

THE MASSACRE OF HIGHER INSTITUTION STUDENTS BY BOKO HARAM, BANDITS AND KIDNAPERS IN NIGERIA: THE VICTIMS' NARRATIVES

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Abstract

In recent times, Nigeria has witnessed an astronomical surge in criminality and violence occasioned by the activities of Boko Haram, Banditry and Kidnappers. No day passes-by without various media houses reporting that these hideous groups has killed, kidnapped and even abducted Nigerians for ransom. The most pathetic and unfortunate situation now is their concentration on killing, kidnapping and abduction of secondary and higher institutions students. For instance, some students of Greenfield University, College of Forestry Mechanisation in Kaduna, Abia State University in Abia state and Federal Polytechnic in Akwa Ibom state to mentioned but a few has been kidnapped and some were killed by these groups. Based on this discourse, the study seeks to investigate students' experience on Boko Haram, Bandits, and Kidnappers' den. This study is located in qualitative approach. In line with qualitative methods, interpretive paradigm is used as lens to understand and interpret participants' narratives. Ethical issues were obtained from the participants' parents, Ministry of Education and the participants before structured interview was administered on them. In fact, ten participants who were kidnapped or abducted, later freed were selected for the study. Data were transcribed, coded and emerging themes were analysed using thematic analysis. Findings indicated that students were always abducted in the night and lectures' time. Additionally, students were subjected to inhuman treatment such as physical torture, rape and starvation. Based on the grounds that university campuses have been as theatre of death instead of citadel where scientific knowledge is acquired, it is recommended among others that more security agents should be sent to the universities to ensure that life and property of students are protected from the insurgents.

Keywords: Massacre, Boko haram, Banditry, Kidnapping, Ransom, University students

Introduction

Before the advent of civilian administration in Nigeria in 1999, there was no reported case of kidnapping, banditry and boko haram. In this study, kidnappers, bandits and boko haram are groups of criminal gangs which take up arms with Nigerian state causing major social, economic, religious and educational instability. During this period, the country only witnessed some pockets of armed robbery in some build-up cities such as Lagos, Benin, Port Harcourt, Kano, Ibadan and Onitsha to mention but a few. In fact, the country was generally peaceful and Nigerians were free to move at any time. It was very common for Nigerians to live in any part of the country without molestation. Furthermore, it was fun those days for a student from any ethnic nationality in Nigeria to live freely and harmoniously in any higher institution of their choice without fear of being kidnapped or killed. Additionally, social activities at nights were at their peak; moreover, students spent midnight oil in their classrooms preparing for their examinations unhindered. From all indications, this violent-free era in Nigeria has been mutilated, killed and buried. Today, however, the hitherto peaceful Nigeria enjoyed by all has been replaced by kidnapping, banditry, gender related violence, armed robbery and boko haram activity. No day passes-by without radio and television stations, newspaper houses reporting that these hideous

groups have killed, kidnapped and even abducted Nigerians for ransom. The number of reported abductions for ransom across the country is rising on daily basis according to security experts.

In recent times, boko haram, kidnapers and bandits has directed their attention to secondary and higher institutions students. For instance, in 2014, boko haram kidnapped 300 girls from Girls secondary school in Chibok, Borno State. In a similar circumstance, more than 150 secondary school students were kidnapped after armed men raided a boarding school there in Kaduna State. Again, Voice of America (VOA) news aired on 25th August, 2020 reported that about 317 girls were abducted from government school in Zamfara state. In the area of higher institutions of learning, about 18 students were abducted after bandits invaded their hostels in Greenfield University in Kaduna State. Five of these students were later killed and report has it that parents of these kidnapped students were made to pay over five million dollars as ransom before these students were released. Still in Kaduna State, over twenty three students were kidnapped by bandits in College of Forestry Mechanisation. They were held for over three weeks until over two million dollars was paid for their released. From all indications, documented evidence revealed that all students kidnapped were usually held at-least for two weeks for ransom negotiation and payment before their released. Personal observation has shown that kidnapped students were kept as long as two months for ransom to be raised and paid before they are released. In light of the above discourse, the big questions that guide study are as follows; at what times are university students usually kidnapped by insurgents? What are kidnapped students' experiences while in insurgents' captivity? These questions will guide in the investigation of the phenomenon under study.

