



**ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)**

## **Emerging Issues in Zamfara Armed Banditry and Cattle Rustling: Collapse of the Peace Deal and Resurgence of Fresh Violence**

**Anas Sani Anka**

Assistant Lecturer, Department of History & International Studies, Federal University Gusau, Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

*This position paper examines major critical reasons responsible for the resurgence of fresh killings in Zamfara state. It also makes critical appraisal of the factors that led to the collapse of the peace deal entered in to between Zamfara state government and armed bandits. It also provides a historical background to the crises and efforts put in place by the government to addressing the crises since 2011. The paper applies mixed methodology of interview and content analysis to enable the researcher capture fresh facts from the field for the purpose of documentation.*

### **1. Introduction**

One of the most heartwarming issue that characterizes human living in Zamfara state since after the conduct of the 2011 general elections is the unending conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and Hausa rural settlers especially those residing along Dansadau, Zurmi, Shinkafi, Anka, Maradun and Tsafe forest. This conflict which up till now has not been clearly defined either by the government or people of the state started like a mere conflict of interest but later turned to bloody crises which led to the death of over 2000 lives. As argued by Kiruwa (2017) over five thousand lives have been lost to the crises since it started in early 2011 and despite interventions of the government and its agencies not has been achieved it an attempt to end the conflict.

The tragedy which caused Zamfara state bad name among comity of other states in Nigeria, is considered as one of the most critical challenge that threaten the peace of the state. While hundreds of innocent people are living Zamfara State due to the fear of these armed bandits, hundreds of them continue to take advantage of the situation to rustle more cattle and other ruminant animals. From 2011 to date not fewer than 15,000 cattle were rustled by these suspected armed bandits living away the owners to survive in a state of uncertainty Daniya (2017). In terms of destruction of lives and properties, not fewer than 36 communities along Dansadau, Zurmi, Shinkafi, Tsafe, Bakura and Maradun towns were burnt to the ground with their residents forcefully asked to migrate to alternative safer places. Tukur (2017).

Despite effort by both the Federal and State Governments to curtail this ugly situation through the use of cohesive measures, the killings and brutality continue to take new dimension as the bandits continue to come with some new strategies of perpetrating their heinous acts. It was difficult for the security agencies to fight along the forest as the bandits understand the terrain more than the security agencies. Former Zamfara State Commissioner of Police Akila Usman Gwary once told NTA News that, security agencies in Zamfara state especially police and army are finding it difficult to fight the armed bandits along Dansadau-Birnin Gwari forest because, there is no access road in trying to reach out to these villages whenever there is report of attack and communication by even the security agencies operating along the forest was virtually impossible NTA (2014).

To alternatively manage the situation, the idea of peace deal and amnesty was initiated between the State government and the leadership of these armed bandits. The peace deal was initiated to enable the armed bandits surrender their weapons and embrace peace. We have reviewed the impacts of the cohesive measures especially the use of the military and mobile police men and come to the conclusion that, the operation has not yielded the much needed result in spite of huge sum of money spent by the government and we opted for negotiation with the bandits as the best option to ensuring sustainable peace Tangaza (2017).

The peace deal has however being described as failure especially with the resurgence of the fresh killings in some communities along Shinkafi, Tsafe, Dansadau and Maradun with multiple number of death and loss of properties. The new violence is described as the most tragic in the history of the state with brutal murders and sexual intimidation among women and children. In trying to give an account of their tragedy, the victims considered the nature of the operation by the armed bandits as the most inhuman maltreatment against humanity. As captured by Shehu (2017), they are sexually harassing our women. Sometimes they would ask a resident to take his daughter or wife to their camp to rape. No one dares to stop them.

This ugly development emerged at a time when people believed that, the peace deal entered in to between the state government and the bandits would serve as panacea to the crises. But why has the peace deal failed? This is attributed to many

factors among which include, absence of the political will from the site of the government to implement the agreement it has entered with the bandits, non-implementation of rehabilitation and reconstruction measures to bring succor to the victims of this conflicts as well as the re-arrest of some members of the bandits by Department of the State Security Services (SSS) after they have signed the peace deal with the state. as argued by Shehu (2017), the peace pact was jeopardized after a close associate of Buharin Daji called Dogon Bangaje was intercepted arrested and detained by the DSS.

Among the objectives of this paper is to among other things: make an analysis of the major issues in the peace deal and why it fails and impacts of the resurgence of fresh violence in some parts of Zamfara State. A mixed methodology of conducting field both interviews and literature review is used to enable this researcher have some fresh facts on the emerging issues around armed banditry and cattle rustling in the state.

