

**AN ASSESSMENT OF VIGILANTE GROUPS EFFECTIVENESS IN CURBING
HERDSMEN VIOLENCE AND KIDNAPPING IN DELTA STATE: A STUDY OF
ETHIOPE EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA.**

ADOGBEJI, Oghenenyerhovwo Elvis, Ph.D
Department of International Relations
Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba
Oghenenyerhovwo.adogbeji@dou.edu.ng
08065264623,

NIKORO, Felix
Department of International Relations
Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba
nikorofelix@gmail.com
+2348135110576

&

OLISEMEKE, Chukwudi Solomon
Department of Political Science
Delta State University, Abraka
olisemekechukwudijr@gmail.com
+2348078548137

ABSTRACT

This study assesses the effectiveness of vigilante groups in curbing herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Delta State, with particular focus on Ethiope East Local Government Area. The increasing cases of violent clashes between herdsmen and local communities, alongside the rising incidents of kidnapping, have posed severe threats to peace, security, and socio-economic development in the region. The inability of conventional security agencies to adequately address these challenges has led to the emergence and reliance on vigilante groups as complementary security actors in many rural and semi-urban communities. Routine Activity Theory was used to explain the roles and effectiveness of the roles vigilante groups are playing in the war against herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiope East Local Government Area. Simple percentage and chi-square was used to test the hypotheses while 482 sampled respondents completed a structured questionnaire that was used to collect data from respondents. The study finds that vigilante groups have played major roles in the war against herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiope east. The study also finds that vigilante groups deployed strategies against herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiope East Local Government Area is helping to reduce the frequent activities of herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiope East Local Government Area. The study recommend among others the need for Government to provide adequate training, modern security gadgets, and financial support to vigilante groups in Ethiope East Local Government Area to enhance their effectiveness in combating herdsmen violence and kidnapping.

Keywords: Vigilante, Herdsmen, Kidnapping, Security, Violence, Ethiope East.

INTRODUCTION

The rising wave of insecurity in Nigeria has become a critical national concern, particularly in rural communities where herdsmen violence and kidnapping have threatened peace, social stability, and economic activities. Delta State, like many other parts of the country, has witnessed increasing incidences of clashes between herders and farmers, cattle rustling, banditry, and abductions for ransom, which have left devastating impacts on lives and livelihoods (Adogbeji, Ushurhe & Okonkwo, 2024). The conventional security agencies such as the police and military, though constitutionally mandated to ensure safety, often face challenges of manpower shortage, limited logistics, and poor community integration. This situation has necessitated the emergence of non-state security actors, notably vigilante groups, as a complementary force to state security structures in addressing grassroots insecurity.

Vigilante groups in Nigeria are locally organized security outfits formed by community members to protect lives and property within their jurisdiction. Their roles have become more pronounced in rural and semi-urban areas where formal security presence is weak or overstretched (Adelani, 2024). In Delta State, and specifically within Ethiope East Local Government Area, vigilante groups have gained recognition as critical stakeholders in maintaining peace and order, especially against the backdrop of herdsmen-related conflicts and the surge in kidnapping incidents. Their activities range from surveillance and intelligence gathering to direct confrontation with criminals, often carried out with limited resources and high personal risk. The assessment of their effectiveness is, therefore, a necessary academic and practical undertaking.

The violent clashes between herders and farmers in Ethiope East are deeply rooted in competition over land and natural resources. The destruction of farmlands by cattle, threats to food security, and the displacement of rural dwellers have aggravated the situation, fueling resentment and insecurity. Alongside these tensions, kidnapping for ransom has emerged as a lucrative criminal venture, affecting traders, students, farmers, and travelers. These twin threats have created an atmosphere of fear and vulnerability, compelling communities to embrace vigilante groups as immediate responders to security challenges. By leveraging their knowledge of local terrain and strong community ties, these groups have stepped into a gap left by conventional security agencies.

