



## The Architecture of Insecurity: A Sociological Analysis of Kidnapping and Banditry in Etsako West LGA, Edo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract.** Etsako West Local Government Area (LGA) in Edo North Senatorial District has, in recent years, experienced rising incidence of kidnapping and banditry, particularly along major transit corridors. This study investigates the prevalence and impacts of the insecurity between February 2022 and August 2025, using purposive sampling. The study used secondary and primary source of data collection. Data were gathered through key informant interviews with community leaders and traditional rulers as well as unstructured in-depth interviews with farmers, traders, students, civil servants, religious leaders, vigilante groups, local hunters, youth groups, and transport workers union in Auchi, South Ibie, Agbede, Jattu, and Aviele. Findings reveal recurrent abductions, ransom payments, and community protests. Major hotspots identified include Auchi–Afuze–Agbede road, Auchi–Benin highway, Auchi–Okpella road, and Auchi–Okene–Abuja highway. The insecurity has disrupted farming, education, trade, and social life of the people. The state response through the police, DSS, and military interventions remain inadequate thereby giving rise to community policing involving vigilantes, local hunters, youth groups, and transport workers union. Yet, the insecurity persisted due to the rugged and forest terrains along the major transit routes to the neighbouring Benin, Ondo, Ekiti and Okene-Kogi State forests corridor, where the kidnapers and bandits have their forest camp/hideouts. The study recommends permanent checkpoints, sustained patrols, publicized hotlines, and combined land and aerial surveillance to effectively curb kidnapping and banditry in Etsako West LGA.

**Keywords:** Architecture of Insecurity, Sociological Analysis, Kidnapping and Banditry, Etsako West LGA, Edo State Nigeria.

### 1. Introduction

The roots of Nigeria's kidnapping epidemic can be traced to the early 2000s in the Niger Delta, where militants employed hostage-taking as a tactic to negotiate with oil companies and the government for resource control and economic benefits (Asuni, 2009). Initially politically motivated, this practice evolved into a profit-driven criminal enterprise by the 2010, fueled by lucrative ransom payments (Odo, 2015; Chukwuma, 2020). The profitability of kidnapping has attracted diverse criminal networks, transforming it into a widespread menace across Nigeria's regions. Concurrently, banditry has surged in the North-West and North-Central regions, characterized by armed raids, cattle rustling, and mass abductions (Osumah, 2020; Edeko, 2021). These activities have displaced rural communities, disrupted agricultural production, and deepened poverty.

The convergence of kidnapping and banditry has created a complex security crisis, particularly in areas like Etsako West, a critical link in Nigeria's North-South transport corridor. Highway abductions, farm attacks, and village raids have become rampant, exploiting the region's strategic location and the vulnerabilities of its rural communities (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). Etsako West, located in Edo State's northern senatorial district, is a predominantly rural area with a mix of agricultural and trading communities. Its position along major transport routes make it a prime target for criminal activities, particularly kidnapping and banditry. Since 2020, the local government area (LGA) has witnessed a sharp increase in violent crimes, including ambushes on highways, raids on farms, and attacks on villages (Alemika, 2019). These incidents have disrupted

livelihoods, forced farmers to abandon their fields, and deterred traders from operating, leading to significant economic losses.

The limitations of conventional policing in Etsako West are stark. The Nigeria Police Force faces chronic challenges, including insufficient personnel, outdated equipment, and limited funding (Alemika, 2013). These constraints hinder effective patrol and response capabilities, particularly in remote areas. Moreover, the lack of trust between communities and law enforcement, stemming from perceived inefficiencies and occasional complicity, has further undermined security efforts (CLEEN Foundation, 2018). As a result, residents have increasingly turned to informal security structures, such as vigilantes and local hunters, to fill the gap. Community policing, defined as a collaborative approach that integrates local knowledge, trust, and collective action to prevent crime, offers a viable solution to the insecurity crisis in Etsako West (Brogden & Nijhar, 2005). Unlike conventional policing, which relies heavily on centralized command and reactive measures, community policing emphasizes proactive engagement, community participation, and localized problem-solving. This approach aligns with Edo State's socio-cultural strengths, including strong communal ties and a history of collective action through vigilante groups and local hunters.