## 2. Historical Over-view of Cattle Rustling/Armed Banditry in Zamfara State Since 2011

The history of cattle rustling and armed banditry in Zamfara started since around 2009 but it became out of control in 2011 especially after the general elections. The causes of these unending conflicts are many even though people disagreed on causes to a varying extent. While many links the scenario to long term human conflicts between Fulani herders and farmers due to struggle of ownership of farm land and grazing areas, others see it as direct effect of reaction against socio-political and economic marginalization of the Fulani by their Hausa counterparts. As argued by Kiruwa (2017), people tried to misconceive the cause of these conflicts in Zamfara and to say the facts, not all the attacks are carried out by the Fulani herders but because of the impression people have about our people, and every single action perpetrated in the rural communities is attributed to Fulani herdsmen.

These acts of cattle rustling and armed banditry has caused a lot of hardship and state of fear among the residents of the states. The miscreants who take advantage of the terrain of some of these areas rustled hundreds of thousands of cattle and other valuables as well as killed scores of people. As argued by Bello (2017), communities like Kwokeye, Bingi, Kizara, Mashema, Maji, Fanda, Haki, Matankari, Yar Katsina and many communities in Maru, Anka, Gusau, Chafe, Birnin Magaji and Zurmi Local Governments were grossly affected. Apart from cattle rustling sometimes women faced constant intimidation and harassment including cases of rape and assault while children are forced to embark on unprepared migration due to the fear of the unknown. As argued by Shehu (2017), they are sexually harassing our women. Some time they would ask a resident to take his daughter or wife to their camp to rape and no one dares to stop them. From 2011 to date no accurate statistics could be provided as to the number of people killed through this act of armed banditry. As argued by Tukur (2017), people are killed in communities that are not even known to the security agencies and because of the nature of our community settlements, not all cases are reported especially those that involved Fulani herders. Bello (2017) makes an attempt to highlight some flash points that are termed as victims of this banditry.

S/No	Flash Points Areas	Number of Cattle/Sheep Stolen
1	Kizara	Over 4000 Cows
2	Lilo	90 Cows
3	Shigama and Kwokeya	1,020 Cows and Sheep
4	Gidan Kaso	1,455 Cows
5	Lingyado	Over 2,100 Cows
6	Tsabre	Over 3,500 Cows
7	Rukudawa	250 Cows and Sheep
8	Bagegga	Over 4,500 Cows
9	Unguwar Galadima	350 Cows and 500 Sheep
10	Guru	270 Cows
11	Tungar Baushe	1,110 Cows
12	Yar Gada	180 Cows and 500 Sheep
13	Badarawa	Over 200 Cows
14	Jangeme	Over 600 Cows
15	Madaba	76 Cows and 30 Sheep
16	Nasarawa Godal	Over 1000 Cows and Sheep
17	Nasarawa Mailayi	Over 500 Cows and Sheep
18	Dorayi	Over 2500 Cows
18	Filinga	Over 5,000 Cows

*Table 1: Flash Points Areas and Villages that are mostly Affected Armed Banditry and Cattle Rustling in Zamfara MACBAN as cited by Bello (2017)*

As for the number of those killed through this act of armed banditry over the years, there are conflicting arguments as to the accuracy of the data. For instance when the attack on the people of Yargaladima occurred in 2014, the police, army and journalists differs on the accuracy of the number of people killed. While the army announced that, one hundred people are

killed, Nigerian Police Force announced that, only seventy people lost their lives. The state Police Commissioner Akila Usman Gwary announced that, the state police command can only confirmed the killing of seventy people even as dozens lost suffered various degrees of injury. NTA (2014). Journalists at the scene disagreed vehemently with the position of the police and other security agencies as BBC's Haruna Tangaza confirmed the killing of two hundred and fifty persons in the Yargaladima attack. Over two hundred persons including women, children and adult were lost to the attack as hundreds of innocent households were forced to flee out of their homes for the fear of unknown Tangaza (2014).

These plus many other cases recorded in over fifty communities affected by these banditry since 2011, defined the complexity of the attempt to compiling accurate data and statistics of those killed by the acts of armed bandits and cattle rustlers in Zamfara State. But the interim report of the Committee set up by the state government to ascertain the causes of this crisis has highlighted some cases with records from the communities as cited by Bello (2017)

S/No	Flash Points	Number of People Killed
1	Kizara	48
2	Lilo	50
3	Kwokeya	52
4	Gidan Kaso	42
5	Lingyado	25
6	Bagegga	2
7	Ungwar Galadima	150
8	Tungar Baushe	26
9	Guru	28
10	Badarawa	11
11	Rakumi Mallamawa and Karagawa	20
12	Cigama	20
13	Malmo under Dumba Village	37
14	Cigama	1
15	Yargada	1
16	Jangeme	1
17	Madaba	58
18	Mutunji	30
19	Mashema	26
20	Dabgulbi	13
21	Birnin Magaji	15
22	Filinga	2

