

# **Nigerian Security Challenges: Unsafe Schools, Residential and Dangerous Travel Networks**

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## **Abstract**

There has been a heave of kidnapping cases in recent time in Nigeria. This act of criminality is perpetrated by conventional and emerging immoral groups as well as individual criminals for a range of reasons. Kidnapping cuts across all regions of Nigeria and anyone could be kidnapped at anytime and anywhere, ranging from people's residential homes through the roads and railways. A problem previously strange to the people has speedily become domesticated. In the last decade, the volatile oil rich regions of the Niger Delta, first witnessed this incident on a large scale with the target being regularly expatriates and some few Nigerians in the oil trade. It has now spread all over the country extending to places as far as Zamfara, Katsina and Sokoto in the Northern part of Nigeria. South-East and South-Southern Nigeria have become known as the kidnapers' playgrounds of Nigeria. This research studied the worsening security situations of Nigerian people residential homes and the journey networks. Recently, a train own by Nigerian Railways Cooperation (NRC) was attacked and many people are still in captivity. While attacks and kidnapping on all Nigerian roads almost become a daily routine more especially Abuja – Kaduna road. Classical method was used in gathering and analyzing data for this work. The paper asserts that the activities of the bandits on our roads, villages and towns make Nigerian security agencies impotent and thereby rendered the citizens automatic preys in the hands of criminals.

**Key words:** Banditry, Kidnapping, Community security, Dangerous roads.

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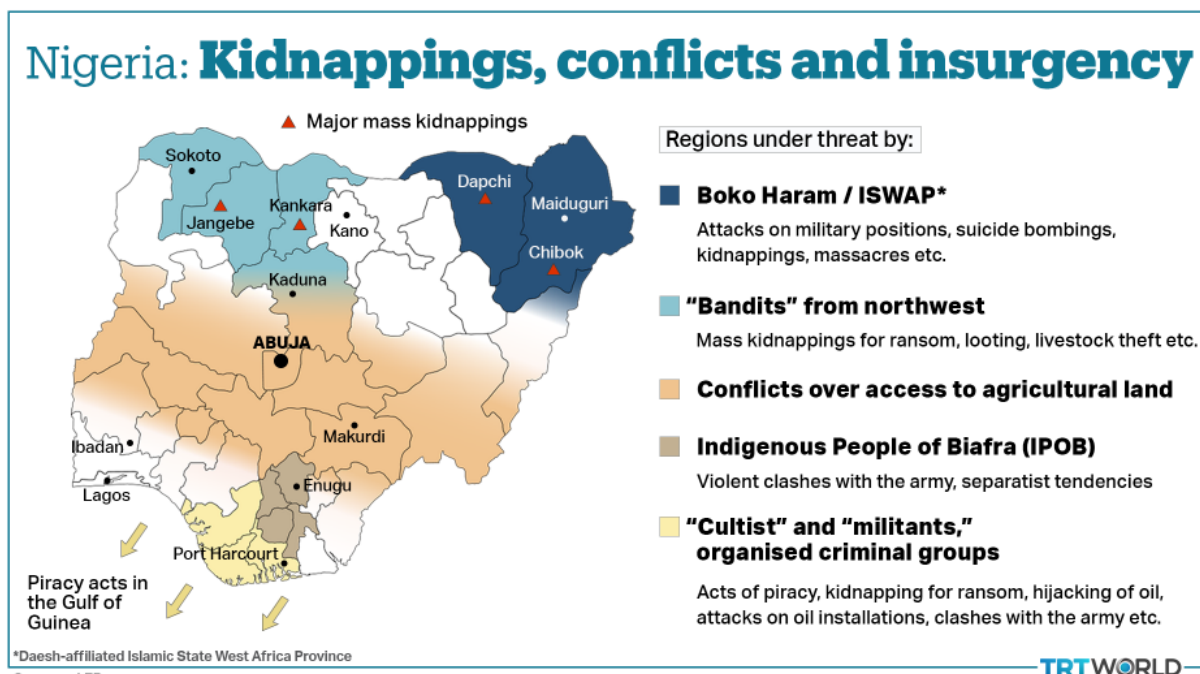
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## **I. Introduction**

