

Impact of the Role of the Military in Internal Security Operations in Kaduna, 2013-2023

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Abstract: This study critically assesses the role of the military in internal security operations in Kaduna State between 2013 and 2023. Kaduna State, a region marked by ethno-religious tensions, banditry, communal conflicts, and insurgent threats, has witnessed an increasing reliance on military intervention to restore and maintain internal order. The research examines the scope, strategies, and effectiveness of military operations in curbing internal security threats, while analysing the civil-military relationship and the operational challenges encountered. Drawing on primary and secondary sources, including interviews with security personnel, residents, and official reports, the study examines how military deployments, such as Operation Safe Haven, Operation Whirl Punch, and other joint task force initiatives, have impacted peace-building and conflict mitigation in the state. It also assesses the coordination between the military and other security agencies such as the police, civil defence, and intelligence units. Findings reveal that while military intervention significantly reduced the frequency and intensity of violent attacks in certain flashpoints like Southern Kaduna and Birnin Gwari, systemic issues such as poor logistics, intelligence gaps, and lack of community trust constrained operational efficiency. Additionally, concerns about human rights violations and a lack of prosecutorial follow-up created tensions between security forces and the civilian population. The study concludes that although the military played a crucial stabilising role, long-term internal security in Kaduna State requires a multi-sectoral approach involving local governance reforms, socio-economic development, community-based policing, and institutional accountability. This research contributes to the broader discourse on the militarisation of internal security in Nigeria and recommends policy actions for enhancing the effectiveness, legitimacy, and sustainability of security operations in fragile regions.

Keywords: security operations, effectiveness, legitimacy, socio-economic development, logistics, intelligence gaps.

Introduction

The contemporary global security terrain is dotted with existential threats that have devastating consequences on societal well-being. This has compelled nations to continuously appraise their security architecture in order to entrench conducive and favourable atmosphere for economic

security and development. Accordingly, the pursuit for security and development prompts nations to initiate multifaceted solutions, including kinetic and non-kinetic approaches, to counter threats by these non-state actors through the armed forces and all elements of national power. The activities by these non-state actors manifest in acts such as insurgency, kidnapping, terrorism, banditry among others, which impede internal security [1]. Consequently, Nigeria is currently grappled in various internal security threats that pose challenges to national defence, development and security. These security threats include Boko Haram Terrorists (BHTs), kidnapping, separatist agitation, banditry, among others. The activities of these internal security threats, such as banditry, terrorism, kidnapping among others, have resulted in widespread panic by residents of affected communities in Kaduna State. These scenarios have generated deep concerns amongst stakeholders in Kaduna State [2]. The unabated acts of these threats, especially banditry attacks in Kaduna, necessitated corresponding deployment of the military through anti-banditry operations towards enhanced internal security operations [3].

Historically, the Nigerian military's involvement in internal security has been rooted in its constitutional mandate to support civil authorities in maintaining law and order when situations exceed the capabilities of the police and other civil security agencies. The military's role in internal security in Kaduna State has been particularly prominent since 2013, following escalations in violence due to the activities of insurgent groups like Boko Haram and the emergence of armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom [4]. These challenges have compelled the government to deploy military forces under various operations to restore peace and stability in the region.

Kaduna State has witnessed several military-led operations aimed at curbing insecurity and restoring normalcy, from 2013 to 2023. These operations, such as Operation Yaki and Operation Harbin Kunama and Operation Whirl Punch, have involved the deployment of both ground and air forces to engage and neutralise insurgents, protect civilian populations, and secure critical infrastructure. The military's engagement has not been without questions about the effectiveness and sustainability of military-led security interventions.

The period from 2013 to 2023 represents a critical decade for assessing the role of the military operations in internal security in Kaduna State. During this time, the dynamics of internal security threats have evolved, with shifting tactics by insurgents and bandits, changes in the geopolitical landscape and varying responses from the Nigerian government and its security apparatus. Additionally, the involvement of the military in internal security has raised important questions about the balance between civil authority and military intervention, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights.