However, despite their relevance, questions remain about the actual effectiveness, sustainability, and legality of vigilante groups in dealing with complex security threats. Critics argue that vigilante operations are often informal, poorly regulated, and prone to abuse of power, including human rights violations. In some cases, lack of coordination with formal security agencies undermines their impact, while insufficient training and equipment limit their capacity to confront sophisticated criminal elements. On the other hand, proponents highlight their community-based approach, quick response time, and deterrent effect as evidence of their importance in grassroots security management (Adamu, Buba & Tukur, 2023). An empirical assessment is therefore essential to provide a balanced understanding of their contributions and strategies. In light of these considerations, this study seeks to critically assess the effectiveness of vigilante groups in curbing herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiope East Local Government Area. By examining their strategies and outcomes, the research aims to provide evidence-based insights into their role in community security.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- i. Examine the role of vigilante groups in completing community policing to curb herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.
- ii. Assess the effectiveness of vigilante group strategies in curbing herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

- i. There is no significant relationship between vigilante group role and the war against herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.
- ii. There is no significant effectiveness in vigilante group effort to end herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government area.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

CONCEPT OF VIGILANTE GROUP

According to Usman (2014), the concept of vigilantism originated in the United States in the early 1970s, when it was discovered that individuals and neighborhood organizations might contribute to their own security. This period saw the implementation of programs such as neighborhood watch, home security, and personal safety training, and so on. The modern concept of vigilante groups first emerged in America and Europe in the early 1980s, when it became clear that the best way to ensure a relatively crime-free society was to establish a joint cooperation between a professional police service and a responsible public. Vigilante groups are acts of policing based on the idea that by collaborating in innovative ways, police and people may tackle modern community problems such as crime, fear of crime, social and physical disorder, and general neighborhood conditions. The ideology is based on the premise that accomplishing these objectives will need the Police developing a new relationship with residents, giving them the authority to establish local police priorities and involve them in efforts to enhance the general quality of life in their communities. Vigilante moves police work away from random criminal calls and toward addressing community problems (Anderson 2005).

According to Brainard & Derrick-Mills (2011), a vigilante group is a police belief or intention that they should consult with and consider the wishes of the public when determining and evaluating operational policing policy and practice, as well as collaborate with the public whenever possible to solve local problems.

Chukwuma (2002) observed that the police's inability or total lack of commitment to responding adequately to the safety and security needs of citizens in various communities led to citizens resorting to self-help measures, also known as informal policing or 'community initiated policing', as Scharf (2000) defined it. Owumi and Ajayi (2013), on the other hand, stated that neighbourhood watch organizations and vigilante groups continue to operate efficiently, and people consult them on security matters, most likely due to the perceived ineffectiveness and inefficiency of official law enforcement agencies. This position is similar to that of Burton et.al (2003), who believed that individuals rely on vigilante services because they are afraid of crime and have lost faith in the state's capacity to protect them.

According to Alemika & Chukwuma (2003), vigilante groups are committed to their duty, and this level of commitment and effectiveness stems primarily from the fact that the

members are from the communities in which they operate; they also have a determination to ensure security, a vested interest in crime reduction, and are controlled and accountable to the community. The creation and expansion of community-based vigilante security organizations at the local and state levels in Nigeria is a result of the overall sense of insecurity and the poor performance of conventional police. In other words, these institutions arose to address an unmet need.

Olaniyi (2002) has noticed that in many parts of Nigeria, parallel local organizations and vigilante groups have been significantly more effective in tackling crime than state law enforcement forces. They also stated that in certain situations, communities trust vigilante organizations more than the police because of the effective, dependable, and timely manner in which they address criminal concerns. Because of the Nigeria Police's failings, many Nigerian communities no longer rely on the police for protection, instead resorting to uncontrolled and violent revenge against alleged sources of collective risk.

THE ACTIVITIES OF VIGILANTE GROUPS IN NIGERIA

According to Abrahansen and Williams (2005), the limited governmental capacity to guarantee public safety and security has resulted in citizen self-help solutions, including vigilantism, as well as a quick increase in business security. The public's desire for vigilantism may be seen as a response to widespread negative perceptions that the police, courts, and other governmental institutions were too corrupt to reduce crime. Vigilante groups, which have been viewed as a better alternative to the police, refer to some members of an official or unofficial group within a community who work with the police to maintain law and order in the community and prevent crime; the group may or may not have government support (Smith 2007).

