Insecurity and Kidnapping in Southwest Nigeria: Humanitarian Concerns in the 21st Century.

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Abstract

This research examines insecurity and kidnapping in Southwest Nigeria and humanitarian concerns in the 21st century. Southwest used to be among Nigeria's peaceful region but in recent times it has not been spared from insecurity and kidnapping. Insecurity is a daily menace to human survival in terms of trade and industry growth. Insecurity in Nigeria gives rise to the damage to existing material goods as well as human lives thereby making people relocate and closure of businesses. Insecurity is a recurring phenomenon in Nigeria that threatens the well-being of its citizens; because they lack protection and safety. Kidnapping, on the other hand, is an unlawful crime, whereby force is used to capture people to an unknown destination against their wish, in payment of ransom before they are released. There are daily reports of kidnapping in various parts of the world today, kidnapping for ransom, has become a common occurrence. It is a known fact that the geographical spread of kidnapping is global. The objectives are causes of kidnapping and humanitarian concerns to curb this menace. Existing literature will be used for this study. Kidnapping in Nigeria today, cuts across demographic and geographic boundaries between states. Kidnapping in Nigeria is a21st-centuryhumanitarian concern. All hands must be on deck to curb this menace, humanitarian agencies, security agencies and government policies.

This study recommends that the government should invest in an early warning system in the South Western States of Nigeria, to reduce poverty, and unemployment, and effectively monitor and secure all borders to reduce insecurity and kidnapping.

Keywords: Insecurity, Southwest, Ransom, Humanitarian Concerns, Nigeria

Introduction

Globally, the issue of insecurity and kidnapping is not a new phenomenon. Global peace and development cannot be achieved because of the increase in crimes and juvenile delinquency in parts of the world (Odoma and Akor, 2019). Kidnapping is seen globally, as an organized crime that hurts security because it grows more in terms of sophistication and consolidation (Okoli and Agada, 2014).Insecurity is a menace to human life as well as economic growth daily. It is a recurring phenomenon in Nigeria that threatens the well-being of its citizens. Insecurity has given rise to harm to human lives and belongings of people daily. It means danger, anxiety and being vulnerable to attacks.

In Nigeria, insecurity has led to the hurt of lives and possessions thereby making people relocate and closure of so many businesses (Adeleke, 2013).Incidences of insecurity range from Fulani herdsmen clashes with farmers, attacks from Boko Haram, armed robbery, abduction, political calamity, religious catastrophe, killings, trafficking etc. In Nigeria, insecurity has become a life-threatening concern hindering growth and viable progress in Africa as a whole. There are a lot of unparalleled occurrences of uncertainty from the happenings of farmers and Fulani herdsmen clash, Boko Haram insurgences, robbery, kidnapping, political disasters, religious calamities, etc. Insecurity in Nigeria is related to issues that are comparable to insufficiency and joblessness, which backs hindrance and annoyance which gives birth to robbery, abduction etc which in turn creates more panic within the society.

Nigeria is rated low in terms of security matters (The Global Peace Index, 2012). In other words, Nigeria is an insecure dwelling place and is regarded as a solitary radical country today. This has affected investments from expatriates and Nigerians alike because nobody wants to invest where they are being threatened. Insecurity is the state of fear of both lives and properties, anxiety among people, and uncertainty about the future. As far as security matters are concerned,

the Nigerian government has not played any pivotal role. According to Anekwe, Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anigbogu (2015), the Nigerian government has not been able to offer a protected and harmless atmosphere for its citizens in terms of the protection of lives and properties, this has steered to an absence of concern amongst corporate depositors into the economy of the nation.

Kidnapping is a worldwide phenomenon that is as ancient as conception itself, with continuous growth which spreads geographically and numerically in the global sphere. Kidnapping today has become a flourishing business because of the ransom demand that depends on the victim's status (Ishaya, James and Ezekiel 2019).An international security agency Constellis, identified that developed countries are also involved in either high or very high kidnapping. This means that kidnapping has become a worldwide phenomenon. According to Fasoranti, Abrifor and Haruna (2022), kidnapping is a law-breaking act that involves the capture, moving and custody of a person or a set of people contrary to their will. It can also be called a fabricated incarceration.

