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### Impact of the Engagement of the Community Protection Guards (CPG) in the Management of Armed Banditry in Zamfara State: An Assessment of the Major Silent Issues

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#### Abstract

*This paper examines the impact of the engagement of the Community Protection Guards (CPG) in the fight against armed banditry in Zamfara state. It has made a chronological overview of the first and second engagements of these special groups of security forces by the past administrations in Zamfara state and assesses reasons why the engagements have failed. It has also made an overview of the decision of the current administration of Dauda Lawal to re-engage these groups of civilian security operatives and whether or not the modus operandi to be applied now may likely be different from the ones implemented by the previous governments. The paper has also made an in-depth assessment of why the fight against armed banditry by the conventional security operatives in Zamfara state since 2011 has failed and what necessitated the integration of the Community Protection Guards as an alternative. The paper adopted mixed research methodology of literature review and field interviews with a view to ascertaining facts from the field and uses them comparatively with the opinion from the existing literatures to arrive at some findings and possible recommendations that may be good for the government to implement.*

#### INTRODUCTION

Armed banditry is one of the social problems that have been with Zamfara state for a decade now. It is a tragedy that befalls the state amidst its growing needs for the socio-economic transformation. The conflict which eventually started as consistent disagreements between the local farmers and Fulani cattle herders has grown over the time and transform into a full pledge armed insurgency which claimed the lives of thousands of innocents souls with grave social and economic consequences that almost crashed the state. Estimate has shown that over the last decade, more than (8000) people have been killed mainly in Zamfara state-with over (200,000) turned to internally displaced persons, and about (60,000) forced to flee into Niger Republic (International Crisis Group 2020).

At the beginning of the problem precisely in 2008, authorities have refused to see the growing conflict between these two economic groups Fulani herdsmen and local farmers as something that is threatening to the sustainable security of the state and therefore decided to handle the situation with laxity (Anka 2018). Not until when physical attacks were beginning to be launched at the various communities in the state before the authorities realized that the problem is becoming an eminent threat to the security of the state. (Anka 2018) argued, the brutal murder of a suspected Fulani herder Alh Ishe at Chille Market by some members of the organized vigilante groups as a reprisal attack in 2011 marked the

beginning of the brutality of the armed bandit activities in Zamfara. Since the incident at Chile in 2011, the security situation along Dansadau forest and other critical areas of Zamfara state changes dramatically with the series of attacks launched in more than one hundred communities in Zamfara state. Since when the conflict started in 2011, over one hundred communities and settlements have been either invaded or attacked by the suspected bandits, and hundreds of lives and properties have been lost to the tragedy (Lawal 2018) as cited by (Anka 2018).

The tragedy of the armed banditry in Zamfara state had since spread across the six other states of the North-West geopolitical zone with Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, and Kebbi badly infected by the phenomenon. Banditry by the year 2019 has become a regional phenomenon which infected almost all the states in the Northwest with the exception of maybe Jigawa and Kano where armed bandit activities are not prominently pronounced (Bilya 2023). This infection called banditry has continue to constitute serious security threat to the entire Northwest, especially with the expansion of the network of the actors cutting across the West African countries of Niger, Mali, Chad, Cameroon, and Libya. This expansion in the opinion of (Anka 2023) has also aided the bandits in getting access to deadly weapons that cannot be compared to the ones used by the conventional security operatives such as the army and the police.



The inability of the security forces of Nigeria especially the army and police to curtail the menace of armed banditry in Zamfara for years, had necessitated the people to begin to mobilize themselves into groups and carry locally made arms to defend themselves. Though the existence of local vigilante groups called (Yan-banga) in Zamfara pre-dated the beginning of armed banditry, their coming to force with powerful weapons and visible war with the bandits made them highly recommendable for integration into the conventional security operations against the armed bandits in the region. Similarly, there are different schools of thought that are pro and against the involvement of the Community Protection Guards in the fight against banditry, authorities, for instance, believed that, for reasons of them having adequate knowledge of some of the forests where the bandits operate, couple with the identity knowledge of the armed bandits, and their mode of operations, their engagement has become necessary, especially looking inward into the urgent need to end banditry and ensure that sustainable peace has been returned to the state.

