

## **Effects of Armed Banditry on Sacked Communities in Southern Kaduna, Kaduna State**

<sup>1</sup>Sylvanus, Helda Bernard PhD

<sup>1</sup>Department of Geography, Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) Kaduna, Nigeria

Email: [heldabernard@gmail.com](mailto:heldabernard@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

This study examines the ramifications of armed bandit attacks on communities subjected to displacement in Southern Kaduna, Kaduna State. The study delves into the socio-economic, socio-cultural, and educational repercussions faced by these communities. Utilizing a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, encompassing questionnaire administration, interviews, observations, and document analysis, data was collected and analyzed to comprehend the experiences of the impacted communities. The use of Geographic Information System (GIS) tools for spatial analysis adds a spatial dimension to the study. The findings illuminate the prevalence of a humanitarian crisis in the region attributed to bandit attacks, resulting in displacement, casualties, and property damage. Displaced residents encounter formidable challenges in accessing fundamental resources such as food, water, healthcare, and education. Furthermore, the study reveals that these attacks exacerbate ethnic and religious tensions, escalating violence and fostering societal divisions. The economic landscape of the region is also adversely affected as fear deters investments, disrupts agricultural activities, impedes trade, leading to food shortages and economic instability, potentially amplifying levels of poverty and unemployment. Consequently, the study underscores the imperative for prompt and sustained measures to address the multifaceted challenges confronting these affected communities. The insights derived from this study can provide valuable guidance to policymakers and stakeholders in formulating effective strategies to mitigate the ongoing crisis. Therefore, the study proposes that the government prioritize and enhance security forces in Southern Kaduna by ensuring sufficient resources, training, and intelligence capabilities.

**Keywords:** Armed Banditry, Kaduna, Nigeria, Southern Kaduna, Sacked Communities, Urban

### **Introduction**

Kaduna State has emerged as a notable locus of violence perpetrated by non-state actors, notwithstanding its status as the most heavily guarded state in Nigeria. The state encapsulates the nation's ethnic and religious schism, with Northern Kaduna predominantly inhabited by the Muslim and Hausa-Fulani populace, in contrast to Southern Kaduna, which is predominantly Christian and home to approximately 30 distinct ethnic groups. The historical tension between the Hausa-Fulani and communities in Southern Kaduna finds its roots in resource competition, particularly for land and political control, thereby giving rise to recurrent instances of lethal ethnic and sectarian strife (Abdul, 2015).

In recent times, Southern Kaduna has witnessed an atypical surge in the influx of thousands of cattle and herdsmen from neighbouring states. These entities engage in purposeful despoliation of farmland, often under the cloak of darkness, while simultaneously pilfering ripe crops and intimidating vulnerable farmers. Numerous communities, including Sankwab, Gora Gida, Warkan, Ashong Ashui, Abuyab, Zamandabo, and Shiliam in the Atyap Chiefdom of Zangon Kataf Local Government Area, have borne the brunt of extensive damages to their crops, valued in millions of Naira. The situation is further compounded by politically motivated banditry, revenge killings, and

communal violence orchestrated by criminal factions propelled by ethnic and religious motivations.

According to the Kaduna Internal Security and Home Affairs report (2022), Southern Kaduna has borne witness to the loss of 1,192 lives and the abduction of several others across the region. The demographic breakdown of victims comprises of 1,038 men, 104 women, and 50 children. A salient facet of this situation is that the majority of these incidents occur under the ostensible imposition of a state of emergency by the state government in the afflicted areas, thereby rendering the populace susceptible to external aggression. Additionally, the government's partisan stance is evident in the disarmament of communities, diminishing their capacity for self-defense against marauding herdsmen.

These attacks culminate in the invasion and devastation of villages and communities, accompanied by the egregious acts of rape against women and the orphaning of children. Travelers are specifically targeted, farmers experience insecurity on their own farmlands, and traders fall prey to apprehension, robbery, or kidnapping (Bayari, 2019). The victims endure psychological trauma, pain, confusion, and frustration (Abubakar, Rohana & Talib, 2018). The socio-economic, socio-cultural, and educational development of the affected communities are profoundly impacted by these incidents (Taiwo, 2019). According to Abubakar (2014), fear and trauma have permeated communities in Southern Kaduna, resulting in a significant reduction in social interactions among community members. Youths from rural areas are compelled to flee or migrate to urban centres out of fear of extinction from their family lineages (Abubakar *et al*, 2018).

Those who have abandoned farming communities seek refuge with relatives in safer locales, abandoning their villages and farmlands, which have been occupied by armed bandits. Despite governmental policies, measures, and substantial investments in security and crime control, these challenges endure, thereby precipitating significant consternation among both the populace and the government of the state (Taiwo, 2019). Consequently, this study endeavours to scrutinize the socio-economic, socio-cultural, and educational repercussions faced by the affected communities by delving into the underlying factors contributing to the attacks, such as resource competition, ethnic tensions, and political motivations.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Sacked Communities**

Sacked Communities delineates the distressing phenomenon unfolding in the Southern Kaduna region, where communities undergo attacks and usurpation by armed bandits. Previously vibrant and peaceful, these communities have endured a harrowing ordeal resulting in displacement, loss of lives, and the destruction of homes and livelihoods. The armed bandits, often operating with impunity, strategically target these communities with the intention of seizing control, instilling fear, and exploiting the vulnerable. Their modus operandi typically involves a conspicuous display of overwhelming force, incorporating the use of sophisticated weaponry, rendering the affected communities defenseless against the onslaught. The bandits employ various tactics, including surprise raids, looting, arson, and indiscriminate violence, plunging residents into a state of despair and trauma (Abdulaziz, 2021).

