

KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.57233/gujos.v4i3.13>

Anthonia S. Baduku, PhD

Department of Sociology

Kaduna State University, Kaduna

anthoniabaduku@kasu.edu.ng /toniabaduku@gamil.com

08035924331.

Abstract

The phenomenon of kidnapping has emerged as a significant security concern on a global scale, with particular concern in the recent past within Nigeria. The objective of the study was to assess the phenomenon of kidnapping in Nigeria, focusing on its challenges and mitigation strategies. Being a theoretical paper, data for the study were obtained from reviewing pertinent publications, which served as secondary sources of data. The study examined the high incidence of abduction in Nigeria and implicated the influence of socio-economic factors such as unemployment, poverty, and greed, for the emergence, prevalence and challenges associated with kidnapping in the country. The study further revealed that the pursuit and glorification of material wealth can be a further driver of kidnapping, as it is perpetrated by individuals who seek to satisfy their material needs without consideration for the physical, emotional and economic trauma they visit on their victims. The study recommends that governments at all levels should provide employment opportunities for the large number of unemployed youths in Nigeria, particularly in light of the increasing poverty rates among the civilian population. This can be done through deliberate collaborative efforts between the government and the private sector to generate job opportunities for the country's expanding population, particularly for the younger generation. The government should create conducive atmosphere for the expansion of businesses to retain those in paid employment.

Keywords: Abduction; Crime; Kidnapping; Poverty; Security challenge; Unemployment,

Introduction

Kidnapping, hostage-taking, abduction or by any other name it may be called, is a pervasive historical phenomenon that has existed since ancient times. This maladaptive behaviour has been prominently observed in Nigeria in recent years. It may even rank second only to drug trafficking in the worldwide list of criminal activities (Abdulkabir, 2017). Practically, every state in Nigeria appears to have encountered this widespread social problem. Widely known as 'The Giant of Africa', Nigeria seems to have undergone a shift in political authority, with kidnappers exerting control over the course of events in recent years (Oarhe & Aghedo, 2020), as the surge of criminal activities resulting from the malicious actions of kidnappers has continued without interruption.

Previous efforts by relevant and concerned government entities to arrest this social problem have been largely unsuccessful (Ibekwe, 2020). This unlawful crime infringes upon a basic human right, protected by the UN Charter and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which is the freedom of transit. The frequency of occurrence of kidnapping raises the primary issue of the government's apparent incapacity to effectively control this criminal behaviour. Media outlets, including print and electronic platforms, persistently report on incidents of innocent persons being abducted, therefore emphasizing the potential overburdened state of Nigerian security agencies (Kyrian, 2019). Abdulkabir (2017), reported a significant surge in kidnapping rates, with over 2000 individuals, including young Chibok girls, government officials, politicians, and kings, being recorded as victims between 2014 and 2017. In a 2017 publication, Briggs noted that abduction has evolved into a lucrative enterprise driven by financial gain rather than ethical considerations.

In recent times, the Nigerian State, specifically the Nigerian Railway Corporation, has experienced multiple instances of high-profile attacks. On 28 March 2022, armed bandits launched an assault on an Abuja-Kaduna bound train resulting in the death of over 8 individuals and the abduction of more than 100 passengers. The perpetrators demanded a ransom of one hundred million naira for each of abducted passengers (Premium Times, 2022). On January 7, 2023, armed gunmen launched an assault on a train station in Edo State, resulting in the abduction of 32 individuals (Premium Times, 2023). The Cable network (2022), reported that a total of 4611 individuals were abducted in 2022. The Cable report further indicated a daily average of 13 abductions in highly violent incidents between January and December 2022 (The Cable, 2022).

In 2017 alone, the Nigerian police claimed to have apprehended more than a thousand individuals suspected of kidnapping and armed robbery (Akinloye, 2017). Kidnapping, being a form of organized crime, presents significant challenges for security authorities. The prevalence of kidnapping has had devastating impacts on Nigeria's economy, education, and social cohesion. Agriculture, the backbone of Nigeria's economy, has been severely affected as farmers abandon their fields for fear of abduction. It is against this background that this study assessed the phenomenon of kidnapping in Nigeria, focusing on its challenges and mitigation strategies.