Over and above this, the study investigates the prevalence, trends and impacts of kidnapping and banditry in Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State, between February, 2022 and August, 2025. To address this, the specific objectives of the study are to:

- Identify the hot-spots and vulnerable corridors within Etsako West LGA corridor where kidnapping and banditry crimes are most perpetrated.
- Examine the state and the community security responses to the menace.
- Assess the roles and challenges of community policing in mitigating the kidnapping and banditry insecurity in Etsako West LGA corridor.
- And to apply relevant sociological theories to analyze the incidence of kidnapping and banditry insecurity in Etsako West LGA corridor.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts multiple sociological theoretical frameworks, to capture and analyze the kidnapping and banditry insecurity in Etsako West LGA corridor.

### 2.1 Routine Activity Theory (RAT) By Cohen & Felson, 1979.

Routine Activity Theory (RAT), developed by Cohen and Felson (1979), argues that crime occurs when three elements converge in time and space: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. The theory departs from offender-centered approaches by stressing that everyday social routines shape opportunities for crime. Thus, crime is not merely the product of deviant individuals, but also of the situational context in which potential victims and offenders interact (Felson & Boba, 2010). As lifestyles and mobility patterns change, opportunities for crime expand or contract depending on the presence of guardianship, such as law enforcement, community vigilance, or technological surveillance.

In Etsako West Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State, the dynamics of kidnapping and banditry reflect the principles of RAT. The LGA is traversed by major roads such as the Auchi–Okene and Auchi–Benin highways, which serve as corridors for commuters, travellers, traders, farmers and students. These roads provide suitable targets for kidnappers and bandits, particularly at night or in isolated stretches where security presence are few. The motivated kidnappers and bandits, often organized gangs, capitalize on the absence of capable guardianship, which is evident in inadequate police patrols, slow emergency response, and lack of surveillance infrastructure. Reports of motorists and even local farmers and traders being abducted on their way to markets and farm lands underscore how routine social and economic activities inadvertently expose residents to hostage-taking (Okoli & Agada, 2014).

Community policing in Etsako West LGA directly corresponds to RAT's preventive strategies. Increasing capable guardianship through local vigilance groups, neighborhood watch associations, and stronger collaboration between the police and communities can disrupt the crime triangle. For example, where joint patrols between police and community vigilantes have been deployed along kidnapping-prone highways, incidents have declined due to increased visibility and deterrence (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2013). Moreover, improved street lighting in rural communities and the installation of community-driven surveillance checkpoints can enhance guardianship. The RAT framework therefore suggests that addressing kidnapping and banditry in Etsako West requires situational crime prevention measures that limit offenders' opportunities,

strengthen guardianship, and alter the routine activities that create vulnerability.

## **2.2 Social Disorganization Theory by Shaw & McKay, 1942.**

Social Disorganization Theory (SDT), advanced by Shaw and McKay (1942), links crime to neighborhood conditions rather than individual pathology. The theory emphasizes that crime thrives in communities characterized by poverty, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility, which weaken the capacity for collective social control. In such disorganized neighborhoods, informal social institutions such as families, schools, and religious organizations fail to regulate behavior effectively, creating an environment where deviant subcultures emerge (Sampson & Groves, 1989). The key insight is that crime is an outcome of ecological breakdown, where community cohesion and collective efficacy are weak.

In Etsako West LGA, conditions of social disorganization are evident in many rural and semi-urban communities. The area has witnessed significant economic stress due to youths unemployment, land conflicts, and the influx of migrants, all of which strain traditional authority systems. Weakening social institutions have made it easier for kidnapping and banditry networks to recruit idle youths. For instance, local accounts reveal that many bandit groups operating around Auchì and surrounding villages exploit the breakdown of trust between residents and formal law enforcement, positioning themselves as alternative sources of authority and income (Onapajo & Idowu, 2015). The erosion of collective efficacy means that residents often feel powerless to resist or report criminal activity, thereby reinforcing cycles of kidnapping and bandit insecurity.

