

# Transnational Organized Crime, Mass Kidnapping and National Security in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

The transnational organized crime and incessant incidences of mass kidnapping have grown into a severe national security threat to the country's socio-economic wellbeing. Hence, the studies aim to investigate the incidence of mass kidnapping as a form of organized crime and the dangers it cause to life and safety of property. The study applied the conflict theoretical assumptions and employed Qualitative Data Analysis procedure (QDA) based on previous studies to review researched documents conducted on transnational organized crime and mass kidnapping trends. The government lacks the political will to strengthen institutional capabilities, social exclusion, unemployment and others. The study suggests measures to curb the menace: public awareness programs on civic responsibilities, collaborative approach between the security forces and community police, appropriate sanctions strict monitoring of SIM-card registration stop kidnap ransom payment and job creation.

**Keywords:** national security, organized crime, mass kidnapping, transnational

## INTRODUCTION

The transformation of human society from communal, through hunting and gathering chiefdoms to present industrial societies may not have only refined man's intellect in his efforts to moderate his physical and social environments, but seem to have scientifically initiate him to advanced form of crime commission in society. Hence, transnational organized crime is one form of organized crime coordinated across national borders, involving groups or markets of individuals working in more than one country to plan and execute illegal business undertakings. In order to achieve their goals, these criminal groups use systematic violence and corruption. The advancement in knowledge enhanced the increase in crime trends in a manner that, collaborative or organized crimes are ever in ascendance, more complicated, often existing in network and in most cases operates internationally, such that their activities are increasingly becoming difficult for social control agencies to crack (Ajaegbu, 2012; Okoli, & Agada, 2014; Odoma & Akor, 2019). The nature of transnational organized crime in the various formats of mass kidnappings, against the Nigerian state and neighboring West African countries like Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, is very crucial to the longevity and survival of criminal organizations such as the Boko Haram and despite the combined counter-terrorism (CT) and counterinsurgency (COIN) operations launched against it by Nigeria and the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF), has been the group's unfettered access to funding and materials (Campbell, 2014). The extent of the group's transnational attributes is anchored in their source of income as revealed in Nigeria when the full financial details of Boko Haram were disclosed after the arrest of six money launderers in the United Arab Emirates in 2020 (Falode, 2022).

This paper attempt an explanation and understanding of the meaning of organized crime, the origin, forms, and its proliferation in democratic Nigeria., Mass kidnapping as a pattern of organized crime, is used to justify transnational organized crime and its implications to Nigeria's national security and to suggest possible ways to mitigate ransoming mass kidnapping. Organized crime activity is at the forefront of concerns for the global community because the transnational nature of organized crime networks forge bonds across borders as well as overcome cultural and linguistic differences in the commission of their

crime (UNODC, 2013). Organized crime quickly adapts to new social environments, illustrating its flexible and dynamic qualities. The United Nations and the Council of Europe have identified the most common global illicit activity of organized crime as drug trafficking, with secondary participation in trafficking in persons (most probably kidnapped persons), cybercrime, smuggling of migrants, firearms trafficking, trafficking in environmental resources and counterfeit products, and maritime piracy (Adesina, 2021; Council of Europe, 2005; Ebbe, 2012). Kidnapping originally implied the act of abducting children of influential parents in their period of short sleep or rest to compel them to act in some ways – detrimental. In Nigeria, kidnapping has evolved into a form of organized crime that has its crux in the unlawful intentional deprivation of a person’s freedom of movement in an attempt to criminally exploit the situation to extort money or other economic advantages from victims or their family members and associates (Odoma & Akor, 2019).

From 1970-2010, kidnapping incidents represented a small portion of all terrorist attacks (6.9%), however, through 2016 the percentage of kidnappings has soared significantly to 15.8% of all terrorist attacks (Global Terrorism Index, 2018). In 2017, the total number of terrorist attacks (8,584 worldwide) decreased by 23 percent and the number of casualties due to terrorist attacks decreased by 27 percent, compared to 2016. The number of kidnapped victims and hostages recorded in this year were more than 8,900, which signifies a 43 percent decline from 2016 and a notable shift from previous years, which saw sharp increases in this figure (GTI, 2020). Globally, bombings and explosions accounted for 47 per cent of attacks in that year. Armed assault was the next most common form of attack in accounting for 22 per cent, followed by facility/infrastructure attacks (12 per cent), hostage taking (10 per cent) and assassinations (8 per cent). It is estimated that about 50 terrorist acts have occurred in West Africa in the last decade alone. A vast majority of these have been kidnappings and hostage taking. The three main sources of kidnapping in the region during the past decade have been the conflict in Sierra Leone, the Niger Delta conflict in Nigeria, and the Trans-Sahel region ((IEP, 2020; Li et al., 2021).