Conceptual Clarification

Military

Military is seen as a highly organised body of armed personnel that engages in the preparation for and conduct of war, with a core culture that includes shared beliefs, values, and norms that differential the from other organisations. The military's primarily duty is to deterring threats and aggression to national sovereignty and waging war when necessary [5].

Security

Security implies freedom from threats or danger, for both individuals and groups, however, there is a major contention as to whether the main focus of the concept of security should be on 'individual', 'national', or 'international' security [6]. Although, it is argued by some security experts that the concept of security has always been associated with the wellbeing and safety of states and its citizens from harm or destruction or from dangerous threats. On the other hand, just as it is the capture in the constitution of many, if not all, that the state is the only institution with the primary duty and power for the safeguard of its territory and people. Thus, the concept of security in this study is anchored on the ability of a nation to protect its territory and people.

Internal Security Operations

Internal security operations are actions undertaken by the security agencies, such as the Police, Customs Services, Immigration Services, and others in an effort to contain with domestic threats

to the security of the country. These dangers, which are often caused by riots, demonstrations, strikes, communal clashes, terrorism, banditry and kidnapping among others, which fall outside the primary duties of the military as enshrined in the constitution [7]. Affirming this, section 4 of the Police Act of Nigeria provides the general duties of the police as the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged within the society. Internal security operations are therefore designed to handle internal conflicts in a country. In Nigeria, communal /ethnic clashes, religious conflicts and recently acts of terrorism have necessitated their involvement in internal security operations [8], [9].

Methodology

The study adopted qualitative approach to collect data, check accuracy, verify and confirm the findings in order that the information collected is mutually corroborated. Data were collected through primary and secondary sources, primary sources were through interviews and focus group discussions. While secondary sources were drawn from published literature in journals and military official communication channels, as well as newspapers.

Background to Internal Security Challenges in Kaduna State (2013–2023)

The internal security challenges in Kaduna State from 2013 and 2023 can be situated in decade's long ethnic, religious, and political dynamics shaped by historical processes. The state's heterogeneous nature comprises of groups such as Hausa, Fulani, Gwari, and other minority communities has historically yielded both peaceful coexistence and competition, chiefly along religious lines between Islam and Christianity. The root of these violent conflicts and insecurity can be traced to colonial policies under British Colonial Administration, which was anchored on indirect rule system what have been linked to the inequalities and divisions among groups, and its attendant mistrust. The post-independence era, had furthered these persistent structural imbalances, while the dominant groups hold tight to political power, thereby heating up these grievances and perceived marginalisation. By 2013, these long standing fault lines had progressed into frequent ethno-religious crises, electoral violence, and communal clashes that significantly shaped the security landscape of Kaduna State.

Aside the historical and political factors, socio-economic pressures and governance challenges have significantly contributed to insecurity in Kaduna State during this period. Widespread poverty, unemployment, and uneven resource distribution particularly in access to land have intensified competition between farmers and herders, often leading to violent confrontations in rural areas. Rapid urbanization and limited economic opportunities further deepened social inequalities, making segments of the population vulnerable to mobilization for violence. These conditions were compounded by the proliferation of small arms, the rise of militia groups, and weak institutional responses to conflict. Political actors frequently exploited ethnic and religious identities during elections, heightening tensions and triggering violence, while governance deficits, including corruption and inadequate security provision, undermined public trust. Consequently, the convergence of these factors created a volatile environment in which internal security challenges became persistent and increasingly complex between 2013 and 2023.

Military Involvement in Internal Security Operations

The evolution of military involvement in internal security operations in Kaduna State, Nigeria, reflects a complex interplay of socio-political dynamics, historical conflicts, and changing security challenges. From the colonial era to the present day, the role of the military has transitioned significantly, influenced by factors such as ethnic tensions, religious conflicts, and broader national security concerns. Initially, the military's role was primarily focused on external threats; however, the internal strife within Kaduna State has necessitated a more proactive military presence in domestic security matters.