In Zamfara during the tenures of former Governor Yari and Bello Matawalle, they have all embarked on the engagement of these groups of local security forces though bearing different names as part of their contribution to supporting the conventional war headed by the Nigerian military and indeed the police. The engagements of these CJTF as they were called that time in the opinion of (Maryam 2023) has failed because there was no proper coordination between the state authorities who allow for the establishment of these outfits and the conventional security operatives. Again the two administrations were accused of not ensuring the sustainability of the programmes particularly their deliberate refusal to sustain the payment of the monthly allowances for these local security operatives, recruitment of persons with criminal records, inclusion of political thugs as a means of political compensation, as well as abuse of human right of innocent persons.

The suspension of the operations of these local security guards by the new government of Dauda was revisited hence the security situation became highly worsened after the May 29<sup>th</sup> 2023 with fresh attacks being launched by the bandits even in the areas that never had record of invasion by the bandits since inception in 2008. The state executive council in September 2023 resolved that another fresh recruitment of over (4000) security guards be made again for the third time in ten years with mandate as usual to integrate them into the conventional fight against banditry. Questions were raised as to what differentiate the fresh engagement with the old ones and what tactics is the current government of Zamfara going to adopt to ensure that the fresh exercise has yielded the desired result?

These plus many questions continue to ring loud as to the reasons why the government believed the engagement of another set of local security operatives like (CPG) is justifiable. (Maryam 2023) argued, despite the facts that the conventional war against armed banditry has failed due to some obvious political reasons, there is the need for the

government of Zamfara to identify the gaps, where to fill them, and also be realistic in ensuring that the fresh exercise is carried out in the most decent manner so that the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

The objective of this paper is to examine the rationale behind the fresh engagement of the Community Protection Guards (CPG) in Zamfara and assess reasons why the other recruitments made by the past administrations have failed. It also aimed at examining the prospects of the fresh engagement and challenges likely to be encountered for the government to be able to take pro-active measures in addressing them. The paper adopted mixed research methodology of literature review and field interviews with a view to ascertaining facts from the field and uses them comparatively with the opinions in the existing literatures to arrive at some findings.

### Historical overview of armed banditry in Zamfara

Armed banditry as a social conflict has been with Zamfara state for almost a decade now precisely by the beginning of the year 2008. Many factors are believed to be the root-cause of the this social conflict and in the opinion of (Hassane 2022), as cited by (Anka 2023), banditry was caused by the degradation of pasture due to disrupted rainfall pattern which has compromised herders' livelihoods and with the population increases, farmlands have progressively encroached on grazing areas and transhumance corridors over stepping the distribution of land by national regulation.

The aged long history of marginalization of Fulani herders by the government through its policies and programmes had further been considered as additional push factor. As argued by (Maradun 2023) government policies for years had continue to put the Fulani herders on isolation hence, their years of neglect by the government had pushed them into serious frustration resulting to their retirement in to the forest and aided them to developed criminal wings which is today reaping above public comprehension. Beyond this, the extent of the extortion of these herders by the state authorities especially the police, lawyers and local shariah judges had further made their situation more sympathetic. (Gulubba 2023) argued, for year's police and Shariah court judges have made extortion of the Fulani herdsmen a growing enterprise. A civil case involving a typical Fulani herdsman can cost him years of litigation and prosecution. Lawyers, police, judges, and agents of the emirates will extorts money in large sum and continue to frustrate the case to the extent the herdsman will suffer and loss huge sum of money and large portion or bulls of his cattle.

Different from these remote factors, the un-resolving disputes emanating from the encroachment of grazing reserves, watering places, and cattle routes had further added into the frustration of the Fulani herdsmen and set the Fulani herders against the local farmers (Gulubba 2023). The culmination of these frustrations resulted to the rapid psychological transformation of some of these Fulani herders into embarking on the acts of criminality. Many of them went into cattle

rustling to be able to recover their lost cattle while others take advantage of their deteriorating with the local farmers to transform to bandit criminals (Maradun 2023).

The continued spread of armed bandit activities in Zamfara was aided by some growing number of support the bandits received from known and unknown actors. As argued by (Rufai 202) rural banditry and cattle rustling spread their tentacles to different parts of Zamfara State. The transformation of banditry in Zamfara State is tied to the role played by different collaborators. He added, "The bandits have established wide range of connections across different local government areas in the state. There is considerable number of people across different ethnic groups and social status that served as informants to the bandits. Their main role is to provide relevant security information on conditions of different towns and villages in the state. Part of the vital information is to identify friends and enemies of the bandits and at the same time furnish the bandits with every bit of information regarding the security situation of their respective areas.