The consequences of these attacks are manifold. The most immediate and devastating ramification is the loss of lives, as innocent community members face brutal acts of violence. Families are disintegrated, with loved ones either killed or forcibly displaced, compelling survivors to grapple

with physical injuries, emotional trauma, and the distress of witnessing their communities ravaged by violence. Beyond the loss of human lives, the sackings result in the displacement of entire communities, forcing families to abandon their homes and seek refuge elsewhere, often in overcrowded and substandard Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps or with relatives in neighbouring towns and cities. This mass displacement exacerbates the humanitarian crisis, overwhelming local resources and humanitarian aid efforts (Itumo & Nwefuru, 2019)

The long-term consequences of these sacked communities extend extensively. Disrupted access to education, healthcare, and essential services compounds the already dire situation. The displaced communities, grappling with limited resources, contend with the challenge of providing for their basic needs, resulting in food insecurity, malnutrition, and other health-related issues. The impact of sacked communities transcends the immediate victims, as the social fabric of these areas is torn apart, with eroding trust, weakened communal bonds, and potential interethnic tensions. The destruction of homes, infrastructure, and productive assets disrupts economic activities, intensifying poverty and hindering long-term recovery (Akodu *et al*, 2017).

Addressing the plight of sacked communities demands a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach. This entails the implementation of thorough security measures to neutralize armed bandits and restore law and order. Concurrent efforts to facilitate the safe return of displaced individuals, coupled with the provision of humanitarian assistance, play a pivotal role in rebuilding shattered lives and communities. Moreover, long-term initiatives are imperative to promote sustainable development, foster social cohesion, and address the root causes of violence and instability.

The sacking of communities in Southern Kaduna serves as a tragic reminder of the immense challenges confronted by vulnerable populations in conflict-affected regions. Effectively resolving these crises and rebuilding communities necessitates sustained commitment, allocation of resources, and collaboration among the government, security agencies, humanitarian organizations, and the international community. This collective effort aims to ensure that those affected can reclaim their lives, restore their dignity, and rebuild their shattered communities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in the theoretical framework of social disorganization theory, which derives its foundations from the tenets of individualism and societal transformations. Initially advanced by Shaw and McKay (1942) through an ecological lens that establishes a nexus between structural conditions and criminal behaviour, the theory gained prominence. The theoretical underpinning of Social Disorganization Theory posits that crime and delinquency are outcomes of weakened social institutions and the breakdown of traditional social control mechanisms within a community. Faris (1955) subsequently expanded upon this paradigm, drawing correlations between crime patterns and the erosion of community bonds, while Bursik (1988) underscored the reciprocal relationship between crime and social disorganization. However, detractors posit that the theory oversimplifies the complexities of crime variations, advocating for a comprehensive integration of both structural conditions and indicators of individual agency. Despite these critiques, the resilience of social disorganization theory lies in its succinct capacity to explicate discernible patterns, thereby facilitating reproducibility. The contributions of Shaw and McKay (1942) have rendered the theory extensively examined and debated within the realm of criminology, with a primary focus on the interplay among neighbourhood structures, social control mechanisms, and the dynamics of criminal interactions.

Within the specific context of armed banditry in Southern Kaduna, Social Disorganization Theory provides a valuable lens through which one can comprehend the intricate dynamics underscoring the susceptibility of communities to this form of violence. This theoretical framework offers insights into the role played by the breakdown of social institutions and the erosion of community cohesion, both of which are pivotal factors contributing to the heightened vulnerability of these communities. The theory accentuates the significance of social factors, economic conditions, and the underlying structure of communities as influential determinants in shaping crime rates, particularly in the manifestation of armed banditry.

Applied to the specific case of Southern Kaduna, where armed banditry has emerged as a pressing concern, this framework becomes instrumental in unravelling the complex web of factors that facilitate the perpetuation of such violence. The breakdown of social institutions, ranging from traditional leadership structures to formal governance entities, can create a void in the regulation and control of community affairs. This void, as delineated by Social Disorganization Theory, fosters an environment where criminal elements, such as armed bandits, can exploit the absence of effective social control mechanisms. Consequently, understanding the extent to which social institutions have disintegrated becomes paramount in comprehending the vulnerability of these communities to armed banditry.

Moreover, the erosion of community cohesion, a key tenet of Social Disorganization Theory, accentuates the fracturing of social bonds and informal control networks. In Southern Kaduna, where communal ties are strained by various factors, including religious and ethnic diversity, this breakdown in cohesion further diminishes the ability of the community to collectively resist and counteract criminal elements. Consequently, the theory sheds light on the intricate interplay between social disorganization and the susceptibility of communities to armed banditry.

The theory's emphasis on social factors, economic conditions, and community structure underscores the interconnected nature of these elements in influencing crime rates. In the case of Southern Kaduna, socio-economic challenges, including poverty and unemployment, intertwine with the breakdown of social institutions, creating an environment conducive to criminal activities such as armed banditry. The interdependence of these factors highlights the need for a holistic understanding when addressing the root causes of violence in these communities.

The application of Social Disorganization Theory to the context of armed banditry in Southern Kaduna provides a nuanced framework for deciphering the underlying dynamics. By emphasizing the breakdown of social institutions, erosion of community cohesion, and the interplay of social, economic, and structural factors, the theory contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the vulnerability of communities to armed banditry. This academic exploration paves the way for targeted interventions and policy measures aimed at fortifying social structures and mitigating the conditions that foster criminal activities in the region.

