

Perception Study on Unknown Gunmen Phenomenon in the Southeast Nigeria: The New Face of Terror

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria occupied abysmally the third position in 2019/2020 Global Terrorism Index and has been classified as a country in a 'state of war'. Virtually all the six regions of the country are dotted with various manifestations of insecurity. In the southeast region of Nigeria, which is the focus of this study, the new face of terror is the activities of the 'unknown gunmen'. The specific objectives are to; identify the peoples' perception about the identity of the unknown gunmen; examine the root causes of insecurity in the region; determine governments' responses to the activities of unknown gunmen and determine the impacts of the activities of the unknown gunmen on the region. The study adopted survey research using interview and questionnaire method. The study drew a sample of 350 respondents (politicians, security agents, traditional rulers, men and women) from each of the 6 states in the southeast using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. For the data analysis, descriptive statistics were used. The results of the findings include among others; that people perceived the identity of the unknown gunmen to be political thugs of state actors in the regions; that the root causes of insecurity in the region include governments' crackdown of IPO Bagitation/detention of IPOB leader and in-fighting among political elites from the region. Recommendations include among others; that the state and federal government should provide good governance to the people of southeast to forestall the temptation of violent youth agitation and secessionists ambition, that the politician in the region should desist from 'dirty' politics where youths are used as political thugs and that government should adopt dialogue in dealing with groups agitation rather than the traditional kinetic approach.

Keywords: Unknown Gunmen, South-east, Terror, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Security and welfare of citizens are two fundamental duties of government as enshrined in the Nigeria constitution. It was on this premise that the classical social contract theorists of the 17th and 18th centuries – Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean – Jacques Rousseau – held that social contract is the means by which civilized society, including government arises from the historically or logically preexisting condition of stateless anarchy, or a "state of nature". Because the state of nature is somehow unpleasant, unsatisfactory or undesirable, or because increasingly complex social relations eventually demand it, everyone agrees to give a little. In exchange, each person receives the benefits that supposedly only such a central authority can provide, notably including domestic peace (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021).

Without doubt effort to achieve peace in a polarized multi-ethnic society like Nigeria has remained a herculean task for previous government and most recently this present administration. This view was corroborated by the former president of Nigeria (Muhammed Buhari) in his "Nigeria at 61" Independence Day speech when he noted that the past eighteen months have been some of the most difficult era in the history of Nigeria. Commenting further, he averred that since the civil war, Nigeria and her people have seen a period of more heightened challenges than what it witnessed in this period (Guardian, 2021).

A cursory observation will indicate that Nigeria is indeed a nation at the brink of disintegration. The security challenges are not peculiar to a particular region, it cut across the entire geopolitical zones particularly in the North East (characterized by Islamic jihadists, banditry and kidnapping; North Central (characterized by farmers – herders conflicts, banditry and kidnapping; South – South (Characterized by militancy though appeared to be on the decrease).

Until recently, the south east region was arguably the most peaceful part of the country, but now, it has evolved into a hotbed of violence targeting state security and the society at large. In the South East region of Nigeria which is the focus of this study, there is a new dimension of violence that is bedeviling it at the moment-the activities of “Unknown Gunmen”. The appellation “unknown gunmen’ is one element that has mystified this new face of terror. The governors, security agents, politicians and the people of the region are asking the question. “Who are the unknown gunmen”? Are they mere criminal elements on rampage to unleash destruction on their paths or are they the modern day “Robin Hood” fighting for unjust social order in the region?

In the South East region, the unknown Gunmen have struck in virtually all the five states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. There are litany of attacks by these dare-devils ranging from attack on governors’ convoy, burning of Independent National Electoral Commissions’ (INEC) offices, setting ablaze of correctional centres and police station to murdering of politicians and individuals. Five months into 2021 149 people had been killed in 36 attacks in South east Nigeria as documented by Nextier Security, Peace and Development (SPD) Violent Conflict Database (Ezeobi, 2021).

This study is therefore aimed at examining the emergence of unknown gunmen as the new face of Tenor in the South East region of Nigeria. However, the specific objectives are to:

- Identify the peoples’ perception about the identity of the unknown gunmen.
- Examine the root causes of insecurity in the region.
- Determine governments’ responses to the activities of unknown gunmen.
- Determine the impacts of the activities of the unknown gunmen on the region.