Banditry had cause serious economic infractions for Zamfara state and the consequences are not restricted to monetary or material perspectives only. Report by the committee set up by Zamfara state government to review security situation of the state revealed that "a total of 4,983 women were widowed, 25,050 children orphaned, and 190,340 people were displaced between 2011 and 2019". The report added that, "over N3 billion naira (USD \$6.8 million) was paid to bandits as ransom for 3,672 people abducted during the period under review.

With the growing transformation in the armed bandit activities, the actors become stronger and begin to form powerful network and continue to recruit more people into the industry of armed banditry. As argued by (Mudi 2023), because of the numerical strengths of the armed bandits in Zamfara, they succeeded in extending their network beyond the state by spreading their activities of cattle rustling and kidnapping to Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi and Kaduna state. Estimate has shown that because of the connection of the armed bandit and the strengths of their network, within the last ten years, they have perfected over fifteen thousand abductions and received money paid for ransom worth over N10 billion naira across the six most affected states in the Northwest (Maryam 2023).

The menace of armed banditry had also spread beyond the Nigerian borders hence there had been reported cases of bandits establishing different base around Niger borders with Zamfara, Sokoto, and Katsina state. The armed criminals operating from Sokoto, Zamfara, and Katsina crosses the border at night on motorcycles to attack locals before retreating to wooded areas and Babban Rafi forest straddling the two countries. In a statistics provided by (Anka & Suleiman 2023) states that "in 2021 Le Souffle de Maradi region recorded (2,735) cases of stolen animals, (91) victims of abductions, and payment of (51) million CFA francs (over 77, 5500 Euro) in ransom by hostages families.

One most painful part of the development as regard to the activities of armed bandits in Zamfara state is that they have succeeded in spreading their criminal influence statewide and established terrible enclaves that constitute threat to the state authority. In Zamfara state alone, there are (as of 2021) over (30,000) bandits and close to (100) camps operating via different locations of the state.

### Why Conventional Security Operations Failed in Tackling Armed Banditry in Zamfara State.

There has been growing concern as to the reasons why conventional security operations against armed bandits in Zamfara have failed. Some saw the failure as the deliberate action of the government while others looked at it from multi-dynamic perspectives (Liman & Anka 2019). Since the inception of the conflict, there are about (1,500) police operatives working at the various formations in Zamfara state. This number is added into another (1,500) operatives of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp with about (450) military officers mostly ground troops of the Nigerian army (Isah 2023). But as a result of the banditry these numbers were increased proportionately especially with that of the army increasing from about (400) to (2,000) (Isah 2023)..

Security deployments have also been made to strategic areas such as Dansadai, Dangulbi, Magami, Kanoma, Maradun, Anka, Gummi, Shinkafi, Zurmi, Kwatarkwashi, Wanzamai to mention but a few (Isah 2023). Apart from this, there are quite significant number of special forces deployed for special operations from among both the police, army, and Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corp. in 2018 for instance President Muhammadu Buhari deployed (1000) strong combined security forces comprising the army, air force, police and civil defense to launch attacks on the bandits terrorizing the villages and towns in Zamfara state (Olalekan 2018). In 2021 again, the Inspector General of Police Muhammad Adamu has deployed (275) special forces to Zamfara state as part of the efforts to tackle banditry, kidnapping, and other related crimes in the state (Channels 2018). Before the beginning of the banditry Yari, the former Governor of Zamfara state stated. "As of 2013 we had only 2,700 men from the military, and we have about (4000) now. Before we had only one Battalion Ammunition Depot later the Federal Government established (223) Battalion of the Nigerian Army, (207) Quick Response Unit, (1) Brigades of the Nigerian Army, and later GOC unit (Wale 2019).

The state government since 2011 had been helpful and supportive of these Nigerian troops in their quests to ending the armed bandit activities. Apart from payment of monthly allowances to the troops, the state government has on different times, procured and distributed vehicles, food materials, and medications to support them while at the field. Former Governor Yari was quoted to have stated that "Zamfara state government has spent N35 billion to provide logistics, allowances for security agencies and assisting attack victims since the beginning of the armed banditry in the state (Wale 2019). He added that "(570) brand new Hilux and Range

Rover Ford vehicles were provided to the security agencies by the state government under his charge". Former Governor Bello Matawalle on the other hand, donated (200) operational vehicles to conglomeration of security agencies at the inception of his administration. Governor Matawalle stated that the vehicles donated by his administration to security agencies were meant to mitigate the calamitous trend of banditry and other criminalities in the state (Sanusi 2020).