Applying SDT to community policing in Etsako West reveals that crime reduction requires rebuilding social cohesion and strengthening local institutions. Community policing strategies that integrate traditional rulers, youth associations, vigilantes, local hunters, road transport workers union and religious leaders into security networks can revitalize collective efficacy. When residents are encouraged to participate in joint problem-solving with the police, informal social control is restored, making it more difficult for criminal groups to thrive. Furthermore, addressing the structural driver, through poverty alleviation and youths' empowerment programs, and improved access to education, can reduce the conditions of disorganization that fuel crime. In Etsako West LGA, successful policing will depend not only on tactical interventions but also on socio-economic investments

that restore the community's ability to self-regulate insecurity. Thus, SDT underscores that tackling kidnapping and banditry in Etsako West LGA requires a holistic approach that combines law enforcement with community-driven youths empowerment programs and resilience-building initiatives.

## **2.3 Collective Efficacy Theory By Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls 1997.**

Collective Efficacy Theory, developed by Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997), emphasizes the importance of social cohesion and mutual trust among community members in promoting informal social control. The theory argues that communities with strong networks of trust and willingness to intervene for the common good are more effective at preventing crime and disorder than communities characterized by social disorganization and weak neighborhood ties. In this sense, crime reduction is not only dependent on formal policing but also on the capacity of residents to collectively mobilize against deviant behavior.

In the context of Etsako West Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State, where kidnapping and banditry have become pressing security concerns, the theory provides a useful lens for understanding both the vulnerabilities and the potentials for local responses. Kidnapping for ransom and violent banditry thrive in settings marked by weak communal bonds, high levels of fear, and declining trust in formal state institutions. These conditions often discourage residents from sharing information or intervening in suspicious activities. Collective Efficacy Theory suggests that enhancing trust, cooperation, and shared responsibility within communities can significantly strengthen resistance against such crimes (Sampson et al., 1997).

Community policing, as practiced in other Nigerian communities, aligns directly with the principles of collective efficacy. By encouraging partnerships between the police and local residents, community policing fosters information sharing, joint problem-solving, and community-led surveillance. In Etsako West LGA, community policing structures, when supported by traditional institutions, vigilante, youth groups and local hunters, could enhance the collective capacity to monitor movement in and out of the village communities, identify criminal hideouts, and discourage collaboration with kidnapers and bandits. Informal controls such as community members watching over one another, responding quickly to distress calls, and discouraging youth involvement in criminal networks—are essential manifestations of collective efficacy in action.

Also, the theory implies that combating kidnapping and banditry requires more than punitive enforcement. It involves strengthening neighborhood ties, building trust in the justice system, and empowering citizens to take collective responsibility for security. For instance, community policing forums in Etsako West LGA can function not only as security watch mechanisms but also as platforms for dialogue and reconciliation, thereby reducing the culture of silence and fear that often protects criminals. Strengthening collective efficacy can thus create an environment where residents feel responsible for each other's safety, making it more difficult for criminal networks to thrive.

In summary, Collective Efficacy Theory demonstrates that security challenges like kidnapping and banditry in Etsako West LGA cannot be solved by police presence alone but by empowering communities to act collectively. By nurturing social trust, enhancing cooperation, and fostering mutual accountability through community policing initiatives, residents can reclaim control of their neighborhoods, reduce crime rates, and build a stronger sense of safety and resilience.

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1 Study Area

Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, is largely an agrarian local government area in northern Edo State. It covers about 946 km,<sup>2</sup> hosting

pre-dominantly Etsako people of Afemai ethnic group (Edo State Government,2021). The communities in the local government are connected by rural roads, with Auchi as the main administrative and commercial hub hosting markets, schools, and the Federal Polytechnic, Auchi. Etsako West LGA of Edo State, Nigeria, is administratively divided into six major districts namely: Auchi, South Ibie, Uzairue, Aviele, Anwain and Jagbe, with several clans, villages and communities organized under each district, in traditional and cultural groupings.

Auchi District, Clan and Villages comprise of Aibotse, Akpekpe, Igbei, Iyekhe, Usogun, Auchi (headquarters town)

South Ibie District, Clan and Villages comprise of Ibie-Iyakpi, Egbogio, Ibie-Nafe, Ibie- Iyerekhu, Otegie, Ughieda, Ugiekha.

