

Deconflicting Nigeria's Inter-agency intelligence Rivalry: An Effective Measure to the Security Operations Against Armed Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom in Northwest Nigeria

Abstract

It is a generally accepted belief among scholars and practitioners that inter-agency rivalry among inter-connected organizations or institutions tend to distort the potentials embedded in a seamless inter-agency coordination and collaborativemechanisms. The Nigeria's national strategic security and law enforcement inter-agency policy mechanisms designed to coordinate information/intelligence to support national security and law enforcement operations is not isolated from the persistent menace of inter-agency rivalry amid the humongous material, logistical and operational resources committed to supporting operations. The research therefore explores factors that have continued to sustain inter-agency intelligence rivalry among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies in the context of the security operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in northwest region of Nigeria. In the light of this, the research adopts qualitative research methods of data collection and analysis to explore secondary data drawn from Nigeria's national strategic security and counter-insurgency policy documents, which is targeted at inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration and from other intelligence related literature in juxtaposition to primary data sourced from security and law enforcement officers and civilian components within the northwest region. To this end, the research explores Organizational Culture and Identity Theory as its theoretical framework to explain why inter-agency intelligence rivalry persists. The research found that emphasis on policy document with no explicit or implicit legal framework to coordinate and bind the operational activities of these agencies together under a single unified legal framework created the gaps for security and law enforcement agencies to exhibit the organizational cultural identity of superiority among agencies. Hence, it recommends the enactment of laws with an integrated enforceable legal framework to bridge the institutional, operational and technological gaps with a view to compel and coordinate the activities security and law enforcement intelligence agencies at all levels with a view to share information and intelligence under an integrated authority.

Key words: Inter-agency Intelligence Rivalry, Nigeria's Inter-agency Intelligence Coordination and Collaboration Mechanisms, Armed Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom

Introduction

The events of 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001, the terror attacks on Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, has exemplified the significance of intelligence coordination, collaboration and intelligence sharing (Abioye and Alao, 2020). In the context of Nigeria, the Nigeria's national strategic security and law enforcement inter-agency policy mechanism designed to coordinate the security and law enforcement intelligence agencies operations to support tactical/physical security operations (National Security Strategy, 2019), against the criminal activities of terrorist groups, armed bandits and kidnap gangs is challenged by handful of issues (National Security Summit Report, 2021), which in the context of this paper, are most often facilitated by factors, such as inter-agency rivalry among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies in the face of huge material, logistical and operational resources committed to supporting security and law enforcement operations in the country (Nte and Eyororokumoh, 2025).

The criminal activities of armed bandits and kidnap gangs in the northwest region have continued to pose national security threat with high economic pay-off in terms of derivable financial benefits, mostly facilitated and sustained by factors, such as the proliferation and sophistication of Small Arms and Light Weapons - SALWs across territories, the movement of illicit drugs mostly aided by criminal markets across porous borders and ill-governed spaces or ungoverned territories (National Security Strategy, 2019; Ojo, 2020; National Security Summit Report, 2021; Global Organized Crime Index, Nigeria, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2022; Ojo, Oyewole and Aina, 2023; Osason, 2023; Nwagwu and Enwelum, 2024; Ibani and Jacobs, 2024; Chinonyelum and Onwudinjo, 2024; Fidel, 2024).

Thus, to effectively and proactively combat the criminal activities of armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region of Nigeria, the Federal Government has established in conjunction with inter-agency intelligence mechanisms, a number of frontline security and law enforcement operations (Ojo, Oyewole and Aina, 2023; Babatunde, 2023; Madubuegwu and Abah, 2023; Olubiyo and Ibrahim, 2022; Aina, Ojo and Oyewole, 2023; Yusuf, 2023; Rufus and Ogbe, 2025).

Similarly, the government through the instrumentality of the National Counter Terrorism Centre - NCTC in the Office of the National Security Adviser - ONSA have established a Multi-Agency Anti-kidnap Fusion Cell with the support of the National Crime Agency of the United Kingdom. The Multi-Agency Anti-kidnap Fusion Cell represents a structured and a coordinated multi-agency approach aimed at ensuring that the military, security agencies, law enforcement, intelligence and judicial institutions work seamlessly to combat kidnapping (www.nctc.gov.ng, 3/2/2025). The government also partner with the United States in the sharing of intelligence (US Department of State, 2022), the Economic Community of West African States - ECOWAS and Africa Union - AU (ECOWAS, 2022; African Union, 2022).

Research Problem

While, the dynamic and complex nature of the criminal violence of armed banditry and kidnapping in the northwest region highlights the need to improve the nation's strategic security and law enforcement inter-agency intelligence mechanisms (Adebayo, 2022; Transparency International, 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2022; Adebayo, 2022; Arumede and Edwin, 2024), inter-agency rivalry persists among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies in the northwest region of Nigeria. Hence, the research is guided by the following research questions

Research Questions

In the light of the above, the research is guided by the following research questions:

- ✓ What are the factor (s) sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry among intelligence agencies in the operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region ?
- ✓ How can Nigeria's inter-agency intelligence mechanism be enhanced to prevent inter-agency rivalry among intelligence agencies ?

