

KIDNAPPING: A CHALLENGE TO NIGERIA SECURITY SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Kidnapping for ransom is a common occurrence in various parts of the world today such as: Baghdad, Mexico, Colombia, Haiti, Brazil, Philippines, parts of former Soviet Union, Sudan and South Africa. In Nigeria, Kidnapping and Hostage taking started in the Niger Delta region in 1999, while kidnap for ransom became prevalent as from 2005. Today it is spreading like wild fire into the neighbouring South East, South West and Abuja. Kidnapping for any reason is a crime against humanity, it reduces man into the semblance of an animal. It has created insecurity, threat to National Security and adverse effect on our economy, image and support for the Niger Delta plight. This work probed into the genesis, reasons involved and her victims, their motivation, Government efforts, effects on our National Security and the way out.

INTRODUCTION

Kidnapping is a new wave of crime that is ravaging Nigeria especially the Niger Delta area - the treasure base of the Nigerian Nation, a crime posing a great challenge to national security and the Nigeria security system. One can hardly imagine the frequency and ease with which this heinous crime is perpetuated, without the law enforcement agencies -those who are trained and paid to detect and prevent crime, tracking them while committing the act. More especially since it has to do with movement of the Kidnap victims from one place to another. There is a security gap which the Kidnappers are taking advantage of in perfecting their crime. They move their victims along the road where there are noticeable checkpoints, and waterways, which the Navy ought to be patrolling to guarantee security of lives and properties within the waterways of Nigeria, to their camps where the victims are detained for ransom. This security gap is what this paper seeks to probe into, in other to seek for ways on how to cow the menace of kidnapping. One wonders why people are into the crime of kidnapping, despite the stiff punishment attached to it. The fear of the punishment for an offence could deter its

proliferation. Is it that those involved are not aware of the legal implication? Or that, they have come to a stage where their socio-economic conditions have sown an irreversible frustration in their lives? What caliber of persons engages in this crime, what motivates/entice them to this crime? What is government doing about it? How can it be properly checkmated? These are the concerns of this research paper. This paper has become so crucial considering the general election that is fast approaching. Kidnapping could derail democratic elections, when Politicians start kidnapping themselves, hoodlums will be left to dictate who emerges as the winner of a purported election. This will constitute a threat to sustainable democracy in Nigeria. Elections in Nigeria are always characterized with thuggery, proliferation of arms and light weapons and other related youth violence. Considering the decline in the prices of crude oil from an all time high of US\$147 per barrel in mid 2008 to a decline of less than US\$ 50 per barrel in the first quarter of 2009 (The Guardian, Sunday June 28, 2009 P.27), the consequences of kidnapping i.e. increasing case of insecurity of personnel and oil installations, decelerating productive forces and economic growth of the country becomes a threat to national security and a challenge to our security system. The continued success of kidnapping activities in Nigeria will signal a system failure. For the status quo to be sustainable, this security alert must be taken seriously by security and law enforcement agents.

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Kidnapping: it is the taking away of a person against the person's will, usually to hold the person in false imprisonment, a confinement without legal authority. This may be done for ransom or in furtherance of another crime (Wikipedia.org/wiki/kidnapping). Kidnapping (Adibe, 2008) the taking away of a person against the person's will, usually for ransom or in furtherance of another crime.

Economic Kidnapping: or the Kidnapping business is where a financial demand is made, which could be either hard cash, or some other financial resource.

Political kidnapping: on the other hand, is where political concessions such as the release of prisoner, changes to the law and policy retreats, are demanded (Briggs, 2009).

National security: means peace and stability in the community. The concept would seem to relate to measures enacted with a view to safeguarding territorial integrity and national independence from any external threat. It covers any activity prejudicial to the very existence of the State. Nevertheless, this requirement should not be used as a pretext for imposing arbitrary limitations or restrictions on the exercise of human right and freedoms" (United Nations publication "Freedom of the Individual under Law: an Analysis of Article 29 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights"). National security is concerned with ensuring state legal codes are not transgressed, and prevention of attacks on public infrastructures and their personnel by implementing civil defense and emergency preparedness measures (including antiterrorism legislation), and ensuring the resilience and redundancy of critical infrastructure. This also includes using counterintelligence services or secret services to protect the nation from internal threats sponsored from the outside.

