

Insecurity in South-East Nigeria and Leadership Responsibility: An Analysis of the Socioeconomic Implications

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Abstract

In recent times, southeast Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity; ranging from herdsmen attacks on farmers, banditry, and more recently, killings and wanton destruction of lives and properties by the unknown gunmen who take advantage of the IPOB sit-at-home order to perpetrate criminalities. These situations have badly affected the socio-economic advancement of the zone. In order to ameliorate the appalling situation, leadership of the southeast zone through the states' governors has embarked on increased security budgetary allocation, installation of Computer-based Closed Circuit Television cameras (CCTV) in some strategic parts of the states to enhance surveillance, heightening of physical security measures around the states aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities etc. in view of this, this paper interrogated insecurity in southeast Nigeria and roles of the zone's leadership in curtailing its socioeconomic impact. Qualitative Research approach was adopted which entails the use of secondary source of data and Key Informant Interview (KII); and explanatory method of data analysis in collecting and analyzing data. The result of the study revealed that there has been worsening insecurity evident in the incessant attacks by unknown gunmen. This has affected the ease of doing of business in the region and has led to loss of income and poor socioeconomic development of the region. Despite the efforts the level of insecurity in the southeast is still high; evident on continuous killing and destruction of properties by the unknown gunmen. The study recommends that the southeast state governments should intensify their security fight by providing more modern security surveillance gadgets and also employ security experts with professional training to head the security departments of the southeast states. Also, state police should be established to enable the southeast state governors to have direct control over the security architecture of the states.

Keywords: Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Insecurity, Regional Leadership, Sit-at-Home, South-East, Unknown Gunmen,

Introduction

One of the most prevailing challenges of Nigeria at the moment is insecurity. This is so multidimensional that it ranges from militancy to armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, herdsmen attack on Nigerian communities and a more sophisticated Boko Haram insurgency and terrorism. Generally, insecurity constitutes all forms of violent activities in a country these manifest in political, economic and social violence which disrupt the peace and stability of the society thereby altering peoples' normal way of living (Ayoola, 2022). Since 2015, bandits have maintained dreaded and coordinated attacks across various strategic places in Nigeria including the South-East (Olafeju & Adeniyi, 2022). This is evident on the kidnapping of school children, attacks on train, prisons, military

barracks and lots of other coordinated attacks which have drawn international attention. Hence, banditry has become one of the most contemporary issues occupying national discourse in Nigeria since 2015.

Particularly, the South-East region which used to be one of Nigeria's relatively peaceful zones is witnessing rising insecurity arising from incessant attacks by herdsmen and unknown gunmen. The insecurity in the South-East region immediately after the inception of President Buhari's government in 2015 was orchestrated by incessant clashes between herders and their host communities. Since 2016 when the prominent case of killing by herdsmen was first recorded in Nimbo Community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu state, clashes between farmers and herders has persisted in the southeast which has led to several killings of innocent farmers by the herdsmen. Okibe (2022) lamented that the resultant effect of the incessant clashes between farmers and herdsmen is extensive loss of lives and property. Hence, have threatened the security of the region, reduced its economic productivity, and deepened food crisis in the affected communities (Statista, 2022). The persistent attacks and killings of rural farmers by herdsmen has apparently led to the displacement of farmers; while their farm produce such as yam, rice, cassava are destroyed. Many farmers as a result of fear of attack by the herdsmen have halted farming activities; which has drastically reduced agricultural production and has resulted to shortage of farm produce in the rural and urban markets. This is evidenced by the soaring prices of essential commodities in these areas (Ortom, 2022). These essential Agricultural produce ordinarily serve as a raw material for many foreign investors; which when not available would lead to the collapse of many foreign businesses.

More recently, the southeast region has been dreadful, given the region's rise in the activities of IPOB, a group agitating for the independence of the southeast region and the activities of criminals who operate as unknown gunmen. They take advantage of the sit-at-home declared by the IPOB to perpetrate their criminal activities. This has posed a serious threat to national peace, security and economic development. In other words, the chance of economic growth of the region has been hampered by the activities of unknown gunmen (Okeoma, 2021). Public places such as markets, schools, churches, police stations, military checkpoints and barracks have been severally targeted by the unknown gunmen who indiscriminately attack both security agents and civilians. The incidents of wanton killings in the region stem from banditry which is reflected on the persistent killing by the "unknown gunmen", clashes between security agencies and self-rule enthusiasts IPOB, extra-judicial killings, kidnapping etc.

Since August 2021 when the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) introduced a weekly Monday sit-at-home in the South-East region to protest the continued detention of its leader Nnamdi Kanu by the Nigeria Security Operatives, the region has experienced upsurge in insecurity and civil unrest which adversely affect the socioeconomic development of the region. While other regions of the country observe its normal weekly commercial and economic activities without interruption, the case of the southeast is different. In every Monday which is supposedly the first work day of the week, the sit-at-home leads to the closure of markets, schools, banks and offices on a weekly basis. Furthermore, several roads are often deserted as residents observe the exercise in fear of being attacked; as many businesses according to report by PunchNews (13th July, 2023) have been attacked by unknown gunmen suspected to be enforcing the sit-at-home order. Azeez (2022) lamented that this has grounded human, economic, and social activities in the region. ICIR (2023) also reported that the trade and commerce sector is the worst hit as various investors have exited

their business operations in the region owing to the deteriorating insecurity; and revenues running into trillions of naira have reportedly been lost since the sit-at-home exercise began.

In response to this appalling situation, governments of the South-East states of Abia state, Anambra state, Ebonyi state, Enugu state and Imo state have made concerted efforts to combat insecurity with the formation of civilian security outfit known as Ebubeagu which became mostly functional in Ebonyi state; though many residents have however accused the security outfit of being used by corrupt government officials to suppress their perceived enemies or opposition (Ugwu, 2022). The government also responded to separatist agitation through aggressive militarisation, security crackdowns and mass arrests of supporters and youths. One among such prominent military operation is Operation Python Dance 1&2 which lasted between 26th November 2016 till 27th December 2017 (Daily Trust, 27th February 2021).

Despite the government's security efforts, insecurity has been prevalent. The government's security effort seems unproductive as it is faced with resistance with the emergence of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) which is believed to be an IPOB security outfit to curtail the continuous attack by the Unknown Gunmen and herdsmen in the region. While the herdsmen continued to attack farmers in the forest area and rural farmland, the bandits under the guise of unknown gunmen often targeted security personnel at their stations or checkpoints; personnel are killed, and their vehicles and duty posts are burnt. More than 10 police stations were attacked in parts of the South-East in the first five months of 2021, with many police officers killed (Esho, 2022). In some cases, police stations are burnt and weapons carted away. The gunmen have also targeted government facilities such as the Independent National Electoral Commission offices, prisons and courts. Insecurity has been compounded by a jailbreak launched by the unknown gunmen in early April 2021 in Owerri Imo state's correctional centre which led to the freeing of 1,844 inmates, leading to more criminals re-entering society (Premium Times, 5th April 2021). With more guns in their hands, attackers have become bolder and have branched into other criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom which tantamount to banditry. While the incidents of insecurity in the South-East region have led to thousands of losses to lives and then the destruction of livelihood, businesses are much affected too. Hence, the overall socioeconomic development of the southeast region is affected.