Objectives of the Research

The research examined in the context of Nigeria's strategic security and law enforcement inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration policy framework:

- Factor (s) sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry.
- How can inter-agency intelligence mechanisms be enhanced to prevent inter-agency rivalry among intelligence agencies.

Significance of the Research

Coordinated and collaborative security and law enforcement intelligence efforts is required to effectively approach the fluid nature of violence criminal activities of armed bandits. The research is also of academic relevance to researchers interested in deconflicting inter-agency intelligence rivalry.

Scope and Limitations of the Research

The research is concerned with the factor (s) sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry and ways to deconflicting inter-agency rivalry as an effective measure to support security operations against armed banditry and kidnapping in the northwest region of Nigeria.

Hence, primary data, which informed the research were drawn from respondents serving in the internal security and law enforcement agencies and some civilian component in some localities within the two states of northwest region of Nigeria - Zamfara and Kaduna State. While, secondary data were sourced from related literature and national strategic security and counter-insurgency policy documents as well as other legal books.

Research Methodology

The research adopts qualitative research approach to examine and explore government strategic policy directives and other statute books in juxtaposition to primary data sourced during field interview with a view to understand government inter-agency security and law enforcement intelligence mechanisms and factors sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry and its impact on the security and law

141 enforcement operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the
142 northwest region of Nigeria.

143 The rationale for adopting qualitative research method is exemplified in the
144 opportunity it provides for an in-depth exploration of the experiences, perceptions, and
145 knowledge of participants (Creswell, 2009).

146 In the light of this, the pilot study for the research was conducted in the month of June,
147 2024 in Katsina State in the northwest region of Nigeria to test the feasibility of the
148 research and the tools for data collection.

149 Mixed Purposeful Sampling embedded in Purposive Sampling technique was used to
150 select respondents from and across the following government agencies; the Nigeria
151 Police Force; the Nigerian Military, the Department of State Services, the Judiciary
152 and from members of the public within Zamfara, Katsina and Kaduna State
153 respectively. The total number of 68 respondents – informants were selected from and
154 across the ranks of intermediate senior officers, senior officers and junior officers.

155 As suggested, a lengthy interview with two, to up to ten experienced respondents could
156 be good enough to provide an informed opinion on the subject under research
157 (Creswell, 1998). Hence, Key Informant Interview and Semi-structured Interview were
158 used with open-ended questions to allow for flexibility and in-depth exploration of
159 opinions of respondents with specialized knowledge or unique perspectives on the
160 topic with the view to gather detailed information. (Miles and Gilbert, 2005).

161 The research adopted document and thematic analysis embedded in qualitative
162 research method to the analysis of primary and secondary data collected. The essence
163 of adopting document and content analysis is because data for the research were
164 drawn from multiple sources (Dezin, 1970; Braun and Clarke, 2006). As argued,
165 qualitative researcher is expected to take reference of evidence from multiple sources
166 with a view to seek convergence and collaboration through the use of different
167 methods (Bowen, 2008).

168 Validity and reliability are crucial aspects in examining the quality of research findings,
169 most importantly in ensuring that the conclusions are accurate with precision
170 (Anderson, Boateng and Abos, 2024). Hence, the reliability of the data is based on
171 Lincoln and Guba (1985) criteria for credibility, transferability, conformability and

172 dependability to ensure trustworthiness in the data collection and analytical process
173 through the aid of multiple data collected.

174 The right of research participants/respondents were given due consideration during
175 the research process of data collection. Therefore, before the commencement of the
176 primary data collection process in the field, respondents were informed of the essence
177 of the research and the importance of guaranteeing their confidentiality. In this regard,
178 respondents were willing to express themselves in a very open manner that enable
179 them to provide detail information on their experience and opinions.

180 Literature Review

181 Nte (2012), notes that, “the nature of today’s threats has blurred the lines between
182 traditional diplomatic, military, and law enforcement concerns, requiring all
183 instruments of national power to work as a seamless network to defeat our
184 adversaries.” (Nte, 2012).

185 The events of 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001, the terror attacks on
186 Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, has exemplified the significance of intelligence
187 coordination, collaboration and intelligence sharing (Abioye and Alao, 2020). The
188 increasing need for joint task forces, intelligence operations centers or fusion centers,
189 offers professionals from across the law enforcement, military, and intelligence
190 communities the unique opportunities to share tools and expertise to defend their
191 nation (Baginski, 2007).

192 Inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration may not be limited to the
193 military, police, and intelligence services, it may extend to other related agencies
194 (Udochukwu and Uchenna, 2024). In the light of this, the effective inter-agency
195 intelligence coordination and collaboration is critical for national stability in the face of
196 the multitude of security threats (Nigeria Security Tracker,
197 <https://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/p29483>).

