



THE NEXUS BETWEEN UNGOVERNED SPACES AND RURAL INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examined the nexus between ungoverned spaces and rural insecurity in Nigeria, adopted Social Disorganization Theory as its theoretical framework. Ungoverned spaces refer to physical territories where there is either an absence of state capacity or a lack of political will to exercise effective control. These areas are often rugged, remote, maritime, or littoral areas that are not effectively governed by a sovereign state. In many cases such spaces emerge when governments, either by choice or due to forceful circumstances, relinquish control, thereby leaving the areas relatively lawless. Consequently, armed bandits, criminals, terrorist, insurgent group, militant and jihadist takes advantage of the government's failure to establish authority and occupy these territories through force. The phenomenon of ungoverned spaces reflects the inability of a state to exercise effective control over certain geographic areas within its territory. This situation is evident in states such as Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kaduna, Niger, Kwara, Borno, Yobe and Adamawa where bandits, terrorist, insurgents, jihadist and other criminal groups have taken control of forested areas and transformed them into operational bases. The existence of these ungoverned spaces has significantly contributed to the growing level of rural insecurity across many part of Nigeria. The paper recommends that, the Nigerian government in collaboration with with neighboring countries should develop effective strategies to strengthen border security. This can be achieved through joint intelligence sharing, coordinated surveillance operations, and enhanced regional cooperation among security agencies to combat the activities of criminal groups operating within ungoverned spaces.

Keywords: Arms, Insecurity, Nexus, Rural, ungoverned spaces

1.0 Introduction

Ungoverned spaces are becoming breeding grounds for conflicts and insecurity in various parts of the world. These spaces provide conducive environment for organized crimes, terrorist, bandits, *jihadists* and insurgents. The continue to pose serious security challenges in areas they operate. Ungoverned spaces are areas characterized by persistent insurgencies, militancy,

jihadist movement as found in most parts of the Sahara and of the Horn of Africa. Sahel region continue to suffer a serious security threat from the jihadists due to lengthy ungoverned spaces in the region. Arms become available from the hands of non-state actors due to ungoverned spaces. Many countries in Sahel region, West, Central and East Africa faces insecurity due to ungoverned spaces. Ungoverned spaces led



to the activities of *Tuareg Azawad* rebellion, *Ansari Dine*; *Al-Qaeda* in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) *Lakurawa* and *Boko Haram* in Sahel and West Africa.

According to Usman and Ribah (2023), ungoverned spaces in Nigeria are governed by bandits, organized criminals and terrorists. Ungoverned space, is a territory occupied and control by the armed groups, terrorists, insurgents and militants. The presence of state is entirely absent or lack effective governance, creating a vacuum of power. According to Usman (2021a), large forests in Nigeria and some neighbouring countries are governed by criminals. The thick forest in the north, south and east facilitate criminal activities such as militancy, IPOB, *Boko Haram*, *Lakurawa*, armed banditry, water piracy, kidnapping, farmers-herders conflict etc. Large forests linking Nigeria and some neighbouring countries such as *Sambisa*, *Alagarno*, *Kamuku*, *Kudaru*, *Dansadau*, *Kuyambana*, *Burwaye*, *Ajja*, *Dajin Rugu*, *Falgore* forest. Others include: *Rijana* forest, *Dajin Madam*, *Kenyehu/Uttu* forest, *Kotonkarfe* forest, *DutsenMaigoshi*, *Burra/Lame* Forest, *Yankari* forest, *Dajin Sakani*, *Dajin Wumumu*, *Kwando* Forest, *Dajin Goronyo* among others.

For Usman (2021b) ungoverned spaces fuel the activities of *Boko Haram*, *Al-Shabaab*, *Al-Qaeda* in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), *Azawad*, *Islamic State of West African Province* (ISWAP), cross-border bandits, drugs traffickers and organized criminals. Organized criminals' transit, and overpowered state authorities to control the ungoverned spaces. In recent years, ungoverned spaces have led to different security challenges in Nigeria. It includes: *Boko Haram*, militancy, armed banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, cattle rustling and drugs trafficking. Ungoverned spaces and

unregulated forests have facilitated the activities of armed bandits, organized criminal syndicates, arms traffickers and terrorists in Nigeria.

Nigeria is facing armed banditry, insurgency, terrorism, ethno-religious conflict, sea piracy, militancy etc. Armed banditry is a lucrative business for bandits. Ungoverned spaces aid the criminals in committing heinous crimes like: kidnapping, killings, rape, molestation, displacement, cattle rustling, armed robbery, raiding villages, sales and consumption of drugs. Most of the criminal offences committed in the country are due to the large ungoverned space. Against this background, the paper discusses the nexus between ungoverned spaces and rural insecurity in Nigeria.

