

READINGS
IN PEACE
&
CONFLICT



Essays in honour of
Professor Isaac Olawale Albert

Editors:
Elias Suleiman Bogoro
Matt Meyer
Nathaniel D. Danjibo

27	Societal Institutions And Impact In Promoting Peace Education In Nigeria — <i>Iroye Samuel Opeyemi, Phd</i>	283
28	Problems Of Collaboration On Internal Security Issues — <i>Adi C. Isaac</i>	292
29	Challenges Of Reintegration In The Building Of Post-Insurgency North East, Nigeria — <i>Saheed Babajide Owonikoko, Ph.D</i>	300
30	Internally Displaced Persons And The Challenges Of Human Security — <i>Adesiyan Victor PhD, Aje Olajumoke and Obioma Faith</i>	312
31	Emotional Intelligence In Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism: Beyond The Cacophony Of Legal-Mindedness — <i>Olanrewaju Abdulwasii Oladejo, Ph.D</i>	325
Conflict Management & Resolution		
32	Track Five Diplomacy: The Role of Peace Education in Peacebuilding — <i>Chibuzor Chile Nwobueze, Ph.D</i>	345
33	Complex Dimensions Of Violence: Investigating The Main Issues In The Niger Delta Crisis — <i>Fidelis A.E. Paki</i>	353
34	Insurgency And Human Security: Social Dislocation and Boko Haram Terrorism In North East — <i>Simeon Oludele-Ajiboye</i>	365
35	Crisis Of Confidence As Bane Of Community Development: Conflict Between The Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas Company And Bonny Community In Rivers State, Nigeria — <i>Olusola, O. Isola, Ph.D and Yemi Oginni</i>	377
36	Nomadism, Rural Violence And The Challenge Of Securing The Nigerian State: An Analysis Of The Fulani Herdsmen Attacks In Benue State — <i>John Tor Tsuwa Ph.D and Jude Odigbo</i>	386
37	The Imperatives Of Peace Education In A Traumatized Democracy — <i>Prof. Olabisi Olasehinde-Williams</i>	396
38	Environmental Threats And Human Security In Nigeria: Imperative Of A National Integrated Management Framework — <i>Freedom C. Onuoha, Phd, FDC</i>	405
39	Consolidating ECOWAS Peace And Security Agenda In West Africa: Contributions Of Civil Society Organizations — <i>Chukwuemeka B. Eze & Osei Baffour Frimpong</i>	420

Nomadism, Rural Violence and the Challenge of Securing the Nigerian State: An Analysis of the Fulani Herdsmen Attacks in Benue State

JOHN TOR TSUWA PH.D

*Department of Political science
Benue State University,
Makurdi, Benue State*

And

JUDE ODIGBO

*Department of Political Science
University of Nigeria, Nsukka*

36

INTRODUCTION

Globally, internal conflicts of different sorts have remained the most devastating incidence destabilizing growth and development especially in developing societies. In Africa, majority of the internal conflicts that have exacerbated retrogression on the continent usually tend to arise as a result of many factors ranging from the external influences on the state, prevailing poor governance and autocratic leadership, challenge of state formation, prebendalism, ethnicity, socio-economic and religious dynamics that shape political calculations and resource contestations. Thus, while we are not oblivious of the fact that the aforementioned challenges, to some extent, manifest in some other continents of the world, mismanagement and misapplication of same for individualistic purposes in Africa has deteriorated security conditions in most of the states in Africa.

Indeed, conflicts between farmers and nomadic herders have been a common feature of economic livelihood in West Africa (Tonah, 2006). For instance, Blench, (2010) explained that conflicts resulting from cattle grazing have existed for as long as the practice of agriculture. This Tsuwa *et al* (2015) argued saw the increasing manifestation of farmers-nomadic herders' violence in the last four decades in West Africa which seems to be attributed to scarcity of the resource needed by the duo. Tonah (2006) posited that since the Sahelian drought of the 1970s and 1980s, and the accompanying migration of a huge number of pastoralists into the fringes of the humid forest zone of West Africa, there has been a massive increase of the incidence of farmers-herders conflict. We can also argue that in recent times, the arms flow from the wars in the Arab States and acts of terror has exacerbated the flow of both arms and mercenaries that perpetrate farmers-herders' conflicts in Nigeria.

Historically, the herders in Nigeria have tried to utilize their influence at the national levels of governance to obtain legislations that will give them control over land for grazing purposes outside their regional location. For instance, the Northern Nigeria's Legislative Assembly in 1965 enacted a grazing law in an attempt to provide lands for the nomadic Fulani herders covering the whole of the northern region. Although the act was not sustained following the inability of most states in Northern Nigeria to ensure the designation of lands for this purpose, the ideal of the act

became politicized and considered as the quest to muscle communities with different occupation especially farmers communities. This increased the suspicion between the state, herders and non herders especially those states which have majority of its population as farmers.