Study Objectives

The aim of this paper is to assess the phenomenon of kidnapping with focus on its challenges and its mitigation strategies. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Interrogate the concept of kidnapping
- ii. Identify the causes of kidnapping in Nigeria
- iii. Ascertain the impact of kidnapping on the Nigerian State

Conceptual Clarification

This section of the paper clarifies the concept of kidnapping to foreclose the possibility of possible misunderstanding of usage

Criminologists have provided several definitions of Kidnapping. Okonkwo (2020) defined kidnapping as the act of unlawfully imprisoning and holding someone hostage without their consent, or unlawfully holding someone captive in a way that hinders their ability to seek release from a court or reveal the location of their imprisonment to others, or in a manner that prevents anyone entitled to access this information from discovering the place of their captivity (Okonkwo, 2020).

According to Schmallegger (2017), kidnapping is a criminal offence defined by the presence of the "corpus delict," which refers to the essential ingredients required to establish the conduct as a crime. However, abduction is not a situational crime because it possesses both mens rea and actus rea, elements which are the two fundamental components of a criminal act, in an adequate proportion. Okonkwo (2020), explained that "mens rea" refers to the deliberate desire to commit a crime, or the mental state that follows a criminal conduct while "Actus reus" is the guilty conduct that is an essential first element of any crime constituting a breach of the law.

For Bryne and Taxman (2016), kidnapping is a deliberate decision, rather than an inevitable reaction to a desperate situation. Farabee (2015) provided further explanation to support this stance by rejecting the widely held notion that kidnappers are fundamentally

compelled to engage in criminal activities, since this creates a highly detrimental expectation for both them and future offenders.

Therefore, kidnapping leads to a disturbance of order and a deterioration of public security. Ugwu (2020), is of the view that the strategies used to tackle kidnapping are insufficient noting that while the police devise more strategies to apprehend the kidnappers, the criminals intensify their tactics of terrorizing the public. As pervasive phenomenon in Nigeria, kidnapping has significantly impacted our collective moral compass. It constitutes a prevalent violation of both the law and the victim. Furthermore, it imposes limitations on the mobility of the victims, which makes nonsense of the constitutional guarantee of freedom of movement in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Ugwu (2020) noted that the crime of abduction is dehumanizing, since it could result in the death of the victim. Kidnapping has evolved beyond mere ransom demand as death is typically the inevitable outcome for those who are unable to produce the often-exorbitant sum demanded as ransom, even after a humiliating bargain or negotiation process.

Kidnapping, as defined in legal and criminological literature, refers to the unlawful abduction or confinement of a person against their will. The term often encompasses acts carried out for financial ransom, political leverage, or personal vendettas (Okeke, 2021). In the Nigerian context, kidnapping has been conceptualized as a reflection of broader socio-economic inequalities and systemic failures, including unemployment, poverty, and weak law enforcement structures (Eze, 2023).

The Nigerian Criminal Code (Section 364) criminalizes kidnapping, prescribing severe penalties, including life imprisonment. Despite these legal provisions, the crime persists and has evolved into a lucrative business for criminal syndicates. Scholars such as Olumide (2022) argue that the structural weaknesses in Nigeria's criminal justice system allow kidnapping to thrive, with perpetrators often escaping prosecution due to corruption and lack of evidence.

Literature Review

In recent years, there has been an alarming increase in kidnapping instances in Nigeria. The SBM Intelligence Report (2022) states that more than 5,000 people were abducted in 2021 alone, and that ransom demands hit previously unheard-of heights. Banditry and insurgency have been identified as hotspots in the Northwest and Northeast. The notorious kidnapping of more than 300 students from Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, in Katsina State in December 2020 serves as a sobering reminder that kidnappings of schoolchildren, commonly referred to as "school abductions," have grown especially common (Aliyu, 2022).

