CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL NEXUS BETWEEN KIDNAPPING HOTSPOTS AND UNGOVERNED SPACE ALONG NIGERIAN EXPRESSWAYS

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ABSTRACT
There has been uncontrolled increased in the incidences of Kidnapping in recent times in Nigerian expressways and this poses significant threats to regional integration, national security and development. There is dearth of literature among scholars in providing conceptual and empirical nexus between kidnapping hotspots and ungoverned space in Nigerian expressways. This study sought to identify the major kidnapping hotspots in Nigerian expressways and examine the influence of kidnapping hotspots on ungoverned space in Nigerian expressways with a view to providing effective security measures for addressing the menace. Data for the study were collected through in-depth interviews along Kaduna-Abuja expressway and extant review of literature, official reports and statistical bulletin on the nature and trend and pattern kidnapping and nexus between kidnapping and ungoverned space on Nigerian expressways. The paper revealed that the major drivers responsible for the uncontrolled increase in kidnapping along Nigerian expressways were internal conflict, terrorism, insurgency, poverty, unemployment, bad governance, inadequate robust security architecture for effective crime control and prevention, and slow pace adoption of sophisticated spatially-reference digital technologies for mapping kidnapping hotspots and deployment of security operatives for kidnapping control. The study further revealed a consistent relationship between kidnapping hotspots along Nigerian expressways and ungoverned space, economic loss arising from the payment of ransom, psychological fear of being kidnapped on Nigerian expressways, food security, altered human mobility and regional integration across other parts of Nigeria, distort peri-urban livelihoods, pose threats to national security and development. The paper recommends among others, the need for development of robust security checkpoints through surveillance, patrol vehicles, stop and search operations at some strategic kidnapping hotspots, intelligence information gathering and deployment of joint security task force for prompt response to incidence of kidnapping along Nigerian expressways.

Keywords: Kidnapping, Ungoverned Space, Kidnapping Hotspot, Regional Integration and National Security, Nigerian Expressways
1.0 Introduction

Kidnapping is an age-long phenomenon, however the pattern and trend of kidnapping has taken different dimensions over space and time (Ayuba, 2020). Kidnapping is a global challenge, in both developed and developing countries. As revealed by The NYA24’s (2018) Asia accounted for the highest number of reported cases of kidnapping across the world, followed by Africa, Latin America, Middle East and Europe. While Africa was reported to be the second continent witnessing the highest rate of kidnap for ransom cases, Nigeria occupies the second position as the country with the highest number of kidnapping incidents throughout the world (NYA24, 2018). The global dimension of the increasing incidences of kidnapping is associated with countries experiencing internal conflict, insurgency, or terrorism (Wittig, 2018). This underscores the relationship between kidnapping, terrorism, internal conflict, terrorism, socio-economic woes and ungoverned space.

According to the 2020 report of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), Nigeria ranks third among 163 countries on the scale of key global security trend and pattern of terrorism. The first and second countries are Afghanistan and Iraq respectively. Nigeria has maintained the third position since 2015, suggesting that efforts targeted at mitigating security challenges have not produced optimal results. The report reveals that Nigeria accounted for the 9 per cent of all terrorism-related deaths globally in 2019. As far as the impact of terrorism is concerned globally, these three countries are rated very high. Afghanistan has 9.592; Iraq 8.682, while Nigeria is 8.314. The four terrorist groups responsible for the most deaths in 2019 were the Taliban, Boko Haram, ISIL and Al-Shabaab. Boko Haram, Nigeria’s deadliest terrorist group recorded an increase in terrorist activity mainly targeted at civilians by 25 per cent from the prior year (Global Terrorism Index, 2020).

Crime is a social phenomenon, however, crime has spatial dimension in relation to the fact that criminal activities are prevalent in cities, towns, bus stops, transport routes, expressways and other public places. There has been uncontrolled increase in incidence of crime along major routes in developing countries of Asia and Africa (World Bank, 2015). Nigerian expressways become ungovernable due to fear of being attacked by kidnappers. This pose significant threats to national, regional and states security and national development. There are limited studies for identification of kidnaping hotspots and influence of kidnapping hotspots on ungoverned space in Nigerian expressways.

