

ANYIGBA JOURNAL OF HISTORY & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (AJOHIS)

Volume 2, Number 1, 2021

ISSN:2795-3351



**A Journal of the Department of History &
International Studies, Faculty of Arts & Humanities,
Kogi State University, PMB 1008
Anyigba, Kogi State**

Terrorists without Border: Herdsmen Terrorism and Human Insecurities in West Africa

Anthony Chukwuebuka Okoye
& John Tor Tsuwa

Abstract

The West African sub-region is under deluge of armed attacks by transhumant nomadic Fulani herdsmen in their struggle with sedentary farmers over scarce natural resources like land, water and pasture. Although, there has been conflict between herders and farmers from time immemorial in the region and beyond. However, the upsurge in frequency and intensity of the conflict recently that result in death, injury, destruction of property and population displacement constitute serious source of concern, especially its implications for human security and development in the sub-region. The most worrisome aspect of these attacks is the character and dimension it had assumed in recently. This is evidenced in the level of planning, coordination, execution and caliber of weapons used. Besides, while the sophisticated nature of weapons are meant to maximise casualties; the act of raping of women and scorch earth tactics that sack and render communities homeless aim to psychologically drain as well as instill fears among sedentary farmers into caving in to demands of transhumant nomadic Fulani herdsmen. The violence is also targeted at compelling government into calling for negation or taking definite actions that will be in favour of the transhumant herdsmen - precisely, the provision and allocation land with water points and pasture for their herd.

Keywords: Human security, nomadic herdsmen, sedentary farmers, transhumance, terrorism and West Africa

Introduction

Right from the days of Cain and Abel, conflict has been existing between farmers and herders. Arising from this, conflicts between sedentary crop farmers and transhumant nomadic Fulani herdsmen have been recurrent in West Africa. Although, the conflicts are usually over scarce renewable natural resources, but the pattern of attacks over the years have shown to be a complex mix of politics, identity, religion, terrorism and criminality (Nasir, 2018). Unlike, in time past, these marauders invade communities with sophisticated weapons like assault rifles, AK47, etc. The fact that these attacks assume regional dimension, and involve nomadic Fulani herdsmen who are predominantly Muslim in most cases, and sedentary farming communities that on the other hand are predominantly Christian in addition to the selective character of some of these attacks, especially in Nigeria, appear to give it religious and ethnic coloration. This situation conceals the economic, social, and political undercurrents that fuel the conflict. The political economy of the sub-region demonstrates a historical trend of seasonal migration in which transhumant herdsmen graze their herds up north during rainy season, and move southwards during dry season; and return to the north just before the commencement of next planting (rainy) season. However, this is no longer the situation presently as the herdsmen are making the movement an all year affair even to the point of taking up permanent residence in the south.

Exploiting the provisions of the ECOWAS protocol on transhumance in addition to weak and porous border security in most West African countries these nomadic Fulani herdsmen move in and out of any country unhindered. It was gathered that attempts by the farmers to caution or seek redress over destruction of their crops often results in violent conflict. The implication of this state of affair, is that the transhumance herdsmen that face threat to their occupation and way of life by both government policies and activities of sedentary farming communities feel marginalized and dejected. In the view of these, they resort to

terrorist diplomacy aimed at compelling both the government and farming communities to either grant them access and use right to water points, rangelands and pasture, within these communities or cede part of their lands to them for their herding business.

It is against this backdrop that this study examines the political and economic undertones of the nomadic Fulani herdsman terrorist attacks on sedentary farming communities across the West African with a view of giving practical suggestions to tackling the conflict. The objective of this study is to interrogate the political aims of nomadic Fulani herdsman terrorism and its human security implications, with a view of contributing the extant knowledge on herders-farmers conflict (herder's terrorism).

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the eco-violence theory as its theoretical framework of analysis. The theory was popularized by Homer Dixon (1991, 1994, 1999, and 2007) where he noted that conflicts are triggered by scarcity of natural resources. Expanding on the thesis, Homer-Dixon (1999, p.30) observes:

Decrease in the quantity and quality of renewable resources, population growth, and unequal resource access act singly or in various combinations to increase the scarcity, for certain population groups, of cropland, water, forests, and fish. This can reduce economic productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity and for the larger regional and national economies. The affected people may migrate or be expelled to new lands. Migration groups often triggers ethnic conflicts when they move to new areas, while decreases in wealth can cause deprivation conflicts.

He noted that the seven major environmental problems that might plausibly contribute to intergroup conflict within and among developing countries include: greenhouse warming, stratospheric ozone depletion, acid deposition, deforestation,

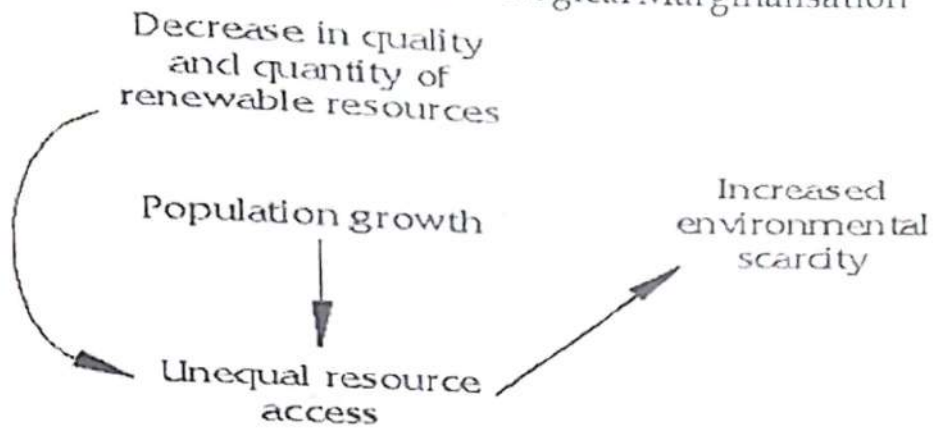
degradation of agricultural land, overuse and depletion of water supplies, and depletion of fish stock (Homer-Dixon, 2007). Across the universe, many of the predicted consequences of environmental change are already occurring. With Homer-Dixon's 1991 list of expected consequence standing out:

Environmental change may contribute to conflict as drivers as war, terrorism, or diplomatic and trade disputes. Furthermore, it may have different causal role: in some cases, it may be a proximate and powerful cause; in others, it may only be a minor and distant player in a tangled story that involves many political, economic, and physical factors.