Theoretical Framework Underpinning the Study

Theoretical framework underpinning this study is known as hopelessness theory. The theory was formulated by Abramson, Metalsky and Alloy in 1989 as a response to limitation in Seligman's (1972) theory of helplessness in depression. Looking at helplessness theory briefly, it was established that repeated exposure to uncontrollable and aversive environmental stimuli leads gradually to the belief that the aversive situation is inescapable and a sense of helplessness ensues regarding the situation (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978). Abramson, Metalsky and Alloy (1989) therefore frowned at Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale's (1978) position because helplessness was not able to explain why certain people become depressed when confronted with uncontrollable stressor whereas others did not. This led to theory of hopelessness in which it was argued by Abramson, Metalsky and Alloy (1989) that a proximal sufficient cause of depression is an expectation that highly desired outcomes are unlikely to occur or that highly aversive outcomes are likely to occur and that no response in one's repertoire will change the likelihood of occurrence of these outcomes. Here, hopelessness theory did not only specify the proximal sufficient cause of depression, rather, it also specifies the sequence of events in a causal chain hypothesised to culminate in this proximal sufficient cause. The theory says that "given equivalent situational cues, individuals who exhibit the hypothesised depressogenic attributional style should be more likely than those who do not attribute any particular negative event they confront to internal, stable, global factors and view the events as very important, thereby incrementing the likelihood of becoming hopeless and, in turn, developing (hopelessness) depressive symptoms" (Liu et al, 2015, p.345). This theory has been adopted for many empirical studies. For instance, Haefel et al (2005) used the theory to explain negative cognitive styles, dysfunctional attitudes, and

the remitted depression paradigm. In the similar circumstance, Hankin and Abela (2011) used hopelessness theory on non-suicidal self-injury in adolescence, however, it was discovered that negative inferential style is significant predictor of the behaviour in adolescents. In like manner, hopelessness theory is appropriate for the study because it is used to tease out hopelessness situation of students kidnapped by kidnappers, bandits or boko haram in universities in Nigeria.

Literature review

Genesis of Kidnapping and Banditry for Ransom in Nigeria

The researcher stated at the introduction of this study that there was no case of kidnapping or banditry in Nigeria during the military administration. This ugly situation started prior to 2003 general election. It was obvious that some unscrupulous elected politicians in order to perpetuate themselves in office recruited some youths in the Niger Delta and North East regions of the country for this mission. Apparently, these youths were armed with guns and other dangerous weapons to ensure that their masters are re-elected into various political offices. As someone from the Niger Delta region, this researcher observed that almost of these politicians from the region were violently returned to their offices against electorates' wishes. In fact, elections were lost by the most popular candidates, but won by most criminal minded candidates. It is unfortunate that after the election, those guns and other dangerous weapons were left in the hands of these youths. Moreover, these frustrated youths were abandoned after they assisted their boss to perpetuate themselves in office. It was documented by Akpan (2010); Albert, Danjibo and Albert (2020) that some youths were one time or the other arrested for using those guns for armed robbery and rape. After initial 'petty' criminalities perpetuated by these youths, they regrouped and began using the weapons for the kidnapping of oil and gas companies expatriates in the Niger Delta for ransom. From my position as a citizen of the Niger Delta region, the agitation against environmental degradation by oil companies and general lack of basic social amenities in the region was initially championed by the group to cover up their nefarious criminalities. It was in 2007 that the group started drawing the world attention that they are into kidnapping because of years of neglect of the region by oil companies and Nigerian state.

Kidnappers, Bandits and Boko Haram: Are they Nigerians?