Uzairue-Jattu District, Clan and Villages comprise of Apana, Iyora, Iyuku, Jattu, Iyamho

Aviele District. Clan and Villages comprise of Agbede, Egeuno, Egho, Odighie (Odigie), Oguolla, Ubiane, Ughioti (Ughiole), Afowa, Wararake, Afashio, Ayogwiri, Ikabigbo, Irekpai, Ogbido, Ayaoghena, Ikhola, Uluoke, Ugbhenor, Idato, Ayua, Imeke, Elele.

Awain District. Clan and Villages. comprise of Amah (Ama), Amogiza, Camp Daniel, Ajuya Camp, Eware, Ewora, Igbirra Camp, Ivioba (Ibhioba), Rabison Camp, Uzoki, Idegun.

Jagbe District. Clan and Villages. Comprise of Ekpolo Camp, Ihelame, Ikhua, Imiogia (Imogian), Imiokonon, Ukumasi Camp, Ikhwa, Inhianmhen.

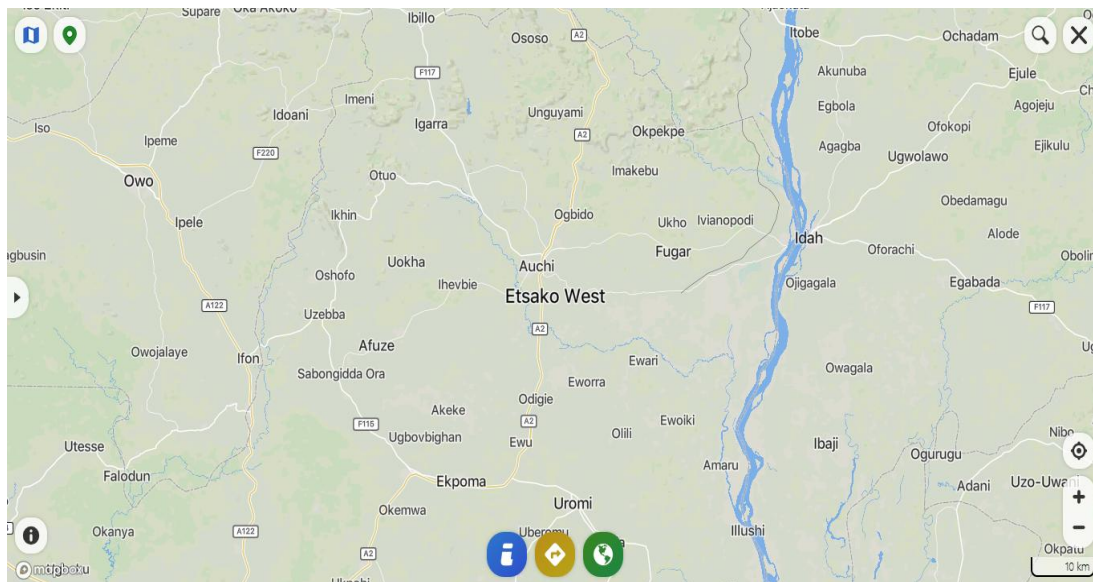


Fig.1: Map Showing Etsako West LGA.

Source: [https://mapcarta.com/Etsako West F1108563347/Map](https://mapcarta.com/Etsako_West_F1108563347/Map). Retrieved Sept.2025

### 3.2 Research Instrument and Sampling Method

There are very few or scanty peer-reviewed scholarly works that focus specifically on kidnapping and banditry in Etsako West LGA. Most of what exists on kidnapping and banditry in Etsako West LGA are news and media reports, NGO/civil society reports documenting community protests over increasing incidence of ransom payments to kidnappers and bandits in the LGA corridor; and the Edo State government Security Reports. This study employs purposive sampling method. An unstructured In-depth interview was conducted with the religious and community leaders, vigilantes, local hunters, youth associations, road transport workers association and key informant interviews with the traditional rulers. In compliance with sociological ethical research standards, the traditional rulers and the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) were consulted prior to the fieldwork to secure approval and foster trust, particularly given the security and sensitivity of the issue of kidnapping and banditry in the LGA. An in-depth unstructured interview was also conducted with 45 local residents (farmers, traders, civil servants and students) in Auchi, South Ibie, Agbede Jettu and Avielle, purposively selected to represent a diverse or cross-section of the communities along the hot-spots and vulnerable corridors within Etsako West LGA where kidnapping and banditry are most perpetrated. The in-depth unstructured interview allowed flexibility to probe and explore the cases of kidnapping and banditry insecurity in the areas. The researcher also had informal discussions (unstructured interview) with the Rapid Response Unit police officers at Auchi Police Divisional Headquarters. This method allowed for first-hand information to corroborate the information sourced from the secondary data

