
The Consequences of COVID-19 Lockdown on Security in Northern Nigeria: Study Evidence from Media Reports

Jamil Hassan Abdulkarim^{1*}, Ibrahim Friday Sule², Tamizhazhagan V³

^{1*}*Department of Environmental Health, New Gate College of Health Technology, Minna Niger State, Nigeria*

²*Department of Biological science ATBU Bauchi*

³*Department of Zoology, Syed Ammal Arts and Science College, Ramanathapuram 623 513*

Received: 04 August 2021 **Accepted:** 20 October 2021 **Published:** 28 November 2021

Abstract: *As a result of the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). In late February 2020, the Nigerian government took various measures to combat the plague. In Nigeria the lockdown was started in Lagos, Ogun State and Abuja the capital territory (1, 2). Some other states across the country have adopted various restrictive measures. However other states of North West, North Central and North East follow suit to contain the spread of COVID-19 in their state meanwhile this bring about bridge of security in those states. The main purpose of lockdown was to contain the spread of novel COVID-19 (3). However this resulted to an increase in banditry and Boko-haram attack in northern part of Nigeria.*

Keywords: *COVID-19, Banditry, Boko-Haram, Mortality, Northern Nigeria*

1. INTRODUCTION

Banditry is characterized as an organized crime committed by outlaws typically involving the threat or use of violence. A bandit is the name of a person who commits or engages in the crime of banditry. Banditry may be in group or individually (4). **Boko-Haram** (BH) is a group of militants, claims to be an Islamic Militant group in Nigeria, and spreads to neighbouring African countries such as Niger Republic, Chad and Cameroon. BH purpose is to institute Sharia, or Islamic law. Boko-Haram is a local Hausa dialect which means “Western education is forbidden” (5). The causal factors for banditry and terrorism differs, both phenomenon locally thrived on exploiting the fragile or weak state capacity evident in human rights abuses, inequality, poor service provision and unemployment (6, 7). While banditry, predominantly in the North-West contrasts the predominance of violent extremism in the North-East, both constitute a common thread of the overlapping nature and characteristics of organized crime as well as its mirrored impact on peace and human security in the affected States (6).

Boko-Haram have been killing guiltless spirits since 2009. Banditry savagery has influenced numerous provinces of Northwestern piece of Nigeria like Zamfara, Niger, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi and Sokoto States. A large number of individuals living in these states have been



presented to uncertainty because of crooks' exercises. In the year 2011 the banditry brutality started as a rancher/herder struggle and has increased in 2017 to 2018 (8). In northwestern piece of Nigeria the revelation of gold mines and the exercises of unlawful mining added to the presence of equipped gatherings. Around here around a huge number of individuals have been inside uprooted. Northern Nigeria in recent time continues to face insecurity problems ranging from banditry, Boko-Haram attack, and kidnapping during the period of lockdown from March to June 2020. On February 27, 2020 Nigeria confirmed its first case of COVID-19. After 3 months, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has reported more than 10 thousand confirmed cases and over 300 deaths. Although more than 3000 people have been treated and discharged successfully (9). The NCDC, Nigeria's Public Health Institute and other agencies continue to work under the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), towards tackling the COVID-19 pandemic (1). As the COVID-19 pandemic keeps on asserting large number of lives across the globe, the desperados working in pieces of northern Nigeria, particularly in the North-West, seem, by all accounts, to be holding a celebration of passings among the upset inhabitants. Obscure, maybe, to most Nigerians and obviously, the Federal Government, which is at present occupied with a battle to contain the spread of the Covid, the setbacks recorded from assaults did by these scoundrels may surpass the COVID-19 fatalities in the country inside the most recent couple of months.

In view of the recent development of COVID-19 outbreak in the country which resulted to the effort taken by the federal government and various state government to contain further spread of the COVID-19 outbreak (10), their attention was tilted toward controlling the disease which left other sectors like security not receiving require attention, this give birth to resurgent of banditry and Boko-Haram activities which lead to the following in the northern Nigeria.