Objectives of the Study The aim of the study is to determine how the leadership of the southeast states has strived to curtail the effects of insecurity on the socio-economic development of the region. Specifically, the study aim to determine: (a) Effects of insecurity on the socioeconomic development of the southeast zone (b) The role of southeast leadership in curtailing insecurity in the region

Review of Related Literature

Insecurity in Southeast Nigeria Insecurity is the inability to take defensive action against forces that portend harm or danger to an individual or group. In other words, insecurity is the condition of susceptibility to harm and exposure to risk and anxiety of anticipated misfortune (Ayoola, 2022). According to Beland (2015), insecurity entails a lack of protection from crime and psychological harm. Hence, insecurity is the breach of peace and security where historical, religious, ethno-regional contribute to recurring conflicts and leads to wanton destruction of lives and properties (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014). It is a state of being unsafe from harm. Causes of insecurity can be classified as remote, proximate and intermediate factors (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). The root causes of

insecurity are the inefficiency of government institutions, pervasiveness, inequalities and unfairness in managing the treasures of the state, ethno-religious conflicts, clash of interest between the government and the public, and youth unemployment; all of which lead to mass poverty in the society. Hazen and Horner (2007) noted that insecurity in most cases is a resultant effect of the failure or inefficiency of government institutions.

The current trend of attacks and killings by herdsmen and unknown gunmen in South-East can be traceable to the above view of Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro (2013) on the causes of insecurity; particularly lack of institutional capacity resulting in government failure, pervasive material inequalities and unfairness, ethno-religious conflicts as well as unemployment/poverty. Insecurity in southeast Nigeria is a recurring phenomenon that threatens the well-being of its citizens. The repeated occurrence of insecurity situations constitutes a bane to economic development and as well leads to the proliferation of crime (Iyare, 2018). This has ranged from killings by herdsmen to more sophisticated attacks by the unknown gunmen - armed bandits who perpetrate criminal activities, especially in the South-East region. Hence, Unknown Gunmen is a name associated with other criminal actors who have capitalized on the perplexing situation of sit-at-home to carry out attacks within the area undetected. This has degenerated into increased banditry in South-East.

Since late 2020 when the activities of the unknown gunmen became more prominent in the southeast, multiple attacks on security personnel and infrastructure especially the Nigerian Police Force by the unknown gunmen have been recorded in South-East. While the Nigerian government through security agencies has consistently indicted IPOB for the targeted assaults; the IPOB has denied being responsible for the violent attacks. This leaves the situation in a perplexed state; the government's stance on IPOB's involvement in the attacks, the group's unwavering denials and the continuity of the attacks (Emeruwa, 2021). The major soft targets of the Unknown gunmen have been security agencies and public structures such as markets, schools and government institutions. There have been several instances where Police stations, military checking points and INEC offices were attacked. Many security operatives have lost their lives to unknown gunmen (Esho, 2022). Five months into 2021, 149 people had been killed in 36 attacks in South east Nigeria as documented by Nextier Security, Peace and Development (SPD) Violent Conflict Database (Ezeobi, 2021).

The growing rate of insecurity in the southeast is very alarming and it calls for concern as it has continued to increase unabated. Data from International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) (2023) signifies that the emergence of the restive activities of the Fulani Herdsmen and "unknown gunmen" have worsened insecurity in the southeast region. The data shows that between 2020 and 2021, the rate of killings in South-East increased from 194 – 1, 272. That is more than 600% increase. Hence, Adagba, Ugwu and Eme (2022) is of the view that the lingering security challenges and the inability of the security apparatus of the government to guarantee safety and security in the country is a clear indication that the efforts of government have not yielded enough positive result. Hence, one could ask, is the security of lives and properties achievable? Apparently, the security situation in the southeast Nigeria appears insurmountable. While many people have argued that government at all levels have not done enough by not confronting the situation head on and dealing with it decisively; others have argued that the situation has a political undertone or inclination calculated to serve the interest of certain disgruntled political gladiators who seems unfavoured by the political reality of Nigeria (Amana & Okpoko, 2023). While on one hand, some people accused the IPOB to be the creators of Unknown gunmen, the IPOB on

the other hand insist that Unknown gunmen was created by the Buhari's government to destabilize the peace and security of the South-East region (Amana & Okpoko, 2023).

Killings in the southeast by unknown gunmen have become a daily occurrence even when the reportage is repetitively downplayed. Between early 2021 and 2022, gunmen have killed at least 37 police officers in 52 attacks on towns and communities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria (Leadership Newspaper 17th November 2022). This has posed serious fear and threat to potential local and foreign investors. A major catalyst of economic growth and development in developing countries is adequate availability of social infrastructure. Such infrastructural facilities as good market, good road, good healthcare system, good security of lives and properties among others can stimulate the transformation of the society. According to Ugwu (2022), social infrastructure requires huge financial investment in terms of both maintenance and construction; however, the unknown gunmen have continuously attacked social infrastructure, thereby causing a lot of negative effects on socioeconomic growth and development of the region. Dajo and Akor (2022) submitted that the activities of the unknown gunmen have caused destabilization to critical social infrastructures that took many years to build.

As reported by Okeoma (2021), the government of Nigeria claimed that the paramilitary wing of IPOB known as Eastern Security Network (ESN) destroyed eighteen INEC offices and a hundred and sixty-four security facilities in the South-Eastern part of the country. While on the other hand, the IPOB have accused the government of sponsoring insecurity in the South-East region with the aim of discrediting IPOB and further oppressing the lives of average South-Easterner. While the ESN operate as an approved wing of the IPOB, some other unscrupulous elements tagged "Unknown Gunmen" utilize this avenue to perpetrate their criminalities and killings.

Part of the activities of the IPOB includes Monday-sit-at-home. In late July, 2021, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) announced a weekly sit-at-home in the South-East. From 9th August 2021, every Monday and other days considered significant to the IPOB is to be sit at home days until the Federal Government of Nigeria release its leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu who is in detention. The sit-at-home order has binding effect on the five states of the southeast which include Ebonyi, Enugu, Anambra, Imo and Abia States; and some states in the South-South such as Delta and Rivers state; as well as some states in the North Central such as Benue and Kogi States (Aytogo, 2021). These areas are considered to belong to the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) (Ugwu, 2022). Since then, the southeast Nigeria has continued to observe the sit at home order on Mondays and other days of the week that Nnamdi Kanu is to appear before the court as a way of protest for the release of Nnamdi Kanu (Aytogo, 2021). Both intra and inter- state economic activities are jeopardized in any sit at home day; virtually, the sit-at-home orders invariably have effect on all geopolitical zones in Nigeria as movements are restricted into the southeast states from other geopolitical zones of the country. The sit-at-home order shuts down every human activity in the South East, making the region become deserted on sit at home days. The restriction of movement has added to the security challenges bedeviling Nigeria. Unscrupulous elements utilize sit-at-home days to perpetrate evils such as kidnapping for ransom, violent conducts of different magnitudes and attacks on anyone who fall prey.