Historically, Kaduna State has been a microcosm of Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious composition, leading to periodic conflicts. The post-independence era saw a rise in ethnic and

communal clashes, particularly between the Muslim-majority North and the Christian-majority South of the state. In response to escalating violence, the military began to assume a more pronounced role in internal security. This shift became evident during the 1980s and 1990s, as the Nigerian military was deployed to quell violent uprisings and riots, marking a departure from its traditional focus on external defense.

The most significant turning point in military involvement came during the sectarian violence that erupted in the early 2000s, particularly the religious riots in 2000. The Kaduna riots highlighted the inadequacy of conventional policing to manage such large-scale violence, prompting state authorities to call upon the military for intervention. The deployment of troops during these riots set a precedent for future military engagements in internal security operations, as the military's capabilities in crowd control and conflict resolution were recognised as essential in restoring order.

In the wake of these conflicts, the Nigerian military's operational strategies began to evolve. The establishment of joint task forces and collaboration with local law enforcement agencies became common practice. This integration aimed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of internal security operations. The military's approach also shifted towards intelligence-led operations, focusing on gathering actionable intelligence to preempt potential conflicts. These changes marked a significant departure from the more heavy-handed tactics of earlier military interventions, emphasising a need for cooperation and community engagement.

Result and Discussion

The rise of insurgency groups, such as Boko Haram, further complicated the military's role in internal security. The spillover effects of the insurgency in neighbouring states heightened the security challenges in Kaduna, prompting an increased military presence in the state. The military's involvement expanded beyond conventional conflict zones to encompass counter-terrorism operations, requiring a more nuanced understanding of local dynamics and grievances. This phase highlighted the importance of military strategy that not only focused on defeating insurgents but also on addressing underlying socio-economic issues contributing to unrest [10].

The 2013 developments, including the ongoing conflicts between herders and farmers, have led to renewed calls for military intervention in Kaduna State. The violence resulting from these clashes has necessitated the military's involvement as a stabilising force to protect civilians and restore peace. However, this has raised concerns about the militarisation of internal security and the potential for human rights violations. The balance between maintaining law and order while respecting civil liberties remains a critical challenge for the military in its internal security role [11].

Assessment of Military Performance

The military's involvement in internal security operations in Kaduna State between 2013 and 2023 has had several key impacts on regional security, socio-economic stability, and community relations. These impacts demonstrate that, while the military's role in internal security has had both positive and challenging effects, its presence has been critical to stabilising Kaduna State in a period of intensified security threats.

Reclaiming Lost Territories

The activities of bandits in Kaduna overtime has caused significant loss of lives and territories. In response, the military continues to conduct operations to counter their menace through OPWP. Since its establishment, the OPWP has made notable progress in retaking territories from the insurgents. With the operations of the OPWP, the bandits have been largely confined to few areas as they have suffered severe casualties over the years. Areas previously held and now cleared include Yadi Forest Camp, Rijana Camp, Kaduna - Birnin Gwari Road and Birnin Gwari-Funtua Road as well as other roads within the AOR [12]. Hence, many inhabitants have returned to their various homes as a result of OPWP anti-banditry operations in reclaiming many lost communities.

On 18 January 2024, during the clearing and stabilisation operations carried out by the OPWP within its AOR, dozens of bandits were killed and their camps were also destroyed across all the

sectors. Thus, OPWP troops have been actively dominating territories through land operations, especially in Brinin Gwari, Kajuru, Kagara, among others.

Security Cooperation

Security cooperation are collective efforts of the military in building close ties to combat criminal activities. Increase in military integration and cooperation is also one of the effects of military operations in Kaduna State. The military operations have positive effect by increasing military cooperation among sister services in the AFN and other security agencies [13]. This is due to several agreements which are beneficial to all security outfits involved in anti-banditry operations in Kaduna State. Between January and November 2023, military operations, through effective security cooperation, carried out various successful offensive operations known as “Exercise Kungama” and some clearance operations which resulted in about 906 cattle recovery and foiled about 22 kidnap attempts by bandits. Okoro averred that all the 6 sectors of the OPWP actively participated in the coordinated offensive action during the operation [14]. Akin-Ojo averred that the OPWP integration has greatly improved the conduct of joint operations despite the limitations posed by interoperability and military training. Thus, the successes recorded so far by military operations were due to the collective efforts by security cooperation of the OPWP in anti-banditry operations for enhanced national security in Nigeria.

