



Impact of Banditries, Insurgencies, Kidnapping and Terrorisms Activities on Food Security Nigeria

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Abstract: *Banditry, insurgencies, kidnapping and terrorism not only directly affect farmers and agricultural workers, but also the entire food supply chain, including transport and distribution. This paper examines the impact banditry, insurgencies, kidnapping and terrorisms activities on food security in Nigeria. This paper is a position paper. The paper used secondary data. The secondary data were collected from both online and print resources. The resources includes; abstracts, government documents, journals and books. The paper acknowledged that the activities of banditry, insurgencies, kidnapping and terrorisms in Nigeria has led to decline in investment in agricultural sector and has forced many farmers to abandon their lands and fishing sites further contributing to the decline in food production. The paper concluded that banditry, insurgencies, kidnapping and terrorisms activities in Nigeria has affected food security across Nigeria. Banditry, insurgencies, kidnapping and terrorisms activities in Nigeria has led to the death of many farmers and fishers and their displacements, destruction of infrastructure facilities that is pivotal for the transportation and distribution of agricultural products, high rate of unemployment and increment in poverty level across the country and leading to food insecurity. To address this issue, the paper hereby recommends that the government should address the root causes of banditry, insurgencies, kidnapping and terrorism in Nigeria. This may include addressing social and economic inequalities, promoting peace-building and conflict resolution, and enhancing security measures. Additionally, it is important to invest in the agricultural sector and support farmers, fishermen and agricultural workers in affected regions to improve food production and distribution.*

Key words: *Banditry, Food security, Insurgents, Kidnapping, Terrorism, Nigeria.*

Introduction

In 2023, the federal government of Nigeria declared a state of emergency on food and nutrition security and hence, one of the priorities of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) is to make Nigeria food secure. One of the means by which the Nigerian government seeks to achieve this tall objective is by increasing agricultural productivity in the country (FMARD, in Usman, 2022). Being endowed with vast human and agro-ecological advantages, Nigeria is believed to possess the capabilities of achieving this stride. However, experiences in the immediate past have proven that similar efforts in reviving the agricultural sector and boosting food productivity in Nigeria have failed to achieve desired results due to resource utilization gap (Illesanmi & Odefadehan, in Usman, 2022), as only an approximated 32 million out of the 94 million hectares of land are cultivated annually. This forms a mere 34% of the total productive capacity of Nigerian agro-ecosystem (Fadare et al., in Usman, 2022).

The pervasive activities of banditry, insurgencies, kidnapping, and terrorism in Nigeria have significantly disrupted fisheries and aquaculture sectors, undermining food security in the country. These security challenges often lead to the destruction of fishing grounds, displacement of fishing communities, and restricted access to water bodies, thereby reducing fish production and livelihoods dependent on fishing activities (Ogunleye et al., 2021). Additionally, insecurity hampers the deployment of necessary equipment and hinders market access, resulting in decreased fish supply and increased prices, which threaten nutritional and economic stability for vulnerable populations (FAO, 2022). The persistent violence also discourages investments in aquaculture infrastructure, limiting sector growth and resilience against food insecurity exacerbated by conflicts. Consequently, addressing security concerns is crucial for reviving Nigeria's fisheries and aquaculture industries, which are vital for ensuring sustainable food security (Nwafor et al., 2023).

One of the major culprits of poor agricultural productivity, unstable school calendar and low economic activities in Nigeria is the macro-scale insecurity in the country with tribal conflicts (Usman, 2022; Ogunode, Umeora, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022; Ogunode, & Chijindu, 2022). The specific insecurity problems comprises of banditry, kidnapping, insurgency, and terrorism.

Banditry as the practice of raiding and attacking victims by members of an armed group, whether or not premeditated, using weapons of offence or defence, especially in semi-organised groups to overpower the victim and obtain loot or achieving some political goals. Such bandits are usually perceived as outlaws, desperate and lawless marauders who do not have a definite residence or destination but roam around the forest and mountains to avoid being identified, detected and arrested (Shalangwa 2013). Banditry as a practice of stealing cattle and animals from herders or raiding cattle from their ranches. From the above, banditry can be seen as the application of force to raid cattle from their ranches and intimidating owners with weapons. Banditry is organized criminal activities carried out by people with weapons that involve raping, cattle rustling, and killing, kidnapping and armed robbery in rural areas or cities. banditry is also the use of force and weapons to abduct people, raid cattle, destroy farmlands, kill farmers and fishermen etc., rape and cart away foodstuffs in rural areas. Banditry affects teachers, students and the entire education process in the rural communities (Egwu 2016).

