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AN EVALUATION OF THE BANDITRY REDUCTION STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE KATSINA STATE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA (2015-2023)

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Abstract

Banditry has posed significant challenges in Katsina, characterised by kidnappings, cattle rustling, and violent attacks on rural communities. The government has adopted a multi-faceted approach to address these issues, resulting in a reported reduction of banditry incidents. Key strategies include enhanced collaboration among security agencies, community engagement initiatives, and legislative advocacy for the establishment of state police. Socio-economic interventions aimed at education and community rehabilitation have also been prioritised to mitigate the root causes of banditry. Despite these efforts, challenges persist, as bandits have adapted their tactics, targeted remote areas and employing more violent methods. To investigate this phenomenon, the paper used both primary (focus group discussion and structured interview) and secondary sources of data collection, and qualitative method of data analysis. The study underscores the need for continuous adaptation of strategies, including the integration of technology and community involvement, to effectively combat the evolving nature of banditry in Katsina State. Overall, while progress has been made, the ongoing threat of banditry necessitates sustained and innovative approaches to ensure long-term security and stability in the region.

Key words: Banditry, bandit, security, insecurity, strategy

Introduction

The security and progress of Nigeria have been seriously threatened by the plague of banditry. The hotspots that have received the most attention recently are Kaduna, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto and Zamfara. In Katsina state banditry has had devasted its people with over thousands of fatality figures, and about 500,000 displaced persons has continued to climb, and it has taken the form of shooting and murdering, cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, rape, torching entire villages, and stealing of valuables (Ladan & Mutawalli, 2021).

The remote and mostly pastoral communities in Katsina state have endured years of neglect, depriving them of the infrastructure, education, and other necessities for the diversification of new means of subsistence that are not openly reliant on natural resources (Bello & Kazibwe, 2024). Internal conflict and the loss of governmental control of the forests have made it possible for small guns to proliferate, greatly increasing the prevalence of banditry and its effects. Poorly policed country borders serve as safe havens for robbers both inside the state and in neighbouring nations like the Niger Republic (Bello, 2023).

To stop this carnage, Katsina state government from 2015 to 2023 adopted various strategies such as collaboration and supports to security agencies and other development and empowerment initiatives directed at addressing the deep-rooted structural causes of the situation.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to evaluate the banditry-reduction strategies launched and implemented by the Katsina State Government from 2015 to 2023. To find out about the steps taken by the Katsina state government to reduce banditry and to explain why banditry has persisted despite all the efforts to stop it.

Methodology

This paper uses the data collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from face-to-face semi structured expert interviews and focus group discussion using purposive sampling technique. The face-to-face respondents include two academics, two traditional leaders, two security personnel, two local farmers' group leaders, and two local herders' group leaders that are residents of Katsina state. For the focus group, the paper analysed the data from two set of FGD, each containing eight individuals totalling of sixteen local individuals drawn from the three senatorial zones. The Katsina north and south have five respondents each while Katsina central have six respondents respectively to ensure representation. Each group contained two females each, and the respondents were selected using their experience, victimhood, and knowledge of the situation. The secondary data used included published Katsina state government documents containing the documented information of the strategies and various efforts to curbing insecurity in the state, journal articles accessed online using Scispace AI tool and google search engine and other relevant reports. My search for data was guided by an inclusion and exclusion criteria where themes related to banditry, armed bandits, herders/farmers conflicts Katsina state government's response, community-based approach to banditry were included in the search. Any issue in relation to bandit's attacks outside Katsina state, any issue that is beyond 2023 in relation to banditry were excluded from my coverage and analysis The data was analysed qualitatively.

Conceptual Clarifications: Banditry and Bandit

Banditry is the practice of engaging in criminal acts, such as robbery, theft, and violence, by organised groups or individuals who exploit their victims for personal gain (Utibe &Ogundiya, 2024). It is commonly understood as criminal activities earned out by organised groups or individuals who use violence, coercion, and illicit means to achieve their objectives. These criminal activities often include robbery, theft, extortion, kidnapping, smuggling, or other forms of predation (Abraham &Sakariyau, 2023).

