



Security Challenges in North-Western Nigeria: The Role of Community Policing

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Abstract

The paper examines security challenges in north western Nigeria and the role of community policing. The paper emphasized on analyzing security challenges and the impact of community policing in surmounting the challenges. The paper adopted Broken Window Theory as the theoretical framework. The paper adopted qualitative technique using content analysis. The paper focus on secondary sources of data in discussing security challenges in north western Nigeria and the role of community policing. Mainly, the sources of the information are text books, pamphlets and journal articles that focuses on the subject of the study were reviewed. The paper focus on analytical and interpretive approach and discussions were carried out thematically. The north western region is suffering from insecurity like jihadist movement of *Lakurawa*, farmers-herders conflict and rural armed banditry. These continue to affect, security and socioeconomic development in the region. Community participation in combating insecurity is an effort by the community to ensure peace and safety of their environment. This is usually carried out in conformity with the state laws. The idea of community participation in combating insecurity and other social vices is very imperative. Community participation connotes all forms of efforts put in place by the community members to protect lives and properties in their community. Most communities across the country had their own community-based strategies of ensuring security of its people and property. *Yan Sakai* as popularly known, play significant role in the fight against armed banditry in northern Nigeria. Armed banditry is one of the serious security challenges affecting many states in Nigeria. Many factors have contributed to armed banditry in Nigeria. This includes: unemployment, poverty, porous border, proliferation of arms. This has affected economy, education, agriculture and security of the affected states. Apart from formal security agents that combat insecurity, members of the community including vigilante group, *Yan Sakai* and *Yan Banga* are used in combating armed banditry in the affected states. The study recommends that, government should improve on the welfare of the security agents' salary, allowances and accommodation. States and LGAs should improve welfare packages for the vigilante, *Yan Sakai*, *Yan Banga*. This can help in combating insecurity in the affected states.

Key words: Armed banditry, Community policing, Insecurity, Security, *Yan Sakai*,

Introduction

Globally insecurity is becoming a treat to global security and peaceful coexistence. Insecurity is becoming a challenge to many nations, as it causes instability, disrupting peace and stability. Africa is one of the continent facing serious security challenges, this become a treat to regional security affecting. Africa is facing insurgency, terrorism, jihadist movement, armed banditry, water piracy, ethno-religious crisis and

famer-herder mayhem. Most of the insecurities in Africa are becoming threat to governance, peace, unity, food production, food security affecting the livelihood of many people in Africa. Security is necessary requirement for socio-economic development of any nation. Security provides enabling environment for citizens to live and work for social, economic and political development. Northern Nigeria faces different security such as: *Boko Haram*, armed banditry, ISWAP, cattle



rustling, kidnapping and farmers-herders conflict, *jihadists* movement. This disrupt peace and socioeconomic activities in the region. Section 24(e) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) provides that:

it shall be the duty of every citizen to render assistance to appropriate and lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order.

According to Usman (2025), today security is assumed to be everybody's business in the society. Security operatives alone cannot combat insecurity without the support of the host communities. It is assumed that, the security agents do not know criminals and their hideout. Therefore, partnership between the security forces and the communities is imperative. The *Yan Sakai*, Vigilante Group and *Yan Banga* have significant role to play in the fight against insecurity in Northern Nigeria through community policing. Recently some states in the north established community security outfit to work along with formal security agents to counter armed banditry and insecurity. This include Zamfara State Community Protection Guard (ZSCPG), Katsina State Community Watch Corps (C-Watch), Sokoto Community Guard Corps, Kaduna State Community Vigilance Squad (KSCVS), Kebbi State Community Guard Watch and Kano Security Neighbourhood Watch.

Thousands of people are displaced suffering from hunger, health challenges, shelter and human right violation due to armed banditry. Socioeconomic activities become affected, making it difficult for many to sustain their livelihood in the affected states. The *Yan Sakai* plays significant role in the fight against armed banditry in northern Nigeria. Many of the civilian informants in the affected states were arrested by the *Yan Sakai*. Farmers-herders conflict is one of the threat that metamorphosed to armed banditry. Most of the pastoral groups are Fulani by origin, inadequate grazing reserves, water point, stock routes and climate change predisposed them to armed banditry and other heinous criminality in Nigeria.