*Table 11: Number of People Killed in Some Villages in Zamfara  
Source: Report of Committee on Cattle Rustling (2015) as cited by Bello (2017)*

The effects of this crises is not restricted to loss of lives and animals alone as several number of houses were destroyed in more than one hundred communities or to some extent burnt completely using local fire gadgets. As argued by Mande (2017), in my own village of Badarawa when the attackers came they met us observing early morning prayers and instead of moving straight to taking away the available cattle if that was the intention they went straight to the mosque and open fire to any person sighted. They killed thirty two people instantly in the mosque and later burnt twenty nine houses and dozens of local food stores. In another account, Tukur (2017) argued, the act of banditry and cattle rustling in Zamfara has rendered more than three hundred households homeless causing unnecessary force migration among the victims. In Dansadau axis since 2011 when this tragedy befall the people of the area, the bandits burnt more than two hundred houses after attacking the communities with several numbers of heartless murder and cases of rape. Just like the killing it was difficult for any researcher to account for the number structures destroyed as a result of armed banditry and cattle rustling in Zamfara. Lawal (2017) argued, while analyzing the consequences of the acts of armed banditry and cattle rustling in Zamfara, it is imperative to say that, apart from the brutal murder of the people and multiple number of rape cases recorded, loss of houses and properties constitutes the greater parts of the economic crises the people of Zamfara would ever forget. As at December 2015 there are over three thousand refugees from these communities and majority of them migrated to safer places due to the destruction of their living structures.

The conflict has since 2011 created a big enmity between Fulani herders, farmers and rest parts of the communities in Zamfara. This enmity has been one of the push factor that influence the exits of the Fulani in greater number to an alternative places. The movement is characterized by many problems ranging from reprisal attacks before living or re-arranging for counter attacks targeting members of vigilante groups in specific. Labbo (2014) argued, the primary motive of attacking Yargaladima community by the suspected bandits was to destroy the ongoing plan by the members of vigilante in the community to attacking them. But instead the consequences ended in destroying the whole community and killed over two

hundred people including women and children. Not only in Yargaladima the attack at Dumburum in Zurmi, Badarawa in Shinkafi, Kizara in Tsafe and Dangulbi in Maru local government areas are all linked to an insinuation of reprisal attack well arranged by members of the Fulani herders.

This migration by the Fulani in Zamfara has stronger socio-economic and political consequences to the people of the state. Tukur (2017) argued, the forceful migration has caused the state shortage of both cattle and meat, dairy as well as manure for farming activities. More than four thousand cattle moved out of Zamfara to some alternative destinations and instead of exporting cattle, sheep and goats to other states, it takes Zamfara more than a week to import cattle, sheep and goats from Taraba, Benue, Nasarawa, Jos and even neighboring Niger Republic.

The acts of banditry and cattle rustling has also limited the chances of many children from accessing basic primary and secondary education as majority of educational structures are either damaged, destroyed or abandoned by people due to constant harassment and fear from both sides of the parties. Maru (2014) argued, in Yargaladima alone, more than four hundred children were forced out of their school due to either loss of bread winner or inability to raise the monthly five hundred naira for the payment of the community hired teachers. From the side of the Fulani and their chances of accessing western education through Nomadic Education programmes, the story is almost bad than any one may anticipate. Kiruwa (2017) argued, analysis has shown that, over sixty two nomadic schools and their structures have been badly damaged to such an extent accessing education by the children of Fulani nomads using the facilities are virtually not possible.

Cases of rape and unending harassment of women is also another negative dimension of the conflict. Badaru (2017) argued, almost two-thirds of the communities attacked along the Dansadau forest by the armed bandits since 2014 recorded cases of rape. They chased away everybody and rape women at their own will while some even ask them to follow them to their camps. This has caused a lot of friction among communities as women opted for migration than staying united with their family due to the fear of the bandits.

### 3. The Political Dimension to the Conflict

The complexity nature of the conflict remains a source of concern among the government, security agencies and even researchers who find it difficult to clearly define its nature, scope and reality of its cause. Even though people are made to believe that, the crises are caused as a result of struggle between Fulani herders and farmers, many look at it as more of politically instigated conflict by the current administration as it fails to take clear measures that would help ensure sustainable peace since 2011. People from the opposition People's Democratic Party particularly, criticize the state government for not being sincere in ending the conflict. As argued by Danmaliki (2014), the government in Zamfara under Abdulazeez Yari deliberately masterminded the incessant killings in various parts of Zamfara to take away the mind of the citizens from demanding for services. These types of situations enable the Governor and his aides to siphon money and deny people the benefit of good governance.