With all these interventions and what the Federal government has done to enhance conventional military/police operations in the state, there seems to be a serious setback as to why the Nigerian government is not winning the war against armed banditry in Zamfara state. Many factors are considered to be responsible for that failure and the number one problem is connected to the lack of adequate knowledge of the forests where the bandits operates by the security operatives deployed for operations in the state. The bandits in the opinion of (Mudi 2023) were born and brought up here in Zamfara and their parents and ancestors are also known to everyone. So they take advantage of their knowledge of the environment to hit at the people and went to the forest straight. Not only that they have prior knowledge of the of multiple number of exit routes so it become difficult for the conventional security operatives who are deployed may be from the Southern part of the country for special operation to be able to confront them whenever they are on their trail. (Liman and Anka 2019) argued, the Zamfara forest is vast, thick, and diversionary with multiplicity of routes and exits, and the conventional police officers and military deployed to go after these bandits do not understand the terrain of the forest and therefore found it very difficult to succeed.

The terrain often which the bandits operate is also not easily accessible hence there is no access road and most a time the bandits operates along the areas that are surrounded by the rivers and streams making the movement of the conventional security operatives very difficult. (Liman and Anka 2019) argued, sometimes the terrain is not motorable hence there is not access road where policemen and military could drive with their Hilux and get these bandits intercepted. Apart from the non-motor ability of the road, the vehicles used by the security operatives are not specially made for these types of operations. (Mudi 2023) argued most a time the military move to the forest with ordinary Toyota Hilux and sometimes their vehicles got broken and as a result they usually suffered ambush in the hand of the bandits.

Lack of effective communication network in most of the areas where the bandits operates has been considered as another reason for the failure of the conventional security operations in Zamfara state. (Mudi 2023) argued, in the 80% of the areas affected by the armed bandit activities there is no effective communication network which will empower the villagers to communicate to the state authorities and sometimes, the bandits could conduct an operation for hours without security agencies been notified. To corroborate this argument, (Liman and Anka 2019) stated, "sometimes the villagers may be aware of the coming of the bandits but before they can be able to communicate effectively to the security agencies or

relevant government authorities the worst would had happened". Again the operational troops usually move to the forest without effective communication gadgets which they are supposed to be using in networking from among themselves. This particularly gives bandits an upper opportunity to ambush the security operatives during an operation.

Scattered nature of the Zamfara settlements is also another reason why conventional security operations against armed bandits in Zamfara are failing. In Dansadau forest for instance, there are over five hundred scattered settlements comprising of villages and hamlets. Each settlement in the opinion of (Maradun 2023) is disconnected from one another and that particularly make it very difficult for the police or the military to deploy operatives in all these settlements to secure the people. Again sometimes, it becomes difficult for the security operatives to have adequate mapping of the villages whenever they are attacked and the time spent for the planning and coordination of the operations gives the bandits the upper hand to strike, kill, abduct, and flee to the forest.

There is also the political dimension to the conventional security operations against armed banditry in Zamfara. (Mudi 2023) argued, sometimes state authorities wasted time on blame games and trying to manipulate ways of getting credit. If the Governor is not in the same political party with the government at the center he usually resorted to making blame games pointing accusing fingers on the failure of the federal government while the security operatives always blamed some state governors for executing measures that are contrary to the measures adopted by the government at the center. (Maradun 2023) also argued, the idea of who is responsible for managing armed banditry has always been the major impediment in the success of the security operations in the state. Whenever there is an attack with resultant casualties, the state government shifts the blame to the government at the center. When you approach the security agencies, they would blame the state governments for taking contrary measures more particularly states like Zamfara that have entered into the various peace agreements with the bandits. This political coloration of the operation against bandits created a lopsided room for the politicians who are supporters of various political parties to be shifting blames between states and federal authorities.

Lastly there is the lack of synergy and coordination from among the security operatives. The police act against the successes of the military because they want to take credit. From within the military themselves, the army moved against the Air Force and navy the same thing with the operatives of the State Security Service. This lack of synergy from the security operatives contributes badly to the failure of the security operations against armed banditry in Zamfara.

## Perspective on the Engagement of Community Protection Guards in Zamfara

Considering, the challenges of the conventional security operations against armed banditry as highlighted above, Zamfara state government led by former Governor

Abdul'Aziz Yari in November 2018 approved the recruitment of (8,500) youths as members of Civilian Joint Taskforce (CJTF). Yari stated that 'The CJTF would be drawn from all the 17 Emirates of the state adding that they would receive para-military training in order to equip them with the skills to fight crime. The engagement of these number of youth was coordinated jointly between the state government and (14) local government areas of the state. They were also placed on the monthly stipend of (N15,000), each while their activities are to be backed by the law. (Agency Report 2018).