According to Linus (2015), kidnapping is an unlawful crime of forcefully taking people against their bidding, now in exchange for compensation or payment to resolve scores of differences between parties. This has become a widespread cankerworm in Nigerian society today. In the Southwest today, the presence of abductors has turned out to be a spike in the flesh of people, kidnapping in turn is growing at an alarming rate which calls for immediate action (Olulowo, Babawale and Anani, 2021).There was an overwhelming increase in kidnapping activities between 2014 and 2017 (Olulowo et al., 2021).Kidnap for ransom is now a lucrative business (Briggs, 2001). Therefore, the government and security institutions should swing into action to reduce crime within the country (Zeman, Bren, and Urban, 2018; Teivans-Treinovskis, Nesterova, Solobutina, and Lipe2018; Kuril 2018).This danger threatens the societal contexts of humanity because it is missing the sagacity of safety and well-being. Kidnapping in Southwest Nigeria has remained devastating day-to-day (Kyrian, 2009).

Research questions

This research will look into the following questions which are:
1. What are the causes of insecurity and kidnapping in Southwest Nigeria?
2. What are humanitarian concerns towards insecurity and kidnapping in Southwest Nigeria?

Research objectives

This research seeks to examine insecurity and kidnapping in Southwest Nigeria: humanitarian concerns in the 21st century with the following specific intentions:
1. Find out the causes of insecurity and kidnapping in Southwest Nigeria.
2. Examine humanitarian concerns towards insecurity and kidnapping in Southwest Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Social disorganization theory

This theory can be traced back to history during the early 1900s. The first social disorganization theory is credited to the conventional works of Durkheim (1960), and progress was made through the theory and research of Shaw and McKay (1969). In 1929, Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay propounded the social disorganization theory. These men were researchers from the University of Chicago, School of Criminology, who carried out a study in the city of Chicago with the help of official records. The result showed that the rates of juvenile delinquency, misconduct among youths, and guarantee correctional institutions, all of these are different, especially in terms of the location where the crime occurred. This theory observed that an individual's physical, as well as social environment, has a lot to do in terms of the behavioural choices that people make. In order words, the location where the crime is committed is of paramount importance in envisaging illegal activity.

According to Shaw and McKay (1969), social disorganization means a swift invasion of a lot of people in and out of a community that produces uncontrolled surroundings that aid crime rather than the aberrant conduct of irregular persons. From the research of Shaw and McKay, there are at the minimum three problems that are common in environs where a crime has been committed. Usually, these problems are bodily destruction, insufficiency, and sophisticated close indigenous beliefs involvement. Shaw and McKay posited that crime is not a result of individuals but rather a reaction by individuals to unusual circumstances. Therefore, social disorganization theory is an essential tool in predicting crime and violence among youth within society.

This theory can be used as a life-threatening framework to understand the relationship that exists between the physical characteristics of the

community and the crimes committed in the urban areas. Some of these characteristics are poverty, built-up insecurity, and ethnic differences, which oftentimes may cause social disorganization and in turn, lead to crime. Social disorganization theory asserts that a crime is committed in an environment because of the dwindling customary communal connections in the society. The moment there is a dwindling in the customary communal connections in the society, there is bound to be social disorganization.

Social disorganization theory has a crucial role to play in issues that have to do with criminal thought which has occurred for a long time and is still relevant in the 21st century. For this theory to uphold its importance, there is a need for constant testing and continuous reevaluation by the experimental confirmation. There should be room for upgrading, in terms of the societal relationships that link the physical appearances of groups of people, in areas like poverty, housing uncertainty, etc. which increases crime rates in socially disorganized societies.