198 The essence and significance of inter-agency intelligence coordination and
199 collaboration in combating serious organized violence or threat of organized violence
200 like terrorism, transnational crime, and cyberattacks has been emphasized (Chen,
201 2023).

202 It is argued that, effective information gathering through multiple intelligence sources
203 and analysis, as well as seamless intelligence coordination, cooperation and

collaboration among intelligence agencies (Olowonihi and Musa, 2024; Udochukwu and Uchenna, 2024), through established fusion centers or intelligence operating centers is critical for timely identification and understanding of criminal behavior and their motivations; tracking criminal networks as well as preventing multifaceted security and law enforcement threats through informed decision making and effective national security policies (Nte, 2012; Johnson, 2024; Clark, 2016; Chen, 2023; Olowonihi and Musa, 2024; Lee, 2024).

However, historical fact shows that, issues such as institutional silos, secret operations, absence of trust, superiority complex among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies, poor communication infrastructure, bureaucratic inefficiencies and issues of training, has continually affected negatively the flow of information and intelligence sharing among security and law enforcement services (Smith, 2020; Udochuchwu and Uchenna, 2024; Sunday, 2024; Arumede and Edwin, 2024).

The gap in intelligence coordination among intelligence agencies hampers intelligence sharing among agencies, thereby enabling terrorist groups to explore and exploit these weaknesses (International Crisis Group, 2022). The prevention and management of multidimensional threats as terrorism, organized violent crime and other serious crime are hampered by the lack of effective inter-agency coordination and collaboration. To them, despite the growing need for inter-agency efforts, the response of government agencies to these issues are often done by individual agency or organization, thereby resulting to duplication of tasks and waste of resources (Okafor and Anyanwu, 2020), thereby sustaining inter-agency rivalry. Hence, the concern to address factors sustaining inter-agency rivalry in the context of Nigerian inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration informed the research.

The research theoretical frame is guided by Organizational Culture and Identity Theory. Proponents of this theory, such as, Stewart Albert and David Whetten (1985), Henri Tajfel and John Turner, Blake Ashforth and Fred Mael (1989), argued that inter-agency rivalry occurred and sustained between related agencies under the quest and influence of 'strong internal cohesion and distinctiveness' through deep rooted organizational culture and identity transmitted to members of an organization over time through recruitment and training process. This to them, often resulted to 'superiority and inferiority relationship' among members of different organizations with inter-connected institutional and statutory mandates and subsequently leading to

237 inter-agency tension and rivalry (Ravasi and Rekom, 2003; Parker, 2000; Ravasi,
238 2016).

239 Nigerian security and law enforcement intelligence agencies, such as the Defense
240 Intelligence Agency DIA, the Department of State Service, Directorate of Military
241 Intelligence - DMI, the Directorate of Military Intelligence - DMI, the Directorate of
242 Airforce Intelligence - DAI, the Directorate of Naval Intelligence - DNI, the National
243 Intelligence Agency - NIA and the Nigeria Police Force - NPF Intelligence
244 Department are inter-related with blurred statutory institutional and statutory
245 mandates. However, in the light of Organizational Culture and Identity theory, the
246 historical influence from the implicit internal organizational culture of identity
247 embedded in the perceived institutional practice of superiority versus inferiority
248 relationship among these intelligence agencies, have played a significant role in
249 facilitating and sustaining the inter-agency intelligence tension and inter-agency
250 intelligence rivalry. Thereby distorting a seamless inter-agency intelligence
251 coordination and collaboration in an effective process of collecting, analyzing
252 information and sharing of intelligence for appropriate utilization.

253 **Definition of Terms**

254 Understanding critical concepts is the initial step in effectively comprehending any
255 activity (Carter, 1990). Hence, for the purpose of this research, the following terms
256 were adopted and defined as follow:

257 **Strategic Security and law Enforcement Intelligence:** The understanding of the changing
258 and fluid nature of today's criminal environment, necessitates the need to holistically
259 understand and address security issues from the lenses of strategic security and law
260 enforcement. Intelligence (Johnson, 2007). Thus, *strategic security and law*
261 *enforcement intelligence* is a process of collecting and analyzing information to
262 identify long-term trends, threats, and vulnerabilities to inform policy and proactive
263 strategies against crime and security risks. It is concerned with the understanding of
264 emerging threats, criminal patterns, and the vulnerabilities of criminal organizations
265 through strategic and operational analysis with a view to provide strategic foresight
266 and insight to support strategic decision making to prepare for future risks /threats or
267 to prevent future crime and instability (Pythian, 2006; Organization for Security and
268 Co-operation in Europe, 2017; Nte and Eyororokumoh, 2025).

269 **Inter-agency Intelligence Coordination and Collaboration:** Generally, Coordination is
270 concerned with the development of a workable framework that is aimed at uniting
271 inter-related components parts of a system for a harmonious and effective
272 relationship. Wilder Research Center defines collaboration as a mutually beneficial
273 and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve
274 common goals... (Roy, 2007).

