



POLICY ANALYSIS

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Non-Negotiation Policy and Safety of Nigerians: When Should We Talk to Terrorists and Bandits?

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Executive Summary

This Policy Analysis stems from the ongoing conversations in Nigeria about the appropriateness or otherwise of negotiating with terrorists and bandits. It notes that though the refrain, 'we do not negotiate with terrorists' is common among Western governments - because negotiation could provide terrorists with the incentives, legitimacy, and motivation to continue their nefarious activities, there have been cases of exchange of prisoners between Western governments and terrorists, and release of hostages after payment of ransom to terrorist groups by some governments. It equally notes that the 'no negotiation' policy had in some instances led to a number of high-profile hostage killings, thus making some to advocate for negotiations with terrorists.

Based on a thorough analysis of both positions, this Policy Analysis offers a general guidance to policymakers, especially the National Assembly, and the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and the military on how to tackle insecurity in Nigeria, including the conditions under which Nigeria may engage in negotiations with terrorists and bandits. The following are therefore suggested/recommended:

- Policymakers need to understand that there is need for a robust multi-layered approach, which may include negotiation if and when the need arises;
- Policymakers need to understand that negotiation with terrorists and bandits can lead to their legitimization, and it can also encourage them to transform into non-violent actors;
- Adequate care must however be taken if and when negotiation is to be undertaken so as not to portray the country as weak. Consequently, it may be important to be guided by the following:



- a. There should be no negotiation whatsoever with bandits and terrorists except where they have shown willingness and readiness to discontinue with their nefarious activities;
 - b. The government must set the terms and conditions for negotiation, if and when it is to take place. The most important condition for negotiation is that the terrorists and bandits agree to surrender;
 - c. Ransom may be paid to secure the release of hostages. This should only be done when and where military actions are not safe for the hostages, or feasible and possible;
 - d. There should be no promise of blanket amnesty to terrorists and bandits, if and when negotiations take place with them. The government must not be seen to be pardoning those who have committed egregious and heinous crimes such as gruesome killing of innocent people;
 - e. Terrorists and bandits who surrender should be appropriately tried in the court of law for the crimes they have committed. They may however be given light sentences as a way of encouraging others to surrender and also serve as deterrence to those who may want to engage in similar nefarious activities.
- The government should continue to strengthen and reinforce the current kinetic/military approach with more sophisticated and precision-laden weapons. Also, welfare of soldiers should be given priority attention by the government and relevant military authorities so as to motivate them and improve their morale on and off the battlefield.



Background

In Nigeria, ongoing debates about whether or not the federal government should negotiate with terrorists and bandits have heated up the polity. The debates revolve around the contradictions between the essence of the state, which is ensuring the safety of its citizens and the stabilization of the polity, and the possible legitimization of groups whose activities and actions threaten and undermine the security and safety of people.

Generally speaking, many governments, especially in the advanced democracies, have reiterated the need to never negotiate with terrorists. In 2003, for instance, US President, George W. Bush, declared: ‘You’ve got to be strong, not weak. The only way to deal with these people is to bring them to justice. You can’t talk to them. You can’t negotiate with them.’¹ Also at the height of IRA violence, UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, vowed never to negotiate with terrorists.² Toros (2008) also recorded pledges made by Colombian, Turkish and Spanish leaders at one point or the other about not negotiating with

terrorists.³ Most influential scholars of terrorism also condemned talks with terrorists.⁴ There is nothing less popular than so-called appeasement in the face of terrorist attacks on innocent victims; entering talks with the perpetrators can be political suicide, which points to state weakness.

However, the Nigerian government and its people have faced series of violent attacks, with dire consequences, since 2009. Rather than abating, the attacks have continued, being typified by killings, mass kidnappings, rapes and displacements of people.

In response, security agencies in the country, including the military, police and paramilitary organisations, have made tremendous efforts to combat the menace. Their efforts have however yielded minimal results, as the frequency of the attacks have increased and the scope extended beyond the northeast, where the problem first started in 2009, to other parts of the country. Given the rising casualties, many Nigerians have lost hope that military response is the best solution to the problem.

