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Impact of Hunters and Forests Security Groups on Crime Reduction and Control in Kaltungo/Shongom Local Government Area, Gombe State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study carefully examines the impact of hunter and forest security groups on crime reduction and control in the Kaltungo/Shongom Local Government Area, Gombe State. The study employed the survey research design. Data were collected through the used interview and questionnaires. Theoretical framework for the study was the broken window theory developed by Philip Zimbardo (1969). The study found that the main strategies used by hunters and forest security groups to reduce crime includes foot patrol, collaboration and community meetings, and public education programs. This shows that, forest security groups and hunters have much impact on reducing crimes. Their challenges include lack of training, poor implementation strategies, information gap and lack of involvement leads to unrealistic community expectations and present a challenge to the police force and the communities at large. In conclusion, the study reveals the important roles played by the hunters and forest security groups in ensuring crime free environment, the study also reveals some challenges that the group faces when administering the functions and duties. The study recommended that the communities members should be assisting the



group in one way or the other and also help in providing the necessary facilities that the group need for a better function should be given to them. The communities must participate in planning and choosing approaches as well as becoming equal owners of the process. Both the Police Force, communities and the hunters and forest security need to have clearly defined roles and be given the skills and resources to carry it out.

Keywords: Community, Crime, Control. Crime Reduction, Forest, Hunters, Security

Introduction

A society's survival depends on its ability to provide enough security, and consequently, government of every nation takes the necessary precautions to safeguard the lives and property of its citizens. Without sufficient protection, businesses and social activities may be hampered, and this fundamental aspect of security explains why societies have attempted to regulate their communities since the dawn of time in order to protect them from criminal exploitation. The act of preventing and protecting particular facilities, equipment, people, or operations from damage, pilferage, destruction, murder, or disturbance is referred to as security Dambazau, (2021). The proliferation of hunters and forest security groups in contemporary Nigeria, particularly in the Kaltungo/Shongom Local Government Area (LGA), is a response to crimes and criminality that have not only increased in degree, scope, and volume, but have also seen an unprecedented change in techniques, mode of operation, and sophistication between 1998 and 1999 (during the fourth republic's wake) and the apparent failure of the Nigeria police. Seeming failure of Nigerian Police Force to contain the expanding wave of crime has led to unilateral popular action against crime and criminals in various major cities of Nigeria (Adebayo & Ogunjemilua, 2020).

In a sense, “dealing with such problems requires the involvement of the local residents, the local authority, business and various agencies, so that on the basis of partnerships and multiagency cooperation, all are actively mobilized in the pursuit of a safer social environment” (Adeyemi & Ogunjemilua, 2021). Hunters and Forest security is a security system in which members of the public are involved in the conduct of policing their locality to complement the efforts of the police in crime control by giving useful intelligent information to law enforcement agencies in the neighbourhood (Eze & Nwankwo, 2022).



Problem Statement

Hunters and forest security groups remain an important sector as it emphasizes proactive problem solving to reduce crime in a given community. The goals of hunters and forest security groups are to reduce crime and disorder, protect farmers from Fulani, and bandit, promote citizens' quality of life in communities, reduce fear of crime and improve police citizen relations. The high rate of crime in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA in general are of great concern. For example, security report by the commissioner for internal security and home affairs, in the year 2023, highlighted profiles on major crime trends and magnitudes experienced in the area previous years to issues including farm land conflict, family conflict, Fulani conflict, kidnapping, Banditry, Cattle rustling, assaults, violence against women, and youths etc. Coupled with this, there is no much studies documented on the impact of hunters and forest security on crime prevention in the area. Hence the aim of this study is to assess the impact of forest security groups and hunters in crime reduction and control in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA.

Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain the nature of criminal activities in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA.
2. To find out the impact of hunters and forest security groups in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA.
3. To assess the effectiveness of hunters and forest security groups patrolling and community engagement in crime prevention and control in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA.
4. To ascertain the factors militating against operational efficiency of the hunters and forest security groups in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA.
5. To suggest how the performance of hunters and forest security groups in crime reduction in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA.

