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# Ungoverned Spaces and Rural Armed Banditry in the North West Nigeria: A Study of Selected Local Government Areas (2015-2022)

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***Abstract***
*The spate of armed banditry in Nigeria, especially in our rural communities, is unprecedented. This paper therefore examines the contentious issues of ungoverned, space within the context of rural banditry. The study is methodologically structured in qualitative and quantitative methods, whereby data were Warned from textbooks, journals, government publications. These were described, explained and analyzed within the context of the subject matter under investigation. The paper recognized the role played by ethnicity, poverty, revisions bigotry and the rising cost of living as factors that could have led to criminality but it argued that the failure of the Federal Government of Nigeria to perform its constitutional role among other things, is the major reason why the scourge of armed banditry has continued unbated in the North and other parts of the country. Unless government take practical steps to provide the needed security in Nigeria, the fight against banditry in Nigeria would be a mirage.*
***Keywords****: Ungoverned spaces. Rural, Armed banditry, Northwest Nigeria; Local Government*

## 1.0 Introduction

In the last decade, the Nigerian state has witnessed an unprecedented wave of security crisis which some fear could lead to the country being tagged a failed state. This is evident in the torrential space of armed violence and criminality in various parts of the country. For example, in the North-East, Federal Government's precarious counter terrorism strategy, has not resolve the menace of Boko Haram as the area remains patently under the control of the sect (Okoli, 2017a, Zenn, 2018). In the North-Central, herdsmen, militancy have plunged the region into dire humanitarian crisis (Okoli and Ugwu, 2019). The picture is not greener in the South-South, South-East and West where the activities of Niger-Delta militants. Indigenous (People of Biafra (IPOB) and Amotekun respectively have overpowered the security architecture and brought it to a near grand zero level-. These activities have led to incalculable consequences throughout the nation, especially in terms of human cost. According to reports, casualty associated with herdsmen militancy was put at 1,229 deaths between 2012 and 2013 (GT1, 2015); while there was a total of 67 clashes between farmers and herdsmen between 2007 and 2011 (Ogayi, 2019). At present, Boko Haram insurgency and herdsmen militancy have seriously challenged the security of the Nigerian State. On Sunday unknown gun men sporadically shot and killed 64 worshippers in two Catholic Church in Ogun state. Then the breaking of the Kuje prison. Despite government's weak disposition, a new phenomenon-banditry has emerged, especially in the North-West which used to be the bastion of security and stability in the North and this has had an untold hardship on rural dwellers.

Studies have been carried by many scholars in respect of the security challenge in Nigeria. Some of these studies which were basically normative explained in several ways why there was so much conflict and criminality in Nigeria. These studies have focused on ethnicity and religion (Solawu, 2010; Ochonu, 2014; Hassan, 2017 and Nwoke and Atuma, 2020), or. have looked at poverty and bad governance as a major causative agent of conflicts in Nigeria (Oarhe and Oyibo, 2010; Yaghoyaju, 2019 and Wonjawei, 2020). Other studies have also focused on the interplay of external factors and the Boko Haram as the area remains patently and Husairu and Sian, 2018). These studies were at best nonnative and focused on operational level which did not provide any policy direction on how conflict conflagration arising from armed banditry could be reduced in Nigeria. More so, what is perceived by these scholars, as causes of crisis in Nigeria are actually the consequences of bad governance which the

Nigerian State has not resolved for decades. The failure of the "federal government of Nigeria to fulfilled effectively fundamental obligations for which it was established, -protection of the lives and properties of the citizens have created a security vacuum which criminal gangs and all forms of bandits have hurriedly exploited. The inability of scholars to recognize this gap is a major task which this study seeks to fulfill. Hence, the title Ungoverned space and armed banditry in Nigeria, especially in the rural communities''. This paper therefore examines armed banditry in Nigeria as a product of the inability of the governments, at all levels, to provide the necessary security' for Nigerian citizens.