¹ Toros, H. (2008). “We Don’t Negotiate with Terrorists”: Legitimacy and Complexity in Terrorist Conflicts. *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 39, No. 4, Pp. 407 – 426, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo. Accessed 11/08/2021.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Wilkinson, P. (2001). *Terrorism Versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response*. London: Frank Cass. And Neumann, P.R. (2007). *Negotiating with Terrorists*. *Foreign Affairs*, 86 (1): 128 – 139. And Alexander, Y. ed. (2002). *Combatting Terrorism: Strategies of Ten Countries*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.



Consequently, some people have begun to canvass for negotiation as an alternative or additional strategy to tackle the problem. However, some other people have argued that negotiating with the enemies of the state is synonymous with political suicide, suggesting that doing so would imply state weakness which would encourage the birth of more internal enemies (terrorists and bandits) who will choose to suck the blood of the citizens for state recognition and economic gains, and afterwards expect negotiation.

Thus, the big questions are, is it appropriate to negotiate with terrorists and bandits, and when is it right to talk to terrorists and bandits? Put differently, which is more important: the integrity of the state or the life of its citizens? Also, can a democratic government talk to terrorists and bandits without jeopardizing the integrity of its political system, and what are the ethical, strategic, and political implications of negotiating with terrorist and bandit groups? Answers to these questions informed this policy analysis.

Nigerian Laws and the ‘Non-Negotiation Policy’

There is a range of domestic legal frameworks in Nigeria dealing with the matters of individuals associated with terrorists and other groups that perpetrate similar criminal acts. However, the study will be limited to two major and related legal frameworks. These are briefly examined in the light of the current debate on whether or not to allow negotiations with terrorists and bandits.

1. *The Terrorism (Prevention) (Amendment) Act, 2013* (which is an

improvement on the Terrorism (Prevention) Act, 2011) makes provision for the extra-territorial application of the Act and punishes terrorist financing offences. However, this legislation does not mention dialogue or negotiation with terrorists as a strategy for preventing terrorism, and neither does it criminalise or outlaw its use.

2. *Sections 80 and 364 of the Criminal Code* outrightly prohibits the act of terror and kidnapping. Section 336 of the Criminal Code prohibits any attempt to injure by explosive substances. However, this law is silent on negotiation or talks with terrorists and bandits as a mechanism for curbing or combating crimes and criminality, and neither does it prohibit, criminalise or outlaw it.

In the light of the above, it is not incorrect to argue that since the use of negotiations or talks with terrorists and bandits is not expressly criminalised or prohibited in the extant laws of the country, then policymakers may explore it when the need arises. This implies that negotiating with terrorists and bandits in the face of the current dire security situation in Nigeria is not in itself illegal or inappropriate, but an alternative measure to solving a serious problem that has defied military solution.

Casualties of Terrorism and Banditry Attacks since 2009

Reports of casualties of violent attacks by terrorists between 2009 and 2021 show that nearly 350,000 people have been killed in the country’s northeast, while 3 million are



estimated to have been internally displaced and 310,000 turned into refugees.⁵

In the same vein, banditry violence has affected populations living in Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, Sokoto, Kebbi and Katsina states in the northwest. Reports show that about 21 million people living in these states have been exposed to the activities of bandits.

The banditry violence in the northwest comes in form of farmer-herder conflict, characterised by cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, sexual violence and killings⁶. The violence has affected about 35 of the 92 local government areas in the 6 states.

Mass kidnappings have also become a major source of concern in the six states, and other parts of the country. Several students in hundreds have been kidnapped, raped and killed.⁷ Though routinely denied, federal and state authorities, religious organisations and even individuals have had to pay ransom in millions of naira to keep victims alive and secure their release.⁸ Some of the notable mass kidnappings in Nigeria include the kidnapping of more

than two hundred Chibok school girls in Maiduguri, Borno state in 2014; three hundred school boys from the Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Katsina State in December 2020; more than 40 students, teachers and administrators of Government Science College, Kagara, Niger State in February 17, 2021; and hundreds of many others in Kaduna state.⁹

All of these are in spite of federal government's huge budgetary allocations to the security sector since 2009, amounting to over N9.54trn.¹⁰ In fact, the administration of President Buhari has expended a total of N5trn on defence, yet violent attacks by terrorists and bandits have not abated.¹¹ Besides, it is evident that the Nigerian Army has been unduly overstretched by the protracted nature of the problem. Moreover, hundreds of soldiers have died in the course of fighting terrorism and banditry, while the Airforce has suffered not less than three air accidents in 2021 alone.¹²

Major strategies so far adopted to combat terrorism and banditry in Nigeria

The Nigerian government and its security apparatuses, as well as individuals and

⁵ Council of Foreign Relations (2021). Global Conflict Tracker: Boko Haram in Nigeria. Available on <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/boko-haram-nigeria>. Accessed 3/8/2021.