The study employs purposive sampling method and also uses secondary sources of data to investigate the incidence of kidnapping and banditry insecurity in Etsako West Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State between February, 2022 and August, 2025. The study adopts a qualitative research design with content analysis of the secondary data sourced from Edo State

Security Reports, Newspaper Reports from Daily Post, Punch, Vanguard, This Day, The Guardian, Daily Trust, Tribune, Nigerian Observer and TVC News documenting kidnapping and banditry insecurity cases in Etsako West LGA; and Non- Governmental Organisation (NGO) and Civil Society reports documenting community protests over increasing incidence of kidnapping, banditry, hostage taking and ransom payments in Etsako West LGA corridor. Above all, the methodological approach and contextual understanding of the data collected on cases of kidnapping and banditry in Etsako West LGA corridor were qualitatively analyzed.

### 4. Results and Discussion

Prevalence and Trends of Kidnapping, Banditry and Hostage Taking in Etsako West LGA (Feb. 2022-Aug. 2025)

Etsako West Local Government Area (LGA), with Auchi as its administrative headquarters, have experienced several incidences of kidnapping and banditry between February, 2022 and August 2025, with several high-profile abductions, ransom payments and several community protests as responses to the menace. There are also occasional allegations of collusion or complicity by insiders especially where the organized kidnapping attracts ransom. Records of kidnappings and banditry attacks have shown that farmers, traders, polytechnic lecturers, students, travellers, and occasionally commuters on inter-town and inter-state buses travelling on local roads and highways such as Auchi-Benin highway; and Auchi-Okene-Abuja highway were mostly targeted victims.

The composition of data on table 1 (showing secondary sources of data) revealed a total number of victims abducted by kidnappers and bandits (between February, 2022-August, 2025) as 36. While 12 victims were released after ransom paid, 8 victims were unconditionally freed, 5 victims were killed, 4 were released after vigilante and police raid, 3 were released, 2 were declared missing, 1 released after community protests and 1 escaped from the kidnappers and bandits forest camp/ hideout.

Table showing incidence of kidnapping and banditry per location in Etsako West LGA (Feb.2022-Aug.2025) It shows also, the total victims, fatalities, rescued/released, and missing in each hotspot

Date	Location	Victims Involved	Outcome	Source
Feb 18, 2022	Okpella–Auchi Road	5 travelers in a commercial bus	2 released after ransom; 3 rescued	Punch (2022, p.13)
Jun 11, 2022	Jattu Junction	Local businessman, age 52	Released after ₦3m ransom	Vanguard (2022, p.21)
Oct 4, 2022	Afowa village	2 farmers	1 escaped, 1 killed	Guardian (2022, p.7)
Jan 23, 2023	Iyuku	Polytechnic student	Released after community protest	Daily Trust (2023, p.18)
May 9, 2023	Iyakpi–South Ibie	Family of four (man, wife, 2 kids)	All rescued after vigilante-police raid	Tribune (2023, p.10)
Nov 17, 2023	Ayogwiri forest	7 passengers in a Sienna bus	2 killed, 5 freed after ransom	ThisDay (2023, p.25)
Mar 14, 2024	Auchi–Benin highway	A lecturer at Auchi Polytechnic	Released after ₦5m ransom	Punch (2024, p.12)
Jul 29, 2024	Uzairue village	Truck driver and conductor	Both killed, truck looted	Guardian (2024, p.8)
Feb 8, 2025	Warrake–Agbede road	3 traders returning from market	All released after ransom	Vanguard (2025, p.30)
Aug 2, 2025	Egho forest axis	10 bus passengers	8 freed, 2 still missing	Nigerian Observer (2025, p.5)