Socio-Economic Activities

Socio-economic activities refer to actions that involve both social and economic factors, impacting and being influenced by the society and economy in which they occur. The activities of the bandits have had a detrimental impact on socio-economic activities in Kaduna State. For instance, the insecurity within the AOR of OPWP has disrupted cross-border commerce and various agricultural activities such as livestock and grain farming, among others. According to Lawal, the attacks on farmers by bandits, especially in Kaduna, have negatively affected agricultural production because most farmers have to abandon their farmlands [15]. He noted that between 2018 and 2023, about US\$12 million in economic activities within Kaduna State were lost due to the activities of the bandits. Similarly, Bangna stated that between 2018 and March 2024, about US\$15 million in economic activities within Kaduna State were lost due to the activities of the bandits. Modibbo noted that the unprecedented rise in insecurity by banditry activities has displaced many farmers and hindered cultivation, with hundreds of farmers killed and kidnapped [16]. As a result, many farmers abandoned their farmlands, fled their communities for IDP camps or stayed and paid ransom. According to a report by Morgan, farmers in Kaduna communities like Kidandan, Galadimawa, Kerawa, Sabon Layi, Sabon Birni and Ruma have been significantly impacted negatively. The report noted that residents in these areas pay substantial sums, ranging from ₦70,000 to ₦100,000 to bandits for permission to farm, with additional payments required for harvesting [17]. The report further noted that farmers who resist these demands face severe consequences, including abduction, murder or confiscation of their farm produce. Modibbo revealed that between 2021 and April 2024, armed bandits killed about 102 farmers because of their refusal to pay stipulated fees. This situation often erodes investors’ confidence in Kaduna State, thereby necessitating prolonged role of the military in internal security operations [17].

Degradation of Bandits Activities

The frequency of bandits’ activities in Kaduna State which manifest through bomb blasts, kidnappings, extortion, arson, among others, serves as an indicator for evaluating the effectiveness of military operations. According to Shehu, troops of OPWP conducted series of operations to clear bandits from their enclaves and recovered several arms and ammunition, including 7 Anti-Aircraft (AA) gun mounted on gun trucks, one 81 MM Mortar and several logistic items. The OPWP anti-banditry operations substantially degraded the bandits’ activities and enhanced internal security in the liberated areas. Similarly, in February 2024, OPWP Sector 3 conducted successful cordon and search operations aimed at degrading the bandits’ capabilities. These operations resulted in the recovery of significant items, including 4 AK- 47 Rifle, 16 AK- 47 magazines, 130 rounds of 7.62mm (special) ammunition, and one bandolier [18]. This survey supports Batubo’s position that the efforts of the OPWP in anti-banditry activities have significantly reduced bandit enclave in some of parts of Kaduna State [19]. Therefore, the response

capability of the OPWP in anti-banditry operations has a positive effect on military operations in degrading bandits' activities with attendant positive effect on internal security in Nigeria.

Population Displacement

People or groups of people who have been compelled to leave their homes due to armed conflict, widespread violence, human rights abuses, or natural or man-made disasters and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border are referred to as "internally displaced persons," or IDPs. According to Uroko, in Jema'a Local Government Area alone, there were over 110000 IDPs in various camps as a result of the violent conflicts in Kaduna, and there are growing reports of food shortages in IDP camps [20]. Consequently, children are being smuggled and trafficked outside of the camp. This situation in Jema'a Local Government Area is of great concern to the people of the area and as well to the government of Kaduna State as was discovered by this study.