Sadly, all effort of the government of the zone to reverse the sit-at-home since late August, 2021 has not yielded any result due to fear of attack. Some people who tried to go about their businesses were attacked by the unknown gunmen; thereby making others to stay indoors for fear. Offices and markets have remained closed too. Hence, both those who want to observe the sit-at-home and those who do not want, observe it.

Role of Southeast Leaders in Curtailing Insecurity and Its Socioeconomic Effect in Southeast It is a popular view that the South-East leaders have not done much to improve the standard of living of their people. The punch 13th November 2022 captioned it “South-East governors’ half-hearted fight against insecurity” Historically, the security concerns of the region took a worrisome dimension in April 2016 when armed Fulani herdsmen invaded the rural town of Ukpabi, Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of the state murdered and maimed many villagers in protest of denial of access to their farmland and reserved forest to feed their herds. This mayhem spread to other parts of the region with new dimension of abduction, kidnapping, raping etc. That made the South-East Governors’ Forum to order that bushes along the expressways be cleared to give clear views to motorists and enhance operations of the security officers. This decision of clearing the bushes along the expressways was described as mere palliatives and not a panacea to the rampaging kidnappers and unknown gunmen (Olapeju & Adeniyi, 2022).

In furtherance of this effort, a forest guards and community security system called Ebubeagu was formed by the region’s leadership. The regional security outfit lacked central coordination and control leading to different nomenclature in different states. In Enugu, it is called Forest Guards/Neighbourhood Watch, Ebonyi and Imo states named it Ebubeagu, Anambra State runs Anambra Vigilante Services whereas Abia State has Homeland Security outfit. The common character of these outfits is that they lack the operational manual, poor training, poor synergy and control by dominant control by the state governors and therefore not too effective in tackling the multidimensional insecurity in the region. The chairman of the joint security outfit Major General Obi Umahi (retd.) resigned from the position, citing lack of support (Punch 13th November, 2022). Before the establishment of Ebubeagu, the pro-Biafra group, the Indigenous People of Biafra, had set up the Eastern Security Network which Nnamdi Kanu described as a solution to the rampaging insecurity in the region; citing the failure of the South-East governors and leaders to addressing security challenges of the region as concerns rampage and killings by herdsmen, kidnappers and bandits within the region.

These efforts could not tackle these challenges using local security outfits. The Southeast Governors’ Forum after its meeting in Enugu in 2022 issued a communique, decried the state of insecurity in the region, saying, “Our economic activities have been halted while kidnapping and killings have been on daily increase. It pleaded with the Federal Government to come to the aid of the region in providing security (Punch 13th November 2022).

The Abia State Commissioner for Information, Chief John Okiyi-Kalu in an interview, explained that the state government had put measures in place to checkmate activities of the said unknown gunmen, yet these men carry out incessant attacks on police formations and other public buildings with precision and success. To him, the battle against the purported unknown gunmen is yielding little or no fruit in Abia State. Despite the claim by the police and state government of putting in place plans to neutralize the activities of unknown gunmen, over 11 police formations, including INEC offices had been razed and some policemen killed. The attacks have remained a recurring decimal (Sun Newspaper, 6th June 2021).

The Governors of Enugu and Anambra States Bar Peter Mbah and Prof Chukuma Soludo respectively argued that atrocities of the unknown gunmen and rise in insecurity are getting unabated due to compliance of the citizens to the sit-at-home order of the non-state actors. They went further to order schools, markets, motor parks, hotels, banks, and public servants, and to start business and work on Mondays. This was geared towards

downplaying the popularity and seemed domination of the non-state actors (IPOB and Unknown gunmen). Unfortunately, this has caused an escalation of fear, tension, and insecurity in the states as unknown gunmen attacked soft points. The security situation especially in Anambra has gone worse as a result of the Governor's order. Fears and tensions relaxing in places like Nnewi, Onitsha, and Ekwulobia got aggravated.

The Governor of Enugu state motivated the state's security agents by buying new vehicles and communication gadgets for patrol, intelligence gathering, and rescue operations. He also mounted CCTV Cameras in strategic spots in the state especially Enugu Capital Territory for easy patrol and quick response to crime and detection. These cameras mounted in the strategic places have put everyone especially the insurgents under caution. Many vices perpetrated by criminal elements within the city but attributed to Unknown gunmen and IPOB have vanished. The engagement of ICT components by the Enugu state government has help them to separate street criminals from the insurgent and bandits engaging in kidnapping, killing and destruction of public and private properties.

The security operatives especially the military and police have increased the number of location operations, military bases and checkpoints/roadblocks in the region to curb and eventually end insurgent and banditry activities in the region. However, the effectiveness of these approaches has been questioned considering the level of escalation so far. The military launched about four operations in the southeast zone from 2016-2024 which include Operation Python Dance I, II and III and Udoka ka Nma. Emelife and Ofurum (2024) argue that these operations have contributed to the escalation of violence, and increased militarization of civilian areas. More than 200 military checkpoints have been established in the region. The operations of the military officials have made the zone the most militarized in Nigeria even when bigger security challenges and terrorism are experienced in other parts of Nigeria. The perceived militarization hampered the expected civil support from the citizens, rather they criticised them and yielded their support to the non-state actors. In their analysis, Emelife and Ofurum assert that citizens often encounter a checkpoint every 5-10 kilometres on the major highways leading to delays, harassment, extortions, loss of business hours and appointments. They stated that it has been established that about #100 billion is paid illegally through extortion to the security personnel in the region annually at the various checkpoints. Even amidst their presence, kidnapping has continued unabated on the southeast roads and over #1.8 billion has been paid as ransom to kidnappers in 120 incidents in the first quarter of 2024.

Analysts, at a roundtable session on the mid-year review of Economic Outlook for 2022, organized by the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria in partnership with Adedipe Associates Limited, recently in Lagos reviewed downward the growth forecast for the economy from 3.74 per cent in January to 3.27 per cent. The firm's chief consultant, Biodun Adedipe, noted that the economic growth had been affected by insecurity. In his words "This government has done things wrongly rather than slowly. As far as I'm concerned, the government is pampering the terrorists, and this insecurity is affecting the economy. Instead of growing the economy, we are losing. People are losing confidence in Nigeria. Our problem will continue or else the insecurity problem is tackled." (Punchnews 14th March 2024). This implies that the effort of political leaders has not been able to curtail insecurity; rather, it has continued unabated.