Insecurity has become a global pandemonium, for many communities, today's world is an insecure place to live, full of threats from all angles. Lingering crises, violent conflicts, natural disasters, relentless poverty, epidemics and economic meltdown inflict hardships and weaken prospects for harmony, stability, and sustainable growth and development in Nigeria. Currently, many Nigerians sleep with much fear of bandits and kidnapers, not too confident that the night will not turn into bloody nightmare, and those who are travelling in Nigerian roads and Rails are not secure either. People travel despite the risks in doing so, because life must keep moving. Nigerians are not safe in their worshipping places, hundreds of worshippers were murdered in a cool bloods in churches and mosques. This brings about the slogan "No where is safe in Nigeria". When these crises are neglected and it overlaps, it can grow exponentially, spilling into all aspects of people's lives, destroying entire country and crossing national borders. In North-eastern Nigeria people are suffering from the Boko haram terrorists, who kill, kidnap and burn their properties. In north-western Nigeria people are terrorized on the daily basis by the bandits who also kill them burn their properties and put levy on their farm products. Kidnapping is on the high rate as most of the states in the country have recorded kidnapping cases from the north east to the south east, back to the North West, down to the middle belt and the south-south regions have become fear zones for commuters, lest they are kidnapped by armed bandits. These bandits ask for big amount of ransom money that the common Nigerian does not have the resources to pay and rescue their loved ones. However, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provided in section 14 (1) (b) that "the very security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". Dami, (2021) observed that Security remains an essential pre-condition for the development of people and society. This explains the importance of security as

the pre-condition for survival of the Nigerian communities. Therefore, security is the most indispensable requirements of human beings and society at large.

Poor infrastructural designs in schools can expose students to insecurity problems like health hazards and stress. Some female students feel threatened as a result of rampant incidences of sexual abuse and rape in schools and the society (Akintunde, 2015). According to Shuaibu (2015), a safe school is one that fosters peaceful, positive or cordial relationships among students, teachers and administrators. Conversely, insecurity is concerned with feelings of uncertainty, dangers or threats to life. Insecurity is a negative feeling involving fear, anxiety, uncertainty and injustice, among others. When an individual does not have control over a situation but has to rely on the cooperation of others that cannot be guaranteed, the result may be frustration or insecurity. Insecurity is a threat to learning. The special effects of insecurity, Oluwa (2014) notes, comprise increase in the quantum of internally displaced persons; socio-political and economic disruptions; and slow economic growth.



source: AFP (2021).

### Conceptual framework

#### The concept of Security and insecurity

Security can be describe as the steadiness and continuity of livelihood (constant and steady earnings), predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect), safety from crime (feeling safe), and freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional anxiety which results from the guarantee of knowing that one is wanted, loved and protected in someone’s community or neighborhood and by the people around). Security is perceived as one of the fundamental human need that contributes to efficient livelihood. Psychologists projected that security is crucial for human survival. It focuses on the emotional and psychological senses of belonging to a social group that can offer one protection. However, it is generally argued that security is not the absence of threats or security challenges, but the ability to confront these pressures posed by these threats with expertise and expediency.

Following the postulation of hierarchy of Needs by Abraham Maslow, the lower needs of man like food, shelter and security must be met before other higher needs like education or intellectual/cognitive needs. Akintunde, (2015) in Nwosu C. A., Joseph, U., Chukwuka, E., Ukwunna., G. C. (2019), stated that the inability to satisfy the need for security may cause stress in individuals and hinder them from pursuing higher level needs. On a general note, security can be seen as the state of safety, freedom from danger and protection from physical harm. By nature, human beings thrive in security and are instinctively driven by the need to maximize available resources to ensure their physical, physiological and psychological wellbeing. This implies that security is not only limited to protection from physical harm. Security also involves existence of environmental factors that instill peace of mind in an individual in order to empower him/her to function optimally in the society. Poor human relations between teacher and student can hamper students’ mental health and cause insecurity.

While in the other hand insecurity can be defined as the state of fear or anxiety, resulting from a concrete or alleged lack of being protected. Crime is an inevitable feature of urbanization, and that for a society to be exempted from crime is absolutely impossible. This is because the very organization of complex societies prevents total compliance to all social laws by all members (Badiyora, Fadoyin & Omisore, 2013). Chris, (2021) further observed that insecurity is lack of or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition replicate on physical insecurity, which is the most visible type of insecurity, and it translate into many other forms of insecurity of economy and social life.