From all indications, not much scholarly works has been done to establish whether those kidnappers, bandits and boko haram members are actually Nigerians or not. In fact, researchers and scholars only focused on the causes of this insurgency, leaving out the identity and nationality of the insurgents. In spite of this, Ojo (2020), Torkwembe (2020), Okpalaojiego (2021) still went on to identify unemployment, politics and greed as the causes of insurgency in Nigeria. Though, these causes might be true. The big question which is debatable is, can foreigners knowing too well that they cannot be employed or engaged in politicking due to Work Visa and Residential restrictions takes up arms with the host country?

On 19th April, 2021, Television Investigative Reporter known as Mr Babajide Otitoju said that most insurgents terrorising Nigeria are from republics of Chad, Niger, Libya and Syria. He went further to say that these countries witnessed decades of civil war. After the war, most of those redundant and mobilised combatants illegally penetrated the country

and engaged in all manners of criminalities. Specifically, Nowak and Gsell (2018) argued that the death of the Libyan President Mu'ammarr Ghaddafi actually paved way for arming of insurgents and other armed groups from Europe and America through the North African borders to the Central Africa and West Africa to Nigeria. Small weapons influx into Nigeria from Libya through Mali and Niger after the collapse of order and security in Libya is enormous. Similarly, The Nation Newspaper of 25th June, 2021, reported that state governors in Nigeria have finally come to realisation that bandits, kidnappers and boko haram members are not Nigerians but foreigners who are mostly from Niger, Mali and Senegal. Furthermore, report from TheCable Newspaper of 14th May, 2021, stated that Nigeria-Niger border is one of popular cross-border trafficking hubs and routes in the West African region, where criminal terrorists from other West African countries suddenly found an abode in Nigeria. Apparently, the presence of these criminal elements in Nigeria is for financial gains. Sule, Mikail and Yahaya (2020) argued that foreign insurgents in Nigeria are largely driven by financial motives, with no known ideological leanings. Aside from hostage taking and cattle hustling for ransom, some of the insurgents engage in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) deal for money. In this paper, SALWs are portable weapons made or modified to military specifications for use as lethal instruments for war or kidnapping. Though, most guns' traffickers operate in black market where these commodities are sold at amount far cheaper than in the conventional market. In spite of sale of these arms cheaper than what is obtainable in international market, Okeke and Oji (2014) held that guns and light weapons trade in Nigeria has made dealers billionaires overnight. In fact, Egbuta (2019) stated that where physical cash is not available to buy these arms, natural resources like crude oil and diamond are exchanged for weapons. These has made the armed actors rich and powerful to the extent that they could control instruments of violence or even challenge government's monopoly of power (Egbuta, 2019).

Effect of Students' Kidnapping in Nigeria

A lot has been written by scholars and researchers about the negative effect of kidnapping students. In Nigeria, President Buhari's government have never allocated huge amount in his annual budget to education ever since he came to power. In 2021 annual budget, a meagre 5.6 per cent was allocated for all levels of education. However, about 25.8 per cent of the budgeted sum is presumed to be wasted through boko haram destruction of school facilities. Dumba, Shittu, Adeyemi and Momoh (2017) using Lagos state as a case study argued that it has been established in recent times that many parents have been forced to withdraw their children from boarding schools due to kidnapping. In states like Borno, Niger, Zamfara and Kaduna, higher institutions of learning has been closed for months due to the menace of kidnappers, bandits and boko haram. The closure of these institutions has compelled students to take to minor crimes such as handset theft, political mugger and streets fight, among others. Fadipe, Uwadia and Kayode (2021) averred that petty criminalities have been on the increase in recent times due to students who were forced to remain at home due to activities of insurgents. On the issue of universities teachers, Joda and Abdulrasheed (2015); Olaniyi and Aminu (2021) held that majority of the higher institutions closed indefinitely and the teachers working escaped during series of attack on their university communities. These universities teachers are currently living at internally displaced camps.

Research Methodology

This study is located in qualitative method. The reason for choosing qualitative method is based on the fact it is valuable in providing rich descriptions of complex phenomena, tracking unique or unexpected events, illuminating the experience and interpretation of events by participants with widely differing stakes and roles and giving voice to those whose views are rarely heard (Vindrola-Padros & Johnson, 2020). In other words, voices and experiences of participants who were once taken hostage by kidnappers, bandits and boko haram and later freed were deeply understood and narrated verbatim. Since participants narrated their experiences when they were in captivity, interpretive paradigm is employed to interpret and make sense of their experiences. Apparently, Siponen, Solimanand and Holtkamp (2021) argued that interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences of individuals.