Conceptual Clarification

The Concept of Crime

Crime is any act or omission resulting from human conduct which is considered in itself or in its outcome to be harmful and which the state wishes to prevent which renders the person responsible liable to some kind of punishment as a result of the proceedings which is usually initiated on behalf of the state and which are designed to ascertain the nature, extent



and the legal consequences of that person's responsibility (Idekula & Nwankwo, 2022). Crime in the legal sense is viewed as any behaviour which is prohibited by the criminal code. In line with the legal view, Nwankwo & Eze (2022) defined crime as an intentional act or omission in violation of a criminal law committed without defense or justification and sanctioned by the state as felony or misdemeanour. However, for the purpose of this research work, crime is seen as the intentional commission of an act usually deemed socially harmful or dangerous to individual, property or authority and which is specifically defined, prohibited, and punishable under criminal law.

Concept of Security

Security is a state of resistance to any type of behavior that causes harm or damage to a person or property. Security can also be described as protection against criminals, thieves, and threats. The level of security is smooth according parameters such as safety, reliability and more. The security alignment should take under consideration actions of intent aberration, and demolition from subjective point of view. The purpose of security is to release people from their apprehensions and aversions and by that to give them a feeling of safety, (Ogunjinmi & Adeyemi, 2021).

Security is the degree of protection against danger, damage, loss, and crime, it is also as a form of protection consist of structures and processes that provide or improve security as a condition. Security is defined as "a form of protection where a separation is created between the assets and the threat" (Laboy, 2020). This includes but is not limited to elimination of either the asset or the threat. Security as a national condition was defined in a Federal government of Nigeria (2020), study so that countries can develop and progress safely. Security has to be compared to related concepts: safety, continuity, reliability, etc. This relates to the condition of freedom from fear of threat against one's life or property or protection of the human person against victimization or avoidable harm or death; or destruction of one's property.

Concept of Hunters Security and Forest Security Groups

The Nigerian Forest Security Service (NFSS) has emerged as a significant player in Nigeria's fight against insecurity. Established to safeguard the country's forests, wildlife, and natural resources, NHFSS has gradually



evolved into a broader security force, addressing some of the nation's most pressing challenges, such as insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, and illegal logging. The Nigerian Hunters and Forest Security Service (NHFSS) was officially renamed to the Nigerian Forest Security Service (NFSS) in late 2024. It aligns with a pending bill in the National Assembly, which seeks to integrate all traditional hunter groups into the NFSS to improve forest security and fight crimes like kidnapping and illegal logging. The bill is still awaiting presidential assent as of April 2025. Closely with other security agencies such as the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, and Civilian Joint Task Force. This cooperation is vital in coordinating large-scale operations and ensuring that forested regions are not safe havens for criminal activities. In recent years, NHFSS has also sought to improve its operational capabilities by engaging with international partners and attending counter-terrorism training programs, which bolster their ability to fight insurgency and banditry.

Local Hunter System

This refers to the special form of informal security structure whereby men who are engaged in the local hunting profession of tracking and killing wild animals as game for both domestic use and sale are deployed for purposes of gathering intelligence and conducting surveillance for use by the formal security formation and direct battle with criminals as part of security provisioning in the local community where they operate (Nwankwo & Eze, 2021).

Hunter and forest security groups has been in existence since 1990s with the traditional hunter guards authorized by the traditional chiefs to serve as community police, informally known in Hausa native language as the "Maharba", but later translated to be called community vigilantes and presently now known as hunters and forest security during the President Tinubu region. The hunter and forest security was recognized in the year 2025 by the Federal Government of Nigeria and their services started recently in other complement the efforts of the police and to monitor the activities of the local/community safety must especially the problem of Fulani-farmers herdsmen, bandit and kidnapping in the communities. The hunters and forest security groups in Kaltungo/Shongom Local Government Area have operational offices that runs for 24 hours daily with vehicles.



These professional hunters rely heavily on their natural endowments or acquired skills of accurate shooting or marksmanship, vast expert knowledge or familiarity with the various terrains, routes, bushes, forests and other spots that serve as hideouts for criminals that exist in their community, use of such less sophisticated weapons like guns, bows and arrows, machetes, daggers, torch-lights, whistles, and above all, anti-criminal charms of various types and levels of efficacy.

The Concept of Crime Reduction

Crime reduction refers to the strategies and efforts implemented to decrease crime rates and improve public safety within communities. It involves a combination of prevention, intervention, and enforcement approaches to reduce crime opportunities and address underlying causes of crime (Idekula & Nwankwo, 2020). According to the Federal ministry of environment (2022), crime reduction/prevention comprises of strategies and measures that seek to reduce the possibility of the occurrence of crimes, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes. Crime reduction is the attempt to and deter crime and criminals. It is applied specifically to efforts made by governments to reduce crime, enforce the law, and maintain criminal justice.