Nigeria has a high rate of kidnapping due to a number of socioeconomic issues. It is commonly accepted that unemployment and poverty are the main causes. Nigeria's unemployment rate was 33.3% in 2022, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), and a sizable share of the unemployed population was young. Many turn to illegal actions, such as kidnapping, as a method of surviving because of this economic disenfranchisement. It is impossible to ignore organized crime's influence. In Nigeria, kidnapping has developed into a well-organized enterprise with networks of enforcers, negotiators, and informants (Adebayo, 2023). These networks are frequently connected to other illegal activities, such as human trafficking and the smuggling of weapons.

The issue is made worse by Nigeria's political and security climate. Kidnapping thrives because of poor governance and insufficient law enforcement. Nigeria has a police-to-citizen ratio of 1:540, which is much lower than the UN's recommended ratio of 1:450 and leaves large areas unguarded (Onuoha, 2023). The spread of light weapons and small weaponry has also given kidnappers more confidence. According to the Arms Trade Treaty Monitor (2022), there are an estimated six million illegal firearms in Nigeria, much of which are in the hands of criminal organizations.

Numerous high-profile kidnapping cases have attracted both domestic and foreign interest. More than thirty students were abducted from the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization, Kaduna, in March 2021. The incident highlighted the vulnerability of educational institutions, even if they were later freed following ransom payments. Similar to this, the July 2021 kidnapping of 121 students from Bethel Baptist High School brought attention to the practice of targeting schools as soft targets. Highway abductions have increased in frequency outside of schools. For example, the Abuja-Kaduna Expressway has become notorious for its high rate of kidnappings. A single attack in July 2023 resulted in the kidnapping of more than 40 travelers, causing significant indignation and demands for increased protection (The Daily Trust, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

Rational Choice Theory of crime

This work is based on the goals of the Rational Choice Theory of criminal behaviour. Cornish and Clarke (1986) argue that criminals do not engage in criminal behaviour by mere coincidence. It is their firm belief that criminals possess a very robust premeditated intention to carry out the deed. They strengthened this stance by asserting that humans are rational agents who carefully consider the methods and objectives, the expenses and advantages, before making

a logical decision. The proponents the theory believe that it would facilitate the contemplation of situational crime control and prevention. The prevailing assumption is that crime is a deliberate action aimed at satisfying the desires of the perpetrator, such as financial resources, social standing, sexual gratification, and thrill. Fulfilling these desires require making decisions and choices, which are influenced by constraints, capabilities, and the accessibility of pertinent information (Clarke 1997).

In Nigeria, social, political, and economic considerations play major roles in kidnapping. These causes can be explained by RCT as logical acts taken by people or organizations with the intention of achieving particular objectives. Potential large financial gain is a major motivator for many kidnapers. For example, in places where law enforcement is weak, ransom payments offer substantial benefits with comparatively low dangers. For instance, the high unemployment and poverty rates in the Niger Delta have driven many to turn to kidnapping as a profitable alternative source of income (Aghedo, 2015). Because of the shortcomings of Nigeria's legal and law enforcement institutions, kidnapping is relatively inexpensive. As noted by Edeh et al, (2020), in rural or conflict-prone areas, offenders justify their behavior by pointing to the slim chances of being apprehended and successfully prosecuted.

RCT can also be used to understand the effects of kidnapping in Nigeria by comparing the perceived rewards for the perpetrators with the wider social, economic, and political costs. Governments, corporations, and families all invest a lot of money in ransom payments. This willingness to pay is a predictable economic behavior of victims that perpetrators logically take advantage of (Okoli & Agada, 2020). Communities and victims endure severe trauma and anxiety, which lowers social cohesiveness and quality of life. Communities are motivated to relocate or engage in private security due to the threat of future kidnappings, which changes the social dynamics of the community.

Methodology

This study is theoretical in nature. Therefore, it relied heavily on secondary data sources such books, journals, specialized reports and the internet. The chosen literature sources were subjected to review to see those whose objectives aligned with those of the current paper.