Population and Sampling Technique

All kidnapped and later freed victims formed the population of this study. In this study, however, purposive sampling technique was used. After all, Campbell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young and Walker (2020) opined that purposive technique is often adopted to ensure that a researcher relies on his or her own judgment when he or she is choosing members of population to participate in the study. Drawing from Campbell et al's (2020) assertion, the researcher adopted purposive sampling to select participants who were kidnapped and later freed after ransom has been paid for the study.

Since these kidnapped and later freed victims (participants) are spread across thirty-six states of the federation and federal capital territory (Abuja), six geopolitical zones (South South zone, South East zone, South West zone, North Central zone, North East zone and North West zone) were used in the selection of participants. In each of the zone, two participants were selected. In total, twelve participants were selected for this study. The method in which information is going to be solicited from participants quickly came to mind. Since this is a qualitative research where participants will volunteer information on his/her experience during and after kidnapped, it is appropriate that semi-structured interview was used to elicit information from the participants.

To reduce old traumatic memories, all ethical issues were taken care of before the actual date for the interview. For instance, this researcher wrote letters to participants' parents requesting their permission to allow them to participate on the study. At the same time, letters of permission were sent to these participants for their voluntary participation on the interview. Consent forms were designed and distributed to all the participants for signature indicating their willingness to volunteer information. Since identification of these students during interview may lead to stigmatisation, their real names were replaced with pseudonym. For avoidance of any ugly incidence of traumatic disorder during interview conversation with the participants, a traumatic therapist was hired to counsel them before the commencement of conversation. However, during the interview session, audio recorder was used. The reason for audio recorder was to ensure that participants' narratives were recorded verbatim. In fact, Nordstrom (2015), Rutakumwa, Mugisha, Bernays, Kabunga, Tumwekwase and Mbonye (2020) had earlier submitted that the reason why audio recorder is used in qualitative research is based on the fact it normalises discursive practice. Similarly, fieldnote was also used during the interview. The reason for the use of fieldnote was because it allows the researcher to write down participants'

feeling in an unobtrusive manner (Canfield, 2011). After the conversation with participants, the information collected was transcribed. The transcribed text was coded using Teman and Saldaña's (2019) model which allow for a pattern which is repetitive, regular and consistent occurrences of action/data that appear more than twice (Saldaña, 2021). The emerging themes after the text has been codified were analysed using narrative analysis (Atkinson & Carver, 2020). The choice of narrative analysis is to understand how my participants construct stories and narrate same based on their kidnapped experience.

Findings

From the analysis of the first research question which bordered at what time did university students usually kidnapped by insurgents are explained below.

They came by night

From the analysis, most of the participants stated me that it was at night that they were captured from their halls of residence by boko haram members. Specifically, Amina narrated how she spent hours in the day studying in the school library. She was forced to return to her room by 9.12 P.M after she felt exhausted with her academic work. On getting to her room, she could only take her bath and went straight to her bed. After some hours, her sound sleep was disrupted with sound of gunshots. She went on to state that before she knew what was going on at that particular moment, she was dragged out of her bed to a waiting truck by three hefty men. In probing further, this researcher asked Amina whether these three men did inform her where they were taking her to. In her reply, she said:

I could not ask where they were taking me to due to that fact I was afraid of being raped or killed. Secondly, since this event happened at night, there was no opportunity to ask any question. Moreso, they used soldier's voice to order me around, therefore, I was so afraid to ask them anything.