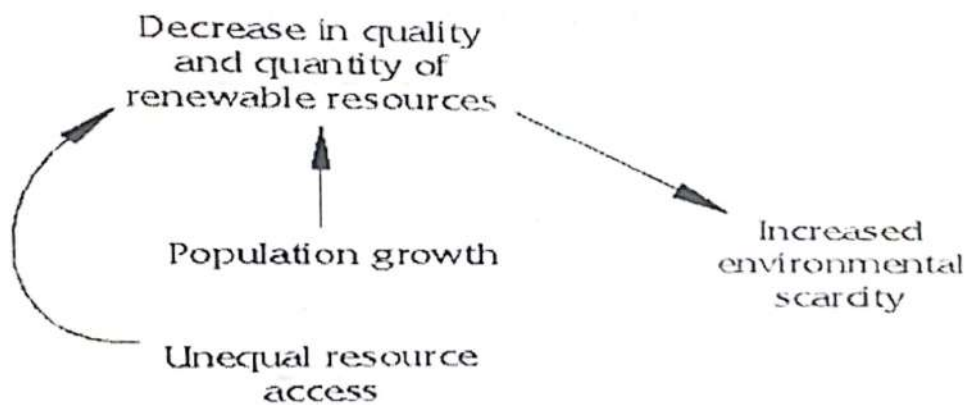
On this note, the implications of environmental effects on security include heightened internal and cross-border tensions caused by large-scale migrations; conflict sparked by resource scarcity, particularly in less developed and weak states (Campbell, 2008). Echoing similar concern, Romn (1993) argued that many nations experiencing resource scarcity, may witness conflict or ecosystem collapse that is capable of triggering environmental refuges. The theory stresses that scarcity and competition over environmental resources such as fresh water, crop land, forests and fish that are of vital importance to human sustenance and survival will lead to violent conflicts.

In applying to theory to the study, it was observed that the conflicts between transhumant nomadic herdsman and sedentary farmers in West Africa are remotely triggered by environmental scarcity that itself consists of environmental change, population growth and unequal distribution of social resources. When these three sources of environmental scarcity often interact, and two patterns of interaction are particularly common: "resource capture" and "ecological marginalisation".

Fig. 1: Resource Capture and Ecological Marginalisation



Resource Capture: Resource depletion and population growth cause unequal resource access.



Ecological Marginalization: Unequal resource access and population growth cause resource degradation and depletion.

Source: Homer-Dixon(1994).

The transhumant nomadic Fualni's herdsmen historically, graze their herds in the arid regions of West Africa during the rainy season and visit the southern parts during dry season. However, a number of factors such the population explosion, expansion of farm lands, government developmental policies, programmes and projects, drought and desert encroachment, especially the droughts of 1970s and 80s compelled them to migrate southwards in search of water, land and pasture for their

herd. It is within the contours of the struggle over such renewable natural resource like land, water and pastures that claims and counter-claims that result into violence between them often ensue. Here farmers accuse transhumant nomadic Fulani herdsmen of grazing their herds on their crop as well as allowing their herds to pollute their source of water; the herders on the other hand accuse the farming communities of rustling and stolen in addition to being denied access to water point and pastures. Over time, these conflicts that were originally fought with the stick, fist, daggers and dame guns with limited number of casualties' took a different dimension both in frequency and perimeter. This change witnessed the replacement of traditional weapons with more sophisticated ones such assault rifles and AK47, etc by the herdsmen.

Arising from the violent manner transhumant nomadic herdsmen respond to famers complain concerning destruction of their crops or pollution of water sources by the herders herd; most communities, states and countries formulated policies that either expel or restrict activities of transhumant nomadic herdsmen. Given this, herdsmen develop sense of frustration that triggers aggressive behaviours. Again, the fact that most government developmental policies and interventions target settled livestock breeders and sedentary farming communities generate feeling of relative deprivation among nomadic herdsmen that are often at receiving end of these projects. The point is that as more and more infrastructures like hospitals, tarred roads, amusement parks, schools, stadiums, petrol and gas stations, commercial agriculture, industries, plantations, power stations, etc, are established, the lesser the land area for grazing.

Regrettably, in order to ensure that they were accommodated and granted access to these scarce renewable natural resources, transhumant nomadic herdsmen commence waging of terrorist styled attacks against any sedentary community that challenges their access to and right to use either

their land, pasture and water. An attack that witness killing, abduction, kidnapping, maiming, razing of whole community, pillage, raping of women, sacking of communities and displacement of thousands, etc. that create fear in minds of surviving members of these communities. These armed campaign-like attacks equally force government into interventionist negotiations and proposals aimed at addressing the demands of the transhumant nomadic Fulani herdsmen in order for peace to reign. A situation that is *in tandem* with Homer-Dixons (1991) assertions that scarcity and uneven distribution of renewable resources had started contributing to intergroup conflicts, which are basically sub-national, widespread, and endemic in character:

In brief, our research showed that environmental scarcities are already contributing to violent conflicts in many parts of the developing world. These conflicts are probably the early signs of an upsurge of violence in the coming decades that will be induced or aggravated by scarcity. The violence will usually be sub-national, persistent, and diffuse. Poor societies will be particularly affected since they are less able to buffer themselves from environmental scarcities and the social crises they cause. These societies are, in fact, already suffering acute hardship from shortages of water, forests, and especially fertile land.

Demonstrating this, Homer-Dixon and his team developed three hypotheses to link environmental scarcity (changes) with violent conflict. First, they suggested that decreasing supplies of physically controllable environmental resources, such as clean water and good agricultural land, would provoke interstate "simple-scarcity" conflicts or resource wars. Second, they hypothesized that large population movements caused by environmental stress would induce "group-identity" conflicts,

especially ethnic clashes. And third, they suggested that severe environmental scarcity would simultaneously increase economic deprivation and disrupt key social institutions, which in turn would cause "deprivation" conflicts such as civil strife and insurgency (Homer-Dixon, 1994). Interestingly, these scenarios appear to be playing out in West Africa where transhumant nomadic Fulani herdsmen attack communities as a result of resource scarcity.

Understanding terrorism

Despite the existence of many international agreements, charters, treaties, communiqués, resolutions, protocols, conventions and institutions, etc, that criticise and condemn terrorism; there is no generally acceptable definition of the term. In these wise, different authors, commentators, scholars, organisations, institutions and governments differ in their definitions on the subject matter. In the view of this Bartolotta (2011) observes:

There is a long-standing consensus in the academic community over the disagreement surrounding the conceptual and operational definition of terrorism. Both the theoretical conceptualization and the empirical manifestation of terrorism are highly contested base on state, national, political, geopolitical, religious and even ideological constellations, giving rise to not one but many manifestations of terrorism, differing from one region to another, one sub-region to another and one country to another.