On the side of the Civil Society Organizations, the conflict is also connected to the government's insincerity in providing adequate social security and safety measures for both the farmers and herders. Haidara (2014) argued, there is no justification for the government of Zamfara to be spending more monies in procuring arms and vehicles for the security agencies to be fighting and unending crises. The government needs to realistically address the socio-economic and political needs of both the Fulani herders and farmers as well as stop deceiving the citizens.

Others described the non-availability of the Governor and his frequent trips out of the state as a contributory factor to the crises in Zamfara. Many see his decision of not visiting scenes of the armed bandits' attack as an act of showing non-concern to the negative effects of the crises by the governor himself. Yuguda (2014) argued, people of Zamfara state should understand clearly that, the administration of Governor Yari is directly or indirectly connected with the killings around the state. The Governor neither stays in the state since his election and did not bother to visit communities affected for condolence and sympathy.

There are others who described the relationship between the bandits and some Governor's aides as a strong indicator of the link between the state government and what is happening in the state. Pictures of the bandits and some Governor's associates are seen going round social media and there are reports circulating that, some aides of the Governor are used in reaching out to the bandits for discussions and negotiations. Danmaliki (2014) argued, the state government cannot convince us that, it has no link with the killings in Zamfara as some communities confessed that, they have seen some government officials meeting with the representatives of the bandits and they have held several meetings within the forest.

The difficulty of the terrain used by the bandits in conducting the operation is another dimension to the crises. Many times when the bandits are conducting operations, people tried to reach out to the security agencies for intervention but the response is always negative especially with the constant complaint of non-accessible roads to be used by the police in reaching out to the scene of the incident as well as absence of network for effective communication. Gwary (2013) argued, the police in Zamfara are operating in a very difficult situation. When the bandits are conducting operations it is always difficult for the security agencies to arrive the scene in good time because of the difficult nature of the terrain and sometimes to even communicate is difficult.

The state government on the other hand, accused the opposition political parties and their agents for sponsoring the crises with the aim of ridiculing the image of the government. Danmadami (2014) argued, the state government is battling harder to come up with some strategies that, would help in ending the conflict but those in the opposition used their influence



and connection in Abuja to block all chances of the state to succeed so that they can be using the scenario as campaign weapons to win the heart of the people in the state especially as the general elections draws nearer.

The politics of who have the power to instruct security agencies to respond to the crises is also another dimension. Many a times when a call is put on the police for rapid response they always insist, they can only act if there is an instruction and clearance from the Inspector General of Police. This type of response is always perceived by the state government as deliberate attempt by the PDP power brokers to sabotage the effort of the state government. The Governor said this time without number that, "the Constitution of Nigeria has made me the Chief Security Officer of the state but in actual sense I am not. I cannot on my own instruct the State Commissioner of Police to move to the scene of the incident whenever there is an attack because the simple argument he would put to me is that, till he received instruction from the IGP, NTA (2014).

The allegation of bandits having more powerful weapons than the security agencies is also another dimension to the conflict. During various attacks when survivors are asked to explain the powerful nature of the weapons used in the attack, they confessed that, the weapons especially guns used by the bandits are such more sophisticated than that of the police and army. As argued by Garba (2014) the bandits met us in the mosque observing early Morning Prayer and opened fire on anybody sighted. They shot at us using machine guns and even when the police came they confessed to us that, their weapons are much more sophisticated that they have to treat with caution.

The state government for instance argued constantly that, the crises was as a result of conflicts of interest between the Fulani pastoralists and farmers which after some years turn to a bitter rivalry of what is happening today. The State Governor while on condolence visit to Kizara community in Tsafe after its attack by the bandits in 2013 declared "both the Fulani and farmers contribute to these bloody crises because both parties believed in opportunity not what is right and the consequences are enormous and this is what we are paying for now in Zamfara state, NTA (2013). Again during the North-West Security Meeting organized by the Nigerian Police Force in Gusau in 2013, the late Sarkin Gabas of Gusau Alh Sani Y.S described that, the deliberate neglect of the plight of the Fulani people and clear cases of socio-political and economic marginalization of the Fulani remain the cause of the crises NTA (2013).

To others like Miyetti Allah Association of Cattle Breeders of Nigeria, they described the crises as purely a war to eliminate the Fulani people and deny them access to social forces provided to them by the relevant laws of the land. Tukur (2017) argued; if a Fulani man is deny access to grazing areas, watering places, social security and safety as well subjected to merciless extortion he has no option than to react in such a way he and his animal would survive. The situation in Zamfara is demoralizing on the site of the Fulani, we were denied almost everything and we are portrayed as criminals who instigated and lead killings of innocent people, it is very unfair.