Demand for transport is a derived demand, because such movement is not for its own sake, but for what it will help to achieve. Transportation is therefore the gateway for national interaction that enhanced socio-economic development, ideas generation and innovation diffusion from one place to another, service and people across national and international boundaries. Nigerian expressways are road networks and infrastructure that connect different states, other regions and link to inter-states travel and mobility. This enhanced human mobility for socio-economic, cultural and other activities enhanced different travel pattern across Nigerian cities and rural areas and this has been challenged with series of safety and security issues on Nigerian expressways. Therefore Nigerian expressways have become attractive zones for kidnappers, owing to low level of security surveillance, intelligence.

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gathering and prompt deployment of security personnel for effective crime control and prevention. It is against this backdrop that the paper sought to examine the extant literature on the conceptual and empirical nexus between kidnapping hotspots and ungoverned space along Nigerian expressways, examine the drivers responsible for kidnapping, and suggest measures for sustainable kidnapping prevention and control.

2.0 Conceptual Review

i. Kidnappings

There is no general consensus among scholars on the conceptualization and operationalization of kidnapping. Scholars have conceptualized kidnapping differently from different socio-economic background, different perspectives on motivations for kidnapping, across varied academic and disciplinary orientations.

According to Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben (2014), kidnapping is the act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom. This definition is not comprehensive enough to reflect other reasons for kidnapping. People may be kidnapped not only for profit or ransom; people can be kidnapped for ritual, spiritual purpose, sexual exploits, begging and political reasons.

Furthermore, people may be kidnapped not necessarily by unlawful force; there are some people that connived with kidnappers to get ransom from their family, relatives, or boss in workplace. This means kidnapping may be done voluntarily without any force, and this is more common among organized kidnappers, that run kidnapping as a syndicate. This is another emerging form of kidnapping that has not been given enough attention among scholars on conceptualization of kidnapping.

In the same vein, Inyang and Ubong (2013) conceive kidnapping as the use of force to capture, take away and detain a person unlawfully against his/her will. The definition of kidnapping as given by Inyang and Ubong (2013) explored the definition of kidnapping from the criminal law perspective. Persons are kidnapped and abducted by criminals for various reasons and intentions, such as for adoption, begging, camel racing, illicit intercourse, marriage, prostitution, ransom, revenge, sale, selling body parts, slavery, unlawful activity, murder and for other purposes (Hazen and Horner, 2007).

Fage and Alabi (2017) perceive kidnapping as a product of some variables ranging from economic, political, religious and self-determination through coercive or fraudulent abduction of a person or group of persons. This present paper conceives kidnapping as a “deliberate attempt by some criminal syndicates to either forcefully or plans to kidnap with the intention to collect ransom, political, ritual, gain acceptance of an offer, human trafficking, and begging, trading, forced labour and other selfish interests and agitations”. Kidnapping does not have to be by force, and this is more common among organized kidnappers, that run kidnapping as a syndicate. Furthermore, the reasons for kidnapping may be varied such as to collect ransom, acquired weapons, political gains, psychological warfare tactic to passed a message, spiritual purpose such as sales of human parts for ritual and sacrifice, gain acceptance of an offer, human trafficking for begging, sexual exploits and other selfish interest and agitations. This is the conceptual understanding of kidnapping; this present paper is anchored on.
ii. Categories of Kidnapping

One of the scholars that contributed to the literature on kidnapping is Osumah and Aghedo (2011). The study classified kidnapping into three types. First, there is a ritual kidnapping. This is identified as the “oldest form of kidnap.” The victims of this form of kidnapping are most often killed, as the desire of the kidnappers is usually to harvest organs or other body parts for sacrifice or money-making rituals. The second form of kidnapping is identified as political. Political actors in Nigeria place a high premium on power and employ any means to acquire power for self-regarding gains (Osumah and Aghedo, 2011). The third type of kidnapping is business-oriented, or economic in nature. Originally, this form of kidnapping was done to threaten rivals or curb competition, but in recent time, kidnapping has changed into more of the money-making and ransom motivated kidnapping events (Osumah and Aghedo, 2011).