Furthermore, according to Alemika and Chukwuma (2000), the rise of vigilante organizations, as well as the fact that several states of the federation have approved and strongly supported the function of vigilante groups, suggests that their operations are respected. However, a number of severe concerns have been raised by researchers and well-meaning citizens about the country's operational logistics. Vigilante groups have been rapidly expanding in Nigeria due to a shift in emphasis from traditional policing, which focuses on deterring crime and apprehending suspects, to one that is focused on police community partnership in solving the problem of crime in society. These concerns range from the character of the vigilante members, the manner of admission of the members, the training they receive, the remuneration and upkeep of the same, the power relationship between the members and the citizens, to the allegiance of the members to the State authority and the degree of cooperation between the groups and the conventional security forces of the State (Adelani, 2024).

Unlike the Nigeria Police Force, which was formed in 1930 when regional police forces were merged, the vigilante groups emerged as a single body in 1989 and became a full-fledged organization in 1999 after being registered as an NGO with the Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria (Adamu, Buba & Tukur, 2023). The Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) continues to demand recognition from the Nigerian government. It is vital to understand that a country like Nigeria is plagued by various forms of crises, including ethnic, religious, political, and even land-related disputes. Vigilante organizations have the potential to play an important role in conflict prevention and resolution (Adam 2016).

OVERVIEW OF SECURITY

Security is one of the most important topics in the existence of any country. It has attracted discourse and redefinitions over time to keep up with changing trends and dynamics; thus, it has been referred to as national security, internal security, common security, collective security, shared security, human security, cooperative security, integrated security, sustainable security, and so on. The focus of this paper is internal security, defined as the act of maintaining peace within the borders of a sovereign state or other self-governing areas, generally by preserving national law and defending against internal security threats. Internal security may be the responsibility of police, paramilitary forces, or, in extraordinary circumstances, the military itself. Brown (2014) defined internal security operations as actions taken by domestic security agencies such as the police, customs, immigration, and others to contain domestic threats to the country's security. These threats frequently refer to serious situations of riots, demonstrations, strikes, communal clashes, terrorism, and the like, all of which lie outside of the military's constitutional responsibilities. Based on the aforementioned, there is agreement that internal security focuses on acts of threat to peace within a sovereign state, and it is the responsibility of domestic security agents to deal with such threats. The military is only called in when it is beyond their ability to contain the threat(s), such as in the instance of Boko Haram.

In Nigeria, the security sector includes all of the institutions and other components of the state that are responsible for securing the state and its population. The institutions include the Armed Forces (Armed and Defense Forces), Police and Paramilitary Forces, Intelligence and Security Services.

HERDSMEN VIOLENCE

Fulani herders, also known as Fulani pastoralists or Fulani nomads, are a nomadic or semi-nomadic ethnic group from West Africa. The Fulani people live in several nations in the region, including Nigeria, Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and others. They are well-known for their traditional pastoralist lifestyle, which includes herding cattle, sheep, and goats (Akpobaro & Babalola, 2018).

In recent years, the phrase "Fulani herdsmen" has gained traction in the context of Nigerian conflicts. There have been instances of conflicts between Fulani herders and farmers, usually over land use, grazing rights, and resource rivalry. Some of these disputes have ethnic and religious overtones, with tensions between primarily Muslim Fulani herders and predominantly Christian farming communities (Onwubiko, 2003).

It is vital to emphasize that the term "Fulani herdsmen" refers to a broad category of individuals and does not indicate that all Fulani are participating in conflicts. The situation is complicated and influenced by many elements, including historical, economic, environmental, and political concerns.

Fulani people are well-known for their participation in the so-called Fulani, Sokoto, or Usman Dan Fodio jihad (holy war), which irrevocably altered the political and religious landscape of what became northern Nigeria (Onwubiko, 2003). Usman Dan Fodio championed a revivalist religious movement known as jihad, or holy war. The jihad started in 1804, with a fight at Trabinkwatto against Yunfa, King of Gobir. Yunfa was beaten, and the whole of Hausaland eventually succumbed to Fulani defeat and subjugation. The jihad ended in 1809,

but battles of consolidation lasted until the 1850s, when the last emirates, such as Kontagora, were established.