Banditry refers to the incidences of armed robbery or allied violent crimes such as kidnapping, cattle rustling and village or market raids. It usually involves the use offered or threat to that effect to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill (Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014). In recent times, rural banditry has assumed unprecedented high proportion, manifesting in several forms of violence in Nigeria and other rural communities in Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto and even Niger States. Reports of fatalities in these states are alarming. For example, in December 2019 alone, the fatalities rate was put at 38 deaths in Niger, Kebbi and Katsina States (WANEP, 2019). In total, the Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Abubakar, who spoke on behalf of the committee which was established to resolve the banditry issue in Zamfara State revealed that between June 2011 and May 2012, a total of 6,319 people including women and children lost their lives to bandits (Thursday Newspaper, 2019). Further reports also revealed that over 10,000 cattle were lost, while 2,688 hectares of farmlands and 10,000 houses, 147,800 vehicles and motorcycles and as estimated 4,000 people were internally displaced in Shiroro Local Government Area in Niger State (Thisday, 2019; Guardian, 2019). The multifaceted layers of criminality involved, and recurrent nature of armed banditry have also informed scholarly interrogations which are sharply divided as to the factors that drive this phenomenon. While some believe banditry is a by-product of the herder - farmer conflict due to the adverse effects of climate change (Shalangwa, 2013; Gambari, 2018; Bashir, Azlizan and BtYusof, 2018 and Ahamadu, 2019), other stressed factors such as illicit artisanal gold mining involving foreigners and local collaborators (WANEP, 2019), the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (Kuwu, 2016; WANEP, 2019), None of these has any predictive relevance in that they do not provide any policy direction on how the problem can be resolved.

The inability of government to provide a cure for the disease the government itself needs to be examined. This has become imperative because unlike Boko Haram and Herdsmen vs. Farmers conflict with no clear leadership structure the government can identify their administrative heads and enter into some kind of negotiation. In doing this, the government may dose the tension. Banditry has no operational command structure through which the federal government can engage for any meaningful discussion. Their patterns include, village raids, highway robbery, kidnapping and cattle rustling. Their occurrences have been perennial in the hinterlands of Zamfara and Kaduna States (Okoli and Ugwu, 2019). It is this incessant criminality in the face of federal government ineptitude that has motivated the writing of this paper.

## 2.0 Literature review

Literature on the nature and incidence of rural banditry falls sharply into a number of perspectives. The first perspective is that of farmer-herder conflict, which narrates the volatile security context and the declining state's capacity to govern (Sheltima & Tar, 2008; Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016). This narrative is strong and compelling owing to the increased hostilities between herders and farmers as well as the dysfunctional state security architecture. According to Onunaiju (2020), the dialectics of farmer-herder conflicts have metamorphosed into banditry. According to him, the herders, who are located chiefly in the forest and mountains have turned into criminals, engaging in armed robbery and kidnapping for ransom as a major trade (Onunaiju, 2020). Although there is compelling evidence of the state's incapability, the herder-farmer crisis is an age long one driven by competition and struggle over access, control and use of lan^and water resources (Ogayi, 2019). This competition is emboldened by environmental resource scarcity, demographic pulls, climate change and increase in human population which have put intense pressure on the environmental resources. The farmers need land to grow their agricultural products while the herders need to gaze their cattle. Because land as a commodity is scarce in relation to demand, competition and struggle ensure and this usually results in violent conflicts. The

narrative on the nexus between this phenomenon and banditry is a spillover of armed herdsmen militancy (Egwu, 2016).

The second perspective emphasizes the occurrence the incidence as a[1] disguised terrorism that bears the trappings of Neo-jihadism (1CP, 2015; SBM1, 2015; CWI, 2016 and Omilusi, 2016). This perspective resonates with the popular local cynical anecdotes to the effect that such violence represents the calculated effort to further Islamize the wider Northern Nigeria with the Middle Belt region as the focal target (Okoli and Ugwu, 2019). This perspective has been rightly rejected on grounds that criminality cannot be used as a weapon of politicization. Thus far, it has been observed that banditry has no religious or ethnic identity as regards the victims. As such, it cannot be an instrument for Islamization of Nigeria,

The third perspective is a narrative which accounts for the problem from the standpoint of ethno-communal violence complicated by the fault lines of Identity conflict (Blench & Dendo, 2005). Again, trying to stereotype banditry is anecdotal. Yes, the Northwest is dominated by a particular ethno-religious group but that does not explain entirely the prevalence of the phenomenon. The bandits may be dominated by Hausa/Fulanis but their targeted victims are predominantly also people of this same ethnic origin.