According to the UNCHR (2018) terrorism is an acts of violence that target civilians in the pursuit of political or ideological aims. Likewise, the 2015 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report defines terrorism as "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by non-state actors to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or

intimidation. The European Union (EU) defined it as violence aimed at intimidating a population, and that which aims to compel a government or an organization to act or abstain from any act (Official Journal of the European Communities, 2002). The Nigeria anti-terrorism Act of 2011, considers terrorism to be "an act which is deliberately done with malice, aforethought and which may seriously harm or damage a country or an international organization; and is intended or can reasonably be regarded as having been intended to:

- 1) Unduly compel a government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act;
- 2) Seriously intimidate a population;
- 3) Seriously destabilize or destroy the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organization, or otherwise influence such government or international organization by intimidation or coercion;
- 4) an attack upon a person's life which may cause serious bodily harm or death;
- 5) Kidnapping of a person;
- 6) Destruction to a government or public facility, transport system, an infrastructural facility including an information system, a fixed platform located on the continental shelf, public place or private property likely to endanger human life or result in major economic loss;
- 7) The seizure of an aircraft, ship or other means of public or goods transport and diversion or the use of such means of transportation to influence government or international organization by intimidation or coercion
- 8) The manufacture, possession, acquisition, transport, supply or use of weapons, explosives or of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, as well as research into, and development of biological and chemical weapons without lawful authority;

- 9) The release of dangerous substance or causing of fire, explosions or floods, the effect of which is to endanger human life;
- 10) interference with or disruption of the supply of water, power or any other fundamental natural resource, the effect of which is to endanger human life;
- 11) An act or omission in or outside Nigeria which constitutes an offence within the scope of a counter terrorism protocols and conventions duly ratified by Nigeria; and
- 12) An act which disrupts a service but is committed in pursuance of a protest⁵.

On its part, the 1999 Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in its Article 1 (3) specifically defines a "Terrorist Act" as:

"(a) Any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to:

- (i) Intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles; or
- (ii) Disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or
- (iii) Create general insurrection in a State.

(b) Any promotion, sponsoring, contribution to, command, aid, incitement, encouragement, attempt, threat, conspiracy, organizing or procurement of any person, with the intent to commit any act referred to in paragraph (a) (i) to (iii)."

Similarly, Saul (2008) sees it as any serious, violent criminal

act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury, or to endanger life, including acts against property committed outside an armed conflict for a political, ideological, religious or ethnic purpose and intended to:

- a. create extreme fear in a person, group, or the general public; and
- b. seriously intimidate a population or part of a population; or
- c. unduly compel a government or an international organisation to do or to abstain from doing any act.

The United Nations Security Council in 2004, under Resolution 1566, conceptualized terrorist acts as:

criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, which constitute offences within the scope of and as defined in the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, are under no circumstances justifiable by considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar nature.

Bruce Hoffman (cited in Aytikin, 2017) stated that terrorism has three motivations and criteria: 1) acts of terrorism which are performed are generally politically (or religiously) motivated in nature, 2) they are calculated and not done by 'chance', and 3) terrorism as an act is performed to kill and send a message for propaganda purposes to the general public.

Indeed, all the elements of terrorism as suggested in preceding conceptions are represented in the manner and style of armed attacks by transhumant nomadic Fulani herdsmen across West Africa. This among others include premeditation, violence,

injury, instilling of fear, death, destruction of property, kidnapping, hostage taking, abduction, rape, arson, terror, intimidation, compelling government to act in a particular manner, disruption of social service provisioning, etc. The point is that the terrorist gaming of Fulani herdsmen that resonate in tears and blood wherever they chose to visit is not a happenstance or spontaneous occurrence. Rather, it is a well thought and coordinated plan that is aimed at a definite end.

Trends and Transformation in Fulani nomadism in West Africa

The Fulani herdsmen are largely located in the Sahel and semi-arid parts of West Africa, but due to relatively recent changes in climate patterns, many herdsmen have moved further south into the savannah and tropical forest belt of West Africa. The herdsmen are found in countries such as Nigeria, Niger Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, and Cameroon. The Fulani's due to their migratory nature are spread across all the climatic zones in West Africa, such as the deserts of the north, to the derived savannah and forests of the south. In terms of occupation, they are mainly transhumant herders, and they remain so (Sangare, 2019) to date. They herd livestock like cow, cattle, sheep, camels, and goats, etc. They constitute the largest nomadic pastoral community in the world (Appiah & Gates, 2010, Levinson, 1996). Despite the fact, that, some of them are beginning to sedentralise through faming and semi-nomadic herding most of them still engage in nomadism. The distributions of Fulani's across West African countries are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Estimated population distribution of Fulani's in West Africa

Country	Total population (Millions)	Fulani population (estimated)	Fulani percentage of total population
Benin		750,000	
Burkina Faso	19	1,200,000	6.3%
-	23.5	1,800	small percentages
Gambia	2	320,000	16%
Ghana	28	4,600	small percentages
Guinea-Bissau	1.9	320,000	17%
Guinea-Conakry	13	4,900,000	38%
Mali	18.5	3,000,000	16%
Mauritania	4.2	1,260,000	30%
Niger	21	1,600,000	7.6%
Nigeria	190	16,800,000	Under 9%
Senegal	16	3,500,000	22%
Sierra Leone	6.2	310,000	5%
Togo	8.2	111,000	1.3%

Source: Compiled by the authors from Sangare (2019, p.3), 2020 World Population Review, and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulani_herdsman.

The information contained in the above table indicates that there is Fulani population or community everywhere in West Africa. One striking feature of the information presented in the above table is that there is no West African country where the Fulani's constitutes the majority. The situation can be attributed to their itinerant nature that does not permit them to settle at one spot. Historically, Fulani herdsman graze their herds in areas around the arid and Sahel region of West Africa due to its environmental condition that make the land not too suitable for farming (Kinge & Nweke, 2019). Until recently, there appear to be an unwritten working understanding between Fulani herdsman and farming communities in the sub-region (Okoye, Obiorah & Nwoke, 2020), whereby herders tend their herd in the arid (northern parts) during rainy season when farmers are planting and growing their crops. But, move southwards during dry

season, at a time farmers had harvested their crops. This way, there is little or no issue that is capable of triggering conflict between them. Rather, they enjoy symbiotic relationship in which Fulani herders cows (herds) feed on leftovers in the farm and in turn fertilize the farmers farm (Okoye, 2018).