Since 1999 when Nigeria returned to the league of civilized countries under democratic governance, the herders-farmers conflicts have continued to spread and indeed appeared to have heightened insecurity in the country. Fasona and Omojola (2005) contended that of conflicts and other forms of unrest reported in the northern region of Nigeria between 1991 and 2005, farmers-herders conflicts accounted for 35%. It is wont to argue that, these conflicts have snowballed to other regions of the country with the north central region becoming the major theatre of war within the last four years. We can also argue that, the casualties of these confrontations usually go beyond the impact on farmers and herders but it always has other undertones that affect the whole gamut of the socio-economic life of the society.

As stated above, the north central region of Nigeria seems to be the hotbed of farmers-herders conflict. More specifically, Benue state appears to have recorded the highest number of incidences of farmers-herders violence in recent times. In 2011, conflicts between farmers and Fulani pastoralists in Benue State left two soldiers, some 50 men, women, and children dead (Daka, 2011). Also, on February, 2016, over 200 persons were reported killed and houses razed in Akwu village in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State by suspected Fulani herdsmen (Adoyi, 2016). Meanwhile, the violence has continued unabated since the inception of the present administration, with over 2,000 persons displaced and not less than 100 seriously injured (Duru, 2016).

Following from the above, it is important to note that the farmers-herders violence has assumed devastating dimension in Benue state. It has affected local government areas such as Agatu, Buruku, Tarka, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, and Guma. In these local governments, the attackers usually invade the settlements, sack the people, destroy their property and farm lands, and by extension breach the security of the state. In some communities, they occupy the areas after chasing away the original dwellers. This chapter therefore examined the link between nomadism, rural violence and the extent it poses threat to the security of the Nigerian state with specific reference to the rising cases of violent confrontations between suspected Fulani herders and farmers in Benue state.

THEORETICAL EXPLANATION

The Nigerian security woes, especially in the last two decades, could be analyzed from variety of theoretical standpoint. Thus, this can be attributed to seemingly multitudes of systemic challenges responsible for the present security fiasco in Nigeria. We are not oblivious of this plethora of problems. However, in this study we adopted eco-violence theory. We are guided with the fact that the extent to which a political system responds to environmental challenges and other related security issues remains vital in its ability to maintaining peace and stability. Thus, disconnect between the Nigerian *elite* and the people coupled with socio-economic, religious and ethnic crisis have prompted other forms of conflicts.

The eco-violence theory as developed by (Homer-Dixon and Blitt, 1998 and expanded by Homer-Dixon, 1999; Soysa, 2002) among others, hinged on the assumption that scarcity of environmental resources such as fresh water, crop land, forests, that are essential to agricultural production has the tendency to trigger conflicts. The issue of environmental pressure as a source of conflict revolves largely around resource degradation and resource scarcity (Soysa, 2002). He suggested that environmental concerns have rapidly become matters of "high politics," and that the discourse on development and peace is dominated by questions regarding growing resource scarcity. In fact, a "shrinking resource pie" is supposedly fueling violent civil conflict by aggravating strained social relations (Soysa, 2002). Thus, Homer-Dixon and Blitt (1998) contended that the occurrence of this scarcity, especially in the developing countries, accounts for the increasing number of conflicts in these regions.

According to Homer-Dixon (1999: 30):

Decreases in the quality and quantity 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. Migrating groups often trigger ethnic conflicts when they move to new areas, while decreases in wealth can cause deprivation and conflicts.

We can deduce from here that the scarcity endangered by ecological factors such as drought, and general climate changes indicates that the encroachment that comes as a result of these tends to increase pressure on land and water resources that are limited. This pressure usually leads to competition which in turn results to conflicts between the groups involved. As Rakigh and Urderl (2009) observed, fresh water scarcity or pollution appears to exert strong effects increasing the risk of conflict. Certain parts of the North which is the main abode of herders have been experiencing continuous reduction in rainfall and an increase in the rate of dryness and heat which makes it a fast growing arid environment with depletion on the amount of water and vegetation due to the desert encroachment. This has led the Fulani herdsmen to constant migrations in search of pastoral existence, hence into Benue State which is greatly endowed with both vegetation and water resources.