One of the effects of the Fulani jihad was the removal of Hausa political leadership and the political rise of the Fulani people. The jihad also resulted in the Fulani becoming landlords in Hausa territory and other regions of northern Nigeria, despite previously being landless. As a result, the jihad established the Fulani people as new conquerors and leaders of the Hausa people. The implication was that for the first time in their history, the Fulani could claim a homeland. Importantly, the Fulani people's economy was heavily based on livestock husbandry (Akpobaro and Babalola, 2018). However, cattle rearing was the most common Fulani expertise in that field. It was completely ruled by men, with women assigned to lowly domestic and housekeeping tasks. Hence, the term, Fulani herders became quite famous due to their huge and nearly ubiquitous engagement in animal, particularly cow rearing as a primary occupation and source of subsistence.

Fulani herdsmen have been reported to have attacked, killed, and destroyed private property in 22 of Nigeria's 36 states, as well as the federal capital territory (FCT) of Abuja, in addition to the three original states of Kaduna, Plateau, and Nassarawa, where the herdsmen operated with great intensity. The herdsmen's attack has now spread to the states of Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Delta, Edo, Ebonyi, Enugu, Osun, Ondo, Ogun, Kogi, Taraba, Ekiti, Abia, Anambra, and Benue, resulting in a national onslaught (Adogbeji, Ushurhe & Okonkwo, 2024).

By May 28, 2016, terrorist organizations Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen have killed 3,094 Nigerians (Adaoye & Alge, 2016). It is also stated that Fulani herders in Nigeria slaughtered more than 1,200 people in 2014. As a result, the Fulani herdsmen have become the world's fourth deadliest terrorist organization. Over 300 people are believed to have perished in an attack on farmers in Benue State in February 2016 (BBC, 2016). According to Olayoku (2014), 61,314 deaths can be classed as violent, out of roughly 615 recorded in the Nigerian Watch database.

The Benue State killing, which lasted five days and instilled fear, was Fulani herders' most prolonged act of violence (Olayoku, 2014). The invasion of farmlands by Fulani herders, as well as the destruction of indigenous people's agricultural farmlands in villages, have been highlighted as the primary causes of this violence. In 2012, Nigeria had one of the highest numbers of fatal incidents (128).

OVERVIEW OF KIDNAPPING

Kidnapping is an organized crime committed by gangs that endangers the peace and quiet of the area by intimidating, evicting, murdering, and destroying property, among other crimes. It entails using force or firearms (or any other means of coercion, assault, or violence), as well as terrorism, to deprive individuals of their material possessions (Okoli & Abubakar, 2021). The thieves' behavior implied that they were desperate in their fights with other factions within the state and, by extension, the surrounding territory. Furthermore, kidnappers work in separate organizations that lack formal structures and are not coherent. The only thing these gangs have in common is the possibility of robbery, group competitiveness, and territorial disputes.

The kidnappers are still a diverse range of commercially motivated, non-ideological organized crime gangs that engage in large-scale extortion, abduction for ransom, armed

robberies, looting, and targeting motorists (Osasona, 2023). Furthermore, they respond to changing security conditions by deploying a loose, opportunistic, flexible, and adaptive network; members are chosen based on operational expertise and knowledge.

Kidnapping is a criminal offense involving the unlawful abduction or removal of a person against their will. It is usually done with the intention of holding the individual captive, often for ransom, or committing other crimes including extortion, human trafficking, or violence. On March 28, 2022, a passenger train on the state-run Nigeria Railway Corporation's track between Abuja and Kaduna was targeted by suspected terrorists. The incident resulted in eight deaths and 62 abductions (US Department of State, 2022).

Kidnapping is universally despised and banned in most places. The severity of charges and penalties for kidnapping might vary based on the circumstances, such as whether violence was used, the length of captivity, and the motivation for the abduction. Kidnapping is a severe crime that law enforcement authorities and legal systems around the world work hard to prevent, investigate, and prosecute. Kidnapping violates an individual's fundamental rights and is regarded a serious crime with severe legal ramifications.

VIGILANTE GROUPS EFFORT IN CURBING HERDSMEN VIOLENCE AND KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA

Vigilante organizations in Nigeria are playing an increasingly important role in resolving the country's growing insecurity issues. Vigilante gangs frequently operate in areas where formal security forces are either overwhelmed or incompetent. They offer localized security services like as crime prevention, intelligence gathering, and property protection, primarily in rural or underserved areas (Eme & Onyishi, 2021). Their community-based approach enables them to respond quickly to threats by using local knowledge and trust, which government agencies may lack.