Contrary to this age long pattern of seasonal migration, the combined effects of population growth (both human and herds), government developmental policies and climate change that manifests in drought and desert encroachment, decrease in length of rainy season, reduction in amount of rainfall (it is currently reported that rainfall in the Sahel has dropped by 20% over the past 40 years), shrinking of water bodies (as evidenced in Lake Chad), corporate mining, improvement in veterinary medicine that prevent diseases like *trypanosomiasis* as well as activities of insurgent groups like Boko Haram (BH), Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA), etc, compel herders to embark on season and out of season southwards movement in search of pasture and water. Meanwhile, the literatures on migration have identified *push* and *pull* factors as reasons while people move from one place to another. In the former, harsh environmental condition or existential threat to an individual or group compel the people concerned to involuntarily move out of their original residence. For instance, in Nigeria, the Sahel is creeping southward by approximately 1,400 square miles a year, swallowing whole villages and reducing the land available for grazing (Nnoko-Mewanu, 2018). On the other hand, the pull factor describes a situation in which the existence of favourable atmosphere attracts people to a place (Okoye, 2018). This suggests that while climate change induced extreme events acting in concert with other variables uproot herdsmen from northern parts of the sub-region. The existence of arable land, pasture and fresh water, attract herders and farmers alike down south (Okoye, 2018). Given this, a primary reason for the increasing trend in herdsmen migration is to reach areas with abundant grass and water. In doing this,

herders before moving to new areas, send a reconnaissance team to study the area for availability of these resources. It is in the contest of this off-season migration that the intensification of conflict between transhumant herders and sedentary farmers ensue. In highlighting how these factors create sense of frustration in the minds of these herders, Okoli (2017) observes:

What this means is that the average nomadic herder lives in an environment he considers hostile and indifferent to his needs, where he must struggle to fend for himself and to survive. This struggle for survival has become a way of life for herders who are ready to defend or redeem their endangered livelihood with their blood.

More so, the priority given by development policies to intensive livestock farming and sedentarized communities tends to marginalize nomads. Left out of development policies, frequently feeling discriminated against by the authorities, transhumant herders often feel they are living in a hostile environment and mobilize to defend their interests. In addition, terrorist groups and militias fighting in West and Central Africa cash in on their frustrations to recruit them (Sangare, 2019).

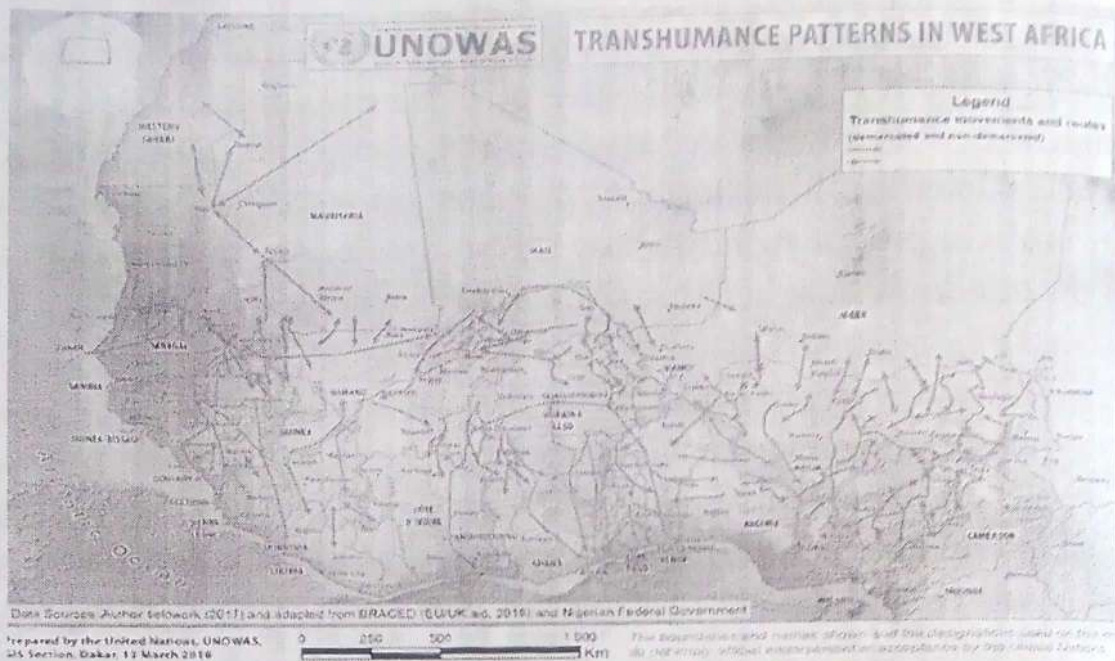


Fig. 2: Transhumance patterns in West Africa
Source: UNOWAS (2018, p.17).

Dynamics of transhumant nomadic herdsmen terrorism in West Africa

For decades now, the West African sub-region had been infested with endemic terrorist threat. This time, not by BH, Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA), Islamic State in the Great Sahel (ISGS), etc, rather it comes from transhumant nomadic Fulani herdsmen that wage armed attacks against sedentary farming communities. The story of their carnage and mindless murderous offensive is the same in Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo, Gambia, Guinea, Benin, Ivory Coast, Niger, and Nigeria, etc. Although, the intensity and frequency of the violence is not evenly distributed, however, in all these countries, it is the tale of their regular trademarks – tears and blood. Given the resort to terrorist diplomacy by transhumant Fulani herdsmen in their struggle for natural resources. It is this terrorist gaming aimed at forcing, intimidating and coercing farming communities into granting them access to pasture, water points as well as conceding part of

their territory by instilling fear in them in addition to compelling governments to intervene on their favour that impels herdsmen to attack, murder, maim, plunder, rape, raze, destroy and displace inhabitants of farming communities that deny them access to these resources at midnight in most cases. This suggests that just like in all acts of terrorism, herdsmen violent attacks is a tactics of political competition. This strategy appears to be working in Nigeria, given the various attempted Federal Government's interventionist schemes targeted at accommodating, appeasing and pacifying herdsmen into ending their terrorist attacks namely 1) grazing reserve, 2) cattle colony, and 3) rural grazing area (RUGA), etc. The acceptance of these interventionist programmes and projects by Fulani nomadic herdsmen and their umbrella body MACBAN supports the narrative that the armed attacks were aimed at land grab. Using the Nigeria for example, where the attacks are often described as herders – farmers conflict both in the media, academic and governmental circles, Onwubiko (2020) observes:

There is no such thing like farmers versus herders' crises. What is happening and has just happened in Delta state is armed Fulani herdsmen terrorism. Groups of armed Fulani herdsmen are on rampage apparently determined to kill as many farmers as possible so as to take over their lands.