There are those that blame the government for not taking appropriate measures to safeguard the grazing areas that are set aside to Fulani herders for grazing. The demand for land by the farmers to increase their capacity of food production, as well as development necessitated by industrialization and urbanization influenced massive taking over of grazing areas from the Fulani custody. Government deliberately allows this phenomenon to continue and the end result is the existing conflicts we are facing in the state Attahiru (2013).

Government in Zamfara neglected the livestock sub-sector and make not a priority and the existing laws on protection of environment, grazing reserves, livestock development and social integration of Fulani herders in to the socio-economic and political mainstream is considered as critical factor that lead to the present crises.

#### **4. Peace Deal and Amnesty: The Matters Arising**

As part of the measures to ending the conflict, the state government instituted a peace deal with the bandits headed by the state Deputy Governor Malam Ibrahim Wakkala. The aim of the peace deal was to among other things: reach out to the bandits and initiate ways of finding a lasting solution to the lingering crises. When the idea of the peace deal come it was grinded by mixed reaction as to whether it was the last option for the peace to reign in Zamfara. While government looks at stick and carrot as the best approach, many see it as an attempt to shelves the miscreants from facing justice. Garzali (2017) argued, the idea of peace deal may sound good but, it may have a future implication for the state especially that, others may take arm against the state thinking they would also be pardon by the state.

The first meeting between the bandits and the local communities were held at Gobirawar Chali in Dansadau Emirate and it was led by the State Deputy Governor Malam Ibrahim Wakkala Liman on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2016. Three major issues top the dialogue especially with the demands from the bandits clearly defined. As captured by Sheetu (2017), unauthorized vigilantes must stop the wanton attacks against their communities, security agencies and vigilante groups must also stop seizing their cattle and lastly the government must not continue to neglect their communities in the area of development. The government agreed that, for the amnesty deal to be perfected, the bandits must surrender their arms, and promised not to invade any community while the peace deal lasted. The government also proposed some strategic measures of integrating the bandits back to the people by providing soft grant for them to commence business as well as integrated some of them in to the government. As argued by Labaran (2017), we have heard that government has accepted these people and even integrated them by offering them job and even cash to start businesses. The idea is good but our concern is that, the victims communities are not subjected to justice and fairness because they have not been compensated with they have lost to the bandits.

Many see the peace deal collapsing especially with the way the whole process was initiated by the government has and it has been assessed as deliberate attempt to promote crimes. Haidara (2017) argued, the entire process of the amnesty

and peace deal is politically influence to cover some big people who are allegedly considered as benefactors. You cannot ask those who had been terrorizing innocent people and their communities to surrender and go scot-free. This action would enhance crime and criminality as well as influence the state citizens to continue to ridicule the powers of the government. Others are of the opinion that, hence the government has failed to reconsider the plight of the victim communities, the chances of the people accepting the peace deal is not realistic.

Again, others believe that, the peace deal may collapse due to insincerity of the government in fulfilling its promises. When the negotiating was initiated the government dealt with one camp and ignores the other camps and many saw those parties neglected as capable remobilizing to the forest and continue with their bandits activities. Lirwanu (2017) argued, the government should have considered the option of reaching out to both the two camps if it really means business. Dealing with Buhari camp alone may not end these crises. The other camps are also strong enough to frustrate the successes of this peace deal. Others faulted the government for appointing a juicy position to Buharin Daji the popular forest bandit. As argued by Labaran (2017), appointing Buhari the camp leader as the Special Adviser to the Executive Governor of Zamfara is a complete jeopardy to the right of innocent souls that suffered in their hands. He killed hundreds of innocent lives and terrorized several communities and yet he has been rewarded with the best position any citizen of Zamfara would eye for.

### 5. Outbreak of Fresh Killings

Few months in to the peace deal, not many people anticipated that the fears already raised by some concern citizens after the peace deal may be realistic. Until around October when fresh attacks against some communities in Shinkafi and Maradun local government areas of Zamfara have been experienced. The State police command confirmed severally the outbreaks of these fresh attacks. As reported by Premium Times (2017), the State Police Public Relations Officer Mr Shehu said the attackers had on November 16 and 17 invaded Gidan Maidawa, Wari and Tungar Baure, Mallamawa villages in Shinkafi and Maradun local government areas killing many people. In these attacks dozens of people have been killed and hundreds were forced out of their homes due to the fear of the unknown. Beyond Maradun and Shinkafi communities in Maru, Anka and Tsafe are not spared of these fresh attacks. As argued by Micheal (2017), in the same vein, gunmen abducted about 40 traders after killing two policemen and four civilians in Mai kansa Village in Maru local government area of Zamfara. Bandits promise never to release the abducted till their herds of cattle seized by security operatives are released.