Theoretical Framework This paper is anchored on the system theory. According to David Easton, the analysis of the subsystem such as security system which exists in a larger system such as Nigeria federal government is described using the body system. According to him, the body system is made up of various subsystems which are interconnected; and

once a subsystem is affected by disease or accident, other subsystems are affected and thus, the entire system cannot function effectively. The system approach focuses attention on the whole and also on the complex interrelationships among its constituent parts. The system theory emphasizes on the relationship and interactions among component parts. This theory views a state as a unified whole and purposeful system composed of interrelated parts (Stonner, Freeman, & Gilbert, 2009). The whole is greater than its component parts. A change in any component of a part may adversely affect the functionality of the entire system. In effect, many subsystems such as religion, politics, security, economy, culture, education exist in any society and they work together to promote social order, solidarity and stability. The security system is one among the very vital subsystems that exist in a state, any form of abnormality in the security system affects the effectiveness of other subsystems such as socioeconomic system; and thus lead to the collapse of the entire system which is the state. In the southeast, the abnormality in the security aspect has affected both economic and social development of the region. Hence, economic activities are sometimes halted as a result of abnormality in the security sector of the state; leading to overall decline in the socioeconomic development of the entire southeast. Moreover, southeast is a sub-unit of Nigeria as a complex whole; yet, any form of abnormality in the region affects the entire Nigeria. The sit at home and its accompanying security challenges does not only affect the southeast; on sit at home day, both intra and inter- state economic activities are halted; there would not be movement of goods and services from southeast to other regions or from other regions to the southeast. Therefore, insecurity in the southeast invariably has effect on entire Nigeria.

Discussion and Analysis.

Effects of Insecurity on the Socioeconomic Development of the Southeast Zone Existing data has shown that insecurity in the southeast mostly orchestrated by the activities of the unknown gunmen have disrupted the effectiveness of business activities in the South-East region. The unknown gunmen have attacked several businesses operating in the region as well as private individuals especially on days declared as sit-at-home. Sometimes, as noted previously, any business that opens, or transporters operating in the early hours of sit-at-home day are attacked. This has led to destruction of lives and properties in the region; creating security tension and poor socioeconomic development.

A respondent who is a military officer serving in 82 Division, Nigerian Army, Enugu stated thus:

Without sentiment, security in the South-East has been worsening. Before now, there was nothing like unknown gunmen or sit-at-home order. But today, everyone is living in fear in the South-East including the security operatives. While Fulani herdsmen are attacking in the farmland mostly in remote areas, the unknown gunmen are operating in more or less urban areas. Sometimes especially on days declared to be sit-at-home, the unknown gunmen attack businesses both on the road and shops that open for business. These so-called unknown gunmen seem to have become so dreadful such that they attack police and army checking points and barracks, kill officers and go free without being caught. This is what has become of southeast today.

Agony in South East as kidnappers lay siege to communities



The data shows that between 2020 and 2021, the rate of killings in South-East increased from 194 – 1, 272. That is more than 600% increase.

The table below represent collated newspapers reports of various prominent attacks by unknown gunmen in the South-East especially in 2021- 2023 when the activities of the unknown gunmen became more prominent.

Date	Event	Fatality	Source
	Onueke Police Station in Ezza South Local Government Area of Ebonyi state was attacked		Vanguard Newspaper
February 23	Unknown gunmen attacked a police station in Abayi, Osisioma Aba, Abia State	One police officer was killed	Vanguard Newspaper
February 24	A patrol vehicle was attacked in Ekwulobia in Anambra State	One police officer was killed	Premium Times

February 24	Gunmen attacked Abayi police station in Osisioma Ngwa, Abia State	A police officer was killed while arms and ammunition were looted and the station was set ablaze	Vanguard Newspaper
February 25	The Divisional Police headquarters Aboh Mbaise, Imo State was attacked.	A police officer was wounded	Vanguard Newspaper
February 26	Gunmen torched a police station in Imo State	Unknown	Premium Times
March 20	Unknown gunmen attacked the Divisional Police headquarters at Isiala Mbano, Imo State	Unknown	Premium Times
March 24	Professor Charles Soludo was attacked at a town hall meeting in Isuofia, Aguata, Anambra State	Three police officers were killed while Anambra State Commissioner for Public Utilities, Engr. Emeka Ezenwanne was abducted.	Premium Times
April 5	Unknown gunmen used explosives to open the administrative buildings attacked a correctional facility in Owerri, Imo State and freed 1,844 inmates	1,844 inmates freed	Premium Times
May 6	Unknown gunmen set ablaze the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NLDEA) office in Amaekpu, Ohafia, Abia State.	Unknown	Daily Trust Newspaper
May 9	Unknown gunmen attack a police station in Trademore estate in Ubani, Abia State	Unknown	This Day Newspaper
May 17	Unknown gunmen attacked the Ubakala divisional police station in Umuahia, Abia State.	Two police officers were killed	The Guardian Newspaper
July 21	Gunmen attacked a police checkpoint in Inyaba bridge Obeagu Amechi, Enugu South LGA of Enugu State	6 police officers were killed, a police station was torched and firearms stolen	Sun news
7 th July 2021	Gruesome killing of Prof. Samuel Ndubuisi, the Director-General, Scientific Equipment Development Institute (SEDI), in Enugu on the Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway		PremiumTimes
September 28, 2021	Gunmen attacked Nkpor Junction	Dr Chike Akunyili, husband of the late Professor Dora Akunyili was killed. Also a member of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Somadina Oforma was killed	The Guardian Newspaper
August 16, 2022	A commercial motorcyclist was killed Ogbaku Junction, Mbaitolu LGA, Imo State		Vanguard news
August 18, 2022	Unknown Gunmen attacked Enugu-Abakaliki Expressway, Ebonyi State.	A police officer killed on a checkpoint	Premium Times
August 28, 2022	Galaxy Hotel, Isu community, Onicha LGA of Ebonyi State was attacked	Four guests in a hotel were killed	The Guardian Newspaper

Sept 11, 2022	Attacked at Enugwu-ukwu, Njikoka LGA, Anambra State	Senator Ifeanyi Uba convey was attacked. Some aids and police officers were killed and many other injured	Sahara Reporters
Sept 27, 2022	Attack at Obeagu-Amodu, Enugu South LGA of Enugu State	Some soldiers and police officers killed	Premium Times
October 10, 2022	Invasion Akokwa/Arondizogu/Ikperora/Okigwe road, Imo State	Two police officer killed	Sun News
16 th May 2023	Gunmen attacked an advance convoy of the United States mission in Nigeria at Atani in Ogbaru LGA of Anambra State,.	Four people—two Nigerians who worked for the mission, and two members of their Nigerian police escort were killed and three others abducted	Aljazeera news & Guardian Newspaper
May 18 th 2023	Attack at Ngor Okpuala, Check Point.	Two Police Officers	
May, 22 nd 2023	Unknown gunmen attacked Police Checkpoint at Union Bank in Abakaliki	An Inspector of Police was killed	Punch Newspaper