In a similar circumstance, Bako who was released from bandits' captivity after ransom of almost six hundred thousand dollars was paid by his parents was still traumatised when this interview was conducted. However, he was able to report that he was abducted by bandits at the middle of the night. He stated that the bandits numbering about twenty-one gained entry into the university campus after they killed security guards on duty. They divided themselves into four groups, thereafter, they moved one room after another picking students. Probing further, Bako was asked how many students they were able to capture and how many trucks were there to convey the kidnapped students. Bako was reluctant to answer the question, after few minutes, he replied:

I would not want to be reminded of the event of that faithful night. But if you insist, the bandits effortlessly kidnapped eighty-six students because all security guards at the university gate were killed and there was no policeman or soldier to give them any resistance. We were all carried away by three lorry trucks they came with.

Narratives from the participants indicated that most kidnappings were carried out at night. In fact, Amina and Bako specifically stated that they were abducted at night by bandits who were ruthless and deadly. Further investigation revealed that before students were taken into captivity, bandits have to kill all security guards on duty. Bako reported that aside from killing of security guards, three lorry trucks were used to transport kidnapped victims to bandits' den.

It happened during lecture period

From the analysis, it was discovered that kidnappings were executed by bandits when students were receiving lectures. A clear oral testimony came from Philips who reported that they were having lecture that particular Tuesday at around 12.25 pm when bandits struck. According to Philips, the incident was like Hollywood film. In fact, we were kidnapped in commando's style during Political Economy class. Within few minutes, all class members were rounded up and matched in a single file to three lorries which were parked outside. This researcher was forced to ask Philips if some students escaped during pandemonium ensued. In his reply, he said:

My brother, I do not want to remember what happened that day because I am still traumatised. Well, to answer your question, actually some students tried to run away but none of them are alive today. Frankly speaking, they were all shot with AK 47 and other automatic guns bandits came with.

In another circumstance, Fatima declared that university communities in Nigeria have become theatre of bloodletting. Students are kidnapped, raped and even killed in broad day light by bandits and government is not doing anything about it. She narrated that she was kidnapped by heavily armed men who dressed in army uniforms. They stormed the university campus in mid-day. Initially, she thought that they were men from Nigerian Army in Kaduna. However, tension developed when these men began to shoot indiscriminately killing policemen who provided security in the campus. In order to establish to what Fatima was doing when bandits struck, this researcher asked Fatima to explain what time bandits kidnapped her and what she was doing before the kidnapped happened? Fatima looked at me for a moment then replied:

These guys (bandits) came around 2 pm. She was having a group discussion with other students on the assignment my lecturer gave. While we were still discussing on this assignment that was when other students and I were forcefully taken away.

It was established other participants that bandits carried out their nefarious activity during broad day light. From the quotes, it was obvious that some students were kidnapped when they were in the class taking lectures, while others were kidnapped during when they having group discussion. It was also pointed out that bandits had a free day each time they went for kidnapping of students in the school because there is no adequate security put in place to counter the insurgents.

The findings from the second research question which touched on kidnapped students' experiences while in insurgents' captivity revealed that they were tortured, raped and starved of food.

We were tortured

The majority of kidnapped students narrated the ugly experience they had in the hands of bandits and boko haram group. Danladi specifically stated that he was captured while he was taking lecture with other students. After his captured, he was driven for over three hours to unknown destination inside the bush. He went on to report that him and other students kidnapped were detained in small closed container. The researcher therefore asked Danladi to narrate what happened after they were detained inside closed container. Danladi responded:

In fact, immediately I was detained, I was told to give my parents cell phone numbers in which I did. They informed my parents that I have been kidnapped through the cell phone numbers I gave them. They informed my parents that I can only be released when the sum of two hundred thousand dollars is paid. Aside from ransom demand, I was constantly beaten up.