The *Lakurawa* Militants

The *Lakurawa* are jihadist militant operating along

Nigeria-Niger border, attacking communities in Sokoto and Kebbi states. Their presence in north western Nigeria continue to threaten security in the region. The *Lakurawa* terror group claimed to be *Jihadist* groups in the Sahel. They are known as *Jama'atul Musulumina*. The *Lakurawa* are herdsman but turned militant in the wake of the Malian crisis spreading fundamentalism in West Africa. They operate along the Sahelian countries and infiltrate into Nigeria posing challenge to the national security.

According to Rufa'i (2021), the *Lakurawa* group was formed in 1999 by a Malian, Ahmadu Kofa. The members of the group came from different nationals among Sahelian countries like Niger, Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Mauritania. They are extreme *Jihadist* across Sahelian countries. The activities of the militant *Lakurawa* started in 1999 and attract national and international concern. *Lakurawa* operate in border communities in western parts of Sokoto, the presence of *Lakurawa* in the border communities was at the invitation of the traditional leaders as a way of providing security in the areas from bandits' invasion in 2017. The Sokoto border communities see the traditional rulers as saviours negotiating security with militant *Jihadists* or *Mujahidun*. The *Lakurawa* were effective at pushing the rural armed bandits. However, they took over control of the communities, with consequences of imposing extremists' ideology and fundamentalism. Their primary objective was to introduce their version of the Sharia legal system.

Rufa'i (2021) further expressed that, there exists intermarriage between the militant *Lakurawa* and some communities in Sokoto state and recruited youth from the communities. They established a base at Gudu and Tangaza LGAs, about 60 miles away from Sokoto. The *Lakurawa* as an Islamic sect started with less than 50 indigenous youth in 2017, but the number increased to over 200 young boys within the ages of 18—35, providing stipends to members. Members embrace heterodox practices and esoteric interpretations of the Holy Qur'an. They emphasize purity and refuse contact with the rest of the society. The *Lakurawa* herdsman suspected to be Malians and armed



found around Nigeria-Niger border of Sokoto state. The *Lakurawa* herdsmen are light skinned; speak Arabic and Fulfulde languages with cattle looking for greener pastures. The herdsmen are Malians and reside in a forest in Niger Republic sharing border with Nigeria. The *Lakurawa* are just like the so-called Ansaru, ISWAP and AQIM shouting "Allahu Akbar" when raiding villages and in confrontation with security agencies. The *Lakurawa* are herdsmen, light skinned, speaking Arabic and Fulfulde languages from Mali. They exploit the fragile Mali to achieve nefarious agenda of extremism.

In 2024, *Lakurawa* infiltrated in to Nigerian territory along Nigeria-Niger border especially Sokoto and Kebbi states. The *Lakurawa* are found in Tangaza, Gudu, Illela, Gwadabawa, Silame, Bunji, Kware, Augie and Kangiwa local governments. *Lakurawa* have no place or camp to stay, they remain transhumance across Nigeria-Niger borders. *Lakurawa* possessed sophisticated weapons, this gives them advantage to commit atrocities like: killing, maiming, kidnapping, cattle rustling, mass looting of resources, and raiding villages across Nigeria-Niger borders.

This resulted in the increase of internally displaced persons and refugees in Nigeria and the neighbouring Niger Republic. Communities in Kebbi and Sokoto States in the north western Nigeria continue to live in fear due to presence of the militant affecting daily activities and socioeconomic development in the states. This is due to the fact that, *Lakurawa* militia kills, raid villages, rustle cattle and imposed their laws.

Farmers-herders Conflict in Nigeria

One of the serious security challenges affecting Africa for decades is farmers-herders conflict found in different parts of the continent. For decades, this conflict has become extremely violent and disastrous to the security and socioeconomic activities of the affected nations Nigeria inclusive. The nature of the conflict centred on land resources. The land resources include: farmland, grazing reserves, water point, cattle routes and forest reserves. The *Fulbe* pastoralists are transhumance, and travel

thousands of miles in large numbers with cattle in search of pasture. They are often armed to protect their livestock against wildlife and rustlers.