Source: Compiled by the authors

These are just few instances of many attacks by the unknown gunmen in the South-East over the years. In the South-East region, no state is free from attacks by the unknown gunmen. According to Agwu (2023), in the first quarter of 2023, a soldier attached to 14 Brigards, Goodluck Jonathan Barracks Ohafia was said to have been missing in a village in Ohafia while returning from his annual leave. When the information got to the soldiers in the Barracks, they went on rampage and sacked the entire village as many abandoned the village and scampered for their dear lives in neighbouring villages as some of the buildings in the area were reportedly burnt down by the irate soldiers. In another development, four policemen were killed at Ndiegoro area of the state. The police in the state went on manhunt and apprehended two of the suspected killers while others are still on the run. Also in Ngor Okpuala, Imo State recently, five policemen were shot dead by Unknown Gunmen who stormed a restaurant in the area where the police officers were eating (*BusinessDay* 11th June, 2023).

From the responses and the news headline, one could understand the deteriorating nature of insecurity in southeast especially ever since the emergence of the bandits called unknown gunmen in the zone. More recently, the killings by these criminals have continued unabated. Nextier SPD, an independent body conducted a study to examine the activities of dissident groups in Nigeria's South East, particularly between 2021 and 2022. The study revealed that unknown gunmen killed 83 civilians and 36 security personnel in the first half of 2022. According to the study, at least, 3 civilians and 1 security personnel were killed each week (*Vanguard News* June 8, 2024).

Furthermore, **Nnamdi Ojiego in Vanguard news reported that** gunmen killed 31 people in Ebonyi and Anambra states in a space of 72 hours in April 2022; while INEC office in Imo State was attacked twice in the same month. Also, two persons were killed when gunmen attacked some residents at New Market in Enugu North LGA in December 2022. The attack came barely 24 hours after gunmen attacked Imo communities, killing a police officer and

Prince Iheme who was an elder brother to Nollywood actor, Osita Iheme. The report also revealed that in April 2023 alone, there was a spike in the killings of 95/100 which represent 5.3 % in Southeast. In addition, another 73 people were said to have been kidnapped in 28 kidnapping incidents in the region during the same period (**Vanguard News June 8, 2024**).

In the spree of killings by unknown gunmen, political leaders are not spared. On 22 February 2023, Oyibo Chukwu, the 2023 Labour Party (LP) senatorial candidate for Enugu East District was killed by gunmen, believed to be political assassins, in Amechi Awkunanaw in Enugu South LGA of Enugu State. He was killed alongside five supporters who were inside his vehicle (Premium times 31st December 2023).

Dons Ude, a former Secretary of the Peoples' Democratic Party in Enugu State was found dead on 26 April, 2023 after missing for few days. On May 16th 2023, gunmen ambushed a convoy of US Consulate officials along Atani Osamala Road in Ogbaru Local Government Area of Anambra State during a mission to assess the impact of erosion in the council area and killed some of them. It was reported that two officials of the US Consulate and two police officers attached to their convoy were killed, while three others, including two other police officers and their driver, were abducted by the attackers.

On Sunday 20th October 2024, 13 youths were reportedly killed when gunmen open fire on the residents during a new yam festival in Nibo community in Awka south LGA of Anambra state (Punchnews 21th October, 2024). Premium times also reported that barely 4 days later on 24 of October, 2024, gunmen attacked the residents of Ifite Awka in Anambra state, killing some innocent citizens.

On 16th December, 2024, Vanguard News reported that a UNIZIK lecturer, Dr Osita Fabian Chinedu was shot dead by unknown gunmen at Aroma area of Awka. Also in a similar development, vanguard news gathered that Ihiala town in Anambra state witnessed another tragic day on Monday 30th December, 2024 as gunmen killed three individuals. A popular businessman known as Oluebube was shot dead while supervising workers mounting canopies for a funeral ceremony. In another separate attack, two security operatives attached to Ihilala LG secretariat were killed on the same day (Vanguard News 31st December, 2024).

Ahmed Gulak, a former Special Adviser on Politics to the former President Goodluck Jonathan, was killed in Owerri, Imo State, on his way to the airport. Justice Stanley Nnaji, a former Judge of Enugu State High Court who was killed in Enugu. Likewise, Chief Provost of the Nigerian Immigration Service in Imo state Mr Okiemute Mrere was murdered along the Owerri-Portharcourt Road. Prof. Samuel Ndubuisi, the Director-General, Scientific Equipment Development Institute (SEDI), in Enugu was gruesomely killed on 7th July 2021 on the Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway. This happened two days after Ifeanyi Okeke, the Chief Executive Officer of AutoEase was killed in the same area (Nda-Isaiah, 2021)

A report by the African Democratic Congress, ADC South East zonal chapter, revealed that about 100 people are killed every week in the southeast as a result of the rising cases of banditry, kidnapping, ritual killings, armed robberies amongst other crimes (Vanguard News June 8, 2024).

A respondent was asked "How would you describe the effect of insecurity on socioeconomic development in the southeast?" she responded thus;

Insecurity in the southeast has been a thorn on the flesh of the government and the entire South-East people. The so called unknown gunmen have become formidable and are employing guerrilla tactics targeting public places such as market, school and churches. They ambush, kidnap and

kill security operatives, politicians and private individuals. Many children are now orphans; many women are now widows and many parents are now childless as a result of the killings by the unknown gunmen. Sometimes they operate in early hours of Monday and other days that their activities force people to sit at home in fear. They have attacked and burnt trucks carrying goods. Sometimes, these goods are looted; sometimes they are set ablaze. Their activities have become so dreadful such that sometimes it appears that even political leaders hardly talk about it as a result of fear of being attacked too.

With these reports of continuous terror by the unknown gunmen in all parts of the South-East Nigeria, many youths who are socioeconomically viable and relevant in the southeast region are now living in fear of becoming victims. Economically, this menace has scared away potential investors. For example, oil exploration and exploitation in Ogbaru - Ugwuta axis of Anambra -Imo states have been distorted due to high level of insecurity. Arson, kidnapping wanton destruction of government properties and all manner of criminalities going on a regular basis in the area. In many other occasions, there have been several clashes between the youths in the area and the army. Sometimes, the unknown gunmen hide under this scenario to perpetrate their evil act.