This present paper argued that others factors may be associated with kidnapping for sacrifice and other spiritual purposes, through the sales of human parts for ritual, human trafficking among others. This is more in southern parts of Nigeria. Some kidnappers are just greedy and lazy, thereby resort kidnapping as their perceived way to earn a living. Others kidnapped because they have access to weapons, to perpetuate violence and collect ransom. These are opportunist kidnappers. Furthermore, enough attention has not been focused on the multiplier effect of the prevailing terrorism, banditry, insurgency and other forms of insecurity in Nigeria. These aforementioned factors can be categorized as primary or direct factors responsible for kidnapping in Nigeria.

The second factors can be categorized as secondary or indirect factors. These are factors associated with slow pace of combative force among security operatives, such as inadequate information gathering for the deployment of resources for the prevention and curtailment of kidnapping. There is also problem associated with inadequate robust security architecture, strategic framework and security arrangement in the selection of specific points for establishing security outfits such as Police stations, patrol deployment, special operations, and tactical units, operational and strategic military operations, vigilante groups and other joint security task force for combating kidnapping. Other factors are associated with slow pace in the adoption of sophisticated spatially- referenced digital technologies through the use of Geographic Information System and Remote Sensing (GIS/RS) such as satellite imageries for sharing real-time information, monitoring and prompt response to the deployment of security operatives for the prevention and control of kidnapping along the hotspots in Nigerian expressways.

Furthermore, the categories of kidnappers are not broad-based and robust enough to cover all the other categories of kidnappers. The categories of kidnapper as expound by Osumah and Aghedo (2011) explore the major reasons associated with kidnapping. The idea is not all kidnappers kidnapped for ritual, money, or political, people may also be kidnapped to get access to some vital documents and other stakes with monetary value, or get approval, such for marriage, sales of property among others. Others are ‘opportunist’ kidnappers that kidnapped because some people connive to kidnap them and gain attention from their family members, relatives and boss in their place of work. Opportunist
Kidnappers take advantage of the uncontrolled and porous situations to engage in kidnapping. This is more common among syndicate kidnappers or criminal gangs. Many people, especially the less-privileged, destitute and people with disabilities, can be kidnapped for begging, trading, slavery. This may be partly because their poor living conditions and physical characteristics may draw sympathy from the general public to solicit for alms and trade. This is another conceptualization of categories of kidnappers as argued by this present paper.

iii. Ungoverned Space

Ungoverned space is an age-long concept; however, it is gaining attention among global scholars across environmental, geo-strategic and military studies, security and spatial sciences, and other allied disciplines. This is due to uncontrolled increased in insecurity, terrorism, insurgency, criminal activities, such as uncontrolled increased in kidnapping, especially in developing countries in recent times. There is no general consensus among scholars on the conceptualization of ungoverned space, and no general agreement on variables or indicators, to measure ungoverned space. Raba and Peter (2007) are among the scholars that have provided robust conceptualization of ungoverned, which their explanatory and analytical views provide framework in which the present paper is underpinned.

Raba and Peter (2007) conceptualize ungoverned space as the level of control of physical space, and the extent to which the state has no control of the fundamental government functions. The study characterized ungoverned space by failed or failing states; poorly controlled land or maritime borders or airspace; or areas within otherwise viable states where the central government’s authority does not extend. Ungoverned space can thus be found along a continuum of state control. As argued by Esty et al. (1998) ungoverned space are characterized by the loss of control of some geographic or functional space within their territories, to some syndicates involved in criminal activities, such as kidnappers; weak or failed states, in which the institutions of the central government are so weak that they cannot maintain authority or political order beyond the major cities. This assertion, is supported with the idea that the major kidnapping hotspots are along expressways, which are found along peri-urban areas or fringes. However, there is also concentration of kidnapping at the city-centres, as a result of the interplay of numerous factors, such as the motives for kidnapping and different security apparatus put in place for robust crime management.