⁶https://www.acaps.org/country/nigeria/crisis/north-west-banditry?acaps_mode=slow&show_mode=1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸<https://www.americansecurityproject.org/combating-banditry-in-northwest-nigeria/>.

⁹ <https://apnews.com/article/science-shootings-africa-niger-nigeria-3d6e8ab891f8936eda794f6047980c9d>

¹⁰ Ndujihe C (July 29, 2018). Security: FG spends N6trn on defence in 11 years. *Vanguard*. Available

on <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/07/security-fg-spends-n6trn-on-defence-in-11-years/>. And

BudgIT (2020). 2020 Budget: Analysis and Opportunities. Available on

<https://yourbudgit.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-Budget-Analysis.pdf>. Accessed on 17th January, 2021.

¹¹ Sunday Punch Cover Page (August 8, 2021). Buhari's defence allocations hit N5tn, over 11,420 Nigerians were killed in six years. *Punch Newspaper*, Vol. 25, No. 20,165.

¹² <https://thenationonlineng.net/x-raying-nigerian-military-aeroplanes-constant-crashes/>



groups have over the years used a variety of strategies to address the problem of terrorism and banditry in the country. The strategies can be categorised into three: – kinetic/aggressive or high-power approach, ransom payments and partial negotiation. The following are the highlights of the strategies since 2009:

i. Kinetic approach - The federal government has relied heavily on military approach in combating terrorism and banditry. A component of the approach is *decapitation*, a strategy used to undermine a group or organization by removing its leader(s). However, decapitation strategy has been a complete failure. Scholars have shown that it was the extrajudicial killing of the Boko Haram leader, Mohammed Yusuf and others in 2009 that led to the transformation of the group (Boko Haram) into a full-blown terrorist organisation engaging in brutal attacks against state institutions, personnel and ordinary citizens.¹³

ii. Ransom payments: Apart from the military approach, reports, including by the Council on Foreign Relations, have suggested payments of ransom by government to bandits.¹⁴ Specifically, Katsina State government was alleged

to have paid a sum of N30 million (about \$76,000) to bandits to secure the release of the kidnapped Kankara school boys.¹⁵ Besides, there are evidences of individuals and communities negotiating with terrorists and bandits. For example, communities such as Gurmana, Manta, Bassa, and Kukoki districts in Shiroro area of Niger State at a point agreed to pay N20million as ransom to terrorists/bandits for peace.¹⁶

However, to stop or discourage payments of ransom to criminals, there is an ongoing effort by the federal government through the Terrorism Prevention (Amendment) Bill, 2021 to criminalise payment and facilitation of ransom payments to kidnappers. This proposal has been criticised by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), emphasising that a law that seeks to penalise an already traumatised citizen with jail term of 15 years is an unjust and a bad law that should not be made.¹⁷

iii. Negotiation: this is another but unofficial strategy that has been used in Nigeria to tackle terrorism and banditry. For example, in 2019, a peace deal was secured between armed bandits and the

¹³ Walker, A. (2012). What is Boko Haram. Special Report of the United Institute of Peace. Available on https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/S_R308.pdf. Accessed 4/8/2021.

¹⁴ Campbell, J. (February 18, 2021). Kidnapping and Ransom Payments in Nigeria. Council on Foreign Relations. Available on www.cfr.org/blog/kidnapping-and-ransom-payments-nigeria. Accessed 7/8/2021.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Adebayo, TR. (April 30, 2021). Embattled Niger Communities Negotiate with Boko Haram, N20m levy agreed. Available on www.punch.com/embattled-niger-communities-negotiate-with-bharam-n20m-levy-agreed. Accessed 7/8/2021.