Fig 2: Graph showing incidence of kidnapping, banditry and hostage taking in Etsako West LGA (Feb.2022-Aug.2025) It shows also, the total victims, fatalities, rescued/released, and missing in each hotspot

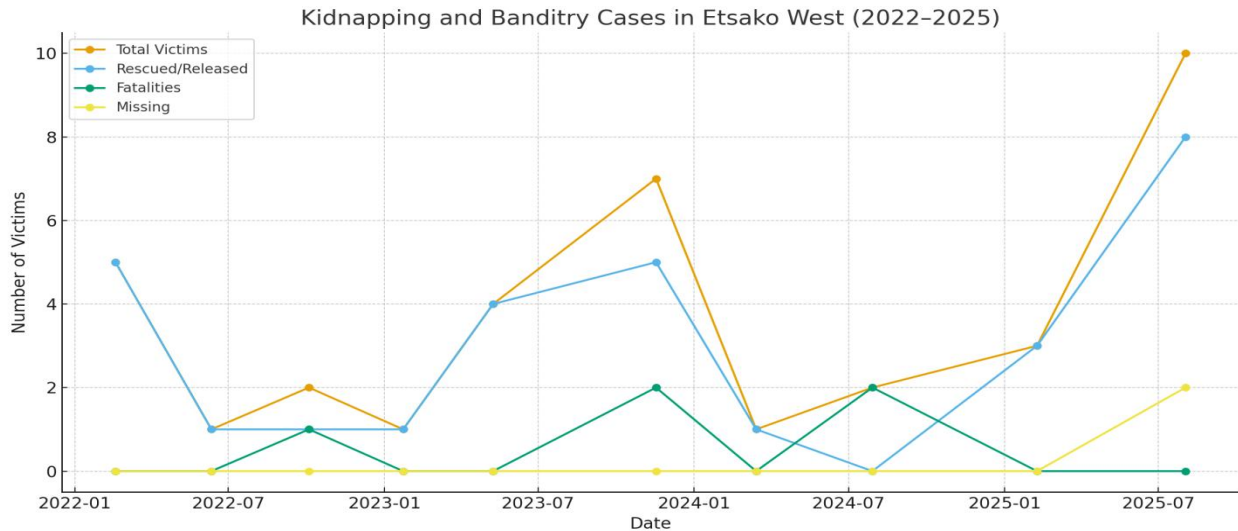
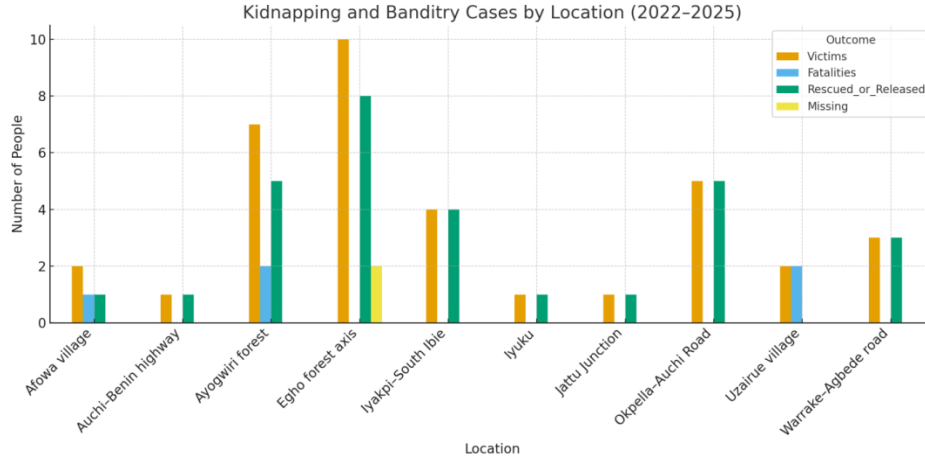


Fig 3: Bar-chart showing incidence of kidnapping, banditry and hostage taking in Etsako WestLGA (from Feb.2022– Aug.2025). It shows also, the total victims, fatalities, rescued/released, and missing in each hotspot



This kidnapping, banditry insecurity and hostage taking along Etsako West LGA corridor have largely resulted to community protests, erosion of local economic activities (notably farmers have abandoned their farms and traders deterred from operating, leading to significant economic losses and deepened poverty), and repeated protests and calls for stronger security responses from state and federal authorities. The community leaders, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and civil society reports reveal that the problem has remained unabated and sometimes intensifies in specific forest road corridors to other neighbouring states like Ondo, Ekiti and Kogi.

