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HISBAH AND COMMUNITY POLICING AS COMPLEMENTARY STRATEGIES FOR COMBATING ARMED BANDITRY IN NORTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Armed banditry has emerged as one of the most severe security threats confronting Northwestern Nigeria, resulting in widespread killings, kidnappings, cattle rustling, destruction of livelihoods, forced displacement, and the erosion of public confidence in state security institutions. This paper examined the complementary roles of *Hisbah* and community policing in combating armed banditry in Northwestern Nigeria. Adopting a qualitative doctrinal research design, the study relies on documentary analysis of classical Islamic sources, relevant legislation, government reports, and contemporary scholarly literature on security governance, Islamic jurisprudence, and community policing. The paper argued that the institution of *Hisbah*, founded on the Islamic principles of *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong), justice (*'adl*), public trust (*amānah*), consultation (*shūrā*), social solidarity (*takāful*), and the objectives of the *Shari'ah* (*Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah*), provides a strong ethical and institutional foundation for supporting community policing initiatives. It further revealed that effective collaboration between *Hisbah* organizations, the Nigeria Police Force, traditional institutions, religious leaders, and local communities can significantly enhance intelligence gathering, early warning mechanisms, public confidence, and preventive security measures against armed banditry. Challenges such as inadequate legal frameworks, limited operational capacity, insufficient funding, inter-agency rivalry, political interference, and weak community trust tend to constrain the effectiveness of these collaborative efforts. The paper concluded that integrating the moral authority of *Hisbah* with the participatory framework of community policing offers a culturally relevant, ethically grounded, and sustainable strategy for addressing armed banditry and strengthening community security in

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Northwestern Nigeria. It recommended institutional collaboration, capacity building, legal reforms, and sustained community engagement to enhance the effectiveness of this integrated security model in promoting lasting peace, justice, and social stability.

Keywords: Hisbah, Community Policing, Armed Banditry, Northwestern Nigeria.

Introduction

Security remains one of the foremost responsibilities of every government because the protection of lives, property, and human dignity constitutes the foundation of sustainable development, political stability, and socioeconomic prosperity. No society can achieve meaningful progress in an atmosphere characterized by violence, fear, and persistent insecurity. In recent years, however, Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented escalation of diverse security threats, including terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, communal conflicts, farmer-herder clashes, secessionist agitations, and, most significantly, armed banditry. Among these challenges, armed banditry has become one of the most devastating forms of organized criminality in Northwestern Nigeria, particularly Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kaduna, and parts of Niger State. The activities of armed bandits have resulted in thousands of deaths, mass displacement of rural populations, destruction of agricultural livelihoods, closure of schools, disruption of commercial activities, and the creation of an enduring climate of fear and uncertainty. Banditry in Northwestern Nigeria was originally associated with cattle rustling and rural armed robbery within a short time, it evolved into a sophisticated criminal enterprise involving kidnapping for ransom, illegal taxation of rural communities, village raids, sexual violence, destruction of public infrastructure, and attacks on security personnel. The increasing sophistication of these criminal networks is facilitated by widespread poverty, youth unemployment, weak governance, porous international borders, proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, environmental degradation, and the existence of vast forest reserves that serve as operational bases for criminal groups. These multidimensional drivers have exposed the limitations of conventional security responses that rely predominantly on military operations and centralized policing (Okoli, Al Chukwuma, 2018).

Despite sustained efforts by the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police Force, and other security agencies, armed banditry has continued to persist. It indicates that coercive measures alone cannot provide a lasting solution to the crisis. It is worthy of note that effective crime prevention requires active collaboration between security institutions and the communities they serve. This realization has brought community policing to the forefront of modern security governance as a participatory approach that emphasizes trust-building, intelligence sharing, community engagement, conflict prevention, and joint responsibility for maintaining public safety. Through partnerships involving law enforcement agencies, traditional rulers, civil society organizations, religious institutions, and local residents, community policing seeks to address both the immediate manifestations and the underlying causes of insecurity. Parallel to modern security approach is the Islamic institution of *Hisbah*, which has historically served as a mechanism for promoting public morality, social justice, market regulation, conflict resolution, and community welfare within Islamic governance. Derived from the Qur'anic principle of *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (literally translated as: commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong), *Hisbah* represents a proactive system of public accountability that encourages collective responsibility for safeguarding society against corruption, injustice, and social disorder. Throughout Islamic history, the institution of *Hisbah* functioned not only as a regulatory

mechanism but also as an instrument for preserving public order, protecting vulnerable members of society, and strengthening the relationship between the governing authority and the community (Yusufari, 2020). In several states of Northern Nigeria, *Hisbah* organizations continue to play important roles in public enlightenment, mediation, conflict management, crime prevention, and the promotion of social harmony.