Discussion

Analysis of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping is a widespread crime that has existed since the emergence of contemporary society. According to Handrahan (2014) and Menon (2016), the Kyrgyzstan kidnappings were conducted with the intention of reinforcing masculinity and consolidating a robust ethnic identity. Bridal abductions in India are undertaken with the intention of diminishing women's social standing and the bride's ability to negotiate. Furthermore, the motivation for kidnapping is strongly influenced by the cultural aspects of other countries. Abduction in Nigeria surpasses the traditional categorization of abduction on a worldwide scale. A compelling argument can be made that the majority of kidnappings in Nigeria arise from the interconnection of corruption and unemployment among the younger population. This notion is supported by Dambazau (2014), who argues that the absence of effective leadership, coupled with inadequate governance, significantly contribute to the explanation of the issue.

Although Nigeria is characterized by ethnic and religious divisions, the methods used for kidnapping challenge ethnocentric approaches. The success of kidnapping in Nigeria is not influenced by ethnic affiliations, but rather by the information received and the techniques used. However, the majority of kidnapping incidents are confined to specific ethnic groups. The escalation of kidnapping in Nigeria indicates that the primary factors contributing to kidnapping are politicians, poverty, terrorism, inadequate sanctions and the pursuit of quick financial gain. Consequently, kidnapping is a significant social issue that requires national resolution

Incidents of abduction have primarily been documented by the media, with minimal examination within academic circles (Akure 2017). Thom-Otuya also examines this notion; her research delves into the motivations of kidnappers, the response of the government, and the impact on Nigeria's National Security, with a particular emphasis on the Niger Delta region and the abduction of oil workers and expatriates. Thom-Otuya (2020) differs from Dodo (2020) by not addressing cultural and traditional norms related to kidnapping. However, Thom-Otuya does advocate for the augmentation of military and defense expenditures (Thom-Otuya 2020). Nevertheless, the implementation of military security measures does not inherently answer the aforementioned concerns. Despite increased military expenditure over time, which encompasses security measures, the occurrence of ritual and ransom kidnappings has not shown any reduction.

Jordan (2017) is one of the few that contextualizes and elucidates that kidnapping is linked to socioeconomic disparities, power dynamics, and inequities. Moreover, Igwe (2016) stated that the problem of kidnapping in Nigeria is characterized by a pervasive and robust belief in the pursuit of rapid financial gains. The belief is held by both the educated and the uneducated, by individuals of all religious affiliations, and by those who engage in abductions and those who

do not. Contemporary education in the fields of science and logic has not adequately eliminated the idea. Despite the presence of pertinent legislation, individuals continue to engage in illegal abductions for financial gain. The conviction in immediate financial gain, commonly perceived as self-evident, has motivated individuals nationwide to abduct, commit homicide, and intentionally harm other individuals, including their own family members (Igwe, 2016).

Although individuals' aspirations and values vary from person to person, it must be acknowledged that to a greater extent, the Nigerian polity is skewed towards a materialistic lifestyle. Most people wish to be rich which is not inherently a negative thing. The aspiration and struggle which leads to kidnapping plays out in two narratives: Firstly, the aim of kidnapping is not directly focused on being wealthy, but as means to obtain financial liberation where little and very tight opportunity for financial freedom is available in the polity. Secondly, the influence and affluence in society push some people aspiring for social status to engage in devious acts such as ransom and ritual kidnapping. This would be a fast way for people to obtain money required to ascend the social ladder that they clamor for. At this juncture, it can be deduced that ransom and ritual kidnapping stem from materialism which becomes a security challenge to the state. This is not to say that materialism itself is the problem, but it becomes a problem due to the degree of its pursuit by those who employ its usage for their means.

From the political side, Yun revealed that since the mid-1990s, hostage-taking and kidnapping increased as preferred tactics of political terrorist (Yun, 2017). Apart from the political kidnapping which politicians use as a means to make their opponent give in to their demands, many politicians in Nigeria are believed to be involved in ritual kidnapping for sacrifice.