Conceptual Explanation: Ungoverned Spaces

According to Abasa (2015), ungoverned space referred to as territory, governed by the criminals. Ungoverned spaces connote failed state, the social, political and economic zones of the ungoverned areas are fully controlled and managed by the non-state actors. This become a hindrance for the state to control its sovereignty. For Usman (2021b), ungoverned spaces are general conditions of weak to non-existence of state authority in a defined geographical area. Ungoverned territories are areas of limited or anomalous government control inside, otherwise functional state. The spaces are anarchic zones, outside formal and sovereign state control that constitute a security threat.

According to Aju (2018), ungoverned space is associated with physical and non-physical spaces where there is semi-presence or absence of control by the state. The physical spaces that are considered to be ungoverned constitute geographical areas that are



beyond the reach of the state to exercise sovereignty and control, while the non-physical spaces considered to be ungoverned, are those within a state where the government is not able to exercise authority or control. Bernard & Daful (2021), expressed that, in an ungoverned space, a shadow state or territory comes into being with gangs, armed groups, terrorists, insurgents or militants that take over the control of the affairs. In these areas, the presence of the state is entirely absent creating a vacuum of power exploited by the non-state actors.

According to Lenshie (2018), the presence of ungoverned space is a semi-presence or absence of security governance. Security governance is associated with the state utilizing its resources to ensure its sovereignty and control of the territories within its geographical boundaries. Security governance is about national security, which is about policing people using coercive apparatus for them to conform with the norms established by the state. In the same vein, Menkhaus (2007), assert that ungoverned space result as a failure of a constituted authority to exercise effective control over a geographic area within the state. Ungoverned spaces are areas of abdicated governance. Abdicated is a state where a government, either by force or choice abandons its control, leaving an area lawless and occupied by militants, bandits, terrorists and insurgents who control the territory under their watch.

From the forgoing, ungoverned space is a physical or non-physical area where there is absence of state to exercise control. Ungoverned territories areas that are not effectively governed by a sovereign nation. Ungoverned spaces in Nigeria are occupied and exploited by the criminals whose activities include: kidnapping, killings, rape,

displacement, cattle rustling, armed robbery, raiding villages, trafficking of arms and drugs. The larger ungoverned spaces across Nigeria is threatening national security and development.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Social Disorganization Theory as its theoretical framework of analysis. Social disorganization theory was popularized by the work of two Chicago Sociologists, Clifford R. Shaw and Henry Mackay in (1929). The theory argued that society is dynamic; it changes from simple to complex. Proponents of the theory focus on the conditions within an area that affects crime rates. A disorganized area is one in which institutions of social control have broken down and can no longer carry out the expected roles and functions (Siegel, 2013). The indicators of social disorganization include drugs trafficking, unemployment, poverty, delinquency, armed banditry, terrorism, militancy, insurgency and arms proliferation. A disorganize society is likely to have large ungoverned spaces. The ungoverned spaces aid criminals in committing atrocities against the innocent citizens and the state. Ungoverned spaces exist due to lack of commitment by the government, to explore all security apparatus, to ensure that the country is secured against internal and external threat. Society lacks the ability to enforce law and order, and ensure that citizens conform to the laws of the state. This situation leads to a state of normlessness and anarchy. This condition breeds criminality as in present Nigeria. Many areas are becoming ungoverned by the state, the disorganized nature of the Nigerian state gave bandits, terrorists, militants and terrorist advantage to control ungoverned spaces in the country



Nigeria's Ungoverned spaces along International Borders

According to Usman (2025), the location and size of the country is very important for a number of reasons. Nigeria's neighbouring countries have direct implication for its national security, as security challenges in these states often spill over into Nigerian territory. Cross border criminal activities frequently occur between Nigeria and its neighbours, exacerbating insecurity in border regions. Furthermore, Nigeria shares borders with countries that were formerly French colonies, whose legal and administrative systems differ from Nigeria's British-influenced framework, particularly in areas of public law, international transactions, and diplomatic relations. Overtime, these differences, combined with weak border enforcement, have facilitated episodes of cross-border criminality. In addition, the porous nature of Nigeria's land border encourages irregular migration and provides opportunities for transnational criminal networks to operate.