Internal national security: is also the management of national finances free from economic problems that can lead to large scale public dissatisfaction with the government, and public disorder through protests. External national security is generally the scope more often associated with national security in democratic states. It encompasses national border security as a means of immigration control, national environment security where the environmental threat originates from sources external to national territory, territorial waters and airspace, and assurance of international trade safety through the state borders ("<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NationalSecurity>" 2009).

EVOLUTION OF KIDNAPPING IN SOME PART OF THE WORLD

Kidnapping for ransom is a common occurrence in various parts of the world today and certain cities and countries are often described as the, Kidnapping Capital of the world. As of 2007, the title belonged to Baghdad. In 2004, it was Mexico, and in 2001 it was Colombia. Haiti also has frequent kidnappings. Including, Brazil, Philippines, parts of former Soviet Union and Africa. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kidnapping>). In the past, and presently in some parts of the world such as Southern Sudan, Kidnapping is a common means used to obtain slaves and money through ransom. In more recent times, kidnapping in the form of Shanghaiing or (presganging) men was used to supply

merchant ships in the 19th century with sailors, whom the law considered unfree labour ([http://en. Wikipedia. Org/wikilkidnapping](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kidnapping)). Economic Kidnapping (Briggs, 2009) is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. It is estimated that kidnapping globally take home in the regions of \$500 million each year in ransom payment, the hostage is a commodity with a price on his head. Reliable statistics are hard to come by, but it is estimated that there are approximately 10,000 Kidnappings each year worldwide. The undisputed kidnap capital of the world is Colombia, where the activity has been described as a cottage industry. In 2000, the Colombia's National police recorded 3162 cases. Colombia's problem has not been contained within its own borders. Colombian kidnapping groups often cross over into Venezuela and Ecuador to take hostages, and both countries feature in the top ten. Briggs noted that, Latin America is an important hub for kidnapping. However, it would be wrong to see the crime as uniquely Latin America problem. Over the past decade, kidnapping has risen in the parts of Africa, most notably Nigerian and South Africa. This can largely be traced to the expansion of multi-national companies into these countries following the rich national resources on offer. Similarly, companies moved into parts of the former Soviet Union following the collapse of communism at the start of the last decade, and the kidnapping rate has grown there too.

EVOLUTION OF KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, kidnapping and Hostage taking started in the Niger Delta Region in 2005. Initially it was used by the Niger Delta militants, to make a case for the development of the region. At the initial stage according to Aloysius Okorie the Commissioner of Police of Imo State, they were not asking for ransom. But later on the militant, hoodlums and criminals hijacked it and started kidnapping for a ransom (News Watch, June 29, 2009 P.16). One of the fore most recorded cases of kidnapping was when the movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta, (MEND) Kidnapped nine (9) foreign workers in Delta State to bargain for the release of detained Mujahid Asari Dokubo, Leader of the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force, (NDPYF) and the arrowhead of the Niger Delta Struggle, for a fair deal in this cycle. They did not ask for ransom, only that their leader should be released in exchange for the hostages. The federal government dangled irresistible carrot- money (hard Currency), the boys could not resist it, and so

they took the money and released the hostages (Tell, December 17, 2007, P23). Initially, expatriate oil workers and a few of their unfortunate indigenous colleagues were the targets. But within the '18 months that Dokubo languished in the State Security Service, (SSS's) Underground gulag at Abuja, hostage taking not only prospered, it gained considerable leverage and displaced armed robbery as the highest paying crime in the Niger Delta. In addition, after the April elections, kidnapping became a business tool to settle grievances by groups who felt short-changed by politicians they worked for (Tell, December 17, 2007, p.24). Today, it is spreading like wildfire into the neighbouring South East where some Igbo youths, initially masquerading as members of the Movement for the Actualizations of the Sovereign State of Biafra,(MASSOB), fighting for the release of their leader, Ralph Uwazurike, who like Dokubo, was locked up by the State for their activities. In the South East, kidnapping is very prevalent in Abia, Imo, and Anambra States. It extended to Akwa Ibom State. The pervasive insecurity created by kidnapping "activities is a key manifestation of the breach of social contract by the Nigeria government and a consequent manifestation of frustration aggressions depositions amongst the people. Nigeria is drifting towards the Hobbesian social contract where citizens opt out of the social contract due to one party (the state) increasingly failing to keep its own side of the bargain. This is a manifestation of a 'failed state'. This is a State which has become incapable of fulfilling the basic functions of a Sovereign government. These functions include physical control of its territory, Provision of Security of life and Property for its Citizens, the monopoly of the use of Legitimate physical force and ability to provide reasonable public services or to interact with other States as a full member of the international community. A "failing State" denotes State in transition to a failed State. Here while the state remains nominally a Sovereign and fulfils a modicum of the functions of a Sovereign government, the central government has become so weak and ineffective that it has little practical control over much of its territory, leading to an upsurge in pervasive insecurity such as kidnapping, Organized assassinations and robberies. A failing state is also characterized by a weakened ability to provide basic public services and widespread Corruption as people think of themselves first, following the failure of the state to perform its traditional functions, most of the