MATERIALS

The Concept of Terrorism

The concept of terrorism gained global prominence after the 9/11 bombing of American symbol of economic power – The World Trade Centre in Washington by groups of Islamic jihadists. The then President of United States – George Bush (JR) declared a war on terror and mobilized a coalition of ‘friendly’ nations to fight against all enemies of the free world. The definition of terrorism is a difficult concept to describe and has been the source of academic and political debate for many years. While some scholars and experts choose to use open definitions, others have described several different types of definitions, examining them all and trying to encompass the elements that typify what terrorism is (Stuurman, 2019).

In this study, we adopted the definition of terrorism as provided by the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). It is the most widely used definition, and it reads:

“Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (Shanahan, 2016:108).

From the foregoing, one could adduce that the activities of unknown gunmen captured the essential ingredients in the above definition: unlawful use of violence, intimidation of government and society at

large, and the furtherance of socio-political objectives.

The Concept of Unknown Gunmen

The term “unknown gunmen” could be seen as a form of politicized violence used by ideological groups, political elites and criminal elements in order to achieve their political and social objectives. The unknown gunmen is term that gained prominence in recent Nigerian discourse. The appellation or nomenclature “unknown gunmen” is an element of psychological terror as people are yet to fathom the ideological learning of these dare-devil in the South-east region.

In the Nigerian political space, violence appears to have become the only tool for political engagement and negotiation. There is an intricate matrix of power play and maneuvering by various ethnic nationalities as well as non-state actors in Nigeria. Odeyemi (2022) quoting Ononuju Katchu, the Southeast presidency advocate pointed out that weaponization of nepotism as a policy of the state by the President Buhari Administration is to be blamed for exponential violence in the southeast.

On several occasions, the state and Federal government has accessed the proscribed indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) of been responsible for the carnage and destruction going on in the southeast region. However, the group IPOB) has categorically denied any of these attacks. The question now is this “The question now is: “Who is responsible for the people attacked, lives and property destroyed every day?” The temerity and Gestapo manner at which these unknown gunmen” attack police stations, local council headquarters and other public institutions, kid nap and kill politicians and citizens questions if there is any government in place to arrest the situation. These worry was captured thus:

What surprises residents is the level of confidence these marauders attach to their notorious act. Brazenly, and dressed in black attires, with guns fitted to their chests and ready to fire, they move in choice cars unhindered to their various targets irrespective of the time of the day. They don't leave any target without inflicting pains, dispossessing people of breadwinners and means of livelihood, among others (Njoku & Nzeagwu, 2022 para. 2).

The above submission is apt to adduce that the unknown gunmen as are not ghost but well-equipped and motivated individuals with well-spelt agenda. Gadu, a senatorial aspirant of PRP in Taraba South lend credence to the notion that the “unknown gunmen” is simply known gunmen that was allowed to operate because of political correctness. Speaking further he said that government (Politicians) have failed to handle it in order not to jeopardize their political fortune.

Understanding the Root Causes of Violent Conflict in the South – East Region

The South – East region of Nigeria is made up of the five Igbo speaking states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi Enugu and Imo. The region is one of the most peaceful regions in Nigeria since the Nigerian Biafran war of 1967 – 1970. However, the region is gradually losing the relative peace that it had enjoyed over the years since the emergence of various separatist agitators such as the Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB), Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM), Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) among others.

The Igbo nation of the South East region have been subterraneanly considered an existential threat to the State of Nigeria even after conceding defeat at the end of the 30 month, fratricidal war (1967 – 1970). The Igbos went to war due to fundamental issues bordering on injustice of various kind, social inequality, marginalization and political exclusions. However, in post war Nigeria era, these issues have only been exaggerated (Jacob, Nwobi and Igboji, 2020). Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim and Imhonopi (2019); Jacob et al (2020) and other authors have attributed the renewed emergence of various separatist agitators like MOSSOB, BZM and IPOB to the unprecedented marginalization of the Igbos. The Nigeria central

government has not helped matters as it employed kinetic approach in quelling the agitations and in the process creating more dissension, violence and call for self determination in the the region.