Raba and Peter (2007) further argued that not all ungoverned space, pose the same level of threat, however, ungoverned space harbor terrorists, areas containing terrorists, insurgent forces, or criminal networks that, and areas that may not harbor terrorists but that can produce humanitarian crises—refugees, internal displaced camps (IDPs), epidemics, and famine among others. Going from the foregoing, the conclusion that to be drawn, is that ungoverned space as areas containing terrorists, insurgent forces, or criminal networks such as kidnappers, and pose threat to regional and national security (Raba and Peter, 2007). This is the concept of ungoverned space, in which the present paper is underpinned. This is owing to the fact that kidnapping is being perpetuated by criminal syndicates that are more organized, using tactical, operational and strategic knowledge, to perpetuate violence. Kidnappers operate along some areas, especially along expressways and other public places, and the inability of the
governments has failed, relatively or absolutely, to the control the kidnapping hotspots, by kidnappers, and other terrorist camps.

iv. Indicators of Ungoverned Space

Raba and Peter (2007) made a systematic attempt to identify some indicators associated with ungoverned space, which are un-governability and conduciveness. These provide framework for characterizing areas associated with ungoverned space. The major variables to measures un-governability are (1) the level of state penetration of society; (2) the extent to which the state has a monopoly on the use of force; (3) the extent to which the state can control its borders; and (4) whether the state is subject to external intervention by other states.

From the conceptual standpoint of Raba and Peter (2007), it can be argued that, owing to kidnapping, does not mean the identified kidnapping hotspots along Nigerian expressways, are ungovernable, some parts of an area maybe governable, but the state security architecture may not be capable or lack enough needed capacity for prevention and control of kidnapping in the selected areas. In this context, it refers that the state is absent, unable or lacks capacity to perform its function for enhancing safety and security of its citizens, commuters, motorists and the general public against kidnapping. In the same vein, the conceptualization of ungoverned space, does not mean, that there is no governing structure along the kidnapping hotspots. Conclusively, ungoverned space, simplified that the territories are outside the control of the government that holds nominal sovereignty over the territory in question. This assertion is supported by literature.

Mallam (2009) observed that the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has without doubt failed to live up to expectations. As argued by Inyang and Abraham (2013), Nigeria is faced with the challenges of inadequate resources and training of security operatives for combating the incidence of kidnapping. Osumah and Aghedo (2011) and Umar (2016) argued that despite checkpoints put in place in Nigerian cities, with increasing police surveillance and different anti-terrorist units, these efforts do not address the root cause of kidnapping. Amaize and Dayo (2019) attributed the uncontrolled incidence of kidnapping along major expressways in Nigeria due to inadequate security agents to curtailed incidences of kidnapping. It can be concluded that, the kidnappers are well organized, possessed needed logistical and training for perpetuating violence, while there are no enough security architecture to fight the increasing scourge of kidnapping. This makes some identified kidnapping hotspots to constitute ungoverned space in terms of inadequate control of space by government.

v. Indicators of Conduciveness

The second indicators for measuring ungoverned space are conduciveness. Conduciveness becomes important, to provider fuller explanation of ungoverned space, owing to the fact that, not all space harbor terrorists, criminal gangs, such as kidnappers (Raba and Peter, 2007). Conduciveness seeks to differentiate ungoverned space that are more probable to create breeding ground for terrorism and criminal activities, from ungoverned space that are less probable to create breeding ground for terrorism and criminal activities. There are major variables to measure conduciveness in relation to ungoverned space, which are: (1) adequacy
of infrastructure and operational access; (2) sources of income; (3) favorable demographic and social characteristics; and (4) invisibility (Raba and Peter, 2007).