### **History of Kidnapping in Nigeria**

The first act of kidnapping in connection to Nigeria was the attempted kidnap of the Nigerian former minister of transport in 1983. Kidnappings which started with the kidnapping of government expatriates has moved to men of God (religious leaders), politicians, traditional leaders, high profile expatriate and now it has graduated to indiscriminate act of mass kidnappings. Organized criminal gangs have taken advantage of the corrupt environment to target any high profile expatriates or Nigerian that could provide them with the intended objective behind the abduction (Ibrahim, & Bala, 2018).

The broadening ratio of insecurity as a result of kidnapping in Nigeria is a cause for concern as all are affected by it. Churches, Mosques, Markets, Schools, Homes and the highways, all are susceptible to this menace. The Kaduna – Abuja highway is a notorious place for now as deaths and mass kidnapping takes place on the daily particularly at these periods of the month of November, 2021. The abductees and their families are traumatized by the ordeal of kidnapping. Foreign investors are scared away from Nigeria. The general state of insecurity in the country has no doubt reached a stage where virtually everybody is now worried. Presently, hardly can people sleep with their two eyes closed, because of the fear of being kidnapped most especially in the northern part of the country. The kidnapping or abductions have become more indiscriminate across northern Nigeria as local criminal gangs view victims as a source of income, and the villagers — who have been ignored by the government — as victims. An average of 13 persons were abducted daily in Nigeria in the first half of 2021, bringing it to 2,371 the number of persons kidnapped in the country within the first six months of the year according to a report by a Nigeria’s geo-political intelligence platform called the SBM Intelligence, 2021 (Vanguard, 2021). Boko Haram has been known to raise funds through mass kidnapping of foreigners and civilians for ransom. According to reports, Boko Haram has a specialized kidnapping task force that sets out to abduct politicians, business people,

foreigners, rulers and civil servants with the intention of later trading them back for large sums of money or for the return of other Boko Haram militants (IEP, 2020).

Contemporary trends of Mass Kidnappings in Nigeria cut across demographic and geographic boundaries of local government areas and States. It is no longer a peculiar feature of either urban or rural setting that it has become so very complex (Bamiduro, 2010; Bello and Jamilu, 2017; Badamsi, Ummu, Kamarul, 2019). In Nigeria the spate of mass kidnapping attracted both international and national attentions because on April 14, 2014, Boko Haram militants kidnapped more than 276 schoolgirls from Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok in Nigeria's north-eastern Borno State, this attracted outcry from local, national and the international communities, social media and civil societies. Also, the kidnapping case of the fifteen innocent primary and nursery school children who were taken away from their school in Abia State cannot be easily forgotten (Raheem, 2010). Six students from Igbonla Model School, near Epe, Lagos were abducted at around 5 a.m. on Thursday 25th May, 2017 by gunmen who arrived through a creek behind the school. The hoodlums broke through the school's fence to gain access into the premises. The incident occurred seven months after gunmen kidnapped two teachers and four pupils of the same school (Ejikeme, 2017). The kidnapers reportedly broke the hostel doors, seized 10 senior secondary school pupils and led them to the shore where their boat was parked. After profiling their family backgrounds, four pupils were released, while the men from the underworld whisked away the remaining six pupils (Ejikeme, 2017). This deadly crime has not only become ubiquitous, it has been commercialized in different parts of the country (Emanemua & Akinlosotu, 2016; Inyang & Abraham, 2013; Ugwuoke, 2011) . With the nefarious attention shifting away from children and the foreigners, now to mostly Nigerians, irrespective of their gender, age, professions, religions, etc. (Bello, and Jamilu, 2017).

## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

**Mass Kidnapping;**- is a form of violent crime cum organized crime commonly identified with the illegal seizure of persons against their will for several criminal reasons (Ngwama, 2014). Mass kidnapping is perceived by Okoli and Agada, (2014) as an organized crime that has its essence in the unlawful intentional deprivation of persons' freedom of movement in an attempt to exploit the situation to extort money or other advantages. There are three identified broad categories of kidnapping, namely; criminal, political, and emotional/psychological kidnapping. Again, for the purposes of better understanding, these typologies are illustrated as follows:

(i) Criminal Kidnapping – this is a type of holding people that is motivated by the quest to obtain ransom from the victim(s)' family, business or associates;

(ii) Political Abduction – kidnapping driven by the need to advance a political cause (e.g. militant/militia, terrorist government) and,

(iii) emotional/pathological kidnapping – seizure committed by people who have psychiatric issues, taking leisure in acts such as rape, child abduction more especially by close associates and likes of estranged parents.

The different forms of kidnapping notwithstanding, they center on criminal and unlawful reasons to achieve selfish motives.

**Crime:** “Providing a single and acceptable definition of the concept” has been a difficult task among criminologists and scholars of society. The difficulty in providing acceptable definitions of crime is because they are time-bound. For instance, a behavior considered a crime by a people could change over time even in the same society, while what used to be a norm could be criminalized with time (Odoma, 2019). Although, no country is static or rigid about its position on crime, no known society denies its presence and thus

frowns at the willful violation of its norms. The difficulty in coming to terms with an acceptable definition of crime notwithstanding, crime refers to infraction or deviation from the approved standard of behaviour by a people to the extent that, it threatens the very existence of such a people or group. In other words, crime if not checked, has the potential of disrupting social relations in society because its impacts on the members are often severe. For a criminal act to take place a form of deviation from an acceptable mode of behavior, whether formal or informal, must have been established by a group. Whether the source of such approved standard is a cultural or penal code or a mixture of both, there must be a deviation from standards of some sort before a crime is said to be committed (Odoma, 2019).

### National Security

This may be conceptualized as the freedom from or the absence of those possibilities which could undermine domestic unity and the mutual existence of the nation and its capacity to maintain its most important institutions for the advancement of its core values and socio-political and economic objectives as well as meet the legitimate aspiration of the citizenry. It implies freedom from danger to life and the presence of an ideal atmosphere for the people to achieve their legitimate aim and objectives within the society (Imobighe, 1990). That is to say, the primary objective shall be to strengthen those conditions which allow for the control of crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress and growth and improve the welfare and well-being of the quality of life of the citizenry (Attah, 2018).

### Systems of Mass Kidnappers

Kidnappers are sophisticated actors, trained, well equipped, very much tactful, and calculative in carrying out and executing their missions. They must have viewed the outcome of their actions to be beneficial to their group members before they strike (Odoma, & Akor, 2019). Kidnap victims must be seen by kidnappers to possess kidnap value (Okoli & Agada, 2014). Ransom Value (RV) is the strategic “networth” of a kidnapped victim, which, in essence, makes them kidnap target. The underlying logic of mass kidnapping business is that the victims are worth a ransom value and that they can pay, whether by self or proxy Okoli and Agada (2014) maintain that this value is determined by several factors as presented in tabular form below:

#### Factors Determining Ransom value (RV)

S/N	Factor	Illustrations
1	Personal affluence of victim	This has to do with the material standing of the target victim
2	Family premium on victim	The fact that the victim is an only child or the only male/female child raises the RV
3	Corporate premium on victim	Business executives and strategic stakeholders of firms are accorded much value
4	Public stake/relevance	Political office holders, paramount rulers, etc, are seen as possessing high ransom value
5	Social connections/networks	Members of eminent social friendship networks are also high targets
6	Type of kidnappers involved	Petty kidnappers are likely to accept cheap ransom
7	The negotiation process	The quality and terms of negotiation process is likely to help in determining the RV

Evidence in the extract showed that mass kidnapping has become a repeated crime most especially in the northern region of Nigeria. The height of the onslaught of kidnappers was projected with the mass kidnapped of two hundred and seventy-six (276) secondary school girls in Chibok community of Borno

State in North-Eastern Nigeria by Boko Haram terrorists on April 14, 2014; after which kidnapping became a lucrative criminal venture embarked upon by hoodlums from virtually all the states of Nigeria.