275 In the light of this, inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration is
276 concerned with the organized efforts and commitments to synchronize the activities of
277 different intelligence agencies with other related stakeholders to achieve common
278 objectives. It emphasizes the systematic sharing of information, resources, and
279 expertise for the purpose of timely and actionable intelligence for effective operations
280 (Al Waroi, 2024). It is concerned with established protocol of communication and
281 leveraging on knowledge/skills, expertise, technology and resources with the aimed of
282 achieving a common objective in combating complex security and criminal threats
283 (Hull, 2008; Sunday, 2024).

284 The effective and seamless coordination and symbiotic collaborative mechanisms
285 between and among intelligence agencies (Arumede and Edwin, 2024) is critical in an
286 ever-changing and ever-evolving technological world.

287 **Inter-agency Intelligence Rivalry:** Interagency intelligence rivalry is inter-agency
288 tension between various inter-related security and law enforcement intelligence
289 agencies in situation in which these various inter-related intelligence agencies
290 with almost similar statutory mandates are in constant overlap. Inter-agency intelligence
291 rivalry may result from competition for superiority, relevance and resources by inter-
292 related intelligence agencies with similar mandate (Abioye and Alao, 2020).

293 **Armed Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom:** The concept of armed banditry has been
294 changing in time, space and context (Rufa'i, 2018), defined and classified globally by
295 its peculiar drivers (Kae, 1986). The activities of armed bandits in the northwest region
296 are driven by economic benefits/gains: Defined as loose collection of various criminal
297 groups involved in kidnap-for-ransom and other crimes (Osasona, 2023).

298 Hence, in the premise of this research, *Armed Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom*
299 is defined as acts, absence of any ideological necessity, but in the pursuit of illicit
300 violent use of force or threat of force to intimidate, extort, sexually assault, rape, maim
301 or kill in order to constrain movement of their victims to undisclosed location (s) for

the purpose of eliciting financial/economic benefits from the victims' family, close associates or government as ransom (International Crisis Group, 2020; Osasona, 2023).

Nigeria's Inter-agency Intelligence Coordination and Collaboration Mechanisms

The Nigerian Strategic Security and Law Enforcement Intelligence measures to serious violent crime, such as terrorism, armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom is based on *inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration* through the Office of the National Security Adviser - ONSA (Constitution, 1999; Police Act, 2020; National Security Agency Act, 1986; NSS, 2014; 2019 NTAL, 2016; NACTEST, 2016; www.nctc.gov.ng).

In the light of this, the Nigeria inter-agency intelligence institutional coordination instruments may not be limited to the following agencies of government:

The Nigeria Police Force - Department of Force Intelligence - DFI: The Nigeria Police Force is the lead internal security and law enforcement agency. It is the first responder in the five strands of the National Counter Terrorism Strategy - NACTEST, that is, *to forestall, secure, identify, prepare and implement* with support from other security agencies. It is responsible for the updates of crime registry and store information digitally for easy access (National Terrorism Alert Level, 2016).

In the performance of its general constitutional mandates of maintaining the internal security of the country, the Nigeria Police Force - NPF, through the Department of Force Intelligence - DFI is responsible for the collection and collation of information, analysis of information, assessment/evaluation, and then subsequent dissemination of criminal intelligence to proactively prevent and detect crime and the activities of criminals (www.npf.gov.ng).

The Defense Intelligence Agency - DIA: The Defense Intelligence Agency shall be charged with the responsibility for the prevention and detection of crime of all military nature against the security of Nigeria; the protection and preservation of all military classified matters concerning the security of Nigeria, both within and outside; such other responsibilities affecting defense intelligence of a military nature, both within and outside Nigeria as the President may deem necessary (National Security Agencies Act, 1986).

333 The Defense Intelligence Agency - DIA is to coordinate the Counter Terrorism
334 efforts of the Directorate Military Intelligence - DMI, the Directorate Navy
335 Intelligence - DNI, and the Directorate Airforce Intelligence - DAI and, in
336 conjunction with relevant agencies, the Defense Intelligence Agency is the lead agency
337 for the collation of military-related intelligence within and outside the country
338 ((National Security Agencies Act, 1986; NACTEST, 2016). It gathers military threats
339 intelligence and conduct strategic reconnaissance operations and supports defense
340 planning operations (Olowonihi and Musa 2024).

341 The National Intelligence Agency - NIA: The National Intelligence Agency
342 shall be charged with responsibility for the general maintenance of the security
343 of Nigeria outside Nigeria; concerning matters that are not related to military issues;
344 and such other responsibilities affecting national intelligence outside Nigeria as the
345 National defense Council or the President, as the case may be, may deem necessary
346 (National Security Agencies Act, 1986).

347 The NIA is to serve as the lead agency for external information/intelligence
348 collection/collation and, in conjunction with relevant Ministry Department and
349 Agencies - MDAs, monitors all terror-related activities with a view to forestall, identify
350 and secure in the five strands of the National Counter Terrorism Strategy -
351 NACTEST (National Counter Terrorism Strategy, 2016).

