

INTERROGATING THE IMPLICATION OF SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATION AND ARMED BANDITRY ON FOOD INSECURITY IN NORTHEASTERN NIGERIA: A CASE OF DIKWA LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Serifat Bolanle Asiyani and Babatunde Afeez Adeniyi

*Department of History and International Studies, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti
Department of Agricultural Business, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora*

Corresponding Author's email: serifat.asiyanbi@fuoye.edu.ng



Abstract

The paper investigated the implication of small arms proliferation and armed banditry on food insecurity in the Dikwa local government of northeastern Nigeria. The study examined the region's susceptible factors of armed banditry and the roles of small arms in armed conflict in the region. The paper explored the implication of small arms and armed banditry on food security challenges that bedeviled the northeastern region. The paper used a qualitative research design in which 20 key informants (KII) were selected for interview. The primary data were complemented with the secondary desk reviews of relevant textbooks and academic journals. Data generated were analysed using descriptive and content analysis. The findings reveal that the primary drivers of the proliferation of small arms and armed banditry in the area are poverty, unemployment, poor salary scale of security personnel, and marginalisation. The bandits have been responsible for the killing of innocent citizens; interactivities of bandits have sent thousands of innocent citizens on the journey of no return, while many are under their captivity. The protracted nature of armed banditry in the region due to accessibility to small arms has exposed millions of people to risks of malnutrition. The paper calls for a multi-faceted approach to mitigate the scourge of armed banditry and eliminate the illicit flow of small arms that stand as obstacles to food insecurity. The paper used anomie theory to explain socio-economic inequality as a significant driver of armed conflict in the region.

Keywords: *Armed Conflict, Banditry, Displacement, Humanitarian, Nigeria*

Introduction

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a major challenge propelling the wheel of armed conflict with a significant effect on food security, particularly in northeastern Nigeria (Babarinde, 2016). The illicit trade, coupled with easy accessibility of small arms, fuels conflicts that disrupt agricultural production and distribution, leading to food shortages and hikes in food prices. Research has shown that the availability of SALW makes it easier for non-state actors to carry out attacks, leading to higher levels of violence and instability. Between 2009 and 2022, almost half of the conflicts in Nigeria, particularly in the northeast, were fueled by small arms and light weapons (Small Arms Survey, 2009 & 2022). The persistent flow of small arms and light weapons in northeastern Nigeria has changed the narrative of violence with a significant impact on farmers, pastoralists, and people of the region. On this note, the study aims to investigate the

effect of small arms and armed conflicts on the food security crisis in Dikwa, northeast Nigeria, viz-a-viz, the susceptible factors of armed banditry in the region.

Conceptual Clarifications

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs)

Small arms and light weapons are ambiguous concepts as their availability has been classified as another epidemic or life-threatening disease without a clear-cut solution. It is a life-threatening disease as its availability instills fears and contributes to the killing of unarmed innocent citizens and disruption of physical infrastructure, including farmers' farmlands (Babarinde, 2016; 2017). Different scholars conceptualize small arms and light weapons from various perspectives. Some define small arms from a humanitarian perspective due to the concentration of these weapons in the hands of untrained and undisciplined combatants, which makes them prone to human rights abuse (Barman, 2004). The availability of small arms, particularly in the hands of non-combatant soldiers, instigated war executed by child combatants who had not received any training or were hardly aware of human rights abuse (Musa, 2011).

Musa (2011) refers to small arms a "weapon of mass destruction" for a good number of reasons; first, their availability and accessibility have prolonged armed conflicts and violence in war-torn areas such as northeast Nigeria with pernicious effects. Second, the official termination of armed conflicts in the conflict zones gives the opportunity to ex-combatants to engage in a series of violence, such as ethnic and political rivalries with warlords and local and international gang affiliations, due to the availability of these weapons in their hands. This is because most of these weapons, such as AK-47 rifles, machine guns, ammunition, and explosives, among others, always remain circulating in the aftermath of wars. The availability of these weapons in the post-conflict area made escalating tension and disagreement easier to degenerate into conflict. These activities are evident in northeast Nigeria, where armed bandits and insurgents quickly transport AK-47 assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, and light machine guns with more than enough fire powder to the conflict zone areas. This encourages more violent rather than peaceful resolution of differences once competing groups have been armed with automatic weapons (Akinyemi & Asiyambi, 2023). An inestimable amount of property has been destroyed due to the activities of the criminally minded groups in the region.