Vigilante organizations in Nigeria have increasingly played an important role in resolving the recurring challenges of herders violence and kidnapping, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas where official security authorities frequently struggle to maintain an effective presence. These groups, composed primarily of local inhabitants, are familiar with the landscape, culture, and movement patterns within their towns, giving them a comparative edge in responding rapidly to threats. Their grassroots method allows them to notice suspicious activity, identify unusual faces, and supply real-time intelligence to both law enforcement and community people. This intimate community integration enables vigilantes to act as the first line of defense, providing a sense of security in areas prone to violent herdsman attacks and abductions.

In several occasions, vigilante organizations have been acknowledged for covering security gaps, particularly in locations where insurgency, banditry, and kidnappings are common (Ajayi & Adesina, 2022). Their contributions frequently supplement the efforts of established security services, notably in intelligence collecting and local surveillance. However, there are issues regarding these groups' legitimacy and accountability, particularly when they engage in extrajudicial activities or violate human rights (Oluwaseun & Adamu, 2023). Despite these obstacles, vigilante organizations' involvement in lowering crime and supporting official security agencies is widely recognized as crucial to Nigeria's attempts to tackle instability.

Vigilante groups' activities are frequently apparent in their direct intervention during attacks, where they deploy quickly to repel armed herders or kidnappers, averting the loss of life and property. Many of these groups conduct frequent patrols around farms, markets, and routes known for abductions, inhibiting criminals from functioning freely. Their conspicuous presence in vulnerable areas lessens fear among residents and farmers, encouraging them to resume their normal livelihoods, notably farming, which is a key source of sustenance in rural Nigeria. By taking these precautions, vigilante groups not only save lives but also indirectly contribute to food security and economic stability in afflicted areas.

Another crucial feature of their activity is intelligence gathering and collaboration with formal security services. Because vigilante members are drawn from the community, they can monitor and track strange cattle movements, report suspected kidnapping hideouts, and provide reliable local intelligence that state security agents may not have. Their intelligence has often resulted in successful raids, arrests, and rescue missions. Vigilantes fill in the gaps left by overburdened police and military forces, thereby strengthening the entire security structure. Furthermore, their tight relationships with traditional leaders strengthen community cooperation in the face of herdsman attacks and discourage kidnappers from hiding out.

In Nigeria, vigilante organizations play an important role in local security, especially in areas where official law enforcement institutions are seen to be incompetent or ineffectual. These organizations frequently form in response to increased insecurity, such as kidnappings, armed robberies, and community conflicts (Ezeani, 2021). It is often based on community self-defense, using local knowledge and networks to monitor and respond to criminal activity (Adebayo, 2022). Their presence has been shown to increase people's perception of safety, as these groups frequently patrol neighborhoods and issue timely alerts about potential dangers (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2021).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study relies on Routine Activity Theory propounded by Cohen Lawrence and Felson Marcus in their work *Social Change and Crime Trends: A Routine Activity Approach* (1979) which provides a useful framework for assessing the effectiveness of vigilante groups in curbing herdsman violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State. According to the theory, crime occurs when three elements converge: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardianship (Cohen & Felson, 1979). The theory opines that when the proportion of motivated offenders or even suitable targets were to remain stable in a community, changes in routine activities could nonetheless alter the likelihood of their convergence in space and time, thereby creating more opportunities for crimes to occur (Schaefer, 2021). In the context of herdsman violence and kidnapping, the offenders are the armed herders and kidnappers, while the vulnerable rural dwellers, farmlands, and travelers serve as suitable targets. The absence of adequate security and the slow response of formal law enforcement in many rural communities create an enabling environment for these crimes to thrive.