In terms of demographic, they can be measured in relation to presence of criminal networks, especially among the youth, communities vulnerable, such as motorists or commuters, due to their poor knowledge of the terrain along expressways, may be vulnerable to kidnapping. State of violence, such as terrorism and insurgency, especially in the North West and North East of Nigeria could also create fertile grounds to kidnapping and other terrorist attacks. Availability of criminal networks, with right weapons, operational, tactical and strategic experience may increase their susceptibility to kidnapping among others. The concept of conduciveness, refers to the degree to which ungoverned space create enough system and avenue for perpetuate violence, terrorism and criminal activities, such as crime.

3.0 Method of Data Collection and Analysis

Both primary and secondary data were collected for the paper. The primary data were collected through in-depth interviews conducted among the respondents that stay along Kaduna-Abuja expressways, officers of Nigerian Armed Forced that are in charged in providing security and residents of Kaduna-Abuja expressway with the experience of kidnapping among others. The secondary data were collected through extant review of literature, official reports and statistical bulletin on the nature and trend and pattern kidnapping and nexus between kidnapping and ungoverned space on Nigerian expressways.

4.0 Discussion of Findings

i. Nature and Pattern of Kidnapping on Nigerian Expressways

The thrust of this paper is to examine the pattern and trend of kidnapping hotspots along Nigerian expressways and identify nexus between kidnapping hotspots and ungoverned space in Nigerian expressways with specific reference to Kaduna-Abuja expressway as a case study. This is the presentation of results from in-depth interviews. On the nature and pattern of kidnapping along Kaduna-Abuja expressway, according to a female discussant:

Abuja-Kaduna expressway shares boundaries with Kaduna and Niger states and Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) and it is located along urban fringes that connect to other parts of Nigerian cities to the northern and southern Nigeria respectively. This enhance free flow of people and inadequate security architecture expose commuters to various criminal activities such as kidnapping along the expressways (Nigerian/Male/IDI/Jere-Kaduna /07/03/2023).

This shows that Nigerian expressways are becoming attractive zones for kidnappers. Furthermore, other expressways along Kaduna-Abuja that have become kidnapping hotspots and ungoverned space are Sabon Maro –Doka, Doka –Polewire, Polewire – Akilibu, Rijana, Akilibu - Gidan Bussa, Gidan Bussa Bridge, Gidan Bussa – Kateri, Kateri – Gada And Azara – Jere, Birni Gwari, Kaduna-Zaria-Funtua road. This indicates that the major kidnapping hotspots are spatially concentrated along expressways.

Other highway hotspots for the incidences of kidnapping were found along the southwest Nigeria. There are also dangerous

This study is in line with Ajayi and Ajayi (2014) posit that Nigeria have been faced with the challenges of the risk of lives and properties due to incidences of crime along transport routes and expressways. As revealed by Wojuade and Badiora (2017), crime in Nigeria has changed from normal crime along transport corridors and routes to the recent incidences of kidnapping and terrorism. The study further revealed that On June 6, 2017, 3 passengers were abducted from Lagos-Benin commercial bus at Benin City by-pass near Oluku station in Benin City. Furthermore, on 7th of August 2017, gunmen abducted 15 passengers in Rivers State when they hijacked a Lagos-bound commercial bus. The incident occurred around Elibrada community bus terminal along the east-west road in Emohua Local Council Area.

According to Enietan-Mathews (2015), Kaduna State has witnessed uncontrolled increased in the number of kidnapping, including the kidnapping of women, especially around the villages of Birnin Gwari local government area. Dami (2021) argued that citizens hardly sleep with two eyes closed as a result of terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa up to Zamfara, Katsina and Kaduna. In recent years, Kaduna-Abuja expressway has been become an attractive zone for kidnappers and has ripple effect on regional and national security. Yun (2007) argued that as the world becomes more globalized, more people travel for pleasure and work, and more people live abroad. As a result, there is a growing target population for kidnappers, especially along expressways. Ifeoma (2013) argued that Nigeria expressways such as Wukari – Takum and Wukari Ibbi roads in Taraba state, highways along Katsina, Borno, Kaduna, Nassarawa and Zamfara states have become attractive zones for kidnappers.