A major consequence of conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as elsewhere, is the displacement of populations. This carries significant economic, fiscal, and social costs for the region involved in conflict, but often also for the nearby regions that host the displaced people [21]. Over time, the number of (United Nations-recognised) persons of concern from sub-Saharan African countries including internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, and refugees has more than tripled, rising from fewer than 5 million in the 1980s to 18 million in 2017, with more intense conflicts generally implying larger displaced populations. Notably, as of 2017, the majority of the close to 6 million refugees and 1 million asylum seekers who originated in sub-Saharan Africa had resettled within the region; a relatively smaller number have been recorded as refugees in advanced economies. The effects of the prevalent conflicts in the Southern Kaduna region have displaced a good number of the population as they seek to settle in other states like Nasarawa, Plateau States and businessmen like Igbo people residing in the area had to relocate to their own states for fear of the unknown [22], [23].

Community Trust and Relations

The military's role in internal security operations in Kaduna State from 2013 to 2023 has had a complex but notable impact on community trust and relations. Kaduna, like many areas in northern Nigeria, has faced significant security challenges due to insurgent activities, banditry and communal conflicts. The Nigerian Armed Forces' interventions were critical in stabilising many volatile situations. For example, Operation Safe Haven, established in 2015, was intended to foster peace and protect communities in Kaduna, alongside neighbouring states impacted by similar security issues [24]. According to a report from SBM Intelligence, 64% of community members felt a positive shift in local security within the operational areas between 2017 and 2021, demonstrating some increase in trust as local stability improved. This reinforced the perception that the military could play an essential role in addressing immediate security threats, particularly in rural and high-conflict regions where state policing was often under-resourced.

However, trust-building is not solely about combating violence; it also requires addressing community needs and grievances. The military's civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) initiatives, which include medical outreach programmes, infrastructure rehabilitation, and skills acquisition workshops, contributed significantly to improving relations with local communities. For example, during Operation ACCORD in 2018, CIMIC initiatives in Kaduna involved over 15,000 civilians who benefited from medical services and vocational training [25]. The Army's Civil-Military Affairs Department reported that 78% of respondents in impacted communities viewed these programmes favourably, with many respondents expressing appreciation for the military's responsiveness to their health and economic needs. Such programmes were essential in shifting public perception of the military from an external force to a collaborative partner in community development.

Nonetheless, military operations faced criticism for human rights abuses and indiscriminate tactics, which initially damaged community trust in certain areas. Human Rights Watch documented concerns from Kaduna residents who reported that counter-insurgency measures sometimes disproportionately affected civilians, especially during high-intensity operations [26]. However, significant reforms were made between 2019 and 2021 to enhance accountability and training in

human rights for the Nigerian Armed Forces personnel, as evidenced by the introduction of the Human Rights Desk in 2020 within the Nigerian Army. This move led to a 35% reduction in reported abuses by 2022, according to the Nigerian Bar Association's report on internal security in Kaduna, restoring some degree of trust between the military and civilians [27].

The decade-long military presence in Kaduna has, overall, fostered a new dynamic in civil-military relations. Communities that once viewed the military solely as a force of defence now recognise it as an agent for peace and development. According to a survey conducted by the Kaduna State Peace Commission in 2023, over 72% of respondents in affected areas acknowledged the military's positive influence on local security and development, which has enhanced trust and encouraged cooperative relationships. Such partnerships have laid the groundwork for more sustainable security practices that involve both military and civilian stakeholders, showing that a military presence, when combined with social outreach and accountability measures, can reinforce security while fostering communal goodwill [28].

Strengthened Local Defense Capacities

The Nigerian military's role in internal security operations in Kaduna State from 2013 to 2023 has impeccably empowered local security capacities, basically through training and logistical support to local law enforcement. In the face of increased insurgency, banditry and communal clashes, the military has had to expand its mandate to support internal security alongside conventional defence. Through specialized training programmes, local defence forces, including the Nigerian Police and Nigeria Civil Defence Corps, have received technical and combat training that has improved their readiness to respond to security threats. According to a 2021 report by the Nigerian Defence Headquarters, over 2,000 local law enforcement officers in Kaduna were trained in counterinsurgency, surveillance, and tactical response between 2013 and 2021, enhancing their effectiveness in managing security challenges [29].