- Mortality
- Morbidity
- Loss of Property
- Depression

2. MORTALITY

The death is being on increase in recent time due insecurity experience in some part of northern Nigerian as the result of lock down imposed with view the contain the spread of COVID-19 in the country however this further lead increase in attack lunch by bandit and Boko-Haram which claim many life of innocent civilian, furthermore this resulted to women and children becoming widow and orphan respectively, this further created serious socio-economic problem and public health burden, leading to humanitarian disaster thereby increase the number of internally displace person in view of fear of attack from the attack from the attack by bandit or Boko-Haram. According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2019 report and the Nigerian Government, over 200,000 persons were internally displaced in several communities of Zamfara, Katsina and Sokoto States between January-August 2019. Majority of these IDPs were women, children and the elderly. Another reports obtained from Zamfara State Government revealed that banditry led to an estimated 22,000 widows and 44, 000 orphans in Zamfara State since 2011 (6).



3. MORBIDITY

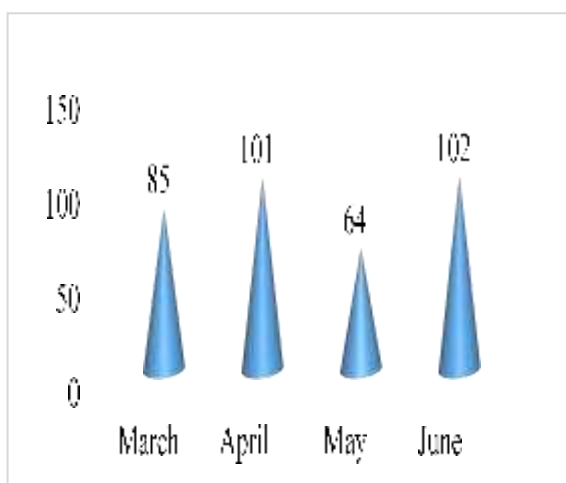
The morbidity refers to illness however banditry and Boko-Haram activities in some part of northern Nigeria due to lockdown as a result of COVID-19 has resulted to a lot of morbidity from rape, various degree of injury sustains in course of attack thereby increasing disease burden which major public health concern.

4. LOSS OF PROPERTY

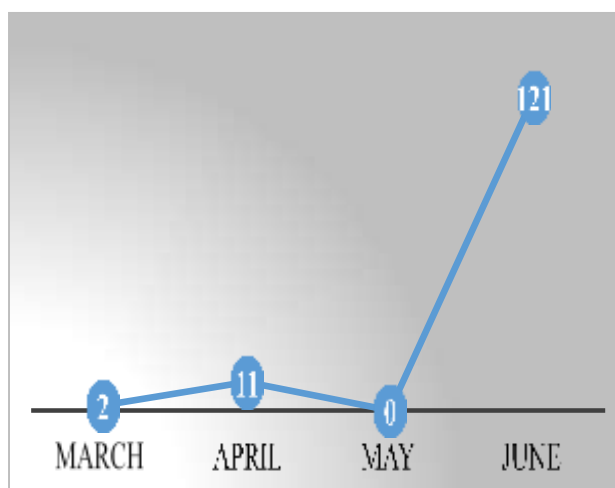
in view of the recent attack by bandit and Boko-Haram which resulted in loss of property whereby some houses are being set on fire, cattle are being rustle and other material has been destroyed and take away respectively by the bandit and Boko-Haram during the period of lockdown in view to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the region. The flow of illicit firearms in communities of North-West region is also a cause for insecurity. Apart from fatalities recorded, bandits' attacks on communities increased social risks, discouraged investment and triggered economic crises for individuals and communities. The conflict is causing a spillover effect on other neighboring communities in the North-Central region, hindering inter-communal and inter-state trade (6).

5. DEPRESSION

The recent activities of banditry and Boko-Haram due to lockdown in northern Nigeria have left number of people killed, rape and brutally injured, subjected children to orphan and married women to widow, this may not only affect the socio-economic but rather lead to psychological trauma among the victims more especially the children and women thereby increasing a public health burden in this region (6).