According to Usman (2025), herders are people who derive more than 80% of incomes from livestock and livestock products. Although the livelihoods of these communities are vulnerable to climate change, population growth, competition for land, farmers and governments encroachment to stock routes and grazing lands. Pastoralism contributes significantly to the economy of Nigeria, contributing to the GDP and plays a major role in providing food. In addition, thousands of Nigerians make a daily living from the sale, transport, processing and marketing of livestock products that include meat, milk, butter, hides and skins, bones and plough powers to farmers.

For Abbass (2012), pastoralism and farming remained the most ancient trades and two sources of livelihood for most people in the developing world. There has been a growth in human as well as livestock population in Africa. This gave rise to competition for scarce resources between farmers and herders. The conflict is driven by struggle for land resources, land does not expand while population multiply and heavily depend on land for survival, resulting in conflicts. The nature of the conflict centred on resources such as farmland, grazing reserves, water point and stock routes.

Mertz, Rasmussen and Vang (2016) asserts that, the movement and settlement of the pastoralists in West Africa increased violence between pastoralists and farmers, especially the struggle for land. Climate change led to water scarcity, food insecurity, migration, overgrazing and demographic change. Farmers-herders conflict is driven by climate change and other ecological problems. The problem is fueled by the fact that, land does not expand, while people multiply and heavily depend on land resources for survival, resulting in land conflicts. Farming and herding are practiced on the same spaces, as such conflict between the land user become inevitable.

Mohammed (2016), argued that farmers-herders conflict has disrupted socioeconomic activities, political stability and threatened Nigeria's national



unity. It has led to poverty, hunger and destabilized affected communities. The conflict has led to the proliferation of arms, often used to commit heinous criminality. At the macro level, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country declined, and also bring about shortages of food, meat, milk, hides and skin for industrial use.

According to Usman (2025), farmers-herders conflict has been a serious concern to many Nigerians. Governments at state and federal levels have proposed different avenues to curtail conflict between farmers and herders. Some State Governments enacted Anti Grazing Laws to combat farmers-herders conflict. In 2020, late President Buhari proposed the *Ruga* programme aimed at addressing farmers-herders conflict. Also, in 2024, President Tinubu established the Ministry of Livestock Development. The president lamented that, the creation of the ministry would improve meat, dairy and reduce farmers-herders clashes in the country. Despite the afore mentioned development, farmers-herders conflict continued to be a challenge affecting security, peace and socioeconomic development in Nigeria. Most of the pastoralists in Nigeria and other countries are *Fulbe* origin. They loss cattle due to conflict and depletion of land resources. This pushed many of the into armed banditry for survival. The current armed banditry affecting northern Nigeria metamorphosed from farmers-herders conflict.

Rural Armed Banditry in Nigeria

Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto and Kebbi are the most affected states in the north west suffering from rural armed banditry. Recently Kano and Jigawa states as the most peaceful states in the region are facing attacks from the armed bandits. Banditry increases in subsequent years in Northern Nigeria. According to Usman and Ribah (2023), banditry involves the use of force, or threat to intimidate people with the intention to rob, rape or kill. Banditry is a crime against humanity leading to insecurity in Nigeria. Armed banditry is accompanied with rape, organized attacks on villages, cattle rustling, destruction of properties, displacement and loss of lives. Large forests linking Northern Nigeria and some neighbouring countries are governed by armed bandits and

terrorists. This includes *Sambisa, Alagarno, Kamuku, Kudara, Dansadau, Kuyambana, Burwaye, Ajja* and *Dajin Rugu*, they are red zones, no-go areas and ungoverned spaces. Bandits are spread across Africa especially Sahel region. Bandits are believed to come across northern states and outside the country. Some are believed to come from Sahel region and other West African countries.

According to Centre for Democracy and Development (2015), bandits use weapons to commit atrocities against humanity. Armed banditry has led to lawlessness, killings, kidnapping, displacement, theft of livestock, burning and raiding grains. This affects internal security, peaceful coexistence and economy in Northern Nigeria. Armed bandits block the road at any time and robe people. The most dangerous dimension is that, any time they are neutralized by the security forces, they retaliate on local inhabitants on the ground that, the locals gives information on their locations. The bandits invade villages and kill indiscriminately.