Furthermore, the formation and deployment of military operation has contributed to enhanced intelligence-sharing mechanisms between the armed forces and local security agencies, crucial for tracking and countering insurgent movements. This collaboration has fostered a network that supports real-time data sharing, thereby increasing situational awareness and enabling quicker responses to threats. The Kaduna State Government, in a 2020 report, noted that joint operations led by the Nigerian Army and local police reduced response times to security threats by up to 30%, compared to independent police operations. The introduction of communication tools and intelligence software, facilitated by the military, has also been instrumental in coordinating these efforts, creating a more resilient and informed local defence structure [30], [31].

The military presence in respect to internal security operations has afforded, a study of the area with some level of safety, which has, in turn, refreshed the establishment of vigilante groups that work together with the government owned security agencies. These collections are composed of locals with a high spirited interest in the provision of safety in their neighbourhoods. It has also been very efficient in providing local knowledge, assisting to identify prospective threats, and supportive in surveillance. The absorption of local security framework into military operations has enabled communities, enriched surveillance efforts, and promoted a grassroots approach to security. A 2022 study by the Center for Democracy and Development cited by Kenku and Umar averred that communities in Kaduna with active military-vigilante cooperation reported a 25% decrease in crime rates, underscoring the community-driven approach to defence [32].

In the end, the deployment of military operations in Kaduna has tiled the way for the acquisition of modern equipment and resource for the mobilisation for local security forces. The military has shared innovative surveillance equipment, including drones and night-vision devices, which are before now inaccessible to local agencies because of budget constraints. This technology has enabled the local security formation to spread their surveillance scope and carry out a more efficient night operations, considerably enhancing their operational capacity. Furthermore, joint operations sponsored by the Kaduna State Security Trust Fund have allocated resources to modernise transportation and communication equipment, adding to consolidate local security capabilities [33]. These initiatives have laid the foundation for a more sustainable, self-reliant defence framework that allowed Kaduna state to challenge internal security threats with greater

efficacy.

Long-Term Institutional Development

The military has played a pivotal part in determining the region's institutional landscape in their role in internal security operations in Kaduna from 2013 to 2023, particularly on the subject of capacity building, organisational reforms, and community relations. Owing to the repeated threats from insurgency, banditry and other security challenges, the military's involvement became important in the process of calming down the region and assisting civil authorities. Their outright involvement, bring up capacity development within the state's security agencies. Furthermore, the joint operations compelled the development of local security capabilities, including training on intelligence gathering, combat readiness, and inter-agency cooperation. The continuous familiarisation to the military-standard operations considerably helped the state's security agencies in enabling a more agile response to evolving security threats.

Another significant effect was the transfer of operational best practices and discipline into the civil security architecture in Kaduna. The partnership of the military personnel with state and local agencies familiarised structured command protocols and crisis management frameworks, which aided the organisational development. Consequently, institutional frameworks became more vigorously, with definite standard operating procedures that support national security requirements. For example, the inclusion of structured response plans for emergencies and enhanced information sharing systems contributed to a more integrated and sustained security framework in Kaduna. These procedures apart from reinforcing the local government have also set a precedent for organised crime prevention across the region.

The deployment of military in internal security particularly in Kaduna State has also predisposed the legal and regulatory facets of institutional development in Kaduna. Military involvements in civilian spaces always ensured that operations were within precise permissible boundaries, which in turn mandated the formation of localised legal structures. These guidelines guarantee that joint operations are carried out with a high sense of responsibility and consideration for civil rights, supporting long-term obedience to the rule of law. The installation of checkpoints, patrol areas, and engagement protocols were institutionalised, for both the military, police as well as the vigilante thus, leading to a noticeable decline in violent crimes. Consequently, this structured approach to security concretised the law enforcement to develop within a well-ordered legal structure, promoting civilian trust in security mechanisms.