countries in the developing world involved in civil wars or protracted internal conflicts could qualify as 'failing states.

KIDNAPPING OPERATIONS IN NIGERIA

Kidnapping operation began in Niger Delta in 1999 in Oboro Community 3 expatriates staff of shell were kidnapped, 2 Indians nationals, working with ANGOG Construction Company at Ughelle, in Delta State, were kidnapped and a Greek national was held captive near Brutu in Delta State. Ijaw youths seized a helicopter belonging to one of the oil firms together with its crew as a protest to the company for neglecting their welfare. The Ogbotobo Community hijacked a Bristow helicopter on lease to Texaco overseas oil company (TOPCON) and its six (6) member's crew. They demanded for N1.5 million as ransom before releasing the hostages (Vanguard, 13 August, 1999 P.?). In 1998, Koloama youths kidnapped twenty (20) expatriates and a Nigerian. Also at oborto community in Bomadi Local Government of Delta State, two (2) expatriates and a Nigerian were kidnapped. The kidnap business as from 2006 took another dimension; in January 11th 2006, some expatriate workers of different national were kidnapped. This involved an American, a Briton, one Bulgarian and a Hungarian (Punch 12 January, 2006 PA). After a prolonged dialogue and negotiation, the victims were released. In February 18, 2006 another incident of kidnap took place, it involved three Americans, one Briton, one Filipino, two Thais and two Egyptians. They were later released after a high powered delegation of negotiators and the promise by the Federal Government and oil companies to meet their demands. On Friday 2, June 2006, eight expatriate oil workers were kidnapped, six of them were Britons, one American and one Canadian were abducted while working on an offshore oil rig. They were on board the drilling rig Bulford Delphine, which operates for the Nigerian oil company, Peak Petroleum industries. The militants want the oil company to negotiate on a range of issues affecting their local people and the environmental impact of drilling in their area. President Olusegun Obasanjo joined in the mediation efforts to free the eight hostages whom were later released after Bayelsa government spirited effort and intervention. On 22 June 2006, militant unleashed terror in different parts of the Niger Delta while they engaged the naval men in a shootout in Port -Harcourt. Between August 1st and 2nd, 2006 a German,

three other Filipinos, Norwegians and two Ukrainians; and on Wednesday, August 9, 2006, two Norwegians and two Ukrainians working for Peak Petroleum Industrial limited on board an oil service vessel, were kidnapped by some militants from Agge, Orobiri, Azemabiri and Ogboitu coastal communities in Ekeremor Local Government Area of Bayelsa State because they were not recognized by Peak Petroleum industries in the memorandum of understanding signed with nine host communities in the area in Yenagoa on August 7, 2006. Kidnap for ransom or commercial kidnapping that started at Delta Ijaw and Bayelsa State now drifted to the following states: Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Abia, Imo, Anambra etc. In Rivers State, the followings were kidnapped for ransom: a three year-old Michael Stewart, son of India Somiari - Stewart, a female legislator representing Okirika in the Rivers State House of Assembly. He was kidnapped at Tantua International School, Elekahia, and released three days, Marget Hill, daughter of Dennis Hill, a Britton, with a Nigeria mother, was kidnapped on her way to school. She was later released. Three year old Samuel Amadi, son of Eze Francis Amadi, traditional ruler of Iriebe in Evo kingdom, was kidnapped and released (Tell, December. 17, 2007). After the April election of 2007, Celestine Omehia's mother Cecilia was abducted even before Omehia was sworn in as Governor of Rivers State. On August 25, 2007, Hansel Seiborugu, who is over seventy (70) years and Mother of Wernipre Seiborugu Speaker of the Bayelsa State House of Assembly, was kidnapped. She spent eleven (11) days in captivity. On Monday, October 9, 82-year-old Pa Kononibo: father of Ebiungu Kononibo, Bayelsa State House of Assembly member representing Kolokuma-Opokuma ward I was kidnapped at his home in Odi. The Kidnappers stormed the house at about 9pm and after three hours of gum battle spirited the old man away through the River Nun. A female member of the House also had her 11-year-old son kidnapped while she slept at night (Tell, December 17, 2007, P. 24). On Friday, August 5 of 2007, Kara Befi, a Chief and father of Charles Befi, a former deputy speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly was kidnapped from his home in Khana Local Government Area. On September 27, a Columbian oil worker with Saipem was kidnap and two others a Colombian and a Filipino were kidnapped. They asked for N200 million ransoms. David Worth, a British Oil worker with Hydrodive, was kidnapped on August 10th and kept for 55 days. In 2008, Professor Nemi Briggs a former Vice Chancellor of the University of