Ultimately, Fulani herders appear to be on mission of land grab as over time, they seek to privatise and expropriate lands leased or loaned to them either by an individual or community (Okoye, Obiorah & Nwoke, 2020). Likewise, Lala Walet, a Mopti NGO worker, promoting livestock commerce noted that nomadic Fulani's herdsmen are complaining that farmers are in charge of all the land (Nasir, 2018). In a number of cases, violence had been as a result of Fulani's renegeing on the terms and conditions upon which lands were leased to term. On the grounds that they had

lived and used the land for long period and as such, they now own the land. And in addition claim and assert indigene status as well as all the rights that appertain thereto including land ownership, political positions, leadership position, governance inclusion, creation of local government, autonomous status, etc.

Worse still, these attacks witness the deployment of sophisticated military grade weapons such as AK47, AK49, and other assault rifles in addition to mercenaries and hired fighters. For instance, both Nigerian government and its security agencies had severally reiterated that nomadic Fulani herdsmen attacking sedentary farming communities across the country are non-Nigerians. This suggests that they must be hired fighters and mercenaries from elsewhere within West Africa and beyond. In this connection, Okoli (2017) states:

The military capability of the militant herdsmen has become increasingly sophisticated. They use modern weaponry as well as mercenary fighters. Some of the attacks now include military style operations, sometimes with the use of supply helicopters and machine guns mounted on vehicles.

The rising number of casualties registered recently during Fulani herdsmen armed attacks against farming communities, can be attributed more to the quality and caliber of weapons brandished during these attacks more than in the numbers of the attacks in recent times. Most of these attacks took place at the dead of night at a time farmers were asleep with their families. The preference for this tactics, which is common in most terrorist gaming are two, 1) it caught the farmers unaware, unorganized, and unprepared, and 2) even the greatest of warriors is at his weakest point when attacked in the company of his family; as he will torn between protecting his family and confronting the assailants. These give the attackers upper hand in the situation. Besides, it was under this condition that herdsmen commit the

worst of terrorist atrocities by unleashing scorched earth offensive on hapless communities.

Although, tenuous, however, there are evidence linking Fulani herdsmen with terrorist organisations operating in West Africa. For instance, in 2017 the African Centre for Strategic Studies noted that Islamist terrorist groups in the Sahel and Sahara are attempting to exploit pastoralist grievances to mobilize greater support for their agenda (Fulton & Nickel, 2017). Ditto to Lala Walets', revelation that Fulani herdsmen complains of farmers control of lands, the jihadists ask them to join their sects on the agreement they will help them (herders) fight to get back the lands (Nasir, 2018). Again, the role of Fulani herdsmen in the creation of terrorist jihadism in central Mali in 2015 as well as their actions towards its spread in Burkina Faso and Niger seems to confirm this view (Sangare, 2019). It is the quantum of destruction and fear they often left behind that necessitates their classification as the fourth most deadliest terrorist organization in the world in the year 2015 after by the Global Terrorist Index (GTI) ISIL, Taliban, al-Shabaab and BH; and the second most deadly terrorist group in Africa after BH (Chibueze, 2016).

The human and material costs of transhumant nomadic Fulani herdsmen attacks had been felt in all parts of ECOWAS member states. In Mali, specifically in the Menaka region, armed men raided two villages where they murdered an estimated 16 persons belonging of the Tuareg ethnic group. The number later rose to 40 by April, of the same year. The Fulani's were implicated in the attack by Daouda Maiga, the governor of Menaka, noting that it the dastard act were perpetrated against the Tuareg for the support they (Tuaregs) gave the French troops during an anti-terrorist operation against the "Islamic State" (IS) to the which the Fulani's are affiliated to (Sandner, 2018). The involvement of foreign fighters in Fulani offensives were demonstrated when Fulani herdsmen from Niger joined forces with those in Mali after the formation of the Ganda Izo militia in 2009 in fighting against

the Tuaregs. These Fulani, herdsmen many were initially integrated into the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA), and later into the ISGS (Sangare, 2019). Likewise, an inter-communal violent conflict between herders and farmers in Bouna, northeast, Cote d'Ivoire in March 2016 resulted in the death of an estimate 27 persons while thousands more displaced. The situation is not different in Niger that had witnessed a number of clashes. For instance, in November 2016, conflicts between herders and farmer led to the death of 18 persons and left about 20 others injured. The clash broke out near the village of Bangui along the country's southern border with Nigeria.

In Burkina Faso, official statistical records indicate that from 2005-2011 there were 12,071 conflicts in Burkina Faso involving pastoralists, with 55 deaths (UNOWAS, 2018). As for Guinea, it is in Guinée Forestière where farmer-herder conflicts appear to be most recurrent in Guinea, with clashes reported in 2016 and 2017 resulting in significant material damage and human casualties. In the case of Ghana, conflict between Fulani herders and farmers - precisely residents of Dwibeease and Hweehwe in Kwahu east district of the Eastern region of Ghana in November 2018, left an estimated 15 persons dead, while hundreds were displaced after fleeing their communities during the incidence.

Table 2: Reported Cases of Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Ghana, 2009-2013

Cases Reported	Number	
	Agogo	Gushiegu
Deaths	12	14
Injuries (gun shots/cutlass wounds)	16	12
Destruction of Property (burning of houses)	N/A	19
Crop Damage	300	N/A

Source: Kaderi Noagah Bukari, 2018

In Togo, the Chairman of ECOWAS Authority and Togolese President, Faure Gnassingbe Eyadema, decrying the unfortunate situation noted that leaders of the region will be seeking ways to address the relentless insidious violent conflict involving farmers and herders in the region. Highlighting the regional spread of the attacks, he stated the violence has become an annual occurrence across most ECOWAS member states including his country, Togo, Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Nigeria that is the worst hit both in terms of the incidence of herdsmen attack as well as human and material loss (Premium Times, June 30th, 2018). Also, in Guinea, there had been series of violent conflict involving nomadic herders and sedentary farmers.