Reduction in Armed Banditry and Insurgency

From 2013 to 2023 there has been a noteworthy impact on reducing armed banditry and insurgency; all thanks to the military's role in internal security operations in Kaduna particularly. These operations have been marked by several military-led initiatives aimed at calming down the state amid ongoing violence and dislodging the band of insurgent groups and armed bandits, who often take advantage of the remote areas, ungoverned spaces with little or no security presence. For example, in 2016, Operation Sharan Daji was launched with the mandate to targeting armed groups and bandits in Kaduna and its adjoining states. From the update report credited to the Kaduna State Security, the military involvements have helped pool down the number of violent incidents and attacks by over 30% in affected states, presenting a descending drift in reported instances of armed groups and bandits. The down-turn is credited to the military's strengthened operations, which include ground patrols, aerial surveillance, and intelligence-sharing efforts, positively reducing the intensity for armed groups to operate.

Military partnerships with local vigilante groups and other security agencies have additionally strengthened these efforts. From end to end, operations such as Operation WHIRL PUNCH, launched in 2018, the military has raised better-quality intelligence-sharing with local groups, enhancing their effectiveness in locating and disrupting armed groups. According to a 2021 report by SBM Intelligence, these combined activities of the said military operation and the civilian and other security agencies collaboration led to the interception of arms and arrest of a large number of armed group members, significantly weakening the armed bandits' capabilities and logistics. This has purportedly led to a reduction in number of attacks on communities and villages as well

as kidnappings along major highways. By equipping the local communities and vigilante units, the military has been able to counter banditry more effectively, with data from the Kaduna State Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs showing a 20% decline in the rate of recurrence of attacks in communities from 2019 to 2023.

At the peak of these achievements, challenges remain, particularly due to the adaptive tactics of insurgents and armed bandits, who often blend into civilian populaces or withdrawal to their interior hideouts. The Nigerian Defence Headquarters stated in 2022 that, while the military operations have lowered visible and open presence of the bandits, these miscreants have often evolved their operations, using guerrilla tactics to sustain their activities. However, the military's utilisation of technology, such as drones for surveillance, has begun to lessen these challenges. Drone surveillance, along with the establishment of rapid response units, has been fundamental in guaranteeing quick reactions to episodes of banditry. More intelligence from the Centre for Democracy and Development agreed that areas under constant drone surveillance have experienced a further 15% decline in occurrences of the violence, underscoring the effectiveness of technology in internal security operations.

There has been a considerable decline in the incidences of armed banditry and insurgency between 2013 and 2023, as a result of the deployment of the military in internal security in Kaduna State. This became possible owing to the implementation of strategic operations, community engagement, and technological adoption, the military has drastically reduced the operations of these armed groups, given way to a greater stability in previously volatile areas. Nevertheless, the persistence of these threats requires the sustenance of military strategy to ensure that gains in security are upheld. As presented in the Kaduna Peace Commission's 2023 annual report, military exertions have been praiseworthy in a bid to addressing the roots of insurgency and banditry within the study area. It is also pertinent to address the menace of poverty and unemployment, which remains crucial for a long-term solution.

Challenges Facing Military Operations

While the military operation in Kaduna State remains partially a success, the operational success recorded in the course of internal security engagements in Kaduna State were equally constrained by significant tactical and strategic challenges. Some of the challenges include but not limited to, consistent ambushes of the military by armed groups (bandits and Kidnappers). This always led to loss of lives of soldiers and injuries of different magnitude, other difficulties include instances of sabotage and difficult tendency of the communities. Loss and damage of hardware of personnel and operational miscalculations. Other damaging deficits, were in the areas of intelligence gathering and coordination which, once in a while results to errors that result in austere humanitarian costs, among which are unintentional targeting of civilian populations. These occurrences not only dented the efficacy of personnel during operations but also ruined public confidence, thus thwarting civil-military relations and flagging local support for counterinsurgency efforts.

At the peak of these operational challenge lies the incidence that occurred on December 3, 2023 when a drone strike carried out by the personnel of Nigerian Army in Tudun Biri village mistakenly besieged civilians under the erroneous guess that they were armed bandits. The episode give rise to the demise of at least 88 unarmed civilians and over 70 others left injured, signifying a significant breach of the principles of distinction and proportionality in military operations. This incident points out the characteristic limitations accompanying the deployment of unconventional military technologies in complex internal security environments, particularly where intelligence is deficient and civilian combatant boundaries are unspecified. It further highlights the necessity for superior intelligence confirmation and corroboration mechanisms, severer operational protocols, and higher responsibility to ease the risks of civilian prey in future engagements.