Port Harcourt and, the current Chairman, Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission was kidnapped for ransom, Elechi Amadi, an elder statesman and renowned author was kidnapped in 2009 and later released. Samuel Nnee, the paramount ruler of kpite community and the GBENE MENE TUA TUA in Tai Local Government Area of Rivers States was kidnapped on January 11th 2009. Gladys DauKoru, wife of Edward Daukoru, a former Minister of Petroleum Resources was kidnapped. Afinyetegha Igoni, Commissioner for works with the Rivers State independent electoral Commission, RISEIEC was equally kidnapped. Pius Kii, a Catholic Priest was kidnapped. Dr. Chigbo Sam Eligwe a Businessman Politician was kidnapped at his business premises at Ahoada Town. At Akwa Ibom, Aniefon Aniede Udoh, 23 Year Old daughter of Aniede Udoh, Chairman of Abak LGA was kidnapped in May 2009. She died at the hands of her captives yet ransom was paid. Austin Ekong, a former chairman of Ikot Abasi LGA was kidnapped and released after payment of ransom, Nse Nteen chairman of the Essien Udim LGA where the Governor of Akwa Ibom hail from was kidnapped and released after payment of ransom. Godwin Udoh a younger brother of Emmanuel Udoh, Chairman of Eket LGA was also kidnapped and released after ransom was paid. Ime Uwak, a treasurer with Obok LGA was kidnapped and released after payment of ransom. Ignatius Edet father of the speaker of the state House of Assembly was kidnapped and released after ransom was paid. In Edo State, Osammede Adun, Managing Director of Bob Izua Transport Company Limited and chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP in Edo, Friday June 5 at about 9.p.m was kidnapped by a 19-man gang all of them dressed in military uniform at his residence in Benin City. Pa Odvwri, the father of this Day Editorial page Editor, Eddy Odvwri, was killed by his abductors because he recognized his kidnapers as boys from his neighbourhood. Godgood Nlaku a wealthy businessman in Edo State was murdered by his abductors. The ill wind of kidnapping blew to Ondo state an oil producing state on the 14th of June 2009, with the abduction of Iyabo Basaru, wife of the state Commissioner for Lands Sikiru Basaru. Iyabo was kidnapped along with her friend, Sola Alli, wife of the newly appointed permanent secretary in the state, by gunmen In front of Basaru's house at Ajipawo area Akure. In the neighboring Ekiti state, Tope Okunlola, South-west regional manager of Spring Bank Plc and his driver Ojo Adebajo were Kidnapped in early June, they were all released after