Not only civilians, the security agencies are also not spared of the attacks by these bandits. In the Maradun attacks for instance, two police officers were killed by the bandits even as their corpses was burnt to ashes. As argued by Micheal (2017), they killed two mobile policemen and four civilians on board. They abducted about 40 traders including women and children and dashed in to the forest firing gunshots in to the air.

S/No	Communities Affected	Local Government Councils	Number of Death Recorded
1	Dole	Zurmi	6
2	Tudun Bugaje	Zurmi	22
3	Kwangami	Shinkafi	17
4	Maikansa	Maradun	20
5	Sabon Birni	Shinkafi	10
6	Mallamawa	Shinkafi	25
7	Bindin	Maru	11
8	Tsafe Town	Tsafe	3
9	Magazu	Tsafe	5
10	Tungar Kahau	Maru	4
11	Sububu	Maru	11
12	Gidan Maidawa	Maradun	15
13	Wari	Shinkafi	5
14	Tungar Baure	Maru	10
15	Maikansa	Maru	2
16	Barayar Zaki	Anka	2
17	Wuya	Anka	3

*Table111: Fresh Communities Attacks by Armed Bandits with Recorded Casualties*

*Source: Compiled from the field interview*

These scenarios have become part of the fresh security challenges that befalls Zamfara communities especially that only Gusau the state capital is not directly affected by this act hooliganism. Communities like Bindin, Magami, Kurar Mota in Gusau and Bungudu, Wuya, Sabon Birni and Brayar Zaki in Anka as well as Tsafe are also not spared. Garba (2017) argued, these armed bandits chased away innocent people in Tsafe, took over Gusau-Zaria High way for over an hours hooting sporadically and shot dead a FRSC official in spites of the presence of heavy security personals. Few days after that incident,

Lawal (2017) argued, these hoodlums shifted few kilometers from the headquarters of Tsafe very closer to Magazu and killed innocent people including a PDP stalwart from Zamfara Abdulhadi Saidu Garkuwan Yanware.

Few weeks after the Tsafe attack, the hoodlums invaded communities along Bindin and Dangulbi killing dozens of women and children while hundreds fled their communities for safety. Ige (2017) account as follows "they have separated us with our relatives and relations as they launched fresh attacks against the Dansadau forest. They have killed my husbands and my two step wives and I have to rush to Magami for safety".

This fresh armed bandits attack come with new dimension of dehumanization and act merciless maltreatment against citizens of Zamfara. They both killed innocent people on arrival at any community, raped women, abducted young girls and burnt structures especially local grain stores Labbo (2017) narrated. In another account, Shehu (2017) argued, this brutal attack was not isolated to Tungar Kahau. In villages like Maikamar Rini, Mallamawa and Gidan Anna in Shinkafi and Maradun local government areas of the state, dozens were left dead with residential houses and local siloes burnt, throwing the survivors in to a major humanitarian situation with a looming threat of hunger.

Police and other government agencies also corroborate this positions especially that, victims of these armed bandits attacks claimed of their wives and daughters missing in every attack launched by these suspected hoodlums. Shehu (2017) argued, we have suffered a lot at the hand of the gunmen" Musa Ali said "they are sexually harassing our women. Sometimes they would ask a resident to take his daughter or wife to their camp to rape. Not much efforts are being intensified to tracing some women abducted by these hoodlums as households recounted that, their missing daughters and wives are still on captivity as argued by Shehu (2017), some of the women spend days in the bandit's camps being raped and upon their release to return to their village, they are often intercepted by other gangs of gunmen. In another accounts he argued, Sometimes they would laugh at women trying to run away. They laughed at one heavily pregnant woman when she was busy parking her children in order to escape the carnage" adding that both women and elderly are not spared from the brutality of the bandits.

This fresh attack on communities in Zamfara is a strong indicator that, the amnesty deal entered in to with the armed bandits by the state government has virtually collapsed. Shehu (2017) argued, Mamman (2017) argued, the latest attack in Zamfara suggests that, the peace treaty entered between the government and the bandits have finally collapsed. This position has been championed by many residents of the affected communities. At the inception of the peace agreement we have argued that, what these people would do if the government failed to fulfill its own side of the agreement would be worse than what the bandits have done earlier.

