

## Utilization of track one diplomatic strategies in combating the bandit economy along the Kenya and Uganda Border

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### ABSTRACT

The bandit economy is a pervasive global security issue, thriving in regions like Texas, Oklahoma, and the UK, where it has evolved into a lucrative enterprise. In Africa, the problem is exacerbated by illicit small arms, weak Track One Diplomacy, and cross-border dynamics. Despite advancements like aerial monitoring by Kenya and Uganda, banditry persists, posing significant challenges to regional security and requiring more effective supranational strategies. The objective of the study was to assess the Track one Diplomatic strategies for combating banditry along the Kenya-Uganda border. The study was conducted in *Lokitanyala* along the Kenya-Uganda border. The study utilized descriptive research design. The study used both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. The study was guided by power theory. The study target 621,241 respondents from which, a sample size of 384 was derived, using Fisher's formula comprising *Lokitanyala* households, while key informants were drawn from political and religious leaders, administrative leaders, youths (former bandits) and civil society. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules; FGDs. Quantitative Data was analyzed through SPSS version 25 to generate descriptive statistics that were presented in the form of frequencies and percentages in graphs, tables and charts. Qualitatively, it emerged to the researcher that, while bilateral agreements are beneficial, their success depends on the commitment and implementation by the involved parties. The findings revealed that some of the track one diplomatic strategies used combating banditry include; joint border patrols, bilateral, agreements, Information sharing, joint public awareness sessions. The study concludes that, Track one diplomacy strategies along the Kenya-Uganda border have been pivotal in addressing cross-border security issues and fostering bilateral cooperation. The study recommends that both the governments of Kenya and Uganda implement community development programs that provide alternative livelihoods, improve access to education, and create economic opportunities.

**Keywords:** Bandit Economy, Bilateral Agreements, Cross-Border, Diplomatic Strategies, Track One Diplomacy

### I. INTRODUCTION

Bandit economy remains a pervasive global security problem in the world today. In the United States for example, banditry continues unabated in Texas and Oklahoma, the top cattle producing states (Wolf *et.al*, 2015). The situation is not different in the United Kindom (UK). In 2019 for example, cattle worth Three Million Euros were stolen from the UK farms (Hederson, 2020). Further Hederson, (2020) argued that large scale sheep thefts over the past two years have contributed to a 19.4 % rise in value since 2017 making rustling the costliest crime for the UK farming sector. According to Azar (1990) an increase in banditry incidents in the UK has transferred the crime from a local issue to a highly organized enterprise worth millions according to new data. Notwithstanding the prevalence of bandit economy in the West, the problem remains particularly severe in Africa due to circulation of illicit small arms and light weapons (Mazuri *et al.*, 2022). According to the International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT, 2017) bandit economy was historically rooted in cultural and socio-economic factors. Recently the practice is a large-scale criminal activity with strong security implications and direct and indirect effects on the groups involved (Chepyegon, 2023). Bandit economy has had a wide range of negative effects including loss of human lives, displacement of populations and destruction. This has been attributed to failure of government agencies, structures and mechanisms (Mazuri *et al.*, 2022).

In Africa, states are reluctant to enter into official negotiations (Track One Diplomacy) in such conflict fearing the possibility of losing their sovereignty or autonomy (Kemper, 2007). Furthermore, in Africa, bandit economy is a cross border and transnational issue affecting regional security. In Nigeria, for example, the crime remains a serious security issue, especially the Northern area. Bandit economy in Nigeria has also evolved into a militarized criminal activity powered by proliferation of SALW (Mazuri *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the government's response to bandit economy has also been slow and generally reactive. One attempt involved the Nigerian Police Force, launching the Task Force on Cattle Rustling and Associated Crime. The task force was responsible for patrolling and intelligence gathering on anti-rustling and related crimes. It was also to investigate and possibly prosecute reported cases of such crimes. However, the task force has been relatively inactive since its creation (Olaniyan *et al.*, 2016). This has therefore elicited a plethora of questions on why track one diplomacy has failed hence prompting the need to explore track two diplomacy.

Regionally, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda have also continued to feature prominently on the list of African countries experiencing the crime (Mazuri *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the East Africa region has no legal framework to deal with the crisis. Responses to bandit economy by East African countries have so far been ineffective. A failure of security and justice systems to adapt to the threat has led to formation of new organized crime cartels (Chepyegon, 2023). Countries in the region responded, in the main, in two ways, using largely indiscriminate force and incentivized disarmament initiatives. However, neither of these approaches was particularly successful. Indiscriminate violence increased community resentment against state security forces, while the exchange of livestock for firearms and ammunition achieved the opposite effect making civilians acquire more firearms (Gumba *et al.*, 2019).

Transnationally, track-one diplomacy has been used to address the transnational as well as supranational issues such as border disputes, hoarding of goods, cattle rustling and human trafficking. In the case of Kenya and Uganda, specifically at Lokinyatala border, track one diplomacy has been used to tackle bandit economy. The aspect of track-one diplomacy is also predominantly used in this research. This is the kind of diplomacy practiced by States and international organisations. It is characterized by formal rules, some legal and others based on practice, to which all states and international organizations agree. Track-one diplomacy is also based on formal operating procedures and formalized relationships (Onditi, 2023). This study entails the observation of track-one diplomacy as practiced by Kenya and Uganda in addressing the issue of bandit economy at the Lokinyatala border.

Across Kenya-Uganda border, bandit economy remains a fundamental security challenge and the main driver of insecurity in North Rift Kenya (Bunei, 2017). Bandit economy has been on the rise resulting in deaths both amongst armed bandits and security forces. Bandit economy is no longer a cultural lifestyle by pastoralists living in Northern Kenya but a multi-billion commercial venture done by ruthless local, national and international businessmen who collude with government officials, politicians and community leaders arming raiders to carry out the deadly attacks for illicit meat trade (Gumba *et al.*, 2019). As a result of bandit economy, people have been displaced, impoverished and children's schooling disrupted. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the role of Track One Diplomacy in combating bandit economy along Lokinyatala, Kenya-Uganda Border.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Notably, trade in livestock is big business across East Africa with a high urban meat demand and export oriented markets supply chain across the borders (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). This has led to the emergence of a well armed mercenary for hire, remotely controlled by businesspeople and the well connected politically and militarily' establishment from both side of the divide who have invested and are reaping the economic value of rustling. These gangs have taken advantage and control of the porous territorial borders to metamorphosis of cross border cattle rustling in recent times. Given that cattle are not illegal commodities like contraband goods that may raise an alert when transported as noted by (Gumba *et al.*, 2019), however, stolen cattle are usually transported in small numbers or already slaughtered disguised in form of meat to conceal evidence of livestock in contrast to traditional methods of driving living animals.