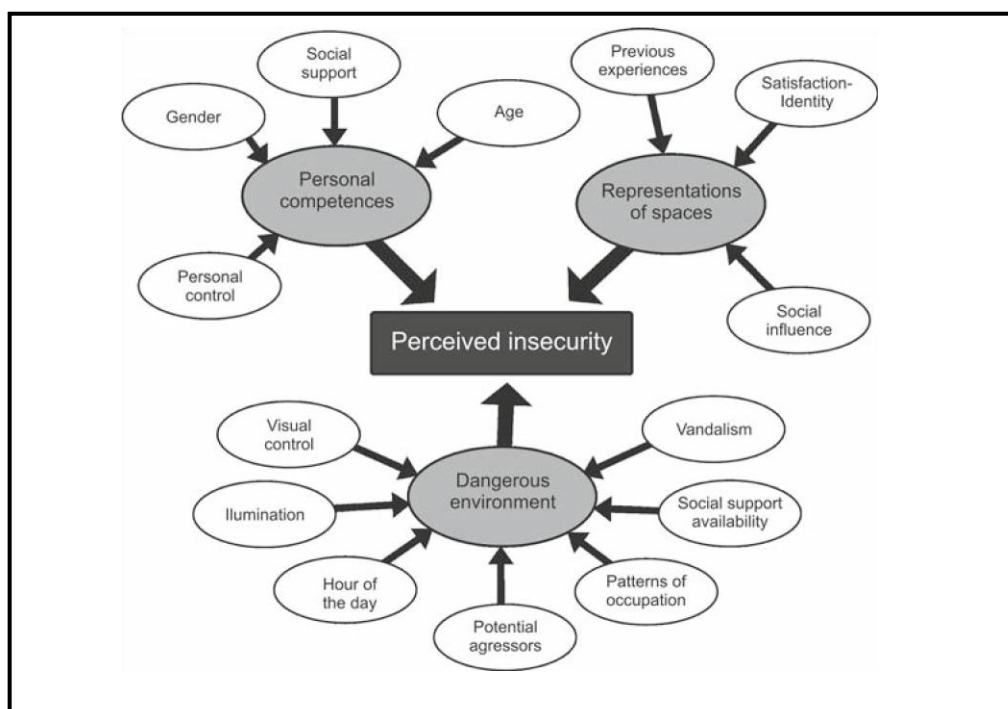


Fig. 1 Graphical representation of the general theoretical model of insecurity perception  
Source: Carro V. & Vidal T. (2010)

### The concept of Kidnapping

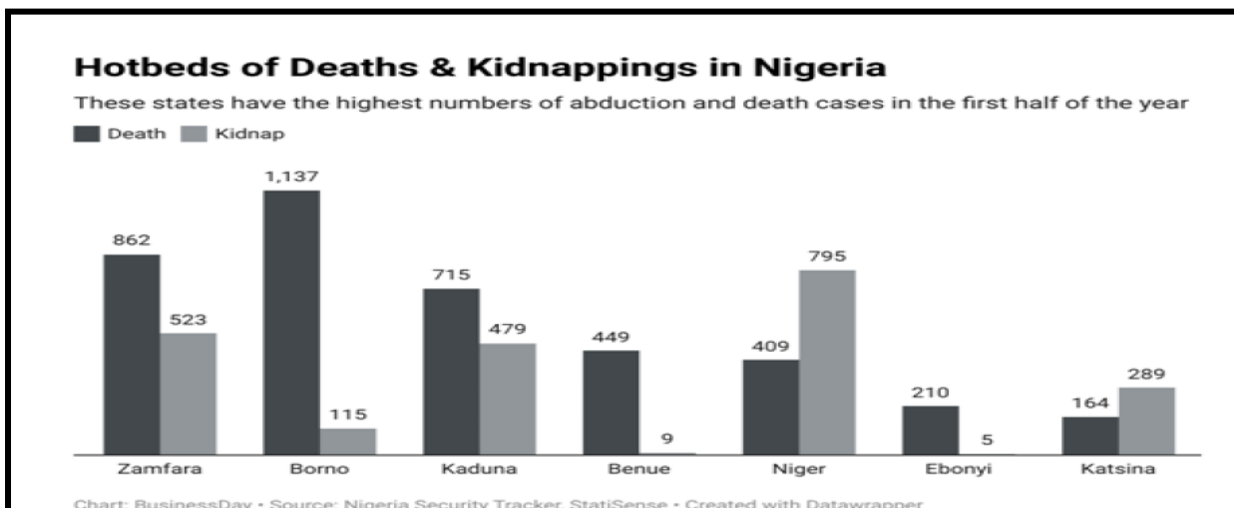
Kidnapping has been defined and categorized by many scholars in multiple dimensions. According to Davidson (2010), kidnapping refers to “a group of criminals armed with guns and cell phones apprehend unsuspecting victims and drag their victim into a secluded spot and begin to make phone calls to whomever and demand for a ransom”. Ogbuehi, (2018) posits that the word kidnapping was first recorded in 1673 as joined together from two different words kid which means “child” and nap from “nab”. Ogbuehi, (2018) further stated that there are no clear records on when the first case of kidnapping was documented in the world, but “kidnapping” has been used to refer to the stealing of children for use as servitudes in American colonies as early as 1673. The online New World Encyclopedia defined kidnapping as the crime of taking away of a person by force, deceit, or threat and detaining that person against their will.