Social disorganization theory recognizes various areas that aid crime in society issues such as lack of family structure and stability of a society, these also affect single-parent families, development and family links. Family disruption can affect the lack of guardianship and supervision that youths should enjoy in terms of their behaviour in society to reduce crime among them. Other factors that can affect crime are high population which will weaken the social controls within the society. Disunity and lack of social controls give youth the leverage to commit crimes.

In recent times, scholars have been able to explain culture by using it to solve neighbourhood crimes, with huge success in terms of positive development. Scholars are using culture as an important tool in the area of communal crime (Anderson, 1999; Fagan and Wilkinson, 1998; Kubrin and Weitzer, 2003; Sampson and Bean, 2006). Also, they have been able to connect the relationship between culture and crime in both organized and disorganized communities (Berg et al., 2012; Kirk and Papachristos, 2011; Sampson and Bartusch, 1998; Stewart and Simons, 2006; Warner, 2003).

Social disorganization theory can be used to aid the effort of government; law enforcement agencies and policymakers to make vital informed decisions with adequate evidence to form strategies that will help to prevent criminal movement in a deprived group of people to make the society a better place for all and sundry.

Causes of insecurity and kidnapping

According to Ohakhire (2010), he classified kidnapping into '3Rs' which are linked with the hunt for ransom, revenge and ritual. Reasons by other researchers for kidnapping in Southwest Nigeria are some of the following:

1. **Poverty:**
This is a universal occurrence though but it is a prevalent problematic issue in Nigeria. Nigeria is known as a country with abundant resources, yet it is ravaged by poverty. Today, Nigeria is among the poorest twenty nations in the world; with over and above seventy per cent of its populace being deprived of basic amenities, with over and above thirty-five per cent existing in hopeless nonexistence (Rural Poverty Portal, 2008). Olulowo et al. (2021) related poverty to crime, the moment people do not have the basic needs of life they become desperate and can go to any length to meet their needs. According to Human Development Indicators (2004), Nigeria out of a total number of 177 countries ranks 151. Therefore, it is believed that poverty in Nigeria is the main cause of kidnapping in the country.

2. **Unemployment:**
This is another cause of insecurity and kidnapping because youths lack employment opportunities in various parts of the country. A lot of graduates are roaming the streets looking for what to eat, they in turn take to kidnapping and other evil vices to make ends meet. This is in line with the popular adage "An idle mind is the devil's workshop" (Ugwuoke, 2011). Linus (2015) also observed that a lot of youths both male and female roam the streets in search of employment in Nigeria. This has led to a lot of frustration among the youths who took to kidnapping as the last resort to their plight.

3. **Corruption, Fraud and Bad Governance:**
These are some of the contributory factors to the incessant insecurity and kidnapping in Nigeria. Corruption, fraud, and poor governance of the Nigerian leaders have escalated kidnapping within the nation. Transparency Perception Index (2019), showed that Nigeria is universally behind when it comes to corruption and fraud. Our government has failed us in terms of safety and security. According to Igbuzor, (2011), the government has failed to give the masses public goods which is due to them. This has led to violence among the populace, especially the youth who are already frustrated about the happenings within the country.

4.   Rich Quick Syndrome

Dodo (2010), observed that most Nigerians are no longer ready to strive to get money, they want the quick way and survival of the fittest is the order of the day. This has led to moral decadence and greed within the society (Inyang and Ubong, 2013). Greed has led many people to do evil things without looking at the consequences, kidnappers torture fellow human beings without having any human feelings for them. Some even go to the extent of maiming and killing others without any remorse.

5.   Inequality, Lack of Fairness and Justice

This factor has led to an increase in insecurity and kidnapping. A selected few are given priority over others, who at the same time lord it over others. Inequality, unfairness and injustice have made some people hardened, thereby taking laws into their own hands. The issue of marginalization has not helped matters at all, the security of the country is in jeopardy because it lacks vibrant phases of societal and nationwide growth in terms of providing simple amenities towards the national security.