Armed Banditry

Armed bandits are non-state actors who influence states' decisions irrespective of the circumstances. Though they are non-ideological and unorganized criminal organizations with different factions, their notorious activities, coupled with their menace, have made them surpass *Boko Haram* in the region. Armed bandits have been conceptualized as a criminal enterprise that rely more on small arms and light weapons, and motorcycles for flexible movement while carrying out their attacks. They are criminal entrepreneurs, economically-driven due to their engagement in cattle theft, sexual violence, extortion rackets, kidnapping for ransom, and armed robbery, among others. Adewuyi (2021) sees armed bandits as a group of people or gangs capable of inflicting fear on people through threats or force to control the minds of their victims to do as they request. He explains further that armed bandit or banditry is a crime committed against humanity through the abuse of natural rights conceived by humans. The analysis of Adewuyi (2021) aligns with the view of Mahmoud (2021), who views contemporary armed banditry as a modern way of engaging in economic theft through informal networks. The use of informal networks remains the only way to fill the gaps between the societal 'means and needs' created through socio-economic dislocation and fragmentation since the ends justify the means.

Furthermore, International Crises Group (2020) and Okoli and Ugwu (2019) conceptualized armed bandits as criminal syndicates who used the precarious conditions of the region to venture into illegal activities to satisfy their socio-economic needs. The activities of armed bandits vary from one region to the other. They are not limited to storming and sacking whole villages, raiding villages with the collection of informal tax, extortion on village routes, and stealing valuable goods such as money, livestock, and human resources. The fear of armed bandits is the beginning of wisdom for victims as the bandits continue to seek informal cooperation while deciding how to restrict their movement and disrupt socio-political activities by removing government protection. The International Crises Group (2020) and Okoli and Ugwu (2019) defined and explained the activities of armed bandits ranging from socio-economic and political disruption but needed to differentiate between organized and economically driven bandits. Economically driven bandits are the most prevalent bandits in the northern region (Osasona, 2023).

This paper conceptualized armed banditry as all-encompassing, ranging from economically driven and organized criminal groups, as their activities have severe implications for the country's socio-economic, sustainable, and security development. The criminal cartel has the same purpose of destroying and tearing the fabric of relative peace and cordial relations not only between the different ethnic groups but also between the government and the people of the region. Their informal activities have undermined the government's capacity, stripped the community naked, and taken charge of their communities and farmlands, with grave implications for crops and food crises in the region.

Theoretical Orientation; Anomie Theory

The paper used anomie theory as its theoretical orientation to explain the rationale behind the activities of criminally minded people in the northeast region. The theory explained the persistent rise of deviant behavior in the country and attributed it to socio-economic inequality and a lack of a well-culturally defined society (Durkheim, 1894; Bernburg, 2002). A well-culturally defined society tends to rule through the existence of traditional institutions that control and maintain the societal values (individual or behavior), with regulating machinery to complement and reciprocate a particular effort to realize their primary goals.

Durkheim (1894) explains further that any sudden change in socio-economic development would significantly affect societal actions. Such action would restructure the absolute power of traditional institutions of norms, deregulating and overpowering the existing cooperation. Such a society would be prone to deviant behavior, including persistent social conflicts and socio-economic challenges (fighting over limited resources), eventually leading to civil unrest and food shortages. The civil unrest later degenerates into political instability, further undermining cooperation and collaboration among citizens. This birthed the breakdown of societal rules and regulations, which Durkheim and Robert described as a state of anomie.

Therefore, the paper adopts the principle of anomie theory to explain the state of restlessness in northeast Nigeria due to socio-economic inequality and structural contradictions that question the survivability of citizens in the region. The theory shows that the persistent socio-economic disparities in the country have broken the traditional institutions that should have regulated the country's peace and security.