The fourth perspective simply sees banditry as nothing more than criminality. This perspective sees the marauding nomads as aggressors who are motivated by wholly criminal intents (McGregor, 2014; Olayoku, 2014). Connected to this criminality is the high rate of poverty and social inequality in the northwest region. Resulting from this deprivation, the unemployed youths take to banditry for survival. The fifth perspective is a narrative that sees the international dimension to the problem (Ononuiju, 2020; Jimoh, 2020; Okoli, 2021). This perspective underscores the transnational dimension of this phenomenon. According to Okoli (2021). There seems to be a Transnational complexion of the ongoing banditry. Globalization has led to transnationalization of crime. This obtains where poor border governance amidst 'visa on arrival' policy of government is fastly aiding illegal migration and smuggling of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) with relative ease and impunity. Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim (2013) summarized the factors that drive banditry in northern Nigeria as cattle rustling, illicit artisanal gold mining, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SA1AAR youth unemployment, inequality and poverty, weak governance and security capacities.

Resource conflict occurs at the vortex of internecine conflict between agricultural crop growers and transhumance pastoralists and is linked to the issues of cattle rustling and rural banditry, the basis of the conflict itself can be found in the scarcity of land and water resources. The scarcity arises from a number of factors, including changes in agrarian^ relations, climate change, and environmental decline. The tendency for competition among different occupational groups over scarce resources further exacerbates the tension. Such competition tends to pitch different communal groups into deadly confrontations, especially where occupational and communal boundaries overlap (Egwu, 2016:32).

No doubt, herder-farmer relations have been severed by environmental scarcity which has intensified transhumance of nomads hence, violence. The unhealthy rivalry between the two occupational groups may be responsible for banditry as it relates to cattle rustling. But then, beyond cattle rustling, can we rightly connect Herders-Farmers crisis with other forms of banditry? We early do not subscribe to this narrative. The linkage is simply narrow and anecdotal. The unacceptability of this narrative derives impetus from the contemporary context of banditry. Herders-Farmers conflicts have been more intense and prevalent in the North central and southern states whilst banditry has been more pronounced in northwestern states of Nigeria. Logically, it follows that the where herder-farmer clashes are pervasive should be the hotbed for rural banditry. Incidentally, this is not so. So, the nexus is simply weak.

## 3.0 Theoretical foundation

The establishment of an appropriate theoretical frame is imperative for any political sciences-oriented discourse. Not only because of its explanatory potency, but also because it provides a guide to the understanding of the entire work. In this regard, the paper has adopted the Ungoverned Space Theory (UST) as its analytical framework. The thrust of the theory is that, governability deficits in weak and fragile states are conducive to the territorial usurpation by anti-states forces (Lenshie, 2020). Put simply,

the prevalence and existence of ungoverned, under-governed or poorly governed spheres in such states creates enabling condition for emergence of non-state elements that are often inclined to compete with or contest the authority of the state (Okoli, 201 9a). In essence, the ungoverned space theory suggests an existence of a state with government but not governance. In other words, it is a weak or failed state. Admittedly,

> *A weak, failed, or collapsed state performs none of its governance functions effectively in a given area, freeing illicit actors to pursue threatening activities... All ungoverned areas have the potential to become comprehensive safe havens, but not all of them do, those ungoverned areas that do become safe havens, many are exploited not by transnational illicit actors but by groups whose activities and interests remain strictly local (OUSD, 2007:19).*

Organized criminals and insurgents build safe havens and conduct illicit governance within the ungoverned territories (Ojo, 2020). In the absence of firm authoritative control by the state, the affected populations are systematically, enmeshed in the illicit governance systems of the anti-state forces. In such a scenario, he authority of the state is virtually subverted and supplanted by the irregular government entrenched by an occupying criminal or insurgent group (Olayoku, 2014).

The essence of ungoverned space theory is to show that contrary to opinion of some scholars who have pinned criminality, violence and conflict in Nigeria as a function of poverty, ethnicity and religion, these social vices are a consequence of the inability of government to exercise its constitutional authority of protecting the lives and property Nigerians. Thus, organized criminals and insurgents build safe havens and conduct illicit governance within the ungoverned territories (Ojo. 2020). In the absence of a firm Authoritative control by the state, the affected citizens are symmetrically enmeshed in the illicit governance systems of the anti-state forces. In such a scenario, the authority of the state is virtually subverted and supplanted by the irregular government entrenched by occupying criminal or insurgent groups (Olayoku, 2014).