Conceptual Clarifications

- i. **Hisbah:** Hisbah is one of the most significant institutions of Islamic public administration, established to safeguard public morality, promote social justice, protect public interests, and maintain peace and order within society. Linguistically, the Arabic word *hisbah* is derived from the root *ḥasaba*, meaning "to reckon," "to account," or "to seek reward from Allah." In Islamic jurisprudence, however, the term assumes a broader institutional meaning that encompasses public supervision, accountability, and the promotion of societal welfare through the implementation of the Qur'ānic injunction of *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*; translated as: commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Classical Muslim jurists defined Hisbah from both legal and administrative perspectives. Al-Māwardī (1996) defines Hisbah as "the duty of commanding what is right when its abandonment becomes apparent and forbidding what is wrong when its commission becomes manifest" (p. 240). This definition portrays *Hisbah* as a preventive institution established to preserve public order by ensuring that societal conduct conforms to Islamic ethical and legal standards. Similarly, Ibn Khaldūn (1967) described *Hisbah* as "a religious office included among those instituted to promote good and prevent evil," emphasizing that its objective is to supervise public affairs in accordance with the *Sharī'ah* (p. 461). Ibn Taymiyyah (1983) broadened the scope of *Hisbah* by asserting that its fundamental purpose is the realization of justice and public welfare (*maṣlahah*) through the elimination of corruption (*fasād*) and oppression. According to him, "the objective of authority in Islam is to establish justice among people and to command the good that Allah has commanded and forbid the evil that He has prohibited" (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1983, p. 15). Modern scholars equally regard *Hisbah* as a comprehensive regulatory institution. For instance Kamali (2008) observed that *Hisbah* constitutes "an institutional mechanism for ensuring compliance with ethical standards in both public and private life" (p. 192). The conceptual foundation of *Hisbah* is deeply rooted in the glorious Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW). Allah commands, "Let there arise from among you a group inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and they are the successful" (Qur'ān 3:104). Similarly, Allah (SWT) describes the Muslim community as, "The best nation produced for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah" (Qur'ān 3:110). These verses establish collective responsibility for promoting righteousness and preventing wrongdoing as an essential characteristic of Islamic society. The Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) further institutionalized this obligation when he stated, "Whoever among you sees an evil should change it with his hand; if he is unable, then with his tongue; and if he is unable, then with his heart and that is the weakest of faith" (Muslim, 2000, Hadith No. 49). This Prophetic tradition establishes varying levels of responsibility according to one's authority and capability, thereby providing the ethical basis for organized public institutions such as Hisbah.
- ii. **Community Policing:** Community policing has emerged as one of the most influential policing philosophies in contemporary criminal justice and security governance. It developed as a response to the limitations of traditional policing models, which largely

emphasized reactive law enforcement, centralized decision-making, and incident-based responses to crime. Rather than focusing exclusively on arresting offenders after crimes have been committed, community policing advocates proactive crime prevention through collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. It recognizes that sustainable security cannot be achieved by the police alone but requires active participation, trust, and shared responsibility among government institutions, traditional authorities, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and citizens. Scholars have offered diverse but complementary definitions of community policing. Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1990) defined community policing as "a philosophy and organizational strategy that promotes a new partnership between people and their police" (p. 5). According to the authors, the philosophy seeks to improve public safety by encouraging collaborative efforts to identify, prioritize, and solve community problems that contribute to crime and social disorder. This definition underscores the importance of public participation and partnership in achieving effective policing outcomes. In Nigeria, community policing has become a central component of policing reforms aimed at addressing the country's growing insecurity. The Nigeria Police Force formally adopted community policing to strengthen public confidence, improve intelligence gathering, encourage community participation, and enhance crime prevention. The approach seeks to transform the relationship between the police and citizens from one characterized by suspicion and fear to one founded on mutual trust, cooperation, transparency, and shared responsibility (Alemika, 2009). This transformation has become particularly important in Northwestern Nigeria, where armed banditry has exposed the limitations of conventional security responses.