Nigeria, the most populous nation in the West African sub-region had been the worst hit especially the middle belt region of the country that comprised of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Taraba, Niger, and Plateau states. Meanwhile, the Human Rights Watch noted in 2018 that the decades old communal conflict between nomadic herdsmen and farmers in the Nigeria's Middle Belt intensified in 2018 and further exacerbated the security situation in the country. At least 1,600 people were killed and another 300,000 displaced as a result of the violence. Worse still, the selective character of targets of attack by transhumance herdsmen that are predominantly Muslim against sedentary farming communities in Middle belt and Southern region that are predominantly Christians appears to accentuate the religious fault lines in the country. In the view of this, Christians across the country allege of a conspiracy by Muslims hiding under the cloak of Fulani herdsmen seeking to Islamise them by every means necessary. Highlighting the selective characters of these attacks based either on religion or ethnicity, Okoli (2017) observes:

In Kaduna, Taraba, Plateau and Nasarawa states, herdsmen attacks have been focused rather selectively on non-Muslim communities in a fashion that suggests a religious character to the attacks. In other places like Zamfara and Kebbi states, the attacks have been targeted on non-Fulani villages. So, in most of the attacks, it would seem victims are targeted on religious or ethnic grounds.

Depicting the increasing trend both in the number of herdsmen terrorist styled attacks and casualties. It was noted that there were 18 incidences of Fulani violence in the Middle Belt between 1997 and 2010. However, this figure witnessed an exponential increase such that there were 371 incidences between 2011 and 2015. The annual trend analysis of casualties emanating from herders - farmer conflict in Nigeria indicates that there were 39 deaths in 2010 as against 116 in 2011. By 2012, it rose to 128 deaths, with a decrease in 2013 to 115. In 2014 it was estimated at more than 1,200. The figure rose to 386 in 2017. Interestingly, it was observed by Amnesty International that out of 310 attacks recorded between January 2016 and October 2018 that 58 percent occurred in 2018. Within this period, it was noted that the conflict resulted in death of more than 3,600 persons (Aljazeera, 2018; Amnesty International, 2018). Again, Nnoku-Mewanu, (2018) stated that while the violence resulted in the death of over 1,300 persons that over 300,000 were displaced between January to August 2018 in the country.

These atrocious terrorist acts of nomadic Fulani herdsmen contributed to the reasons why Nigeria was ranked six times by the the Global Terrorism Index between 2000 and 2014 among ten countries most affected by terrorism (GTI, 2015). As at March 18, 2019 an estimated 130 deaths with over 10,000 persons have been displaced in Kaduna state alone (Tauna, 2019).

According to UNHCR's regional office based in Dakar (August 2018): it is estimated that 62,000 persons were internally

displaced in Nigeria in 2017 as a result of farmer-herder conflicts, and 3000 persons in the northern part of Benin Republic in June/July 2018 for the same reasons.

Table 3: Incidence of violent farmer-herder conflicts in some West African Countries

Country	Year of occurrence	Estimated number of deaths	Other consequences
Ghana	2001 to 2016	68	Destruction (burning) of farms, killing of cattle, more than 1000 injuries
Nigeria	2005 - 2010	302	7000 hectares of farms destroyed 1300 cattle lost, 7 communities sacked
Burkina Faso	2005 to 2011 (over 3,147 cases)	55	Many cattle killed, injuries and destruction to farms
Benin	2006 - 2007 (283 cases in northern Benin)	NA	Cattle killed, destruction of farms, injuries, destruction of property
Mali	2012 (Dogon farmers clash with Fulani herders)	25	Cattle killed, property destroyed

Source:Kaderi, (2017)

The preceding arguments suggest that nefarious activities of transhumant nomadic herdsman are nothing short of acts of terrorism, carried out against sedentary farming communities, targeted at securing grazing routes, grazing fields, pastures and fresh water points. A 2017 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report said between 2010 and 2016, deaths from Fulani extremists resulted in more than 3,000 deaths across four countries, with 92% of fatalities taking place in Nigeria (Nasir, 2018).

Implications of herdsman terrorism on human securities in West Africa

The incidence of herdsman terrorism against farmers and communities in West Africa do not produce negative impacts on human security of the people - which connotes freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom from human indignity. The

existence of these conditions will ensure that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential. Human security which is a new way of perceiving national security distinct from military conception has eight dimensions namely 1) food security, 2) economic security, 3) political security, 4) community security, 5) personal security, 6) environmental security, and 7) health security. In the view of its dimensions, human security appears to have two main aspects. It means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. Such threats can exist at all levels of national income and development (UNDP, 1994). Expatriating further on the essence of human security over traditional approach to national security, former United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Frechette noted in 1999 inquired as follows:

What do we mean by human security? We mean, in its most simple expression, all those things that men and women anywhere in the world cherish most: enough food for the family; adequate shelter; good health; schooling for the children; protection from violence whether inflicted by man or by nature; and a State which does not oppress its citizens but rules with their consent.

An essential element of human security is the possibility for all citizens to live in peace and security within their own borders.

The character and nature of herdsmen terrorism often creates human insecurities by undermining the empirical referents of various dimensions of human security. Conflict between herders and farmers enhances food insecurity by limiting both food availability and food accessibility. This implies that people should have access to food either by being able to grow it, buy it, or have it provided for indigent segment of the population

by the state. However, herdsmen armed attacks result in destruction of farmlands, crops, stored foods, increase in prices of food, fear and abandonment of farmland, etc, that escalate hunger, poverty, and malnutrition. By destroying the people's means of livelihood, small scale companies that are located within communities. It threatens economic security both in terms of source of income, occupation, employment, loss of jobs, etc. Thus, it renders people economically insecure. The few still working will be generally underemployed. This will indirectly trigger rise in crime rate.

Personal securities of citizens are gravely undermined during armed attacks and it manifests in various forms. During violent attacks by herdsmen human lives are lost, people get injured, properties are destroyed, women got raped, and people gets permanently disfigured, etc. This creates constant fear in the minds of members of communities that are constantly assailed by these bands of marauders. Besides, women and children are most vulnerable to this armed attack. For women, apart from the general security problem that armed attacks by herdsmen create; it exposes them to condition of widowhood with its attendant loss of their late husband's properties to family members. Children are specially affected either by loss of one or both of their parents, destruction of closure of schools, death of relocation of teachers, loss of academic materials such as books, footwear's, and school uniform, absent from classes, etc. Collaborating, the specific effect of herdsmen violence on women and children, Nnoko-Mewanu (2018) observes:

For women, losing husbands or male relatives during such violence could mean losing access to land or livestock, when others grab land and property from them. Violent clashes also cause women and children to flee to displacement camps, exposing them to further risks of abuse.