Causes of kidnapping in Nigeria

Ohakhire (2020), has attributed kidnapping to the pursuit of ransom, vengeance, and ritual. These are the three fundamental themes of kidnapping, often referred to as the '3rs' of kidnapping. Individual causes of kidnapping are discussed below:

1. **Challenge of Poverty:** Poverty is a global phenomenon which is a recurring problem in Nigeria. It is evident from personal observation, scholarly works, and newspaper, radio and television commentaries that despite its abundant resources and oil wealth, Nigeria is ravaged by poverty. The situation has worsened since the late 1990's to the extent that the country is considered one of the twenty poorest nations in the world; over seventy percent of the population is classified as poor with about thirty five percent living in abject poverty

(Rural Poverty Portal, 2018). Kinoti (2014) in Oyewole (2016) posited that poverty is directly related to crime. He contends that if people do not have enough to eat, they steal to survive. When people become desperate for food and other necessities, they will steal and even kill to get what they need. The Brookings Institution's report (2018) ranked Nigeria as the poverty capital of the world with 93.9% of Nigerians living below poverty line. Poverty in Nigeria is generally believed to be prime cause of kidnapping in the country.

2. **Challenge of Unemployment:** Lack of employment opportunities for the youths in different parts of Nigeria is one major cause of the prevalence of kidnapping. Inyang (2019) associated kidnapping to the endemic rate of youth joblessness. He corroborated this fact by citing the widely acknowledged adage, which says that "an idle man is the devil's workshop" to present the situation of unemployment in Nigeria. Linus (2015) noted that there are uncountable able-bodied men and women in Nigeria roaming the streets in search of non-existing job. Out of frustration together with mounting responsibilities to tackle many idle young persons have ventured into criminal activities including kidnapping.
3. **Proliferation of Arms and Military Uniforms:** Inyang (2019) believed that the purchase of large caches of arms as a result of political patronage of miscreant who were dumped after elections may indirectly encourage and enhance kidnapping. He equated today's kidnapping situation to the episode of armed robbery in the early eighties where many able-bodied young men who fought during the Nigerian civil war were discharged and sent home without adequate post-war debriefing and empowerment. By the same token, many of the youths (thugs) used and abandoned by politicians after winning elections have turned to kidnapping innocent person and relatives of those persons they thought to be wealthy (Inyang & Ubong, 2016).
4. **Moral degradation and the need for rapid accumulation of wealth:** The challenge of moral decadence and the quest to get rich quick syndrome are some of the causative factors of kidnapping according to Inyang and Ubong (2016). According to Inyang (2019), in Nigeria, nobody asks questions on how people make their wealth as a poor person today, can show up with an expensive car tomorrow and nobody dares to question the source of the sudden wealth. He further asserted that people of questionable backgrounds who donated money to develop their communities are rewarded with chieftaincy titles thereby creating a wrong impression in the minds of some Nigerian youths, who thereafter, take to kidnapping. Inyang and Ubong (2016) identified greed as one of the causes of kidnapping in Nigeria

noting that it is greed that pushes perpetrators to brutalize and torture a stranger and put his family through a cruel ordeal for weeks, months sometimes years.