Ashiekwene (2021) held that the Southeast Nigeria have virtually become a war zone. He attributed the region's rising violence on three major factors:

The ascendancy of illegitimate politicians installed by hook or by crook;

The irresponsible conduct of leaders from the region, who have mismanaged the resourcefulness and energy of the teeming younger generation;

The tone – deafness of Buhari's administration and his politics of spite;

Considering the first factor above, one can vividly recount how the leadership of the political parties, especially the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC), was selling party position to the highest bidders before the last general elections, most sensible people feared there would be consequences, but did not know when or how. The installation of political stooge, winning election using any means necessary' and militarization of election are the perfect ingredients for the preparation of the seething violence the region is currently witnessing.

President Buhari's tone-deafness; politics of spite and general insensitivity has not also help matters. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society and our diversity is such a sensitive matrix to engender national cohesion. Unfortunately, the president has mismanaged the country's ethnic diversity. For instance, the president was asked in the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) during his first tenure, on his plans for the Niger Delta "with particular reference to amnesty, bunkering and inclusive government". This was his chilling response:

I hope you have (a) copy of the election results. Literally, constituencies, for example, that gave me 97% cannot in all honesty be treated, on some issues, with constituencies that gave me 5%. I think these are political realities (Chima, 2015).

Furthermore, the president's insensitivity and silence on the ongoing wanton destruction of lives and property by the deadly pastoral Fulani herdsmen in the southeastern states is questionable. Secessionist groups for instance (IPOB) through its leader Nnamdi Kan have held that the Fulani Herders from the North are increasingly encroaching on the settled farmers of the South/South and South/East. He also accused the Government of condoning it and legitimizing the land grab by proposing the Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) Scheme. Although the IPOB has been proscribed by the Government as a terrorist group, most south easterners believed that the group is fighting against social injustice, gross marginalization and protection of the region from Fulani-herders invasion of their land. According to Jacob et.al. (2020) between 2017 and 2019, a high number of peaceful protests have been violently attended to by the police and army with hundreds arrested and jailed, and many killed.

The region's elite has not helped matters. They have preyed on the youths with their politics of opportunism and mismanaged the legacy of enterprise and industry inherited in the past. The mismanagement misapplication and misappropriation of the common wealth and resources by the political elites has resulted in the complete isolation and abandonment of the people especially the youths.

The political elites use mostly the uneducated youths as political thugs during election only to abandon them after winning the election. The ammunitions (AK47) that were visibly brandished by these unknown gunmen could be the guns supplied by politician that wants to win election in a do – or – die fashion. Complication of some Media Reports of activities of Unknown Gunmen in the South-East (Jan 2021 – October 2021)

State	Date	Nature of Attack and Number of Casualties	Source
Abia	March 22	Killed 3 Police Officers at Abariba	BBC.News.Com
Abia	Feb 1	Killed 2 police officers from Abayi Divisional Police Headquarters in Aba	BBC.News.Com
Abia	Feb 23	Killed 1 Police Officer from Omoba Police Station in Isiala Ngwa South LGA.	BBC.News.Com
Anambra	18 March	Killed 1 Police Officer at Police Check-point at Nnewi-Aniocha LGA	BBC.News.Com
Anambra	19 March	Killed 1 Police Officer at Ekwulobi Police Station Nanka.	BBC.News.Com
Anambra	27 Sept.	Attack on APC Campaign rally at Uruagu, Nnewi	Vanguard Newspaper
Anambra	12 October	Attacked Governor Obianos Convey on an APGA rally in Ihala LGA. No casualty	Vanguard Newspaper
Ebonyi	Jan. 8	Killed 3 Police Officers at Onueke Police Station in Ezza South LGA	BBC.News.Com
Ebonyi	4 February	Burnt Police Divisional Headquarters in Isu, Onicha LGA	BBC.News.Com
Ebonyi	1 March	Gun attack of Iboko Divisional Police Station in IzziLGA. No casualty recorded but Police property was damaged	BBC.News.Com
Enugu	23 Sept.	Killed 2 Police Officers at Police Checkpoint in Nachi, Oji River LGA	The Guardian
Enugu	4 Oct.	Burnt a Commercial Tricycle at Amechi, Road beside Romchi Filling Station	Sahara Reporters
Enugu	11 Oct.	Attacked and abducted a female Police Officer at Umulokpa in Uzo-Uwani LGA	Vanguard Newspaper
Imo	Feb. 5	Killed 2 Police Officers in Umulowo Police Division in Obowo LGA	BBC.News.Com
Imo	Feb. 25	Burnt Aboh Mbaise Divisional Police Headquarters	BBC.News.Com
Imo	March 19	Burnt Police Station in Ihitte-Uboma LGA	BBC.News.Com
Imo	April 5	Burnt and Freed 1800 in- mates at Owerri Correctional Centre, Burnt Police Command Headquarters Owerri	Blue Print Newspaper
Imo	30 May	Killed Ahmed Gulak (Politician) at Umueze Obiangwu inNgor-Okpala LGA	This Day Newspaper
Imo	3 June	Killed 3 Civilians at Orji Owerri and environs	Vanguard Newspaper
Imo	4 Oct.	Shot Sporadically at First Bus Stop Irete, Owerri West LGA, around Douglas and Wethral Roads, Akwakuma axis and Control Post Junction. No casualty recorded	Daily Post Newspaper