When people find it difficult to feed or to eat balanced diet, get injured, disfigured and displaced as a result of transhumant Fulani herdsmen attack, their health security are often compromised. Apart from the destruction of health facilities, there is also the twin problem of death, injuries, displacement of relocation of health workers away from a community suffer constant armed attacks. Even, where available, a people that have been impoverished may find it difficult to access medical services. Politically, the multiplier effects of herdsmen armed attacks undermine people capacity to enjoy and exercise their fundamental human rights such as participation in decision making process, casting of vote and inclusion in governance, etc. For instance, those that are injured and displaced during the violence find it difficult to participate in electoral processes. Owing to the fact that they are removed from the areas in which registered as voters. Decrying the effects of acts of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights in addition to government and society at large, the UNCHR (2008, p.1) observes:

Terrorism clearly has a very real and direct impact on human rights, with devastating consequences for the enjoyment of the right to life, liberty and physical integrity of victims. In addition to these individual costs, terrorism can destabilize Governments, undermine civil society, jeopardize peace and security, and threaten social and economic development. All of these also have a real impact on the enjoyment of human rights.

The selective nature of victims and objects of these attacks in most cases, sow seeds of distrust along the religious fault lines in the region by threatening people's freedom of religion and worship. This way Christians, cultivate a sensibility that the Fulani's acting under the cover of transhumant nomadic herdsmen want to "Islamize" them at all cost, through subtle but undeclared jihad. On the part of the Fulani's these armed attacks

has the tendency of pitting them against all other communities and ethnic nationalities, whether farming or not. This if unchecked can result in a vicious chain reaction against Fulani's across West Africa.

Moreover, the herdsmen attacks have increased the rate of proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region, as villages, communities and ethnic nationalities have resorted to forming vigilantes and private security outfits to protect themselves. For instance, in Nigeria, the Yoruba dominated South West states of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo through their governors established Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) codenamed Operation Amotekun on January 9th, 2020 following a regional security summit held in Ibadan, Oyo State on June 2019. The operatives of this regional security bears arms (dane guns) just like conventional police. The rise of Fulani herdsmen armed attacks complicates the already weak regional security that is being threatened by the activities of a number of militant and insurgent terrorist groups like ISWAP, BH, ISGG, etc.

Concluding remarks

The activities of transhumant nomadic Fulani herdsmen across West Africa had been laced with violent conflict in recent times. This is evidenced in the series of conflicts involving nomadic Fulani herdsmen and their host communities. Although, these conflicts are usually described in the literature as well as government circles as herders-farmers clash, herder-farmers-farmers conflict or herders-farmers crisis, etc. The findings made in this study suggest that the level of coordination, premeditation, aims and strategy displayed in these armed attacks by transhumant Fulani herdsmen against any sedentary farming community that opposes their access and use rights to their land, water and pasture is tantamount to terrorism as conceptualised by the Nigeria anti-terrorism Act of 2011, the 1999 Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention on the Prevention and

Combating of Terrorism and the 2004 United Nations Draft Convention on International Terrorism, etc. The point to note from the provisions of these documents (legislations) is that a terrorist or terrorist organisation is not just a suicide bomber. Rather, the action of any one or group that adopts violence as a strategy or tactics for achieving its goals is seen as terrorism (Ibaba & Okoye, 2015).

Given that land, water and pasture, which are resources that are essential to both nomadic herdsmen and sedentary farmers, are now scarce compared to decades ago, due to environmental scarcity. A situation that appear to confer on sedentary farming communities position of resource capture, while placing transhumant Fulani herders in difficult position that can be equated to environmental marginalization in their natural location around the arid and Sahel regions of West Africa. Responding to this situation, transhumant nomadic Fulani herdsmen begin migrating in their numbers into the areas occupied by sedentary farming community. Their migration coupled with the destruction of farmer's crop by their herds in addition to the fact that farmers themselves as a result of urbanization and population growth are almost cultivating on marginal lands triggered opposition towards Fulani herders who they refuse to share their land and water points with.

Conversely, transhumant nomadic herdsmen in order to ensure they access these scarce resources resort to terrorist diplomacy as a way of turning the tide to their favour by intimidating farmers into granting them access and use rights over their land, water and pasture. It is this terrorist ideology that gave birth to the incessant armed attacks by transhumant Fulani herdsmen across the ECOWAS member states. Meanwhile, unlike such other terrorist groups as BH, ISWA, ISGS, etc, whose operations are largely restricted to particular geographical space (country[ies]), these nomadic Fulani herdsmen leveraging on their spread in the subcontinent as well as exploiting the provision of

ECOWAS Protocol on Transhumance that permit relaxed entry and exit among member states has now become terrorists without border as their terrorism knows no boundary. Their murderous offensives, reign of terror, invasion, atrocities and armed attacks cut-across virtually all the West African states and beyond, extending into Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo, etc. These terrorist styled attacks against sedentrised farming communities in the sub-region by nomadic Fulani herdsmen, constitute grave threat to human security of citizens both nationally and regionally. It not only undermines peace and security, it also hinders economic development potentials of ECOWAS member states.

In the view of the fact that herdsmen terrorism has assumed regional security challenge in West Africa it therefore requires multilateral or regional security architecture in managing. As no country can successful go it alone based on their regional spread and ease of movement. Again, ECOWAS member state need to efficiently implement the various legislations aimed at curtailing herders conflicts within their borders. This also requires that states should ensure effective border security as a means of detecting and preventing cross border movement of arms and terrorists in and out of their country. The challenges of porous borders should also be tackled with immediate effect. Meanwhile, the practices of open itinerant grazing need to be rethink by government and opinion leaders in West Africa. The practices are no longer in sync with modern realities where almost every parcel of land belongs to someone. Hence, there is no way conflict will not ensue if we continue to allow nomadic system of animal husbandry. Having said this, transhumant Fulani herdsmen should be made to embrace ranching either as an individual or at the level of cooperative society. Finally, as a means of deterrent, punitive measures that will see anyone breaching the peace and human security of the people should be made to severely punished, without minding whose horse is being hoard.

