



Grazing Conundrum: Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict and Internal Security Crisis in Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

Generally, many states in Africa in the aftermath of decolonisation have remained grossly unstable and crisis prone. As is evident, the scale of underdevelopment ravaging the continent cannot be unconnected with the deepening instability in Africa. In many cases, internal or domestic violence posed severe threat to state survival. In fact, in many African states, security of lives and property appears to be a scarce commodity. This is in spite of the fact that Africa has abundant natural resources that should assist the states to provide necessary security equipment and, indeed, fund the entire security architecture to be capable of responding to security needs of people. Thus, utilising these resources by individual states for the benefit of the populace remains one of the greatest undoing of many states in Africa.

Thus, Nigeria's security crisis has degenerated from a brush fire to an all-consuming conflagration. As Nwolise (2017) succinctly puts it, in

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Nigeria, we are all restless and living in fear because of the combined devastating effects of a very sick economy and ravaging insecurity pathogens that are walking in the streets, some with impunity, as the state seems helpless, and with great negative effects on the economy and subsequently, the lives of Nigerians. As the Nigerian state flounders, its capacity to regulate or prevent the emergence of these insecurity pathogens also diminishes. The implication is the ever growing security lapses and emergence of several ethnic militias like Fulani herders, threatening the state and, indeed, inflicting monumental damages to the state and the people.

With the return to democratic governance in 1999, expectations seem to be upbeat that through the utilisation of democratic principles, the state will fashion out resourceful strategies to contain several symptoms constituting insecurity. But whether this optimism is well founded definitely has remained to be seen. In more than one decade since her return to democracy in 1999, Nigeria has witnessed more internal conflicts ever in her history. For instance, communal and ethno-religious violence such as the Ife-Modakeke crisis, perennial Jos crisis, Kaduna communal violence, Jukun/Tiv ethnic violence, Wukari crisis and Aguleri/Umuleri communal violence; separatist agitations such as the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) separatist agitations in the southeast; militancy in the south-south; and terrorism such as the Boko Haram terrorism and the prevailing and rampaging terrorism of the Fulani herdsmen; the ever high-rising cases of kidnapping; and some highly induced state massacres such as the Odi massacre and the Zaki-Biam massacre are tendencies and pathogens of insecurity in Nigeria.

Thus, while the Nigerian state grapples with these crises, the rising incidences of the Fulani herdsmen attacks tend to have spiralled out of state control. Evidently, the protracted farmers-nomadic herders' violence in Nigeria has constituted a major source of insecurity. In the last few years, the intensification and rising cases of the herders-farmers crisis raised issues of conspiracy, poor state attitude and the extent of state preparedness to providing security to the Nigerian people. Nigeria has been constantly racked by civil strife, particularly across the religious divide, and this has reconfigured the herder-farmer conflict in new and striking ways (Blench and Dendo 2003).

Incidentally, Kwaja and Ademola (2018) noted that more than 6000 people have been killed and over 62,000 people have been displaced in the Middle Belt States of Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau alone. They further stated that despite the escalating and expanding violence, there have been no systematic consolidations or assessments of what has been done to this

point to address farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria (Kwaja and Ademola 2018). Specifically, Duru (2017) explained that from 2013 to 2016, over 500 persons are still missing while over 500,000 people were displaced and the future of almost a million youths truncated. He also stated that over 9000 households were affected and over 2000 killed in various attacks carried out by herdsmen while properties worth over ₦95 billion were destroyed in 2014 alone.

Indeed, Fasona and Omojola (2005) contended that out of all the conflicts and other forms of unrest reported in the Northern region of Nigeria between 1991 and 2005, farmers-pastoralists conflicts accounted for 35%. For instance, between 2007 and 2015, the Nigeria Watch database recorded 615 violent deaths related to cattle grazing, out of a total of over 61,000 violent fatalities in Nigeria (cited in Olayoku 2016). Also, in 2016, an estimated death toll of approximately 2500 people was recorded and these clashes are becoming potentially as dangerous as the Boko Haram violence in the northeast (International Crisis Group 2017).