For Usman (2021), the attacks by the bandits result in destruction of lives and properties, human right violation and a state of insecurity. The bandits attack day and night in large numbers using motorbikes which give them added advantage as to easily escape immediately before the arrival of the security agents. In some cases, they fire sporadically, steal livestock, rape women, kidnap for ransom and set houses ablaze. Bandits warned farmers in affected states to avoid farming or face deadly attacks. This becomes a threat to food production in the country. As banditry persists, particularly in rural areas, agriculture, as the dominant occupation became affected. Farmers migrate to safer environment; the displacement affects their livelihood. Economy in Northern Nigeria become affected due to insecurity. This affects food production, marketing and the gross domestic product in the region. Most of the bandits are *Fulbe* origin who are pastoralists. They loss cattle due to conflict and depletion of land resources. This pushed them into armed banditry for survival.



From the foregoing, *Lakurawa* jihadist, famers-herders conflict and armed banditry are becoming security threat in the north western Nigeria. This continue to affect daily lives, socioeconomic development and peaceful coexistence in the region. It leads to food insecurity, displacement, hunger and youth restiveness. Community engagement with security agencies become crucial in salvaging the region against the insecurity.

Community Policing and the Fight against Insecurity

Yakubu and Ugwuoke (2019) opined that in 2004, the Nigerian Police introduced community policing. It engages members of the community in crime prevention, control and coordinate door-to-door activities of beat patrol officers. The principle of community policing recognizes the community and its leaders as partners in the prevention and reduction of crime. It brings community and police together in promoting crime awareness and prevention. Community policing is based on the philosophy of the interdependence and shared responsibility of the police and community in building a safe community. It reflects the values of community participation, problem solving and police accountability.

For Hussein (2015), community policing is an effort between the police and the community to help identify and solve insecurity. It is a proactive approach that brings together the police and the community in the fight against crime. Community policing provide a framework within which members of the community can be active participants in the fight against crime and insecurity with aim of enhancing safety in their neighbourhood.

The forms of community policing include:

- Police Community Relationship Committee (PCRC)
- Vigilante Group of Nigeria
- Civilian Joint Task Force
- Community Development Associations (CDAs)

In the North Eastern Nigeria, the military engages the Civilian JTF in counter *Boko Haram* insurgency. Security forces achieved significant

success in tackling *Boko Haram* with the role of the Civilian JTF. The Civilian JTF as community members sacrificed their lives in providing security. In Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, civilian JTF are in frontline in ensuring *Boko Haram* defeat. In the North Western Nigeria, security operatives along with *Yan Sakai* engage in the fight against armed bandits.

According to Sarki (2017) community participation in crime prevention is paramount. This is usually carried out in organized manner and in conformity with the state laws. Communities organized and implement strategies of combating crime with the recognition and support of government and formal security agencies. Involving the community in combating security challenges helps to rebuild the trust citizens have on the law enforcement agencies and win the support of informal mechanisms of crime control. A successful war against armed banditry, insurgency and terrorism depends on information and support the community gives to the law enforcement. Without the community support, the war against crimes may not succeed. The preventive measures require community participation at the levels of individuals, groups, corporate bodies and society at large.

For Umar and Bappi (2022) the informal or traditional strategies in the fight against insecurity through “Neighbourhood Watch”. Community members engage in patrolling of their neighbourhood to surmount criminal activities in their localities. Notable neighborhood watch associations in Northern Nigeria include: *Yan Banga*, *Yan Sakai*, Civilian JTF and Vigilante Group. Informal crime control associations are made up large volunteers drawn from the community. In some communities, monthly levies are contributed from the households for the payment of *Yan Banga/Yan Sakai*. The neighbourhoods watch brings residents of the area and police together in a mutual problem-solving relationship. The security also supported the formation and training of *Yan Sakai*, Civilian JTF and Vigilante volunteers to help in combating insecurity in the affected States. The groups join the security forces in their operations in an attempt



to get rid of criminality. The *Yan Sakai*, Civilian JTF and the Vigilante group participate in surveillance and intelligence gathering, cordon and search, road blocks and open confrontation.