Despite the deployment of security agencies by both Kenya and Uganda, bandit economy has continued (Mkutu, 2007). There has been inadequate security responses put in place by both governments, thus the growing incidences of nefarious economic activities along the border have not only led to loss of human lives and property, but have also fueled inter-ethnic disputes and impacted negatively on the local economy. Several studies have analyzed the persistence of the bandit economy, focusing on its root causes. For instance, Okello (2018) highlighted marginalization as a key driver of banditry, urging governments to address socio-economic inequalities. Similarly, Smith and Johnson (2020) emphasized the role of small arms proliferation, advocating for tighter arms control measures. Furthermore, Adan and Wekesa (2021) examined political interference, proposing robust disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration frameworks. Despite these recommendations, insecurity continues to plague border regions.

A raft of Track one diplomatic measures, through government agencies, have been put in place to militate against bandit economy across Kenya-Uganda border. For instance, Kenya and Uganda have jointly deployed a contingent of security personnel from; the Kenya Police Reservists (KPR), General Service Unit (GSU), Administration

Police (AP), Anti Stock Theft Unit (ASTU) and, more recently, Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) as well as Uganda police forces. However, despite extensive acknowledgement by the two governments that in armed situations multiple variables inform security experiences (Leff, 2009), cross-border bandit economy continues unabated.

## 1.2 Research objective

The objective of the study was to assess the utilization of Track one Diplomatic strategies in Combating Banditry along the Lokitanyala border of Kenya and Uganda

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on a theoretical framework. In line with study variables power theory was used to give the theoretical underpinnings for the study.

#### 2.1.1 Power Theory

Weber (1947) defined power as the probability of one actor within a social relationship to be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance. Dahl (1957) proposed to call the objects in the relationship of power as actors. The term actor is inclusive and may refer to individuals, groups, roles, offices, governments, nation-states, or other human aggregates. Hanna Arendt defined power not as the property of an individual, but rather argued that it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together (Habermas, 2017).

Morgenthau (1954) observes that international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power and whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim. All states seek to maximize their power, international politics can be conceived of and analyzed as a struggle between independent units seeking to dominate others. State differ not so much in what they seek to achieve, but in their capabilities to achieve ends that are largely shared. Waltz argues that each state is a separate, autonomous and formally equal political unit that must ultimately count on its own resources to realize its interests. In anarchic environments, each units incentives is to put itself in a position to be able to take care of itself since no one else can be counted on to do so (Waltz, 1979).

Waltz observes that balance of power politics prevails whenever “two or more state coexist” in an anarchic order with no superior agent to come to the aid of states that may be weakening or to deny to any of them the use of whatever instrument they think will serve their purposes (Waltz, 1979). A state must always be concerned with its relative power to pursue political power. The power of others – especially great power- is always a threat, never a cure. Weak states may have no alternatives but to guess right and hope that early alignment with the victor will ensure their survival and (at least some) other vital interests (Donnelly, 2000). The argument is that whenever two powers face each other, in this case Kenya and Uganda, each is the only real threat to security of the other; they cannot but be enemies if bandit economy is not contained. Each must, whatever its preferences or inclinations, balance its power against the other. John Herz argues that international anarchy assures the centrality of the struggle for power even in the absence of aggressively or similar factors (Herz, 1981).

For the purposes of this research, the study focused on the utility political power in addressing bandit economy. Political power is actors’ control of others in direct and indirect ways. Other scholars however, stress that many important international outcomes cannot be adequately explained with reference to power and are better understood by the concepts of democracy, liberal values and economic interdependence (Moravcsik, 1997). But the question is, can democracy be a panacea for bandit economy? This study endeavored to find this out. Despite its relevance, power theory does not address whether the state allows illegal enterprise of bandit economy

### 2.2 Empirical Review

Past studies provide significant insights into the persistence of the bandit economy, its causes, and the effectiveness of Track One Diplomacy in addressing related security issues. Papa and Mapendere (2018) highlight the formal application of state-to-state diplomacy as a critical tool in addressing insecurity. They argue that official diplomacy enables states to leverage political power, financial resources, and intelligence to influence negotiations and deter violations of international treaties. This framework has been instrumental in peace processes, such as the Oslo Accords.

Kwaja (2022) focuses on Nigeria, identifying poor leadership and structural imbalances as primary drivers of the bandit economy, particularly in Plateau State. He emphasizes the commercialization of cattle rustling and its transformation from a cultural practice to an economically motivated crime. The study further links these activities to the existence of robust underground markets that perpetuate rural insecurity.

Ojedokun *et al.* (2024) examine banditry in the North West Region of Cameroon, where it is driven purely by economic gains rather than cultural traditions. The study identifies organized groups with significant financial resources

as key actors. These findings contrast with practices in the Horn of Africa, where cultural motives historically underpinned cattle rustling.

Huho (2012) analyzes banditry among Northern Kenyan pastoralists, noting its evolution from cultural raids to politically motivated acts influenced by administrative boundary disputes, land access struggles, and electoral strategies. He attributes the increasing frequency and fatality of raids to arms proliferation and climate change, emphasizing the role of political developments in shaping these dynamics.

Therefore, while these studies examine various dimensions of the bandit economy, they tend to focus on specific regions or isolated factors like cultural practices, economic drivers, or political motivations. None comprehensively addresses the interplay between state diplomacy, governance failures, and transnational dimensions of the bandit economy. This study bridges the gap by exploring how Track One Diplomacy and governance can be effectively integrated to counteract the persistence of bandit economies in transnational contexts. It also investigates the role of modern technological advancements, such as aerial surveillance, in enhancing the effectiveness of state interventions.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

A research design is the plan according to which research participants are found and how information is collected from them. In it, the researcher describes what he or she is going to do with the participants, with the view of reaching conclusions about the research question (Welman *et al.*, 2005). The study was conducted using descriptive survey research design which descriptive research as a method of collecting information by interviewing, or administering questionnaire to a sample population to get their attitude, opinion and habits on any variety of educational or social issues.

#### 3.2 Study Area

Lokitanyala, Kenya is a settlement in the West Pokot County of Kenya. It sits across the international border from Lokitanyala, Uganda. Lokitanyala, Kenya is a vital border crossing between Kenya and Uganda. Due to the poor state of roads on the Ugandan side, vehicles often have to cross into Kenya, and then back into Uganda while travelling between various Ugandan towns.

#### 3.3 Study Population

The study population entailed households along Lokitanyala border of Kenya and Uganda and key informants selected from various institutions as follows: including: Officials from Ministry of Interior and coordination (Kenya and Uganda); Deputy County/Sub-County Commissioners, Chiefs/Sub-Chiefs, and other stakeholders such Political leaders(Kenya and Uganda), Religious leaders(Kenya and Uganda), state Security Officers(Kenya and Uganda), NCIC officials, Youth/ warriors, and officials from Civil societies.