Benue state is strategically located within the Benue valley with arable land and River Benue that traverses the length and breadth of the state, making it appealing to farmers and cattle grazers. Unfortunately, this natural blessing has become a source of death for some Benue indigenes that are regularly invaded by suspected Fulani herdsmen. For instance, Audu, (2014) explained that in March 2012-conflict between Fulani nomad and sedentary farmers in Gwer West Local Government Area of Benue State left over 30 people dead. Earlier, the November 2011 conflicts between farmers and Fulani nomad in Benue State, left two soldiers, some 50 men, women, and children dead (Audu, 2014).

Thus, suspected Fulani nomads have unrepentantly inflicted monumental injuries and have caused death to the rural people of Agatu, Buruku, Tarka, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, and Guma Local government areas of Benue State. Also, in the last few months, some Council areas like Mbalagh, Mbadwen, Uvir, Ndzorov and Saghev in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas have been horribly devastated. Consequently, persistent attacks by gangs of notorious herdsmen affect the quantity of farm products which may lead to food scarcity in the state. It has also compounded security situation in Nigeria and particularly Benue state since the conflict has degenerated from battle at the farm lands to a more devastating dimension of invasion of communities and local governments in Benue State.

Following from the above, the perennial conflicts between the farmers and the migrating Fulani herdsmen in Benue state can be explained from the perspective of the struggle for survival in the midst of scarce resources. It can be noted that there seems to be a huge link between scarcity, migration and rural violence in Nigeria. No doubt, the combination of these domestic factors tends to have sustained strain social relations among various ethnic groups in Nigeria. It has also led to frequent rural violence, especially in the last two decades. For instance, Olayoku, (2016) stated that during the past eight years, the *Nigeria Watch* database has recorded 615 violent deaths related to cattle grazing, out of a total of over 61,000 violent fatalities in Nigeria.

CONCEPTUALIZING NOMADISM AND RURAL VIOLENCE

There seems to be numerous ethnographical commentaries and studies of nomads. While some of these perspectives centered on types, adaptations and mobility of the nomads arising from scarcity of resources, economic limitations and strain relationship (Szuchman, 2009; Msuya, 2015), contemporary views, especially in Nigeria, have dwelt mainly on persistent violent confrontations between the nomads and sedentary communities (Audu, 2014; Sayne, 2011; Olayoku, 2016). This

can be attributed to the fact that very recently; there has been a dramatic upsurge in the number of violent conflicts between herders and farming communities in several states and in Nigeria.

Just like other concepts in social sciences, nomad or nomadism remain a complex concept and scholarly efforts to achieve a generally accepted definition that will prevail over diverse prejudices that undermined the understanding of the concept seems to have remained elusive. Szuchman, (2009) posited that although the word nomad no longer conjures up the image of mythic and inscrutable creatures, fiercely independent and existing outside the purview of the civilized world, this romantic notion was not easily vanquished. For him, one can trace a long tradition of Western travelers and scholars who perpetuated the myth of the stateless nomad, along with a false binary state-nomad opposition.

Thus, Nomadism can be seen as a form of pastoralism in which livestock are herded in order to identify fresh pastures on which to graze. Indeed, nomads follow an irregular pattern of movement, in contrast with transhumance where seasonal pastures are fixed. Though this peculiarity is often not observed by several perspectives, as a result, the term nomad is mainly used for both, in historical cases where the regularity of movements is often unknown in any case.

On the other hand, "rural" has been defined in several perspectives. Pruitt, for instance, suggests that it be defined by reference to "numerical measures such as population density and size of population clusters" (cited Benson, 2016). In this regard, rural violence can be seen as the use of physical force, which causes psychological hurt and material deprivation to others, especially identify or category of people in specific locale. Rural violence manifests in many forms and patterns in Nigeria. It could manifest in form of religious disturbances, communal crisis, ethnic and socio-economic and political patterns. Rural violence undermines internal security. For Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013), internal security also implies freedom from danger to life and prosperity.