Impact of Hunters and Forest security groups in Crime Reduction Kaltungo/Shongom LGA

- 1. Hunters and Forest security groups Protects Lives and Properties:*** Due to the insufficient police force in Nigerian society to carried out their functions, the Nigerian hunters and forest security groups was introduced to assist in meeting this demand, and one of such demands has been the protection of lives and properties. This function on the part of the hunters and forest security groups is very necessary, given the important attached to human lives, and much more important too, their properties must be protected, the hunters and forest security groups have been functioning in protecting the lives of Nigerian and their properties.
- 2. Hunters and Forest security groups Maintains Peace and Order:*** This aspect of function has been attached to the hunters and forest security group. It is expected of it to maintain peace and order within society.



For instance, anytime there are social functions or public functions, the services of the hunters and forest security groups can best be employed to assist in ensuring that, peace and order are maintained in order to guarantee the success of such event particularly, those recruited by the government.

3. ***Hunters and Forest security groups Assist in Combating Crimes:*** This is another function of the hunters and forest security group, is that they assist in fighting crimes in the society, particularly, in the night. During the night hours, the hunters and forest security groups will organize itself and go for patrolling for the purpose of ensuring that any robbery attempt is averted.
4. ***Hunters and Forest security groups Arrests Crime Offenders:*** The hunters and forest security groups do not only prevent crimes, they can go as well as arresting any individual caught committing crime, because crime commission is invariably the same thing as encroaching or infringing the rights of the members of the public, and when you are caught, you are going to be arrested by the members of the hunters and forest security group, and once you got arrested by the hunters and forest security group, they will immediately hand you over to police for prosecution.
5. ***Hunters and Forest security groups Handovers Everything Recovered Items During Operation to the Relevant Authority:*** Anything recovered during operations by the hunters and forest security groups is returned to the appropriate quarters, nothing recovered is expected to remain in the custody of the hunters and forest security group. Therefore, it is one of the major functions of the hunters and forest security groups to return all exhibits to help in further investigation purposes.

Mechanisms Adopted by Hunters and Forest security groups in Crime Reduction in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA

1. ***Surveillance on building and suspected criminal individuals:*** This method affords the hunters and forest security groups the motorized patrol and foot patrols including highway and border patrols as this remains the most opportunity to collate intelligence on criminals.
2. Arrest and interrogation of suspected criminals.
3. ***Cultivation of information:*** Information is the key to all policing functional activities as it is an essential part of police duty and this is



achieved by building relationship as well as developing rapport with the hunters and forest security groups and members of the public. Every investigation has a moral, professional and ethical obligation to safeguard the identity of an informers. Failure to follow the ethics may result in death, injury, or intimidation of the informer and/ or his or her family. As a general rule an informer should not be exposed unless he or she has agreed (for example if he or she is willing to give evidence in court).

4. Decoy methods are strategies employed by the police and the hunters and forest security groups destabilize the set plans of the criminals. This is sequel to the intelligence gathered on the activities of the criminals and their preparedness to commit crime.
5. Raiding of criminal hideouts to apprehend criminals and recover arms and ammunition.
6. ***Simulation of crime situation:*** the hunters and forest security groups create scenario by engaging in some activities aimed and selling dummies to criminals who mistakes such actions for real life situation and unwittingly expose their identities.

Challenges Facing Hunters and Forest security groups in the Kaltungo/Shongom LGA

1. The hunters and forest security groups in Northern Nigeria face challenge of lack of educated people involve in the duty of policing the community.
2. They are not fully supported by the Nigeria Police Force in decision making that is whenever the Police Force are making decision on the community, the hunters and forest security groups where usually not include in the decision body or committee for example in the night patrol.
3. The hunters and forest security groups in Northern Nigeria also face a challenge by the police through the arbitrariness (use of force) in the exercising its powers of arrest and prosecution, perversion of justice, use of crude techniques of investigation and discharge of criminal that the informal group caught during their duties but the police will discharge them without contacting the hunters and forest security groups
4. Lack of working facilities for the members of the hunters and forest security groups is another challenge. Facilities such as patrol van,