In recent times, the Kaduna – Abuja federal highway has become the den of kidnappers with high profile Nigerians falling victim and the mass kidnapped of the students of Greenfield University located along Kaduna – Abuja highway. The Greenfield University kidnapping took place on 20 April 2021, when at least 20 students and two members of staff were kidnapped in Kasarami village, Chikun local government area of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The abductors demanded a ransom on the remaining 14 abducted students of Greenfield University in Kaduna State, Northwest Nigeria, have been released after the parents allegedly paid huge ransom (Abubakar, 2021). The parents shown in a TVC news report said they paid a total of N180 million as ransom to the terrorists to secure their children’s release (wikipedia, 2021). Several cases of mass kidnapping were reported to have taken place, the caliber of persons kidnapped and the need to play along with the kidnappers to ensure the safe release of the victims apparently account for the non-publicity of some of the cases (Ngwama, 2014).

This and other similar acts of criminality, have earned Nigeria, the unfortunate description of a violent nation and one of the most unsafe countries to do business within the Africa sub-region (Odoma & Akor, 2019; Ugwuoke, 2011). The above sad assertion must have been as a result of the fear and apprehension caused by the unabated activities of mass kidnapping and kidnappers. Obviously, violent crimes like kidnapping bring about fear in society and thus scare tourists and foreign direct investment (FDI) with the attendant negative consequences on the economic performance of such a nation (International Crisis Group, 2020; Ugwuoke, 2011). As rightly noted by Ugwuoke (2015), Odoma and Akor,( 2019), these categories of crime are mostly responsible for the notorious image associated with Nigeria among the alliance of nations.

**Some Selected Mass Kidnap Cases in Nigeria**

S/N	Name	Year kidnapped	Place kidnapped	Ransom demanded	Release	Kill
1	Chibok Girls	April,14, 2014	Borno State			
2	Greenfield University Students	20 April 2021	Kaduna State	180 million		5
3	Government science secondary school, kankara.	11 December 2020	Kankara, Katsina State			
4	100 Dapchi schoolgirls	February 19, 2018	Yobe State			5
5	136 pupils of Salihu Tanko, Islamic School	2021 May, 30	Tegina town, Niger State			
6	Kaduna Federal College of Forestry Mechanization, students	March 11,2021	Kaduna State			
7	317 Government Girls Science Secondary School.	February 26,2021	Jangebe, Zamfara State			
8	Bus seizure of state owned bus; 53 passengers ;-20 women,& 9 children	February 18, 2021	,Kundu village, Niger State			
9	Kagara Government Science College; 24 schoolboys,3 teachers and 8 relatives of school staff	February 17, 2021	Niger state			1



10	<b>Niger state bus raid; 21 PASSENGERS</b>	February 15, 2021	Niger State		10	
11	<b>Pirates kidnap sailors; 15 Turkish sailors</b>	January 23,2021	cargo ship off Nigeria's coast			<b>1</b>
12	<b>Kogi raid; 14 people.</b>	January 25,2021	Kogi, State		5	
13	<b>Abuja city; 11people &amp; eight Orphans</b>	January 25,2021	Abuja city			
14	<b>Wedding guests;25 people</b>	January 27, 2021	Northeastern Taraba state			
15	<b>Farmer community. knapping 50 people</b>	January 28. 2021	Shiroro, north-central Niger State			
16	<b>Katsina abductions; 80 Islamic school students.</b>	2020 December 19	Northwestern, Katsina state			
17	Emir of Kajuru, 13 abducted at his palace.	26 April 2021	Kajuru, kaduna state	<b>200million</b>	<b>3</b>	

Source: The Author. ( Okoli, 2021)

### Associated Reasons for Mass Kidnapping

Mass kidnapping, is a gang phenomenon, although it has been understood and explained from a variety of standpoints. In this paper, four of such standpoints are considered by several scholars who have conceived mass kidnapping as being driven by

- (i) Leadership factor
- (ii) Quest for material accumulation
- (iii) Corruption and
- (iv) Climate