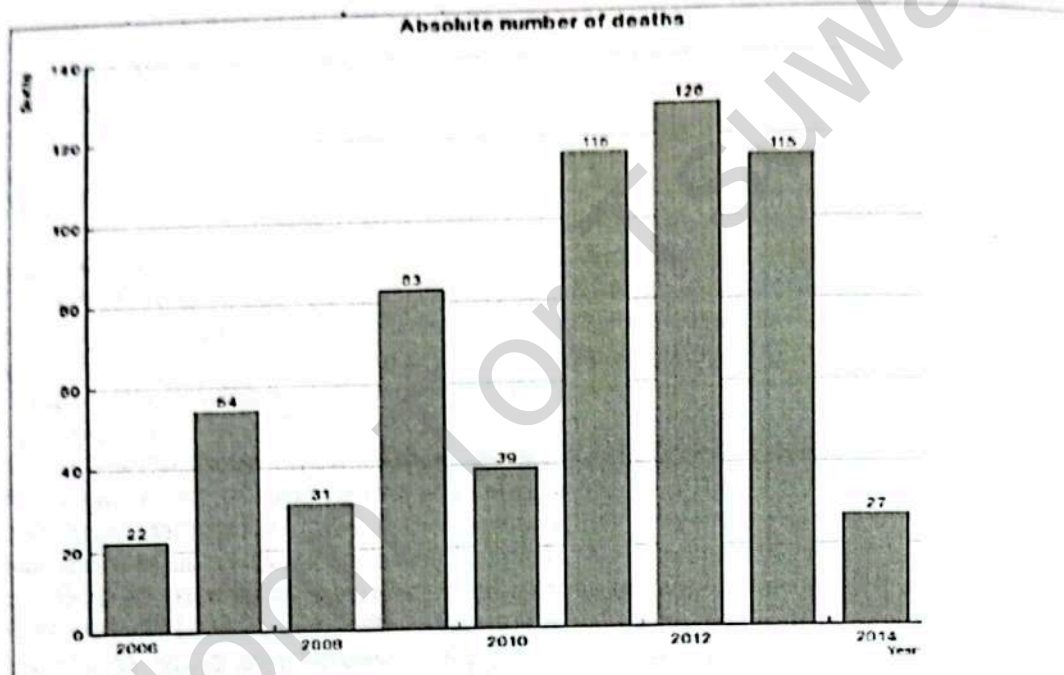
However, in recent years, the spate of rural violence and its impacts on many communities in Nigeria have become devastating. For instance, many communities in the Northern and Central Nigeria and more specifically Benue State have been destroyed by herders-farmer clashes. This form of rural violence has metamorphosed into a sordid and heinous act of invasion of communities in Benue State. This has increased people's perception which in the opinion of Tukur (2013) indicated that more often than not nomadic Fulani herders are perceived to be prone to causing violence in rural communities.

HERDERS-FARMERS VIOLENCE: THE INDICES

One of the major challenges confronting the present Nigerian state is insecurity. Insecurity has to do with non-protection of lives and property of the people and the entire society (Nwanegbo and Odigbo 2015). For them, the prevailing security crisis is not unconnected to the fact that the post-colonial Nigeria tends to have retained colonial security architecture which was designed basically to forestall any form of revolt against the colonialists. Unfortunately, the sustenance of this security arrangement tends to have detached the people from the "formal" security structure in which people play complimentary role of collaborative intelligence gathering with the state security agencies. As a result, insecurity has continued to threaten peace and stability, hence stultifying development progress in Nigeria.

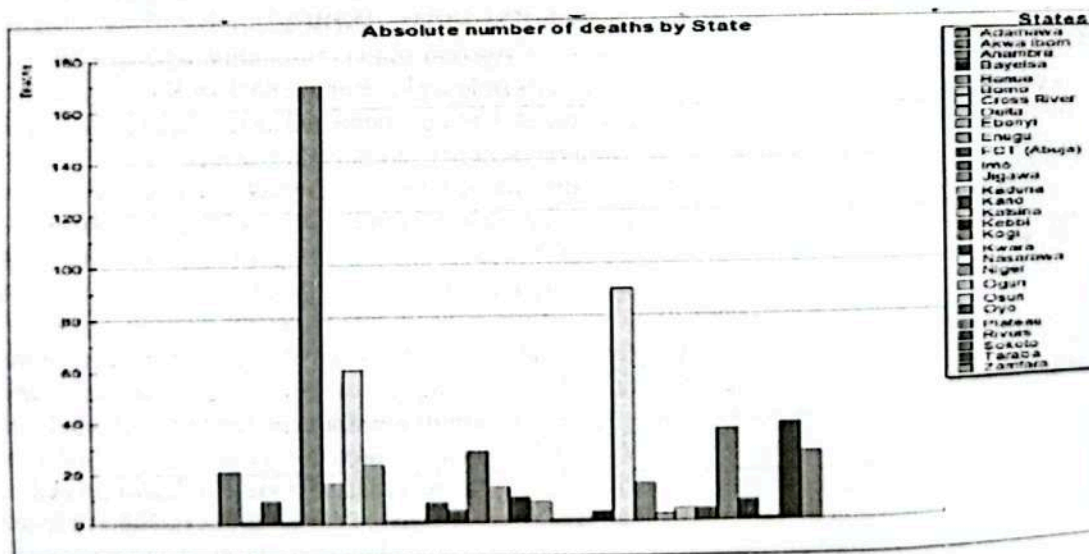
Thus, Schaub (2014) explained that violent conflicts have been a recurrent phenomenon during the last two decades of Nigeria's history. Part of these conflicts is the ever increasing herders-farmers violence. It is worthy to note that, these confrontations that lead to these conflicts is usually in the rural areas where farmers dwell with no arms to protect themselves. For instance, during the past eight years, the Nigeria Watch database has recorded 615 violent deaths related to cattle grazing in rural communities, out of a total of over 61,000 violent fatalities in Nigeria (cited in Olayoku, 2016). He further stated that 111 relevant cases of herders-farmers violence were reported by the press across the 36 states of Nigeria from June 2006 to May 2014 (Olayoku, 2016). Figures 1 and 2 below show violent deaths in Nigeria caused by cattle grazing, per year (June 2006-May 2014) and violent deaths caused by cattle grazing in Nigeria, by state cumulated figures (June 2006-May 2014).