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- standard record book, weapons etc that will help them to carryout effective duty for the community safety.
5. Nigeria Police Force involvement in the hunters and forest security groups activities, involvement in things like knowing their year plans, punishing of an offender, constitution of the community police etc.
 6. Struggle of power. It might be that not all citizens in the community are civic minded. In fact, some people engage in the hunters and forest security groups for a wrong reason, thus, it will lead to use of his/her authority in order to fulfill his/her personal gains.
 7. Lack of proper training. Lack of proper training and administration has become a great duties challenge to the policing group and that makes them to work even outside their working base, that means training for new recruits and retraining of the veteran officers should be done in order to solve these challenges.

Theoretical Framework: Broken Window Theory (BWT)

Broken window theory was used to explain the place of informal policing structures in crime control, and it use to explain the incidence of crime in the society. The proponent of broken window theory is Philip Zimbardo (1969). The theory focuses on the control and prevention of crime from within the community as against from outside the community. It explains how effective and efficient informal policing structures are in controlling crimes compared to the formal policing structure that is made up of strangers.

The theory holds that only the community members can safeguard themselves from crimes. This is because they live in the community and can work and watch at all times. They also know who those potential criminals are and how best they can be contained. The core principle of informal policing structures is the constant maintenance of law and order in the various communities by members of that community. This is in line with the core notion of broken window theory, which asserts that the constant presence of police structures makes a community less conducive for crime and criminals. Increased police presence and enforcements of informal rules of conduct and laws can make a community seem less chaotic and safer, thereby, increasing the presence and involvement of residents in their community and lowering crime rates (Palmiotto, 2019).



Methodology

Kaltungo/Shongom LGA are in the southern part of Gombe state. It is largely dominated by the Tangale people, most of them are Christians and Muslims. This study adopted survey research design because, it is most helpful in describing the characteristics of a large population, studying individuals' attitudes either by interviewing or asking respondents to fill out a questionnaire. Sample is the portion of the population selected for study. In this study, the selection of the sample becomes necessary because it is difficult and almost impossible for the researcher to study or interview the entire members of the hunter and forest security groups in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA, due to the economic and time constraint. As such, Krejcie and Morgan statistical table of determining sample was applied to determine the actual sample size for the study from the total population, which is 2000. The researcher adopted non probability sampling technique (purposive) to select the study participants from the sample because the various districts and wards have no equal population. The purposive sampling was adopted to select 15 respondents from the study area. And then traditional chiefs, citizens in the communities and formal securities were selected for oral interview. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires and in-depth interviewed. Data were analyzed using percentage frequency table of distribution and the interview were analyzed and interpreted.

Results of Findings

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (Note: N = 148)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	116	78.4
	Female	32	21.6
Age	21-25	19	12.8
	26-30	22	14.9
	31-35	45	30.4
	36-40	31	21.0
	41-50	14	9.5
	51 and above	17	11.5
Marital Status	Single	56	38.0
	Married	67	45.3
	Divorced	6	4.1
	Widows/Widower	12	8.1
	Separated	7	4.7



Religion	Christian	67	45.3
	Islam	52	35.1
	Traditional	29	19.6
Educational Level	Primary	47	31.7
	Secondary	61	41.2
	NCE	17	11.5
	HND	5	3.4
	Tertiary	14	9.5
	Others	4	2.7
	0-5	11	7.4
	6-10	16	10.8
Working Experience	11-15	23	15.5
	16-20	38	25.7
	21-25	26	17.6
	26-30	24	16.2
	31 and above	10	6.8
Ranks	Junior Cadre	117	79.1
	Senior Cadre	31	20.9
	Total	148	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2026

On the sex distribution of the respondents, the table shows that 116 representing 78.4% of the respondents were male while the remaining 32 representing 21.4% of the respondents were female. The age distribution of the respondents in table shows that 19 representing 12.8% of the respondents were within the age of 21-25 years, 22 representing 14.9% of the respondents were within the age of 26-30 years, 45 representing 30.4% of the respondents were within the age of 31- 35 years, 31 representing 21.0% of the respondents were within the age of 36-40 years, 14 representing 9.5% of the respondents were within the age of 41-50 years while the remaining 17 representing 11.5% of the respondents were within the age of 51 years and above. On the marital status of the respondents, the table reveals that 56 representing 38.0% of the respondents account for singles, 67 representing 45.3% of the respondents account for married, 6 representing 4.1% of the respondents account for divorced while 12 representing 8.1% of the respondents lost their spouses, whereas the remaining 7 representing 4.7% of the respondents were separated from their partners. The religious affiliation of the respondents in the table shows that 67 representing 45.3% of the respondents account for Christianity, while 52 representing 35.1% of the respondents were of Muslim faithful whereas the remaining 29 representing 19.6% of the respondents were of African