Kidnapping has been defined by scholars to a varying degree. Kidnapping is an action that involves unlawful detention or keeping persons away in a hidden environment and restricting the person's movement. Kidnapping is the application of force to abduct people and keeping them away from their families for economic and social reasons that are not justified by laws (Ogunode, 2023). Ene, (2018),

states that kidnapping is an act of capturing, taking away and keeping people in custody either through force or deceit. Kidnapping as the act of seizing and detaining or carrying away person(s) by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom. It involves taking a person from their residence or location of interest forcefully without their consent with the motive of holding the person as a hostage and earning a profit from their families and places of official duties (Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben 2014).

According to the U.S. Government Counter Insurgency Guide (2009), Insurgency is defined as “the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify or challenge political control of a region”. This implies that insurgents see to subvert or displace the government and completely or partially control the resource and population of a given territory. This is achievable through the use of force-including guerilla warfare, terrorism and coercion/intimidation, propaganda, subversion, and political mobilization. Insurgents fight government forces, only to the extent needed to achieve their political aims, their main effort is not to kill counter insurgents, but rather to establish a competitive system of control over the population, making it impossible for the government to administer its territory and people. Hence, insurgent activity is designed to weaken government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control and influence. Ukpong-Umo (2016), insurgency is a condition of revolt against a government that is less than an organized revolution and that is not recognized as belligerency. The term is used in describing a movement’s unlawfulness with capacity to pose a threat to a state or seen as such by another authority, especially when viewed from the backdrop of its not being authorized and therefore, executing a cause that is illegitimate (Shafer, 1988).

Terrorism as “the unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political or other ideological beliefs, to instill fear and coerce governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are usually political. Hence, instilling of fear in mind of populace by the terrorist group stands out in the definition. This is embraced to achieve their complex ambitions (United State Department of Defence (DOD) (2004). Also, Pearsall and Trumble, (2006) viewed terrorism as the systematic use of violence and intimidation to coerce a government or community into according to specific political demands. According to Article 2 of the draft comprehensive convention on international Terrorism, defines the term thus: Any person who commit an offence within the meaning of this convention if that person by any mean, unlawfully and intentionally causes; deaths or serious bodily injury to any person, or serious damage to public or private property, including a place of public or private property, including a place of public use, a state or government facility, a public transportation system, an infrastructure, facility or the environment, or damage to property place, facilities or system referred in paragraph (6) of Convention on International Terrorism Act, resulting or likely to result in major economic loss, when the purpose of the conduct, by its nature or contest, is to intimidate a population or to compel a government or an international organization to do or obtain from doing any act (Schmid & Graaf, 1980). Banditry, Insurgents, Kidnapping and Terrorism appear to have militated against smooth food production in the Nigerian’ North East region, North West region, North-Central region and South East region. This paper is aimed to assess the impact of impact of Banditry, Insurgents, Kidnapping and Terrorism on Food Security Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Food security

Food security refers to the availability, access, and utilization of food for a population. It is a critical issue that impacts the well-being and development of individuals, communities, and countries. The concept of food security encompasses food availability, access, utilization, and stability. It is a

multifaceted issue that is influenced by various factors such as economic, political, social, and environmental conditions. In order to address food security, it is crucial to understand the causes and consequences of food insecurity, as well as potential solutions to improve food availability and access (POP 2025). Food security exists when people have access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development, and an active and healthy life. By contrast, food security refers to when the aforementioned conditions don't exist. Chronic food insecurity is when a person is unable to consume enough food over an extended period to maintain a normal, active and healthy life. Acute food insecurity is any type that threatens people's lives or livelihoods. Food security is a moral imperative, in that all people should have equal and unrestricted access to food. Beyond this, food security is an investment in wider stability and security. Where there is food insecurity, there is displacement of people and increased instability that can ripple throughout countries, regions and beyond (Anthem, 2025).

Based on the 1996 World Food Summit, food security is defined when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (Worldbank 2024). The four main dimensions of food security:

- 1) Physical *availability* of food: Food availability addresses the "supply side" of food security and is determined by the level of food production, stock levels and net trade.
- 2) Economic and physical *access* to food: An adequate supply of food at the national or international level does not in itself guarantee household level food security. Concerns about insufficient food access have resulted in a greater policy focus on incomes, expenditure, markets and prices in achieving food security objectives.
- 4) Food *utilization*: Utilization is commonly understood as the way the body makes the most of various nutrients in the food. Sufficient energy and nutrient intake by individuals are the result of good care and feeding practices, food preparation, diversity of the diet and intra-household distribution of food. Combined with good biological utilization of food consumed, this determines the nutritional status of individuals.
- 5) *Stability* of the other three dimensions over time: Even if your food intake is adequate today, you are still considered to be food insecure if you have inadequate access to food on a periodic basis, risking a deterioration of your nutritional status. Adverse weather conditions, political instability, or economic factors (unemployment, rising food prices) may have an impact on your food security status (Worldbank 2024). Through their research, academics have identified key drivers of food insecurity, such as climate change, economic inequality, and political instability.