These criminal activities are perpetrated by criminal elements called bandits, which are organised groups that operate with a degree of structure, coordination, and division of labour (Osasona, 2022). These groups may have leaders, hierarchical structures, and specific roles assigned to their members (Mungadi et al., 2020). Bandits employ violence, coercion, intimidation, or the threat thereof to achieve their objectives (Vande, 2023). This includes the use of physical force against victims, psychological tactics, or the display of weapons to instil fear and compliance (Vande, 2023). Bandits often target vulnerable individuals or groups, such as travelers, merchants, or rural communities (Osasona, 2022). They exploit the weaknesses or lack of protection of their victims to carry out criminal activities, such as robbery, kidnapping, or extortion (Mungadi et al., 2020).

Banditry often thrives in regions with weak governance, ineffective law enforcement, or areas undergoing political unrest (Abraham &Sakariyau, 2023). These conditions provide fertile ground for bandits to operate with relative impunity.

Causes of Banditry in Nigeria

Banditry in Nigeriais a complex issue with multiple contributing factors. Understanding the causes can help shed light on the underlying dynamics that fuel this phenomenon (Akinyetun, 2021). Several elements have been suggested as driving forces of banditry in Nigeria, particularly in the country's northwest region. Some socio-existential variable that characterise the region's interior, as well as its borders, are the drivers of banditry in northern Nigeria (Ahmad & Jamilu, 2022).

Widespread poverty, unemployment, and lack of economic opportunities in northwestern regions have created an environment conducive to banditry (Adenike, 2021). Marginalized communities with limited access to education, healthcare, and basic services have become vulnerable to recruitment by criminal elements (Shrestha, 2021).Weak governance, corruption, and inadequate security infrastructure in remote areas has further create a breeding ground for criminal activities (Ewusi&Ngange, 2020). Similarly, inadequate law enforcement presence, porous borders, and limited resources for maintaining law and order are contributing to the proliferation of banditry (Idris &Tutumlu, 2022).

Furthermore, competition over natural resources, such as land, water, and minerals, can escalate into conflicts involving banditry (Schellens& Diemer, 2020). In Northern regions where access to resources is limited or disputed, armed groups may resort to banditry as a means of survival or to gain control over valuable assets (Schellens& Diemer, 2020). As Nigeria is characterized by diverse ethnic and religious groups, and tensions between these groups can fuel banditry (Agbiboa&Okem, 2011). In some instances, criminal elements exploit these divisions to mobilize support or justify their actions, exacerbating conflicts along ethnic and religious lines (Agbiboa&Okem, 2011).

Inadequate access to justice, weak dispute resolution mechanisms, and a breakdown of traditional authority structures undermine the rule of law (Selita, 2019). This creates an environment where bandits can operate with impunity, eroding trust in institutions and contributing to a cycle of violence (Agbiboa&Okem, 2011). Regional instability, cross-border criminal networks, and transnational organized crime, and arms smugglings contribute to the growth of banditry (Bello, 2023). The movement of arms, drugs, and illicit goods across borders can facilitate the activities criminal groups and fuel insecurity within Nigeria.

Availability of small and light weapons, and other interrelated factors, has often worked to the advantage of armed bandits (Sa'ad &Idakwoji, 2021).

Forms of banditry, its nature, dynamics, and operation patterns in Katsina State of Northern Nigeria

The nature and pattern of armed banditry in Katsina state has become so pervasive that only a few residents that travel or live within border communities can claim not to have suffered its impact (Osasona, 2022). The phenomenon has taken various forms in various places which may include waylaying victims on the highways and on transit points; storming and sacking of whole villages; stealing hundreds of cattle; settling in villages and collecting taxes; and extortion on village routes (Osasona, 2022). Losses could range from monetary, material, valuables livestock and above all, human resources (Ojo, Oyewole, & Aina, 2023).

In most cases, by their nature, armed bandits often live in ungoverned or under-governed spaces, where government presence is mostly limited or absent (Ojo, Oyewole, & Aina, 2023). These include remote areas and forest enclaves, which are used as hiding places to plan and execute attacks (Onwuzuruigbo, 2020), such an environment provides bandits with opportunities for operational advantage. Accordingly, armed bandits often operate in rural

settings, such that their attacks, kidnappings, and cattle rustlings, lootings, among other criminal activities, are carried out in, from and against villages (Abdulyakeen, 2021). Their operational control can therefore revolve around rural and border communities, and uninhabited or less populated spots along major roads or waterways (Ojo, Aina & Oyewole, 2024). In this manner, the primary victims of armed banditry are innocent citizens residing in or traveling along remote parts of the state (Onwuzuruigbo, 2020).