Imo	19 Oct.	Killed 3 Traditional Rulers and injured many during a stakeholders meeting at Nnenasa in Njaba LGA	Vanguard Newspaper
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Source: Field survey, 2023

Theoretical Framework

The frustration Aggression theory was adopted for the study. The theory was initially developed by John Dollard and his associates in 1939 and had since been elaborated upon and expanded by scholars such as Berkowitz (1962) and Yates (1962) in Onya and Salihu (2020). This theory has argued that when people are frustrated, the resort to acts of aggression. Frustration comes when there is a gap between what a person wants and what he actually gets. The theory holds that frustration leads to aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression shifts to an innocent target.

This theory has also been used to explain riots and revolutions, which are believed to be caused by poorer and more disadvantaged sections of society who can express their pent-up frustration and anger through violence. (Nielsen, 2012, in Wikipedia.org). This theory is apt in analyzing the marginalization, inequality, poverty and political exclusion meted against the southeasterners by the central government and the political elites in the region.

For the people especially the youths, finding expression and relevance in violent agitation have become a rule instead of an exception. The unknown gunmen could be seen as an albatross created by the unjust socio-political system. Their obvious frustration has resulted in latent aggressive behaviours and manifestations in the southeast region.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in South East region of Nigeria which is made up of five (5) States: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo.

The southeast is bounded on the west by River Niger, in the South by the Niger Delta region, on the Flat North Central to the North, on the east by the Cross River. It is divided between the Cross Niger transition forests ecoregions in the South and the Guinean forest Savanna mosaic in the dries north (Klikipedia, 2022). The southeast is the indigenous cultural homeland of the Igbo people, a group that accounts for ninety percent of the population of the entire zone.

The southeast is the smallest geopolitical zone in Nigeria. However, it contributes greatly to the Nigerian economy due to oil and natural gas reserves in states like Abia and Imo. Furthermore, the region has a viable industrial economy with the following commercial cities such as Onistha, Nnewi in Anambra State; Owerri and Orlu in Imo State; Abakaliki in Ebonyi State; Aba in Abia State and Enugu town in Enugu State. The main agricultural products of the region include yam, cassava, rice, cocoyam. Apart from oil and natural gas deposits, the region boosts of bauxite, iron ore sand stone, lignite, columbite, clay, coal, and tin.

The region has a population of about 22 million people which accounts for 10 percent of the total population of the country. Aba and Enugu are the most populous cities in the southeast as well as the tenth and fourteenth most populous cities in Nigeria (Wikipedia, 2022). They share common socio-cultural characteristics: Language (Igbo), republican politics, strong business orientation among others. The survey research design was adopted for this study. Randomly, four hundred respondents (politicians, security operatives, traditional rulers, men and women) were targeted (80 from each of the five states’ capitals: Umuahia, Awka, Abakaliki, Enugu and Owerri) for the survey opinion. The use of the state capitals was because of their cosmopolitan nature. Data was collected through the use of a structured interview and