Nigeria and The Republic of Benin

The Nigeria-Benin border covers 809 km (503 miles). Republic of Benin is a small country which extends, as a narrow territory, all the way from the Atlantic in the south to the River Niger in the north. Kebbi, Kwara, Lagos, Niger, Ogun, Oyo and Sokoto shared international border with the Republic of Benin. The border suffers from smuggling of contraband goods and armed robbery, armed banditry, terrorism etc. This is becoming security threat along the border communities due to ungoverned spaces.

Nigeria and The Republic of Niger

The Nigeria-Niger border covers 1,608 km (999 miles). Niger is a very large country (1,267,000 square kilometres). There are aspects of the geography of Niger and Nigeria that are security importance.

Jigawa, Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, Kebbi, Borno and Yobe shared international boundary with Niger Republic. Some of the security challenges along Nigeria-Niger border due to ungoverned spaces include: *Lakurawa* militia, *Boko Haram*, armed banditry, farmers-herders conflict and cross-border banditry.

Nigeria and The Republic of Chad

The Nigeria-Chad border covers 85 km (53 miles). Chad is a very large country. Its boundary lies entirely on Lake Chad. It shared boundary with Borno state. Nigeria's security problems associated with Chad due to ungoverned spaces, include: *Boko Haram* insurgency, terrorism, farmers-herders conflict, cross-border armed banditry cross over and take advantage of the ungoverned spaces.

Nigeria and The Republic of Cameroon

The Nigeria-Cameroon border covers 1,975 km (1,227 miles), making it one of the longest international boundaries in West Africa. Cameroon, located to the east of Nigeria is relatively large neighbouring country. The boundary between the both countries traverses challenging terrain including mountains and thick forest. It is therefore difficult to patrol effectively. Borno, Adamawa, Taraba, Benue and Cross River States shared international boundary with the Republic of Cameroon. Criminal activities along Nigeria-Cameroon border due to ungoverned spaces include: *Boko Haram* insurgency, farmers-herders conflict, cross-border armed banditry and communal clashes.

Because of the ungoverned forests and insecurity affecting the countries, a Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was formed by the countries with aim of improving regional security among the countries. But recently, the coalition is facing challenge, affecting diplomatic



relations and regional security. Chad promised to pulled out. This threatens Nigeria's national security and other countries within the region.

Implications of Ungoverned Spaces on National Security

The security implications of ungoverned spaces in Nigeria include the proliferations of armed banditry, the activities of *Boko Haram*, widespread abduction, the circulation of illicit arms and increased border insecurity. These challenges collectively pose a significant threat to Nigeria's national security. The implications of these issues are discussed below:

Ungoverned Spaces and Displacement

Ungoverned spaces have facilitated the activities of armed bandits, *Boko Haram*, independent People of Biafra (IPOB), Niger-Delta militants and sea piracy in Nigeria. Kidnapping for ransoms are pervasive for organized criminals due to large ungoverned spaces in the country. Thousands of Nigerians were kidnapped and taken to ungoverned forest as their destination. They operate in the forest and negotiate huge amount of money as ransom.

According to Amnesty International (2016), *Boko Haram* has abducted thousands of people and were taken to unknown forests. In 2013, 20 passengers were abducted along Damaturu-Maiduguri highway. In 2014, 276 school girls from Chibok were abducted. In 2015, the Nigerian military rescued 293 abducted women and children at *Sambisa* forest. The *Sambisa* forest also become a challenge to security in neighbouring countries of Niger, Cameroon and Chad.

According Human Rights Watch (2015), in 2014, 16 women and 2 children were abducted from Wala village to *Sambisa* forest. Also, 30 women from Gujba village in Yobe State were abducted. Also, 60 women from Kummabza in Damboa, Borno

State were abducted by *Boko Haram*. In Konduga village, 20 students of Government Girls Science College and 5 female street traders were abducted. *Boko Haram* has abducted 41 Fulani women from Bakin Kogi, Garken Fulani and Rigar Hardo villages near Chibok. Also, 45 girls from Wagga, Adamawa State were abducted. In March 2015, *Boko Haram* conducted over 400 people mostly women and girls in Damasak, Borno State.

Many of the abductees by *Boko Haram* were taken to *Sambisa* forest and other unknown forest occupied and governed by the insurgents. Ungoverned spaces like *Sambisa* forest in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states served as hideout for the insurgents. This facilitate attacks of innocent citizens, while abductees were taken to the unknown forest that served as red zones and no-go areas.