¹⁷ Vanguard Editorial (May 30, 2021). Criminalising ransom payment. Available on www.vanguardngr.com/2021/05/criminalising-ransom-payment/. accessed 7/8/2021.



governments of Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara. The deal encompassed disarmament, the release of kidnapped civilians, and pardon for the bandits.¹⁸ Also, reports have shown that about 65 communities in Niger State negotiated and signed a peace deal with insurgents in April, 2021 to avoid future raids,¹⁹ in addition to purchasing six motorcycles, worth N500,000 for the terrorists.²⁰ This was after the terrorists had displaced more than 5,000 villagers in the state.²¹

Understanding the Extent of ‘No Negotiation with Terrorist Policy’ of the Developed Democracies

It has been argued that there is no right or wrong decision when it comes to strategizing how to stop or curtail terrorism and save the lives of hostages.²² Thus, those who claim that talks alone would end terrorism and banditry are just as wrong as those who insist that governments must never negotiate with terrorists and bandits. Cronin (2010), for example, posits that under certain conditions, talks are necessary, although they are not sufficient elements of effective counterterrorism²³. This is because entering into negotiations may not necessarily end the violence. At the same time, it may be a mistake to have the

impression that it may not end it. It is important to note that a policy of non-negotiation with terrorists is only viable when a state is in a position of strength i.e. when a state has the resources (military, human, intelligence and technological wherewithal) to combat terrorism.

For such a state, it is a NO to initiate talks with terrorists. This explains why 'We do not negotiate with terrorists' is a common refrain among Western governments, especially when faced with a hostage situation. The argument is relatively straightforward – negotiation could provide kidnappers and terrorist organisations with the incentives, legitimacy, and motivation to continue their nefarious activities. Also, talks can destabilize the negotiating governments' political systems, undercut international efforts to outlaw terrorism, and set a dangerous precedent.²⁴

In practice, however, there are evidences of negotiations between terrorists and some Western governments, leading to successful exchange of prisoners (that is prisoners for prisoners from both side), payment of ransom, ceasefire, and release of hostages.²⁵ In 2014, for instance, France and Spain paid millions of euros in ransom

¹⁸ Brenner, C. (2021). Combating Banditry in Northwest Nigeria, available on <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/combating-banditry-in-northwest-nigeria/>

¹⁹ Adebayo, T.R. (April 30, 2021). Op.Cit.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid.

²³ Cronin, A.K. (2010). When should we talk to terrorists? United States Institute of Peace Special Report.

²⁴ Neumann, P.R. (2007). Negotiating with Terrorists. *Foreign Affairs*. Available on www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2007-01-01/negotiating-terrorists. Accessed 11/08/2021.

²⁵ Negotiating with terrorists. Available on www.chathamhouse.org/events/all/members-event/negotiating-terrorists. Accessed 9/8/2021.



to bring home journalists and aid workers captured by the Islamic State in Syria.²⁶

Peter Neumann (2007) and Toros, H. (2008)²⁷ list some of the other cases of ‘negotiations with terrorists’ by advanced democratic governments:

- i. The British government maintained a secret back channel to the Irish Republican Army even after the IRA had launched a mortar attack on 10 Downing Street that nearly eliminated the entire British cabinet in 1991;
- ii. In 1988, the Spanish government engaged in talks with the separatist group, Basque Homeland and Freedom (known by its Basque acronym ETA), for six months after the group had killed 21 shoppers in supermarket bombing;
- iii. In 1993, the government of Israel secretly negotiated the Oslo accords with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO);
- iv. In 1979, the US government negotiated with, and even made concessions to, Iranian militants, after they had stormed the US Embassy in Tehran and took more than 90 hostages. Initial refusal of the US to negotiate led to the hostages being held for 444 days.
- v. Also, President Ronald Reagan secretly negotiated with terrorists in 1985. This followed the hijack of a TWA flight, carrying 153 American passengers and crew, by two Hezbollah terrorists who forced the pilot to land at Beirut airport

and demanded the release of 766 Shiite prisoners from Israel in exchange for the hostages. Although the American president had publicly declared that his government would not negotiate, yet evidence has shown that US officials privately asked the Israeli government to release the Shiite prisoners. This became evident when after two weeks of the hijack, the American hostages were released and the Israeli cabinet freed 300 Shiite prisoners, although claiming that the release had long been planned before the incident.