6.   Porous Boundaries

According to Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpan-Robaro, (2013), porous borders have given people the liberty to move around without any check on them. This act has led to an increase in insecurity and kidnapping within the country. Arms and ammunitions are brought into the country through these boundaries which are used to perpetrate these evil acts of insecurity and kidnapping. A felonious bunch of criminals come from these boundaries and transport prohibited weaponry to execute murder and kidnapping unrestricted.

Figure 1: Models of Kidnapping for Ransom Prevalent in Nigeria
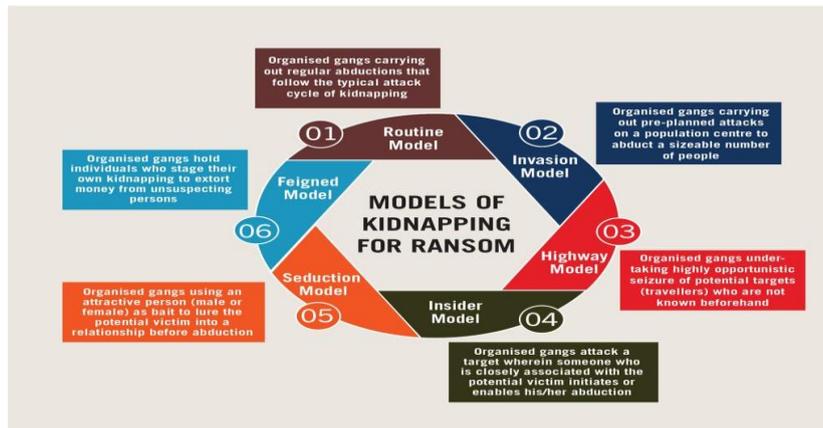
Source: Onuoha, Freedom (2021) 'Threat of Kidnapping in Nigeria: Scale Dimensions, Trends and Drivers.

Humanitarian concerns

Early Warning System (EWS)

This means putting in place a set of capacities that will help to create and publicize prompt and important notice material systems. This is to assist persons, societies and establishments who are faced with hazards to prepare and act appropriately to reduce harm or loss of both lives and properties.EWS means through which people systematically get important and timely information before a disaster occurs to make informed decisions and take immediate action. Early warning has three main goals which are: Prevention, Mitigation, and Preparedness.

The primary aim of EWS is to save lives and properties and help reduce losses of public and private properties during a disaster. A resilient EWS is used for current announcements among the community, tragedy executives, management experts and assistance amenity workers outside the commencement of a tragedy; this facilitates quicker rescue in the consequences of a disaster. The following are elementary rudiments of an early warning system; for the success of the system, each part must function efficiently. These are risk knowledge, monitoring, response capability and warning communication.

- **Risk knowledge**: looks at understanding of dangers and priorities within a period.
- **Monitoring:** deals with a follow-up processing what manner dangers and susceptibilities change over some time.
- **Response capability:** means that each side by side helps to ease the threat the moment tendencies are seen. This can be in the form of pre-season mitigation activities which depends on the warning period.
- **Warning communication:** uses the one-to-one care evidence from those who understand the messages, need them and are willing, to listen to them.

Early warning system for kidnapping in Nigeria

For kidnapping to be reduced in Nigeria, there should be a system that monitors at-risk locations and assesses the probability of violent eruption, escalation, and continuation of geographic diffusion within such dangerous locations. Nigerians have lost trust in the government of the day; this trust must be built back between communities and security agents, and foster closer collaboration with local actors. Those living in rural communities see state security agents as 'predators' rather than 'protectors'. In rural areas, some communities do not have accessible roads, electricity, and mobile telephone services. When these essential infrastructures are not available within the community, the people of that community become vulnerable to attacks from kidnappers.

These people find it challenging to make distress calls to security agencies when the need arises. When security agents are contacted, it is difficult to access the communities because of bad roads or lack of bridges. Government and community leaders need to be trained to identify early warning system to be able to nip conflict situations before it escalates. The government should work with security firms to execute adequate training. Security agencies should have synergy in cooperation, coordination, and collaboration while carrying out their duties. They should operate in silos with role convergence; sharing information and intelligence promptly.