ransom was paid. At Delta State the Common Criminals, some were undergraduate students are into the business of kidnapping for ransom. Henriena Omovegie was kidnapped and killed. His son Obinna Esiobi, an undergraduate of Novena University in Delta state was among the kidnappers. Melvin Okorie, a 17- year -old son of Celestine Okoye, an assistant Commissioner of police in charge of operations in Delta state was kidnapped in April 2009. He was later rescued through serious police manhunt. Another Okowa, 76 years old father of Ifeayi Okowa, Secretary to the state was kidnapped a serious police manhunt rescued the victim. In the south east kidnapping is spreading like wild fire. In Imo state, traditional rulers, priests and businessmen have been the principal victims. Chijioke Okwara, the Eshi of Nkwere and traditional ruler of Nkwere Autonomous Community was kidnapped in Aba in Abia State and taking to a forest in Ntigha, Isala Ngwa North Local Government Area of Abia State where he was held captive for days. He was later rescued by men from Imo State police command in conjunction with their Abia counter part. On may 24 2009, a four-man kidnapping gang abducted Michael Ekerue, the traditional ruler of akala autonomous community in Mbaitoli Local government area of Imo State and Felicia, his wife. They were returning from church service while the hoodlums intercepted them at gunpoint. Sabra Nwoke, education secretary, Umuowa Council was kidnapped on May 15 but was released following police actions. Sylvester Ibe, a retired soldier in his 70 was kidnapped; he was taken to a house in the same village where he was held captive. He was later rescued through police manhunt. On May 19, another gang of Kidnappers whisked away Herbert Amushie, a retired school principal, from his residence in Ebikoro Uzoagba, Ikeduru Local Government Area; he was received by the police after two days. On May 25 Innocent Ibekwe, a retired education officer and former chairman of the Nigeria Union of Teachers in Imo State was kidnapped. Basil Enwerem, deputy director, accounts, Government House, Owerri was kidnapped on March 31 in his village Mbano. Peter Orji, a treasurer of the people's Democratic Party, P.D.P, was kidnapped in Owerri and taken to Ntigha, Isiala Ngwa North Local Government where he was held captive. Other cases of kidnapping recorded in Imo State were those of Ginikanwa Udeagu, daughter of Ebere Udeagu, former deputy governor of the state. Celestine Ngaobiri, member of the Imo State House of Assembly from Obowo Constituency, and the Late Christopher Chukwu,

father of Tony Chukwu, a wealthy businessman. On the 27th of June 2008, Rev. Father Matthew Cherian, a wealthy Catholic Priest who hails from India was kidnapped. After three days in captivity he was released (Newswatch June 29, 2009 P.12-23). In Anambra State, kidnapping started long before it crept to Imo state. On January 28, 2007 Pius Ogbuawa, Nnewi business Mogul was kidnapped in front of his church. He was later taken unto captivity for several days before a ransom of N20 Million was paid for his freedom (Ibid P.16-17) Two months later, two (2) Chinese men and a Nigerian working with Innoson Industries Nigeria Limited were also abducted in Nnewi. Anthony Eukeme, chief executive officer of Tonimas was kidnapped. Other prominent persons who had been kidnapped in Anambra include Mbamalu Okeke, a traditional ruler of Abagawa. He was kidnapped along with one of his red cap chiefs and son. They were later rescued by the police. Michael Agaowo and his liberian wife were kidnapped on the night of their wedding. They were released two days after paying N15 Million as ransom. Tochukwu Mbachu, chairman of Nigeria Medical Associations, Anambra State was kidnapped and later released. Okey Chukwuogo, Governorship aspirant of the People's Progressive Alliance, PPA was kidnapped. In Abia State, there have also been many cases of kidnapping. Felix Anyansi-Agwu, Chairman of Enyimba football club, and Awa U. Kalu, a Judge, were some of the victims of kidnapping. In Enugu state, Uche Ani, State coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, was kidnapped at his residence at Enugu when he was returning from work. It is very noticeable that kidnap victims are easily rescued and the kidnappers arrested in most of the kidnap cases in the south east. This can be attributed to the terrain of their operation. They operate within land locations; they either keep their victims in the forest or secluded residential houses within a community. It is not so in the core South South or Niger Delta such as Delta Ijaw, Bayelsa and Rivers State. Here once one is kidnapped, he is whisked to the creek where, the police cannot operate effectively. Hence, kidnap victims are hardly rescued nor the kidnappers arrested due to the terrain.

TARGETS OF KIDNAPPERS

The targets of the kidnappers (the Guardian, Sunday June 28, 2009 P. 27) are:

- Wealthy local individuals

- Expatriate working in the area
- Business travelers and tourists who visits hostile areas
- Employees of high profile companies, particularly oil companies
- Captains and sailors of oil carrying vessels
- Relations of top government officials at the local, state and federal government levels
- Citizen of nations suspected to be supporting the government with military supplies
- Top officials of political parties and their relations
- Relations of business moguls.