In the year 2022 Governor Bello Matawalle flagged –off the training of Community Protection Guards in Zamfara as marked of signal for the re-instatement of the activities of the Civilian JTF which were earlier suspended by the same administration. He stated "the formation CPG was informed by the desire of his administration to work out all possible options to deal with the increasing act of banditry causing loss of lives, untold hardship and rupturing inter-communal peace in some parts of the state (Adekunle 2022). Matawalle added, "The state recorded numerous attacks in the ongoing banditry ravaging the Northwest region, while many attempts to placate the bandits have failed. Sani Shinkafi Chairman of the Committee on Security and Prosecution of Armed Bandits in Zamfara affirmed this position by stating that, "the reinstatement of the CJTF is done with a view to help security operatives in the frontline to sustain the effort to flush out all bandits and their collaborators" (Agency Report 2021)

Only recently however, the Governor of Zamfara state Dauda Lawal announced the decision of the state executive council to recruit (4,300) personnel of the (Community Protection Guards) to help add into the strength of the existing conventional fight against armed bandits in the state. The spokesperson of the Governor Sulaiman Bala in a statement announced that "4,300 CPG members would be recruited in each local government area of the state. The recruits would undergo rigorous physical training that would prepare them to assist the security agencies with actionable intelligence to combat insecurity". Modalities and strategies or the Modus Operandi for the fresh recruitments are yet to be define by the government and this make the whole exercise to be ineffective in the eyes of the citizens especially when comparison is made to the previous experiences.

Observers are of the opinion that the state government led by Governor Dauda Lawal need to strategically identify its model of engagements of the (CPG) so that the exercise may not end the way the previous engagements ended. (Maryam 2023) argued, it seems even the present government has followed the series of copy and paste as done by its predecessors because re-instating the activities of the Civilian JTF without corresponding modeling to convince the citizens that new innovations are invented will not boost the morale and confidence of the citizens of Zamfara in anyway.

## Trailing Criticisms

There is no doubt to the fact that, the activities of the Community Protection Guards otherwise known as Civilian JTF world over had been criticized basically for the lessons

learned. In Nigerian context however, CPG constitutes a local group formed in 2013 to support the Nigerian security forces in the fight against Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria and to protect local communities from attacks by Boko Haram and their activities have progressively expanded over the years (UNICEF 2017). Their intervention since from the days of Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East had helped a lot in managing the Boko Haram phenomenon. Clayton & Thomson (2014) argued, civilian defense forces are effective in identifying insurgents and their sympathizers. Civilian JTF had been useful in spotting Boko Haram Insurgents, repelling attacks, and liberating town and villages captured by Boko Haram. In addition, this group has been a vital link in the intelligence gathering network, necessary for successful Special Military Joint Task Force (SMJTF).

Despite these numerous identical roles, the activities of the CJTF had been criticized by many observers especially on the growing cries for human right abuse, extortion and taking the laws into the hand. Assessing the major challenge in the operation of these civilian groups (Mudi 2023) argued, these people called CJTF are majorly illiterate people who neither understood the religion of Islam nor that of the Christ, these antidote of illiteracy made their activities very inhuman and sometimes act speedy than the conventional security operatives. He further stated that, "the short term training conducted for them often recruitment sometimes does not change their perceptions towards doing the right thing. (Samir 2023) argued, what make this civilian operation against bandits worst in recent time is the manner they go after suspects of banditry enforcing consequential punishment on them without recourse to the rule of law and also their rules of engagements. He added "sometimes they don't allow investigations to be made, or allow authorities to prosecute the suspected bandits arrested rather they take the law into their hands".

Another trailing criticism is lack of understanding of the Modus Operandi of their engagement by the government. (Mudi 2023) argued, sometime government engage these group of civilian security operatives called "Yan-Sakai" and without recourse to their old aged grudges with the Fulani suspected bandit groups government empowers them to take arms and deploy them to the forest without corresponding attachment of the conventional security personnel. The kind of atrocities they perfected resulted to attracting the anger of the Fulani rival groups who always saw the recruitment of the CJTF by the government as a direct attempt to eliminating them.