Traditional beliefs. Educational levels of the respondents in the table shows that majority 61 representing 41.2% of the respondents has Secondary certificate, 47 representing 31.7% of the respondents had primary school certificates while 17 representing 11.5% had NEC certificate, 14 representing 9.5% had tertiary certificate, HND certified holder are 5 representing 3.4%, and the remaining 4 representing 2.7% of the respondents had informal school certificates.

The respondents working experience in the hunters and forest security groups service as shown in the table above indicates that 11 representing 7.4% of the respondents have been in the hunters and forest security groups service within the range of 0-5 years, 16 representing 10.8% of the respondents account for 6-10 years, 23 representing 15.5% of the respondents account for 11-15 years, 38 representing 25% of the respondents account for 16- 20, 26 representing 17% of the respondents account for 21-25 years while 24 representing 16.2% of the respondents account for 26-30 years whereas the remaining 10 representing 4% of the respondents account that they have been in the hunters and forest security groups service for 31 above years.

The ranks of the respondents in table reveals that 117 representing 79.1% were in the category of junior cadre while the remaining 31 representing 21.9% of the respondents were of senior cadre.

Research Question 1. What is the prevalence of crime in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA?

Table 2: Prevalence of Crime in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA (N=148)

Rate of Crime Before the Current Form of hunters and forest security group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	101	68.2
Low	27	18.2
Normal	20	14.5
Rate of Crime After the Current Form of Vigilantism		
High	16	10.8
Low	111	75.0
Normal	21	14.2
Prevalent Crime in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA		
Armed Robbery	24	16.2
Theft of farm motor cycle	29	19.6
Murder	5	3.4



Theft of farm produce	35	23.6
Burglary	17	11.5
Kidnapping	3	2.0
Rape	4	2.7
Others	31	21.0
Time of Occurrence		
Morning	46	31.0
Afternoon	33	22.2
Night	69	47.0
Days of much crime occurrence		
Sunday	64	43.2
Monday	14	9.5
Tuesday	6	4.1
Wednesday	9	6.1
Thursday	5	3.3
Friday	48	32.4
Saturday	2	1.4
Causes of Criminality		
Poverty	33	22.3
Unemployment	41	27.7
Bad Company	22	14.9
Drug Abuse	27	18.2
Inadequate parenting	11	7.4
Others	14	9.5
Total	148	100

Source: Primary Date, 2026

On the rate of crime before the current form of hunters and forest security group, Table 2 reveals that 101 representing 68.4% of the respondents account for high rate, 27 representing 18.2% of the respondents account for low rate while the remaining 20 representing 14.5% of the respondents indicated normal rate. On the rate of crime after the current form of hunters and forest security group, Table 3 shows that 16 representing 10.8% of the respondents indicated high rate, 111 representing 75.0% of the respondents indicated low rate while the remaining 21 representing 14.2% of the respondents indicated normal rate. The high percentage 75.0% of the respondents who account for low rate is an indication that the rate of crime has decreased after the current form of hunters and forest security group. On the crime that is prevalent in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA, Table 4 shows that 24 representing 10.2% of the respondents indicated armed robbery, 29 representing 19.6% indicated that theft of motor cycle is high, 5 representing 3.4% of the respondents indicated murder, 35 representing



23.6% of the respondents indicated theft of farm produce, 17 indicated 11.5% for burglary, 3 representing 2.0% of the respondents indicated kidnapping while 4 representing 2.7% of the respondents indicated rape, whereas the remaining 37 representing 21.0% of the respondents indicated other form of crime, perhaps assassination, abduction, pick pocketing etc. On the time of crime occurrence, Table 5 shows that 64 representing 43.2% of the respondents indicated morning time, 33 representing 22.2% indicated afternoon time while the remaining 69 representing 47.0% which is the highest percentage of the respondents indicated that the prevalent crime majorly took place in the night hours and it shows the most time of crime occurrences in the study area.