352 The Department of State Service - DSS: The Department of State Service shall be
353 charged with the responsibility for the prevention and detection within Nigeria of
354 any crime against the internal security of Nigeria; the protection and preservation of
355 all non-military classified matters concerning the internal security of Nigeria; and such
356 other responsibilities affecting internal security within Nigeria as the National
357 Assembly or the President, as the case may be, may deem necessary (National
358 Security Agencies Act, 1986).

359 The DSS is to serve as the lead agency on information/intelligence collection/collation
360 on all non-military components of internal security as well as prevention and detection
361 of terror-related activities/crimes. The agency is to reactivate/resuscitate the crime
362 registry for the storage of digital information and collaborate with the Ministry of
363 information and National Orientation Agency to develop public enlightenment
364 program that will sensitize the public. It will also liaise with religious bodies and

365 relevant department in the academia to develop de-radicalization programs
366 (NACTEST, 2016).

367 The Joint Intelligence Board - JIB and The Intelligence Community Committee - ICC:

368 The Joint Intelligence Board - JIB and the Intelligence Community Committee -
369 ICC were established during the Military Government in 1986 under General Ibrahim
370 Babangida, the then Military President of Nigeria. The Joint Intelligence Board - JIB
371 and Intelligence Community Committee - ICC are charged with the responsibility of
372 supervising and coordinating intelligence and information analysis required for
373 strategic decision making. The Board collate and compiles intelligence from other
374 intelligence agencies, re-evaluate, synthesize and disseminate through the Office of the
375 National Security Adviser to the National Security Council (National Security Strategy,
376 2019; Bot, 2023; Bala and Ouedraogo, 2018).

377 The Directorate of Intelligence - DINT: The Directorate of Intelligence - DINT is a
378 department in the National Counter Terrorism Centre - NCTC in the Office of the
379 National Security Adviser with its analysts drawn from the Armed Forces, Intelligence
380 and Law Enforcement Agencies. It functions as an all-source intelligence production
381 facility focused on timely identification of threat to Nigeria's national security for
382 informed strategic response. Through collaboration with domestic intelligence
383 agencies and international partners, the Directorate provides a comprehensive and
384 integrated picture of threats, vulnerabilities and opportunities to enable the NSA take
385 informed decisions in the interest of national security. It monitors terrorism activities
386 and violent extremism, secessionist agitation groups, farmers - herder conflict,
387 maritime security, other criminal groups involved in banditry, kidnapping, cattle
388 rustling, illicit movements of Small Arms and Light Weapons - SALWs and drug
389 trafficking. (www.nctc.gov.ng).

390 **Data Analysis and Results**

391 The analysis of data and the presentation of results were guided by the sequence of
392 the research questions examined in the context of Nigeria's strategic inter-agency
393 intelligence mechanisms vis-à-vis the factors sustaining inter-agency rivalry and its
394 effects on the security and law enforcement operations against armed banditry and
395 kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region. Hence, the analysis of secondary
396 and primary data was done through *Policy and Document Analysis*.

397 On question of national strategic security policy directives on inter-agency intelligence
398 coordination and collaboration through formal channels of communication. A policy
399 analysis of Nigeria's national strategic security policy documents and other extant laws
400 expressed as follows:

401 *"...the Joint Intelligence Board - JIB and Intelligence Community Committee - ICC*
402 *working in concert with the National Crisis Management Centre - NCMC will*
403 *continue to coordinate intelligence and information analysis required for strategic*
404 *decision making by National Security Council"* (National Security Strategy, 2019).

405
406
407 The 2019 National Security Strategy document further states: *"To balance*
408 *enforcement with preventive and proactive measures as a departure from reactive*
409 *response to insecurity through collaborative intelligence driven approach, the Police*
410 *at all levels are mandated to engage in active partnerships with armed forces, security*
411 *agencies, citizens, non-governmental organizations, government agencies, traditional*
412 *institutions, faith-based organizations, educational institutions and businesses to*
413 *collaboratively solve problems of crime, reduce the fear of crime, maintain public*
414 *safety and apply proactive measures that address anti-social behavioral patterns*
415 *before they evolve into more serious forms of criminality"* (National Security
416 Strategy, 2019).

417
418 In its national strategic efforts to respond to acts of terrorism through inter-agency
419 platforms and mechanisms at strategic and operational levels, the government
420 established the Counter Terrorism Centre - CTC with the strategic document of the
421 National Counter Terrorism Strategy - NACTEST, developed to guide and
422 coordinate national counter terrorism efforts. Hence, the document state:

423
424
425 *"The Office of the National Security Adviser will develop a single comprehensive*
426 *database to serve as an information sharing system for the various agencies. The aim*
427 *is to provide a mechanism where law enforcement, public safety and security*
428 *agencies can collate their various data bases for a single purpose and easy access.*
429 *Similar facilities will need to be created at state levels and linked to the central*
430 *system"* (NACTEST, 2016).