Although armed bandits generally live and act in anonymity, they commit violent crimes in the open (Ojo, Aina & Oyewole, 2024). This reflects a tactic employed by common criminals, who consider theft as a means to an end, which is often defined in private terms (Ojo, Aina & Oyewole, 2024). Although the operational, tactical, and strategic roles of individual members of armed groups may be shaped by gender differences, the growing sexual diversity of armed conflicts and criminal violence can no longer be ignored. By their nature, women are more suitable, employed and sometimes restricted to intelligence, counterintelligence, and logistics.
The mode of operation of the bandits could constitute an obstacle to preventive measures that could have been put in place by the law enforcement agents (Ladan & Mutawalli, 2021). This is because these bandits engage in one-time raids and follow a 'nomadic' (or slash and bum) form of appropriation. Once the territory covered by the bandits expands so that they incur high travel costs, they find it economically advantageous to form rebel government where looting is converted to taxation.Instead of the anxiety of random looting, people suffer the certainty of steady taxation (Aina & Ojo, 2024).

Strategies implemented by the Katsina state government towards reducing banditry
The Katsina State Government in Nigeria has implemented various measures to address the issue of banditry and improve security within the state. Some Key measures taken by the state government include:

Dialogue and Reconciliation
The government has engaged in dialogue and reconciliation efforts with repentant bandits (Bello, 2019). This involves encouraging bandits to surrender their weapons, renounce violence, and reintegrate into society. According to one respondent, state government have provided opportunities for rehabilitation, skills training, and education for former bandits to discourage them from returning to criminal activities (Personal interview, 2023, June 7). The State government has convened a reconciliatory meeting at Runka in Safana LGA where bandits were called upon to stop all criminal activities to ensure the security of lives and properties in not only Safana but also other LGAs that were affected by banditry and cattle rustling (Aina, 2023; Bello, 2019).

Following series of reconciliatory meetings with the bandits the State government granted amnesty to them and arranged a peace deal where the bandit leader Buharin Daji symbolically handed over his gun to Governor Masari at a gathering in Kankara, Kankara LGA on 16th January 2016 (Abdullahi, 2020). The other bandits also handed over weapons that include 47 AK47 assault rifles, 267 locally made guns, and 57 other brands of weapons (Abdullahi, 2020).

The State government has purchased one Hilux vehicle and fifty motorcycles which were given to the ex-bandit leader and ex-rustlers and selected cattle rustlers for the purpose of patrolling the vast terrain of the Rugu and other forest areas (Abdullatif, 2021). This forest patrol is to ensure that cattle rustling is effectively contained and to confront the few bandits that still engage in stealing cattle (Aina, 2023). The State government has also built health

care facilities such as dispensaries for the benefits of Fulani herdsmen. Some dams located at the Rugu Forest were rehabilitated to provide water to the cattle belonging to the Fulani communities (Abdullahi, 2021). This was beside provision of some monthly allowances to the leaders of the ex-bandits for fuelling the car and the motorcycles (Abdullahi, 2021). The State government carried out public enlightenment programmes on the media with the objectives of informing the people of the eight frontline LGAs that an amnesty programme and peace deal has been organized and that the vigilante group and local people should not attack the ex-bandits. The ex-bandits should be allowed to settle within the local communities if they wish to do so and carry out their daily activities without any fear of danger (Danjuma, 2020).

Community Engagement

The government has focused on community engagement and mobilization to enhance security (Abdullatif, 2021). This includes the establishment of community-based vigilante groups, collaboration with local leaders, and encouraging citizens to report suspicious activities. Community-driven initiatives aim to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for security within local communities. Community engagement is a crucial aspect of the measures implemented by the Katsina State Government to curb banditry within the state. It involves actively involving and mobilizing local communities in the security efforts and creating a sense of ownership and responsibility for maintaining peace and security.

One respondent asserted that, "government encourages the formation and support of community-based vigilante groups" (Personal Interview, 2023, June 6). These groups consist of residents who are trained, equipped, and empowered to assist in maintaining security within their communities. The state government also recognises the influence and role of traditional and community leaders in the provision of security, and because of this, it engages with local leaders, such as village heads, religious leaders, and community elders, to seek their support and involvement in addressing banditry. These leaders play a vital role in mobilising their communities, mediating conflicts, and promoting peacebuilding initiatives (Personal Interview 2024, June 7).