PATTERN OF OPERATION

Kidnappers operate in a discrete and dangerous manner. They abduct people when they believe they can get ransom paid. In most kidnap cases, there must be an insider who knows the victim very well. The kidnappers monitor people up to their bed rooms. They know the insider-out of their families, their operations, when they go out and come in. This information is what makes the kidnappers to succeed in their nefarious acts. Sometimes, they are dressed in military uniform to go for their victims. Most often too, they shoot gun for hours before abducting their victims; sometimes too they only brandish the gun to compel compliance, they blind fold their victims and take them to unknown hide out, They threaten their victims with gun that if their people do not come on time with the ransom, they will waste them. They rape their female victims and sometimes due to environmental stress, their victims may die or if their victims recognize some of them, they may be constrained to kill them and equally collect ransom. In the Niger Delta area, most of the kidnap victims are moved to the creeks as a hide out. While in the South East, their victims could be taken to a forest or to a secluded private house. The Militant treat their kidnap victims with decorum, while the common criminals involved in the kidnap business, demystify their victims with inhuman treatment. All is to infuse fear in them as to expedite the process of payment of ransom.

Kidnappers are motivated by profit rather than principle. It is chiefly motivated by expected financial gain. It is estimated that kidnappers globally take home with over \$500 million each year (Briggs. 2009).

CAUSES OF KIDNAPPING

- ❖ **Militancy – Owubokiri:** while speaking at the Nigeria institute of international affairs Lagos during the fourth Dr. Martin Luther King (Jr.) memorial lecture tagged "kidnapping - A crime Against Humanity what is the way out" disclosed that, militancy in the Niger Delta region was the immediate precursor of kidnapping in the Country (This Day on-line, May 29,2009).

- ❖ **Proliferation of Arms and Military Uniforms:** The escalation of the Niger Delta crises in Nigeria raised the stake of proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Minister of State for Defense, Dr. Rowland Oritsejafor recently said that the volume of illegal arms in circulation in the Niger Delta was disturbing to the federal government and warned that the situation could lead to instability. Kidnappers use gun to prosecute their operations. When they make money, they buy more sophisticated weapons to perpetrate their actions. The kidnappers put on military uniforms for their operations. How do they get all these military uniforms?

- ❖ **Unemployment:** - The spate of unemployment in the country is too high and very risky for national development. There are lots of youth whose energy are still seeking for work to dissipate and earn with it. They are Poor and idle. This is the factor that is responsible for the spread of the kidnap venom to various parts of the country like wild fire.

- ❖ **Poverty:** - All over the World, poverty is said to be a motivating condition for criminals activities. The Niger Delta area is suffering from administrative neglect, crumbling infrastructures, and services, high unemployment, social deprivation, abject poverty, filth squalor and endemic conflict. Most of these kidnappers are

lured by poverty; this can frustrate them into harsh and uncivilized thought and actions.

- ❖ **Inadequate control of our sea territorial Jurisdiction:** - If you can note, most of the kidnaps carried out by the militant, their victims are always ferried to the creek for custody. The Nigeria navy does not have enough functional equipment to monitor and secure our porous waterways. The Navy has only about ten (10) combat ships with about twelve (12) defender boats; none of this ship is below thirty (30) years. She is inadequately equipped to police her sea lanes, therefore being incapacitated to monitor sea pirates and kidnap activities. She is inadequately equipped to patrol and familiarize herself with the creeks and tributaries in Niger Delta. It is therefore believed that the naval force is incapable of protecting the economic interest of Nigeria, her oil and gas pipelines in the sea, including oil company workers and their properties/facilities in the high sea.
- ❖ **Corruption and poor governance:-** Poor leadership being provided by the country's politicians that have resulted in mass poverty and unemployment, It is a common denominator that the federal government has abandoned the area that produces about 90% of her foreign exchange revenues; and about the state share of 13% oil revenue derivation? To what extent has the Government of Niger Delta utilized these funds to develop her area? Our leaders to some extent have not done well; they have been involved in one financial scandal or the other.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO KIDNAPPING: There is no central or federal law on kidnapping. Individual States are now making laws on kidnapping through their various Houses of Assembly. Rivers and Abia States have passed laws, while Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Enugu and Imo States are in the process of passing a law on Kidnapping. The law prescribes capital punishment for militants and persons engaged in kidnapping for ransom and extortion. The Joint Task Force (JTF) is equally a security measure put in place to checkmate crime activities perpetuated by these militant and common criminals.

Government have granted amnesty to the Niger Delta militants, this is a peace move that is intended to stem down the spate of violence and criminality going on in the Niger Delta region, and to reduce the threats to peace and national security.