Methodology

The paper used a qualitative research design with snowball sampling techniques and in-depth telephone interviews with 20 respondents in northeast Nigeria. The respondents contained internally displaced people, community leaders, repent armed bandits, families of unarmed

slayed, and families of those in captivity of criminally minded groups in northeast Nigeria. These selected respondents were engaged in telephone conversations to get first-hand information that assisted this paper's descriptive and content analysis. The use of telephone interviews is necessary due to the sensitivity and volatility of the region. The primary data generated was aligned with desk reviews of relevant textbooks, policy papers, and academic journals.

Role of Small Arms on Armed Conflict in Northeastern Nigeria

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons remains a significant issue responsible for human and national security challenges in Nigeria. Its availability and easy accessibility have empowered and engaged bandits, coerced youths, and cattle rustlers in all sorts of illicit activities such as kidnapping and hostage for ransom, killing, maiming, and displacing of people, among others. The high rate of illicit small arms in circulation, coupled with the illegal stockpiling, has given unrestricted access to bandits that dispossessed the travelers of their valuable goods and properties such as cattle, money, camel, and sheep, destroying what they have labored for and send them out of their ancestral home. Most times, bandits operate under the power of small arms and ammunition within and along rural borders in collaboration with some local or community vigilantes and, in some cases, security operatives deployed for the safety and security of the people in the area (Abdulahi, 2019).

Records show that more than 60,000 AK-47 rifles are in the possession of bandits that are responsible for the killing of more than 3,000 people in a week (IANSA, 2007). In comparison, more than a hundred people were injured due to improper disarming of many civilians and non-state actors in the region (IANSA, 2007). Therefore, the proliferation of small arms remains a propelling vehicle driving the armed conflict in the region. For example, cattle rustlers have changed from using ordinary sticks and spears to using small arms to coordinate their activities. This has undermined the socio-economic peace and relative security of the country. Indeed, it has invaded development and provoked humanitarian and food crises, encouraged inter and intra-state conflicts, and heightened insecurity rather than making peace for the protection of the people.

Aside from the improperly disarmed civilians in the aftermath of the war, illicit weapons get into circulation through smuggling and change hands within the countries with relative ease or are piloted through government transactions; after all, the trade on weapons remains clandestine between private and individual, or through leaking, rupturing and continue pipeline of small arms (Rana, 2005). These pipelines were strategically crucial in the Cold War years and still provide channels for small arms across countries today. These methods of arms supply have significantly contributed to the duration and intensity of armed conflict in the region.

In contrast, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the northeast are not symptoms of violence, let alone capable of triggering conflicts in the sub-region; they only contribute to the intensity and duration of destructive internal disputes. Therefore, the user-friendliness of small arms has made Jekada (2005) refer to it as an "approximate cause" with the capacity to transform potential violence into full-fledge confrontations. Its easy accessibility and availability only heightened tension, and prolonged duration and intensity of violence viz-a-viz encouraged revisiting old conflicts with negative impacts on the region's socio-economic and sustainable agricultural productivity. Therefore, small arms and light weapons remain the instruments that aggravate tension and unleash accumulated frustration from the frustrated elements.

Causative Factors of Armed Conflict in Northeastern Nigeria

Factors responsible for armed conflicts are multifaceted and multidimensional, and many are in discourse.

1. Historical grievances and ethnoreligious tensions: The northeast region has a history of ethnoreligious crises and communal clashes, which have often led to cycles of violence and reprisal attacks. These tensions, coupled with the perceived marginalization of some ethnic groups, fuel grievances that armed banditry exploit for recruitment and support.
2. Proliferation of small arms and light weapons: The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region has made it easier for armed banditry groups to acquire weapons. These weapons often flow across porous borders, and their availability amplifies the impact and reach of armed groups, enabling them to carry out attacks and maintain control over specific areas (Philip et al., 2020).
3. Influence of Boko Haram insurgency in the region: The Boko Haram insurgency significantly affects the region's security dynamics. The insurgency has created a volatile environment, causing displacement, disruption of livelihood, and the breakdown of social structure. Armed banditry groups emerged as a response to the Boko Haram insurgency and its consequences.
4. Economic motivations: Economic factors such as the lucrative nature of criminal activities like cattle rustling, kidnapping for financial reasons, and illegal trade play a crucial role in perpetuating armed banditry. The profitability of these activities incentivizes individuals to join or support armed groups.
5. Regional and transnational connections: The northeast region shares borders with neighboring countries like Niger, Chad, and Cameroun. These porous borders facilitate the cross-border movement of armed groups, weapons, and illicit goods, making it difficult to contain the activities of armed bandits within the national borders.