Source of data

This study used secondary sources data from existing literature of scholars' works that centre on insecurity and kidnapping in Southwest Nigeria, online journals, magazines, newspapers, and reports.

Insecurity and kidnapping in southwest Nigeria

In January 2022, it was reported that 1,486 Nigerians were victims of insecurity and kidnapping in Nigeria,915 (62%) people were killed and571 (38%) people were kidnapped (Dataphyte 2022).According to media reports, in Southwest, 264 people were kidnapped between 2018 and May 2020. Osun State had 50 persons kidnapped and Ondo State had 99 persons kidnapped between 2018 and May 2021. These states can therefore be seen as the bedrock for kidnapping in the Southwest. This data shows a drastic upsurge in insecurity and kidnapping in Nigeria.

Figure 2: Prevalence of Kidnap for Ransom across Nigeria's Geo-Political Zones
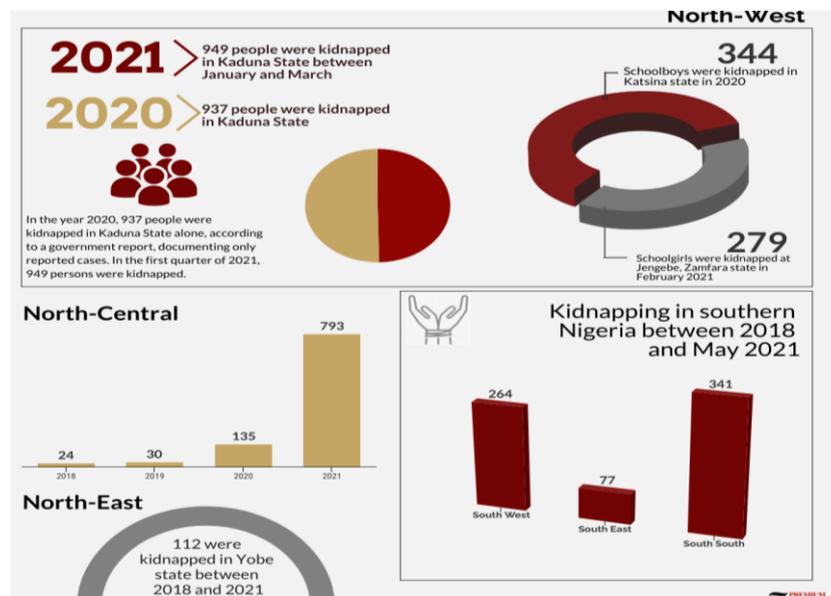
Source: Premium Times Media Reports.

Amotekun was established as a regional security agency by the state governments in the Southwest, to support the law enforcement agency and other safekeeping organizations within the states in helping to fight against kidnappers. Open grazing of cattle is banned in Southwest Nigeria in other to curb clashes between cattle herdsmen and farmers.

Conclusion

Insecurity is a cankerworm that has destroyed human and natural resources alike. This study can be concluded by saying that kidnapping drives away investment, be it foreign or local and leads to insecurity in the society at large, reducing growth and development within the country. The nature of present kidnappings in the Southwest can mostly be connected with the pursuit of ransom, revenge and rituals. Insecurity is a fundamental element that hinders the development of investments in Nigeria. Therefore, it is important to make the security agencies stronger in terms of the safety and protection of lives and properties in the Southwest with whole earnestness and persistence, to create Nigeria fit for human habitation for all and sundry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are some of the recommendations for this study:
- The government should invest in an early warning system to reduce insecurity and kidnapping.
- Poverty and unemployment must be addressed, if the government wants insecurity and kidnapping to be reduced within the country.
- Drastic measures should be taken concerning corruption.
- The government should ensure that lives and properties are safe and well protected.
- There should be strict, just, and fair judicial policy. Criminals should face the consequences of the law.
- Policies to safeguard lives and properties must be put in place.
- Collaboration between the government and various relevant agencies to stop the menace of insecurity and kidnapping in our country Nigeria.

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