The relevance of this theory' to this study is that the phenomenon of banditry cannot be properly understood in isolation from the socio-politico ecological context of Nigeria's internal security crisis. The underlying factor in this regard the country's weak state structure that is patently lacking in both legally and capability to governed (Okoli, 2019a). It is this singular factor, more than anything else that has given rise to the worsening trajectories of violent Conflicts and criminality of which the rise of armed banditry is but a necessary dimension. There is sufficient evidence in the swathes of scarcely governed hinterlands, forestlands, borderlands and international frontiers where anti-state actors and groups have carved a niche for themselves (Albert, 2018, Okoli and Ogayi, 2018). Instances a include hut not limited, to the creeks and River lines of the Niger-Delta, which have been under the competitive control of the region's various militant groups, the portion of forested landscapes a borderline of the embattled Lake Chad frontier in the country's North Eastern region which have been occupied by local insurgents and their international cohorts (Okoli, 2017).

The ungoverned space theory (UST) s an analytical framework is a post 9/11(2001) paradigm which aims at explaining the spatio-territorial dimension of a national security challenge, especially in fragile or weak states (Rabasa, 2007). Studies of ungoverned territories have been and remain strongly b state failure literature that emerged in the 1990s (Taylor, 2013). In Nigeria, ungoverned territories have laid a favourable geographical condition for the germination and growth of criminal activities. The theory is thus, necessary for this study for two reasons: First, it provide a clear guide to our understanding of banditry to only in the North-Western part of the country but to the whole of Nigeria. Second, its predictive relevance provides a clue as to how the issue of banditry could be resolved. In this way, the theory provides a necessary and sufficient explanation to the issue under discussion. It is for this reason that the theory is adopted as a framework of analysis.

## 4.0 Research method

The study is methodologically structured in both qualitative and quantitative methods, data from the qualitative method were largely drawn from textbook, journal articles. Government publications and internet sources. These were described discussed and textually analysed. The later goes beyond attaching themes to text in providing deep theoretically informed conceptually organized arguments for

why the social world is organized the way it is (Baztraa, 2020). The adoption of the textual analysis is informed by the fact that it helped us to comprehensively make meaning out of the contemporary internal crisis in Nigeria as evidenced with armed banditry.

The quantitative method involved the use of structured questionnaire administered to sample population of 800 people drawn from selected local governments of the most affected states. These states include; Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara. Three local governments were selected from each of these states. They include, Chikun, Kachia and Kajuru (Kaduna state), Batsari, Safana and Katsina Metropolis (Katsina state), Illeca, Rabah and Sabon Birni (Sokoto state) and Bukura, Birnin Magaji and TSafe (Zamfara state). The same was structured into three categories. Category A was made up of farmers who appear to have been the most affected. Category B was made of traditional dealers/local government Chairmen and Category C was made of non-indigenes, but who had stayed in each of the local government for more than 15 years. The choice of these category of persons in based on the assumption that they stand a better chance of providing adequate knowledge on the activities of banditry. A five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Undecided (UN). For research assistants drawn from the four states considered were employed to distribute and retained the questionnaire. A non-parametric statistical tool; chi-square ($x^2$) will be used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Whereby $X^2 = \sum \frac{of-(ef)^2}{ef}$

Where:

$x^2$ - Chi-square
$\sum$ - Summation sign
of - Observed frequency
ef - Expected frequency
\- - Division sign

It should be noted that of 800 questionnaires that were administered to the sampled population 20 were either mutilated or not returned. Thus, the rate of responses was 97.5%. Details of the responses is as shown on the Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Showing as sample**

| Items | Kaduna | Katsina | Sokoto | Zamfara | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Farmers | 50 | 50 | 50 | 45 | 195 |
| Traditional leaders | 56 | 44 | 52 | 43 | 195 |
| Business men/women | 50 | 45 | 50 | 50 | 195 |
| Security | 50 | 50 | 50 | 45 | 195 |
| Total | | | | | 780 |

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

## 5.0 Data Presentation

Table 1 shows the selected states in Northern states

Ho: There is no significant relationship between ungoverned spaces and armed banditry in the Northwest region of Nigeria.

Hi: There is significant relationship between ungoverned spaces and armed banditry in the Northwest region or Nigeria.