### **The Study Area**

Southern Kaduna is located between Latitudes 09° 00' N and 10° 57' North of the Equator and Longitudes 06° 51' E and 8° 51' East of Greenwich Meridian. The region has a landmass of about 26, 000km<sup>2</sup> on an average elevation above sea level of 1, 993 feet (6577m) (Salleh, 2014). It shares common borders with Kubau, Soba and Igabi LGAs to the North, Bauchi and Plateau States to the East, Birnin Gwari and Niger State to the West, Nasarawa State to the South and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja also to the South as shown in Fig 1.

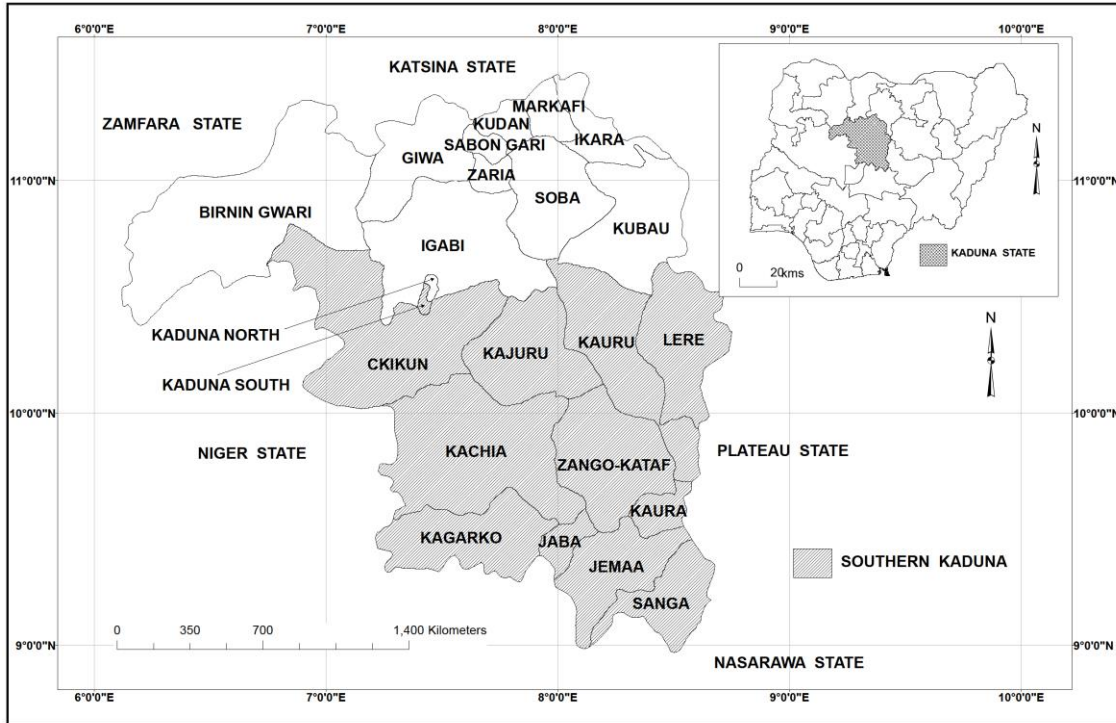


Figure 1: Map of Southern Kaduna in Kaduna State

Source: Dept. of Geography, NDA Kaduna (2023)

Southern Kaduna is characterized by a tropical continental climate exhibiting distinct wet and dry seasons. The wet season, spanning from April to mid-October, witnesses its peak rainfall in September. Conversely, the dry season extends from mid-October to late April of the subsequent year. The mean annual rainfall for the state is approximately 1323mm, with notable spatial and temporal variations. The southern part, specifically Kafanchan, experiences a higher average rainfall of about 1733mm, whereas the northern part, represented by Makarfi, receives an approximate 1032mm (Hena, 2014).

The rainfall distribution is intricately influenced by the interaction between two air masses over the state - the warm, moist Tropical Maritime (TM) air mass originating from the Atlantic Ocean, and the cold, dry Tropical Continental (TC) air mass originating from the Sahara Desert. The Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD), marking the boundary between these air masses, determines the movement of the ITD northwards, ushering in rainfall to the state, reaching its zenith in September. The mean maximum air temperature peaks in April at 28.9°C, while the mean minimum occurs in December (22.9°C) through January (23.1°C), influenced by the Harmattan wind. Atmospheric relative humidity averages 70-90% during the rainy season and 25-30% during the dry season. The dry season witnesses the highest evaporation rate. The annual rainfall averages 1272.5mm, with an average humidity of 56.64%. The daily minimum and maximum temperatures average at 15.1°C and 35.18°C, respectively (Abaje *et al*, 2018).

The vegetation in Kaduna State is diverse, ranging from the forested Guinea Savannah in the south, characterized by heavy rainfall, to the Savannah scrub in the north (Hena, 2014). The state's vegetation spans from the Guinea Savannah to the Sudan Savannah, featuring tall grasses reaching approximately 3.6 meters in height. Trees such as baobabs and mangoes are dispersed and decrease in size towards the Sudan Savannah. The dominant vegetation type is the Northern Guinea

Savannah, comprising tall woodland and long grass Savannah species, alongside gallery forests along the main watercourses (Ezeamaka, 2019).