Besides beating, the researcher asked whether there was any other form of punishment given to him. In his response, he said; *"I was also informed that if in three days' time my parents failed to pay the ransom, they demanded I will be executed. I was going through both physical and mental torture."*

Danladi's narrative notwithstanding, Aisha's story was very pathetic. She began by saying that after she was kidnapped by bandits on the 16th May, 2021, and that she was forced to trek for over 72 kilometres inside a thick forest. While she was subjected to the strenuous trekking, she was also beaten when she wanted to rest in order to regain her strength. In the midst of this physical torture, her menstrual flow started. Aisha continued; *"I was confused when it happened due to fact it was unusual since the date for the beginning of my 'flow' was still far. It dawned on me then that I was forcefully taken away from the class, hence I did not carry any sanitary pad."* Aisha concluded by saying that she was dripping while trekking, and was seriously stained. Physical torture Godwin went through was unbelievable. He narrated how attempted to escape on so many occasion, but was closely monitored. An opportunity came for him to escape when he went to answer call of nature in which he gladly seized. However, luck ran out of him when he was later caught. Out of curiosity, this researcher asked Godwin what happened after he was caught. In his reply, Godwin declared:

I was thoroughly beaten by these bandits till I became unconscious. When I regained consciousness, I was chained for days. Look at the scars in which I was beaten and chained on my back and legs.

Apparently, narratives from the participants have shown that they were subjected to both physical and mental torture by the insurgents. One of the participants specifically mentioned how she was left in her menstrual flow for days without any help. Meanwhile,

Godwin was detained in dehumanised manner. He asserted that he was chained like an animal for days, and as at the time of the interview scars was still fresh in his legs indicating how he was chained.

I was raped

Aabidah was very unlucky when she was taken hostage from her university by bandits at Kaduna state in North Central zone of Nigeria. Frankly speaking, Aabidah was reluctant to open up on her experience with the insurgents. After much persuasion, she began by saying that what happened to her should not happen to her enemy at all. Her narrative goes this way:

I was kidnapped around 2 pm on that faithful Monday while I was doing an assignment given to us by our lecturer. I was taken away with other eighteen students to a thick forest. I want to tell you that four female students were killed by the bandits when they attempted to escape. For fear of being killed, I was forced to cooperate with them. After I have spent three days in the camp, the leader among these bandits called me out and I was raped repeatedly for days. I cannot imagine myself being violated by a total stranger. I wish this invasion of my body should not result in pregnancy, otherwise I will kill myself.

Unlike Aabidah who was still in shocked and distressed but managing to response to my questions, Cecilia was unable to say a word on the issue of rape because of traumatic experience she went through. All she was able to say was; “*I do not to talk about that, I went through horrible experience. I wish God can take my life.*”

The above narrative has shown the precarious experience kidnapped female students went through in the hands of bandits. Aabidah and Cecilia’s self-esteem has been eroded due to invasion of their privacy.

I was starved of food

Analysis clearly indicated that all the kidnapped students complained of starvation while in captivity. For instance, Moses was quick to point out that for almost two months he was in captivity he vividly remembered how many times he was provided with food. When the researcher probed further how often he was provided food, he looked at me for a minute and replied:

Sincerely speaking, the day I was lucky, I was provided with a half plate of spaghetti. But most times, four slides of bread were always provided to me as food. It was not easy to eat dry bread without water because one has to count his/herself lucky to drink half cup of water.

Moses’s view was supported by Bello and Jumai who reported that they were starved for the number of days spent at insurgents’ camp. Specifically, Jumai gave narration on how she was not given any food the first three days she was taken into hostage. The researcher

interrogated how she survived during the said three days, she responded; *“I survived through the mercies of God. I was terribly weak and dehydrated because there was no drinking water.”* Furthermore, Jumai was blunt to say that when the insurgents finally brought food, she was compelled to scramble for it. The reason why she scrambled for the food was because it was very small and was not enough for all hostages. In the same circumstance, Bello said; *“I could not believe I will live to see this day. I was terribly hungry throughout the period I was in captivity. Though I was physically tortured, but I was able to endure it. However, I was nearly killed by hunger.* Meanwhile, Bello explained that food was sparingly provided and its taste was often unpalatable. He therefore submitted that most times he ate it was just for sustenance of life throughout my detention.