#### 3.4. Sampling of Strategy and Sample Size Determination

##### 3.4.1 Sampling of Household Heads

According to the Uganda National Population and Housing Census 2014 of 2014 the population of Lokitanyala in Moroto District of Uganda stood at 422,441(Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2017). On the other, end the population of West Pokot County stands at 621,241 (KNBS, 2019). In this regard, the total population for the two sub-regions of Kenya and Uganda stands at 1,043,682. Since the population for the regions of Kenya and Uganda is above 10,000, the researcher applied Fishers formula to determine the sample size for the study. Therefore, the desired sample population was determined using Fisher's formula for sample size determination (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999:43). The formula is stated thus:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where n=desired sample size (the target population is greater than 10,000).

z=the standard normal deviate at the confidence level of 95% is 1.96.

p=the proportion of the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured is set at 50%

q=1-p (probability of non-success)

d=level of statistical significance set at 0.05

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 * 0.5 * (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 384$$

Stratified proportionate sampling used to determine the number of household sampled in Lokitanyala of Moroto District Uganda and Lokitanyala, West Pokot County, Kenya. Table 1 indicates that number of household heads sampled in the two areas.



**Table 1***Stratified Sampling for Household Heads*

Population	Total Population	Sample Size
Lokitanyala, Moroto Uganda	422,441	155
Lokitanyala, West Pokot Kenya	621,241	229
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,043,682</b>	<b>384</b>

**3.4.2 Sampling for Key Informants and Focus Group Discussions**

In this study, the sample population comprised of key informants at different levels of Track One Diplomacy and other stakeholders who provided information on peace in their locality. At the same time there were questionnaires and FGDs administered. Ranter (2017) define a sample as a subject of a specific population. It is also referred to as a representative sample, as noted in Pratt *et al.* (2005). The process of sampling involves the selection of a group of individuals or elements from a target population. The group sample can then stand for the whole population.

The sample size was drawn from various key informants selected from various institutions as follows: including: Officials from Ministry of Interior and coordination; Deputy County/Sub-County Commissioners, Chiefs/Sub-Chiefs, and other stakeholders such Political leaders, Religious leaders, state Security Officers, NCIC officials, Youth/ warriors, and officials from Civil societies as well as custom officials from Uganda. The target population is summarized in Table 2 and Table 3.

**Table 2***Categories of Target Population in the Borderline of Lokinyatala, Kenya*

Population	Sample size	Sampling Technique	Data collection Instrument
Deputy County/Sub- county Commissioners	2	Purposive	Interview
NCIC officials,	2	Purposive	Interview
Chiefs/Sub- Chiefs	4	Purposive	Interview
Political leaders(Kenya and Uganda)	8	Purposive	Interview
Religious leaders	5	Purposive	Interview
State Security Officers	10	Convenience	Interview
Youth/ warriors-former bandits	10	Snow-balling	Interview
Council of Elders	21	Purposive	FGD

**Table 3***Categories of Target Population in the Borderline of Lokinyatala, Uganda*

Population	Sample size	Sampling Technique	Data collection Instrument
Local government officers	5	Purposive	Interview
Security officers	5	Purposive	Interview
Traders and business owners	10*2= 20	Purposive	FGD
Former bandit gang members	5	Snow-balling	Interview
Political leaders	5	Purposive	Interview
Religious leaders	5	Purposive	Interview
NGO personnel	5	Convenience	Interview
Victims of banditry	5	Snow-balling	Interview
Custom officials	5	Purposive	Interview

**3.5 Methods of Data Collection**

Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires while qualitative data was collected through the use of interview Guides and Focus Group Discussions

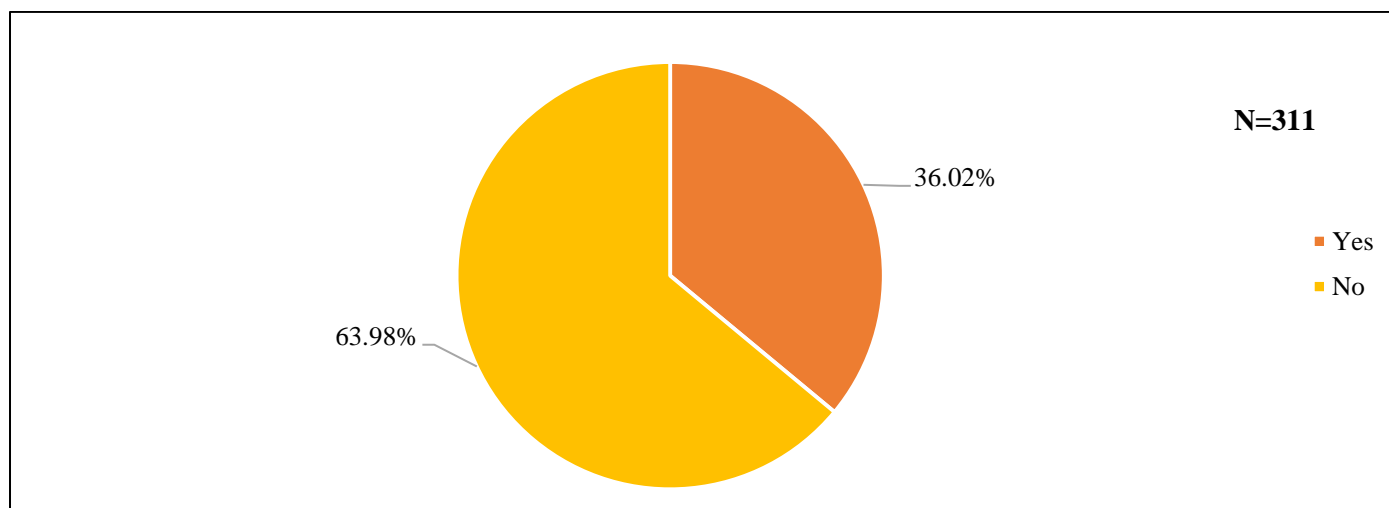
**3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Quantitative Data was analyzed through Statistical Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 25 to generate descriptive statistics inform of frequencies and Percentages which were presented in the form of graphs, tables and charts. Qualitative data was transcribed, organized in themes and presented in the form of narrative reports and verbatim quotations.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Awareness of Diplomatic Efforts to Combat Bandit Economy

The study examined whether there was awareness with regard to diplomatic efforts to combat the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border. Out of 311 respondents, only 36.02% (112 respondents) acknowledged being aware of diplomatic initiatives to combat the bandit economy, while the majority (63.98%, or 199 respondents) remained unaware. These results underscore a notable gap in the effectiveness of Track One Diplomatic efforts, aligning with the findings of Nyasio (2019), who highlighted the challenge of disseminating information in conflict-prone areas where access to government communications is often limited. This finding also corroborates the arguments presented by Abdullahi (2019), who noted the difficulty of information distribution in areas lacking robust infrastructure. The results are illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1**  
*Awareness of Diplomatic Efforts to Combat Bandit Economy*

The respondents who were aware of diplomatic efforts (36.02%) may have been exposed to information through formal channels like government announcements or media coverage, which aligns with Smith et al. (2011) who found that individuals with access to multiple information sources are more likely to be informed. These individuals were possibly also involved in or had observed cross-border initiatives, such as regional security meetings or bilateral agreements between Kenya and Uganda, echoing Kiriimi (2017) who argued that participation in diplomatic activities enhances awareness.