Methodology

This paper is apposition paper. The paper used secondary data. The secondary data were collected from both online and print resources. The resources includes; abstracts, government documents, journals and books.

Result and Discussion on Impact of Banditry, Insurgents, Kidnapping and Terrorism on Food Security Nigeria

Banditry, insurgencies, Kidnapping and Terrorisms activities in Nigeria has led to decline in agricultural investment. Tunji (2022) reported that Nigerian capital Importation report for Q1 2022 released by the National Bureau of Statistics indicated that capital importation into Nigeria's agriculture sector tumbled by 99.23 per cent from \$237.83m in the fourth quarter of 2021 to \$1.76m in

the first quarter of 2022. This implication is that there was a 99.23 per cent decline within three months in investment in the Nigerian agricultural sector. The Federal Government in its National Development Plan 2021 – 2025 admitted that food insecurity was a major concern, noting that food security, which is essential for development, had declined in the country. The government admitted that a rising security issue was threatening food supply and increasing uncertainty around food prices. The former Deputy President, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dr Gabriel Idahosa, however, identified the issue of insecurity as it affects Nigeria's investment in the agriculture sector. Banditry and insurgencies have affected investment in education, agricultural and mining sector (Ogunode & Kolo, 2021; Ogunode & Ukozor2022)

Banditry, Insurgents, Kidnapping and Terrorism in Nigeria has affected food security across Nigeria. The rampant insecurity in Nigeria disrupts the very fabric of daily life, particularly in rural areas where agriculture serves as a lifeline. Farmers, essential to the nation's food production, find themselves caught in the crossfire of conflicts, rendering their fields unattended and unproductive. The pervasive fear of violence forces many to abandon their lands, leading to a decline in crop cultivation and harvest, subsequently amplifying the threat to food security (Lawal, 2024). A study by Adebisi, Azeez, and Oyeduji, (2017) that examine the impact of Boko Haram's insurgency on the agricultural sector in Nigeria. They adopted the time series data analysis research method, while descriptive statistics and t-test were used to analyze the secondary data before and during the insurgency. The result of their findings showed that agricultural value added to the GDP was high before Boko Haram disruption and has reduced during the period of insurgency. Ojogho and Egware (2015), also carried out a study on the impact of insurgency on agricultural development in Nigeria. Using secondary time-series data they collected on Nigerian agricultural share of GDP, infant mortality rate, CO₂ emission from fuel combustion and level of food production as proxies for agricultural transformation for the years, 1960-2011. The Nigerian civil war, Boko-Haram, Niger-Delta, Fulani herdsmen insurgencies were used as proxies for insurgency. The data were analyzed using the Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) after testing for stationarity, co-integration and lag selection using the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF), Johansen and the Schwarz's Bayesian Information Criterion (SBIC) statistics respectively. They were able to discover from the result that the VECM had a unit decrease in previous year food production level would increase the share of agriculture to GDP by 4.26% the following year while a shift from non-insurgency to insurgency in any year by Boko-Haram, Niger-Delta and Fulani herdsmen reduced the share of agricultural contribution to GDP by 17.56%, 19.45% and 17.47% respectively. A similar shift from non-insurgency to insurgency in any year by Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen insurgencies reduced food production level, on average, by 10.21 and 4.69 tonnes respectively while a shift from non-insurgency to insurgency in any year by Niger-Delta crisis and Fulani herdsmen increased CO₂ emission, on average, by about 5% and 8% respectively.

Banditry, Insurgents, Kidnapping and Terrorism have led to the death of many farmers in rural areas and communities in Nigeria and this has also contributed to shortage of food supply. Ilesanmi and Odefadehan, (2022) and Usman, (2018) observed that one of the major culprits of poor agricultural productivity in Nigeria is the macro-scale insecurity in the country with tribal conflicts, insurgency and banditry as major drivers. Evidence suggests that in the last five years, an approximated 77,000 people were lost to tribal conflict and 2.6 million people of the farming community were displaced due mainly to conflict between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers in the North-West and North-Central parts of the country. In the North-eastern part of the country, the Boko Haram insurgency has not only consumed an estimated 32 thousand people, mostly from the agrarian communities in Bornu State but has also neutralized the 420,000 tons wheat production capacity of the state which is 30% of annual national consumption.