According to Usman (2021a), many schools were attacked and students abducted by the armed bandits. In Niger State, over 300 students from Government Science College, Kagara and 200 pupils of SalihuTanko *Islamiyya* School were abducted by the bandits in Tegin, Rafi local government. In Katsina state, over 100 students from Government Science Technical College, Kankara were abducted. Also, over 84 *Islamiyya* students in Dandume, Katsina state were rescued by operation Puff Adder. In Zamfara State, about 314 female students from Government Science College Jangebe were abducted.

In Kaduna state, armed bandits abducted students of the Federal Institute of Forestry, students of the Greenfield University, staff and students of Nuhu Bamali Polytechnic, Zaria were abducted. Also, on 17 June, 2021, armed bandits abducted over 80 students and staff from Federal Government College, BirninYauri in Kebbi State. Education at primary, secondary and



institutions of higher learning have been affected with the attacks of armed bandits in Northern Nigeria. The abduction of the citizens is facilitated by the ungoverned spaces in the country.

Also, in March, 2022, 8 passengers were killed and 62 were kidnapped in a train attacked by the bandits along Kaduna-Abuja and were taken to unknown forest by the bandits. The passengers were released on batches and finally released on October, 2022 after spending months. In 2021, many passengers were abducted along Kontagora-Sokoto road and were taken to unknown forest. On July, 2022, bandits killed and kidnapped many passengers in Katsina State Transport Authority (KSTA), along Katsina-Jibia. The passengers were taken to unknown forest by the bandits. The abductees were taken to unknown forest, some were released after paying ransom, while many remain in captivity for about three months.

In July, 2022, terrorists attacked military checkpoint at Zuma near Abuja from their hideout. Also, on 5th July, 2022 armed bandits from their hideout attacked Presidential Advance Security Convoy at Dutsin-Ma on their way to Daura. Also, in July, 2022, an elite of the Nigerian Army, responsible for protecting the President, the Presidential Guards Brigade were attacked and 6 were killed by the bandits at Bwari-Kubwa from their hideout.

Most of the abductees were taken to unknown forest under the control of armed bandits in Nigeria. Some of the abductees lost their lives in the unidentified forest that served as red zones and no-go areas. Ungoverned spaces become a threat to national security in Nigeria. This is because it facilitates attacks and abduction by the armed bandits. This create insecurity, fear and uncertainty across the country.

Ungoverned Spaces and Banditry

Armed banditry in Nigeria has been partly attributed to the influx of people into Nigeria from war-ravaged neighbouring countries. The political upheavals and insecurity in Mali, Libya, Sudan, South Sudan, Central Africa Republic, Somalia and Nigeria have given rise to armed banditry in the West Africa and Sahel region. The fall of former Libyan leader Gaddafi in 2011 has resulted in the massive circulation of illegal weapons used by cross border bandits. Cross-border pastoralists have facilitated the influx of arms used by bandits in Nigeria. This makes both rural and urban areas in Nigeria vulnerable to armed robbery, kidnapping and cattle rustling. Rural areas are more prone because of the ungoverned spaces and proliferation of arms. Ungoverned spaces have threatened the livelihoods of Nigerians (Usman, 2021b).

For Abdullahi (2019) Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger, Sokoto and Kebbi are the most affected states in Nigeria. Zamfara State is the epicenter of banditry in the country, most of the bandit's leaders based in Zamfara State forests. They ride motor cycles to states like Katsina, Kaduna and Niger and commit heinous criminal offences. For Anka (2017), banditry involves the use of force, or threat to intimidate a person with the intention to rob, rape or kill. Banditry is a crime against humanity and has cause violence in contemporary Nigeria. Armed banditry is accompanied with rape, organized attacks on villages, cattle rustling and destruction of properties, displacement and loss of lives. Ungoverned spaces are mostly found in states suffering from armed banditry.

Armed bandits block the road at any time and robe people. The most dangerous dimension is that any time they are attacked



by the security forces, they retaliate on local inhabitants on the ground that, it is the locals that give information on their locations. On such occasions, the bandits invade villages and kill indiscriminately. The attacks result in wanton destruction of lives and properties, human right violation and a state of insecurity. The bandits attack day and night and usually in large numbers using motorbikes which give them advantage to easily escape immediately before the arrival of the security agents, the bandits understood the terrain in the ungoverned spaces where they operate (Ladan, 2019).

According to Nadama (2020), bandits warned farmers in the affected communities to avoid farming or face deadly attacks. This becomes a threat to food security in the country. As banditry persists, particularly in rural areas, agriculture, as the dominant occupation of people and sources of livelihood became affected. The only alternative to the people is to leave the area to safer environment where they might be treated as refugees in their home state. This displacement deprives them of a number of things in interaction with the host communities.