Armed Banditry in Northwestern Nigeria

Armed banditry has become one of the most devastating forms of organized criminal violence confronting Nigeria, particularly in the Northwestern geopolitical zone. Although the phenomenon is not entirely new, its intensity, sophistication, and geographical spread have increased significantly over the last decade, transforming it from isolated incidents of cattle rustling into a complex security crisis with profound humanitarian, economic, and political consequences. Today, armed banditry is characterized by coordinated attacks on rural communities, mass kidnappings for ransom, cattle rustling, village raids, highway robberies, sexual violence, destruction of farmlands, illegal taxation of local populations, and attacks on security personnel. The term banditry generally refers to organized criminal activities perpetrated by armed groups outside the authority of the state for economic, political, or social gains. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2023), organized armed criminal groups frequently exploit weak governance structures, limited law enforcement capacity, and difficult terrains to establish operational bases from which they engage in violent criminal enterprises. In the Nigerian context, armed banditry has evolved beyond ordinary criminality into a highly organized network involving sophisticated weaponry, intelligence sharing among criminal groups, transnational arms trafficking, and extensive financial operations driven largely by kidnapping for ransom. The Northwestern region, comprising of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto, Kebbi, Jigawa, and parts of Niger State has become the epicentre of armed banditry in Nigeria. The vast forest reserves of Rugu, Kamuku, Falgore, Kuyanbana, Sububu, and Dumburum have provided strategic hideouts for criminal groups, enabling them to launch attacks on surrounding communities while evading security operations. The difficult terrain, porous international

borders with neighbouring Niger Republic, and inadequate state presence have further strengthened the operational capabilities of these groups (International Crisis Group, 2020).

Causes and Dynamics of Armed Banditry

The persistence of armed banditry in Northwestern Nigeria cannot be attributed to a single factor; rather, it is the outcome of complex socioeconomic, political, environmental, institutional, and transnational dynamics. One of the most significant drivers is widespread poverty and youth unemployment (World Bank, 2022). Despite the region's enormous agricultural potential, limited economic opportunities, declining rural livelihoods, and inadequate social welfare programmes have left many young people vulnerable to recruitment by criminal networks. As World Bank (2022) reports indicated, persistent rural poverty continues to fuel social exclusion and increase the attractiveness of criminal enterprises among unemployed youths. Weak governance and limited state capacity have also contributed significantly to the proliferation of banditry. In many rural communities, the absence of effective policing, inadequate judicial institutions, corruption, and poor public service delivery have created governance vacuums that criminal groups readily exploit. Where citizens perceive state institutions as ineffective or inaccessible, public confidence declines, thereby weakening cooperation between communities and security agencies (Alemika, 2009).

Environmental factors equally play an important role in explaining the emergence of armed banditry. Desertification, climate change, deforestation, shrinking grazing reserves, and increasing competition over land and water resources have intensified conflicts between farmers and pastoralists across Northwestern Nigeria. While many of these disputes initially revolved around access to natural resources, prolonged violence, revenge attacks, and the proliferation of firearms have transformed several conflicts into organized criminal enterprises. Okoli and Lenshie (2018) observed that environmental insecurity has significantly contributed to rural violence by intensifying livelihood competition and weakening traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms. Another critical factor is the widespread proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. Nigeria's porous borders facilitate illegal arms trafficking from neighbouring countries experiencing political instability, thereby enabling criminal groups to acquire sophisticated weapons. These weapons have substantially enhanced the operational capacity of armed bandits, allowing them to confront security agencies directly, attack heavily populated communities, and resist military operations (UNODC, 2023). The commercialization of kidnapping has further transformed the dynamics of banditry. What initially emerged as localized criminal activities has evolved into a lucrative criminal economy in which ransom payments finance weapons procurement, recruitment, logistics, and territorial expansion. In several instances, attacks on educational institutions, highways, markets, and rural settlements are strategically planned to maximize financial returns through ransom negotiations. This criminal economy has strengthened the organizational resilience of bandit groups and complicated government efforts to suppress their activities.

Socioeconomic and Security Implications

The consequences of armed banditry have been devastating for individuals, communities, and the Nigerian state. The most immediate impact is the widespread loss of human life. Thousands of civilians, security personnel, and community leaders have been killed, while many others have sustained physical injuries and long-term psychological trauma. Kidnappings, sexual violence, forced displacement, and destruction of homes have created

one of the most severe humanitarian crises in contemporary Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2020). Agriculture, which constitutes the primary source of livelihood in Northwestern Nigeria, has been severely disrupted. Fear of attacks has forced many farmers to abandon their farmlands, leading to declining agricultural productivity, food shortages, and increasing food prices. In some communities, armed bandits impose illegal taxes on farmers before permitting access to their farmlands, thereby undermining rural livelihoods and worsening poverty (Ojo *et al.*, 2024).

