

# We Must Not Surrender to Banditry and Insurgency

By [Mansur Liman](#)

It now appears that we have, little by little, carved in and surrendered to the pressures of bandits and insurgents. With shocking ease, they have forced a fundamental shift in our education policy. While I fully support every measure designed to protect the lives of our sons and daughters, the decision to close all public boarding schools carries grave implications. It means that millions of parents can no longer send their children to boarding houses—places where they would normally receive care, stability, and quality learning free from the daily distractions and uncertainties of our homes and streets. Boarding schools are not mere academic environments. They are formative spaces where children discover themselves, develop social skills, learn from peers, and build lifelong friendships and networks that often shape their future careers and values. Closing these institutions does not only disrupt academic progress; it erodes an important pillar of social development for an entire generation. By shutting our boarding schools, we are acknowledging a hard truth: the authority and control we once believed we had over our security architecture have been severely weakened. Our inability to properly



secure schools so that children can learn in peace is now laid bare. The preferred response, rather than confronting the threat head-on, has been to shut down educational institutions and ask parents to fend for themselves. This is a painful admission of failure. If we do not collectively rise against the terror inflicted by these violent groups—individuals who have no regard for the sanctity of human life—we will continue making decisions that stifle the natural growth of our society. Let us be clear: if kidnappers can no longer abduct schoolchildren in large numbers because boarding schools are closed, they will simply shift their targets. They will come into our communities, our homes, our

farms, and our highways. They will abduct entire villages and towns if that is what it takes to achieve their aim. These are adversaries who constantly adapt, and if we remain passive, they will always be a step ahead.

The fight against banditry and insurgency can no longer be left solely to our overstretched security forces, who—through no fault of their own—often arrive only after situations have deteriorated. If we want our children and grandchildren to enjoy the kind of peace we once took for granted, then we must accept that collective sacrifice is inevitable. Peace has a price, and that price must be paid by all of us. One radical but necessary approach is a coordinated national lockdown for a fixed period—six months—similar to what we endured during the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, an invisible virus shut down our economy and movement. Today, we face a visible, armed, and determined threat that has abducted our children, displaced our people, and challenged the sovereignty of our nation. If we could respond decisively to a virus, then surely we can

respond to those who shed innocent blood. During this period, the use of motorcycles—the primary mobility tool of bandits—should be banned nationwide, from our cities to our rural communities. The open sale of petroleum products, which fuels their mobility and sustains their operations in the forests, must be temporarily halted or tightly rationed. These measures will disrupt and eventually collapse the supply chain that sustains criminal groups. When fuel, food, and free movement become inaccessible to them, they will be left with no choice but to abandon their hideouts. Yes, these measures will be painful.

Yes, they will affect every citizen. But extraordinary threats demand extraordinary responses. We took similar drastic steps during the civil war to restore Nigeria's unity, and those sacrifices ultimately preserved the nation. Today, we face an internal war of a different kind—one against banditry, kidnapping, and insurgency—and we must be willing to act with the same resolve. If we do not act now, we risk losing more than our schools. We risk losing our nation.

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