Amaize and Dayo (2019) argued that more than 133 highway across Nigeria have identified as the major kidnapping zones, where commuters are being robbed, abducted, maimed or even killed. This pose significant threat to national security and ungoverned space. The study further revealed that about 11 kidnapping hotspots have been found across five states along expressways in the South East region, while 41 kidnapping hotspots were found to exist along the expressways in the South West Nigeria. The study attributed the uncontrolled incidence of kidnapping along major expressways in Nigeria due to inadequate security agents to curtailed incidences of kidnapping. In Katsina state, some major roads are now deserted for fear of attacks by armed bandits and kidnappers. Such roads include Jibia, Gurbie, Kaura Namoda, Dutsoinma, Kankara, Sheme, Faskari, Musawa, Matazu, Charandi – Kaakia, Kusada, Dandume, Sabuwa, Sheme, Kankara and Dutsoinma. Funtua highway roads are avoided by many motorists between 6pm and 6am. Likewise the major highway roads from Katsina and Zamfara states are most dreadful (Amaize and Dayo, 2019). The implication of this is that, kidnappers have created ungoverned space along the major expressways in Nigeria.
In Niger State, the major expressway serving as hotspots for kidnappers are Suleja – Lambata, Bida Road; and Roads in Kushaka, Kurebe, Pandagazi, Gidigori, Kusheri, Koregi, Alawa, Kwaki, Bataro, Chububa, Shafa, Kauri, Zazzaga in Rafi LGA. In Zamfara State, Suleja – Lambata, Bida Road; Kushaka, Kurebe, Pandagazi, Gidigori, Kusheri, Koregi, Alawa, Kwaki, Bataro, Chububa, Shafa, Kauri, Zazzaga in Rafi LGA are the safe haven for kidnappers. The expressways are characterized by isolated forest, bushes that serve as hide-out and ungoverned space for kidnappers to keep their victims against the knowledge of the general public for payment of ransom (Amaize and Dayo, 2019).

Another respondent claimed that:

*Kidnapping for ransom is one of the major motive for kidnapping and this is more common in northern Nigeria. Many people are kidnapped, especially in the northern Nigeria with a view to demand for ransom from the family of the victims or from the government (Nigerian/Female/IDI/Kaduna-City/07/03/2023).*

The study agrees with Ojeme (2015) that found out that uncontrolled rate of kidnapping in Nigeria, armed robbers and other criminal gangs are becoming kidnappers with a view to earned more money from the payment of ransom (Ojeme, 2015). In the same vein, Toromade (2019) argued that 79% of the kidnapping in Nigeria occurred across the three geopolitical zones, with North West as the zone with the highest concentration of kidnapping, where 265 people were kidnapped in the first quarter of the year.

There is a spatial variation in the categories of kidnapping in Nigeria. Aubrey (2014) revealed that the strongest ordinal pattern of kidnapping are seen in northern Nigeria where ritual and religious kidnapping were more common, and southern Nigeria, where economically-motivated kidnappings are the most prevalent. The study further revealed the most significant spatial clusters were seen with the clustering of kidnappings in southern Nigeria, where the majority of the oil extraction occurs. This region saw the most significant clusters of kidnapped foreigners, kidnappings for ransom, and total fatalities. The study also revealed high proportion of fatalities in northern Nigeria, with ritual and religious kidnapping, most frequently occurring in the north, is not motivated by economic or political desires, which may explain the higher rates of fatalities in northern Nigeria.