### Who are Nigerian Kidnappers

Kidnappers come across all regions of the country, all ethnic groups in Nigeria do have share in the crime of kidnapping, whereby they abducts any unlucky person within their terrain during their operations. As kidnapping is getting worst, even neighbors, young and old are not exonerated from being the prime suspects of the crime. Fundamentally, in the north-central and north-western Nigeria, the Fulani hostility against the agrarian population which started in the North-Central areas, spreading to the north-west has lead to thousands of deaths of innocent, harmless and armless Nigerians. The mode of operation of the Fulani bandits revolves around kidnapping, abduction and raping of women, attacks on villages and setting them ablaze, obliteration of farmlands. Ojo, (2020) observes that, the decades of primitive conflict between the herders and farmers was reinvigorated in 2018 and continues to abate the security thralldom experienced in the northern region. In southern Nigeria, West, East, and South the kidnappers abducts their victims and demand a huge amount of money from them and threaten to kill them within a short period if the said ransom is not paid.

### History of Kidnapping in Nigeria

There's no official record on when kidnapping has started in Nigeria, but Ogbuehi (2018) traced kidnapping to have first perpetuated by the Federal government of Nigeria when it abducted an Ex-transport minister Alhaji Umaru Dikko in its 1984 effort to repatriate him from London, he was alleged to have stolen \$1b during his time as the Minister. However, several authors have agreed that kidnapping in Nigeria started in Niger-Delta region when agitations against environmental degradation due to the exploration activities by multinational oil companies in the region reach its peak. Today, kidnapping has spread to all other parts of Nigeria. At first, the targets of kidnapers in the Niger-Delta region were foreign nationals, but now the kidnapers abduct anybody they see, rich or poor. Kidnapping has now become a common incidence all over the country.



Source: Nigerian security tracker, statsense (2021).

### Theoretical Framework

This study adopts two theories; the first theory is called the Strain theory! This theory of crime is a product of clash that exists between ends and wants. Nigerians are generally eager for the good life, which requires material possession, power, wealth and recognition. Everybody longs for good things of life despite of their social status. "Strain is connected to criminal motivation, people who feel socially and economically embarrassed may perceive the right to humiliate others in return" (Ogbuehi, 2018) . These theorists are of the opinion that the members of the lower class who are unable to achieve their live goals legitimately get angry and frustrated. This situation puts them in a position of taking to crimes such as kidnapping to make ends meet. This study consider this theory for its relevance with the status of Nigerian kidnapers, especially the Fulani kidnapers whom other scholars argued that they were abandoned wandering in the bushes without formal education, abject poverty and disconnected with social amenities and liberty.