Aligwekwe (2022) lamented that the security tension arising from the activities of the unknown gunmen has a negative economic implication on the South-East region, with many businesses closing down and transportation sector deeply affected. Similarly, Anele and Eke (2022) regretted that the total shut down of business activities on Monday which is supposedly the first business day of the week as a result of fear of being attacked by the unknown gunmen have continued to drive away investors and business owners who are now shutting down their business outlet in the southeast and relocating to other regions, they consider more secure and stable for investments. Some of these macro businesses which have announced that they are shutting down part of their southeast business outlet includes Unilever, Total Energies Shoprite, PZ Cussions among others (Businessday, 25th July, 2024; Premium Times, 10th February, 2024; Vanguard News 7th April, 2021; Vanguard News, 7th December 2023).

Role of Southeast Leadership in Curtailing Insecurity in the Region

Controlling insecurity in the southeast requires a realistic approach. However, what has been a contending issue of insecurity in the southeast is the identity of the unknown gunmen. The unknown gunmen are human beings, and we see them every day. The inability to provide the true identity of this group has made the onslaughts continue unabated and the marauders, most often escape without capture. Former Governor Dave Umahi of Ebonyi State had in an interview with Channels Television's Sunrise Daily on security issues in South East Nigeria opined that the unknown gunmen are not unknown. In his words,

From what is happening in Ebonyi State, where the youth go to attack the Army and the Police and burn down INEC offices when these people confront the security agencies, they kill the security agents; sometimes the security agents will kill. We profiled them and saw that they were not "Unknown Gunmen". Many of these criminals are known but perhaps due to "political correctness" or ineptitude on the part of our security personnel, or reasons that are not known, their crimes are often dismissed and simply labelled as "Unknown Gunmen", denying their victims and families of the justice they deserved. The inability to apprehend these "Unknown Gunmen" has undoubtedly led to a surge in crime and criminality nationwide (Channels Television, 2021).

This appears to be a proof that the government is not realistic in their fight against the unknown gunmen. If a governor can boldly admit to political correctness or inefficiency of security operatives in a state, who then should be looked unto to put things in order? It is argued that the southeast leaders have made efforts, but have not done enough in maintaining adequate security for the region and socioeconomic impact in the southeast region.

The South-East Governors had in several occasions organized a regional security meeting where they discussed and proffered solutions to the rising insecurity in the region. Public enlightenment programs have been carried out severally through the media, educating the public on security consciousness and how to avoid activities that are considered threat to public peace. Since 2017, in collaboration with the Federal Government a military operation named Operation Python Dance phase one and two were conducted in the South-East and other military operations such as operation Udoka as a way of curtailing insecurity in the South-East. Security votes have also been increased for the South-East as a way of improving security in the region. It was a welcomed development when the South-East governments established the regional security outfit called Ebubeagu. But on the long run, the Ebubeagu's activities became counterproductive as they were accused of being used to oppress political opponents and intimidate the innocent civilians on the street.

Furthermore, there have been increased police check points in most of the South-East roads that are susceptible to attack; such as Aba- Umuahia- Owerri roads, Enugu-Nsukka Express Road, the Enugu- Onitsha Express Way and the Enugu- Portharcourt road. But despite these multiple check points, the activities of the unknown gunmen still continue on these routes unabated. The current Enugu state Government has as well empowered an arm of the police force known as Distress Response Squad with vehicles and other security logistics so as to enhance their security operation in the state.

There has been increased in security budget - South-East inclusive as shown in the chart and table below.

Budgetary Allocation to the Nigerian Army, Navy and Air Force (2015-2022)

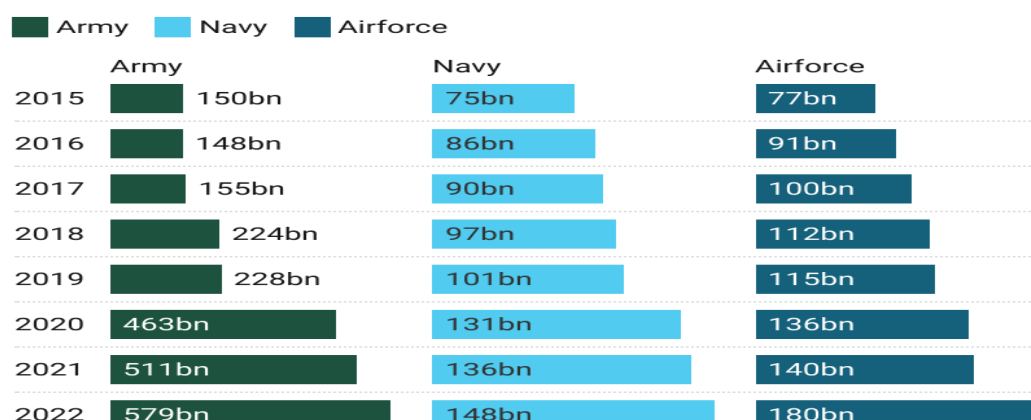
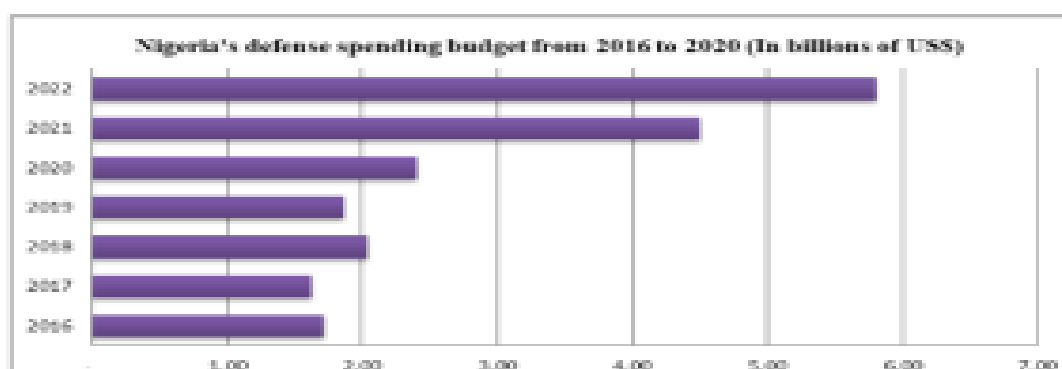


Chart: Dataphyte • Source: Budget Office of the Federation • Created with Datawrapper



Source: World Bank, Statista

Taking this data from 2015 down to present, according to BusinessDay 20th May, 2022, the World Bank reports that in 2016, Nigeria approved a defense budget of \$1.72 billion. The budget for the following year was \$1.62 billion which showed a 5.92 per cent decline. The military spending in the 2018 budget was \$2.04 billion, a 26.02% increase from that of the previous year. However, this declined by 8.95 per cent in 2019 when the military budget stood at \$1.86 billion. But it increased to \$2.4 billion in 2020 and the country increased its military spending by a massive 56 per cent in 2021, to reach \$4.5 billion. This reveals that from 2016 to 2022, Nigeria spent over \$19.9 billion on security alone.