**ii. Drivers of Kidnapping and Ungoverned Space in Nigeria**

There are numerous factors responsible for the increasing rate of kidnapping especially along Nigerian expressways. Deliberate attempts have been made among scholars in providing explanatory framework on factors responsible for kidnapping. According to ODMA (2014), the major factors responsible for kidnapping in Nigeria are bad leadership, endemic poverty, weak correctional agencies, lack of synergy among agencies of social control, and failure to arrest and punish offenders. Venatus and Agnes (2010) established that unemployment and lack of hope are factors responsible for kidnapping and this is more common among the youth. The study further argued that many people, especially Nigerian youth migrate to urban centres with a view to get better jobs and live a meaningful life. However, inability to get jobs makes them to engage in kidnapping as a means of livelihood.
According to Inyang and Abraham (2013), the use of Nigerian youth for conducting electoral malpractices such as political thugs to perpetuate violence during election and post-election create a breeding ground for kidnapping. Many are dumped by the politicians, and some of the youth embrace kidnapping to retaliate and as a means of livelihoods. However, some of the reviewed studies examined factors responsible for kidnapping under the lens of socio-economic deprivations in terms of poverty, unemployment among the youth, bad governance, corrupt political system in relation to different malpractices and sharp practices associated with electioneering.

According to a respondent:

Some of the factors responsible for kidnapping along Nigerian expressways are linked to undulating terrain, forested areas on the highways serving as safe haven for kidnappers, potholes as a result of poor conditions of the road, increasing rate of commuting pattern, inadequate security checkpoints for crime control, low level of intelligence gathering among armed forces, poor level of civil-military relations and inter-agency collaboration (Nigerian/Male/IDI/DSS/06/03/2023).

On the effects of kidnapping along Nigerian expressways, another respondent claimed that:

The uncontrolled rate of kidnapping hotspots along Nigerian expressways creates a breeding ground for criminalities such as kidnapping and ungoverned space. More often we cannot go to farms or move freely within the communities and our produce get spoilt or stolen by kidnappers (Nigerian/Male/IDI/Farmer/Jere/06/03/2023).

5.0 Recommendations

From the foregoing, the paper recommends based on the finding in proffering sustainable solutions to the menace of kidnapping along expressways in Nigeria. The recommendations are enumerated below:

i. Since the root cause of kidnapping is associated with poverty, unemployment among Nigerian youth, corruption and bad governance. There is need to enhanced pro-poor policy framework by creating more enabling environment for job creations, small and medium enterprises among the youth and accountability and transparency on the parts of politicians and government officials.

ii. Commuters and motorists should ensure to travel during the day, take alternative safe routes, and do not stop at unsecured places.

iii. There should be investment in widespread adoption of sophisticated spatially-referenced digital technologies such as Geographic Information System and Remote Sensing such as satellite imageries, drones for sharing real-time information, monitoring and effective crime management. This would enhance prompt response to the deployment of security operatives for the prevention and control of kidnapping along the hotspots in Nigerian expressways.

v. There should be selection of specific kidnapping hotspots at intervals for establishing security outfits especially at the major kidnapping hotspots along Nigerian expressways.

vi. There should be more intelligence gathering network and capabilities to pre-empt and apprehend kidnappers before they strike. This should be through robust civil-communal-military relations

6.0 Conclusion

The paper shows that kidnapping is a social problem, however, the major kidnapping hotspots along Nigerian expressways are associated with the interplay of numerous factors associated with the prevailing land use, such as transport routes that enhance vehicular movements and inter-states travel along Nigerian expressway, socio-economic characteristics of commuters and motorists. There are also predisposing environmental conditions, such as rugged and undulating terrain, forested areas; potholes along expressways increased the vulnerability of the general public to incidences of kidnapping in Nigerian expressways.

This creates a breeding ground for the uncontrolled rate of kidnapping hotspots along Nigerian expressways. This is more prevalent along Federal road networks that link to other states in Nigeria and inter-states travel. In the same vein, there is a consistent relationship between internal conflict, terrorism, insurgency and kidnapping. This creates a breeding for ungoverned space, especially along expressways characterized by forest and vegetal covers by constituting safe haven for criminal gangs and syndicates forming network for their heinous acts. Kidnapping is more prevalent at the peri-urban areas of major routes along Nigerian expressways.

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