On the days of crime occurrence, Table 6 shows that 64 representing 43.2% of the respondents indicated morning time, 33 representing 22.2% indicated afternoon time while the remaining 69 representing 47.0% which is the highest percentage of the respondents indicated that the prevalent crime majorly took place in the night hours and it shows the most time of crime occurrences in the study area.

On the causes of crime, Table 6 reveals that 120 representing 43.2% of the respondents account that Sunday is the key day of the criminal activities because people usually goes to the church, 14 accounted to Monday representing 9.5% of the respondents, 6 for Tuesday account for 4.1%, 9 for Wednesday representing 6.1% , 5 for Thursday representing 3.3% , while 48 representing 32.4% of the respondents indicated Friday because of worship day and finally, 2 inadequate 1.4% Saturday.

Qualitative Analysis of the Interview Schedule on the Prevalence of Crime in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA before and after the Proliferation of Hunters and Farmers Security Groups in its Current Form

A traditional chief had this to say that:

“Crime rate was on the increase before the current proliferation of hunters and farmers security groups, but however started to decrease after the proliferation of current hunters and farmers security groups and I think that the hunters and farmers security groups are doing well in the area of forceful apprehension of criminals as it seems they know the hideouts of these bad boys in the community more than the police who don’t know much about our terrains”.



On this also, an informal security officers in one of the council districts expressed his own views thus:

“To say that the hunters and farmers security groups are not trying in the area of crime reduction, control and prevention is an understatement. They are assisting the police, in as much as they independently handle most cases themselves until when the case is getting out of control before they reach out to us for proper prosecution. They are really complementing our efforts since it’s proliferation in the community.”

Research Question 2: What are the crime prevention and control mechanisms adopted by the hunters and forest security group in the Kaltung/Shongom LGA?

Table 3: Mechanisms of Crime Prevention and Control by the hunters and forest security group.

Mechanisms of Crime Control	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Beat Patrol	33	22.3
Stop, Detain and Search	23	15.5
Use of Decoy Vehicles	11	7.4
Bush Hunting	45	30.4
Static Guards	5	3.4
Under Cover Works	13	8.8
Intelligence Gathering	6	4.1
Others	12	8.1
Total	148	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2026

As shown in Table 7, 33 representing 22.3% of the respondents indicated that they adopted beat patrol as one of the mechanism used to reduce and control crime in the study area, 23 representing 15.5% of the respondents accounted for stop, detain and search as mechanism of crime control, 11 representing 7.4% of the respondents indicated the use of Decoy vehicles, 45 representing 30.4% of the respondents indicated bush hunting, 5 representing 3.4% indicated the use of static guards as crime control mechanism, 13 representing 8.8% of the respondents indicated that they employed under cover works in crime prevention and control, 6 representing 4.1% of the respondents indicated that they adopted intelligence gathering in their crime reduction, prevention and control while the remaining 12



representing 8.1% of the respondents indicated other methods perhaps the use of flash tough, koboko and whistle blow in crime prevention and control.

Qualitative Analysis of the Interview on the Mechanisms for Crime Reduction by the Hunters and Forest in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA

As weapon used by the hunters and forest security groups in crime reduction in the study area, community leader was interviewed:

"Automatic double barrels, matches, koboko, torch light, rope, guns and whistle as the weapons they use. On further enquiry, they stated that certain crime requires giving the culprits some latches of koboko or tying him or her with rope"

Another respondent

On the hunter and forest security groups' relationship with the formal security in the crime reduction, the formal security officer interviewed revealed that the hunter and forest security groups had cordial and collaborative relationship with the formal security sector. They held that the formal security inaugurated them and when arrests were made, normally, the offenders supposed to be handed over to the formal security for prosecution but nowadays, the hunter and forest security groups would handle the case until when it gets out control before they hand over the case to us.

Research Question 3: How effective is the hunters and forest security groups in crime reduction in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA?

Table 4: Effectiveness of the Performance of Hunters and Forest security groups in Crime Reduction

Effectiveness of Hunters and Forest Security Groups	Frequency	Percentage
Effective	88	59.5
Very Effective	54	36.5
Ineffective	4	2.7
Very Ineffective	2	1.4
Total	148	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2028

As shown in Table 8, 88 representing 59.5% of the respondents indicated effective, 54 representing 36.5% of the respondents indicated very effective while 4 representing 2.7% of the respondents indicated ineffective, whereas



the remaining 2 representing 1.4% of the respondents indicated that the operation of hunters/forest security groups has been very effective in the study area.