questionnaire method. The questionnaire was pretested and validated by a pilot study. Out of the four hundred copies of the questionnaire distributed only three hundred and fifty representing 87.5% were returned and analyzed. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques of data analysis. This involved frequency distribution and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 on the people's perception about the identity of the unknown gunmen lucidly shows that a preponderant 28.6% of the respondents identified political thugs of state actors in the region. This is followed by hoodlums taking advantage of insecurity situation in the southeast (21.4%), unemployed youths accounted for (20%), sponsored criminal elements by the federal government accounted for (15.7%) while members of indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)/Eastern Security Network (ESN) recorded the least with (14.3%). This finding clearly shows that peoples' perception about the identity of the unknown gunmen hinges prominently on the use of political thugs by the political elites in the region. From the interview conducted; in-fighting among politicians in the region have further divided the political class as witnessed in Imo and Anambra States. The low response rate on members of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)/Eastern Security Network (ESN) could be adduced that their agitations have been perceived as legitimate expression of the systemic injustice and marginalization of the southerners by the Federal Government. Further revelation from the interview conducted showed that although there were some bad elements among IPOB/ECN perpetrating acts of violence in the region, majority are from politicians and criminals hiding under IPOB/ESN to commit acts of terrorism in the region.

Table 2 showed the respondents' responses on the root causes of insecurity in the region. Governments' crackdown is IPOB agitation/detention of IPOB leader had the highest response rate of 28.6%. This was followed by in-fighting among political elites from the region (17.1%), dissatisfaction with political leadership in the region had (15.6%) herders' onslaught against communities scored (14.3%), systemic injustice had (12.9%) while economic hardship had the least response rate of (10.6%). This finding clearly indicated that the root causes of insecurity in the region emanated from governments' crack down of IPOB agitation/detention of IPOB leader. This finding is in tandem with that done by Amnesty International (2016) and Chukwudi et al; (2018) that the governments' use of brute force towards agitators and marginalized ethnic groups had exacerbated the cycle of violence in such places. For instance, the operation Python Dance and other 'dances' by the Nigerian military were crude manifestations of how the use of kinetic approach can escalate conflict in the southeast region. Other inherent causes of insecurity as shown by the study had political undertones. The interview conducted also gave credence to the view that many of the people from the region are disenchanted and appalled by the quality of political/socio-cultural leadership existing at the moment. They further averred that the failure of leadership in the zone has emboldened group like IPOB to become the voice of the oppressed. For instance, IPOB sit-at-home order (every Monday) has been strictly obeyed by the people even when the government and its security agencies have reassured the people to come out on Mondays. From the foregoing, failure of leadership has increased the cycle of violence and agitation in the region.

Table 3 tested governments' responses to the activities of unknown gunmen. The use of government security agents to arrest youths/militarization of the region has a preponderant (42.9%) response rate. This was followed by the establishment of regional security outfit (Ebube Agu) with (28.6%); imposition of curfew in the states accounted for (22.9%) while consultative forum by government and other stakeholders had the least response rate of (5.8%). The findings above clearly showed that government whether at the state or federal level strongly believed that the use of kinetic approach – sheer brutality and force is the main approach to respond to the activities of unknown gunmen. Evidently, a small percentage of the respondents opined that government has adopted consultation to tackle the problem. It is therefore important to highlight the need for dialogue and communicative engagement between government, secessionist agitators and the youths.

Those interviewed observed that repressive activities against the pro-secessionists over the years have not stopped further agitations and violence. They maintained that criminal elements hoodlums and other external axis of evil that are determined to destroy the peace that exist among Igbos are capitalizing on the violent face-offs between the government and pro-secessionist groups. The government must become more proactive than the traditional reactive approach.

