

How can FG end banditry in Nigeria?

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Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu

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competence from his training and orientation. While fighting corruption is good, fighting this menace of insecurity would be better because without security, no meaningful development can

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take place. I suggest that the President should declare a state of emergency in this area, the situation is getting worse by the day. Take the case of Zamfara for example. I read in the media that gold mining is at the heart of the senseless killings in the area and that traditional rulers, top politicians and even policemen are benefiting from the crime being committed against the people. I even heard that some policemen are involved in collecting ransom from kidnap victims for bandits; this should not be the case. The President must take the necessary steps to ensure that those found culpable of involvement in these crimes are punished to serve as deterrent to others. There is even information that some of these people involved in kidnapping for ransom were herdsmen who were victims of cattle rustling. I heard that some of them resorted to this form of criminality because they discovered it was a quicker way of making money. It is sad that the governor of Zamfara State has abandoned the state and has taken up residence in Abuja from where he is shouting. This is not what he was elected to do. As a long term solution to this problem, governments at all levels must create jobs for our teeming unemployed youths, the police is short staffed and underpaid, we should find a way of recruiting more men into the security services in line with global best practices and reduce the number of idle hands in our society. This is the way to go. •**Abubakar Tsav (A retired Commissioner of Police)**

There is the problem of porous borders in the country. The administration of then President Olusegun Obasanjo blocked some borders to prevent such acts of criminality at the time; when I was in charge of federal border operations. Our borders are still very porous and we have not been able to secure them effectively. If we can strengthen the security at the borders, banditry will reduce drastically. We have to deploy closed circuit cameras, drones and other technologies at our borders to enhance maximum security. Look at the United States of America, the administration of President Donald Trump is even trying to build a fence on its border with Mexico to strengthen its borders, because borders are very important to national security. I think the police and other security agencies also have launched a joint operation on banditry in Zamfara State which is the most affected state. And the Federal Government also announced a suspension of all mining activities in the state to enable them deal with the bandits. These are immediate steps and the government wants to cordon off the areas, having realised that the bandits come in under such guises to perpetrate their crime. For me, these steps by the government are welcome developments. Another area which we need to strengthen is inter-

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word. It is about the task of national security, which should be pursued and achieved. •**Lawrence Alobi (A retired Commissioner of Police)**

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We have a very serious problem on our hands and it requires urgent attention from all Nigerians, especially those in control of the security apparatus. No nation can make any serious progress when its people live in constant fear for their lives and property. The banditry in the north, especially in Zamfara State and the kidnapping along the Abuja-Kaduna road require proactive measures. These bandits are not ghosts, they are human beings, they have families and they live within our communities. We should have security agencies that the people trust enough to offer useful security information and our security outfits should be trained, equipped and motivated enough to act on such information to smash these criminal gangs before they strike. We are calling for foreign direct investments but nobody will put money where there is no security for his/her investment. That is why all hands must be on deck to solve this problem. It will not make sense for any individual or political party to make political capital out of this issue; we are all vulnerable, irrespective of political or religious affiliation. We all travel from one part of the country to another, if some of us can afford to fly or use the train, what about our friends and relatives who cannot? •**Abdullahi Jalo (Legal practitioner/ politician)**

The ongoing banditry across the country is a very sad story. Many lives have been wasted, properties destroyed and communities ravaged. Our security chiefs have failed us and so has President Muhammadu Buhari, the Commander in-Chief of the Armed Forces. With the level of insecurity in the country, many gangs have seized the opportunity to terrorise and wreak havoc on the ordinary citizens. Many Nigerians who cannot afford bodyguards have become victims of this menace and if not quickly fixed, this will consume the nation. One would have expected President Buhari who is a former general to be well equipped with strategies to tackle the insecurity facing this nation or at least, command his service chiefs to victory in this fight but the reverse is the case. The alarming rate of poverty and the slow rate of economic growth is a contributory factor to this social menace and people have resorted to violence and other criminal behaviour in order to make ends meet. The lack of faith in our criminal justice system has also provided an avenue for aggrieved Nigerians to take laws into their own hands by resorting to the use of jungle justice. The service chiefs should be quickly replaced with competent hands. Sanity must be restored to our criminal justice system and allied institutions, then the killings and the banditry can finally become a thing of the past.

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What we need at this point is a right synergy between our security agencies. I think that is being done with the recent visit to the Chief of the Air Staff by the Inspector General of Police. That is why Air Force fighter jets are pounding the hideouts of the insurgents. However, we can't win this war using the military approach alone. We need to involve the people so that they can volunteer information to security agencies. We need all hands to be on deck to solve this problem. To do this, we need to win the war of the hearts and the minds, we should take steps to reduce poverty in the land; we should create jobs. This issue of kidnapping and banditry has come to be with us, we need to be security conscious in our homes, work, the streets and worship centres because this is not something that will go away very soon. •**Mr. Mike Ejiofor** (*A former Director of the Department of State Services*)

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