5. **Corruption and bad Governance:** The decline of the state's administrative and institutional capabilities, the corruption epidemic, inconsistent economic policies, external shocks, the weak rule of law and military dictatorship, the escalation of ethnic nationality conflicts, and the state's incapacity to carry out its policies and decisions because of corruption and refraction of such policies through prisms of ethnic and sectional interest have all been cited as reasons for the economic failure (Arewa, 2016). This is called the breakdown of institutional infrastructures (Fukuyama, 2018). The foundations of institutional framework in Nigeria are very insecure and have motivated a weakening of state governance and democratic accountability, thus, paralyzing the existing formal and legitimate rules nested in the hierarchy of social order (Asuquo, 2019). The state of insecurity in Nigeria is a function of government failure. This manifests in the incapacity of government to deliver public goods to its citizens (Igbuzor, 2017). This lack of basic necessities for the Nigerian people has created a growing army of frustrated people who resort to violence at the slightest provocation or opportunity. Even though, Nigeria is full of resources to meet the needs of her people, the well-established culture of corruption in public service has brought about the dearth of basic necessities.
6. **Insufficient Equipment for Law Enforcement Agencies:** Thon-Otuya (2020) posited that most of the kidnaps carried out by the militant that their victims are always ferried to the creek for custody and others carried out in other parts of the country, the bandits take them into the bushes of ungoverned spaces. She further asserts that the Nigerian navy does not have enough functional equipment to monitor and secure the porous water way. The Navy, according to her, has only about ten (10) combat ships with about twelve (12) defender boats; none of this ship is below thirty years. She is inadequately equipped to police her sea lanes, and this makes her inadequately equipped to monitor sea pirates and kidnap activities. The police and the customs are also ill equipped to match the sophisticated weapons been used by bandits.
7. **Prevalence of Substance Abuse:** The rise in kidnapping is directly linked to the widespread use and trafficking of illicit drugs (Okoli, 2019). The proliferation of hard drugs contributes to the occurrence of violent crimes, such as kidnapping and armed robbery, in Nigeria. Every day, illegal drug sales outlets emerge where criminal activities are planned, perfected, and carried out. Some street corners in several states in Nigeria have been transformed into no go areas for law-abiding citizens, as unscrupulous criminals have converted them into

ghettos and hideouts for their illicit drug deals and consumptions. Once the drug users become intoxicated, they become fearless, audacious, and inhumane, enabling them to commit kidnapping without any moral restraint.

8. **Inequality and Lack of Equity and Justice:** The perception of marginalisation among many Nigerians is influenced by the superficiality displayed by the political class and economic elite in relation to the severe poverty experienced by citizens. The elite has also commoditized security. As Ezemenaka (2018), argued, the security of the Nigerian nation-state has been diminished to that of the ruler and his immediate supporters. Consequently, the security architecture of the Nigerian state has failed in incorporating crucial elements of social and national development, supported by the provision of fundamental social, economic, or even military conditions necessary for effective national security. This state of inequality, unfairness, and injustice has hardened the people, compelling them to take control of their own fate and kidnapping is one of such means of getting by.

Effects of Kidnapping on Nigeria

In Nigeria, kidnapping has become a serious security issue that has serious repercussions for people, communities, and the country as a whole. The impacts include those related to psychology, the economy, education, and security.

Psychological and Social Trauma

Kidnapping imposes significant psychological burdens on victims and their families. Survivors often experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety, which can take years to overcome. Families of victims live in constant fear, while communities subjected to repeated kidnappings experience increased social distrust and instability (Agbu, 2023; SBM Intelligence, 2023).

Economic Consequences

The economic ramifications are equally severe. Families are drained of their savings through ransom payments, with kidnappers demanding sums as high as ₦5 billion in a year. Businesses in kidnapping-prone regions suffer disruptions, discouraging local and foreign investment. Additionally, ransom payments sometimes exceed ₦302 million annually, further straining Nigeria's struggling economy (SBM Intelligence, 2023; The Guardian, 2023).

Disruption of Education

Targeted attacks on schools have forced closures, particularly in northern Nigeria, leading to setbacks in educational attainment. The 2021 mass abduction of schoolchildren in

Zamfara and Kaduna highlights the risks, discouraging parents from enrolling their children in school due to safety concerns. This trend exacerbates educational inequality and weakens human capital development (Abdulrahman et al., 2021; The Guardian, 2023).

Escalation of Security Challenges

The proliferation of kidnapping undermines national security. Kidnappers, often armed with sophisticated weapons, exploit weak law enforcement structures. The inability of security agencies to prevent kidnappings emboldens criminals and fosters a climate of impunity (SBM Intelligence, 2023; Agbu, 2023).