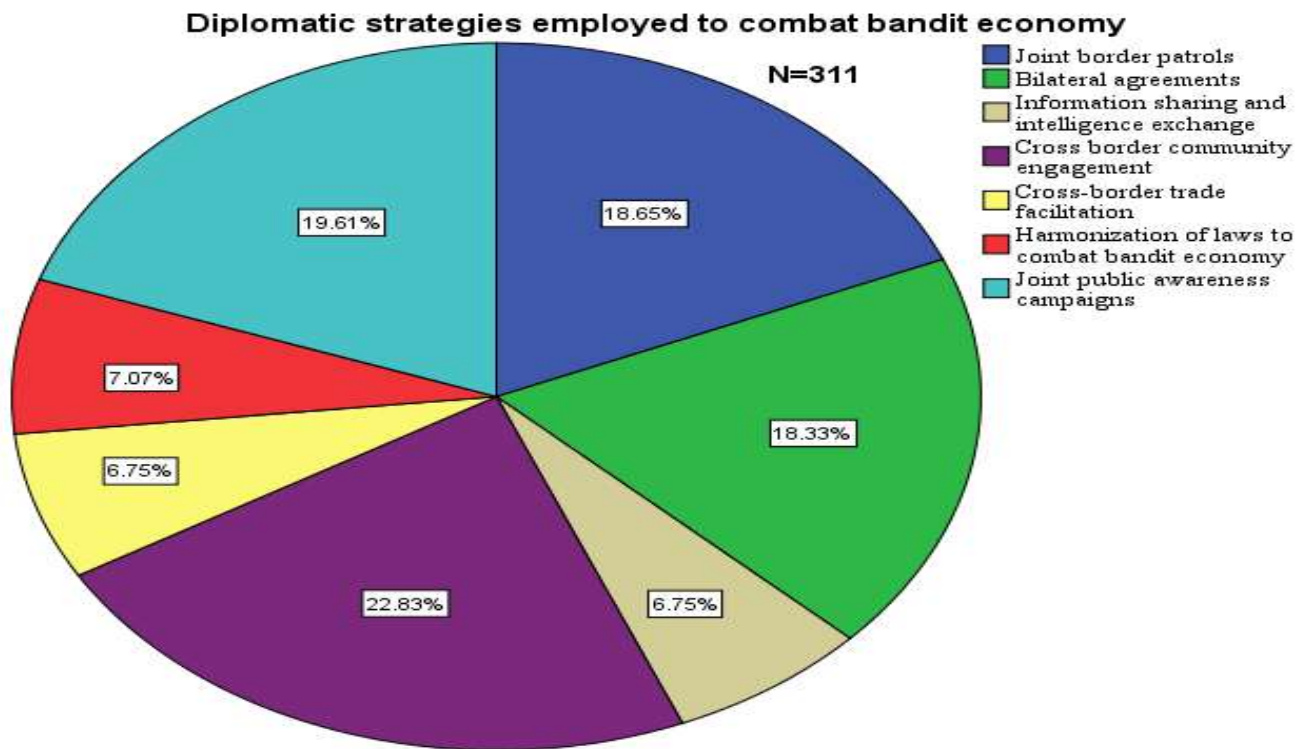
On the other hand, the 63.98% of respondents who were unaware of these efforts reflect the challenges faced in regions where diplomatic initiatives lack visibility. This aligns with Turner et al. (2008) who identified insufficient visibility and effectiveness of such initiatives in certain regions. Additionally, the disconnect between policy implementation and grassroots awareness in areas with entrenched informal economies (Nye et al., 2008) could explain why many respondents did not perceive the impact of diplomatic measures.

The study's findings emphasize the gap in awareness, which can be attributed to inadequate communication strategies and insufficient engagement with local communities. This is in line with broader scholarly calls, such as those from Nye et al. (2008), for more inclusive and transparent diplomatic practices in conflict zones. In conclusion, while some progress is being made through Track One Diplomacy, the limited awareness of these efforts calls for more robust and targeted communication strategies to ensure that diplomatic measures effectively reach and resonate with local populations, ultimately contributing to the mitigation of the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border.

### 4.2 Diplomatic Strategies Employed to Combat Bandit Economy and Trade Activities along the Kenya-Uganda Border

Diplomatic strategies to combat the bandit economy and trade activities along the Kenya-Uganda border are crucial in addressing cross-border bandit economy and enhancing regional stability. The study found that joint border patrols were identified by 58 respondents (18.64%) as a key strategy, a finding consistent with previous research on the role of cooperative security in managing border security (Chifu, 2024; Buzan & Wæver, 2009). This strategy is crucial in addressing cross-border criminal activities, as coordinated patrols enable neighboring states to pool resources and share information, which increases the capacity to detect and respond to illegal activities. This aligns with the concept

of Track One Diplomacy, where formal state-to-state collaboration strengthens border security and fosters stability in the region. The results are illustrated in Figure 2.



**Figure 2**

*Diplomatic Strategies Employed to Combat Bandit Economy*

Bilateral agreements, cited by 57 respondents (18.33%), reflect the role of diplomatic negotiations in fostering cooperation between states. These agreements, as noted by Okumu and Ikelegbe (2010), provide a formal framework for addressing shared challenges such as the bandit economy. The study's findings suggest that such agreements enhance border management by streamlining operations and reducing opportunities for illegal trade. This aligns with the study's objective to assess how formal diplomacy influences efforts to combat the bandit economy through legally binding agreements.

Information sharing and intelligence exchange, mentioned by 21 respondents (6.75%), were also found to be crucial strategies for enhancing border security. This aligns with the work of Menkhaus (2007), and Clunan and Trinkunas (2010), who emphasize the significance of intelligence-sharing networks in addressing transnational crime. Timely and accurate intelligence are key components of Track One Diplomacy, contributing to a comprehensive and coordinated response to cross-border criminality.

Cross-border community engagement, identified by 71 respondents (22.82%), emerged as a critical strategy for reducing local support for banditry. This finding supports the argument made by Soderbaum and Taylor (2008) that local cooperation is essential for addressing the root causes of the bandit economy. The involvement of local communities helps build trust and creates networks that can support anti-banditry measures, reinforcing the effectiveness of diplomatic strategies through grassroots involvement.

The establishment of legal trade routes, cited by 21 respondents (6.75%), is another strategy aimed at reducing reliance on illegal trade. This is in line with the work of Snyder and Duran-Martinez (2009), which suggests that formalizing trade routes and providing legitimate economic opportunities can diminish the appeal of the bandit economy. This strategy aligns with Track One Diplomacy's broader objective of promoting economic development and stability through legal frameworks.

The harmonization of laws, mentioned by 22 respondents (7.07%), is essential for reducing discrepancies in border regulations. Niemann (2013) argues that harmonizing laws ensures consistency in enforcement, preventing the exploitation of legal gaps by those involved in the bandit economy. This is a critical aspect of Track One Diplomacy, where cross-border legal coordination enhances the effectiveness of diplomatic efforts to combat illegal activities.

Lastly, joint public awareness campaigns, cited by 20 respondents (6.43%), were recognized as a vital strategy in educating the public about the dangers of the bandit economy. As highlighted by Muggah (2012) and Moser (2009),

public awareness campaigns contribute to reducing tolerance for illegal trade and encouraging lawful economic behavior. These campaigns align with Track One Diplomacy's role in fostering peace and stability through soft power and public diplomacy.