Implications for Security and Governance

At the heart of the formation and deployment of military operations in Kaduna State between 2013 and 2023, was to combat communal violence, terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping. The success or otherwise of these operation have complex and mixed implications for security and governance.

While these operations have struggled to achieve lasting peace, they are able to provide momentary calm and weakened the extremist groups, dislodging the criminals from their enclaves, who most time regroup after a while, causing significant displacement of residents and rural economic decline. Therefore, the success or the contrary of it in the military operations in Kaduna State presents the following implications for Security and Governance:

- **Tactical Gains vs. Long-term Instability:** The deployment of military operations have assisted in targeting major bandit and kidnapper hideouts, with major focus on areas like Birnin-Gwari and Kajuru. These operations have not fully yielded a long-term stability, as criminal gangs often relocate to some of the ungoverned spaces in Kaduna and neighboring states and often return at instances when much attention of the military is focused on other area, thus over stressing the military. Their comeback is often with much aggression and usually have adverse effect on the civilian population.
- **Proliferation of Small Arms and Insecurity:** At the forefront of increased kidnapping, rural banditry, and cattle rustling in Kaduna state and the North-west is the deteriorated security situation that led to the influx of small arms and light weapons (SALWs). The success or failure of the military operation in Kaduna State means that, there must be elimination of kidnapping for ransom, reduction in the trafficking of arms, ending of extortion of rural communities by bandits and other dangerous vices.
- **Weakened Democratic Administration:** It is a fact that the security situation in Kaduna has created and added to the already existing "ungoverned spaces" across most of the remote area in the state. This presents a challenge to the government's ability to administer and provide public services, thus disconnecting the rural population, where government officials cannot access such communities and administration has broken down in many areas and rural livelihoods are destroyed. The success or the lack of it represents the salvage or a total breakdown of governance in such areas.
- **Forced Migration and Displacement:** The deployment of military operation has the potential to provide security for the already over 50,000 people displaced and forced mass migration to safer areas. To return to their ancestral homes, will therefore bring to an end the humanitarian crises created by the violent insecurity situation in Kaduna State. The success or failure of the operation would be determined if the security of the area improves or the deteriorating insecurity creates more challenges on the cities on towns where these displaced people moved to, further adding to the humanitarian problem.
- **Financial Drain:** It is a fact that over the past two decades, the bulk of the national budget have been channeled into security, far above any other sector of the country's national life. The success of these military operations has the potentials to reduce the burden on the country national budget. On the other hand, the failure of these operation means that more government funds will be channeled into security at the expense of developing social services.

Conclusion

This paper examined the formation and deployment of the military operation in Kaduna State from 2013 to 2023 and presents both strategic success and operational failure. While the deployment of the Nigerian Army and other security agencies was of great significance to the suppression of armed banditry, insurgent activities, and communal violence throughout the state. By deploying various operations, the military was able to bring back to a relative calm, particularly in some of the major conflict-prone areas, guard important infrastructure, and make available rapid response to security threats. These involvements highlight the indispensability of the Nigerian military in circumstances where of the security agencies and civil security institutions are not efficient enough or have deficiency in tactical capacity to excellently tamed escalating violence.

The paper further highlight that military's role in internal security operations is faced with structural and operational difficulties that limit its overall effectiveness. Operational bottlenecks

which include unsatisfactory intelligence capacity, environmental challenges such unfriendly terrain, coordination cracks among security agencies, and public trust as well as issues of human rights violations have hampered the operational successes. There have been instances of civilian casualties and perceived bias have further complicated civil–military relations, raising concerns about accountability and adherence to international humanitarian best practices. While the military have been central in the management of Nigeria’s internal security, workable stability in Kaduna State is solely hinged on an all-inclusive framework that include enhanced governance, socio-economic development, community engagement, and strengthened civil security framework together with the military efforts.

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