Impact on Religious Practices

Religious institutions and leaders have not been spared. In 2023, at least 21 Catholic priests were abducted, many during services. Such incidents disrupt religious practices, erode communal trust, and highlight the boldness of kidnappers targeting high-profile figures (The Guardian, 2023)

Strategies Adopted by the Government to Address Kidnapping in Nigeria

The Nigerian government has taken a number of actions to stop kidnapping, from stepping up military operations to passing new laws. A stronger legal basis for prosecution was made possible by the Terrorism (Prevention) (Amendment) Act, 2022, which designated abduction as an act of terrorism. In order to improve local security, state governments have also introduced community policing programs, especially in the Northwest.

Despite these initiatives, kidnapping has not abated. Anti-kidnapping efforts are less effective when security agencies are corrupt. Furthermore, the abduction economy is sustained by ransom payments, which are frequently made by desperate families. Olawale (2024) asserts that in order to address the underlying reasons of kidnapping, a multi-stakeholder strategy involving the government, civic society, and international partners is desperately needed.

Conclusion

In Nigeria, kidnapping is still a serious problem that is influenced by many socioeconomic, political, and security variables. Such variables have been interrogated in this study. The study notes that while recent government initiatives have produced some encouraging results, much more needs to be done. A comprehensive strategy that incorporates strong law enforcement, socioeconomic improvements, and community involvement is needed to address the underlying causes of kidnapping. Nigeria can only successfully counter this threat and rebuild public trust in its security sector by putting forth consistent and concerted efforts.

Recommendations

Arising from the interrogation of the challenges of kidnapping and the persistence of the menace, the following recommendations are put forward to help in the mitigation of the scourge.

- i. To combat poverty and offer alternate sources of income, governments should expand access to reasonably priced education and career training, particularly in rural regions. Education has the capacity to foster entrepreneurial endeavors and create job possibilities.
- ii. Increased government accountability and openness can lessen corruption, which frequently feeds resentment that results in illegal activity.
- iii. To foster confidence between local communities and law enforcement, community policing should be strengthened. This would allow for more proactive crime prevention.
- iv. The government should deploy cutting-edge surveillance equipment at national borders to stop the flow of weapons and criminals that support kidnapping operations. It should also work with neighbouring countries to battle international crime syndicates that engage in kidnapping.
- v. Concerted efforts must be made to offer victims and their families counseling and psychological support to aid in their trauma recovery. This is in addition to providing families who have experienced economic instability as a result of ransom payments with financial support or reintegration initiatives.
- vi. Government should create neighborhood watch programs and urge people to report questionable activity without worrying about the consequences. There is also the need to reward or incentivize whistleblowers who provide credible intelligence about the location and apprehension of abductors.
- vii. The National Assembly should amend current legislations relating to kidnapping and similar crimes to inflict harsher penalties on kidnappers and their sponsors. On its part, the judiciary should ensure prompt dispensation of justice through expediting action on the prosecution procedure for offenses involving kidnapping or abduction.

References

- Abdulkabir, O.S. (2017) Causes and incisive solutions to widespread incidence of kidnapping in Nigeria's current administration: Under scholastic scrutiny, *Journal of Political Science & Public Affairs* 5:258
- Abdulrahman, I., Abubakar, M., & Yusuf, M. (2021). Educational Disruption Due to Kidnapping in Northern Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Security Studies*, 5(3), 45-58.