The traditional rulers interviewed were of the opinions that the operation of the hunters/forest security groups in crime reduction have been effective in the area.

The head of a community had this to say thus:

"Formal securities are not many enough to cover the entire communities in terms of crime reduction, preservation and controls and the few ones are not everywhere, but the hunters/forest security groups are everywhere penetrating the nooks and crannies of the community. Where the formal securities cannot go the hunters/forest security groups will go as they know the various hide out of the bad boys and offenders in the community. The hunters/forest security groups have been very helpful also in handling the crisis between the farmers and herdsmen in our various communities more than the formal securities. So I want to say that they are effective in reducing, controlling and preventing criminal activities".

Another respondent

"With the advent of the proliferation of hunters/forest security group, the formal security now have full confidence to visit the volatile areas of the communities and this is an attestation to their effectiveness in crime reduction in Northern Nigeria".

Research Question 4: What are the factors militating against operational efficiency of the hunters and forest security group?

Table 5: Factors Militating Against Operational Efficiency of the hunters and forest security group

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequacy of Basic Operational Equipment		
Yes	88	59.5
No	54	36.5
Don't Know	46	4.0
Lack of Public Cooperation		
Yes	51	34.5
No	95	64.2
Don't Know	2	1.3
Corruption/Godfatherism		



Yes	42	28.3
No	85	57.4
Don't Know	21	14.3
Total	148	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2026

Table 8 reveals that 88 representing 59.5% of the respondents indicated Yes, 54 representing 36.5% of the respondents were of contrary opinion that lack of basic operational equipment have nothing to do with the operational efficiency of the hunter/forest security groups while the remaining 46 representing 4.0% of the respondents claimed that they don't have an idea on whether inadequacy of basic operational equipment has connection with operational efficiency of the hunter/forest security groups or not.

Table 8 also shows that 95 representing 34.5% of the respondents indicated Yes, while 85 representing 57.4% of the respondents indicated nay that lack of public cooperation has no relationship with the operational efficiency of the hunter/forest security groups, whereas the remaining 21 representing 14.3% of the respondents were neutral and claimed that they don't have an idea on whether lack of public cooperation can affect the operational efficiency of the hunter/forest security groups.

When the respondents were asked on whether lack of proper training giving to hunter/forest security groups could militate against the operational efficiency of the groups, table 8 also shows that 51 representing 34.5% of the respondents indicated Yes, while 85 representing 57.4% of the respondents indicated in contradiction that lack of proper training has no connection with operational efficiency of the hunter/forest security groups whereas the remaining 21 representing 14.3% of the respondents claimed that they don't know whether lack of training could affect the operational efficiency of the hunter/forest security groups.

The respondents were asked on whether corruption coupled with Godfatherism can affect the operational efficiency of the hunter/forest security groups, table 8 above further reveals that 42 representing 28.3% of the respondents indicated yes while 85 representing 57.4% of the respondents were of contrary opinion, whereas 21 representing 14.3% of the respondents claimed neutrality that they don't know whether corruption/Godfatherism has any connections with operational efficiency of the hunter/forest security groups.



Qualitative Analysis of the Interview on the Major Problems Militating Against Operational Efficiency of the Hunter/Forest Security Groups

A traditional ruler interviewed pointed out that:

“Lack of sophisticated fire arms, poor funding, lack of adequate patrol vehicle and lack of proper training were among the major problems confronting them and when provided them with what is needed, will improve their performance”.

Research Question 5. How can the performance of hunters/forest security groups in crime prevention and control be improved in Northern Nigeria?