431
432
433 Still on collaborative efforts, the 2016 NACTEST document, further states:

434
435 *"Security Services, Ministries, Department and Agencies are to work collaboratively*
436 *with one another and with the Office of the National Security Adviser - ONSA to*

ensure they undertake programs and projects that are both counter terrorism relevant and specific, according to the provisions of their mandate, to position the Country by being resistant and responsive to terrorism” (NACTEST, 2016).

On the collaborative efforts to regulate the flow and use of fire arms and explosive devises, the 2016 NACTEST further states:

“The Nigeria Police Force in conjunction with the Department of State Services - DSS, Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps - NSCDC, Nigerian Immigration Service - NIS, Nigerian Customs Service - NCS, Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria - FAAN, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency - NIMASA, National Intelligence Agency - NIA and the Ministry of Solid Minerals, will ensure that firearms and explosive are not illegally imported and unlawfully used in the country” (NACTEST, 2016).

Similarly, “the Nigeria Police Force in partnership with the Department of State Services - DSS, maintain and monitor information on quarries and industrial explosive sites in the country. It institutes measure to monitor and control the sales, distribution and use of materials that may be used in making Improvised Explosive Devises - IEDs. Also, in collaboration with National Space Research Development Agency - NASRDA, the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Information, the Nigeria Police Force - NPF shall develop mechanisms to control the activities of cybercriminals (NACTEST, 2016).

In line with the need for a well-developed and holistic system to respond to serious organized violence and transnational organized violent criminal activities, through intelligence gathering, analysis and intelligence sharing, necessitated the need for the establishment of the Nigeria’s National Terrorism Alert Level - NTAL system in the Office of the National Security Adviser. Thus, the 2016 Nigeria’s National Terrorism Alert Level document states:

“The National Security Adviser is to issue threat levels upon assessment of risk and threat analysis in receipt of assessment from Joint Terrorism Analysis Branch - JTAB, whose work is dependent on inputs from relevant intelligence gathering and security intelligence agencies” (NTAL, 2016).

Furthermore, to underscore the commitment of the Nigeria’s national strategic policy directives, the 2019 National Security Strategy document also states:

“To meet the challenges posed by serious crimes to internal security, we will improve the intelligence-gathering, logistical, technological, forensic and rapid response capabilities of the Nigeria Police Force. In specific terms, the Nigeria Police Force will be upscaled in five key areas, namely; recruitment, training platform and equipment modernization, data collection, management and retrieval as well as technology-driven command, control, communication and intelligence networks to meet modern standards” (NSS, 2019).

In juxtaposition to the responses of respondents during the field interviews in the context of Security and Law Enforcement Operations Against Armed Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom in the Northwest Region of Nigeria vis-à-vis factor (s) sustaining inter-agency rivalry and its affects on the operational compliance among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies and other agencies on the channels of formal communication between agencies as specified in the national strategic security policy documents and extent rules:

The key theme in the responses from multiple respondents vis-à-vis field operational inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies, shows that:

“The channel of communication is of policy dominated with little operational compliance in terms of adequate and seamless coordination and collaboration among/between security and law enforcement intelligence agencies and other agencies” (Interview, 2024).

Also, it is also evident in the response of the respondents that:

“Historical factors embedded in bureaucratic bottle neck, the traditional orientation of silo and secret operations by individual agency, as well as other factors, such as the establishment of multiple security and law enforcement agencies with similar or differing mandate, institutional superiority complex, paranoid relationship (issue of trust), inadequate and up-to-date inter-agency training, collaborative training and technological gap within and between agencies are some of those factors sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry” (Interview, 2024).

On the question of legal obligation on individual security and law enforcement intelligence agency to collaborate with other agencies under a single institutional coordination. Respondents notes that;

“The absence of legal obligation on individual agency or group of agencies to collaborate with a view to share information and intelligence to support security and law enforcement operations in the region has facilitated and sustained inter-agency intelligence rivalry, thereby affecting the effective response to the violence of armed banditry and kidnapping ransom in the northwest region.” (Interview, 2024).

On how timely, accurate and frequency do the security and law enforcement agencies received actionable intelligence through inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration mechanisms to respond to threats of armed banditry and kidnapping in the region. The central theme in the responses shows as follows:

“Community led-intelligence has been instrumental to the proactive and reactive operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region” (Interview, 2024).

The response further states:

“The Police are mostly the first responder in the event of armed violent attack on communities, but mostly, the Police are often reacting to these attacks, rather than been proactive or preventive” (Interview, 2024).

Research Findings

Based on the analysis of data, the following findings emerged:

- The need to adjust and align the strategic thinking of Nigeria’s security and law enforcement intelligence agencies and other security and law enforcement agencies to proactively respond to the ever-evolving and complex criminal environment, necessitated the need for the development of strategic security and law enforcement inter-agency policy documents, aimed at guiding and

coordinating efforts of agencies through the Office of the National Security Adviser as a formal means/channel of communication with various relevant agencies to prevent, detect, investigate and contain all kinds of threats in the country, including armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom.