Regrettably, anthropogenic activities, including annual burning, wood cutting for fuel, cultivation, grazing, and bush burning, have significantly impacted the distinctive characteristics of the vegetation cover. Nevertheless, certain localities, particularly in the southern local government areas, still harbour fringe forests, known as "Kurmi" in Hausa (Bako, Maiwada, Abubakar & Akwo, 2016). The prevalent trees in the region include shea butter, locust bean, silk cotton, mango, and Isobellina doka, with an average height of about 6-10 meters (Ezeamaka, 2019). The implications of the vegetation extend to the socio-existential conditions prevailing in the interior and frontier areas of the state. These areas, characterized by sparsely governed spaces, separated rangelands, and farmlands, are susceptible to violent contests (Olapeju & Peter, 2021). The forested or vegetated covers in these regions are distant from local and state centres of governance, presenting vast, rugged, and hazardous terrains conducive to various forms of criminal activities. Consequently, violent crimes such as armed kidnapping and banditry have thrived in these forested areas, particularly in remote villages where security presence is minimal (Olapeju & Peter, 2021).

## **Methodology**

The methodology embraces a holistic approach by incorporating various research methods. This inclusivity ensures a thorough exploration of the subject matter from different angles. According to Pavelko and Grabe (2017) "content analysis provides researchers with the systematic capability to detect patterns in media content that are often not detectable through unsystematic observation." Hence the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including literature review, case studies, interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, document analysis, spatial analysis, and impact assessments, allows for a triangulated and nuanced understanding of the research question. Institutional data sources from 2013 to 2022 were sourced and analyzed from specific communities. The emphasis on selecting specific communities affected by armed banditry enhances the research's contextual relevance and provides in-depth insights into the unique challenges faced by different communities.

Participants for the study were purposefully chosen based on direct experiences of armed banditry and displacement in Southern Kaduna, with residency in identified sacked communities as a key criterion. For quantitative data collection through surveys, a random sampling approach was employed to ensure a representative sample, utilizing a systematic random sampling method from a list of households provided by local authorities. To ensure diverse representation in focus group discussions, a stratified sampling technique was utilized, considering factors such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status to create strata. Participants were then randomly selected from each stratum, fostering a comprehensive and varied discussion.

The use of Geographic Information System (GIS) tools for spatial analysis adds a spatial dimension to the study, aiding in understanding the geographical patterns and distributions of armed banditry incidents. The incorporation of triangulation, combining data from various sources and methods, strengthens the validity and reliability of the findings. This approach reduces the risk of bias and enhances the credibility of the research outcomes.

## **Result of the findings**

## **Historical Trajectory of Armed Banditry**

Some dominant explanatory frameworks have traditionally played a significant role in understanding the emergence of armed banditry in Southern Kaduna. These frameworks attribute the rise of armed banditry to factors such as limited educational and employment opportunities, corruption, and inadequate infrastructural development despite substantial federal revenue allocations. According to Okoli (2021) and Adewuyi and Daful (2021), the increase in armed banditry can be attributed to cultural and traditional influences, population pressure, environmental resource scarcity, state failure, and the widespread availability of small arms and light weapons across Africa. Okoli (2021), further suggests that pastoral culture and tradition contribute to armed banditry in Nigeria, as cattle theft is seen as a means to replenish herds lost to rustling. Some traditions even permit theft from non-pastoral groups that dare to rear cattle, reserving cattle husbandry exclusively to nomads.

Climate change also exacerbates the situation as it leads to the shrinking of the Lake Chad, drought, flooding, and the loss of crucial vegetation, further contributing to desertification in the region. Consequently, herders migrate from the Northern region to the Middle Belt and the Southern regions in search of greener pastures, making their herds vulnerable to attacks by armed bandits and marauding militants. Armed banditry is also attributed to state failure, intra-state conflicts, and the proliferation of light weapons across Africa, leading to the classification of countries as fragile states, including Nigeria. In addition to its internal challenges, Nigeria's geographical location in the conflict-ridden Sahel region exposes it to the flow of weapons from war zones, which are then acquired by criminal groups, including armed bandits (Adewuyi & Daful, 2021).

## **Factors Facilitating Armed Banditry Operations in Southern Kaduna**

These factors are influenced by a combination of historical, socio-economic, and political dynamics. While the situation can be multifaceted and context-specific, the following factors are commonly cited as contributors to the facilitation of armed banditry operations in the region: Southern Kaduna has experienced longstanding ethno-religious conflicts between different communities, primarily along ethnic and religious lines. These conflicts are often rooted in historical grievances, land ownership disputes, and competition over resources, creating a volatile environment that can be exploited by armed bandit groups (Osumah, 2017).

Land disputes, including issues related to ownership, access, and control of land and natural resources, can contribute to the emergence and escalation of armed banditry. Competing claims over land ownership between different communities, combined with weak land tenure systems and dispute resolution mechanisms, has led to violence and criminal activities in the area (Human Rights Watch, 2018). The presence of inadequate security infrastructures, including limited police presence and insufficient security personnel, has created a security vacuum that armed bandit groups exploit. Weak law enforcement, delayed response to security threats, and the absence of effective intelligence gathering mechanisms contribute to the facilitation of armed banditry operations (International Crisis Group, 2020).

Socio-economic marginalization, characterized by high poverty rates, unemployment, and limited access to basic services, has contributed to the vulnerability of communities and individuals to armed banditry. The lack of economic opportunities and development in the region has also thrust individuals and small groups in the area to engage in criminal activities, including joining armed bandit groups (Oduh, 2019). Political instability and challenges of governance, including corruption, ineffective leadership, and weak administrative structures, undermines security and

provides a conducive environment for armed banditry. Inadequate governance and the perception of marginalization also breeds discontent and create conditions that armed bandit groups exploit (Abdulkadir, 2018). Addressing the factors facilitating armed banditry operations in Southern Kaduna requires a comprehensive approach that combines conflict resolution, promotion of inter-communal dialogue, equitable resource allocation, improved security infrastructure, and socio-economic development initiatives. It is crucial to engage local communities, promote dialogue, and foster trust between different groups to create an environment of peace and stability.