The Katsina state government conducts public awareness campaigns to educate communities about the dangers of banditry, the importance of security, and the need for collective action (Abdullatif, 2021). These campaigns involve town hall meetings, community dialogues, radio programmes, and other platforms to disseminate information and promote community participation in security efforts. Community members are encouraged to actively participate in intelligence gathering and reporting of suspicious activities. The government establishes confidential reporting mechanisms, hotlines, or dedicated platforms where residents can share information with security agencies (Katsina State Government Budget Presentation Speech, 2023). According to one participant, this collaborative approach strengthens the flow of information and helps security forces to proactively respond to potential threats. Promoting community-based conflict resolution and mediation processes to prevent and address conflicts that may fuel banditry (FGD 2023, June 8).

Additionally, one participant from my FGD maintained that Local Peace Committees or platforms are established to mediate disputes, resolve grievances, and foster peaceful coexistence across all Local Government Areas. These initiatives according to him contribute to reducing tensions and addressing the underlying causes of conflicts (FGD 2023, June 8).

The government supports skills training, entrepreneurship programs, and access to micro-credit facilities to empower community members economically (Katsina State Government

Budget Presentation Speech, 2023). By providing alternative livelihood opportunities, the government aims to reduce the vulnerability of individuals to recruitment by bandits. Recognizing that youth are often targeted for recruitment by bandit groups, the government implements programmes to engage and rehabilitate vulnerable youth (Katsina State Government Budget Presentation Speech, 2023). These programmes include education and vocational training, sports and recreational activities, and mentorship opportunities (Katsina State Government Budget Presentation Speech, 2023). By offering positive alternatives, the government aims to steer young people away from engaging in criminal activities. Some participants agreed that through community engagement, the importance of involving local communities as active stakeholders in ensuring security and combating banditry can be recognised. They extended that by building trust, promoting dialogue, and empowering communities, the state government can foster a collaborative environment where communities become active partners in maintaining peace and security within the state (FGD 2023, June 8).

Support for Intelligence Gathering

The Katsina state government has invested in intelligence gathering and sharing mechanisms. This involves strengthening the capacity of security agencies to collect and analyse information, improving communication and coordination among various security agencies, and utilizing technology for early warning systems and information dissemination (Katsina State Government Budget Presentation Speech, 2023). Enhanced intelligence gathering is a significant component of the measures implemented by the Katsina State Government to curb banditry within the state. It focuses on improving the collection, analysis, and sharing of information to enhance security operations (Katsina State Government Budget Presentation Speech, 2023).

The Katsina government provides support to security agencies operating within the state, including the Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Army, Department of State Security Services (SSS), and other relevant agencies (Ladan, 2020). This support includes training, equipment, and resources to enhance their intelligence gathering capabilities. The government emphasizes the collection of timely and accurate intelligence on bandit activities. This involves deploying trained personnel to gather information from various sources, including local communities, informants, surveillance systems, and technology-driven intelligence tools (Ladan, 2020).

It also promotes collaboration and coordination among security agencies operating within the state. This includes establishing mechanisms for sharing intelligence, joint operations, and regular communication channels (Ladan, 2020). Improved coordination allows for more effective responses to banditry incidents and the sharing of vital information for proactive measures (Ladan, 2020).

The government also invests in early warning systems to detect and prevent banditry incidents (Odia, 2023). These systems utilize information from various sources to identify potential threats and trigger timely responses. Early warning mechanisms include community reporting platforms, hotline numbers, and communication networks to disseminate alerts and share information with security agencies (Odia, 2023). One respondent suggested that if the State government can engage local communities to act as sources of intelligence, community members will feel empowered to report suspicious activities, provide information on bandit hideouts, and share relevant details that can aid in investigations. This according to him will help in building trust and cooperation with communities and enhance the flow of actionable intelligence (Personal Interview 2023, June 7).

The Katsina State Government also invests in the training and capacity building of security personnel involved in intelligence gathering (Ladan &Iguda, 2019). This includes equipping them with skills in data analysis, surveillance techniques, information management, and the use of modem technologies. Strengthening the capacity of security personnel improves their ability to collect, analyze, and utilize intelligence effectively (Ladan &Iguda, 2019). By prioritizing enhanced intelligence gathering, the Katsina State Government aims to proactively identify and neutralize banditry activities.