The educational sector has also suffered enormous setbacks. Numerous schools have been closed following repeated attacks on students and teachers, while mass abductions from educational institutions have generated widespread fear among parents and disrupted children's access to education. The resulting increase in school dropouts threatens long-term human capital development and socioeconomic progress within the region. Economically, armed banditry has discouraged domestic and foreign investment, disrupted transportation networks, reduced commercial activities, and increased the cost of doing business. Frequent attacks on highways have impeded the movement of goods and services, thereby affecting regional and national economic growth. Rural markets, which serve as important centres of agricultural trade, have similarly experienced declining patronage due to persistent insecurity. Perhaps more significantly, the activities of armed bandits have weakened public confidence in government institutions and conventional security agencies. Communities that repeatedly experience attacks despite military deployments often develop feelings of abandonment and mistrust toward the state. This erosion of confidence has, in some instances, encouraged the emergence of self-help security arrangements, vigilante groups, and informal community defence mechanisms.

Curbing Armed Banditry through Community-Based Security Responses

The complexity of armed banditry demonstrates that military force alone cannot provide a sustainable solution to the crisis. While kinetic operations remain necessary for dismantling criminal networks, they must be complemented by preventive and community-based strategies that address the underlying drivers of insecurity. It is worthy of note that effective responses require collaboration among security agencies, traditional institutions, religious leaders, civil society organizations, and local communities to improve intelligence gathering, conflict prevention, and public trust (Baker, 2008). Within this context, community policing provides an important institutional framework for strengthening local participation in security governance. Residents possess valuable knowledge regarding their communities, including geographical terrain, suspicious movements, and emerging threats, making them indispensable partners in crime prevention. Similarly, Hisbah institutions, particularly within predominantly Muslim communities of Northwestern Nigeria, possess significant moral authority and grassroots legitimacy that can support public enlightenment, mediation, intelligence sharing, and conflict prevention. From an Islamic perspective, armed banditry represents a grave violation of the objectives of the Shari'ah (*Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah*), particularly the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), and human dignity. The glorious Qur'ān unequivocally condemns corruption and violence on earth, declaring, "Indeed, the recompense of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive to spread corruption in the land is that they be killed or crucified or have their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides or be exiled from the land" (Qur'ān 5:33).

This verse underscores Islam's strong condemnation of organized violence, terror, and criminality that threaten public peace and security. Likewise, Allah commands believers,

"And do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order" (Qur'ān 7:56). These divine injunctions establish the preservation of public order as a fundamental objective of Islamic governance and provide the ethical foundation for collaborative security initiatives. Consequently, integrating Hisbah with community policing offers a culturally responsive and morally grounded approach to combating armed banditry by promoting justice (*'adl*), consultation (*shūrā*), public trust (*amānah*), social solidarity (*takāful*), and collective responsibility. Such an integrated framework strengthens both preventive and responsive security measures while fostering sustainable peace and resilience in Northwestern Nigeria.

Role of Hisbah in Supporting Community Policing Against Banditry

One of the foremost roles of *Hisbah* is community sensitization and public enlightenment. Through sermons, public lectures, religious gatherings, and media engagements, Hisbah officials educate members of the public on the Islamic prohibition of murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, extortion, and all forms of violence. Such enlightenment programmes reinforce moral consciousness, discourage sympathy for criminal groups, and promote peaceful coexistence. This role aligns with the Qur'ānic injunction to "*cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression*" (Qur'ān 5:2), thereby strengthening community support for lawful security initiatives. Owing to their close interaction with local communities, Hisbah personnel often possess valuable knowledge of community dynamics, emerging tensions, suspicious movements, and potential security threats. Through structured collaboration with the Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies, such information can improve intelligence-led policing, facilitate timely intervention, and prevent attacks before they occur. This complements the philosophy of community policing, which relies heavily on community participation and local intelligence in preventing crime (Skogan, 2006). Many security challenges in Northwestern Nigeria originate from unresolved disputes involving farmers and herders, families, ethnic groups, or neighbouring communities. Hisbah institutions frequently engage in mediation and reconciliation using Islamic principles of justice (*'adl*), consultation (*shūrā*), and peaceful settlement of disputes. By resolving conflicts at their early stages, Hisbah reduces the likelihood of violence that criminal groups may later exploit for recruitment or expansion.