KIDNAPPING AND NATIONAL SECURITY:

The Niger Delta crisis has created a wave of violence within the Niger Delta Region and Nigeria at large and, an upsurge of criminal activities like kidnapping that is threatening the Peace, Security and Economy of Nigeria.

- **INSECURITY:** The planned crime of kidnapping creates insecurity among Nigerians and corporate personnel. Contractors abandon their projects due to insecurity this trend retards growth and development. Oil workers abandon their job for their safety, at the detriment of our oil production which is the main source of our economy. Nigeria earns over 90% percent of her foreign exchange from oil production and gas (Tell, July 13, 2009 P.2S). Therefore, when there is a threat to oil and gas production, there will be a shortage in oil and gas production as a result of youth violence or militancy, it translate to great threat to our National Security and a challenge to our government and the law enforcement agents.

Insecurity Could lead to migration of foreign investors to neighbouring states or Country. This could create capital flight from the state thereby affecting the economy of the state. It could close companies and render a lot of workers jobless, this could also result to threat to security. According to Tedd Brown, a special agent with the department of states Bureau of Diplomatic Security and Executive Director of Overseas Security Advising Council (OSAC), an arm of the united Department of states, "these growing threats to western Business interests represent a serious threat to the local economies due to joblessness, decrease in revenue and taxes" (Beacon August 15-21, 2008).

INCREASE IN DEFENCE BUDGET: The spread of kidnapping activities in most parts of the country has created a crime wave that has affected Nigeria National security, greater chunk of the budget is allocated to security services at the National state and local government levels. This is likely to prevent the improvement of the economic and the welfare services of the population.

Military spending can under develop the economies of developing countries, by diverting scarce financial resources and trained personnel from projects that could create wealth and benefit the poor.

- **Elective and political Violence:** The wide spread of kidnapping incidents in Nigeria could escalate the use of kidnapping by youths and political thugs of strong politicians to intimidate their political opponent, thereby derailing the democratic process.
- **Expose Nigeria Security Lapses:** If you notice kidnap trend in Nigeria, you will observe that, kidnappers are easily caught and victims rescued from their hide out in the south east. This is because; the Nigerian police operatives can access the hide out of the criminals by land. But in the Niger Delta Region, you will notice, those kidnap victims are hardly rescued from their hide out, and kidnappers are not easily apprehended by law enforcement agents. This is because, they ferry their victims to the creeks. Consequently the weakness of the Nigeria Navy is being revealed, due to their inability to have complete control of the security of our water ways.
- **Military Incursion into Politics:** The alarming rate of kidnapping activities in the country could derail democracy and pave way for militant incursion into politics and send the politicians parking. During the second republic, the presence of Corruption, abuse of office with impunity on the part of the elected officers and subsequent election rigging and high rate of inflation of the economy, the Army struck once more on 31st of December 1983 (Obiajulu and Obi 2003). If political gladiators will use kidnapping the prevailing weave of crime in Nigeria to intimidate their opponent, then, they will be pre-empting military incursion into Nigeria politics to remedy the insecurity of lives, properties and businesses with military dispatch. This will be utmost retrogression of the Nigerian Society.
- **Proliferation of Arms:-** Kidnapping activities leads to proliferation of arms. The business requires good firing power i.e. fire arms in order to abduct their victims, to scare people out of their sight and to resist the law enforcement agents. Those in the kidnap business will be amassing fire arms and ammunitions for their business.
- **Image of the Country:-** In the Game of international relations, the image and prestige of a country is very important to her national interest. If a third world countries that ought to attract foreign investors have a very poor and dented

image, there is a probability that, she will find it difficult making friends and attracting foreign investors.

PREVENTION AND REMEDY

Kidnapping for any reason is a crime against humanity, it reduces man into the semblance of an animal. It can be prevented and the rate of occurrences remedied through the following suggestions:

- **Resolve the Niger Delta Crises:** It is believed that one of the immediate causes of Kidnapping in Nigerian is protest Second that the crime of kidnapping is traceable to the Niger Delta militant. Therefore to prevent further occurrence, there is great need to redress or seek genuine and pragmatic solution to the Niger Delta crisis, this will erase the platform on which the militant are operating. A strong political will is needed to sort the Niger Delta problems. Government should right the injustices meted on the Niger Delta region and her people.
- **Enthroned True Federalism:** Nigerians by her constitution is operating a federal system of government but in practice she is operating something on the contrary. There is great need to restructure the Nigerian State to enthrone true federalism including true fiscal federalism. Federalism is a system of government in which the centre and the federating units are each, within a sphere, co-ordinate and equal.
- **Unemployment:** Is the cause for the rapid spreading of kidnapping in Nigeria. Aside from the Niger Delta Militant, other jobless criminals have joined the trial of kidnapping due to poverty and idleness. Karl Mark stated it rightly that man is an economic being. The art of survival is the first challenge of man. This is why the relationship between the capitalist and the proletariat is inevitable, due to the logic that, man must engage in a productive process for him to survive. Government should carry out extra ordinary effort to ensure favourable employment opportunities for her adult citizens. This will reduce crime.