### **Dimensions of Armed Banditry in Southern Kaduna**

In this context, "dimensions" denotes a confluence of interrelated crime events executed nearly simultaneously, where the absence of any constituent chain renders the entire act null. Within the realm of armed banditry, Okoli and Ugwu (2019) have identified four distinct dimensions, which serve as the foundational framework for this study. These dimensions encompass village raids, highway robbery, kidnapping, and cattle rustling.

Village raids, the first dimension, involve the invasion and marauding of rural communities, resulting in severe casualties among the populace. Such raids often target households, shops, and markets, with looting serving as a primary objective or reprisal attacks directed at rival villages (Yaro & Tobias, 2019). The second dimension, highway robbery, is a pervasive phenomenon in the region characterized by the interception of motorists and travellers on various highways (Olafeju & Peter, 2021).

Kidnapping, constituting the third dimension, entails highway-armed abduction, wherein travellers are ambushed and seized by armed bandits, subsequently transported to secluded hideouts in the forest. Ransom demands are then communicated to their relatives or associates, forming a central aspect of this criminal dimension (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). The final dimension of armed banditry prevalent in the region is cattle rustling, a form of organized cattle theft driven by motives of accumulative or profiteering inclinations. In essence, criminal gangs orchestrate organized rural banditry with the aim of profiting from the illicit acquisition of livestock (Asmau & Abdurashed, 2020).

### **Modus Operandi of Armed Banditry in Southern Kaduna**

It is imperative to acknowledge that armed bandits employ sophisticated weaponry to instill fear and execute kidnappings for ransom. Their modus operandi involves a series of stages, with intelligence gathering assuming a pivotal role. Local informants and collaborators systematically collect credible information regarding potential victims or vulnerable populations, providing logistical support, including footwear, military uniforms, food, and shipments of narcotics that the bandits utilize in their operations. Armed with an array of advanced weapons and backed by a well-organized structure of armed individuals, the bandits mobilize in convoys of gun trucks and motorbikes to execute their lethal assaults.

Within their encampments, a structured sequence of governance prevails, encompassing periodic planning of recruitments, raiding, negotiations, and strategies for collecting ransoms from the relatives of abductees. These activities unfold within occupied forests (Olafeju & Peter, 2021). These forested sites function as command centres for the bandits, covering operational, logistical, technical, and organizational aspects, while also serving as holding locations for abducted victims (Muhammad *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, the forests function as camps, armouries, cells, and warehouses, as well as training grounds for recruiting new members, radicalization, and engaging



in illicit activities such as mining and arms trafficking. Additionally, these areas serve as pray-ground (Igboin, 2021). The challenging and volatile terrain of forest landscapes provides the bandits with tactical maneuverability advantages when confronted by state actors (Albert, 2018; Okoli, 2021). They meticulously plan, simulate, and execute sporadic attacks from the forests, retreating to their concealed positions once the operation is completed or when confronted by a superior force. The utilization of forested terrains as a means for asymmetric violence by the bandits can be construed as the weaponization of the forests (Okoli, 2021).

### **The Consequences of Armed Banditry in the Southern Kaduna Region**

The surge in criminal activities as a result of armed banditry within the region has precipitated a disconcerting escalation of violence, encompassing a spectrum of offenses including shootings, killings, cattle rustling, kidnappings, rapes, looting of valuables, and the systematic destruction of entire villages. This widespread destruction of lives and properties has led to the displacement of families and communities, resulting in the creation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in affected areas. Table 1 Presents Some Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in Southern Kaduna.

**Table 1: Some Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Camps in Southern Kaduna**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Composition</b>
1	Kajuru	As at 2019, around 44,110 individuals	Orphaned Children, Women and Elderly Persons
2	Mararaban Kajuru	4,410	Children, Women and Elderly Persons
3	JSS Kajuru,	3, 477	Primarily Orphaned Children, Women and Elderly Persons
4	Adara Town Hall in Sabo Kaduna	25,011	Primarily Children, Women and Elderly Persons
5	Nehemiah Camp	40 Persons in 2016 to 2,114 registered persons in 2017 from villages in Jema'a LGA,	Primarily Children, Women and Elderly Persons
6	Mercy IDP camp in Zonkwa	over 3000 registered members with 52 widows	Primarily Orphaned Children, Women and Elderly Persons
7	Mariri camp in Lere LGA	-	Children, Women and Elderly Persons
8	Ladduga, in Kachia LGA.	-	Primarily Children, Women and Elderly Persons
9	Maraban Rido in Chikun LGA	4,000	Orphaned Children, Women and Elderly Persons
10	ECWA Church, Zangon Kataf	-	Children, Women and Elderly Persons
12	Forest Camp, Chikun LGA	-	Children, Women and Elderly Persons
13	Kufana	3,324 people.	Children, Women

*Source: NCFRMI Field Office, Kaduna / SEMA, Kaduna (2023)*

Many of these camps are situated on public properties, including town halls (such as Adara Town Hall in Sabo, Kaduna), and public schools (like Maraban Kajuru LEA 1 Primary School in Kajuru LGA, and Nehemiah Camp at Takau Primary School in Kafanchan, Jema'a LGA of Kaduna state). The majority of IDPs in Southern Kaduna, particularly women and children, face severe shortages in essential necessities such as clean water, shelter, clothing, and food. They encounter a range of challenges, including insufficient relief materials and financial assistance from the Nigerian

government due to competing priorities and the escalating number of IDPs, which strain both services and financial resources, limiting access to healthcare, housing, and education (Uzobo & Akhuetie, 2018).

