government could not heed to the recommendations of these Islamic scholars which made their efforts to suffer a defeat. (Maradun 2024) argued, many people believed that the Gummi committee was working toward bringing out in clear terms the rationale behind the Fulani people resorting to taking up arms against the state so that the government can sit down to look at these factors and develop a framework for getting them addressed, but such a move was never taken seriously by the government, a circumstance that led the entire arrangement to collapse.

Community/Bandits Peace Accord as an Option

Emanating from the failure of the various peace accords entered into by the governments and their attendant failure, state governments of Katsina and Zamfara, for instance, had opted to ignore the peace accord component of the whole development and opted for violent means to end the armed banditry violence. The Governor of Katsina, Dikko Rada, had, for instance, stated clearly that, "there is no basis for the government to continue to be deceived with any initiative named after a peace accord. The government must begin to be open to the demands of the people by taking the bold steps of fighting the armed bandits head-on and ensure that they are brought to justice." (Channels 2024). His colleague from Zamfara, Dauda Lawal, had also reiterated in one

of the interviews with the BBC Hausa service that, “Zamfara state government will no longer accept any move to dialogue with the armed bandits again because my predecessors had entered into similar initiatives without any result. We can accept have peace with those who opted to surrender their arms willingly and accept genuine peace; except that, we are ready to move headon with the fight against banditry.”

Decisions of this magnitude were seen as too complex for some citizens living in the rural areas, as government presence could not be established to give the adequate and desired security protection required by the citizens. This development, in the opinion of (Mudi 2024), triggered the anger of the armed bandits by renewing their brutalities against innocent people and communities simply in order to prove to the government their capacity and capabilities.

The renewed violence by these armed bandits had caused some significant fears again to a greater extent that communities opted to re-enter into a peace accord without mincing over the position of the government.

From Zamfara to Katsina and Birnin Gwari in Kaduna State, one cannot count the number of villages and hamlets that have entered into peace negotiations with the bandits without caring to inform the government. In the opinion of (Mudi 2023), some communities perfect their negotiations using monetary inducements with the enforcement of a levy by the bandits running into millions of naira. Below are samples of some of the communities that have entered into peace accords with various bandit groups and the amount of money enforced on them as a levy.

Table (6) Showing Communities that entered into private peace accord with the bandits in the N/W

S/No	Name of the Communities	State(s)	Money enforced
1	Koloma	Zamfara	N60 Million
2	Dan Hayin Zargado	Zamfara	N60 Million
3	Zargadao	Zamfara	N60 Million
4	Dan Godabe	Zamfara	N60 Million
5	Sabuwar Tunga	Zamfara	N60 Million
6	Makini	Zamfara	N60 Million
7	Bubaka	Zamfara	N60 Million
8	Yalwa	Zamfara	N60 Million
9	Bahwada	Zamfara	N60 Million
10	Koda	Zamfara	N60 Million
11	Manya	Zamfara	N60 Million
12	Kabusu	Zamfara	N60 Million
13	Kunchin Kalgo	Zamfara	N20 Million
14	Sungawa	Zamfara	N15 Million
15	Rakyabu	Zamfara	N15 Million
16	Kwaren Mai Saje	Zamfara	N10 Million
17	Magazawa	Zamfara	N10 Million
18	Gijin Zama	Zamfara	N8.5 Million
19	Giwa	Zamfara	N7 Million
20	Kauyen Magaji	Zamfara	N7 Million
21	Barebari	Zamfara	N6 Million
22	Unguwar Rogo	Zamfara	N5 Million
23	Machiya	Zamfara	N5 Million
24	Katuga	Zamfara	N5 Million
25	Magazu	Zamfara	N5 Million

26	Tsageru	Zamfara	N5 Million
27	Gidan Anne	Zamfara	N7 Million
28	Unguwar Dan Halima	Zamfara	N5 Million
29	Kauyen Kane	Zamfara	N5 Million
30	Kurar-Mota	Zamfara	N6 Million
31	Kibari	Zamfara	N3 Million
32	Sabon Garin Bakin Gulbi	Zamfara	N2.5 Million
33	Karda	Zamfara	N5 Million
34	Dakolo	Zamfara	N5 Million
35	Yelwa	Zamfara	N2.7 Million
36	Shinkafi Community & Environs	Zamfara	Undisclosed figure
37	Birnin Magaji Community & Environs	Zamfara	Undisclosed Figure
38	Birnin Tsaba	Zamfara	Undisclosed Figure
39	Wanzamai	Zamfara	Undisclosed figure
40	Kunchin Kalgo	Zamfara	N20 Million
41	Dankolo	Zamfara	N14 Million

Source as Compiled by the Author, 2025.