The findings of this study reveal a diverse set of diplomatic strategies employed to combat the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border. These strategies, ranging from joint patrols and bilateral agreements to community engagement and legal reforms, reflect a comprehensive approach to tackling the complex issues of cross-border criminality. Each strategy aligns with the research objective of evaluating Track One Diplomatic strategies, providing valuable insights into the practical application and effectiveness of diplomacy in addressing the bandit economy. The results further support the idea that a multifaceted approach, involving both formal diplomatic efforts and local community participation, is essential for enhancing border security and promoting regional stability.

#### **4.2.1 Joint Border Patrols**

The study aimed to evaluate the role of diplomatic strategies, such as joint border patrols, in combating the bandit economy and cross-border trade activities. The findings regarding joint border patrols provide insights into how this strategy is used to address the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border and how it aligns with both the research objectives and existing literature on the subject.

The study found that joint border patrols are an important strategy employed to combat the bandit economy. The respondents highlighted that joint patrols enhance the ability to detect and intercept illegal activities such as smuggling and unauthorized trade, which are central components of the bandit economy. This finding is consistent with the arguments of Karanja and Njeri (2017), who emphasize that collaborative border security measures between neighboring countries, like Kenya and Uganda, significantly improve monitoring and control over illicit activities. The study's findings align with the assertion that joint border patrols enable the pooling of resources, sharing of intelligence, and coordination of responses, thereby increasing the capacity to enforce border regulations effectively.

The study's results also reflect the broader scholarship on cross-border cooperation, such as the work of Titeca and Kimanuka (2012), who highlight how joint patrols strengthen the ability of security forces to address regional security challenges, including the bandit economy. By coordinating efforts, neighboring countries can address the transnational nature of illicit activities, such as smuggling, which often exploit gaps in national security systems. This collaborative approach is vital for bridging operational gaps, fostering an integrated security strategy, and effectively combating the bandit economy. These findings support the study's objective of assessing how Track One Diplomatic strategies, including joint border patrols, contribute to enhancing border security and mitigating cross-border illegal trade.

The interviews with key informants (KIIs) further supported these findings, stressing that joint border operations are critical to addressing security challenges along the Kenya-Uganda border. The KIIs highlighted that cross-border cooperation, particularly joint patrols, significantly enhances the capacity of security forces to tackle the complex and transnational nature of the bandit economy. The study's findings align with the KII perspectives that coordination between Kenya and Uganda, including shared intelligence and joint operations, strengthens the overall security framework in the region.

However, the study also considered critical perspectives on joint border patrols, particularly those of Raballand and Mjekiqi (2010), who caution that while joint patrols are beneficial, their effectiveness can be limited by challenges such as inconsistent commitment from participating countries and logistical difficulties. The study's findings echoed these concerns, suggesting that while joint patrols are effective in enhancing security, their implementation can be hindered by a lack of sustained political will, resources, and operational consistency. Furthermore, Ferris and Robbins (2004) argue that joint border patrols should be part of a broader strategy that includes community engagement, economic development, and legal reforms, as focusing solely on security measures may have limited long-term success. The study's findings align with this view, emphasizing that joint patrols, while critical, need to be integrated with other strategies addressing the root causes of the bandit economy.

In conclusion, the study's findings on joint border patrols align with the research objective of assessing Track One Diplomatic strategies. The findings confirm that joint border patrols are a crucial component of efforts to combat the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border. The positive impacts of joint patrols, as outlined by Karanja and Njeri (2017) and Titeca and Kimanuka (2012), are evident in the study's results. However, the challenges highlighted by Raballand and Mjekiqi (2010) and Ferris and Robbins (2004) also underscore the need for a broader, more integrated approach to security that combines diplomatic strategies with other initiatives, such as community engagement and legal reforms, to address the root causes of the bandit economy effectively.

#### **4.2.2 Bilateral Agreements**

The study findings revealed bilateral agreements, resulting from negotiations, are a strategy employed to combat the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border are supported by substantial scholarly work. These agreements are



pivotal in managing cross-border issues and fostering regional cooperation. Scholars widely acknowledge the importance of bilateral agreements in enhancing border security and combating the bandit economy. For example, Odhiambo (2014) argues that bilateral agreements between neighboring countries can significantly improve border management and reduce illegal activities. He highlights how such agreements establish frameworks for cooperation, mutual assistance, and information sharing, which are crucial in addressing cross-border challenges like smuggling and banditry. By formalizing cooperation, these agreements help align the efforts of different countries and provide a structured approach to managing shared security concerns.

Similarly, Titeca and Kimanuka (2012) emphasize the role of bilateral agreements in the East African context. They note that negotiations leading to formal agreements, such as the 2013 MOU on Cross-Border Cooperation between Kenya and Uganda, have facilitated enhanced coordination in combating the bandit economy. This agreement, signed by representatives from both governments, including the Kenyan Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government and Uganda's Ministry of Internal Affairs, has been pivotal in harmonizing border policies, sharing intelligence, and jointly implementing security measures. Such collaborative frameworks are crucial for addressing the transnational nature of the bandit economy, which often exploits inconsistencies between national regulations. The scholars argue that these agreements provide a structured approach to managing the challenges posed by cross-border crime, ensuring that both countries can mount a more effective and unified response to illicit activities. Additionally, the 2015 Joint Border Security Initiative further solidified this cooperation, focusing on the establishment of joint task forces and regular security meetings to monitor and assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies.

On the other hand, one of the respondents argued that:

*While bilateral agreements are beneficial, their success depends on the commitment and implementation by the involved parties. It is important to point out that negotiations and agreements can sometimes result in ambitious plans that fail to materialize due to lack of political will, resource constraints, or inconsistent enforcement. These factors can undermine the effectiveness of bilateral agreements, making it challenging to achieve the intended outcomes* (Interview with security officer at Lokitanyala border, Kenya-Uganda, 14/6/2024)

In support of the prevenient assertion, Raballand and Mjekiqi (2010) argue that while bilateral agreements are important, they should not be seen as a standalone solution. They emphasize that effective border management requires a comprehensive approach that includes not only bilateral agreements but also local engagement, economic development, and law enforcement reforms. According to their perspective, bilateral agreements alone may not address the underlying socio-economic factors driving the bandit economy and may require complementary strategies to achieve sustainable results. The study's findings that bilateral agreements, as products of negotiations, play a role in combating the bandit economy are well-supported by scholarly work. Researchers like Odhiambo as well as Titeca and Kimanuka affirm the benefits of such agreements in enhancing cross-border cooperation and security. However, the critical views of Raballand and Mjekiqi, and Ferris and Robbins, highlight the potential limitations and challenges associated with these agreements. Successful implementation requires not only effective negotiation but also sustained commitment and integration with broader strategies to address the root causes of the bandit economy.