- Adebayo, T. (2023). *The Economics of Kidnapping in Nigeria: Trends and Solutions*. Abuja: Security Monitor Press.
- Agbu, O. (2023). Kidnapping in Nigeria: Patterns and Policy Responses. *African Security Review*, 32(2), 120-136.
- Aghedo, I. (2015). Sowing peace, reaping violence: Understanding the resurgence of kidnapping in post-amnesty Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Insight on Africa*, 7(2), 137-153.
- Akinloye B., (2017). 1,000 kidnappers, robbers arrested – IG. *The Punch* <http://punchng.com/1000-kidnappers-robbers-arrested>
- Akure, P.D., (2017). Kidnappers, ritual killers' den discovered beside Ondo Assembly. *The Punch* <http://punchng.com/kidnappers-ritual-killers-den-discovered-beside-ondo-assembly/>
- Aliyu, M. (2022). "Rising Cases of School Abductions in Northern Nigeria." *Journal of African Security Studies*, 15(3), 45-63.
- Arms Trade Treaty Monitor. (2022). *Illicit Arms and Kidnapping in Nigeria*. Geneva: ATT Secretariat.
- Daily Trust. (2023). "Kidnapping Surge along Abuja-Kaduna Highway." *Daily Trust*, July 14, 2023.
- Dambazau, A. (2014). Nigeria and her security challenges. *Harvard International Review* <http://hir.harvard.edu/article/?a=5711>
- Dodo, W. A. (2020). The causes and remedies of kidnapping in Nigeria, *The Nigerian Academic Forum*, 19 (1): 1-4
- Eze, O. (2023). *Criminality and Security Challenges in Nigeria*. Lagos: Frontier Books.
- Handrahan, L. (2014). Hunting for women: Bride-kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 6: 207-233
- Igwe, L. (2016). Money making rituals and superstition in Nigeria, *Sahara Reporters*, January 23. <https://saharareporters.com/2013/01/21/money-making-rituals-and-superstition-nigeria-leo-igwe/>
- Inyang, U. S. (2019). "Kidnapping: Who Can Deliver Nigeria?" *News D' OR Magazine*, pp. 11-15
- Jordan, S.D. (2017) Ritual Killing, 419, and Fast Wealth: Inequality and the popular imagination in South-eastern Nigeria, *American Ethnologist*, 28:803-826
- Kyrian, I. (2019). Intelligence reports and Kidnapping. *Dawn*, May 17, p.9.

- Menon, T. K. (2016). Crime against women in India: Violence within and without, *Philosophy and Social Action* 29:17-22
- National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2023). *Labour Force Report: 2022*. Abuja: NBS.
- Oarhe O.; I. and Aghedo (2020). The open sore of a nation: Corruption complex and internal security in Nigeria. *African Security* 3(1): 127147
- Ohakhire, A.E., (2020). "Re-positioning the Nigeria Democratic Police to meet the Challenges of Policing a Democratic Society in the 21st century and beyond" A paper presented at the Retreat at the Police Service Commission held at Le-meridian Hotel, Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria, 1 to 4 November.
- Okoli, A. (2019). "Revealed! How Traditional Rulers Are Aiding Kidnapping in Abia". Vanguard, July 4, p. 10
- Okoli, A. C., & Agada, F. E. (2020). Kidnapping and the dilemma of public safety in Nigeria. *Journal of African Studies*, 12(3), 50-65.
- Olawale, S. (2024). "Rethinking Counter-Kidnapping Strategies in Nigeria." *African Journal of Security Studies*, 18(2), 112-128.
- Olumide, K. (2022). *Understanding Crime in Nigeria: A Multidimensional Approach*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Onuoha, F. (2023). "The Role of Law Enforcement in Tackling Kidnapping in Nigeria." *Nigerian Police Journal*, 19(1), 78-94.
- Oyewole, S. (2016). Kidnapping for rituals: Article of faith and insecurity in Nigeria, *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 9 (9): 35-52
- Premium Times (2023) Gunmen attack Nigerian train station, kidnap many passengers. Premium Times [online] Accessed from: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com>
- SBM Intelligence. (2022). *Kidnapping Trends in Nigeria: A Statistical Analysis*. Lagos: SBM Intelligence.
- SBM Intelligence. (2023). *The economics of Nigeria's kidnap industry*. Retrieved from [SBM Intelligence](#) 1 August, 2024
- The Cable (2022) In Detail: Non-state actors killed 4,545 people, kidnapped 4,611 in 2022". The Cable [online] Accessed 4th August, 2024 from: <https://www.thecable.ng>
- The Guardian Nigeria. (2023, July 23). The economics behind Nigeria's kidnap epidemic. Retrieved from [The Guardian Nigeria](#).
- Thom-Otuya, BEN (2020) Kidnapping: a challenge to Nigeria security system. *International Journal of Social Sciences* 2(8):107–116