Vigilante groups, by their presence and activities, serve as capable guardians within communities. Their effectiveness can be explained through their ability to disrupt the convergence of these three elements by increasing surveillance, patrolling farmlands, monitoring entry points, and responding swiftly to distress calls. By doing so, they reduce

the chances of offenders finding easy targets without resistance. The visible presence of vigilante members also acts as a deterrent to potential offenders, as it raises the perceived risks of engaging in violent attacks or kidnapping. Therefore, from the lens of Routine Activity Theory, vigilante groups enhance community security by filling the gap left by state security agencies, thereby reducing opportunities for crime and making it more difficult for herdsmen violence and kidnapping to occur in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Using the survey approach, the study used a descriptive research design. The data were presented and analyzed using simple percentage and chi-square analysis. Civil servants, farmers, traders and others like communities leaders, travelers among others was used for this study. The purposive sampling techniques was employed to choose the survey respondents. A structured questionnaire was employed as the data gathering tool. There are two section to the questionnaire. The three sections of the instrument correspond to the research questions that were developed for the study. The four-point likert scale was scored as follows: 4 for strongly agree, 3 for agree, 2 for strongly disagreed and 1 for disagreed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Out of the five hundred (500) questionnaire, only four hundred and eighty two (482) were found. This suggests that the instrument eighteen copies were misplaced. This is sufficient for data analysis since it shows that 96.4% of the questionnaire were returned and 3.6% were lost. Thus, the 482 collected questionnaire served as the basis for the data analysis.

Table 1: Analysis of demographic characteristics of respondents

Items		Frequency	Percentage
Age	25-40	140	29
	41-55	226	46.9
	56 and above	116	24.1
	Total	482	100
Sex	Male	349	72.4
	Female	133	27.6
	Total	482	100
Religion	Christianity	451	93.6
	Islam	13	2.7
	African Traditional Religion	18	3.7
	Total	482	100
Marital Status	Married	284	58.9
	Single	131	27.2
	Divorced	34	7.1
	Separated	13	2.7
	Widowed	20	4.1
	Total	482	100

Education	SSCE	161	33.4
	B.Sc	182	37.8
	M.Sc	84	17.4
	PH.D	55	11.4
	Total	482	100
Occupational Status	Civil Servant	110	22.8
	Farmer	196	40.7
	Trader	92	19.1
	Others	84	17.4
	Total	482	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents. 140 respondents of 29% are between the age of 25-40, 226 respondents of 46.9% are 41-55 years old, 116 respondents of 24.1% are 56 and above years of age. Thus the study is dominated by those between the age of 41-55. 349 respondents of 72.4% are male while 133 respondents of 27.6% are female. This shows that the study is dominated by male. 451 respondents of 93.6% are Christians, 13 respondents of 2.7% are Islam, while 18 respondents of 3.7% are African Traditional Religion (ATR). Thus, this study is dominated by Christians. 284 respondents of 58.9% are married, 131 respondents of 27.2% are single, 34 respondents of 7.1% are divorced, 13 respondents of 2.7% are separated from their partners while 20 respondents of 4.1% are widowed. Thus, this show that this study is dominated by 58.9% married couple. 161 respondents of 33.4% are SSCE holders, 182 respondents of 37.8% are B.Sc holders, 84 respondents of 17.4% are M.Sc holders, 55 respondents of 11.4% are Ph.D holders. This shows that the study is slightly dominated by B.Sc holders. 110 respondents of 22.8% are civil servants, 196 respondents of 40.7% are farmers, 92 respondents of 19.1% are traders, while 84 respondents of 17.4% are into other occupations. Thus, this study is dominated by farmers.

Table 2: the role of vigilante groups in completing community policing to curb herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiope East Local Government Area.

Statements	SA	A	SD	D	A%	D%
Vigilante groups complement the effort of police in curbing herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiope East Local Government Area	141	243	33	65	79.7	20.3
Vigilante groups respond timely to security threat than Nigeria police in Ethiope East local Government Area.	154	263	25	40	86.5	13.5
Collaboration between vigilante groups, police and communities is helping to reduce the threat of herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiope East Local Government Area.	127	175	79	101	62.7	37.3

Communities in Ethiopia East Local Government Area have trust and confidence on vigilante groups in response to herdsmen violence and kidnapping threat than Nigeria police.	153	258	27	44	85.3	14.7
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Field Work 2025

Table 2 show the simple percentage analysis of the roles of vigilante groups in completing community policing to curb herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area. 79.7% of respondents agreed that vigilante groups complement the effort of police in curbing herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area while 20.3% disagreed. 86.5% of respondents agreed that vigilante groups respond timely to security threat than Nigeria police in Ethiopia East local Government Area while 13.5% of respondents disagreed. 62.7% of respondents agreed that collaboration between vigilante groups, police and communities is helping to reduce the threat of herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area while 37.3% disagreed. 85.3% of respondents agreed that communities in Ethiopia East Local Government Area have trust and confidence on vigilante groups in response to herdsmen violence and kidnapping threat than Nigeria police while 14.7% disagreed.