In the specific case of mass kidnappings in Nigeria, “Okoli and Mamuda ( 2021)” noted that kidnappers who engage in such criminality do so for reasons bothering on leadership factors, the quest for material accumulation, corruption, climate and vegetation conditions. The narratives go as follows;

The driving force behind the incidence of mass kidnapping include the immediate usurpation of freedom by subjecting the victims to the state of slavery; to them to dehumanizing conditions for the commission of some further criminal act against their persons ; or to obtain ransom for their safe release (Odoemene, 2014) . The crux of the matter in mass kidnapping is all centered on ransoming. By which it meant the demand for some payment of sort, either in cash or in kind, in exchange for the abductees, who are wallowing in danger often in disadvantaged position.

The phenomenon of cattle rustling as an associated factor to mass kidnapping is circumspect within the common logic of primitive accumulation in a social relationship where criminal indulgence is highlighted by the existing nature of the capitalist structural system of materialism of violence. With this kind of background, criminals and violent groups commit acts of criminality, both for subsistence and capital upgrading. And they do that with crass impunity amidst the declining capacity of the state to exercise

coercive control.

The relationship between Climate-change and mass kidnappings; to the crisis of agro-pastoralism holds that, the ecological harsh conditions of global warming, aggravated by rising incidences of drought, desertification, flooding, and famine have occasioned volatile livelihood situations among traditional agro-pastoralists in the Sahel, displacing and plunging some of them into desperate survival tactics such as mass kidnappings (Rufai, 2021). Who have been dislodged from their native livelihood systems, have resorted to banditry and mass kidnapping as a mode of survival and alternative subsistence. The involvement of youths in transnational organized crime in form of rural brigandage, cattle rustling and allied criminal raids tend to affirm this standpoint (Olaniyan, & Yahaya, 2016; Olaniyan, 2018).

The ungoverned spaces argument postulates that mass kidnapping is driven by the failure of the state to affect total sovereign territorial control within its jurisdiction. The inability of the government to assert and enforce its will through its agencies of power in the countryside, frontiers, borderlands and open space forest landscapes has created spheres of competitive influence where the violent non-state actors exercise quasi-territorial powers in negation of the sovereign and territorial integrity of the Nigerian state (Ojo, 2020). The ungoverned spaces have created safe havens for kidnapers, who operate with utmost criminal opportunism and impunity in such spheres (Rufai, 2021).

In this regard, mass kidnapping has become a genuine strategy for both insurgents and terrorists. The synergy between terrorism/insurgency, banditry and mass kidnapping is more of operational than ideological, but as a means to an end; for fund raising, publicity, forced recruitment, coercive bargaining, and propaganda. Mass kidnapping explains the growing articulation of transnational organized crime in northern Nigeria, where jihadists allied to Boko Haram or ISWAP have engaged in different well-designed collaborations particularly in the northwestern hotbeds of Kaduna-Katsina-Zamfara (Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, 2021).

There is also the farmer-herder conflict standpoint which maintains that mass kidnapping is a logical consequence of the conflict between the farmers and migrant herders in some parts of Nigeria. It links mass kidnapping to herders' militancy and that history has it that the kidnapers originated from the rank of hired militants (mercenary fighters) who hitherto fought on the side of the herders in their confrontation with crop farmers. The defected mercenary fighters turned to opportunistic criminality, beginning with cattle rustling and thereafter kidnapping for ransom (International Crisis Group, 2020). The above views are important and plausible to the extent that they offer some insights into the phenomenon of mass kidnappings in Nigeria.

## **THEORETICAL FRAME-WORK**

Another important genre of kidnapping in Nigeria is mass abduction. This follows the 'invasion model' of kidnapping, whereby a group of persons is targeted for 'wholesale' abduction. Terrorists and bandits have engaged in kidnapping of school children in the country over the recent years. Often times, Mass abduction is effected on the highway where a vehicle commuting passengers is 'high-jacked' and the passengers are taken into captivity *in masse* in prospect of ransoming or other strategic bargaining. This paper adopts the kidnap for ransom model (K4R) and the invasion model as it is analytical framework. The K4R model was influenced by Okoli and Agada, (2014); WANEP, 2019) in an attempt to explain the instrumental essence of organized crime as a desperate means of economic empowerment and social climbing. This model is used in understanding the present kidnapping crime studies. The basic assumptions of K4R can be highlighted thus:

(1) Driven by the quest for Ransom

- (2) Target profiling that is target capital worth or corporate strategic value
- (3) The political economy of ransom prospect and payment

Kidnapping manifests in a variety of patterns and models, common patterns of kidnapping in the country include kidnapping for ransom (K4R), kidnapping for ritual, hostage taking, mass abduction, and child abduction (WANEP, 2020). It is primarily driven by the quest for ransoming. Kidnapping in this regard is often carefully planned, prospected, organized, and prosecuted. The planning and prospecting usually start with profiling of a target with a view to determining his kidnap ransom value (KRV). KRV refers to the target's capital worth plus social premium (i.e.  $KRV = CW + SP$ ). CW has to do with the target's material substance quantifiable in monetary terms while SP refers to the target's family or corporate strategic value (Odoemene, 2014). The strategic value in this sense varies in degree per circumstance. For instance, a kidnapped child of a wealthy family is worth a high KRV; but a kidnapped only child of an affluent household possesses an extra KRV in view of the premium on such life (Okoli, 2021).

Wealthy individuals and their relations are adjudged to be of high KRV in view of their material resources which could be extracted by way of ransoming. This is also true of strategic members of organizations that are believed to be wealthy. Sometimes, a target's KRV is determined, not necessarily from the standpoint of his material affluence, but by virtue of the perceived worth of his/her capital. In this regard, one's membership of a perceptibly well-to do family or organization confers on him/her some higher degree of KRV. The rationale is that when such a person is kidnapped, members of his wealthy family or organization would conveniently see to his release expectedly through contribution ransoming. The rational calculus of K4R is based on the political economy of ransom prospecting and payment. This is predicated on the likelihood that a kidnap victim possesses the material and social capital to enable the appropriate ransom payment.

The above evaluation on kidnap Ransom Value (KRV) attests to the phenomenon of mass kidnapping in Nigeria. Giving credibility to the invasion model of kidnapping, whereby a group of persons is targeted for 'wholesale' abduction. Terrorists and bandits have engaged in mass kidnapping of school children in the country over the recent years. Often times, Mass abduction is effected on the highway where a vehicle commuting passengers is 'highjacked' and the passengers are taken into captivity in masse in prospect of ransoming or other strategic bargaining, (Okoli,2021). The rational calculus of K4R is based on the political economy of ransom prospecting and payment. This is predicated on the likelihood that a kidnap victim possesses the material and social capital to enable the appropriate ransom payment. There are, however, instances of K4R where the aforementioned rational considerations hardly apply. Petty and opportunistic criminals often engage in predatory abduction of individuals in vulnerable situations even without recourse to any target-profiling. For such occasions, determination of KRV is impromptu and less systematic, often leading to lower ransom trades-off.

### **The Link between Transnational Organized Crime and Mass Kidnapping**

Organized criminals are identified with such high profile crimes as kidnapping, illicit drug trafficking, human trafficking, cyber-crimes, terrorism, hijacking, money laundering, to mention but a few of them. Although organized crime can be identified with any nation and groups, it goes beyond local boundaries, cultures, and nations. The common forms of organized criminal activities in Nigeria include mass kidnapping, terrorism, politically motivated killings, armed robbery, militancy, official corruption, money laundering and allied reasons. Kidnapping as an organized crime has its roots in the unlawful intentional deprivation of a person's freedom of movement in an attempt to exploit the situation to extort money or other (Ewi, 2010; WANEP, 2019)



Customarily, the earnings of the kidnap for ransom are used in the purchase of more arms and ammunitions by the leaders of the criminal gangs to maintain supremacy. Organized crime play an important point in aggravating mass kidnapping to generate more money for the purchase of arms to maintain their lordship superiority among criminal lords. Indisputably, in an organized criminal structure, there is superiority contest that often lead to loss of life in terrifying contest.