Considering the magnitude of destruction, complex strategies of attacks and perhaps more importantly, the government's failure to apprehend and prosecute any of the architects of this crisis, interrogating herders-farmers violence and security crisis in Nigeria becomes essential. This chapter examines the subject matter and panoramically x-rays the activities of the herdsmen in Nigeria. It also looks at the historical antecedent of herders-farmers violence in Nigeria and changing patterns of the attacks especially between 2011 and 2018 to determine the extent of its impacts and provide solutions on how the state can nip from the bud the prevailing herders-farmers conflicts and security crisis in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

There are several theoretical standpoints explaining the farmers-herders violence, especially within the context of the causes of conflict, management of conflict and state-people relationship during and after a conflict situation. Among these theoretical viewpoints are Karl Marx's conflict theory and the eco-violence theory. Karl Marx's conflict theory is essentially important for the understanding of the problem of herder-farmer conflicts because it provides a well-articulated approach to the general perception of conflict situations. Crucially, reasons for escalation can be located by examining the sequence of interactions to explain why some conflicts escalate and others do not (Kriesberg 2007). Conflict theory,

therefore, looks at the societal inequality as an underlining factor that engenders competition which paves way for subsequent emergence of conflict.

On the other hand, eco-violence theory as developed by Homer-Dixon and Blitt (1998), Homer-Dixon (1999) and Soysa (2002), among others, hinged on the assumption that scarcity of environmental resources such as fresh water, crop land and forests, which are very 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).

While we are not oblivious of the analytical diligence and utilities of the abovementioned theories, it is our view that these theories have fallen short of providing major analytical ingredients that can unveil the underlining conjectures sustaining herders-farmers violence in the North in particular and Nigeria in general and indeed the dynamic changes in the killing spree. The above theories are also weak in explaining how poor herders and farmers appear to have unhindered access to weapons and persistent availability of expensive and sophisticated weapons for the violence. The theories seem unable to interrogate or rather explain the capacity of low-income herders and farmers in terms of sponsorship and sustenance of the violence. This is important especially when they are virtually categorised among the majority of people who lack the basic necessities of life and indeed do not have the wherewithal to invest in violence.

Following from the above, this study adopts conspiracy theory. We are guided by the fact that the extent to which a political system responds to domestic challenges and other related security issues remains vital in its ability to maintain peace and stability. Thus, disconnect between the Nigerian elites and the people, girded with socio-economic, religious and ethnic conspiracy, has prompted a myriad of conflicts. Only recently Nigeria has seen the Niger-Delta crisis, separatist agitations, kidnappings, political instability, the ongoing Boko Haram onslaught and devastating herdsman violence, and economic and financial crises, which can also be associated with various conspiracy assumptions.

A conspiracy theory is a proposed explanation of some historical event (or events) in terms of the significant causal agency of a relatively small group of persons—the conspirators acting in secret (Keeley 1999). More specifically, conspiracy theory can generally be counted as such if it is an effort to explain some event or practice by reference to the machinations of powerful people, who attempt to conceal their role (at least until their

aims are accomplished) (Sunstein and Vermeule 2009 cited in Bjerg and Presskorn-Thygesen 2016). It explains the underlining connectivity of everything and principally demonstrates that nothing happens by accident as many incidences of violence are pre-meditated. In fact, conspiracy theories appear to provide broad, internally consistent explanations that allow people to preserve beliefs in the face of uncertainty and contradiction (Douglas et al. 2017). Thus, conspiracy theories are stronger when the motivation to find patterns in the environment is experimentally heightened (Whitson and Galinsky 2008 cited in Douglas et al. 2017).

Consequently, the conspiracy theory explains the underlining dynamics that sustains herders' violence and the increasing tempo in the last few years. In this study, the conspiracy theory explains herdsman conflicts in two folds, the elites' conspiracy and the state conspiracy. Elitist conspiracy is seen from the angle of the role played by the owners of the cattle in the conflict. It should be noted that herders are not the real owners of the cattle; they are only servants or apprentices who rear the animals for their masters. The masters are the traditional rulers, a large number of the elites, both ruling and non-ruling elites, in Nigeria. It is also important to note that the herders do not have access or capacity to purchase sophisticated weapons like AK 47. However, the owners of the cattle have and indeed are the people who sanction the manifestation of any deadly attack. In times of misunderstanding with the host community, the herders report to the owners of the cattle. Experiences in the last few years have shown that if the owners of the cattle (the elites) decide to attack such host, it is them who provide the weapons, hire the mercenaries and provide other logistics including settling the security agencies to stay off such areas during the period.