**Table 2: Showing responses to hypothesis**

| States | Responses | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | D | UN | Total |
| Kaduna | 85 | 40 | 70 | 195 |
| Katsina | 120 | 50 | 25 | 195 |
| Sokoto | 140 | 20 | 35 | 195 |
| Zamfara | 136 | 34 | 25 | 195 |
| Total | 481 | 144 | 155 | 780 |

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

From Table 2 above 780 questionnaires were retrieved from the four (4) states considered. Of this number 481 (61.7%) agreed, 144 (18.4) disagreed while 155 (19.9%) were undecided to the fact that there was a significant relationship between ungoverned spaces and armed banditry in the Northwestern region of Nigeria. A breakdown indicates that in Kaduna state, 85 (43.5%) agreed, 40(20.5%) disagreed and 70(35.9%) were undecided. In Katsina state. 120(61.5%) agreed, 50(25.4%) disagreed while 25(12.8%) were undecided. In Sokoto, state, 140(71.8%) agreed. 20(10.6%) disagree while 35(17.9%) were undecided. In Zamfara state 136(69.7%) agreed, 34(17.4%), disagreed while 25(12.8%) were undecided.

We can now use the non-parametric statistical tool $x^2$ to test our hypothesis an indicated on the table below.

| **of** | **ef** | **of-ef** | **$(of-ef)^2$** | **$\frac{(of-ef)^2}{Ef}$** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 85 | 120.25 | -35.25 | 1242.6 | .10.33 |
| 40 | 36 | 4 | 16 | 0.4 |
| 70 | 38.75 | 31.25 | 976.6 | 25.2 |
| 120 | 120.25 | -0.25 | 0.0625 | 0.0005 |
| 50 | 36 | 14 | 196 | 5.4 |
| 25 | 38.75 . | -13.75 | 189.1 | 4.88 |
| 140 | 120.25 | 19.75 | 390.1 | 3.24 |
| 20 | 36 | -16 | 256 | 7.1 |
| 35 | 38.75 | -3.75 | 14.1 | 0.36 |
| 136 | 120.25 | 15.95 | 248.1 | 2.06 |
| 34 | 36 | 2 | 4 | 0.1 |
| 25 | 38.75 | -13.25 | 175.6 | 4.53 |
| | | | | **$\sum$63.6005** |

$X^2 = 63.6005$
We now work out the degree of freedom (df)
df = (C-1)(R-1)
df = (3-1) (4-1)
df = (2) (3)
df = 6

The critical tabulated chi-square value at 0.05 level of significance at 6df = 12.6.
Apply the decision rule of chi-square; that where the calculated chi-square ($x^2$) value is greater than the critical or tabulated value, the null ($H_o$) hypothesis is rejected and the alternative (Hi) accepted or vice versa. We notice that the calculated $x^2$ value of 63.6005 is greater than the critical value of 12.6. So, we reject ($H_o$) and accept (Hi). We conclude therefore that there is a significant relationship between ungoverned spaces and armed banditry in the Northwestern region of Nigeria.

## 6.0 Discussion of findings

There is no doubt as the findings shows, the spate of banditry and other forms of criminality in the northwestern region of Nigeria is a function of the inability of the federal and state governments to asserts their control its territory. There are competing narratives as to the cause of banditry in the Northwest region of Nigeria. These perspectives include but not limited to ethno-religion crisis (Canci and Odukuya, 2016).

Akpan, (2011), Nakande (2011), Obatern and Omonobi (2010) and others have cited the emergence of Boko Haram (Alaneme, 2011, Warner, 2018 and Nwagboso, 2018), herdsmen militancy (Ogayi, 2019, Amina, 2018). While these perspectives cannot be underestimated, they are in most cases the consequences of the federal government failure to assert her constitutional responsibility of protecting the lives and property of the Nigerian citizens. The abysmal failure is evidenced in several areas.

**(i) Niger-Delta Crisis**

The linkage between resources (oil) conflict is exemplified in the Nigeria-Delta region of Nigeria. Admittedly, before the discovery of oil in 1956, the mainstay economy of the people in the region was fishing and farming. These occupations have been dislocated by oil exploitation and exploration. While the state and her associated multinational corporations engage in their unholy roguery, the people and environment are left in a rather somber condition. This is hard to understand given that there are extant laws that guarantee the protection of the region and its people, would be better conjectured.