Table 4 tested impact of the activities of unknown gunmen on the region. A preponderant (24.3%) and (22.9%) identified loss of lives and property; and disruption of economic activities respectively. This was followed by heightened sense of fear and insecurity with (20%) response rate; loss of investors in the region/capital flight accounted for (16.6%); loss of faith in the government for security accounts for (7.7%); loss of state revenue had (6.3%) while burden on government expenditure to repair/rebuild damaged infrastructure scored only (2.3%). This finding lucidly showed the activities of unknown gunmen have devastating effect as it destroyed lives and property. A study by Nextier Security Peace and Development (SPD) corroborated our study that five months into 2021, 149 people have been killed in 36 attacks in Southeast Nigeria by unknown gunmen (Ezeobi, 2021). The disruption of the economic activities of the southeast is another area of major concern especially in the hospitality industry as the case of Imo state. The fear of the unknown gunmen has equally heightened the general sense of fear in virtually all segment of the society. The slightest rumor of sighting “men on black outfits” in Siena bus will automatically send panic and shock waves to an entire state. Our observation has shown that even when the IPOB has announced that the sit-at-home protest is no longer enforced, the people of the southeast: businesses, markets, higher institutions, public and private organizations prefer to stay at home for fear of attack or death by the unknown gunmen. From the interview conducted it was observed that a state like Imo which is a hospitality hub, hotel businesses are having hard times in terms of patronage due to insecurity. In the final analysis, the activities of the unknown gun is turning a ones peaceful region to a war zone where life is short, business disarticulated and government in a state of dilemma.

Table 1: People’s Perception about the Identity of the Unknown Gunmen

Perception	Frequency	Percentage
Sponsored criminal elements by the federal government	55	15.7
Political thugs of state actors in the region	100	28.6
Unemployed youths	70	2.0
Members’ of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)/Eastern Security Network (ESN)	50	14.3
Hoodlums taking advantage of insecurity situation in the southeast	75	21.4
No idea	–	–
Total	350	100

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 2: The Root Causes of Insecurity in the Region

Causes of Insecurity	Frequency	Percentage
Systemic injustice	45	12.9
Herdsmen’s onslaught against communicates	50	14.3
Governments’ grade down of IPOB/Detention of IPOB leader	100	28.6
Dissatisfaction with political leadership in the region	58	18.6
Economic hardship	37	10.6
In fighting among political elites from the region	60	17.1

Total	350	100
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Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 3

Government Responses to the Activities of Unknown Gunmen	Frequency	Percentage
Establishment of regional security outfit (Ebube Agu)	100	28.6
Use of government security agents to arrest youths/militarization of the region	150	42.9
Imposition of curfew in the states	80	22.9
Consultative forum by Government and other stakeholders	20	5.8
Total	350	100

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 4: Impact of the Activities of Unknown Gunmen on the Region

Impacts on the Region	Frequency	Percentage
Disruption of economic activities	80	22.9
Loss of state revenue	22	6.3
Loss of lives and property	85	24.3
Burden on government expenditure to repair/rebuild damaged infrastructure	8	2.3
Heightened sense of fear and insecurity	70	20
Loss of investors in the region/capital flight	58	6.6
Loss of faith in the government for security	27	7.7
Total	350	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The activities of unknown gunmen in the Southeast region of Nigeria have gradually turned ones a peaceful and economic vibrant region into a hotbed of violence and terror. This study emphasized that people perceived the identity of the unknown gunmen to be political thugs of state actors in the region and also hoodlums taking advantage of insecurity situation in the southeast. The study further revealed that the root causes of insecurity in the region are majorly governments' crackdown of IPOB agitation/detention of IPOB Leader; and in-fighting among political elites from the region. We also concluded that the governments' responses to the activities of unknown gunmen have been the use of government security agents to arrest youths/militarization of the region. The use of dialogue was minimally applied. The study also concluded that the activities of unknown gunmen has negatively impacted on the socio-economic lives of the region such as loss of lives and property, disruption of economic activities; heightened sense of fear and insecurity among others. To this end, the following recommendations were made:

The state and federal government should provide good governance to the people of southeast. Its absence remains the major contention to issues on insecurity, violent agitation among the youths and secessionists in the region.

The politician in the region should desist from 'dirty' politics where election is a do-or-die affair. They use

the youths as political thugs to win election and dump them after election. The end result is frustration expressed in acts of violence and terror in the region.

The political actors/elites should set up peace and reconciliatory forum at State and Regional levels to discuss on how to settle political differences and in-fighting.

The government should adopt dialogue/communicative engagement in dealing with groups' agitation rather than the traditional kinetic approach of brute force.

The security agencies should engage in intelligent gathering to forestall attack on their personnel, property and public at large.

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