The second theory is the theory of securitization. The theory was propounded by the societal security theorists Wæver, Buzan and Wilde (1998) in Copenhagen School, but became popular among the constructivist studies. The word securitization as coined by Wæver (1995) refers to the process in which state actors convert subjects into matters of security concern that allow extraordinary measures to be taken in issues of security. Messina (2014), viewed that securitization as a process by which apparently non-security issues are converted into urgent security concerns which are therefore portrayed as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind. It has also been conceptualized as process-oriented actions towards security threats which is contrary to materialist approaches of classical security studies. Unlike the classical approaches to security which focus on the material dispositions of threats (like the use of power, military capabilities and polarity), securitization emphasize how an actor can transform certain issue into a matter of security (threat) in order to allow for the use of extraordinary measures to address it.

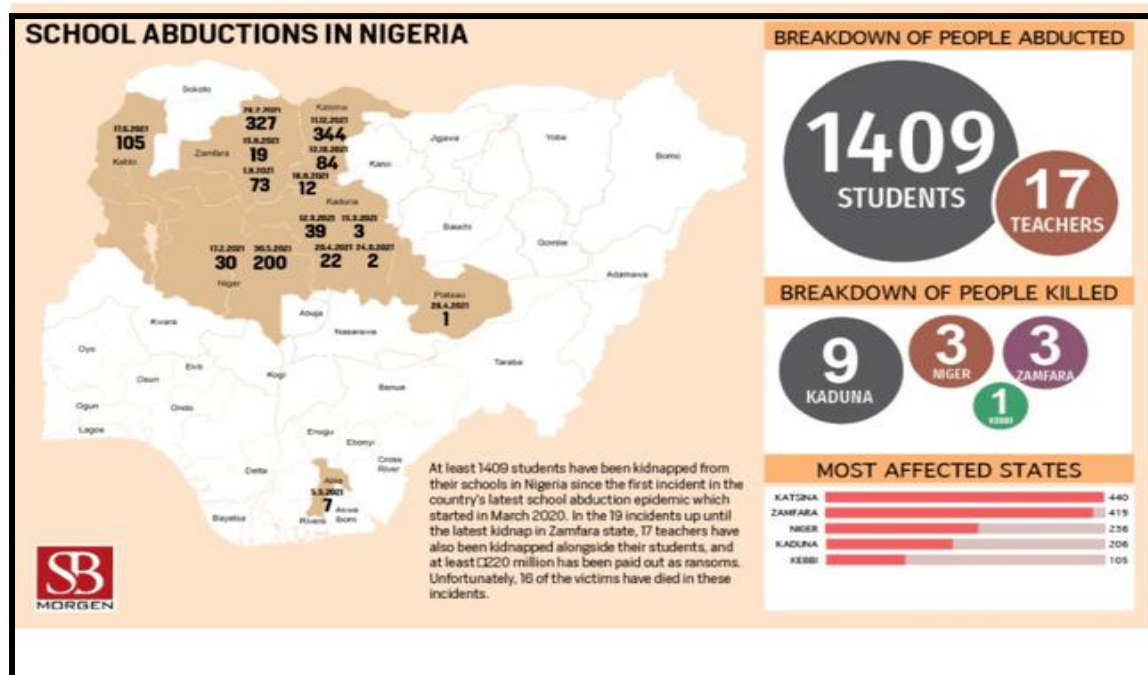
The two theories used in this study are meant to complement each other, while strain theory highlights the reasons and causes of insecurity, and what prompts the kidnapers to such heinous crime, with a view of identifying the problem in order for the government and other stakeholders to avoid the occurrences, the securitization theory tend to suggest the ways in which the authority would facilitate multiple facets and tools in the environment and society to curtail the problem of insecurity.

### Unsafe Nigerian Schools

Education is the bedrock of every nation and no amount of wealth, time or fortune spent on education ever become a waste or too much. The attainment of education to an entity brings about refinements, soberness, vitality, faith, acquaintanceship, scientific researches, self-reliance, and empowerment, political self-regards while to a nation it expends economic, social, political and technological activities or frontiers. (Ejuronemu & Imam, 2021). The need to build a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning activities cannot be overemphasized. However, in the past couple of years the school environments especially those schools at located at the outskirts of the towns had seemingly become a wild environment full of the fear of unknown consequences at every moment. Teachers and students remain in constant fears in the school environment which virtually affects the input and the output.