Discussion of findings

From all indications, findings have established that insurgents often attacked universities institutions. Majority of the participants pointed out that these insurgents usually came at night to abduct students. These insurgents probably struck at night to hide their identities. It is obvious that the majority of students usually slept on their beds at night than in the day. Therefore, they (insurgents) were aware that they will be easy to kidnap more students at night while sleeping hence their frequent attacks on students at night. After all, in 12th April, 1986, a former Chief of Defence Staff in person T.Y. Danjuma said that only an insane man stage coup d'état in the day. Olaniyan (2018) have argued that frequent abduction of students in the middle of the night were by insurgents were to ensure that they carried out their nefarious activities unhindered by Nigerian security agents.

While some kidnapped students said that bandits usually came at night, others were of view that they were kidnapped in a broad day light. It was established that most students were kidnapped while receiving lectures or doing assignment given to them by their lecturers. It was discovered that day light attacked by the insurgents often resulted in heavy casualties. In other words, each time bandits attacked university campuses, many security agents and students were killed before other lucky ones were abducted to the bush. Insurgents' attacked of students in a broad day light implies that they were not only prepared adequately for the attack, but they adequately armed with sophisticated weapons to counter whosoever tries to stop their deadly mission.

The issue of abducted students being subjected to series of torture were raised by the majority of the participants. In fact, Danladi and Aisha narrated how they were physically and mentally abused by bandits when they were taken hostage. Ordinarily, subjecting these detained students to both physical and mentally torture was not only seen as senseless and absurd, but it was the highest level of inhumanity to man. However, from my interpretive perspective, it can be argued that these students were kidnapped and subjected to physical and mentally abused in order to inform their parents on the urgent need for payment of ransom to secure their release. In fact, this finding is at variance with position canvassed by Fayah (2021) who reported that the crime of kidnapping people in Iraq was done in order to embarrass government. Similarly, findings indicated that some female students were raped by bandits. Specifically, Aabidah and Cecilia explained how they were serially exploited by bandits in detention camps. For fear of stigmatisation by the society, other female detainees refused to comment on the issue of rape, though, their different body languages indicated that they were violently desecrated by the bandits.

Aside from stigmatisation, these female students were afraid to air their views on the issue of rape because of their unborn children being called different unspeakable names if unwanted and forced copulations finally result in pregnancy.

Furthermore, finding has equally shown that aside from the abducted students being subjected to all forms of torture, they were also starved of food. A physical observation revealed that most released or freed students looked malnourished indicating they were either starved or food given to them lack good nutritional value. It is argued that the detained students were starved because bandits did not have enough foodstuffs due to their inability to go to public market square to purchase food for fear of being recognised and eventually arrest.

Conclusion

There is no gainsaying that kidnapping or taking people hostage which millions of Nigerians used to witness in countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and other Arab worlds have finally arrived in Nigeria. The advent of democratic governance in Nigeria instead of bring development to Nigerians has brought insecurity. It has been observed that Nigerians sleep every night with one eye closed due to insurgents' activity. In fact, bandits, kidnappers and boko haram group have taken thousands of Nigerians hostages for ransom. In recent times, the most worrisome is the frequent kidnaping of university students for ransom. In light of the above, the study explored the time in which university students were attacked by insurgents and their experiences while in insurgents' captivity. It was reliably found that insurgents attacked students at night and while they were taking lectures in the afternoon. Similarly, it was discovered that students' experiences while in captivity were horrible. In fact, they were subjected to inhuman treatment such as torture, rape and starvation.

Recommendations

In all previous scholarly articles, the researcher found it uncomfortable to proffer any recommendation based on his conviction that these articles are not feasibility studies which demands recommendation(s). In this article, however, he found it completely different from the previous ones on the ground that Nigerians and even our foreign partners need urgent solution to the challenges of insurgency in the country. In light of the above assertion, the researcher, therefore, recommend the following:

1. More security agents should be sent to the universities to ensure that life and property of students are protected from the insurgents.
2. At the time of carrying out this study, students from various universities across the country are still being held hostage, therefore, government should expedite action in securing the release of these students in order for them to re-unite with their families.
3. From all indications, it appears the activities of bandits, kidnappers and boko haram groups in the country has overwhelm the government of the day, consequently, it is appropriate for government to seek foreign assistance in combating these criminals.

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