Table 3: the effectiveness of vigilante group strategies in curbing herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.

Statements	SA	A	SD	D	A%	D%
Vigilante group strategies have been effective in reducing herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.	124	187	75	96	64.5	35.5
Vigilante group patrol and surveillance strategy is helping to curb frequent incidents of kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area	116	168	83	115	58.9	41.1
Intelligence gathering strategies of vigilante group is helping to reduce herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.	118	158	90	116	57.3	42.7
Vigilante groups-communities engagement is effective in enhancing security awareness and prevention of herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.	123	167	83	109	60.2	39.8

Field Work 2025

Table 3: shows the simple percentage analysis of the effectiveness of vigilante groups strategies in curbing herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area. 64.5% agreed that vigilante group strategies have been effective in reducing herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area while 35.5% of respondents disagreed. 58.9% of respondents agreed that vigilante group patrol and surveillance strategy is helping to curb frequent incidents of kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area while 41.1% of respondents disagreed. 57.3% of respondents agreed that intelligence gathering strategies of vigilante group is helping to reduce

herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area while 42.7% of respondents disagreed. 60.2% of respondents agreed that vigilante groups-communities engagement is effective in enhancing security awareness and prevention of herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area while 39.8% of respondents disagreed.

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: there is no significant relationship between vigilante group role and the war against herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis of questionnaire for the relationship between vigilante group role and the war against herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.

Sources of Variation	Responses		Df	X2-Cal	X2-Crit	Alpha Level	Decision
	Observed	Expected					
Strongly Agree (SA)	575	120.5	3	213.41	7.82	0.05	Significant Ho1 Rejected
Agree (A)	939	120.5					
Strongly Disagree (SD)	164	120.5					
Disagree (D)	250	120.5					

Source: Field Work 2025

Table 4 shows that there is significant relationship between vigilante group role and the war against herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area. The calculated value of 213.41 is greater than the chi-square table value of 7.82. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between vigilante group role and the war against herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant effectiveness in vigilante group effort to end herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government area

Table 5: Chi-square analysis of questionnaire for the effectiveness in vigilante groups effort to end herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.

Sources of Variation	Responses		Df	X2-Cal	X2-Crit	Alpha Level	Decision
	Observed	Expected					

Strongly Agree (SA)	481	120.5	3	35.03	7.82	0.05	Significant Ho2 Rejectect
Agree (A)	680	120.5					
Strongly Disagree (SD)	331	120.5					
Disagree (D)	436	120.5					

Source: Field Work 2025

Table 5 shows that there is significant effectiveness in vigilante groups effort to end herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopie East Local Government Area. The calculated value of 35.03 is greater than the chi-square table value of 7.82. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant effectiveness in vigilante groups effort to end herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopie East Local Government Area.

CONCLUSION

The assessment of vigilante groups in curbing herdsmen violence and kidnapping in Ethiopie East Local Government Area of Delta State reveals that these groups play a significant role in enhancing community security where formal policing structures are either overstretched or less effective. Their localized knowledge, rapid response, and close ties with community members give them a unique advantage in addressing security threats and maintaining order. Despite limited resources, vigilante groups have proven to be instrumental in reducing the rate of violent attacks, fostering a sense of safety among residents, and complementing the efforts of state security agencies.

RECOMMENDATION

Considering the discussion and conclusion of this study, the following are recommended.

- i. Government should provide adequate training, modern security gadgets, and financial support to vigilante groups in Ethiopie East Local Government Area to enhance their effectiveness in combating herdsmen violence and kidnapping.
- ii. There should be stronger collaboration and synergy between the vigilante groups, the Nigeria Police Force, and other security agencies to ensure better intelligence sharing, coordinated patrols, and timely response to security threats.
- iii. Community members should be sensitized and encouraged to support vigilante groups through information sharing, voluntary cooperation, and provision of logistics that would strengthen grassroots security efforts.
- iv. The Delta State government should establish a legal and regulatory framework to monitor, evaluate, and standardize the operations of vigilante groups to prevent misuse of power and ensure accountability in their security interventions.

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