There are conflicting views as to why these bandits decided to resurface again, while some views claimed that, it was as a result of the government failure to fulfill its own side of the agreement, others attributed it to the selfish manner at which the government decided to deal with some selected persons within the bandits camp and ignore others. Basiru (2017) argued, government should have verify who the original leaders of these bandits are especially that, we were told that, there are existing groups who does not operate under the camp of the popular bandits leader "Buharin Daji". We were told that, those that are ignored decided to probe other wise to the government. Others blamed the renewed operation launched against the bandits by the personals of the Nigerian Army as responsible for the renewed violence. Basiru (2017) argued, we heard that after the peace agreement was reached, the officers of the Nigerian army launched fresh operations against the bandits and this action to many of us who are familiar with the operations of these bandits we knew that, they may likely have launched back at the innocent communities. The government should have been careful and tactical in acting on any intelligence it has in its disposal. Other theorists opined that, when some of these armed bandits leaders heard about the stock of monies and appointment given to Buharin Daji as the leader of the camp they decided to establish their own popularity so that, government can extend the hand of negotiation to them. Sulaiman (2017) argued, it may likely be on a mission because many other camp leaders who are not recognize by the government may opted to go by way of instigating fresh violence so that, their plight can equally be considered by the government.

Whatever the reasons for the fresh attacks may be, government is adopting measures to curtail this present situation especially with the intervention of the presidency led by Muhammadu Buhari as reported by Premium Times (2017), President Muhammadu Buhari has ordered a military crackdown on bandits operating in rural communities in Zamfara state, following fresh attacks on some communities in Shinkafi and Maradun local government areas. To enable army carry out this new mandate, the President has approved the request of the Minister of Defence Mansur Ali, for the stationing of the full battalion of Special Forces in Zamfara State. And operationalization of the newly established 8 Division of the Nigerian army in Sokoto in the new order of Battle OBAT. The President has also approved the movement of the 1 Brigade of the Nigerian army from Sokoto to Gusau upon take-off of the 8 Division. Apart from the effort made by the Presidency, the upper legislative chamber has also passed a resolution mandating its standing committee on security to ascertain the cause of the fresh killings in Zamfara state and recommend way to avert its re-occurrence. Adeniyi (2017) argued, the house of representative has mandated its committee on public safety, National Security, police and defence to investigate the attacks in two villages in Shinkafi local government area of the state.

But with these steps taken not many citizens of Zamfara are pleased and certain that, the situation can be brought under control. Babangida (2017) argued, from the time the presidency issued an instruction to the Nigerian army to date, more than twenty communities are being attacked by these hoodlums. The best way to go about arresting this situation is for the state government to make its strategies of managing this crisis open to citizens so that other alternative could be imputed. Malami (2017) on the other hand argued that, no amount of conventional war fare can defeat these hoodlums and the best

approach is to institute a realistic dialogue and make reconstruction measures to both victim communities and hoodlums well-defined.

## 6. Way Forward

In a state of uncertainty and unending crises there are several measures government can adopt to mediate between the warring factions. While the government look at stick and carrot approach as an option, a lot more needs to do in an attempt to address the cause root of the crises. In the case of the Zamfara crises critical measures need to be address.

- (a) New policies on land use need to be initiated to allow for fair access to land by both the farmers and Fulani herders
- (b) Government need to immediately discourage mass migration of both the Fulani herders and farmers from their settlement by embarking on massive rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes which would be of immense benefit to the farmers and herders.
- (c) The government needs to move extra-mile in constructing more road network to link some isolated communities. This would enable both the security agencies and other donor aid agencies in accessing the communities during state of emergency or distribution of relief materials.
- (d) The government also needs to have strong arrangement with the telecommunication outfits in an attempt to provide effective communication network so that people can be able to communicate to the relevant security agencies and government.
- (e) The government need to allow more role for the traditional rulers to enable them adequately arrest emergency situation and report the government for action
- (f) Government need to extend the provision of social amenities to key rural communities so that people in the rural communities can feel a sense of belonging.

## 7. Conclusion

From the discussion so far, the research has established that, the failure of the peace deal entered in to between Zamfara State government and alleged armed bandits collapsed as a result of combination of several factors which are directly connected to non-fulfillment of the commitment by both sides of the party. The findings of the paper indicated that, the fresh violence and killings of innocent lives and destruction of properties can be avoided if the government and the bandits fulfilled both sides of their agreement. The paper has also establish the weakness of the government in adopting strict measures that help end the crises in Zamfara especially by adopting socio-economic policies that would lead to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the victims communities.