Additional hurdles include intra-camp conflicts, criminal activities, and violence, causing general insecurity among members of diverse ethnic communities. As a result, the daily lives of most women and children in IDP camps in Southern Kaduna are characterized by hardship, uncertainty, and despair. The substantial influx of displaced persons into many IDP camps has disrupted their livelihoods, subjected them to cramped living conditions, and forced them to rely on sporadic employment, occasional government agency donations, aid from private organizations and NGOs, and support from religious bodies.

To illuminate the gravity of the situation, Figures 3 and 4 present an overview of the fatalities resulting from armed bandit attacks. Figure 3 encapsulates data from January to December 2019, while Figure 4 spans the period from January to June 2020. These statistics serve as a sober testament to the devastating impact of armed banditry, portraying the loss of lives and the profound human toll exacted upon the beleaguered communities.

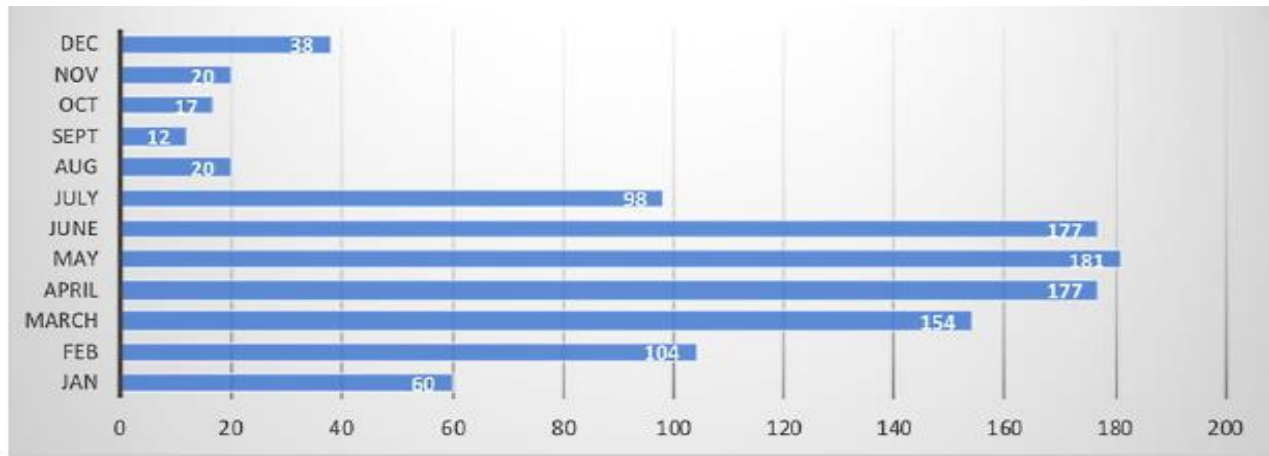


Figure 2- Number of Fatalities from Armed Banditry Attacks (Jan – Dec 2019).  
 Source: West African Network for Peacebuilding, (2020)

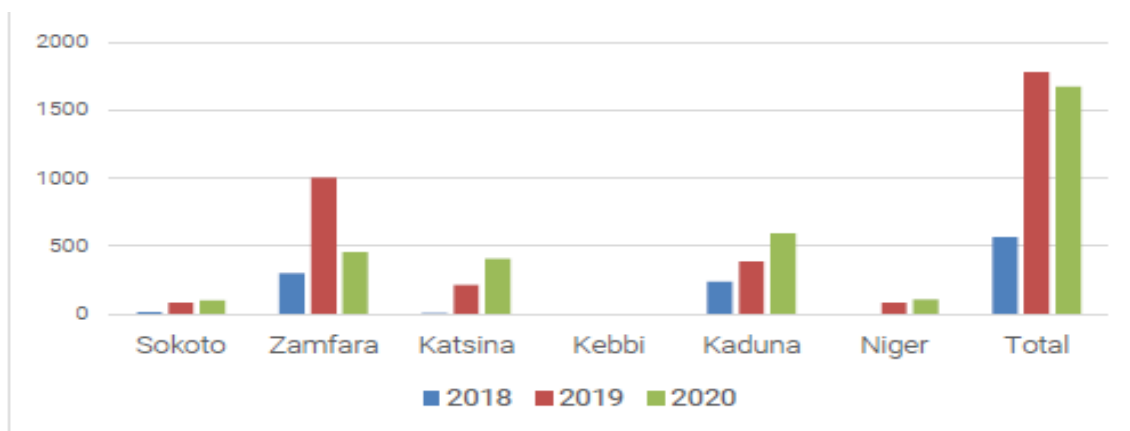


Figure 3- Number of Fatalities from Armed Banditry Attacks (Jan-June)  
 Sources: Council on Foreign Relations, 2020.

According to the Council on Foreign Relations (2020), large-scale farming and animal husbandry are recognized as the primary economic activities in the region, with trading serving as an alternative source of income. Unfortunately, the region has been plagued by targeted attacks on farmers, making it impossible for them to cultivate and harvest their crops throughout the year. Farmers have received warnings from armed bandits to stay away from their farmlands (Orjinmo, 2020). Incidence of farmer kidnappings for ransom have been reported, with some bandits demanding payments of varying sums before farmers are allowed access to their farmlands (Muhammed, 2020). Those who refuse to comply face severe consequences, including abduction, murder, confiscation of their produce or are forced to work on the bandits' farmlands.