Still on the issue of rivalry between the suspected Fulani armed bandits and Civilian security operatives. (Maradun 2023) argued, because of the aged-long rivalry between the bandits and Yansakai as they are used to be called, people believed the CJTF always resorted to using the blanket cover of the legitimate authorities that engaged them to be championing the application of jungle justice on the suspected Fulani bandits. This particular extension of rivalry against the Fulani suspected bandits, always resulted to launching of reprisal and counter attacks. These reprisal or counter attacks

always end with unwanted casualties on the site of both the CJTF and innocent civilians. (Maryam 2023) argued further, “the bandits despite the fact that they understand their growing rivalry against the local Yansakai they hunted at them during every operation and ensure that they always kill significant number of them as part of their mission to taking revenge. Very recently you knew of a single operations where armed bandits laid ambush at some vigilante in Janbako Maradun and killed over twenty of them, they killed another twenty in the neighboring Bakura village and you can count many of these attacks where the bandits targeted the CJTF as a way of taking revenge against what they termed as inhuman operation against their fellow Fulani kinsmen.

Lack of sustainability of their engagements is also another challenge. (Mudi 2023) argued, from 2018 to date this will be the number three recruitment exercise that would be done in Zamfara and no one may tell you why the previous recruitments were aborted. This type of situation usually polluted the mind of the people toward expecting that government will accord political consideration and affiliation in the recruitment exercise. Already when you listen to those from the village you will hear their complaints that genuine vigilante trained persons may not be recruited because they have worked under the previous government of the APC and now the PDP is in charge. (Maryam 2023) argued further that, “already party chairmen at the wards and local government levels have taken over the recruitment exercise and majority of those to be engaged may not likely be genuine CJTF members but people who have nothing to offer except in anticipation of the monetary gains.

There is also the fear of the facts that some political thugs that were used in winning election would be recruited as compensation for their political contribution. (Maryam 2023) argued, using the previous recruitment exercise as an indicator, majority of those recruited especially in the city are those political thugs that were used in winning election and in intimidating the political opponents. This fear lead to the fact that the real mission of providing sustainable incorporation of the CJTF may likely be missing in the long-run.

Lastly, stakeholders raised the fear that, most a time governments do not usually provides sustainable integration plans for these civilian JTF trained on how to handle arms. (Maryam 2023) argued, most of the CJTF recruited by the previous administrations in Zamfara were left without any future plans and the danger is that when you train someone how to handle arms, and even procured the arms for him the tendency of him transforming to a real criminal when you failed to either integrated him to the mainstream security work or provide alternative job for him is high.

## Way Forward

Based on the above challenges raised; stakeholders provided multiple opinions and options on how to go about the fresh engagement of the CPG operatives. Some of the perspectives include:

- The government needs to provide a model through which certain guidelines shall be framed on who

shall handle the recruitment, how the recruitment shall be handled, and behavior plus track record of those to be recruited.

- The government needs to remove political affiliation into the exercise by considering only those that have business with the issue of civilian security operation in their respective localities.
- Considerable amount of money need to be earmarked and be paid to the civilian operatives as at when do so that issue of extortion and corruption by these civilian operatives can be eliminated.
- Corruption need to be eliminated by making sure that the monthly allowances earmarked were paid to the beneficiaries without any third-party involvement or if possible the payment can be channel through the affiliate traditional institutions.
- Use of political thugs in the exercise must be avoided so that the civilian operative may not end up using their engagement to fight their political opponents.
- Traditional institutions must be allowed to take lead in the management of the activities of the civilian security operatives in their respective domains so that they can have direct control and reliable option for feedback to the government.
- The government through the use of traditional institutions must ensure that there is regular meeting between the conventional security operatives and the operatives of the CPG so that areas of grievances can be identified and amended.

## Conclusion

From the discussion so far it is apparently clear that, the engagement of the Community Protection Guards in the management of the armed bandit activities is necessitated by the failure of the conventional security operations to tackle the menace of banditry in the various communities of Zamfara state. This failure may not likely be deliberate but may be connected with the emerging issues and development which the conventional security forces cannot handle with relative ease.

The discussion has also established the simple fact that, the recruitments of the CPG since 2018 is not without some various challenges and these challenges are only surmountable if the government has renew commitment in doing the right thing and by involving the appropriate set of people. Considering the fact that, the engagement has become a child of necessity, it is apparent that politics and political coloration needs to be eliminated to allow for the exercise to produce the most desired result as anticipated.

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