Figure: (1) Violent deaths in Nigeria caused by cattle grazing, per year (June 2006-May 2014)



Source: Olayoku, (2016: 65)

Figure: (2) Violent deaths caused by cattle grazing in Nigeria, by state, cumulated figures (June 2006-May 2014).



Source: Olayoku, (2016: 70)

Essentially, scholars have attributed the causes of herders-farmers crisis to myriad of internal contradictions and climate change. For instance, Audu, (2013); Sayne, (2011) and Audu (2014) have separately argued that scarcity of freshwater appears to have induced conflict between

herders and farmers in the Northern Nigeria. Earlier, Ofuoku and Isife (2009) elaborately outlined several other contributing factors that cause and indeed have sustained conflicts between the nomads and the farmers in Nigeria. Figure three (3) below shows causes of conflicts between nomads and farmers in Nigeria:

Figure: 3 Causes of Conflicts between Nomads and Farmers

S/N	CAUSE	FARMER	NOMAD
		Mean Score Remark	Mean Score Remark
1.	Destruction of Crops	3.4 major cause	3.2 major cause
2.	Contamination of stream by cattle	3.3 major cause	2.5 major cause
3.	Over-grazing of fallow land	2.8 major cause	1.8 major cause
4.	Disregard for traditional authority	3.5 major cause	1.5 major cause
5.	Sexual harassment of women by nomads	2.9 major cause	2.8 major cause
6.	Harassment of nomads by host youths	3.1 major cause	3.4 major cause
7.	Indiscriminate defection by cattle on roads	2.1 major cause	2.9 major cause
8.	Theft of cattle	2.7 major cause	2.9 major cause
9.	Stray cattle	2.9 major cause	3.3 major cause
10.	Indiscriminate busy burning	2.9 major cause	3.3 major cause

Source: Ofuoku and Isife (2009: 50)

As can be seen, causative factors seem numerous yet strategies and efforts at addressing the crisis are obviously not in place. Thus, the conflict has evolved several patterns with seemingly poor government suggestion for grazing routes. Over the years the crisis appears to have continued to escalate endlessly. It is important to note that considering Nigeria's heavy security burden arising from Boko Haram onslaught, underestimating the danger associated with the trend of suspected Fulani herders attack will spell doom to the existing fragile security system in Nigeria. More importantly is to state that the failure of security agencies to fish out the perpetrators of this dastardly act will only encourage more people to participate in this unholy act. The consequence will be more conflict, more blood and more insecurity. This may perhaps earned Nigeria an unenviable position of being one of the most unsafe Nations in the World.

HERDER- FARMER CONFLICT IN BENUE STATE: THE DYNAMICS

Benue State with the Food Basket status of the nation shows clearly that land and water resources are core to the life of the Benue people. According to Tsuwa (2015), in all the 23 Local Government Areas of the State, 80% of the rural dwellers are farmers, 15% are fishermen and the remaining 5% are urban or semi urban based civil servants and those who carry out small scale business. This account to why there are usually contestations over land and water resources in the state. These contestations in some cases lead to communal conflicts between communities and recently with the nomads that have change style, strategies and modus operandi of interacting with communities in the state.

Benue state seems to have experienced highest number of attacks by the suspected Fulani herdsmen in the last few years. According to Ofuoku and Isife (2009) major sources of conflict in the Benue Valley revealed that land matter accounted for the highest percentage (42.9) of conflicts followed by politics (32.08%) and chieftaincy matters (28.3%) respectively. For them, high percentage of conflicts arising from land disputes have to do with land matters and conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers over grazing land. Incidentally, land and water are very vital to the sustenance of the Benue state economy. This is because Benue state indigenes are

predominantly farmers. Agriculture contributes immensely to the growth and survival of the state and it indeed supplies farm products to neighboring states.