Support for Security Agencies

The government provides logistical support, equipment, and resources to security agencies operating within the state (Ladan &Iguda, 2019). This includes the provision of vehicles, communication equipment, and adequate funding to enhance their operational capabilities and response to security challenges. Support for security agencies is a critical measure implemented by the Katsina State Government to effectively combat banditry and improve security within the state. The government allocate financial resources to ensure security agencies operating within the state have the necessary funds to carry out their operation effectively (Ladan &Iguda, 2019).

The government also acknowledges the importance of the well-being and motivation of security personnel (Abdullatif, 2021). This support encompasses financial resources, logistics, training, and collaboration, welfare, and infrastructure development. Incentive schemes was implemented to recognize and reward exemplary performance, boosting morale and commitment to tackling banditry. Investing in the development of security infrastructure, such as the construction and renovation of police stations, barracks, and other security facilities (Abdullatif, 2021). By providing support to security agencies, the Katsina State Government strengthens their capacity to combat banditry and maintain peace within the state. These measures collectively enhance the capabilities of security agencies to respond to banditry incidents, deter criminal activities, and safeguard the lives and property of the residents of Katsina State (Enna, 2021).

Support for Border Security

Given Katsina State's proximity to neighbouring countries, the government has placed emphasis on strengthening border security. This involves collaboration with border control agencies, enhancing surveillance, and implementing measures to curb cross-border criminal activities, including arms smuggling and illicit trade. Border security is an essential component of the measures implemented by the Katsina State Government to curb banditry and enhance overall security within the state. Given Katsina State's proximity to neighbouring countries, effective border security measures are crucial in preventing the inflow of bandits, arms smuggling, and cross-border criminal activities (Radio Nigeria, 2022).

> You cannot secure a country that has too many porous borders. You cannot effectively secure a country that has vast un-governed spaces, and you cannot effectively secure a country when its neighbours provide a gateway for the inflow of small arms and light weapons as well as hard drugs (Radio Nigeria, 2022).

The government actively engages with communities residing along theborders. It educates them about the importance of border security, encourages them to report suspicious activities, and establishes channels for them to provide information to security agencies (Radio Nigeria, 2022). Engaging border communities promotes their involvement in maintaining security and strengthens the overall border security framework. The government invests in the training

and capacity building of security personnel involved in border security. This includes equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and techniques for effective border control, surveillance, intelligence gathering, and interagency cooperation (Ogbonna, Lenshie& Nwangwu, 2023).

Establishment Local Vigilante Groups

The Katsina State government has trained of over 3,000 vigilantes to guard their various communities against bandits and kidnappers. At an inaugural parade held in Katsina, the Special Adviser to Governor Aminu Bello Masari on Security Matters, Ibrahim Ahmed Katsina, decried the situation where residents of communities rely solely on security agents to protect them (Radio Nigeria, 2022).

> These security agents are doing their best, they are human beings too, and we know their number is not enough, therefore we have resolved that we can no longer leave this all-important matter in their hands, we must make individual and collective efforts to guard our villages, towns, and communities (Radio Nigeria, 2022).

Socio-economic Development Initiatives

The Katsina government recognizes the link between socio-economic development and security (Wudil& Haruna, 2021). Efforts are being made to improve access to education, healthcare, and basic infrastructure, as well as promote agricultural and economic opportunities in rural areas. These initiatives aim to address the underlying socio-economic factors that contribute to banditry and provide alternative livelihoods for vulnerable populations. By focusing on socio-economic development, the government aims to create opportunities, alleviate poverty, and improve the overall well-being of the population (Ruja, Sumarmi, & Idris, 2024).

By enhancing educational opportunities, the government aims to provide alternatives to banditry and empower individuals to pursue legitimate livelihoods (Personal interview 2023, June 6). The government promotes agricultural development by providing farmers with access to improved seeds, fertilizers, and modern farming techniques (Wudil& Haruna, 2021). It also supports irrigation projects, mechanization, and the establishment of agricultural cooperatives to enhance productivity. increase income and reduce poverty in rural areas. Strengthening the agricultural sector provides economic opportunities and reduces the vulnerability of individuals to banditry (Ruja, Sumarmi, & Idris, 2024).

By providing education, skills training, agricultural support, infrastructure, poverty alleviation, job creation, healthcare, and social services, the government seeks to create an enabling environment that promotes stability, reduces poverty, and offers legitimate opportunities for the population, it is important to note that addressing banditry requires sustained efforts, collaboration among multiple stakeholders, and a comprehensive approach that goes beyond security measures alone. The Katsina State Government's initiatives seek to tackle the root causes of banditry while improving security and promoting development in the state (Ruja, Sumarmi, & Idris, 2024).