The North East communities' initiate neighbourhood watch with extra vigilance from the members of the community to watch any suspicious movement, strange faces and abandoned vehicles loaded with explosives. This led to the arrest of many insurgents in their hideouts. At this juncture, members of the community need to partner with the security forces in crime prevention and control. Most of the violent crimes are perpetrated with the influence of drugs. Community members are expected to liaise with the National Drug and Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), in the fight against manufacture, processing, selling and consumption of drugs in their communities. Heinous criminal acts are committed at the border communities. This includes: smuggling of contrabands, drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking, terrorism, banditry etc. Sometimes community members give hostage to the criminals.

The Role of Traditional Leaders in Tackling Insecurity

According to Ali (2021) crime prevention is a strategy that seeks to reduce the risk of crime in a community. It provides a framework for the police and other community-based principals to proactively design feasible ways aimed at tackling the occurrence of crime. Under this strategy, traditional leaders and the police examined the effects of crime and apply solutions among communities. Traditional leaders have a customarily influence on their jurisdiction in the communities. They have a preserved cultural role as arbiters of conflicts. Any crime prevention policy established in the communities cannot succeed without the support of the traditional leaders. The functions of the traditional leaders include:

- Preside over customary law and help to maintain law and order
- Assist members of the community in their dealings with the state
- Advice the government on traditional

affairs within their communities

- Convene meetings to discuss security challenges and other issues in their communities
- Protect cultural values and inculcate a sense of belonging in their areas of jurisdiction
- Play active role in community policing and crime prevention in their communities
- They help in promoting social order, peace and harmony in their communities

Method of Study

The paper adopted qualitative technique using content analysis. The paper focus on secondary sources of data in discussing security challenges in north western Nigeria and the role of community policing. Mainly, the sources of the information are text books, pamphlets and journal articles that focuses on the subject of the study were reviewed. The paper focus on analytical and interpretive approach and discussions were carried out thematically.

The Role of Community in Combating Armed Banditry

For Usman and Ribah, (2023), policing specialists have long recognized the value of community participation in generating social order. The idea of community participation in combating insecurity and other social vices is very imperative in Nigeria. Most communities across the country had their own community-based strategies of ensuring security of lives and property. Many states in the North-western Nigeria that suffering from armed bandits uses community policing through the vigilante group and *Yan Sakai* in the repelling the attack of armed bandits. In states such as Zamfara, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Niger, community members became extra vigilant on the people that move around the community. This has helped in identifying strangers and in some cases suspected individuals were apprehended and handed over to the security agents.

The neighbourhood watch contributes in combating armed banditry through the use of surveillance. Members of neighbourhood organizations become eyes and ears for the police in the community. It is not possible for the security



agents to be everywhere at the same time. Therefore, it becomes responsibility of the community members to assist in the surveillance function in order to maintain the safety of lives and properties. Community members have made attempts in repeling attacks from the bandits and arrest civilian informants who supply information to the bandits especially in Zamfara, Katsina, Kebbii, Sokoto and Niger states. The roles of the community in combating insecurity include:

- The objective of forming *Yan Sakai* neighbourhood watch in most communities is mainly to prevent crime through vigilance, awareness, assisting the conventional security forces in detecting crime through prompt reporting of criminal activities. Confidentiality of information and protection of the identity of the informant must be guaranteed to promote reports from community residents. Community members are expected to abide by this principle.
- Involving the community/*Yan Sakai* in combating security challenges helps to rebuild the trust citizens have on the law enforcement agencies and win the support of informal mechanisms in the fight against armed banditry.
- A successful war against insecurity depends on the information and support the community gives to the law enforcement. Without the community support, the war against insecurity may not succeed. Combating armed banditry requires community participation at the levels of individuals, groups, corporate bodies and society at large.
- Most of the violent crimes are perpetrated with the influence of drugs. Community members are expected to liaise with the law enforcement agents (NDLEA) in the fight against manufacture, processing, selling and consumption of drugs in their communities.
- Heinous criminal offences are committed at the border communities. This includes: smuggling of contrabands, drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking, terrorism, banditry etc.