Implication of Armed banditry on Food Insecurity in Dikwa Local Government

Armed banditry or conflict is one of the contributory factors responsible for food insecurity in northeast Nigeria, particularly the Dikwa local government. The persistent rise in the criminal activities has deserted the region, particularly the Dikwa local government. Out of ten communities in the local government, nine have been under siege by armed bandits. At the same time, the remaining one depends on humanitarian aid for food and shelter, among others. It should be known that food security is one of the instruments of national power and the security apparatus of a vital state. Food security is the ability of states to feed their population without any hindrance or fear of hunger and malnutrition. Hunger means the unavailability or inadequate quantity of food in circulation, while malnutrition is an intake of unbalanced diets (Macnamara, 1973).

The interplay between the armed bandits and food insecurity has been categorized in the following ways:

- Destruction
- Conflict-induced displacement
- Food control by warring factions
- Hunger as a weapon of war

The presence of four amplifiers contributes to the structural vulnerabilities within affected societies—rising food prices, increasing social inequalities, exclusion from political decision-making processes, and increasing political fragility. Armed conflict and food security challenges are directly linked to the country's socio-economic human development, as their activities include hunger, starvation through disruption, and destruction of food systems. The armed conflict reduces farming populations, destroys infrastructure, reduces resilience, increases vulnerability, disrupts access to the market, raises food prices, or makes goods and services unavailable. The worst food crises occurred in an area of armed conflict, illustrating a solid connection between these variables. For example, on April 20th, 2019, the villages of Kirsu and Sunka in Anka local government in Zamfara state were raided by gunmen (Nigeria Army, 2020), which led to the displacement and killing of many innocent citizens. The story is similar to the Gusau local government, where the armed bandits invaded Doka and Mutu, destroyed houses, and took their livestock, coupled with the killing of 110 farmers in Jere local government of Borno state on November 29th, 2020 (UN, 2020). The war-torn regions of the North are not different from the Dikwa local government area (LGA), where the activities of criminally minded people wreaked havoc on lives, health, and socio-economic activities.

Aside from this, the illicit flow of small arms has also led to the killing of a large number of people in the local government. The instances have been given where more than sixty civilians were killed by the nonstate armed groups (NSAGs) in two different attacks in Dikwa local government (Nigeria situation report, 2020). The killings occurred when the humanitarian aid agencies were trying to reopen the humanitarian secretariat at the local government. Aside from this, more than 76,000 people have been displaced from their comfort zones with massive destruction of infrastructure and interruptions of goods and services such as health education and transportation activities. The inability of farmers to have access to their farmlands and farm produce has caused the total shutdown of agricultural activities in the conflict-ridden area. This has increased the speculation that more than 4.1 million people face a high risk of malnutrition with cholera outbreaks in the northern part of the region (Nigeria Situation Report, 2020).

The activities of armed bandits have continued to affect the food production system in the north with enormous effects on the country, particularly on staple foods and cash crops, as the criminally minded people continue to witch-hunt the farmers and herders. For example, in July 2021, staple foods such as beans and tomatoes have seen 253% and 123% in prices (Daphine, 2022). In July 2020, a measure of beans (mudu) sold for 73 cents 305.48, but by July 2021 was selling for \$2.16 (900 naira), but in 2023, it is 1,600 naira. The prices of other commodities like bread, onions, and cassava flour have also risen exponentially. The Dikwa communities are a significant producer of sorghum, wheat, millet, and others; armed banditry has stalled the cultivation of more than 400 hectares of wheat in the area. The north-east region has been the primary producer of agricultural products; the activities of armed bandits have reduced the agricultural production to as low as 420,000 tons per annum for wheat, leading to an increase in wheat imports to the country from 2.4 million in the first quarter of 2020 to 6.2 million in the corresponding quarter of 2021 (Daphine, 2022). The bandits continued to strike a deal with farmers before they could access their farmland.