In addition to the challenges faced by farmers, cattle rustling has also severely impacted animal husbandry in the area. The violence and forced displacement resulting from the conflicts have left affected communities unable to rely on locally produced cereals for subsistence and commercial farming, significantly increasing the risk of food insecurity for both displaced and non-displaced populations (Anka, 2017). The escalating crisis in the region has raised significant security concerns for the local population. Since 2016, Southern Kaduna has experienced almost daily attacks by armed bandits, leading the Nigerian government to implement various security operations in the area. The risks of kidnapping for ransom remain prevalent (Orjinmo, 2020), and women and girls are particularly vulnerable to abduction, sexual violence, and abuses, including rape. Table 2. Presents instances of Bi-Monthly Armed Banditry Attacks in Southern Kaduna between January, 2022 to November, 2023

**Table 2. Instances of Bi-Monthly Armed Banditry Attacks in Southern Kaduna**

S/N	Location (LGA)	Monthly Attacks	Communities	Aftermath of Attacks
1	Chikun LGA	Between January and April, 2022	Mararaban Rido	No fewer than seven lives were snuffed out by these deadly bandits
2	Chikun LGA	January 2022 to April 27, 2022	Ungwan Bulus and Ungwan Gimbiya	No fewer than 50 people were kidnapped and eight killed
3	Kajuru LGA	Between January 4, 2022 and April 12, 2022	Surrounding Communities	No less than 38 persons were killed across 40 communities, and about 200 abducted for ransom
4	Kaura LGA	In January 2022	Kurmin Masara	No less than 16 people were murdered and 38 houses razed down by bandits
5	Kagoro LGA	On February 5, 2022	Maraban Kagoro-Gidan Waya Road	11 people were killed
6	Kajuru LGA	22nd February 2022	Idon Hanya Market	22 persons were Kidnapped
7	Kaura LGA	February 2, 2022	Zamandabo was attacked	The death of one person and 15 houses destroyed
8	ChikunLGA	March 28, 2022	Rijana Train Station	No less than eight passengers were murdered, 165 passengers taken as hostages but now released
9	Kachia LGA	On March 16, 2022	Agunu Dutse community	46 persons were Kidnapped
10	Kagoro Chiefdom, Kaura LGA	on March 22, 2022	Tsonje, Agban, Katanga and Kadarko	34 murdered and 35 homes razed down
11	Kaura LGA	Monday, April 25, 2022	Kamaru ward, Chawai Chiefdom	25 Persons murdered, several injured

12	Kaura LGA	Monday, April 25, 2022	Ungwar Rimi	12 persons were murdered, and no fewer than 52 houses were burnt after the village was looted.
14	Kaura LGA	April, 2022	Ungwar Magaji	Unabated attacks and wanton destructions
15	Kaura LGA	April, 2022	Ungwar Makere	A 102-year old man, Pa Garba Akur in Kitakum was hacked to death
16	Kachia	On April 6, 2022	Akilbu village	8 killed and 28 persons abducted
17	Zangon Kataf	On Sept 28, 2023	Takanai	6 People killed in an attack
18	Zangon Kataf	April 16, 2023	Runji Village	29 People killed in fresh Attack
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct, 2023	Kachuwe close to Sarkin Pawa	27 women, 4 boys killed
19	Chikun	15 <sup>TH</sup> Sept, 2023	Dogon Nama	15 killed, abducted 23 Persons
20	Kajuru			
21	Kachia LGA	1 <sup>st</sup> Nov, 2023	Ungwan Baka, Agunu Ward	Killed a farmer, injured two and abducted 25

*Source: Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs Kaduna State, (2023)*

### **Sacked Communities by Armed Bandits in Southern Kaduna Region**

The conflicts in Southern Kaduna have resulted in the targeting and displacement of entire communities. Villages have been attacked, homes have been destroyed, and inhabitants have been forced to flee for their lives. Some Southern Kaduna communities are now fully captured and occupied by armed Fulani militia some for over a year (Tauna, 2020). According to Tauna (2020), as at 30th October, 2020, at least 100 communities (45 in Chikun LGA, 8 in Kaura and 9 in Kauru, while Zangon Kataf had 40 have been displaced and taken over by armed militia unchallenged by the state. Maisamari (2023), asserts that about 245 Southern Kaduna communities have been sacked. “If the size of these captured areas is added to that of Birnin Gwari and adjoining areas, these outlaws have taken about 6,000sq Km of Kaduna land which is bigger than the size of some states. Table 3 and Figure 5 Presents some Sacked Communities by Armed Banditry Attacks in Southern Kaduna.



## **Implications of Armed Banditry in the Southern Kaduna Region**

The occurrence and frequency of armed banditry have been consistently rising in Southern Kaduna. The region has been disproportionately affected by the destructive consequences and significant implications for the region and its inhabitants. Armed banditry in Southern Kaduna has led to a humanitarian crisis, causing displacement and suffering among the local population. The attacks by bandits, which often target villages and communities, results in loss of lives, injuries, and destruction of properties. Displaced individuals and families face challenges related to accessing basic necessities such as food, water, healthcare, and education (Uzobo & Akhuetie, 2018).

Bandit attacks frequently exacerbate existing tensions between the different ethnic and religious groups in the region. The violence often takes on an ethnic or religious dimension, leading to retaliatory attacks and further deepening divisions and mistrust among communities. Another implication is on the socio-economic disruption in the region. The fear of attacks and insecurity discourages investment, hampers agricultural productivity, and disrupts trade and commerce. Farmers are unable to tend to their fields, resulting in food shortages and economic instability. This can lead to increased poverty and unemployment in the region.