Sometimes community members give hostage to the criminals. Border communities have to partner with border security operatives in tackling border criminalities. The borders are porous, for example Nigeria-Niger border covers 1,608km (999miles), Nigeria-Cameroon-1,975km (1,227mile), Nigeria-Chad- 85 km (53miles) and Nigeria-Benin 809 km (503miles). Members of the community who resides in these borders are conversant with the nature and topography of the terrain as well as activities taking place than the security operatives. Therefore, communities with borders who suffer from armed banditry are expected to supply intelligence reports to the border security operatives to tackle trans-border crimes.

- In many States in Northern Nigeria, the military engages the *Yan Sakai* in tackling armed banditry. Community members in the affected states are expected to joint hand with the security forces in tackling security challenges in the North Western States suffering from armed banditry.
- Members of the neighbourhood organizations/*Ya Sakai* are expected to become eyes and ears for the police in the community. It is not possible for the police to be everywhere at the same time. It is the responsibility of the community members to assist in the surveillance to maintain the safety of lives and properties. Community members need to become extra vigilant on the people that move around the community and the kind of activities they do. This can help in identifying strange individuals who are willing to commit crimes.
- Traditional leaders have a customarily influence on their jurisdiction. They have a preserved cultural role as arbiters of conflicts. Any crime prevention policy established in the communities cannot succeed without the support of the traditional leaders. Traditional rulers and the members of the community need to draw possible modalities to tackle insecurity.



- The Federal Government's counter banditry interventions in the country were based on the deployment of security operatives. Several operations such as: Operations Puff Adder, *Diran Mikiya*, *Sharan Daji*, *Hadarin Daji*, Thunder Strike and *Harbin Kunama* and *Fansan Yamma* were carried out. These operations can only succeed only when members of the community assist the security operatives with intelligence report to counter the activities of the criminals. Members of the community have greater role to play in crime prevention and control by supporting security operatives in their communities. The success of any Military Operation depends on how members of the community support the security agents in their mission.
- Community policing provide a framework within which members of the community can be active participants in order to prevent crime and enhance safety in their communities. Therefore, community members in all LGAs of the affected states need to participate actively and strengthen the strategy.

The Broken Window Theory

The Broken Window Theory (BWT) is associated with the work of Kelling and Wilson (1982). There is relationship between broken windows and social disorder. If a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, the rest of the windows would soon be broken. A small problem in a community if not corrected might likely lead to serious criminality. If minor offences are addressed, the chances of serious offences in the future would be limited. Deliberate breaking of windows in the community results in disorder that allows more serious crimes. Maintaining and monitoring communities to prevent crimes create an atmosphere of order and prevent crimes in the future.

Policing and policy are ways to prevent and control crimes and other related social problems in the society. Security agents and community members need to be proactive on minor problems that are capable of leading to serious ones. Policy and

policing at the initial stage can address disorderliness before deteriorating to a serious stage.

Policy makers and members of the community failed to address minor disorders at the initial stage. The “window has broken” for a long period of time and was not repaired to address the security challenges. Some of the problems persisted earlier include: proliferation of arms, unemployment, inequality and poverty, weak governance, large unregulated forest, porous borders and influx of cross-border bandits. These are the “broken windows” that were not addressed at the initial stage. These problems have been in existence for decades, but were not addressed. Failure of the Northern state governments to address insecurity at the early stage led to security challenges such as armed banditry, farmers-herders conflict, insurgency, terrorism, kidnapping, cattle rustling, communal clashes and ethno-religious conflict.

Discussion

The paper found that, insecurity is affecting all spheres of human endeavours in north western Nigeria. This become a factor as many states are establishing informal security outfit in combating the security challenges. Members of the community share intelligence along with the members of the informal security as their role through community policing. Security is everybody's business in the society. Security operatives alone cannot combat insecurity without the support of the host communities. Partnership between the security forces and the communities is imperative. The *Yan Sakai*, Vigilante Group and *Yan Banga* have significant role to play in the fight against insecurity through community policing. Some states in the north established community security outfit to work along with formal security agents to counter armed banditry and insecurity. This is in line with work of Sarki (2017) who expressed that, community participation in crime prevention is paramount. This is usually carried out in organized manner and in conformity with the state laws. Communities organized and implement strategies of combating crime with the recognition and support of government and formal security agencies. Involving the community in combating



security challenges helps to rebuild the trust citizens have on the law enforcement agencies and win the support of informal mechanisms of crime control. A successful war against armed banditry, insurgency and terrorism depends on information and support the community gives to the law enforcement. Without the community support, the war against crimes may not succeed. The preventive measures require community participation at the levels of individuals, groups, corporate bodies and society at large.