Implications of Food Insecurity on the People of the Region

Food insecurity is the inconsistency of food supply due to its unavailability. The unavailability of a supply food chain reduces consumption, adversely affecting people's lives. The lack of nutritional value due to inaccessibility to the quantity and quality of safe food has shortened the lives of people and sometimes sent them to early graves (FAO, 2012). American Dietetic Association

(1998) sees food insecurity as unavailability or limited access to the nutritional value of food at a particular point in time. The problem persists when people or a specific group cannot access sufficient food for their growth and development to live a healthy life (Thomas, 2006). Nafees et al. (2021) wrap the sense of food insecurity concisely with three variables: acute, occasional, and Chronic food insecurity.

Acute food insecurity is an extreme hunger situation with a significant effect of malnutrition and life-threatening. Occasional food insecurity is a temporary shutdown or inaccessibility of the quality and quantity of food for a particular time. Chronic food insecurity is the inconsistency or permanent unavailability of food due to threats or the use of force. Aside from this, food insecurity could also be caused by communal violence, armed banditry, and political tensions, among others, and create temporary or permanent famine in the community ravaged by a series of conflicts and armed banditry, which in turn have a strong implication on the society at large. The consequence of armed banditry in the northern region of Nigeria is food insecurity as the persistent rise in the activities of criminally minded people continues to wreak havoc on the daily activities of victims.

Several factors have been identified as susceptible factors in response to food insecurity in Nigeria, such as climatic weather conditions, inaccessibility to their farmland due to incessant killings, marginalization, and politics of nepotism, among others.

Climatic weather conditions: The weather changes coupled with the inability of the government to make agriculture a productive venture are two of the factors responsible for food insecurity in Nigeria. Climate change affects crops, livestock, fisheries, and aquaculture, significantly impacting the socio-economic values of farm products and livestock, which led to changes in the market value of the products. The findings show that the change in weather conditions influences the physical capital and forces farmers to engage in selling their productive capital. These singular act affect the socio-economic activities of such households and limit their capacities to provide families with quality food, which would, in turn, reduce or collapse their standard of living.

Hunger and Poverty as an instrument of food insecurity: Food insecurity promotes acute famine through hunger and poverty and sends people to early graves. This is because hunger due to inaccessibility to good food could lead to severe health damage by promoting malnutrition in different categories. Malnutrition is a serious case as Nigeria is projected to be one of the countries battling with a high rate of malnutrition in 2024 if a tangible solution cannot be in place. The unavailability of food, whether quality or quantity, is a source of depression that makes people prone to their casket. All these factors continued to play a lead role due to the high tension generated by criminally minded people who based their activities on self-interest without being mindful of the implications of their actions on society.

Strategic Framework in Combating the Effect of Armed banditry on Food Insecurity

Several efforts have been made to mitigate the effect of armed banditry on food security crises in Nigeria, particularly in the northeast region. One of the efforts is Northeast Conflict Management and Stabilization (NECMS), a programme designed to address the root causes of armed bandits and violence in the region. The programme dwells more on reducing support for violence in the region and building a synergy between the government and people to create a conducive environment for sustainable socio-economic development to triumph. It also aims to uproot the political and social tensions and encourage the involvement of youths and women in peacebuilding. West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) is another effort that assists in building a culture of peace rather than violence, which significantly affects food security. WANEP

seeks a multifaceted approach to addressing the impediment of armed banditry on food insecurity.