Other initiatives

The State government has taken punitive measures through suspensions of village and ward heads that connived with cattle rustlers as investigations continue to end of cattle rustling. Even during the time when kidnapping started, the government continues to take punitive measures against village and ward heads that were suspected of conniving with the bandits (Abdullatif, 2021). Following request by village communities that are spread in isolated locations, the State government has constructed access roads to link them with the rest of the

LGA. These roads are expected to make it easier for security personnel to move to the villages to provide security in case of any security breach. Examples include the 50 km road from Dutsinma to Tsaskiya to Kukar Samu and the 9 km Garin Tambari to Illela road all in Safana LGA (Ladan, 2020).

Challenges faced by the government in its efforts to curb banditry in Katsina State.

The foregoing discussions highlight the efforts of the State Government, it can be observed that the State Government has made many efforts armed at tackling the security challenges facing the state right from the time of its inception in May 2015 to May 2023. However, a summary of the responses retrieved from a focus group discussion (FGD 2023, June 8) revealed that, the effort implemented by the government have not yielded to desired result or outcome of ending the security challenges due to the following identified factors:

i. Some of the repentant bandits of January 2016 and that of September 2019 Amnesty programme/peace deal were not sincere and as such they secretly engage in banditry and cattle rustling then. The result was that they were killed by some of their members who felt cheated and then decided to go back to their criminal activities.
ii. There are porous borders along the Katsina State and Niger Republic boundary which allowed the movement of arms and ammunition and even movement of bandits from Niger Republic and Mali into the State to join other bandits in carrying out attacks on villages. The bandits were also able to bring arms into the State through the porous borders.
iii. The efforts of the State government have not ended the security challenges because its neighbour Zamfara State which has become the hub of banditry in Nigeria has continued to experience it. The security challenges re-surface in July 2018 because of movement and influence of bandits from Katsina States neighbour Zamfara State.
iv. The laws enacted by the State Government against banditry, cattle rustling, and kidnapping were not enforced by the security agents. The result is that very few were arrested riding motorcycles around forests or engaged in kidnapping and cattle rustling in the frontline LGAs.
v. Some members of the State security committee are politicians not experts in security matters and as such they tend to politicize the functions of the committee or use the committee as avenue for making money to accumulate wealth. Some citizens of the State have questioned the large sums of money spent by the committee since its inauguration, but the security challenges continue to worsen.
vi. The State government has not focused its efforts on taking punitive action against security agents that engage in large scale extortion of money and cattle from the Fulani people. This had seriously undermined the efforts of the government to tackle the security challenges.
vii. The response of the security agents to reported cases of kidnapping seems discriminator) they respond promptly and or effectively when highly placed persons were kidnapped but do not show the same commitment when other persons of low socio-economic status were involved

Recommendations and Conclusion

Various government's initiatives, in addition to military anti-banditry operations, have been implemented to combat the persistent problem of armed banditry in Katsina state. This had helped to decrease armed banditry case; nevertheless, over time, it has become more aggressive and violent.

To address this protracted menace, topping banditry in Northern Nigeria requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses the root causes of the problem and implements effective measures to deter and combat banditry. This can be achieved by enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of security forces by providing them with necessary training, equipment, and intelligence to effectively combat banditry with professionalism. Increase the number of police officers and strengthen collaboration between different security agencies to share information and coordinate operations. Additionally, addressing the underlying socio-economic issues that contribute to banditry, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunities. The government should also implement policies and programmes that promote economic development, job creation, and social welfare in affected states. The state government also must develop mechanism to foster cooperation and trust between communities and security forces. This also involves encouraging community members to report suspicious activities and provide them with assurance of protection. Furthermore, the federal government should foster community policing initiatives to encourage communities to take an active role in maintaining security.

The government should ensure that those involved in banditry are arrested, prosecuted, and appropriately punished. Expedite legal processes and improve the capacity of the judiciary to ensure swift justice. It should also establish special courts or tribunal to handle cases related to banditry and insurgency. There is need also to encourage individuals involved in banditry to disarm and enter rehabilitation programmes and offer incentives for those who voluntarily surrender their weapons and provide them with opportunities for reintegration into society.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that stopping banditry requires a long-term and sustained effort, combining security measures with socio-economic development, good governance, and community engagement.

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