From the foregoing, cross-border herders take advantages of ungoverned spaces linking Nigeria and other nations in attacking farming communities. In 2020, former Head of State, General Abubakar revealed that, there are about six million small and light weapons in Nigeria used by bandits and other criminal groups. Availability of weapons is facilitated by the ungoverned spaces and has serious threat to national security in Nigeria. Ungoverned spaces have facilitated conflict between farmers and herders, the inflow of arms, free movement of cross-border pastoralists and bandits from the West Africa and Sahel region.

Ungoverned Spaces and *Boko Haram* Insurgency

Ungoverned spaces and border insecurity gave advantages to the activities of *Boko Haram*, ISWAP other terrorists and armed bandits in committing heinous criminal offences against humanity. The large ungoverned spaces especially *Sambisa* and Lake Chad forests found in Nigeria, Niger, Chad and the Republic of Cameroon facilitate the operations of *Boko Haram* in West Africa.

According to Mellgard (2013), the most dreadful insurgent groups in Africa include: *Boko Haram* in Nigeria, *Azward* in Mali, *Al-Shabab* in Somalia and *Al-Qaeda* in the Islamic *Maghreb* (AQIM). The large ungoverned borders in Africa facilitated the terror attacks. They ravaged socio-economic activities of many countries. Ungoverned spaces and insurgency become a challenge to many societies as it causes instability and disrupts peace and orderliness. Insurgent groups engage in armed uprising or revolt against the political authority. The activities of the insurgents facilitated by the ungoverned spaces have paralyzed almost every sector of the affected states.

For Abdulkareem (2010), insurgency flourishes with the presence of ungoverned spaces. The activities of *Boko Haram* have serious impacts on the populace, they employed the use of terrorist tactics against the larger population. The porosity of the ungoverned spaces gave them advantage of controlling many towns in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. Ungoverned spaces become a hideout for *Boko Haram* members in Nigeria. Ungoverned spaces are becoming become threat to peace and security in the country.

Usman (2020) assert that ungoverned spaces become a factor to the proliferation of *Boko Haram* in Nigeria and neighbouring



countries. The activity of *Boko Haram* has implications on Nigeria's national security. It has resulted in dire humanitarian situation as evident in human casualties, human right abuses, displacement, livelihood crisis and public insecurity. Human Rights Watch (2018), expressed that, *Boko Haram* has led to violation of human rights. Many of the women and girls abducted by the insurgents suffer from sexual violence in the camps. They were subjected to physical and psychological abuse, forced labour, forced marriage to their captors and sexual abuse. Ungoverned spaces in Nigeria aids *Boko Haram* in committing atrocities against humanity.

From the foregoing, the activities of *Boko Haram* in Nigeria have been facilitated by the ungoverned spaces that exist the country. Ungoverned spaces become a home and hideout for the *Boko Haram* terrorists. They raid and attack communities, ambush security operatives and move freely with weapons. Different atrocities against International Humanitarian Law were committed by the *Boko Haram* terrorist. *Sambisa* forest become a hide out for *Boko Haram* terrorists, the forest aids their operations due to absence of the state in the forest. *Sambisa* forests as an ungoverned space become a threat to national security in Nigeria. Recently on 26th October, 2022 the USA, Britain, Canada and other nations warned their citizens to avoid travelling to Abuja and environs for fear of terror attacks. This is due to the fact that, the ungoverned spaces around Abuja, Niger, Plateau and Nasarawa states become home and hideout for the bandits.

Ungoverned Spaces and Proliferation of Illegal Arms

Addo (2015) opined that, the large ungoverned spaces in Africa have led to arms trafficking used by bandits and rebel

combatants for fighting civil wars or resource conflict. There is high concentration of uncontrolled small arms and light weapons in Africa. Arms are acquired through black markets, trafficking, locally produced while others are imported into the continent. Many countries in African have a flourishing industry for local arms manufacture. This is due to ungoverned spaces use by the culprits in trafficking arms in the continent. Trafficking of arms in Africa has fuel armed banditry, terrorism, insurgency, resource conflict, inter-communal conflicts, wars and ethno-religious conflict. According to Institute for Security Studies (2012), Africa has the largest ungoverned spaces in the continent. Illicit arms and arms proliferation have led to displacement of innocent people. Arms trafficking in Nigeria, Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Mali, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Angola, Chad, Mauritania and Algeria poses a serious security challenge in the continent. According to United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (2012), the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in West African has become a serious concern to the international community. About 50% of illicit weapons in Africa are used in internal conflicts. Availability of small arms outside the formal security had contributed greatly in continuous cycle of insecurity. For Usman (2021a) ungoverned spaces become a factor rising the possession of arms in Africa. There are about 640 million Small and Light Weapons SALWs circulating globally, 100 million are found in Africa, 30 million in sub-Saharan Africa, 8 million in West Africa and 6 million are found in Nigeria. The problems caused by uncontrolled SALWs cannot be quantified. The presence of ungoverned spaces and