Other approaches used to address the interplay of infiltration of small arms and armed banditry in food security crises include but are not limited to the following;

1. Dialogue and negotiation are democratic bargaining methods used to settle conflicts and disputes among warring parties. The practice has existed since immemorial when the government or community leaders would call the conflictual parties to a round table for peace process discussion and negotiation. The method is used when several armed bandits call for open negotiation and dialogue on reducing violence and its implications on food security viz-a-viz securing a haven atmosphere that would give farmers access to their farmlands.
2. Militaristic approach: The government also used a military approach, such as aerial bombardment, to address the radicality and rascality of armed bandits and reduce their nefarious activities to the barest minimum in the region.
3. A community-based approach is also applied to reduce the tension of criminally minded people in the area. This complements the government's aggressive approach to combing all the bandits' hideouts, which may remain unknown to some military men. The community-based approach, such as the use of local hunters, community policing, and civil-military frontiers, became imperative in the phase of rampant killing and kidnapping of some farmers with adverse effects on the socio-economic development of the region. The combined approach aims to reduce conflict tension and pave the way for resolution on the stabilization of peace and security that would address the abnormality of kidnapping, killing, and maiming that is responsible for hunger and malnutrition. A community-based approach is inclusive conflict management that embraces the intervention of communities to engage the warring parties in a peace process and also serves as local community policing that combs all the settlement places of bandits in the forest. The effort of the community is commensurate with the government intervention to bring to the barest minimum and reduce the escalation of conflict and threat of violence in the region. This is essential to restore normalcy to the conflict zones for socio-economic development to triumph and allow farmers to return to their farmlands in many ways.

Effectiveness of Peacebuilding in the Northeast of Nigeria

It is no news that several efforts have been set aside to address the incessant killings, kidnapping for ransom, and displacement of people in the northeast region of Nigeria. The efforts to rebuild peace and orderliness in the region are at the arithmetic progression. At the same time, the activities of the criminally minded are at geometric progression as the armed banditry activities, due to infiltration and availability of illicit weapons, continue tearing the fabric of relative peace of not only the region but Nigeria with huge implications on food crises. As of now, Nigeria is projected to be one of the countries with the high rates of food insecurity in 2024, where 26.5 million population will be battling the poverty of stomach and mind. The figure further breaks down that 9 million children would fight with acute malnutrition, and 2.6 million children would be on Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) in 2024 (Nigeria situation report, 2023). The figure was exposed by Nigeria and its partners during the October 2023 Cadre Harmonise analysis on food insecurity. The projection was based on the current number of 18.6 million undergoing acute stomach crises as food insecurity continues deepening in the region. The tenacity of armed

banditry and violence in Borno brought redundancy to the availability of food in Nigeria and put the effectiveness of peace-building in doubt. Though in the course of findings, some factors that rendered the efforts fruitless were disclosed but not limited to the following;

1. The dearth of information and inadequate knowledge of the government about conflict. The ineffective mechanisms have been tailored to insufficient knowledge about the intensity of armed violence in the region and the parties' characterization. For example, how could the government determine the number of attacks in a remote area inaccessible to humanitarian and security personnel? This is a gap in having a holistic view of the incidence. The information gap on the number of attacks carried out, viz-a-viz data in casualties and victims, gives a hedge to the bandits to engage in criminal activities and get away with it.
2. Ethnic and religious division has characterized the armed violence in northeast Nigeria. The armed bandits have exploited the multiplicity of ethnic and religious groups to intensify the armed conflict in the region. Understanding divisions and promoting inter-communal dialogue and reconciliation is crucial for effective peacebuilding in the region;
3. Misplacement of priority is another significant factor responsible for unsuccessful government plans addressing the violence in the region. The government could have embraced a venture into the policy that would have uprooted the root causes of armed banditry in the region. A good policy on socio-economic development in copulation with a conducive environment would have regulated the climatic and biological changes that have radicalized the region and made the region a haven for the people. The government embarked on an aggressive approach using coercive measures, further jeopardizing the relative calm of the region.
4. Regional dynamism is another crucial factor influencing the northeast's armed violence. The dynamics of the region have promoted the flow of small arms and light weapons, and private fighters across borders. The involvement of external actors and their interest in the region continues to complicate and render the government's effort ineffective.
5. Boko Haram and other armed groups in the region have employed asymmetric warfare tactics, including suicide bombings, kidnappings, and guerilla attacks. The tactics make it difficult for security personnel to reduce to the barest minimum the activities of armed bandits as they continue to truncate the stability required for peacebuilding in the region.