The prevalence of armed banditry in Southern Kaduna poses significant security challenges. The inability of security forces to effectively contain the attacks has eroded public confidence in their ability to protect the population. The constant threat of violence has created a climate of fear and insecurity, affecting the overall well-being and quality of life of the residents. The attacks by armed bandits have resulted in the internal displacement of numerous individuals and families in Southern Kaduna. Displaced populations often seek refuge in overcrowded camps or with host communities, straining limited resources and putting additional pressure on existing social and infrastructural systems (Omenma, 2020). The persistent armed banditry in Southern Kaduna hampers the region's overall development. Infrastructural projects, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and other developmental initiatives have been disrupted or abandoned due to security concerns. The lack of security and stability impedes progress in various sectors, hindering the region's economic growth and potentials (Akodu *et al*, 2017).

Addressing the implications of armed banditry in Southern Kaduna requires a comprehensive approach that includes security measures, conflict resolution, socioeconomic development, and promotion of interethnic and interreligious dialogue. Efforts should focus on improving security forces' capacity, fostering community engagement, promoting peace-building initiatives, and addressing the root causes of conflict to bring about lasting peace and stability in the region. Figure 6 presents the socio-economic implications of armed banditry on Southern Kaduna populace.

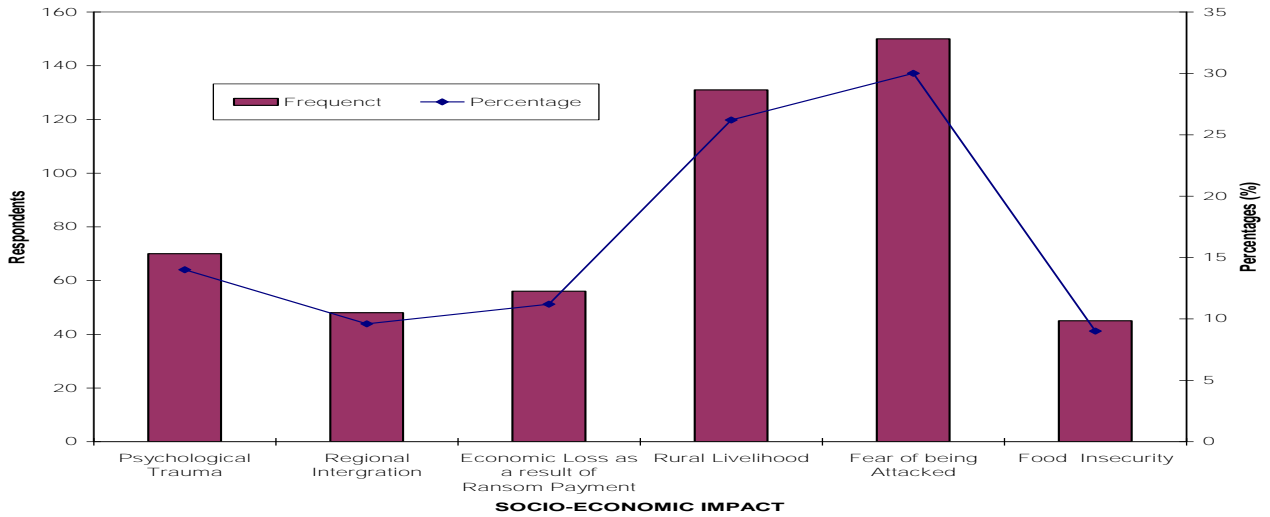


Figure 6: Socio-Economic Impact of Armed Banditry in Southern Kaduna  
Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork (2023)

## Conclusion

The assessment of sacked communities by armed bandits in Southern Kaduna, Kaduna State highlights the devastating impacts of the ongoing violence in the region. The study reveals the profound humanitarian crisis, ethnic and religious tensions, socio-economic disruptions, security concerns, internal displacement, and impediments to development caused by armed banditry. The findings emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive and sustainable solutions to address the challenges faced by the affected communities.

## Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. **Enhanced Security Measures:** The government should prioritize the reinforcement of security forces in Southern Kaduna, providing them with adequate resources, training, and intelligence gathering capabilities. Collaborative efforts between security agencies, including the police, military, and intelligence services, should be strengthened to effectively counter armed banditry and ensure the safety of communities.
- ii. **Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation:** Initiatives promoting inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue, peace-building, and reconciliation should be encouraged. Engaging community leaders, religious organizations, and civil society groups can help foster trust, understanding, and cooperation among different groups in Southern Kaduna.
- iii. **Socio-economic Development:** Economic initiatives aimed at revitalizing the region should be implemented by the government and relevant stake holders. This includes investment in infrastructure, agriculture, and job creation programs to mitigate the socioeconomic disruptions caused by armed banditry. Support for farmers, traders, and small businesses should be provided to enhance economic stability and reduce vulnerability.
- iv. **Humanitarian Assistance:** Efforts should be made to provide immediate humanitarian aids to displaced individuals and communities affected by armed banditry by the government, Non-governmental Organisations, Resilient Aid and Dialogue Initiative (RADI), religious

- bodies, corporate organisations and spirited individuals. Access to food, water, healthcare, education, and shelter should be ensured through partnerships between government agencies, humanitarian organizations, and local communities.
- v. Addressing Root Causes: It is crucial to address the underlying causes of armed banditry, such as poverty, marginalization, and lack of opportunities. This requires long-term strategies focused on promoting inclusive governance, equitable resource allocation, and addressing historical grievances. Socioeconomic development programs should prioritize marginalized communities to foster a sense of belonging and reduce the appeal of joining criminal activities by the government and other relevant agencies.
  - vi. Community Engagement and Early Warning Systems: Engaging local communities and empowering them to participate in their own security is vital. Establishing community-based early warning systems and encouraging the reporting of suspicious activities can help prevent attacks and improve response time. Community policing initiatives should be promoted to enhance trust and collaboration between security forces and the local population by the host communities.

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