availability of SALW in Africa has led to the emergence of terrorists' organization.

Ungoverned Spaces and Border Insecurity

According to Usman, Sarki & Shehu (2017), border security especially along Niger, Chad and Cameroon are not secured due to ungoverned spaces. This aids the influx of weapons and armed bandits into Nigeria. The borders are porous, ungoverned and regulated, aiding organized criminals and cross-border bandits. The Nigeria-Niger border covers 1,608km (999miles), Nigeria-Cameroon- 1,975km (1,227mile), Nigeria-Chad- 85 km (53miles) and Nigeria-Benin 809 km (503miles). Organized criminals residing along these borders are conversant with the nature and topography of the ungoverned spaces as well as activities taking place than the security operatives. *Boko Haram* and militancy. Heinous criminal acts such as: smuggling of contrabands, drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking and terrorism emanates due to ungoverned spaces and border insecurity.

From the foregoing, the activities of armed banditry, terrorism and insurgency are facilitated by ungoverned spaces in Nigeria leading to border insecurity. Ungoverned spaces become pervasive especially around states that shared international border with Cameroon, Chad and the Republic of Niger. Ungoverned spaces around the borders intensify the consumption of hard drugs, availability of arms and a state of lawlessness threatening national security in the country.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The large ungoverned spaces occupied and control by terrorists and armed bandits become a threat to national security in Nigeria. Ungoverned spaces are becoming red zones and no-go areas in Nigeria. The

territories have led to armed banditry, arms proliferation, lawlessness, killings, kidnapping, displacement, theft of livestock, drug trafficking, burning and raiding of villages. This become a threat to national security in Nigeria. Ungoverned spaces are becoming sources of rural insecurity in Nigeria. This leads to farmers-herders conflict, armed banditry, *Boko Haram* insurgency, *Lakurawa* and organized crime. The Nigeria's porous borders make easy movement of weapons used by organized criminals. Series of criminalities such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, armed robbery, arms trafficking, human trafficking are perpetrated as a result of ungoverned spaces. Abductees are taken to the ungoverned spaces and ransom is negotiated for the release. *Boko Haram* occupied some local governments in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa state. Armed bandits and *Lakuraw* militants control some areas in Sokoto, Zamfara and Katsina states. These areas become ungoverned spaces with absence of government to take control. The paper proffers the following recommendations:

- Community policing should be strengthened in providing intelligence report to security agents involved in the fight against insecurity. This is due to the fact that community members know their people and can easily identify strangers in their midst. This can help in locating armed bandits who occupies the ungoverned spaces as their hideout.
- Government should improve the welfare of security agents who are saddled with the responsibilities of combating insecurity. States and local governments should improve welfare packages for the vigilante, *Yan Sakai* and *Yan Banga* who assist the security agents in combating *Boko Haram* and armed banditry in the ungoverned spaces.



•Nigerian government alongside with neighboring countries should work out effective modalities to tighten up border security. This can curtail arms trafficking and armed banditry in the country. This can be achieved when neighbouring countries jointly put hand together in providing intelligence and surveillance to security operatives so as to tackle the activities of criminals in ungoverned spaces.

•Community leaders should engage in enlightening the members of the public on the need for peace and to partner with the security agents in reporting any suspicious person(s) in their community. A successful war against insecurity depends on information and support the community gives to the law enforcement. Community participation at the levels of individuals and groups is required especially who reside around the ungoverned spaces.

•Members of the public who are found around ungoverned spaces are not security conscious. The study recommends that, members of the community need to be extra vigilant on the people that move around the community and the kind of activities they do. This can help in identifying and tackling criminality around ungoverned spaces in the country.

•Ungoverned spaces become centres for growing and manufacturing of hard drugs in Nigeria. The study recommends that, more hands should be put on deck by the government, security agents, traditional leaders and the members of the public in the crusade against production, manufacture, distribution, sales and consumption of drugs.

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