- Historical factors embedded in bureaucratic bottle neck, the traditional orientation of silo and secret operations by individual agency, the establishment of multiple security and law enforcement agencies with similar or differing mandate, institutional superiority complex, paranoid relationship (issue of trust), inadequate and up-to-date inter-agency training, collaborative training and technological gap in information collection, gathering and analysis within and between agencies are some of those factors sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry. Thereby hindering seamless coordination and collaboration that could lead to all source of intelligence in the field of operations in the northwest region.
- This formal means/channel of communication as a basis for inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration is not so visible at regional, state and local level to proactively guide and coordinate efforts of security and law enforcement intelligence agencies and other security agencies to support the operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region.
- The absence of a legal document binding and obligating agencies to collaborate and share information/intelligence at strategic and operational level under a single coordinating agency - Fusion Centre have sustained inter-agency intelligence rivalry, which has affected seamless inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration among security and law enforcement agencies.
- The proactive and reactive security and law enforcement operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region is being supported by community driven-intelligence.
- The Nigeria Police Force is designated by the Nigeria's national strategic policy document as the first responder in the event of impending threat or escalated violence through inter-agency coordination and collaboration. However, it lacks any legal power or institutional legal instrument to compel security and law enforcement intelligence agencies withholding or hoarding

information/intelligence to share their information/intelligence to facilitate prompt coordination for the purpose of timely, accurate and actionable intelligence.

- The fluid and highly flexible nature of the activities of bandits and kidnap gangs in the region and the ability to adapt to relevant influences, such as propaganda with the intention to confuse authorities have given the criminal gangs the operation edge to resist security and law enforcement operations in the region.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings in the preceding section revealed significant evidence in the context of the research. Hence, this section presents Discussion of the research findings, Conclusion, Implications of the study, Recommendations and Contribution to knowledge and policy improvement in the context of Nigeria's security and law enforcement intelligence inter-agency coordination, collaboration and information sharing. And finally, the section presents suggestions for further study.

Therefore, a comprehensive examination and assessment of Nigeria's strategic inter-agency institutional and policy response to complex security and law enforcement issues revealed a holistic strategic institutional and policy coordinated response center, domiciled in the Office of the National Security Adviser - ONSA through the institutional mechanisms like the National Terrorism Alert Level - NATL system, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Branch - JTAB, the Directorate of Intelligence in the office of the National Counter Terrorism Centre - NCTC, Joint Intelligence Board - JIB and Intelligence Community Committee - ICC. For example, according to National Terrorism Alert Level policy document states:

"The National Security Adviser is to issue threat levels upon assessment of risk and threat analysis in receipt of assessment from Joint Terrorism Analysis Branch - JTAB, whose work is dependent on inputs from relevant intelligence gathering and security intelligence agencies" (National Terrorism Alert Level, 2016)

This represents an established fusion center at central strategic level to aide, guide and coordinate information collection from all-sources, information sharing, information analysis - connecting the dots and intelligence sharing among related agencies to provide a comprehensive and integrated picture of threats, vulnerabilities and opportunities to enable security and law enforcement agencies to respond proactively, and to allow for the National Security Adviser - NSA, to take informed

616 decisions at strategic level in the interest of national security and law enforcement
617 agencies. This ensconced and aligned with the works of Baginski (2007), Nte (2012),
618 Gill and Webb (2023), Abioye and Alao (2020) and Cross (2023) on inter-agency
619 intelligence coordination, collaboration and information/intelligence sharing,
620 intelligence operating centers and fusion centers in today's dynamic and ever-
621 evolving complex criminal environment.

622 However, at operational level in the context of the research, the data suggests that,
623 such fusion centers or intelligence operating centers were not visible at regional, state
624 or local government level to aide, guide or facilitate successful proactive or reactive
625 security and law enforcement operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for
626 ransom in the northwest region. Rather, community driven intelligence through
627 Human Intelligence - HUINT has been instrumental most often for reactive
628 operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the region. Signal
629 Intelligence - SIGINT, Communication Intelligence - COMINT, and Geospatial
630 Intelligence - GEOINT is underutilized to collect and gather information in the
631 region.

632 Hence, this operational communication gap at regional, state or local level as well as
633 the underutilized use of technology has sustained inter-agency intelligence rivalry.
634 Thereby preventing information/intelligence sharing among intelligence agencies and
635 providing operational edge for the armed bandits and kidnap gangs to thrive in the
636 region. According to International Crisis Group (2022), the gap in intelligence
637 coordination among intelligence agencies hampers intelligence sharing among
638 agencies, and enabling terrorist groups to explore and exploit these weaknesses.