However, the ICIR in another development examined the expenditure of seven security agencies; the findings revealed that while the budgetary allocation to these ministries increased, insecurity also increased. The examined parastatals are the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Nigeria Airforce, the Nigeria Navy, the Ministry of Police Affairs, the Defence Headquarters and the Ministry of Defence Headquarters.

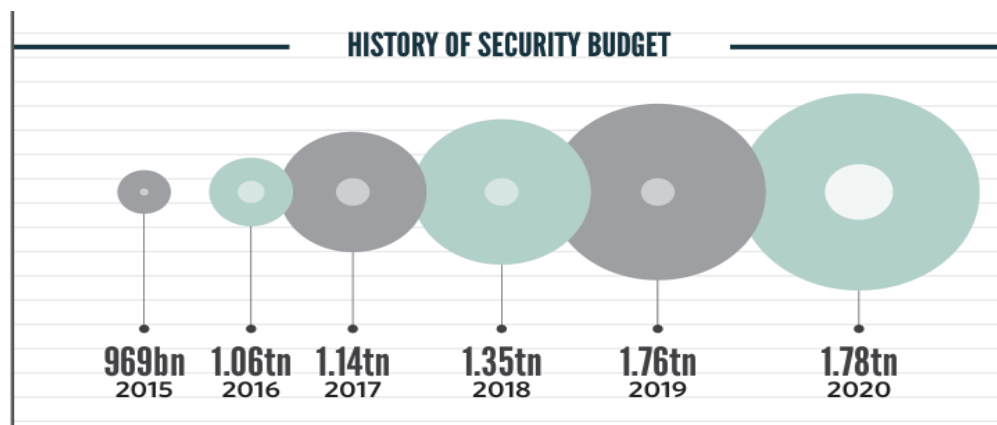
BETWEEN 2019 AND 2023, N7.71 TRILLION WAS RELEASED TO THESE SEVEN UNITS.

Mda	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Nigerian Army	N228.42 billion	N463.41 billion	N510.64 billion	N580.59 billion	N665.12 billion
Nscdc	N89.17 billion	N91.48 billion	N91.36 billion	N110.01 billion	N117.72 billion
Ministry Of Defence (Mod Hqtrs)	N27.37 billion	N22.16 billion	N21.52 billion	N21.01 billion	N62.69 billion
Nigerian Navy	N101.39 billion	N130.81 billion	N136.06 billion	N173.03 billion	N189.79 billion
Nigerian Airforce	N114.84 billion	N136.42 billion	N140.13 billion	N184.78 billion	N200.42 billion
Defence Headquarters	N5.21 billion	N44.42 billion	N35.36 billion	N80.94 billion	N86.11 billion
Police Formation & Command Hqtrs	366,133,777,795	–	–	–	–
Ministry Of Police Affairs	–	N409.39 billion	N455.13 billion	N783.86 billion	N838.06 billion
Total	N932.53 billion	N1.30 trillion	N1.39 trillion	N1.93 trillion	N2.16 trillion

(Note: The police command became a ministry in 2020)

Further analysis showed that over the past five years, the allocation of the Army increased by 191.19 per cent, NSCDS rose by 32 per cent and the Airforce budget jumped by 74.53 per cent. Also, the budget for the Navy increased by 87.19 per cent, the Defence headquarters budget rose by 1550.5 per cent and the Ministry of Defence budget jumped by 129.1 per cent.

Meanwhile, the Police command had a budget of N366.13 billion in 2019 after which it became a ministry in 2020. Between 2020 and 2023, the ministry's budget increased by 104.7 per cent. Below is a supportive information from National Bureau of Statistics, as presented in a chart that shows continuous increase in security budget for the South-East since 2015.



Source: NBS (2021)

In the light of this, the pertinent question is, have the South-East governors done enough in areas of security and boosting foreign direct investment in the region? A respondent from the ministry of commerce and industry in Enugu state said;

I want to be very brief, the government may have made efforts in significant areas but evidence shows that they have not done enough. They are the chief executive officers of the state. So, if the government has done enough, there would not be persistent case of killings by herdsmen, unknown gunmen and banditry as it is today in the South-East region. Ever since the killing by Fulani Herdsmen became more prominent in the South-East in 2016, I have never heard that any Herdsman is arrested or prosecuted for killing.

In another interview, a staff of the Federal Inland Revenue Enugu Office was asked: What areas do you think the government has done well and areas they have not done well in curtailing insecurity and its socioeconomic impact in the southeast? He responded thus:

I think the South-East governors are doing well prioritizing welfare of the security operatives in their states by providing operation vehicles. For instance, almost all the South-East governors donated vehicles for security in their states and the policemen now move in good vehicles. Also, I saw CCTV cameras mounted in some strategic places in Enugu and Ebonyi town. I am hopeful that the Imo and Abia governors are doing the same. But I can say that security is only concentrated in the city but once you get to the suburb of the states, everyone is living at his own mercy. Also, the government has adopted aggressive militarization, security crackdowns and mass arrests of pro IPOB supporters and sympathizers. Though from every indication, I can say that this action instead of quelling insecurity, is rather giving birth to more resistance, restiveness, hostilities among the youths in the region; which equally overheat the security tension in the region. The use of dialogue would be more effective for armless agitators except these criminal elements called unknown gunmen.

Another respondent from the Department of Planning, Research and Statistics, Ministry of Foreign Affairs was asked; Has the government of the region made any effort to sustain economic development amidst the insecurity? He responded thus:

Any right thinking government would be making efforts to attract and sustain investors in his government; but what matters most is the viability of these efforts. The governments of the region have applied public diplomacy; doing their best to present good pictures of the region to the world of investors. One among such actions is when Gov. Peter Mbah of Enugu state in November 2023 assured American investors in Enugu of safety in the state. In May 2024, he equally signed MoU with Vienna, Austria investors assuring them of conducive business environment (Enugu State Government, 2024). There are also many instances where other Governors of the South-East region did the same thing

From the foregoing, the southeast governors has embarked on security surveillance, mounting CCTV camera in strategic places in major cities of the South-East, donating vehicles and logistics to security operatives in the states and have as well established a regional security outfit "Ebubeagu". In other to curb insecurity, the Enugu state government on 28th August, 2019 announced the establishment of Ministry of Security Affair which is expected to coordinate various security intelligence within the new Enugu State security network (Daily Trust, 28th August, 2019). The Enugu state government under Peter Mbah also announced the establishment of a security surveillance control unit and Ai-embedded patrol vehicles; all in a bid to ensure adequate security in the state.