*“Criminal influence was so enormous that he was feared and idolized by his troops. His reign reverberated across Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and parts of Sokoto State as well as Niger Republic, where he engaged in acts of rural banditry through his disparate foot soldiers (Emmanuel, 2017). He subsequently became even more ruthless, engaging in massive village, mine and markets raids, as well as ripping-off a burgeoning criminal economy that specialized in arms trafficking, kidnapping for ransom and cattle theft” (Okoli & Mamuda 2021; Okoli, 2021 & Okoli & Atelhe, 2014).*

### **Implications of Mass Kidnapping on Nigeria’s National Security**

Mass kidnapping is a threat to Nigeria’s national security as it is associated with security complications and consequences that undermine human community by instituting alarming insecurity. The criminal economy associated with mass kidnapping has flourished on a vicious circle of violence. The proceeds from the incidents of mass kidnapping are used in other patterns of criminal enterprises, such as arms and drugs trafficking (International Crisis Group, 2020).

In maintaining the criminal economy, transnational organized crime made it possible for the infiltration of rural banditry by Book-Haram, ISWAP, IPOB, Odua, and NDVS, through the involvement of crime lords in ethno-communal militancy as a result posing the conjuncture in the present dynamics of mass kidnapping in Nigeria. It is evident from the foregoing that the phenomenon of transnational crime which culminated into mass kidnapping is detrimental to the national security of Nigeria.

### **CONCLUSION**

Mass kidnapping crisis is a complicated situation involving the coming together of interests, motives, and actors. Unscrupulous elements taken to mass kidnapping as means of clandestine livelihood, resorted to mass kidnapping as a means of raising funds for their operations as well as a strategy for forced bargaining. The complexity of the associated factors have convoluted into the condition of a complex security situation characterized by criminal opportunism in the fashion of crime-terror intricacy. Mass kidnapping has been the most prevalent and daring predictor of the contemporary security challenges in Nigeria. Driven by the logic of economic opportunity by way of ransom, amidst the declining guarantees for state and human security in the country, predatory violent non-state actors (VNSAs) have resorted to extortion crimes such as mass kidnapping for ransom as a means of primitive accumulation. Plugging opportunities for kidnapping, destroying its reward system, as well as ensuring deterrence of its committal through severe sanctioning of perpetrators would go a long way in bringing about the desired security conditions. With the above circumstances at hand the following recommendations are made;

(a) **Ungoverned Forest Space;** The massive ungoverned open forest rural landscapes in the Nigeria’s remote hinterlands should be ‘governed’ through a pragmatic community policing strategy that involves local vigilantes and neighborhood watch groups. Security personnel needs to be well-equipped, with all required operational facilities as well as intelligence gathering on kidnapping in order to properly function and over-power the ugly threat of kidnapping in Nigeria. Also, the new security outfits formed to police the community deserves to be proactive in reporting any suspicious movement about kidnapper’s hideouts. Additionally, it is mandatory to declare a restrict law on any government official, public office holder, and politician, against inside-relations with the kidnappers. Any of such persons if caught associating with the

perpetrators should be banned from vying and contesting of any governmental position. It would be rest assured discourage the others not to part-take in the criminal act.

(b) **Appropriate Sanctions;** More decisive and stringent sanction, such as death penalty, should be meted out on perpetrators and accomplices of kidnapping in order to make for strong deterrence. Tackling this social vice required re-constitutive strength while suggesting that the traitors be arrested and dealt with appropriately. Relatively, government officials must avoid corruption and flashy wealth display. The focus must be energized on good leadership with transparency, responsibility, and equality. By applying this, hostage-taking will be eliminated and be replaced with patriotism, nation-building, and sustainable development.

(c) **Quit Ransom Payment;** The kidnap's family should refrain from the desperation of paying ransom and delays a little longer or quit the ransom payment to the kidnappers because it often serves as a motivational element for the perpetrators to keep exploring in the ugly criminal act. It should be discouraged, and possibly criminalized.

(d) **Phone SIM-cards Registration;** phone Sims-card registration should be made mandatory for users and to ensure every cell phone user is registered by the service providers for easy identification for security alert.

(e) **Job Creation;** a society that does not provide for the political and economic needs and desires of most of the members is potentially a fertile ground for the recruitment of its youths into anti- social behavior such as mass kidnappings. Hence, employment opportunities should be abound through the support of entrepreneurship.

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