It is worthy to state here that the relationship between the herdsmen and Benue Communities has changed significantly from a cordial one of peaceful co-existence to a hostile one in recent times. Tsuwa (2014) argued that hitherto, there were two groups of Fulani herdsmen that came to the State for grazing activities. The first was the resident Fulani who were allotted portions of land and as such, they lived at the fringes of the farming Communities with their wives and children. While the men tender the cattle with their male children, the wives extract juice (Nono) and moved around the villages to sale. This was the Fulani's that most people grew up in Benue State knowing up to the late 1990's. Apart from this resident Fulani's, there was the migrant Fulani who came in with their cattle and family members during post harvest periods only to graze their cattle. They also came either through the resident Fulani or direct contact with a community leader. They retreat immediately cropping season commences. With these two groups, conflicts emanating from grazing activities were amicably resolved between the herders and the farming communities through traditional means.

However, this cordial relationship changed with strange arrival of the third wave of Fulani's with militia elements. The new Fulani's that came into Benue state jettison the laid down understanding between the previous two groups of Fulani's and the communities. They arrived without their family members and do not seek permission from community leaders before invading their communities. Instead of carrying sticks as the former, they carry sophisticated arms, again, instead of coming in during the post harvest periods, this group invade the communities throughout the year. As a result of this, Dzeka and Iornumbe (2006) citing Otem and Basse (2014) argued that in most times the Fulani herdsmen wonder into the fields during planting season while their herds eat or trample on the tender crops due to the herdsmen's lack of attention or the cattle's stray movement thereby arising tension and even violent conflict. The Fulani's considered their cattle as supreme and care less about human life and crops when his cattle are involved. We can therefore argue that the desire of the herders to graze without borders and without considering the economic and food interest of the farmer is responsible for the continuous conflict between the two. In fact, the recent pronouncement by Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association that their cattle desire the best of grazing anywhere in Nigeria (Newsweek 2016) shows the disregard of the herdsmen on land owners in Benue State.

It is also worthy to note that, the menace of nomad herders in Benue state is exacerbated by the weak nature of the states capacity to tackle insecurity. The state does not have the capability to confront armed insurrection of non-state actors because of the sophistication of non-state actors above the state and the employment of guerrilla tactics by these groups against the state and its citizenry. This is coupled with the weak economic base of the people of the state to develop their land which leaves a lot of land available for the nomads to assumed that they can invade without little resistance. As Tsuwa (2014) argued, the settlement pattern of the Benue people which separates the people by distance in the quest to create large portions of land for farming activities has also affected the negatively. This is because it makes it difficult for collective security strategies as the distance between one household to another gives room for the herders to attack a single area without response from neighbours. It is wont to argue that the boko haram insurgence in the North East has not only made it difficult for the nomads to graze their cattle in the region but it has also made arms available for usage by hired mercenaries from neighboring countries of Chad and Niger to enable the nomads force their way into the Benue valley.

As a result of the above, the bloody conflicts between the herders and famers in Benue state began. Recent statistics from the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) indicates that no fewer than 300 persons died in a renewed outbreak of violence in Agatu Local Government area of the state (Nigerian News Agency, 2016). According to the report, statistics show that property worth millions of Naira has been destroyed while more than 10, 000 persons

were displaced from the villages of Aila, Akwu, Enogaje, Odugbeho, Ugboju, Okokolo, Ocholonya and Adagbo, among others in Agatu Local Government Area alone.

Records of the major attacks in Benue state in the last few years are stated below as follows:

Table: 1 Major Herdsmen Attacks in Benue State

S/N	Month	Year	Place in Benue State	Number of People Killed	Number of People Displaced
1	November	2011	Audu (2011)	2 soldiers, 50 people	Not stated
2	March	2012	Gwer West Local Government Area of Benue state	30 people	Not stated
3	May	2012	Gwer West Local Government Area of Benue state	5 people	Not stated
4	July	2013	Border area of Guma in Benue	40 people	Not stated
5	May	2013	Border area of Benue	2 Soldiers, 18 others were killed	Not stated
6	March	2016	Logo Local Government Area of Benue state	2 people	30 persons
7	February	2016	Agatu Local Government Area of Benue state	50 people	4,000
8	February	2016	Ikpele and Okpopolo communities.	7 people	6,000 persons
9	February	2016	Agatu and Buruku Local Government Areas of Benue state	36 people	300 persons
10	July	2016	Logo and Ukum Local Government Areas of Benue state	81 people	Not stated
11	June	2016	Uzaar in Tombo, Anyii in Logo local government and Vase in Ukum local government area of Benue state	26 people	Over 1000 persons
12	June	2016	Ugondo community in Logo local government area of Benue state	15 people	50
13	July	2016	Gaambe-Tiev community in Logo local government area of Benue state	14 people	Not stated
14	June	2016	Logo local government and Ukum local government areas of Benue state	13 people	Not stated
15	July	2016	Nenzev ward in Logo local government area of Benue State	6 persons	Not stated
16	July	2016	Chambe and Anawah settlements in Logo Local Government Area of Benue State	5 people	Not stated
17	June	2016	Turan Council ward in Benue State	59 people	Not stated