Conclusion

The ease in accessibility of small arms and light weapons coupled with the porous Nigerian borders remains a key driver fuelling the burning fire of armed banditry in the northeast region of Nigeria. The activities of armed bandits have negatively impacted the socio-economic agricultural produce in the region with a significant effect on food security; if proper attention is not put in place, their activities will make the projection of 4.1 million in acute malnutrition with a high risk of cholera come to pass. The paper suggested proper disarmament and disbandment of non-state actors of criminal cartels with adequate attention on Nigerian borders, particularly unofficial borders.

The paper also calls for a comprehensive security measure (beyond the aggressive approach), humanitarian assistance, socio-economic development, governance reforms, and reconciliation between the government and warring parties. Beyond this, regional cooperation and

international support in combating the activities of armed bandits in northeast Nigeria is also required.

Reference

- Abdullahi, A. (2019). Rural Banditry, Regional Security and Integration in West Africa. *Journal of Social and Political Science*, 2(3).
- Adewuyi, A. (2021). Nigeria Navigating Insurgence to Banditry and Avoidable Resurgence Day Approach.
- Agaptus. N, John. S, & Modupe. A. (2019). National Security and Challenges of Food Security in Nigeria. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 8(4).
- Akinyemi, O. & Asiyambi, S. B. (2023). Responding to Terrorism: ECOWAS Mechanism in Combating Insecurity in Lake Chad Region. *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 33, S3.
- Babarinde, S. B. (2016). The Socio-Economic Implication of Illegal Deals in Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa Sub-region. *Ife Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.3(1).
- Babarinde, S. B. (2017). ECOSAP and the Challenges of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the West African Sub-region. (Unpublished Master Thesis).
- Brück, T., Habibi, N., Martin-Shields, C., Sneyers, A., Stojetz, W., & Weezel, S., (2016). The Relationship between Food Security and Violent Conflict. Report to the Food and Agriculture Organization. Accessed at <https://isd.org/wp> on 6th December 2023).
- George, & Adelaja, (2021). Forced Displacement and Agriculture: Implications for Host Communities Sustainability. Accessed at <https://www.mdpi.com> 20/11/2023
- International Crisis Group, (2020). Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem. Accessed at <https://www.crisisgroup.org> on 24/01/2024.
- Jekada, E. (2005). "Proliferation of Small Arms and Ethnic Conflicts in Nigeria: Implication for National Security". Unpublished paper.
- Mahmoud, T. (2021). Banditry, Dynamism and Operating Pattern of Crime in Northwest Nigeria: A Threat to National Security.
- Martin-Shields, C. & Stojetz, W. (2019). Food Security and Conflict: Empirical Challenges and Future Opportunities for Research and Policy-making on Food Security and Conflict. *World Dev.*, 119.
- Nafees, A., Shah Nawaz, S., & Zaid, A. (2021). Food Insecurity, Concept, Causes, Effects and Possible Solutions. *IAR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*.
- Nigerian Army (2020). Nigerian Army Document. Accessed at <https://army.mil.ng> on 27/02/2024.
- Okoli, A. & Ugwu, A. (2019). Of Marauders and Brigands: Scoping the Threat of Rural Banditry in Nigeria's Northwest. *Brazilian Journal of African Studies*, 4(8).
- Osasona, T. (2023). The Question of Definition: Armed Banditry in Nigeria's North-West in the Context of International Humanitarian Law. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 105(923).
- Philip, A. & Haruna, P. (2020). Impact of Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in North-Central Nigeria. Accessed at <https://core.ac.uk/> on 23/2/2024.
- UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2023). Nigeria Situation Report. Accessed at <https://www.unocha.org> on 22/12/2023.

UN (2020). 'Tens of Civilians' Killed in Gruesome Nigeria Massacre. Accessed at <https://www.un.org>.

WANEP (2020). Addressing Armed Banditry in the North-West Region of Nigeria. Policy Brief on Armed Banditry in Nigeria.