On the area of employment, Pragmatic and enduring measures have to be taken to ensure that deliberate effort are explored to create employment within the region. Government should not only concentrate in exploitation of oil and gas alone but, should

explore the coastal economic capabilities of the area as to create wealth and employment by:

- **Establish Deep Sea Fishing Companies:** Government should send economic emissaries to the Scandinavian countries to woo partners that are into deep sea fishing, to establish their presence at Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States Sea Shores. These companies can contain large man power for her operations. The militant and other unemployed youth can fit into these firms.
- **Establish Marine or Coast Guards:** The operations of these militants in the high seas and creeks have revealed the weakness and lapses within the Nigerian Navy and our water ways. We need more security marine personnel to man the security of our water ways and creeks. The porousness of our water ways security is one of the factors that is responsible for the successful operation of the kidnapers and prevention of their arrest and rescuing their victims. The Nigerian Navy needs a lower level security system that will run intelligence, surveillances and information gathering for them. The establishment of marine guards will create employment for the youths and for the rehabilitation of the militants. This could be an arm of the earlier proposal Community guards.
- **Value -Re-Orientation:** According to Dr. Ndi Onuekwusi, to end the kidnapping, in Nigeria requires interventions at the family and security levels. It should be an intervention that goes beyond platitudes (This day Online 29 May 2009). In Nigeria today, Morals have decreased to the barest minimum, there is need for a culture re-orientation. The value for money is leading many adult Nigerians astray, everybody value money and want to do anything whether moral or immoral to make money. There is great need for re-orientation about making money; this will reduce the length with which people use illicit means to make money.
- **Low Level Security Scheme:** States Governments within the Niger Delta area should create Community guards who will assist the Police in community safety, surveillance, crime detection and preventions. Community guards will create an opportunity for the unemployed youths to be gainfully employed in community

neighbourhood watch scheme. Some of these Community guards (marine guards) will man the security of our water ways, they shall serve as the intelligent unit of the naval forces at sea and same to the police force at land. They shall be trained and periodically re-trained to be patriotic and efficient in discharging their duties.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Kidnapping in Nigeria is traceable to the Nigeria Delta militant and, it is spreading to other parts of the country like wildfire. Kidnapping at the initial stage was political kidnapping, the militant were not asking for ransom, later they saw it as money making venture hence, it spread to other parts of the country. Kidnapping has caused untold hardship to the civilian populace, violated the rule of law, created insecurity, impacted negatively on the nation economy, and diverted the federal, state and local government budgets to security expenses. Kidnapping is a crime against humanity; it reduces man into the semblance of an animal. Victims suffer psychological trauma, the lost of freedom and dignity. Kidnapping has demeaned the Niger Delta struggle and make them to lose the sympathy of the International community and the good people of the Niger Delta. Kidnapping is a menace to the society and must be put to a stop. To ameliorate the spread of kidnapping in Nigeria, the following recommendations are made, they are:

- Considering the spread of kidnapping in Nigeria, federal government should play a central role in developing a new collaborative policy framework rather than always allowing the states alone to deal with the crime.
- Government should consider resolving the Niger Delta problem. A harsh environment will produce a harsh way of thought and doing things. If the people of the region are giving back what belong to them originally, there will be no longer be a ground for pretext and excusing criminality since the environment would no longer be chaotic to conceal kidnapping.
- Deliberate employment opportunities have to be created by government in partnership with the private sector. This will keep people busy and help the law enforcement agencies to shift the habitual criminals from those that are coarse or lured to commit crime due to their economic situations.

- The law enforcement agents including the Nigerian Navy should be properly equipped with good firing power and communication gadgets. They should re-train their intelligence unit; empower the Nigerian Navy with efficient marine military hardware to ensure effective sea patrol.

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