Table 6: How to Improve Hunter/Forest Security Groups in Crime Reduction

Items	Frequency	Percentage
How to Improve hunters/forest security groups		
Hunter/Forest Security should be well funded	39	26.3
Hunter/Forest Security should be provided with modern weapons	28	19.0
The public should cooperate with the hunter/forest security groups	34	23.0
Formal security should join hands with hunter/forest Security to make a crime free society	31	21.0
Others	16	10.7
Total	148	100

Source: Primary Date, 2026

When the respondents were asked on what they think can be done to improve on the performance of the hunter/forest Security group, Table 9 above shows that 39 representing 26.3% of the respondents suggested that if only hunter/forest security groups can be well funded and remunerated then their performance would be improved upon, 28 representing 19.0% of the respondents indicated that if the hunter/forest security groups can be provided with modern sophisticated weapons then their performance will be improved upon, 34 representing 23.0% indicated that The public should cooperate with the hunter/forest security groups while 31 representing 21.0% of the respondents were of the opinion that if only the public can cooperate with the hunter/forest security groups in fight against crime then



their performance will be improved upon, whereas the remaining 16 representing 10.7% of the respondents were of other suggestions.

Quantitative Analysis of the Interview on how best can the problem of crime in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA

A monarch interviewed was quoted thus:

“The problem of crime in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA could be solved by providing employment opportunities to our youth. If our youths are gainfully employed or empowered to be engaged in one thing or the other, the tendency to be involved in social vices would be reduced to a barest minimum”.

Another Traditional ruler said:

“The hunter/forest security groups should be funded properly, provide them with modern sophisticated weapons and increase their pay packets to enable them combat crime adequately and effectively”.

Discussion of Findings

It was found in the study that level of crime has reduced downward at the instance of hunters and forest security groups involvement in crime prevention, reduction and control in the northern part of the country. This finding is corroborated with that of Dambazau (2021), who found that rise in crime is one of the reasons for patronage of informal service group. Also, findings further revealed that factors responsible for the level of crime is as a result of poverty, unemployment, inequality, and hopelessness, thieves collect bags, phones, motorcycle, kidnapping, armed robbery and farmer/herdsmen crisis. Findings further shows that hunters and forest security service groups used some strategic methods to reduce the activity of the criminals through spiritual strategic intelligence (SSI) and covering and combing the nocks and crannies of the community/street which the Nigeria Police have been unable to do effectively, maintaining constant presence in the community/street to prevent criminals from operating and repaid response to security threats to prevent breakdown of law and order. This finding is in line with that of Olaniyi et al (2023) who posited that hunters and forest security groups partner with the police in every community they operate in and this partnership have gone ahead to see to reduction in crime rate. This is also in line with the finding of Okonkwo (2023), who found that hunters and forest security groups are always



available whenever they are needed since they maintain constant presence in the community/streets to prevent criminals from operating. Further findings reveal that hunters and forest security groups are very effective and prompt in response to distress call.

Conclusion

This study assesses the impacts of hunters and forest security groups on crime reduction in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA. Arising from the findings of the study, it can therefore be concluded that hunters and forest security groups has been effective in the study area with their various adopted mechanisms in crime reduction as it crawls the prevalence of criminal activities in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA. But the inherent challenges militating against their operational efficiency which are mostly beyond their control have prevented hunter/forest security from becoming very effective in crime reduction. Hence, if their necessary needs are provided with the collaborative efforts of the members of the various communities in which they operate then their activities would be very effective in crime reduction in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA.

Recommendations

- 1.** Hunters and forest security groups should be entrenched by providing them with modern tools for fighting crime, more funding, proper training and better welfare to boost the morale of the members of the hunters and forest security groups in order to keep curtailing the prevalence of crime at its barest minimum in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA.
- 2.** Having discovered that the mechanisms adopted by hunters and forest security groups in Kaltungo/Shongom LGA for crime reduction were effective, the government and security stakeholders in the state should incessantly review the modalities to retain their functionality considering the complex nature of crime and criminal behaviour and to ensure that the security measures and mechanisms of crime control conform with the national and international standard.
- 3.** Government at all levels should encourage informal securities are activities by providing incentives and adequate logistics such as more motorbikes and security vans for the groups. This is to ensure more effectiveness in their operations, and members of the informal groups should encourage to discharge their duties without fear or favour.



4. A concerted effort towards having a synergistic relationship between members of the public, the hunters and forest security groups and the conventional policing outfits in the state is highly recommended. This is particularly important due to the fact that the presence of this would ensure a complementary working relationship that would further improve on the efforts and progress made so far in terms of hunters and forest security groups and policing.
5. Outstanding members of the hunters and forest security groups should be recognized and motivated to boost their morale. This can be achieved by setting up an excellence award unit in the office of the governor of the state to enable them get more dedicated to service.

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