Banditry, Insurgents, Kidnapping and Terrorism have led to displacement of farmers and destruction of farming activities in communities and rural areas. The displacement of farmers and rural communities aggravates according to Lawal, (2024) the challenges faced by the agricultural sector. Forced migration results in the abandonment of once-fertile lands, contributing to a downward spiral in productivity. As displaced individuals seek refuge in urban areas, the strain on resources exacerbates the already delicate balance, further compromising the nation's capacity to ensure a steady and sustainable food supply. The rise in kidnaping of farmers according to Ibrahim et al. (2024) and Olagunju et al., (2020) forms another major insecurity-related threat to agricultural productivity in Nigeria through underutilization of human and financial resources in food production. The fear of being attacked or kidnapped, high ransom, and the high seasonal levy imposed by bandits on local farming communities to allow them have access to their farm lands have seriously depleted the availability of labor supply for farm activities and of consequence, low agricultural productivity and output in Nigeria.

Insecurities problems in Nigeria that includes Banditry, Insurgents, Kidnapping and Terrorism has impact extends beyond the fields, Lawal, (2024) noted that reaching critical infrastructure that is pivotal for the transportation and distribution of agricultural produce. Roads and transportation networks, often targeted in acts of violence, crumble under the weight of insecurity, hindering farmers' ability to transport their goods to markets. The resulting disruptions in supply chains contribute to rising food prices and decreased affordability for consumers, deepening the crisis. Economically, Lawal, (2024) opined that insecurity leaves an indelible mark on Nigeria's food security landscape. A weakened agricultural sector translates to reduced employment opportunities and income for farmers, perpetuating a cycle of poverty. The economic fallout extends beyond agriculture, affecting various sectors such as education, insurance, health and transportation that contribute to overall food availability and affordability, compounding the challenges faced by the nation (Ogunode & Godwin & Unoaku, 2021).

Prolonged banditry, insurgents, kidnapping and terrorism in Nigeria has the potential to escalate into a full-blown humanitarian crisis. Displacement, food shortages, and limited access to basic amenities create conditions conducive to malnutrition and disease outbreaks. The most vulnerable segments of society, particularly women and children, bear the disproportionate brunt of these challenges, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and food insecurity that becomes increasingly difficult to break (Lawal, 2024). The escalation of insurgency in Gombe states especially in the southern senatorial zone and others has caused many farmers to abandon their farms. This is as a result of fear of attacks especially by marauding Boko Haram insurgents, clashes between herdsmen and the farmers, communal conflicts and other forms of conflicts. Most of them [local population] have fled their homes especially farmers and students and educational activities suspended (Muhammed, 2015; Ogunode, Ahaotu & Obi-2021)). The farmers are no longer able to produce in sufficient quantities to meet the demand from other parts of Nigeria. Most of the youths who used to support agriculture in the rural areas have been killed or moved away from the farms. This has reduced the labour needed in the agricultural sector of this region of Nigeria. Others, for their own security, have escaped to neighboring countries as refugees which became an endemic problem (Awodola and Oboshi, 2015). The continuous activities of banditry, insurgents, kidnapping and terrorism in Nigeria has led to decline that had a heavy toll on food shortages and the consequences thereof.

Findings

The paper revealed that banditry, insurgents, kidnapping and terrorism in Nigeria has affected food security across Nigeria. Banditry, insurgents, kidnapping and terrorism in Nigeria has led to the death

of many farmers, fishes, displacement of both farmers and fisherfolks, destruction of infrastructure facilities that is pivotal for the transportation and distribution of agricultural products, high rate of unemployment and increment in poverty level across the country and leading to food insecurity.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The paper examined the impact of banditry, insurgents, kidnapping and terrorism on food security Nigeria. The paper concluded that banditry, insurgencies, kidnapping and terrorism in Nigeria has affected food security across Nigeria. Banditry, insurgencies, kidnapping and terrorism activities in Nigeria has led to decline in investment in agricultural sector and has forced many farmers to abandon their lands and fishermen their water bodies further contributing to the decline in food production. The paper concluded that banditry, insurgencies, kidnapping and terrorism activities in Nigeria has affected food security across Nigeria. The insecurities challenges in Nigeria have led to the death of many farmers, fishermen, displacement of farmers and fishermen, destruction of infrastructure facilities that is pivotal for the transportation and distribution of agricultural products, high rate of unemployment and increment in poverty level across the country and leading to food insecurity.

To address this issue, the paper hereby recommends that the government should address the root causes of banditry, insurgencies, kidnapping and terrorism in Nigeria. This may include addressing social and economic inequalities, promoting peace-building and conflict resolution, and enhancing security measures. Additionally, it is important to invest in the agricultural sector and support farmers and agricultural workers in affected regions to improve food production and distribution.

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