#### **4.2.3 Information Sharing and Intelligence Exchange on Economic Activities**

The study focused on various diplomatic strategies, including information sharing and intelligence exchange on economic activities. The findings indicate that information sharing and intelligence exchange are key strategies employed to combat the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border, and these findings are consistent with substantial scholarly work that emphasizes the importance of these practices in enhancing border security and managing the bandit economy.

The study's findings reveal that information sharing and intelligence exchange are essential tools for combating the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border. This aligns with the perspectives of scholars such as Vines *et al.* (2022), who argue that effective intelligence exchange is crucial for managing transnational threats like smuggling and other forms of economic crime. The study confirmed that timely and accurate information sharing enhances the ability of border security agencies to detect and intercept illegal activities, improving situational awareness and enabling coordinated responses to the bandit economy. These findings support the assertion that intelligence exchange helps prevent and mitigate the impacts of the bandit economy by enabling better-prepared security forces to address the threats posed by cross-border crime.

Similarly, Andersen and Haland (2015) emphasize the role of information sharing in strengthening regional security frameworks, and their findings align closely with the study's results. The research highlighted that cross-border cooperation, particularly in the form of intelligence exchange on economic activities, allows for a more integrated and coordinated approach to addressing the complexities of the bandit economy. The study's findings also affirm that effective information sharing bridges gaps between national security measures, enhancing operational efficiency and fostering a collective response to the bandit economy. This view is consistent with the literature that underscores the

importance of intelligence exchange in improving border management and ensuring a more holistic approach to cross-border security.

However, while the study supports the benefits of information sharing and intelligence exchange, it also recognizes potential challenges and limitations. This aligns with the more nuanced perspectives presented by scholars such as Boas and Jennings (2008), who suggest that information sharing can be hindered by factors like mistrust, differences in data standards, and limited technological capacity. The study revealed that despite the recognition of information sharing as a valuable strategy, practical challenges such as these can undermine its effectiveness. The lack of reliable communication channels and inconsistent data standards can create barriers that diminish the potential benefits of intelligence exchange.

Additionally, the concerns raised by Schimmelfennig (2014) about the limitations of information sharing are also reflected in the study's findings. Schimmelfennig highlights that even when intelligence is shared, it may not always lead to effective action if the receiving countries lack the institutional capacity or political will to act on the information. The study confirmed that the exchange of intelligence can only be effective if the necessary infrastructure and resources are in place to act upon it. If these elements are missing, there is a risk that valuable intelligence may not be utilized to its full potential, thus limiting the impact of information sharing and intelligence exchange initiatives.

In conclusion, the study's findings on information sharing and intelligence exchange align with the research objective of assessing Track One Diplomatic strategies in combating banditry. The findings support the significant role of these strategies in enhancing border security and managing the bandit economy, as emphasized by scholars like Vines *et al.* (2022) and Andersen and Haland (2015). However, the study also highlights the challenges and limitations identified by Boas and Jennings, and Schimmelfennig, such as mistrust, data standardization issues, and institutional capacity constraints. To ensure the success of information sharing and intelligence exchange, these challenges must be addressed. Effective implementation requires reliable communication channels, standardized data practices, and adequate resources to act on shared intelligence. This comprehensive approach is crucial to achieving actionable outcomes in combating the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border.

#### 4.2.4 Cross-Border Community Engagement

The study findings revealed that cross-border community engagement is a strategy used to combat the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border are consistent with existing scholarly research that highlights the importance of local involvement in managing and mitigating illicit activities. Cross-border community engagement encompasses efforts to involve local populations in border security and economic development, aiming to reduce support for bandit activities and foster cooperation between neighbouring communities.

In light of the foregoing view, a focus group discussion with the council of elders revealed that:

Elder 1: *Our communities have long been on the front lines of banditry and smuggling due to our proximity to the border. Engaging local populations in border security has proven to be an effective strategy. By involving our people, we can leverage their intimate knowledge of the land and local dynamics to better monitor and report suspicious activities* (FGD with council of elders, Lokitanyala, Kenya-Uganda border 14/6/2024)

Elder 2: *Indeed. Cross-border community engagement helps build trust between the security forces and the communities. Locals are more likely to cooperate with authorities when they are included in these efforts. This cooperation reduces the community's support for bandit activities and increases the chances of identifying and apprehending those involved in illegal activities* (FGD with council of elders, Lokitanyala, Kenya-Uganda border 14/6/2024)

In support of the antecedent views, Huggins (2010) emphasizes the role of community involvement in enhancing border security and reducing illegal activities. Huggins argues that engaging local communities helps build trust and encourages them to cooperate with security forces, which is crucial for identifying and reporting illicit activities. By integrating local knowledge and perspectives, security measures become more effective and responsive to the specific challenges communities face along the border. This approach improves security and addresses the socio-economic factors that contribute to banditry.

Further, the discussants argued that:

Elder 3: *Community involvement doesn't just stop at reporting crimes. It also includes participating in economic development initiatives. People with legitimate economic opportunities are less likely to turn to banditry for survival. Engaging in local development projects alongside security efforts ensures a comprehensive approach to combating the bandit economy* (FGD with council of elders, Lokitanyala, Kenya-Uganda border 14/6/2024).

Elder 4: *However, these engagement strategies mustn't be just top-down directives. They need to be developed with input from local communities to ensure they are culturally appropriate and address each area's specific needs and challenges. Our involvement can help tailor these strategies to be more effective.*

Similarly, Titeca and Kimanuka (2012) highlight the benefits of community engagement in the East African context. They note that cross-border cooperation involving local communities can significantly contribute to managing the bandit economy. Their research shows that when communities are actively involved in border management, they supported and adhered to security measures. This engagement helps reduce the appeal of illicit activities by providing alternative economic opportunities and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for border security. On the other hand, some scholars offer a more critical perspective on the effectiveness of cross-border community engagement. Bøås (2015) argues that while community engagement is a valuable strategy, it is not without its challenges. He points out that the success of such initiatives often depends on the level of trust between local communities and authorities. In areas where there is significant mistrust or historical grievances, community engagement efforts may struggle to gain traction and achieve the desired outcomes. Bøås suggests that without addressing these underlying issues, community engagement may have limited impact on reducing support for bandit activities.

Furthermore, Mwaura (2017) raises concerns about the sustainability of community engagement initiatives. He argues that while involving communities can be effective in the short term, long-term success requires ongoing support and investment. Mwaura highlights that community engagement efforts need to be integrated into broader development programs and supported by consistent policies and resources. Without sustained commitment, such initiatives may falter and fail to produce lasting results in combating the bandit economy.

#### 4.2.5 Economic Development Initiatives

The study focused on economic development initiatives as a key strategy. The findings of the study indicate that economic development initiatives, such as providing alternative livelihoods, reducing poverty, and improving infrastructure, are employed to combat the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border. The study's findings affirm the critical role of economic development in reducing the appeal of illegal economic activities. This is consistent with the perspectives of scholars such as Collier and Hoeffler (2004), who argue that economic development is fundamental in diminishing the incentives for engaging in illegal activities. The study highlighted that development initiatives that focus on economic growth and job creation can offer legitimate alternatives to banditry. By improving access to resources and services, such initiatives help address the root causes of illegal activities and promote stability in border regions. The findings support the argument that economic development can alleviate the socio-economic conditions that drive individuals toward engaging in the bandit economy, aligning with Collier and Hoeffler's assertion that development helps reduce the appeal of illegal economies.