Hisbah further supports community policing through strengthening moral discipline and social responsibility. The institution promotes the values of honesty, accountability (*amānah*), mutual assistance (*takāful*), and collective responsibility, thereby encouraging citizens to reject criminality and cooperate with security agencies. The Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) stated: "Whoever among you sees an evil should change it with his hand; if he is unable, then with his tongue; and if he is unable, then with his heart" (Muslim, 2000). This Prophetic guidance reinforces the responsibility of every member of society to contribute to the prevention of crime within lawful limits. In addition, *Hisbah* serves as an important bridge between communities and security institutions. In many rural areas where public confidence in conventional security agencies has been weakened by fear, mistrust, or inadequate state presence, Hisbah can facilitate communication, encourage voluntary information sharing, and strengthen cooperation between citizens and law enforcement agencies. Its familiarity with local customs, religious values, and traditional leadership structures enhances its effectiveness in mobilizing communities against armed banditry. Hisbah also collaborates with traditional rulers, religious scholars, youth groups, women's associations, and civil society organizations in promoting peacebuilding and social cohesion. Such multi-stakeholder engagement strengthens community resilience against criminal

infiltration and supports the objectives of community policing through coordinated awareness campaigns, neighbourhood vigilance, and community conflict management. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of *Hisbah* in supporting community policing depends on clearly defined legal mandates, adequate institutional capacity, professional training, respect for constitutional provisions, and effective coordination with formal security agencies. *Hisbah* should function as a complementary institution rather than a substitute for statutory law enforcement. Its activities must therefore remain within the confines of the law while upholding the principles of justice, human rights, accountability, and the rule of law.

Challenges of Integrating Hisbah and Community Policing

- i. Absence of clearly defined Legal and operational Framework: One of the foremost challenges is the absence of a clearly defined legal and operational framework governing collaboration between *Hisbah* organizations and formal security agencies. While *Hisbah* Boards are established by State laws in some northern states, their mandates, powers, and operational procedures vary considerably. This lack of uniformity often creates jurisdictional ambiguities, overlapping responsibilities, and uncertainty regarding the extent of *Hisbah*'s involvement in security operations (Yusufari, 2020).
- ii. Inter-agency Rivalry: Another major challenge is inter-agency rivalry and inadequate institutional coordination. Differences in organizational culture, command structures, and operational priorities sometimes hinder effective cooperation between *Hisbah* personnel, the Nigeria Police Force, the military, civil defence, and other security agencies. Such institutional fragmentation weakens intelligence sharing, delays coordinated responses, and reduces the overall effectiveness of community-based security initiatives (Alemika, 2009).
- iii. Inadequate funding and logistical support: Inadequate funding and logistical support also constitute serious obstacles. Many *Hisbah* organizations operate with limited financial resources, insufficient personnel, inadequate training, poor mobility, and lack of modern communication equipment. These limitations reduce their capacity to conduct community sensitization, gather intelligence, monitor security developments, and effectively support conventional policing operations, particularly in remote rural communities. The challenge of public perception and religious diversity equally deserves attention. While *Hisbah* enjoys considerable legitimacy in predominantly Muslim communities, concerns may arise among non-Muslim populations regarding inclusiveness, neutrality, and the scope of its activities. Consequently, any collaborative security framework must operate within constitutional provisions, uphold the rights of all citizens, and ensure that security services remain impartial, professional, and free from religious discrimination. Another important limitation is the fear of reprisals from armed bandits, which discourages many community members from providing intelligence to either *Hisbah* or formal security agencies. Weak witness protection mechanisms, inadequate confidentiality, and previous incidents of information leakage have undermined public confidence and reduced voluntary community participation in security efforts (Tyler, 2006). Furthermore, political interference has occasionally affected the operations of both community policing initiatives and *Hisbah* institutions. The politicization of security structures, inconsistent government policies, and changes in political leadership often disrupt institutional continuity, weaken public trust, and compromise operational independence. The growing sophistication of armed bandit groups presents another significant challenge. Many bandit networks possess advanced

firearms, communication technologies, extensive financial resources, and transnational criminal connections that exceed the operational capacity of community-based institutions. Consequently, Hisbah and community policing alone cannot effectively confront heavily armed criminal organizations without the sustained support of conventional security agencies and intelligence services.