However, in another instance, the governments of the United Kingdom and United States refused to make concessions, leading to a deliberate killing of high-profile hostages²⁸

The notable different results with different approaches led to a conversation that questions the validity of the internationally acclaimed policy of non-negotiation. Major questions shaking the integrity of ‘non-negotiation policy’ revolves around whether the policy is more important than the life of the millions of the citizens put in danger by the weakness and irresponsible posture of the state.

In a Chatham House Members Event held on 10th April, 2019 on a theme, *Negotiating with Terrorists*, the panellists assessed whether or not governments should negotiate with terror groups, non-state

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Neumann, P.R. (2007). Op. Cit. Also see Toros, H. (2008). “We Don’t Negotiate with Terrorists”: Legitimacy and Complexity in Terrorist Conflicts.

Security Dialogue, Vol. 39, No. 4, Pp. 407 – 426, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo. Accessed 11/08/2021.

²⁸ Ibid.



actors, transnational criminal networks, or even state sponsors of terrorism in hostage crises. The panel concluded that a combination of both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches, including negotiation, without compromising the integrity of the state may be appropriate rather than sticking only to the policy of non-negotiation.²⁹

The lesson from the above is that decision to negotiate or not is not cast in stone. States need to consider major circumstances surrounding the violent activities in their territories, such as lives of the hostages, known and unknown leadership of the terrorist groups, public opinion, internal politics, history of the formation of the terrorist group, networks of the terrorist group, political will of the government and importantly, strength and weakness of the state and its security architecture.

Nigeria's Circumstances and Calls for a Mixed Strategy in Combating Terrorists and Bandits

Does the Nigerian state have the capacity to effectively fight terrorists and bandits without putting the lives of its citizens at risk? The following are some of the reasons the Nigerian State may continue to refuse to negotiate with terrorists and bandits, as well as some reasons why it may need to combine military approach with negotiations in order to effectively address the issue of terrorism and banditry.

Highlights of reasons why Nigeria may not want to negotiate with terrorists and bandits.

- i. The Nigerian state has succeeded in pushing back terrorist attacks, destroyed some of their hideouts, regained already claimed territories, and killed and arrested hundreds of terrorists and bandits;
- ii. Government has exhibited commitment to the war against terrorism and banditry, as defence budget has taken more of the country's budgetary allocations;
- iii. The government has initiated and formed alliance with the international community to jointly fight the war against terrorism. An example is the formation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). The MNJTF is a combined multinational formation, comprising military units from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria to fight insurgency/terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin;
- iv. The activities of the insurgents have been restricted to northeast Nigeria because of the continuous response of the military;
- v. Increasing use of local platforms and networks in the security architecture, such as vigilante, for intelligence gathering,

Reasons why Nigeria may opt to negotiate with terrorists and bandits

²⁹<https://www.chathamhouse.org/events/all/members-event/negotiating-terrorists>



- i. High level of mistrust between the state and the citizens, which has forced people to be making private negotiations with the terrorist groups, accepting demands for payment of annual due/levies in millions of naira to guarantee safety and avoid being attack.
- ii. Chronic poverty in the country has been one of the major drivers of terrorism and banditry, as it has been facilitating the recruitments of people into terrorist networks;
- iii. The life of millions of Nigerians are daily at stake in the fight against terrorists and bandits, as many people have died, and may still die, while millions have been displaced, and more may still be displaced;
- iv. Hundreds of military personnel have died in the course of the war against terrorism and banditry. Also, morale of military personnel appears low;
- v. The Nigerian state lacks modern equipment and ammunitions to effectively combat terrorists and bandits;
- vi. Terrorists are equipped to the extent that they have the capacity to shoot down military jets on the battlefield;
- vii. There are allegations of corruption within the hierarchy of the military on the procurement of weapons and equipment;

Why and when to negotiate with terrorists: Lessons from the literature

Borrowing from studies on terrorism and negotiation³⁰, the following are some of the major advantages of negotiating with terrorists and bandits:

- i. Engaging in negotiations can lead to the splintering of terrorist groups into factions that support the negotiations and those that do not. The advantage of this is that it isolates and potentially strangles the most radical factions of the terrorist or bandit groups.
- ii. Negotiations/talks may also provide great intelligence on the positions of members of the terrorist group, especially divisions among them that may be exploited.
- iii. Negotiations with terrorist groups are best approached as long-term, managed processes demanding patience, resilience, extensive intelligence, and steady determination, rather than what Cronin (2010) called the kinds of intensive meetings and well-publicized signing ceremonies that follow civil war cease-fires or the endings of conventional wars.
- iv. In determining whether to approach a group, therefore, it is vital first and foremost for policymakers to assess what a group's goal actually is, to measure whether a leader's characterization of that aim is accurate and to weigh whether the goal is evolving. There may be loopholes among the leadership and members.