The police officers report that the cross-border multiple movement routes from Etsako West LGA northern forests corridor to the neighbouring Ondo, Ekiti and Kogi state forest corridors are what the abductors exploit to relocate victims to their forest camps/hide-outs, immediately after abduction. The police officers also report that the abductors sometimes pose in army uniforms to deceive victims. This has made the problem of kidnapping and banditry in Etsako West LGA corridor remained unabated and sometimes intensified. Another reason is that the vast forests and rugged terrain of Etsako West LGA corridor provide a good forest camps and hideouts for the kidnapers and bandits. Lack of police patrol vehicles and bad roads along the major hot-spots, Auchi-Benin highway; and Auchi-Okene-Abuja highway and other local roads networking communities in Etsako West LGA are other major problems that have made the problem of kidnapping and banditry remained unabated and sometimes intensified.

**Hot-spots & vulnerable corridors**

Based on media reports and the in-depth unstructured interviews conducted with the community leaders, vigilantes, local hunters, youth associations and the

road transport workers union in Auchi, South Ibie, Agbede, Jettu and Avielle, the following locations were recurrently mentioned as hot-spots and vulnerable corridors within Etsako West LGA where kidnapping and banditry are most perpetrated:

- Auchi-Okpella road corridor.
- Auchi-Benin Highway.
- Jettu Junction. Uzairue
- Village road
- Afowa Village corridor.
- Auchi-Afuze road corridor
- Warake-Agbede road corridor
- Auchi-Afuze-Agbede road corridors
- Iyuku road corridor South
- Ibie corridor
- Ayogwiri forest corridor
- Avielle-Agbede road corridor
- Auchi-Okene-Abuja Highway Auchi-
- Agenebode road and Farm Lands

**State and Community Response to Kidnapping, Banditry and Hostage Taking in Etsako West LGA**

The state response to kidnapping and banditry insecurity in Etsako West LGA refers to the activities of the federal security agencies deployed by the Edo State government. The key actors of these security agencies include: the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) Edo State Command with its Divisional Police Headquarters in Auchi, Etsako West LGA. The Nigeria Police Force conducts road patrols, highway checkpoints, and raids on suspected kidnapers and bandits forest camp/hideouts. They also Work covertly with the Department of State Security (DSS) especially because the DSS plays a key role in tracking ransom-related financial flows. Military intervention sometimes reinforces the police operations during peak crises. Their presence is mostly felt notable along Auchi-Benin and Auchi-Okene-Abuja highway hot-spots for kidnapers and bandits. Yet the Nigeria Police Force is faced with the problem of delayed

response because of poor logistics such as lack of patrol vehicles, communication gadgets, surveillance tech, inadequate personnel, and corruption.

The inability of the conventional state policing structures to promptly address the insecurity challenges of the kidnappers and bandits along Etsako West LGA corridor led to a growing demand for community policing as a complementary strategy. Community policing in this context refers to the participatory security framework where the vigilantes, local hunters, youth associations, road transport workers union and traditional rulers collaborate with the Nigeria Police Force to enhance the security along Etsako West LGA corridor. Traditional rulers and youth associations serve as intermediaries between communities and security agencies. They mobilize communal vigilance, local hunters and encourage information sharing, and mediate disputes that could escalate into insecurity (Okechukwu & Adebayo, 2021).