## 8. References

- i. Adekunle (2017), Again Bandits Kill 9 in Zamfara Fresh Attack, (Online Version), Vanguard News Paper, retrieved from [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com) 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017
- ii. Anka A. S (2014) NTA Local Report on Fresh Armed Banditry Aired on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at 7:00pm News
- iii. Anka A. (2014), Anka A. S (2014) NTA Local Report on Fresh Armed Banditry Aired on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at 7:00pm News.
- iv. Attahiru L (2017), Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 44, Interview Conducted at his Village in Sabon Bindin Village, Anka Local government Area of Zamfara State, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017.
- v. Badaru A (2017), Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 44, Interview Conducted at his Village in Sabon Birni Village, Anka Local government Area of Zamfara State, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
- vi. Babangida (2017) Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 42, Interview Conducted at his Village in Dansadau Village, Anka Local government Area of Zamfara State, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
- vii. Bello S (2017), Cattle Rustling in Zamfara State: A challenge to National Security and Economic Development,
- viii. Danmaliki G (2014), Former Commissioner of Information, Zamfara State, Aged 47, Interview Conducted at Badarawa Village, Zurmi Local government Area of Zamfara State, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2014.
- ix. Dan-Iya M (2017), Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 47, Interview conducted at his residence in Dole Village, Zurmi Local government area of Zamfara State, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017.
- x. Danmadami I. (2014), Zamfara State Commissioner of Information, Aged 48, Interview Conducted at the State Government House Gusau, Zamfara State, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017.
- xi. Garba D (2014), Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 49, Interview Conducted at his Village in Sabon Birni Village, Anka Local government Area of Zamfara State, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
- xii. Garzali M (2017), Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 62, Interview Conducted at his Village in Shinkafi Local government Area of Zamfara State, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017.
- xiii. Gwary A. U (2013), Zamfara State Commissioner of Police, Aged 57, Interview Conducted at Zamfara State Police Force Headquarters Anguwar Gwaza Gusau, Zamfara State, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017.
- xiv. Haidara M (2017), Our Stand on Fresh Violence and Killings in Zamfara, Press Release, Issued in Gusau, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017



- xv. Haidara M. (2014), Bad Leadership and its Impacts on Security Situation in Zamfara, Press Release by Zamfara State Chapter of Northern Youths Assembly, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2014
- xvi. Kiruwa M (2017), National President Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, Aged 50, Interview Conducted at Fulbe Villa Hotel Gusau, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017.
- xvii. Lawali D (2017), Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 40, Interview Conducted at his Village in Bindin, Maru Local government Area of Zamfara State, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017.
- xviii. Labbo L (2017), Resident & Eye Witness, Interview Conducted at his Village in Wuya, Anka Local government Area of Zamfara State, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017.
- xix. Labaran S (2017), Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 44, Interview Conducted at his Village in Dole Village, Zurmi Local government Area of Zamfara State, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
- xx. Lirwanu B (2017) Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 50, Interview Conducted at his Village in Bindin Village, Maru Local government Area of Zamfara State, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017.
- xxi. Lawali M (2017), Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 40, Interview Conducted at his Village in Dauran Village, Zurmi Local government Area of Zamfara State, 10<sup>th</sup> may 2017.
- xxii. Micheal A (2017), 35 Killed, 40 Abducted in Fresh Attacks in Zamfara, (Online Version), Naija, retrieved from [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017
- xxiii. Mande G. (2017) Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 53, Interview Conducted at his Village in Moriki, Zurmi Local government Area of Zamfara State, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
- xxiv. Maru I. (2014), Zamfara State Head Office, Save the Children, Aged 45, Interview Conducted at Yargaladima, Maru Local government, Zamfara State 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2014.
- xxv. Malami B (2017), Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 54, Interview Conducted at his Village in Dansadau Village, Anka Local government Area of Zamfara State, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
- xxvi. NAN (2017) 35 Killed, 40 Abducted in Fresh Zamfara Attacks, (Online Version) The Cable,
- xxvii. Premium Times (2017) Many Killed as Armed Men Invade Zamfara Communities Again, (Online Version) retrieved from [www.premiumtimes.ng](http://www.premiumtimes.ng) 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2017.
- xxviii. Segun A (2017), Reps Probe Zam fara Killings, (Online Version), The Sun Newspaper, retrieved from, [www.sunnewsonline.com](http://www.sunnewsonline.com) 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017
- xxix. Shehu (2017), The Return of Terro Bandits to Zamfara, Others, (Online Version) Daily Trust, retrieved from [www.dailytrust.com](http://www.dailytrust.com) 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017
- xxx. Sheetu S (2017), Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 64, Interview Conducted at his Village in Dumburum Village, Zurmi Local government Area of Zamfara State, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
- xxxi. Sulaiman M (2017) Resident & Eye Witness, Aged 44, Interview Conducted at his Village in Dauran Village, Zurmi Local government Area of Zamfara State, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017. retrieved from [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017
- xxxii. Tangaza H. S (2014) BBC Hausa Report on Fresh Armed Banditry Aired on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at 6:30am News.
- xxxiii. Tangaza H. S (2014) BBC Huusa Report on Fresh Armed Banditry Aired on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at 6:30am News.
- xxxiv. Yuguda B (2014), Minister of Finance, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Aged 52, Interview Conducted at Badarawa Village, Zurmi Local government Area of Zamfara State, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2014.