Prospects for an Integrated Security Framework

One major prospect lies in improved intelligence gathering and early warning systems. *Hisbah* personnel, traditional rulers, religious leaders, and community members possess intimate knowledge of local environments, social networks, and emerging security threats. Their collaboration with formal security agencies can facilitate timely information sharing, improve surveillance, and enable proactive responses to criminal activities before they escalate into violent attacks. Intelligence-led policing remains one of the most effective strategies for dismantling organized criminal networks and preventing armed banditry. Another important prospect is the strengthening of public trust and community participation. Community confidence in security institutions is essential for effective policing. Integrating *Hisbah* into community policing can bridge the gap between security agencies and local populations by utilizing the moral authority and grassroots legitimacy of religious and traditional institutions. This approach encourages voluntary cooperation, enhances public confidence, and promotes collective ownership of community security initiatives (Tyler, 2006). The integrated framework also provides opportunities for preventive security through public enlightenment and peacebuilding. *Hisbah* organizations, in collaboration with Islamic scholars and traditional leaders, can intensify awareness campaigns on the Islamic prohibition of violence, kidnapping, extortion, and other criminal activities while promoting values of justice (*'adl*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), consultation (*shūrā*), and social solidarity (*takāful*). These ethical values complement the objectives of community policing by fostering responsible citizenship and strengthening social cohesion.

Conclusion

Armed banditry remains one of the most formidable security challenges confronting Northwestern Nigeria, with devastating consequences on human lives, livelihoods, socioeconomic development, and public confidence in state institutions. This paper has demonstrated that while conventional security operations remain indispensable, they are insufficient on their own to address the complex and evolving nature of banditry. Sustainable security requires a complementary approach that combines professional law enforcement with active community participation, ethical leadership, and locally grounded security mechanisms. The study has shown that *Hisbah* and community policing share common objectives of crime prevention, intelligence gathering, conflict resolution, public accountability, and the protection of life and property. Rooted in the Islamic principles of *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, justice (*'adl*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), consultation (*shūrā*), social solidarity (*takāful*), and the objectives of the *Sharī'ah* (*Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah*), *Hisbah* provides a strong ethical and community-based foundation that complements the participatory philosophy of community policing. Together, these institutions can strengthen intelligence-led policing, enhance public trust, promote community resilience, and support preventive security strategies against armed banditry. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this complementary relationship depends on addressing existing challenges, including weak institutional coordination, inadequate funding, legal ambiguities, political interference, and limited public confidence. Consequently, integrating

Hisbah with community policing within a well-defined legal and operational framework offers a culturally responsive, ethically grounded, and sustainable model of security governance. Such an integrated approach not only contributes to the suppression of armed banditry but also advances the broader goals of peacebuilding, social cohesion, justice, and sustainable development in Northwestern Nigeria.

Recommendations

- i. **Federal and State Governments** should establish a clear legal and institutional framework that facilitates effective collaboration between Hisbah organizations, the Nigeria Police Force, other security agencies, and community stakeholders. Adequate funding, modern logistics, intelligence infrastructure, and continuous capacity building should also be provided to enhance the effectiveness of integrated community security initiatives.
- ii. **The Nigeria Police Force, Hisbah Boards, and Other Security Agencies** should strengthen inter-agency cooperation through regular intelligence sharing, joint community engagement programmes, coordinated patrols, and professional training. Such collaboration should be guided by constitutional provisions, respect for human rights, and clearly defined operational responsibilities to eliminate institutional rivalry and improve security outcomes.
- iii. **Traditional Rulers, Religious Leaders, and Hisbah Officials** should intensify community sensitization and public enlightenment on the Islamic prohibition of banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling, and other violent crimes. They should continue to promote the values of justice (*ʿadl*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), consultation (*shūrā*), social solidarity (*takāful*), peaceful coexistence, and collective responsibility as essential foundations for sustainable peace and security.
- iv. **Community Members and Civil Society Organizations** should regard security as a shared responsibility by actively supporting lawful community policing initiatives, reporting suspicious activities through appropriate channels, rejecting all forms of collaboration with criminal groups, and participating in peacebuilding, neighbourhood vigilance, and conflict prevention programmes.
- v. **Governments, Development Partners, and Educational Institutions** should address the structural drivers of armed banditry through sustainable socioeconomic interventions, including youth employment, vocational skills acquisition, quality education, poverty reduction programmes, rural infrastructure development, and civic education. Tackling these underlying factors will reduce the vulnerability of young people to criminal recruitment and strengthen long-term community resilience against insecurity.

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