In Anambra state, Vanguard news noted that on assumption of office, the Soludo government launched a war against the gunmen. By then, the border local government areas with Imo State, namely Aguata, Nnewi, Ihiala, Ekwusigo, and South were under siege by the gunmen. The government's effort was matched with serious resistance by the unknown gunmen who went on rampage with more ferocious attack; killing, maiming, and kidnapping innocent people. Vanguard revealed that some of the known camps of the unknown gunmen were "Mother Valley", around the Lilu-Osumorghu axis and, the Ihiala council area, which was nicknamed the "Sambisa of the South East." due to its steep forest terrain. Other dreaded kidnapper's dens could be found in Ukpok, Utu, both in Nnewi South, as well as Lilu, Orumoghu, Mbosi, Uli, all in Ihiala local government area (Vanguard News, August 28, 2024). In March 2024, the army conducted an operation in one of the camps and recovered weapons and ammunitions.

In Imo state, similar case is being experienced. The residents of the Orsu area of the state are still living in fear. Vanguard News (August 28, 2024) gathered that most of the traditional rulers in the area have abandoned their subjects and relocated to Owerri and other urban cities because of threats to their lives. Other areas that are mostly under high threat of insecurity in the state are the oguta, Okigwe and the orlu axis. Consequently, the Imo State government said it was doing a lot to tackle insecurity, including the donation of 32 operational vehicles and refurbished 11 Armoured Personnel Carriers, for security agencies in the state. According to the Chief Press Secretary to Hope Uzodinma, Imo state governor, Oguike Nwachukwu, all the support of the government is to encourage the security agencies to continue their efforts in the fight against criminality and protect lives and property in the state. However, there has been constant heavy deployment of security operatives, comprising of the military, police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and other security agencies, on confidence-building patrol and operation show-of-force across all parts of Imo State (Vanguard News, August 28, 2024). Following the invasion of criminal camps by security operatives, these intelligence-led operations has been lunched in Imo state in a bid to flush out criminally-minded syndicates perpetrating violent crimes, so as to bring sanity in the state.

Enugu has also witnessed an upsurge in insecurity in recent time. The outskirt of Enugu state is still experiencing high level of insecurity. Some of these areas include the Ugwogo-Opi-Nsukka road axis, Four-Corner-Udi road and Ituku Ozalla. Also, Mgbagbu Owa, Umumba and many communities in Ezeagu, Isi-Uzo, and Uzo-Uwani axis area council are living in fear of the unknown gunmen and herdsmen who attack, kidnap and kill at will (Vanguard News, August 28, 2024). However, since the inception of the current administration of Governor Peter Mbah, the Enugu metropolis could be said to have witnessed some security relief because of the efforts that the government has made to equip the security operatives and the installment of modern security gadgets such as CCTV camera, AI-enabled security surveillance gadgets etc.

In Ebonyi state, the government has also made effort to curtail the activities of unknown gunmen who kill mostly at the remote part of the state. In Abia state, owing to rising insecurity especially in the Enugu-Port Harcourt road, Isiukwuato and Umunneochi axis in particular, Vanguard news reported that the Alex Otti administration courageously combed the bushes occupied by killer herdsmen and other criminal elements that have been terrorizing and holding people hostage. The government was said to have visited an area in Lokpanta Cattle market which is said to be a no-go area for non-Fulani. During a raid by security operatives in the forests occupied by the bandits and the dreaded unknown gunmen, shocking and mind-boggling discoveries were made which include decapitated human corpses, shallow graves, and abandoned vehicles of all types belonging to kidnapped victims (Vanguard News, August 28, 2024). It was uncovered that two killer groups that have been holding the region hostage. Since after the operation, relative sanity has been restored in that area; though full security is yet to be established.

From the foregoing, the southeast leadership through the governors of the southeast states has made efforts in controlling insecurity and its effects on the socioeconomic development of the region. But despite all these, the efforts are not effective as insecurity and poor socioeconomic lives has persisted in the region. This is evident on the inability of the government to arrest and prosecute the unknown gunmen who have been killing and maiming lives in the South-East region.

Conclusion

The result of the study has shown enormous consequences and adverse effect of insecurity on the socioeconomic development of the southeast. Despite the efforts of the southeast leaders to curtail insecurity in the region, the high level of incessant attacks, killings and destruction of properties by the unknown gunmen who take advantage of the sit-at-home to unleash mayhem in the South-East has halted various business activities in the region. The resultant effect is poor socioeconomic development and living condition of the region. Hence, insecurity has cost the region billions of naira. It has also affected people's daily income. Greater majority of people in the region who rely and survive on what they earn through their daily businesses (market places, transport agencies, corporate, institutions among others) have been rendered vulnerable; while others are killed. Hence, there is need for swift action that would bring lasting solution to this menace.

Findings

From the data previously presented and analyzed, it is evident that insecurity has become a thorn on the flesh of everyone and a threat to the economy of the Southeast. The rampaging bandits, herdsmen and unknown gunmen have been persistent in attacking both public places such as market, security personnel and facilities such as checking points and police

stations leading to kidnapping, killings and destruction of goods and properties. This has disrupted the effectiveness of business activities in the region. Several businesses operating in the region has been subject to attack especially on days declared as sit-at-home. This has made many investors to close their business outlets in some parts of the South-East; relocating their businesses to other regions which they consider more secure, safer and conducive for their business to thrive. The resultant effect is that income in the region has been on continuous decline and other areas of business such as SMEs, transportation system, financial and social institutions among others have been deeply affected. This has led to poor socioeconomic condition in the southeast. In other words, the consequences of insecurity have been huge losses in internally generated revenue, loss of lives and properties, low investment patronage among other facets of economic value. For these reasons, an urgent solution is needed towards controlling insecurity and its socioeconomic effects.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made: (a) Government should intensify the fight against insecurity in the region by putting up more military logistics that would facilitate more overt military action against the armed criminals so as to arrest and kill the armed criminals on the spot of their operation. Southeast state governments should intensify their security fight by providing more modern security surveillance gadgets and also employ security experts with professional training to head the security departments of the southeast states. (b) State police should be established to enable the southeast state governors to have direct control over the security architecture of the states. (c) More sophisticated Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), cameras and other surveillance devices that detect and record activities should be installed in both strategic and remote part of the South-East so as to enable security operatives closely monitor and get intelligent reports on the activities of armed criminals which would enhance swift response of the security operatives in the case of attack by the unknown gunmen. (d) Government should investigate, fist out and publicly prosecute the sponsors of the unknown gunmen without any bias or prejudice so as to stop their logistics and sponsorship. (e) Governors of various South-East states should create a platform through which they can use traditional rulers to carry out grassroot public enlightenment program on security consciousness among the citizens of their states. This would go a long way in discouraging the sympathizers of the unknown gunmen. (f) There is need to set up regional framework for proper and holistic review of the economic and security architecture of the South-East, so as to make and implement more effective policies in line with the current trends and reality of the region which would make the region fair and more conducive for business activities.(g) Socioeconomic issues of unemployment need to be seriously tackled by the governors so as to discourage the youths from indulging in social vices and sophisticated crimes which sometimes occur as a result of unemployment.

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