These communities opted to pay this amount of money as a levy enforced on them by the bandit criminals for them to live in peace. In the argument of (Gulubba 2023), this negotiation by way of enforcement of a levy has paid well in terms of providing temporary peace. Even though after some time, the bandits usually renewed their brutality, as an avenue to get additional funds from the communities, these unwanted strategies had to a greater extent served better for some of these communities as they lived for months without any incident of armed bandit attacks.

In some instances some communities that could not negotiate for payment of a levy in cash opted to enter into negotiation for them to cultivate hectares of land for the bandit criminals as a way of providing compensation for buying peace. (Mudi 2024) argued, “Some communities deliberately or out of their desire to enjoy peace opted to cultivate some significant number of hectares of land for the bandits as a way of buying peace, . hence they could not afford to raise funds due to the dwindling economic situation.”

Again, in some instances, some communities especially around Zamfara, opted to also provide assorted food items to the bandits from part of what they have produced from their farmlands. (Mudi 2024) argued, “some communities in Tsafe East used to contribute some stocks of assorted food items to the bandits on an annual basis simply in order to serve as a compensation for their peaceful existence in their living communities.”

How have these strategies served? To many, the negotiated peace accord between the communities and bandits has served well because communities like Birnin Magaji, Birmi Tsaba, and part of Shinkafi, before the recent raids on the notorious armed bandit kingpin Bello Turji by the joint security operatives, had enjoyed peace for several months without violence. The experience in some

of these highlighted communities has influenced other communities in Katsina and part of Kaduna, including Birnin Gwary, to adopt the same with a view to enjoying peace.

Implications on State Security

The issue of security and safety of the people is the sole responsibility of the government and its corporate agencies. The decision to make use of force or an alternate means is also the sole decision of the government to decide. When people believe that efforts by the government to secure their lives and properties could no longer be entrusted to the government, they would be left with no option other than to resort to using alternative peace arrangements for their corporate existence. The following are considered to be the consequential effects of allowing communities to broker peace for themselves:

☐ When people opt to broker peace for themselves, the situation represents a simple fact: that the legitimacy of the government is under serious threat and that the government may stand to lose public confidence in its powers and ability to command authority over its citizens.

☐ The situation may likely reflect a state of lawlessness where compliance with the rules and orders of the state may not be ensured or guaranteed. The reason being that there are other nonstate actors that are occupying a wide range of ungoverned spaces which are not under the control of the government.

☐ When citizens are allowed to negotiate their peace with bandit criminals, there may be a likelihood of the proliferation of

too many ungoverned spaces where citizens opt to extend their allegiance to non-state actors instead of the legitimate authorities of the government.

□ The circumstances may take the government a lot of time to be able to regain the confidence of its citizens even after defeating the terror groups since people believe that government authority and legitimacy can be put under serious questioning.

□ The development may lead to the emergence of more terror groups since citizens may have built an impression that the only language the government understands better is being violent against some of its indecisions.

□ The circumstances signal the fall of a government, especially when citizen's safety and security is allowed into their own hands and under the dictates of armed bandits.

Conclusion

From the discussion so far, it is evidently clear that, since the beginning of the armed banditry violence in Nigeria's North-West, most especially in Zamfara state, the government has done its best to bring the excesses of the armed banditry to its barest minimum. Since the conventional measures adopted have failed to provide the anticipated result, the option of engaging the bandit criminals in the signing of various peace accords has also been considered a viable alternative. This development, which many believed required the community to take over the peace accord by themselves, has also brought a serious question of "government being very insincere" about managing the problems of its people. If the people can enter into negotiation with the armed bandits and also enjoy some relative sense of peace, then for sure, leadership's insincerity in keeping promises made to its citizens remains a serious gap that will continue to raise the flag of mistrust between the government and the governed.

The implications of the development, as highlighted in the textual content of this paper, remain that the legitimacy of the Nigerian authority will continue to be put under serious question. By simple

logic, where the government fails to secure its people from the activities of terror groups, a condition of anarchy and uncertainty is bred over time. Apart from the possibility of more terror groups emerging, a time will come when citizens will violently act against any government instruction since the social contract has temporarily been broken.

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