This pathetic situation partly explains the perennial conflicts and crises in the region. Some observers (Terminiski, 2003; Akpan, 2011; Wale, 2009 and Anarcio, 2009) have correctly pointed but that the role of oil in conflicts and crisis in the Niger-Delta is paradoxical. This is because while the multinational oil companies and the Nigerian state enjoy the heremic accruing from oil exploitation, the communities are persuaded to endure its consequences such as oil spillage, gas flaring and several forms of ecological disasters (Ayodele & Sotola, 2008; Akpan, 2011). Therefore, government's inability to assert her constitutional power in resolving the Niger-Delta crises is squarely to blame.

**(ii) Unregulated Agrarian and Mining Sectors**

The issue of unregulated agrarian and mining sectors also articulates in this line and is also pertinent (Ogbonnaya, 2020). The prevalence of farmer-herder crisis, cattle rustling and localized raids in Nigeria, over the years, indicates a failure of governance in respect of the rural agrarian, and extractive economy (Bangu and Smith, 2017). With incidences of communal and sectarian conflicts and insurgency, sufficient chaotic atmosphere where criminal bandits capitalized on such as vacuum of governance to perpetuate acts of criminality. Under such circumstances, local brigands in the North-Western and Central parts of Nigeria, rings of bandits and militias have taken over the chunks of hinterland communities of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Plateau and Benue States. In the aforementioned contested spaces, there are pockets of sanctuaries and enclaves where insurgents and bandits wield near exclusive territorial control, constituting themselves into a sort of parallel government (Onwuzuruigbo, 2020). In such places, the authority of the Nigerian state has become endangered as government at all levels struggle rather precariously to resume authoritative territorial control (Okoli, 2021). It is in this context that the rise and reign of crime lords and bandits, who contest territorial control with state

**(iii) Porous borders**

The porosity of Nigeria's borderlines and international frontiers, as well as the existence of disparate militia groups in the hardly governed country side, have created an abiding enabling atmosphere for arms and drugs trafficking, often resulting in the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and substances (WANEP, 2020). Like the, under-governed hinterland, the ungoverned border lands have also provided an avenue for violent organized such as cattle rustling and kidnapping for ransom, as well as market mine and village raids (Okoli and Lenshie, 2018). For example, the main weapons used in Nigeria's banditry and farmer-herder violence and their supply routes include factory produced small arms manufactured in Europe, East Asia, the Middle East and North America. Because of the porous nature of our borders, there is the prevalence of Chinese type 56-27 62 x 39mm assault rifles and the major smuggling routes for these weapons include Libya, Turkey and Cote d'ivore and from corrupt government security personnel, gun importers have made their way into Nigeria (Jimoh, 2020).

## Conclusion

The predominant thesis in this paper has been that the Federal Government failure to take charge of its constitutional responsibility-in bane on the security architecture of Nigeria, which has manifested in several ways including but not limited to armed banditry. Many scholars have argued that the real cause of armed banditry could be explained in terms of internal tissue and external pressure. The former being associated with ethnic, and tribal sentiments, religious rivalry, poverty, etc. While these may be considered as incidences, they do not display any predictive relevance. They reflect at best the failure of government to take a firm grip on its sovereignty. There is available evidence of this failure as

reflected in Nigeria's porous borders, Niger Delta crisis, ungoverned Northern geographical space and illegal mining. Available data from extent literature on cross-border crimes in West Africa such as summon trafficking, illegal mining, livestock poaching and banditry have shown indisputably that, *free-flow of arms into Nigeria* has contributed both to increase in the number of violent conflicts and also their intensity. In Nigeria today, political leaders and government officials including law enforcement officials have accused migrants from other West African countries of various crimes. There are cases of criminal violence in cities and urban centres such as Jalingo, Jimeta, Yola, Gashua, Dikwa. Gembu, Damatura and Maiduguri are increasingly linked with the presence of immigrants (Adetula, 2015). The fundamental question which we need to address is how did these immigrants get into Nigeria? Again, it boils to the fact that the Federal Government has failed to provide the needed security. Unless the Federal Government of Nigeria rise to the occasion and provide the expected security, criminals such as armed banditry will continue in Nigeria.

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