Similarly, Schmidt and O'Loughlin (2013) highlight the positive effects of development programs, such as infrastructure projects and vocational training, on security in conflict-affected areas. Their research suggests that economic development initiatives can help reduce support for illicit economies by improving access to resources and providing alternative livelihoods. The study's findings align with this view, as it was observed that when communities experience economic improvement, there is a corresponding decrease in the appeal of banditry and other illegal economic activities. The study also supports Schmidt and O'Loughlin's argument that economic development contributes to a more stable environment by addressing the socio-economic grievances that often drive individuals toward illegal activities.

However, the study also acknowledges more critical perspectives on the role of economic development in combating the bandit economy. Muggah (2014) provides a nuanced view, suggesting that while economic development is essential, it is not a cure-all for addressing the complexities of security challenges. Muggah emphasizes that development initiatives must be carefully designed and integrated with broader security strategies to be effective. The study findings reflect this caution, as the researcher notes that economic development alone may not resolve the banditry issue unless development efforts are well-targeted and aligned with local needs and security concerns. Without addressing the specific dynamics of the bandit economy, economic initiatives may have limited impact. The study echoes Muggah's argument that development programs must be designed with a clear understanding of the local context to achieve meaningful results.

Furthermore, De Waal (2015) raises concerns about the potential unintended consequences of development initiatives in conflict-prone areas. He argues that development programs can sometimes exacerbate existing tensions or fail to resolve underlying governance issues, which can undermine their effectiveness. The study found that while economic development initiatives are helpful, they must be accompanied by effective governance, conflict resolution mechanisms, and coordinated security measures to be successful. The findings align with De Waal's assertion that economic development must be integrated with broader governance and peacebuilding efforts to avoid exacerbating tensions or failing to address the root causes of the bandit economy.

In sum, the study's findings on economic development initiatives align with the research objective of assessing Track One Diplomatic strategies in combating banditry along the Kenya-Uganda border. The findings confirm the importance of economic development in offering alternatives to illicit activities and promoting regional stability, as emphasized by scholars like Collier and Hoeffler (2004) and Schmidt and O'Loughlin (2013). However, the study also



reflects the critical perspectives of Muggah (2014) and De Waal (2015), highlighting the need for well-targeted and context-specific development initiatives. Economic development alone, without addressing the specific dynamics of the bandit economy and integrating broader security and governance strategies, may have limited impact. Therefore, a holistic approach that combines development, governance, and security measures is necessary for the successful utilization of economic development as a strategy to combat the bandit economy.

#### **4.2.6 Cross-Border Trade Facilitation**

The study had a particular focus on cross-border trade facilitation. The findings of the study reveal that the establishment of legal trade routes, as part of cross-border trade facilitation, is an important strategy to combat the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border. The study's findings align with the views of scholars such as Dijkstra and Poelman (2013), who highlight the importance of legal trade routes in managing cross-border trade and reducing illicit activities like smuggling and banditry. The study found that establishing legal trade routes helps create structured, regulated pathways for commerce, thus reducing the chances for illicit trade. This formalization of trade routes, as noted by Dijkstra and Poelman, can reduce the incentives for engaging in illegal economic activities by offering a transparent and organized trading environment. This view was affirmed by the study, which observed that the creation of legal trade routes minimizes the exploitation of border areas for illicit purposes. The findings support the argument that by providing clear, regulated channels for trade, legal routes help in reducing the scope for illegal activities, including banditry.

Similarly, Ager and Araujo (2016) argue that cross-border trade facilitation, through the establishment of legal trade routes, contributes to economic stability by ensuring that trade flows are monitored and controlled. This research shows that formal trade routes enhance both economic cooperation and border security. The study's findings corroborate these ideas, as it was observed that the establishment of legal trade routes not only enhances economic stability but also improves security by reducing the opportunities for illicit trade and banditry. The legal routes help create a structured framework for trade, which mitigates the reliance on informal and unregulated border crossings that often fuel illegal activities.

However, the study also acknowledges the critical perspectives of scholars like Bessler and Sarmiento (2017), who caution that the success of legal trade routes depends on the ability of countries to enforce regulations and manage border infrastructure effectively. The study's findings reflect this concern, highlighting that the implementation of legal trade routes alone is not sufficient unless there is proper enforcement and adequate investment in border infrastructure. Without effective enforcement, these routes may struggle to fully mitigate smuggling and banditry. The study found that to overcome these challenges, a comprehensive approach is necessary, one that combines the establishment of trade routes with robust border management and enforcement strategies.

Additionally, Kabeer (2015) raises concerns about the limitations of legal trade routes in addressing the root causes of banditry, such as poverty and lack of economic opportunities. While the study supports the notion that legal trade routes can help reduce illicit activities, it also acknowledges that such routes alone may not address the deeper socio-economic issues driving banditry. Kabeer's suggestion that legal trade routes should be part of a broader strategy, including economic development and social interventions, is reflected in the study's findings. The study notes that without addressing these underlying causes, legal trade routes may only provide a partial solution to the bandit economy. As such, the study stresses that legal trade routes need to be integrated with broader economic and social interventions to be truly effective in addressing the root causes of banditry.

In sum, the study's findings on cross-border trade facilitation through the establishment of legal trade routes align with the research objective of assessing Track One Diplomatic strategies in combating banditry along the Kenya-Uganda border. The findings confirm that legal trade routes are an effective strategy for reducing illicit activities and promoting economic stability, in line with the views of Dijkstra and Poelman (2013) and Ager and Araujo (2016). However, the study also highlights the challenges identified by Bessler and Sarmiento (2017) and Kabeer (2015), which point to the need for effective enforcement, infrastructure investment, and complementary socio-economic strategies. Successful implementation of legal trade routes requires a holistic approach that integrates robust border management, development initiatives, and social interventions to address the root causes of the bandit economy.

#### **4.2.7 Harmonization of the Laws to Combat Bandit Economy**

The study's findings that harmonization of laws is a strategy employed to combat the bandit economy along the Kenya-Uganda border align with a significant body of scholarly work that underscores the importance of legal coherence in managing cross-border economic activities and addressing the bandit economy. Harmonizing laws involves aligning regulations and legal frameworks across borders to create a more integrated and effective approach to addressing shared challenges.