Findings of the paper also revealed that, community policing is gaining ground in most of the communities suffering from insecurity in northern Nigeria. Members of the community along with traditional institutions are playing significant role in maintaining law and order in their domain through community policing. Different informal security outfit were established through community policing in order to tackle security challenges. This support the work of Umar and Bappi (2022) that, the informal or traditional strategies in the fight against insecurity through “Neighbourhood Watch”. Community members engage in patrolling of their neighbourhood to surmount criminal activities in their localities. Notable neighborhood watch associations in Northern Nigeria include: *Yan Banga*, *Yan Sakai*, Civilian JTF and Vigilante Group. Informal crime control associations are made up large volunteers drawn from the community. In some communities, monthly levies are contributed from the households for the payment of *Yan Banga/Yan Sakai*. The neighbourhoods watch brings residents of the area and police together in a mutual problem-solving relationship. The security also supported the formation and training of *Yan Sakai*, Civilian JTF and Vigilante volunteers to help in combating insecurity in the affected States. The groups join the security forces in their operations in an attempt to get rid of criminality. The *Yan Sakai*, Civilian JTF and the Vigilante group participate in surveillance and intelligence gathering, cordon and search, road blocks and open confrontation.

Findings of the paper also revealed that, thousands of people are displaced suffering from hunger, health challenges, shelter and human right

violation due to farmers-herders conflict and armed banditry. Socioeconomic activities become affected, making it difficult for many to sustain their livelihood in the affected states. Many people in northern Nigeria are into farming as the source of livelihood. The clashes between farmers and herders affect socioeconomic activities and food security in the region. This is in line with work of Mohammed (2016), who argued that farmers-herders conflict has disrupted socioeconomic activities, political stability and threatened Nigeria's national unity. It has led to poverty, hunger and destabilized affected communities. The conflict has led to the proliferation of arms, often used to commit heinous criminality. At the macro level, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country declined, and also bring about shortages of food, meat, milk, hides and skin for industrial use.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Community crime control initiatives have remained popular, acceptable and largely effective in curbing insecurity. The Federal Government's counter banditry interventions in the North West were based on the deployment of security operatives. Several operations can only succeed only when members of the community assist the security operatives with intelligence report to counter the activities of the armed bandits. Members of the community have greater role to play in crime prevention and control by supporting security operatives in their communities.

The paper proffers the following recommendations:

- Government at all levels should adequately fund the security agencies and the Community Policing programme by providing adequate logistic support, modern weapons, sound communication gadgets, proper training and tracking devises to locate bandit's hideout. This will assist in the fight against armed banditry more effective and successful.
- Security agencies and the community should intensify efforts on mass mobilization and awareness campaigns on the importance of the communities to partner with the security agents in combating armed banditry.



This will help to enlighten community members who are not fully aware of the existence and importance of the programme.

- Government should improve on the welfare of the security agents' salary, allowances and accommodation. States and LGAs should improve welfare packages for the vigilante, *Yan Sakai*, *Yan Banga*. This can help in combating armed banditry in the affected states.
- Security agents and the members of the community particularly vigilante, *Yan Sakai*, *Yan* and *Banga* should jointly cooperate to improve the security situation in areas with security challenges. Community members should give their maximum support and cooperation to the security agencies saddle with the responsibility of ensuring safety of lives and properties.
- The Nigerian government alongside with neighboring countries should work out effective modalities to tighten up border security. This can curtail arms trafficking, arms proliferation, *Lakurawa* and armed banditry around the borders. This can only be achieved if border communities jointly put hand together in providing intelligence and surveillance to security operatives.
- Legislative arm should review the existing legislations on possession of arms. This can help in tackling the manufacture, possession and trafficking of illegal arms in the country.
- Governments at the federal, state and local council should provide social amenities such as education, roads, water, education, medical care and address the root causes of conflict, which indeed exacerbated by uncontrolled arms, poverty, political, social and economic inequalities in the country. This can address the challenges of social exclusion in rural areas suffering from armed banditry.

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