Insecurity is crippling Nigeria’s education system. In most parts of the country, despite the fact that schooling comes with fair share of challenges, but when students’ risks losing their freedom or lives at school, our tomorrow is under attack (Daily Trust, Wed, 19<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2022). It is on record that over 800 secondary school and university students have been kidnapped in coordinated attacks by terrorists and bandits in the last two years. Currently Nigerian parents accept that schooling is a risky venture that portends the loss of lives and freedom that is normal to scurry around to raise millions in ransom for your child. Abdulganiyu, (2022) further reiterated that insecurity is drastically eating up the educational sector to the extent that government, teachers and the students are being frustrated, leading to educational decay.

Nwosu C. A., Joseph, U., Chukwuka, E., Ukwunna., G. C. (2019) observed that there were cases of kidnapping of teachers and students (Lagos Junior Model College, Igbonla) and there were cases of killing of students and their teachers. Bombs have been brazenly detonated in school assemblies leaving dozens dead (Yobe school attack) while school buildings are burnt down which grounds teaching and learning. Akintunde and Musa, (2016) in Nwosu et. al. (2019) further revealed that insecure school environment affect the learning of children and thus situations of insecurity generate traumatic disorder and toxic pressure that affect learning negatively. General school enrolment and attendance are equally affected as parents take away their children from schools while in some intense cases, the insecurity has led to shutting down of schools. Schools were closed down in Kano state, Niger, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto Zamfara Yobe and Bornu state. These attacks on schools usually lead to outright destruction of school facilities which discourage the establishment of new schools. Consequently, government resources are exhausted as funds intended for other developmental projects are directed towards tackling the aftermath of the attacks. In the end, educational achievement in terms of quality of graduates and manpower suffers which impinge on the overall national development objectives.



Source: SBM Intelligence (2021).

### **Unsafe Nigerian Road Networks**

Travelling in Nigerian roads has become so dangerous, that people move with much fear of uncertainty of their lives and properties. Many people use to get ambushed by the terrorist and kidnapers in the middle of their journeys. In Nigerian road networks, citizens including high rank military personnel other security agents as well as traditional rulers and politicians are not safe either from this mayhem. A lot of people lost their lives over the sporadic shootings of approaching vehicle by the heartless kidnapers just to give them the signal to stop. Adeyamo, (2022), disclosed that Kidnapping has taken on a ubiquitous level in Nigeria with reports of abduction of people in different parts of the country filtering across airwaves daily. From every corner of the country, North, South, East and West, the story remains the same. In couple years, the once peaceful Abuja-Kaduna public road has been described as a road to death due to the growing level of daily kidnapping of travelers including top security officials.

Adeyamo further stated that various drivers laments, incidences of attacks launched on them by kidnapers and armed robbers have become a recurring decimal. They identify various spots on the different roads as being notorious for kidnapers and robbers to launch attacks on commuters and their passengers. More baffling for the drivers and transporters is that some of the incidences of attacks continue to reoccur with little or no resistance from security operatives. They note that the most dangerous times to ply the roads are in the early hours of the day or late evening, with some of them noting that they do not make night journeys anymore. According to the drivers, routes notorious for kidnapping and armed robbery attacks are the Kano-Kaduna-Abuja road, inter-state and local government areas within the states connecting roads of Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, Niger, Borno Taraba Adamawa. East-West road, Ibadan-Ilesha-Akure road, Akoko-Kogi-Lokoja-Abuja road, Lagos-Ibadan, Other routes identified are Ijebu-Ode to Sag- amu road, Ibadan-Ijebu, Ibadan-Oke Ogun zone, People are abducted for ransom on daily basis. While some pay ransom for their freedom, some are killed. Empty vehicles are seen daily with their owners abducted. Motorists have become increasingly fearful on highways because of the in- creasing and intensity of kidnappings.

### **Unsafe Residential Areas**

Majority of Nigerian people cannot sleep with their two eyes closed, without the fear of their homes being invaded by the robbers, kidnapers or the neighborhood miscreants. Many people lost their lives in the hands of these evil perpetrators. It is an understatement that insecurity remains one of the most important challenges bedeviling Nigerian nation. Olajide and kolawale (2013) observed that the significance of keeping a home, its inhabitants, and its treasures safe and secure cannot be overstated, yet the challenges of efficient security strategies can be time- consuming and demanding for some homeowners.