Source: Compiled by the authors from (Audu 2011; Premium Times, August 21, 2016; This Day, July 11, 2016; Vanguard, July 26, 2016; Punch, June 19, 2016; Daily Post, February 23, 2016)

Understandably, the rate of violence in Benue State following herders-farmers clashes tends to have posed severe security threat and seems to have undermined production of goods and distribution. It appears to have developed strained relations between the two groups. With the level of animosity, it may be very difficult and almost impossible to convince any community to

donate parcels of land for the purpose of creating grazing land. In fact, there is need for authorities to engage measures that would promote peaceful coexistence between farmers and herders and also ensure that violation of rights of either party should be handled within the ambit of the law.

NOMAD'S VIOLENCE AND THE CHALLENGE OF SECURING THE STATE

Securing the state is the core of national security. According to Nnoli (2006), national security is a cherished value associated with the physical safety of individuals, groups or nation states, together with a similar safety of their most cherished values. It denote freedom from threats, anxiety or danger...it can be measured by the absence of fear but immersed in the confidence in physical safety... (Nnoli 2006). We can argue that, the principal role of the state is to protect lives and property and to provide conditions that will guarantee the peace and development of the society. Nigeria has experience series of acts that show that the task of securing the Nigerian state is difficult. For instance declaration of the Biafran state that led to the Nigerian civil war, the hoisting of the boko haram flag in some parts of the north east, the activities of the Niger Delta militia groups, religious conflicts in the North and other acts of insecurity have threatened the core existence of the Nigerian state.

The violence caused by nomad's herders in the rural area has emerged as one of the most threatening in the corporate existence of the Nigeria state. According to Ishola and Alumona (2016) the Nigerian state today could be said to have betrayed its enormous potentials for greatness. According to them, despite the huge endowment of human and natural resources, the country is characterized still be high instability, conflict and insecurity, decayed infrastructure, rising unemployment... and general governance deficit. The crisis generated by the inability of the state to resolve the national question has increased the danger of the nomad's invasion of communities outside their region. This has fragmented intergroup relations and has created enemy images between the various groups in the Nigerian polity as the nomad's actions are viewed with political lenses of northern oligarchical quest for conquering the whole nation to institute their religion and way of life.

The cry for protection against the violence of nomad's by the people of Benue state without prompt response from the Nigerian state poses a great challenge for the security of the Nigerian state. History has shown that the lack of capacity of the state to protect its citizenry has led to self help strategies that in turn constitute serious security challenges to the state. The cases of the Niger Delta militia, OPC, MOSSOP amongst other a clear example of the people taking up arms to protect themselves. The continuous violence on rural communities by the Fulani nomads also portends this danger. This danger can spread throughout the north central region of the country thereby igniting another violent conflict that may lead to the fragmentation of the Nigerian state. This is because Benue state is the critical to the politics and economy of the north central and the gate way to many of the states in the country. An unsecured Benue state will definitely lead to an unsecured Nigerian state.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis, we have examined nomadism, rural violence and the extent it poses threat to peace and stability in Nigeria as well as Benue state. The study also identified several factors that necessitated the recent upsurge in the herders-farmers conflicts. Based on this, we noted that the level of animosity among the people may hinder present drive by government towards provision of grazing routes. The prevailing conflictual relationship between the warring groups demands that government should be more meticulous in policy prescription. Also, in finding lasting solution to the herders/farmers violence in Benue state, government should engage people-centered policies. This is important, especially when put into cognizance the fact that democratic governance is known to be a governance philosophy that puts the people at the fulcrum of its functioning. Following from the above, the paper recommended in line with international best practices, the establishment of ranches, government proactive response to security issues at the rural areas and ensuring that decisive punishments are meted out to persons or person implicated in the violence so as to deter further occurrence.