Number of death recorded from Banditry attack (n=352)



Number of death recorded from Boko-Haram attack (n=134)



Fig 1: Number of death recorded from Banditry and Boko-Haram attack during lockdown in Northern Nigeria (n=486)[Source: Vanguard, Punch, CNN and SBS News-March to June 2020]

As reported by the media (i.e. Vanguard, Punch, SBS) from March to June 2020; cumulatively about 352 people were killed by bandits in northern part of Nigeria during the lockdown (March-June 2020). In the month of March only 2 people were reported to be killed by Boko-Haram militant, later on in April about 11 people were killed and there was no report of Boko-Haram attack in the month of May, however in June about 121 people were killed by Boko-Haram militant (Fig 1).

6. CONCLUSION

The statistics from the banditry and Boko-Haram attacks in the northern Nigeria reveals that the number of deaths (486-deaths) from these insurgencies (Banditry and Boko-Haram) during the period of lockdown (March-June) almost reach the number of deaths (573-deaths) recorded from COVID-19 as of June 30, 2020. The insecurity in Northern Nigeria is indeed a great concern to public health. Nigeria is currently working hard to contain the spread of COVID-19 as the confirmed case is currently above 25000 as of June 30, 2020. However the banditry and Boko-Haram attacks has increased during the lockdown in northern Nigeria. The increase leads to high rate mortality and morbidity in these region. Many children became orphans and a lot of women became widows, and this may leads to psychological trauma among the victims. The situation may increase public health burden as well as the disease burden, therefore it is high time Nigerian government to go back to the drawing board and address the issues of insecurity in the northern Nigeria, as matter of urgency.

Acknowledgment

The author thanks to Department of Environmental Health, New Gate College of Health Technology, Minna Niger State, Nigeria Department of Biological science ATBU Bauchi Department of Zoology, Syed Ammal Arts and Science College, Ramanathapuram 623 513.

Conflict of interests

Nil

7. REFERENCES

1. Tijjani SJ, Ma L. Is Nigeria prepared and ready to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in its conflict-affected northeastern states? *Int J Equity Health* 2020; 19: 77. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-020-01192-6>
2. Ebenso B, Otu A. Can Nigeria contain the COVID-19 outbreak using lessons from recent epidemics? *Lancet Glob Health*. 2020;8(6):e770. doi: 10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30101-7.
3. Muhammad F. Social Distancing and Lockdown Due to COVID-19 Pandemic Will not Work in Africa, Middle East *J Rehabil Health Stud*. Online ahead of Print; 7(3):e104271. doi: 10.5812/mejrh.104271.
4. Robinson D. Banditry and the Subversion of State Authority in China: the Capital Region during the Middle Ming Period (1450-1525). *Journal of Social History*. 2000; 33: 528-529.



5. Bodansky Y. The Boko Haram and Nigerian Jihadism. ISPSW Strategy Series: Focus on Defense and International Security 2015:318.
6. West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP). Nigeria: Addressing Armed Banditry in the North West Region of Nigeria 2020. Available from: https://www.wanep.org/wanep/files/2020/Feb/POLICY_BRIEF_ON_ARMED_BANDITRY_IN_NIGERIA_-_18022020.pdf [Accessed Jun 28, 2020].
7. Ayegba US. Unemployment and Poverty as sources and consequence of insecurity in Nigeria: The Boko Haram insurgency revisited. *Afr. J. Pol. Sci. Int. Relat.* 2015;9(3):90-99.
8. Alumona IM, Oshita OO, Onuoha FC. Introduction: Understanding the Crisis of Internal Security Management in Nigeria. In: Oshita O., Alumona I., Onuoha F. (eds) *Internal Security Management in Nigeria*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore 2019. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8215-4_1
9. Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). COVID-19 Nigeria Update. Available from: <https://ncdc.gov.ng/diseases/updateCOVID0outbreakNigeria> [Accessed on June, 30 2020].
10. Kapata N, Ihekweazu C, Ntoumi F, Raji T, Chanda-Kapata P, Mwaba P, et al. Is Africa prepared for tackling the COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) epidemic. Lessons from past outbreaks, ongoing pan-African public health efforts, and implications for the future. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*; 2020: 93(2020):233–236. Doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijid.2020.02.049>