Often times, the vigilante and local hunters are mostly the first to respond in forest search and rescue missions. At times, they also escort farmers to farm to harvest crops. Vigilante and local hunters' networks are the backbone of community policing in Etsako West LGA. They patrol highways, escort farmers, and engage kidnappers and bandits in forest terrains. The establishment of the Edo State Vigilante Network (2020) has formalized these groups, aligning them with state security frameworks (Edo State Government, 2021). On the other hand, local hunters are people with deep knowledge of the forest's terrain. They provide tracking and rescue services and complement the police operations by tracing kidnappers' hideouts and supporting hostage rescue missions (Okoli & Aghedo, 2014).

Residents of communities along the hot-spots (Auchi, South Ibie Agbede, Avielle and Jettu) believe that community policing involving the vigilantes, local hunters, the youth associations and road transport workers union are more effective and reliable than the police in immediate response. Especially, the road transport workers unions (drivers) are also very effective in prompt report of missing commuters and suspicious kidnappers and bandits' forest-camp/ hideout corridors. Local communities are rich in informal intelligence networks. Therefore, Community policing leverages these networks through relationships with traditional rulers, youth leaders, vigilante, local hunters, market associations, road transport workers unions, and other grassroots actors. This improves the flow of real-time information on kidnappers, hotspots and forest camps/ hide-out (Okechukwu & Adebayo, 2021).

Community policing involving the vigilantes, local hunters and the youth associations often operate with locally sourced funding, lacking vehicles, firearms, and communication tools. Rivalries and lack of trust between the police and the vigilantes also hinder their effective operation. These vigilantes, local hunters and the youth associations have legal and ethical issues especially because these groups have always been accused of extra-judicial killings and human rights abuses. They are frequently alleged of compromise with criminal elements thereby weaken their credibility. Another problem is the terrain difficulties. The vast forests in Etsako West LGA corridor provide natural hideouts, limiting the reach of community police patrol.

The residents of communities along the hot-spots (Auchi, South Ibie Agbede, Avielle and Jettu) have staged a number of protests over the increase in abductions and ransom demands of kidnappers and bandits along their corridors and over perceived lapses in the state policing and prosecution of apprehended kidnappers and bandits. For example, these protests have largely signified eroding confidence in the state security institutions. Especially, where rescue of victims fails or where life is lost after paying ransom, community protests and demands for action have always become immediate community response to the menace.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Etsako West LGA, located in Edo North Senatorial District, has in recent years witnessed a rise in kidnapping and banditry, especially along the major transit corridors such as the Auchi -Okpella Road, Auchi-Benin Highway, Auchi-Okene-Abuja Highway, and other local roads and farm lands. Kidnapping and banditry in Etsako West LGA represent both a direct security threat and a driver of socio-economic deterioration of the affected communities. These incidences threaten trade, farming, and social life of the people thereby making security a central concern in the LGA. Social/economic impacts of this insecurity have resulted to loss of life, disruption of social life, schools and economic activities, especially farming.

State's response to kidnapping and banditry insecurity in Etsako West LGA includes the Nigeria police, Department of State Security (DSS) and sometime with Military interventions. But the inability of these conventional state policing structures to promptly address the insecurity challenges led to protests and growing demand for community policing. Community

policing in this context refers to the participatory security framework where the vigilantes, local hunters, youth associations, road transport workers union and traditional rulers collaborate with the Nigeria Police Force to enhance the security along Etsako West LGA corridor. Yet the insecurity persisted due to the rugged and forest terrains corridor along the major transit routes to the neighbouring Ondo, Ekiti and Kogi state forests corridor, where the kidnapers and bandits have their forest camps/hideouts

Following these, the study recommends the need to repair bad roads along the major hot-spots, Auchi-Benin highway; and Auchi-Okene-Abuja highway and other local roads networking communities in Etsako West LGA corridor, create permanent checkpoints and provide police patrol vehicles to enhance persistent police patrols with Military interventions especially on Auchi-Benin highway, Auchi-Okene-Abuja highway and other local roads networking communities within Etsako West LGA corridor, during the high-risk hours of dawn to dusk. To create and publicize emergency hotlines for travellers travelling along Etsako West LGA corridor for them to contact the police for emergency response. And above all, to use combined land and aerial surveillance gadgets where feasible to detect the forest camp/hideouts of the kidnapers and bandits to effectively curb kidnapping and banditry in Etsako West LGA.

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