REFERENCES

- Audu, S. D. (2014). Conflicts among Farmers and Pastoralists in Northern Nigeria Induced by Freshwater Scarcity. *Developing Country Studies*, 3, (12): 25-32.
- Audu, S.D. (2014). Freshwater Scarcity: A Threat to Peaceful Co-existence between Farmers and Pastoralists in Northern Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 3 (1): 242-251.
- Benson, S. R (2016). Assisting Rural Domestic Violence Victims: The Local Librarian's Role. *Law Library Journal* 108, (2): 237-250.
- Blench, R. (2010). Conflict between Pastoralists and Cultivators in Nigeria. Review paper, prepared for DFID, Nigeria. 9 August.
- Daka, T. (2011), "Reps Seek Policy on Grazing Area for Herdsmen", *The Guardian*, July 1.
- Duru, P. (2016). Suspected Fulani Herdsmen kill 26 Persons, Injure many in Benue. *Vanguard*, June, 22. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/06/bloody-farmersfulani-herdsmens-clashes-in-benue-26-killed-scores-injured-2000-displaced/>
- Dzeka T and Iornumbe J. (2016): Pastoralist and Farmers Conflict in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas of Benue State: Causes and its Security implications
- Fasona, M.J. and Omojola, A.S. (2005), "Climate Change, Human Security and Communal Clashes in Nigeria", Paper at International Workshop in Human Security and Climate Change, Oslo Oct. 21-23.
- Homer-Dixon, T. and J. Blitt, (1998). *Ecoviolence, Links among Environment, Population, and Security*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Homer-Dixton, T.F. (1999). *Environment, scarcity, and violence*. Princeton: University Press.
- Msuya, D. G. (2015). Pastoralism Beyond Ranching: A Farming System in Severe Stress in Semi-arid Tropics Especially in Africa. *Journal of Agriculture and Ecology Research International*, 4(3): 128-139.
- Nnoli, O (2006) National security in Africa: A radical new perspective: Enugu, SNAAP Press
- Nwanegbo, C. J and Odigbo, J. (2013). Security and National Development in Nigeria: The Threat of Boko Haram. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3, (4): 85-291.
- Nwanegbo, J. and Odigbo J. (2015). Democratizing Security and Strengthening the Electoral Process in Nigeria. *A Journal Publication of the Nigerian Political Science Association*, 2, (2): 329-351.
- Ofuoku, A.U. and Isife, B.I. (2009). "Causes, Effects and Resolution of Farmers-Nomadic Cattle Herders Conflict in Delta State, Nigeria." *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1(2): 47-54.
- Olayoku, A. (2016). Trends and Patterns of Cattle Grazing and Rural Violence in Nigeria (2006-2014) in M. De Montclos (Ed.), *Violence in Nigeria: "A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis"* African Studies Centre Series 3.
- Raleigh & Urdal H. (2009): Climate Changes, Demography, Environmental and Degradation and Armed Conflict in Environmental Change and Security Program (ECSP) report issues 13, (2008-2009).
- Sayne, A. (2011). Climate Change, Adaptation and Conflict in Nigeria. United States Institute of Peace, *Special Report*. usip.org
- Schaub, M. (2014). Solidarity with a Sharp Edge: Communal Conflict and Local Collective in Rural Nigeria. *Afro barometer, Working Paper*, No 149.
- Shola, J.O and Alumona, I.M (2016) Introduction: The State in Perspective, in Shoal, J.O and Alumona, I.M (2016) (ed) *The State in Contemporary Nigeria: Issues, Perspectives and Challenges*, essays in honour of Prof. Ben Nwabueze. Ibadan: John Archers
- Soysa, I. (2002). Ecoviolence: Shrinking Pie, or Honey Pot? *Global Environmental Politics* 2 (4): 1-35.
- Szuchman, J. (2009). Integrating Approaches to Nomads, Tribes and States in the Ancient Near East. In J. Szuchman (Ed.), *Nomads, Tribes and States in the Ancient Near East Cross Disciplinary Perspectives*. University of Chicago Press.
- Tonah, S (2006). Managing Farmer-Herder Conflict in Ghana's Volta Basin. *Ibadan Journal of Social Science* 4 (1):33-65.
- Tukur, B. (2013). Perspectives on the Conflict between Farmers and Transhumance Pastoralists in Nigeria. Paper Presented at a Conference on Pastoral Security and Development held at N'Djamena on 27 - 29 May.
- Tsuwa, J.T (2014) Ethnic conflict and the Challenge of Development: A study of the Tiv and their Neighbours, being a PhD thesis submitted to the post graduate school, Benue state university Makurdi.
- Tsuwa, J. T et al (2015) The Famers/ Herders conflicts in the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria: A focus on the Tiv/Fulani conflict. In *Journal of Political Inquiry*, Maiden Edition. A publication of the Department of Political Science, Nigerian Police Academy, Wudil, Kano.
- Newsweek*, 23th, May 2016