Considering home security system, it ranges from simple to sophisticated ones. This has to do with the level of development, economic capability of the residence owner or house user. Over the years, various systems have been used to provide security for the home. This include, trained dogs, Vigilante, charm, high fencing, thermal cameras, fire wire, alarm systems, surveillance tools and barb-wire, spy gear, fire alarm, home automation, temperature sensor, water and floor sensor, video recorder, CCTV monitors and likes. It needs to be mentioned here that most of the sophisticated home security systems are still not available in Nigeria due to the cost of procurement, difficulty in installation and use, and unplanned nature of most our residential environments (Olajide & Kolawale, 2013). They further emphasized that it needs to be mentioned at this juncture that issue of home security must be handled with dispatch as it determines the emotional stability of the citizens which transform to the determination of their efficiency.

Attacks by bandits have forced thousands of people to flee their homes and seek shelter in other parts of the country and beyond Nigerian boundaries (Aliyu, 2021). One of the scariest intimidations for families in Nigeria is the rampant kidnapping of people in their residence and that of school children from their schools. Some of the kidnapers are commonly referred to as bandits, they raid villages, kidnap civilians and burn down their homes and properties. Aliyu (2021) observed that the north-west is the epicenter of these attacks. He asserts that in Zamfara state alone, over 3000 people have been killed since 2012 and the attacks are still going on. Hundred of schools were closed following the abductions of school children in Kebbi, Zamfara and Niger state, where children as small as 3 years old were abducted.

It is seemingly clear that this heinous crime is becoming Nigeria's lucrative adventure, and is now expanding to the previously safe zones due to the failure of the security agencies to halt the situation. It poses a real threat to the socio-economic activities of the citizenry.

### **Policy implication**

The onerous and significant duty of every government is to protect the lives and properties of its citizenry proactively, Ubong (2016). When security is ensured all other activities of governance would be seen as second priority. Economic growth and strides in socio-political developments are for the people who are alive. No one provides infrastructural facilities, builds schools, develops transport systems and provides health

centers, entertainment, grows food for the dead (Ejukurunemu & Imam, 2021). It is therefore essential that all government officials (Federal, State and the local authorities) and all the stakeholders (school heads, village heads, rich and poor in the community) must see citizens as first priority by way of keeping them alive, safe, and comfortable.

The porous Nigerian borders have to be checked and controlled appropriately. Due to the poor border investigation many fire arms find their ways into the hands of the bad wagons of the society.

There is need for the inspector general of police to issue firearms license to some communities in order to protect themselves, because currently Nigerian security forces cannot protect all the people of Nigeria due to their insignificant number, while Nigerian population is beyond 200 million.

There is need to establish mobile court marshal in all the troubled areas in the country, where the culprits would be tried immediately after the crime is committed, and if found guilty to be executed instantly. Because there are many allegations against the police in condoning and releasing the culprit in their custody.

Governments and stakeholders should ensure that education reaches all and sundry, the policy of nomadic education should be given a serious attention, so that the Fulani herders will be equipped with sound education and be free from illiteracy and social disconnect.

Many young and agile Nigerians are daily roaming the streets without a job, this brings about the risk of joining the already thriving criminal industry. Government at all levels should initiate programs designed at creating jobs for enthusiastic and hardworking Nigerians to get occupied positively. The more they stay in joblessness with desperate hardship, the more their accessibility to take up any job offered, legitimate or otherwise.

## II. Conclusion

This paper examined Nigerian security challenges in the schools, homes and roads networks, which happens to affect every citizen of the country. The authors revealed that the industry of Kidnapping has grown in geometric sequence over the last two decades without remedy. Nigeria continues to experience increasing violence through frequent attacks by terrorist, bandits and kidnappers. Two theories were adopted for the research (Strain and securitization theories) where the strain theory explains sources or causes of the insecurity in Nigeria and securitization theory provides the avenue of tackling the insecurity. The paper posits that insecurity in Nigeria is causing developmental challenges such as endemic poverty, high rate of joblessness, inured corruption, low industrial production, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, insufficient physical and social infrastructure, large domestic debt, and rising external debt profile.

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