Scholarly research supports the notion that harmonization of laws can play a crucial role in combating the bandit economy. For example, Radaelli (2005) argues that legal harmonization facilitates better cooperation and coordination



between countries, particularly in managing cross-border issues like smuggling and other illegal economic activities. By standardizing regulations and procedures, countries can create a unified approach to enforcement and reduce the opportunities for bandits to exploit legal discrepancies between jurisdictions. Radaelli's work highlights that harmonization helps to streamline legal processes, making it more difficult for illicit actors to evade detection and prosecution. In light of the foregoing, former bandit gang members argued that:

*In the past, we exploited the gaps between the laws in Kenya and Uganda to facilitate our activities. The inconsistencies in regulations made it easier for us to operate without facing severe repercussions. For instance, we could move goods across the border where the enforcement was lax, or the penalties were less severe. However, when both countries started aligning their laws, the dynamics significantly changed. The harmonization of legal frameworks made it much harder for us to find loopholes. With stricter and more consistent regulations on both sides, the risks of getting caught increased. This shift forced many of us to rethink our activities and look for less risky avenues. The coordinated legal approach between Kenya and Uganda is a key factor in disrupting bandit operations, as it reduces the exploitation of regulatory weaknesses (KII with former bandit gang member, 23/6/2024 along Lokitanyala, Kenya-Uganda border)*

Further one of the administrative officer from Uganda stated that:

*When Kenya and Uganda began working on harmonizing their laws, it had a noticeable impact on our operations. Before the harmonization, the differences in border regulations allowed us to evade detection and penalties more easily. Each side had its own set of rules, and we used this to our advantage, knowing that enforcement was patchy at best. However, as both countries aligned their legal frameworks and enforcement practices, we faced greater challenges. The consistency in laws meant that our smuggling routes and illegal trade practices became more difficult to sustain. The legal changes forced many of us to abandon our old methods or risk harsher penalties. This shift has made it clear that a unified legal approach is crucial in tackling cross-border crimes effectively. It not only addresses the immediate issues but also creates a more challenging environment for those engaged in banditry (KII with administrative officer at Kenya-Uganda border)*

In support of the foregoing, Kletzer and McCallum (2014) discuss the benefits of legal harmonization in their study on regional trade agreements. They note that when countries harmonize their laws, they improve regulatory consistency and reduce trade barriers. This consistency not only facilitates legitimate trade but also helps in combating illegal activities by closing loopholes and eliminating discrepancies that bandits can exploit. Their research emphasizes that effective legal harmonization requires active collaboration and agreement among neighbouring countries to ensure that all parties are aligned in their regulatory approaches. However, some scholars offer a more critical perspective on the harmonization of laws. Brenton and Sheehan (2007) argue that while harmonizing laws can be beneficial, it is often challenging due to differences in legal traditions, enforcement capacities, and political will among countries. They suggest that the harmonisation process can be complex and may require significant negotiation and compromise. Brenton and Sheehan highlight that without addressing these challenges, the benefits of harmonization may be limited, and the intended outcomes may not fully materialize.

The findings of the study revealed that that harmonization of laws is used to combat the bandit economy are supported by scholarly research that underscores its role in improving cross-border cooperation and regulatory consistency. Researchers like Radaelli (2005) as well as Kletzer and McCallum (2014) affirm the benefits of legal harmonization in addressing shared challenges and reducing opportunities for illicit activities. However, critical perspectives from Brenton, Sheehan, and Tietze highlight the challenges and limitations of harmonization, emphasizing the need for effective implementation and integration with broader strategies. Successful harmonization of laws requires addressing these challenges and ensuring that legal frameworks are complemented by robust enforcement and comprehensive regional approaches.

#### 4.2.8 Joint Public Awareness

One of the strategies identified in the study is joint public awareness campaigns, which are employed to combat the bandit economy. The study's findings on joint public awareness campaigns confirm that such initiatives are central to increasing vigilance and fostering community cooperation in the fight against the bandit economy.

Scholarly literature widely supports the role of public awareness campaigns in reducing criminal activities and improving community safety. For instance, Bamberger *et al.* (2016) argue that educating the public about the risks and consequences of illegal activities can significantly increase community cooperation with law enforcement. The study's findings corroborate this, as it was noted that joint public awareness campaigns aim to inform and involve local populations in recognizing and reporting bandit activities. By increasing community awareness, these campaigns empower locals to take an active role in preventing and reporting bandit activities, thereby contributing to a collective effort to address the bandit economy. This is consistent with Bamberger *et al.*, (2016) argument that successful campaigns rely on clear messaging, community engagement, and the dissemination of information through various

channels. The study observed that public awareness efforts are integral in encouraging locals to collaborate with authorities in managing the bandit economy.

Similarly, Bursik and Grasmick (1993) emphasize that public awareness campaigns are effective in crime prevention by increasing community cooperation with law enforcement. Their research suggests that when communities are informed about the impact of illegal activities and the importance of reporting suspicious behavior, there is a noticeable increase in law enforcement cooperation. The study findings resonate with this perspective, as it was observed that public awareness campaigns build a sense of collective responsibility, strengthening the social fabric and fostering a united front against banditry. The study highlighted that such campaigns play a crucial role in reducing the appeal of illegal activities by promoting lawfulness and vigilance among community members.

However, while the study's findings align with these scholarly views, it also acknowledges the challenges highlighted in the literature. Public awareness campaigns, while valuable, must be part of a broader strategy to be effective. The study agrees with the view that public awareness should not operate in isolation but needs to be integrated with enforcement, economic development, and continuous adaptation to ensure their long-term effectiveness. As Bursik and Grasmick (1993) suggest, successful public awareness initiatives require sustained engagement and an ongoing commitment to keeping the community informed. The study's findings indicate that while joint public awareness campaigns are essential in raising awareness and building cooperation, their success is dependent on their integration into a broader framework that addresses other factors driving the bandit economy, such as poverty, lack of opportunities, and weak law enforcement.

In sum, the study's findings on joint public awareness campaigns in combating the bandit economy align with the research objective of assessing Track One Diplomatic strategies in addressing banditry along the Kenya-Uganda border. The findings support the scholarly literature on the effectiveness of public awareness in fostering community vigilance and cooperation with law enforcement (Bamberger *et al.*, 2016; Bursik and Grasmick, 1993). However, the study also recognizes the need for these campaigns to be part of a comprehensive strategy that integrates enforcement, economic development, and continuous adaptation to maximize their impact on reducing the bandit economy.

## V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that, Track one diplomacy strategies along the Kenya-Uganda border have been pivotal in addressing cross-border security issues and fostering bilateral cooperation. These formal diplomatic engagements involve government-level negotiations, treaties, and agreements aimed at enhancing security and stability in the region. Key strategies include joint border patrols, intelligence sharing, and coordinated military operations to combat banditry and other illegal activities. The establishment of bilateral security agreements has provided a structured framework for collaboration, enabling both countries to respond more effectively to security threats. Despite these efforts, the success of Track one diplomacy is often hindered by challenges such as limited resources, political instability, and varying levels of commitment from local authorities. Nonetheless, these strategies have laid a solid foundation for cooperation and have facilitated a more systematic approach to border security. To enhance the effectiveness of Track one diplomacy, it is essential to ensure sustained political will, adequate resource allocation, and continuous dialogue between the two nations. By addressing these challenges, Track one diplomacy can significantly contribute to long-term peace and security along the Kenya-Uganda border.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that both the governments of Kenya and Uganda implement community development programs that provide alternative livelihoods, improve access to education, and create economic opportunities. Strengthening local governance and increasing the presence of state institutions in border areas will also help mitigate the factors driving the bandit economy, leading to long-term stability.

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