References

- Aljazeera* (December, 2018). Amnesty: Farmer-herder clashes kill 3,600 in Nigeria. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/12/amnesty-farmer-herder-clashes-kill-3600-nigeria-181217101114812.html> [accessed on 20/1/2019].
- Amnesty International (2018). *Harvest of death: Three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria*. Abuja: Amnesty International Ltd.
- Appiah, A., & Gates, H. L., (2010). *Encyclopedia of Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.495
- Ayitekin, M., (2017). Terrorism without borders: ISIL and cyberspace. Available at: https://insamer.com/en/terrorism-without-borders-isil-and-cyber-space_1257.html [accessed on 27/3/2020].
- Bartolotta, C., (2011). Terrorism in Nigeria: the rise of Boko Haram. *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, 5(1), pp. 44-57.
- Campbell, K. M. (2008). *Climatic cataclysm: The foreign policy and national security implications of climate change*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Chibueze, C. (2016). Disarm Fulani herdsmen; prosecute MACBAN for terrorism and compel them to ranch cattle. Available at: <https://www.change.org/p/nigerian-ministry-of-defence-disarm-fulani-herdsmen-prosecute-macban-for-terrorism-and-compel-them-to-ranch-cattle> [accessed on 7/3/2020].
- Fulton, K. & Nickel, B. P. (2017). Africa's pastoralists: A new battleground for terrorism. Available at: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/africa-pastoralists-battleground-terrorism/> [accessed on 13/4/2020].
- Global Terrorism Index (2015). Measuring and understanding the impacts of terrorism. Available at:

- <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf> [accessed on 7/4/2020].
- Homer-Dixon, T. F. (1991). "On the threshold: Environmental changes as causes of acute conflict", *International Security*, 16: p.77
- Homer-Dixon, T. F. (1994). "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases", *International Security*, 19 (1): 5-40 [Summer]
- Homer-Dixon, T. F. (1999). *Environmental conflict, scarcity and violence*. Prince town University Press.
- Homer-Dixon, T. (2007). "Environmental changes as causes of acute conflict" in J. A. Robert & J. Robert (eds) *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues* (8th ed). New York: Longman.
- Human Rights Watch (2018). Nigeria events 2018. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/nigeria> [accessed on 7/4/2020].
- Ibaba, I. S. & Okoye, A. C. (2015). "Psychopathic leadership and the challenge of terrorism in Nigeria". *Political Science Review*, 6(2):149-170
- Kaderi, N. B. (2017). Farmer-herder relations in Ghana: Interplay of environmental change, conflict, cooperation and social networks. Dissertation for Conferral of a Doctoral Title by the Faculty of Social Sciences at Georg-August University of Göttingen.
- Levinson, D., (1996). "Fulani". *Encyclopedia of World Cultures: Africa and the Middle East*, Volume 9. Gale Group.
- Nasir, J. (2018). From Ghana to Ivory Coast: How herdsman have been wrecking havoc across Africa. Available at: <https://www.thecable.ng/228912-2> [accessed on 13/4/2020].
- Nnoko-Mewanu, J. (2018). Farmer-Herder Conflicts on the Rise in Africa. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/>

2018/08/06/farmer-herder-conflicts-rise-africa [accessed on 9/4/2020].

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2008). *Human rights, terrorism and counter-terrorism*. Geneva: UN Prints July.

Official Journal of the European Communities (2002). On Combating Terrorism: Council Framework Decision. Acts adopted in Pursuant to Title VI of the Treaty on European Union., 13th June.

Okoli, A. C. (2017). Growing herdsmen militancy is adding to West Africa's security threats. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/growing-herdsmen-militancy-is-adding-to-west-africas-security-threats-81966> [accessed on 7/4/2020].

Okoli, A. C. (2017). West Africa security threatened by growing herdsmen militancy. Available at: <https://www.newsweek.com/west-africa-security-threatened-growing-herdsmen-militancy-648032> [accessed on 9/4/2020].

Okoye, A. C. (2018). "New trends and tensions in farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria" in B. Okaba, N. Okoh, I. S. Ibaba, F. Minimah & P. Asagba (eds.), pp.495-502, *Institute of Foundations Studies, Federal University Otuoke - General Studies Book of Reading*, Yenagoa: Dahani Press.

Okoye, A. C., Obiorah, C., & Nwoke, S. I. (2020). Environmental degradation and violent conflict between herders and farmers in Nigeria. *Wilberforce Journal of the Social Sciences*, Special Edition (2): 1-18.

Omale O. D. J. (2013). Terrorism and counter-terrorism in Nigeria: Theoretical paradigms and lessons for public policy. *Canadian Social Science*, 9(3): 96-103.

Onwubiko, E. (2020). Herdsmen's terrorism, not farmers/herders crisis please. Available at: <https://www.thenigerian>

- voice.com/news/285377/herdsmens-terrorism-not-farmersherders-crisis-please.html[7/4/2020].
- Organisation of African Unity (1999). 1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. Available at: <http://www.caert.org.dz/official-documents/conventions/convention-terrorism.pdf>(Accessed:10/4/2020)
- Premium Times (June 30th, 2018). Farmers, herders conflict, a West African problem – ECOWAS. Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/foreign/west-africa-foreign/274380-farmers-herders-conflict-a-west-african-problem-ecowas.html> [accessed on 9/4/2020].
- Relief web (2018). Finding lasting solutions to resolve conflicts between farmers and herders in West Africa. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/finding-lasting-solutions-resolve-conflicts-between-farmers-and-herders-west-africa> [accessed on 9/4/2020].
- Romn, J. (1993) *Defining national security: The nonmilitary aspects*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press.
- Sandner, P. (2018). West Africa: Fulani conflict getting worse. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/west-africa-fulani-conflict-getting-worse/a-43679371> [accessed on 9/4/2020].
- Sangare, B. (2019). Fulani people and Jihadism in Sahel and West African countries. Available at: <https://www.frstrategie.org/en/programmes/observatoire-du-monde-arabo//musulman-et-du-sahel/fulani-people-and-jihadism-sahel-and-west-african-countries-2019> [accessed on 8/4/2020].
- Tauna, A. (March 19, 2019). Kajuru killings: Over 130 lives wasted – Group laments. Available at: <https://dailypost.ng/2019/03/19/kajuru-killings-130-lives-wasted-group-laments/> [accessed on 18/4/2020].
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Human Development Report 1994*. New York: Oxford University Press, 23. Available at:

<http://www.undp.org/hdro/1994/94.htm> [accessed on 12/2/2020].

United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (n.d.). Border management. Available at: <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/border-control/> [accessed on 27/3/2020].

UNOWAS (2018). Pastoralism and security in West Africa and the Sahel: Towards peaceful coexistence. UN.

Urowayino J. (2020, February 22). Nigeria: herdsmen reign of terror in Delta community. Available at: <https://allafrica.com/stories/202002220124.html> [accessed on 7/4/2020].