639 Aside the absence of fusion centers or intelligence operating centers at the regional,
640 state and local government levels, the research identified challenges to seamless inter-
641 agency intelligence coordination and collaboration at the tactical operational level.
642 Thereby facilitating and sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry. These challenges
643 include, bureaucratic bottle neck, silo and secret operations by individual agency, the
644 establishment of multiple security and law enforcement intelligence agencies with
645 similar or differing mandate, institutional superiority complex, paranoid relationship
646 (issue of trust) among agencies, inadequate up-to-date intra and inter-agency training
647 and technological gap within and between agencies. All these factors are enabled and
648 active to sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry in the absence of legal framework

obligating and compelling individual security and law enforcement intelligence agencies to de-conflict under a single legal framework.

The implication is in the fragmented intelligence community and the practice of *suspicion or paranoid* relationship based on *mutual distrust and rivalries*. As Nte, (2012), argued there is absence of cooperation between Nigeria Military Intelligence and State Security Services on one hand and between the intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies on the other hand. Sanda (2011), argued that every security agency in Nigeria has its own security policy that drives its operations, with this comes a lack of effective coordination among the different security and government agencies and the ensuing interagency rivalry (Alli, 2012). This have resulted to poor information coordination and intelligence sharing among intelligence agencies. As argued, Inter-agency rivalries and lack of coordination hinder information sharing and collaboration efforts (Adebayo, 2022).

Conclusion

The Nigeria's inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration mechanisms against serious organized violence of armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom is a complex inter-web institutional mechanisms with institutional focus on both internal and external threats (Constitution, 1999; Police Act, 2020; National Security Agency Act, 1986; NSS, 2014; 2019 NTAL, 2016; NACTEST, 2016; www.nctc.gov.ng).

A policy analysis on impact assessment into Nigeria's inter-agency intelligence measure to the security and law enforcement operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region of Nigeria revealed that factors, such as distrust among agencies, bureaucratic bottle neck, superiority complex among intelligence agencies led to inter-agency rivalry in the absence of legal instrument to compel agencies to share information/intelligence, rather than operate in silo. These factors have negatively affected inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration in the region. This has resulted to a situation of incident-based reactive and investigative intelligence approach with little effect on the growing complexity and dynamics in the criminal behavior of the armed bandits and kidnap gangs in the northwest region.

Hence, the failure of the Nigerian security and law enforcement intelligence agencies to provide accurate and timely intelligence assessments through inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration have provided the fluid and highly

flexible nature of the criminal activities of these bandits and kidnap gangs the operational edge over the security and law enforcement operations in the region.

Recommendation

Base on the research findings, the following feasible and actionable recommendations are proposed to de-conflict inter-agency intelligence rivalry and enhance strategic inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration to support security and law enforcement operations:

- To enhance effective and seamless inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies, there is need to reform the operational perception and legal processes and procedures of the Nigerian security and law enforcement intelligence agencies to enable it function under a coordinating and collaborating inter-agency mechanism with clearly delineated laws to guide, bind and compel security and law enforcement intelligence agencies to collaborate in training, technology and information/intelligence sharing at operational level.
- The Nigeria Police Force is the first responder to any form of security and law enforcement threats by its proximity to the public and the community safety, there is need to legally empower the Nigeria Police Force to serve as a fusion center or an intelligence operating center to enabled it coordinate information/intelligence through inter-agency collaboration to support security and law enforcement operations to proactively respond to impending threats or escalated criminal violence.
- There is need to establish under a single legal framework an inter-agency intelligence operating center or fusion center that is context-specific, and based at regional, state and local government level to holistically assesses the roots causes of criminal threats that are peculiar within the community in order to provide timely, accurate and actionable intelligence to support security and law enforcement operations. As McNamara argued, the state and local fusion centers “are a critical component of the Information Sharing Environment because they can dramatically enhance efforts to gather, process, and share locally generated information regarding potential terrorist threats and to integrate that information into the Federal efforts for counterterrorism” (Ron, 2007).

- Armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the context of northwest geopolitical region of Nigeria is an organized crime, fluid and highly flexible with adapting nature of tactics within the community. Hence, there is need to enhance community driven-intelligence approach in partnership with inter-agency intelligence mechanisms for holistic analysis of information and assessment of situation to support security and law enforcement operations.

Contribution to Knowledge

Serious organized violence, such as armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom is increasingly multidimensional, fluid and often transcending national boundaries and resisting security and law enforcement measures. Having examined the effects of inter-agency intelligence rivalry to the security and law enforcement operations in the context of armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region. It is worth to note that, the research has added value significantly to the existing discussion on inter-agency intelligence rivalry in the context of Nigeria.

Further Research

Based on the findings and limitations of the research, the following windows for further research could be suggested:

- Community Engagement and Information/Intelligence sharing: Exploring Local Information/Intelligence Sharing Model to National Security and Law Enforcement, Experience from Practical Successful Community Initiatives.
- Regional, State and Local Intelligence Fusion Centre: A Recipe to De-conflicting Multi-Security and Law Enforcement Operations.
- Local Intelligence Fusion Centre: Exploring Community Trust and Community Engagement to National Security and Law Enforcement.

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