³⁰ Cronin, A.K. (2010). *Op. Cit.* How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns. Princeton: Princeton University Press. And Stanekzai, M.M. (2008). *Thwarting*

Afganistan's Insurgency: A Pragmatic Approach toward Peace and Reconciliation, Special Report 212.



Sometimes members of a group do not share the publicized goal, or do not share a commitment to violence as the means of furthering their interests. When that is the case, there is a promising opening for more formal talks. This kind of intelligence is fundamental and typically involves clandestine “feelers” or secret back-channel interactions. This will help the government negotiators to strategize and make the best use of the situation.

- v. Negotiation may stop violent attacks or lower the intensity and frequency of violent attacks by terrorists.

Specific Policy Recommendations for Nigeria

In the light of the above analysis, and the peculiarity of the security situation in Nigeria, the National Assembly, the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), the military and other stakeholders may wish to use the following suggestions or recommendations in tackling the problem of terrorism and banditry in Nigeria:

- ii. There is need for a robust multilayered approach, which may include negotiation if and when the need arises. This is because the current kinetic/military approach appears weak and ineffective in curbing and minimizing violent attacks by terrorists and bandits in the country.
- iii. Adequate care must be taken if and when negotiation is to be undertaken so as not to portray the country as weak and incapable of dealing decisively with criminal elements. To this end, the following may guide the government in its decision:

- a. There should be no official negotiation whatsoever with bandits and terrorists except where they have shown willingness and readiness to discontinue with their nefarious activities
- b. The government must set the terms and conditions for negotiation, if and when it is to take place. The most important condition for negotiation is that the terrorists and bandits agree to surrender
- c. Ransom may be paid to secure the release of hostages. This should only be when and where military actions are not safe, feasible and possible
- d. There should be no promise of blanket amnesty to terrorists and bandits, if and when negotiations take place with them. The government must not be seen to be pardoning those who have committed egregious and heinous crimes such as gruesome killing of innocent people
- e. Terrorists and bandits who surrender should be appropriately tried in the court of law for the crimes they have committed. They may however be given light sentences as a way of encouraging others to



surrender and also serve as deterrence to those who may want to engage in similar nefarious activities.

- iv. The government should continue to strengthen and reinforce the current kinetic/military approach with more sophisticated and precision-laden weapons. Also, the welfare of soldiers should be given priority attention so as to motivate and improve their morale on and off the battlefield.
- v. Professional negotiators may be engaged by the government for a cohesive analysis of the major causes and issues involved in terrorism and banditry in Nigeria;
- vi. Political, community and religious leaders at all levels, especially in the North, should be carried along in the fight against terrorists and bandits;
- vii. The government needs to seriously rejig the economy so that it can employ and engage the millions of unemployed youths that are easily recruited by terrorists and bandits;
- viii. The military may design a more inclusive strategy to cater for the fallouts of the negotiation strategy, including managing splintering factions;

Conclusion

Lessons learned through this policy paper are relevant to current and future debates about negotiating with terrorist and bandit groups. There is a realistic chance of negotiating with Boko Haram and some bandits for two reasons: first, they have

shown interests in negotiation through their advocates, such as Sheikh Ahmed Gumi; second, they are increasingly being weakened by different factors which have forced more of their members to surrender.

Thus, this Policy Analysis presents alternative strategy to dealing with the twin problem of terrorism and banditry in the country. It offers general guidance to policymakers, especially the National Assembly, Nigeria Security Adviser (NSA), Nigerian Army (NA), Nigerian Police Force (NPF) on how to enter into talks with terrorist and bandit groups. It suggests that unless a multifaceted approach is adopted, the country may continue to experience violent attacks by terrorists and bandits with serious implications for civilians.

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