On the other hand, state conspiracy is seen from the failure of the state to prevent, foil, arrest, and prosecute the perpetrators of the conflicts. There seem to be several incidences where state security agencies ignore calls to assist distressed communities to avert further attacks by the herdsman. For instance, the Governor of Enugu State in 2016 decried negligence of security agencies after informing them of impending attack in Nimbo. According to him:

I got security information from Uzo-Uwani Local Government Transition Chairman, that such an incident was likely to take place in the state. I immediately summoned a meeting of the State Security Council. After receiving assurances of deployments to Nimbo, I felt quite confident that we had done everything possible to forestall an attack on Nimbo. Sadly, in the early hours of Monday, reports of this carnage reached me. (Uzodinma 2016)

The implication of the above is that the elites in high places of authority who own the cattle heap pressure on the state, hence government leniency is on the crisis. In fact, the majority of the political leaders are the owners of the cattle and surreptitiously sponsor the violence. President Buhari argued in an official visit to the USA in April 2018 that Nigerian herders do not carry guns. Unfortunately he was unable to explain how those with guns were involved in the same issues between those without guns and their host community. Thus, it is simple; the elites who own cattle are the “hirer and provider” of weapons. One can hardly subscribe to the unconnected conclusion that the murderous herders are from Libya. In fact, how many herders have been apprehended by security forces or even arrested and were found to be Libyans? For several years Nigerians are under herders’ terror and no concrete efforts have been made by the leaders or the government to arrest the trend. Surprisingly, some elites, especially the owners of the cattle, question the disappearance of one cow than the death of an entire community. The conspiracy theory is essential if not the bedrock of this study as it enables one to understand the secret behind the rising herders’ violence in Nigeria and the failure of the state to stamp out the tide of herders’ conflicts in Nigeria.

HISTORICISING HERDERS-FARMERS CONFLICTS AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Traditionally, grazing in Nigeria is as old as the society. Open grazing precedes colonialism in most of African states and Nigeria in particular. Grazing reserves in Nigeria started during the pre-colonial era (Bako and Ingawa 1988), although in the traditional society, disturbances arising from grazing lands or routes were minimal. These may be attributed to two prevailing conditions of the time. First, lands seemed to be more available as compared to the contemporary Nigerian society. Secondly and perhaps more importantly is the fact that the level of division, animosity and ethnic bias among Nigerians, as mainly caused by the elitist conscious politicisation of issues of national importance, was at the lowest ebb in the traditional society. In that period, grazing still had its peculiar challenges but incidences of mass killing and destruction rarely occurred.

As Nigeria grows, same way numerous problems develop. The problems confronting the state (grazing challenges inclusive) tend to be either not adequately attended to or ignored for obvious interests or political reasons. Most of these problems and specifically the grazing in Nigeria

appeared to have developed resistance elements to curative measures. As can be seen, the genesis of grazing reserves and efforts at preventing herders-farmers violence in Nigeria could be traced to the colonial period. Although formally introduced by the British, grazing reserves were demarcated by the Fulani who conquered and ruled Northern Nigeria (Iro 2014). The attempt by the British in 1940 to separate the grazing land from the farmland, however, faltered because the Europeans imposed land use controls divorced from economic and demographic dynamics in the pastoral system (Frantz 1981 cited in Iro 2014). In spite of the failure to demarcate grazing land from farmland, the 1940 attempt formally initiated the process of rule codification with regard to grazing in Nigeria. It heralded the consciousness towards establishing rules guiding grazing activities. Thus, Iro (2014, p. 3) further enumerated:

Formal grazing reserves in Nigeria started accidentally in the 1950s when Hamisu Kano, working with pastoralists on livestock vaccination, foresaw the shortages of grazing land in Northern Nigeria. Supported by the government, he initiated the grazing reserve scheme from the abandoned government resettlement schemes (Fulani Settlement Scheme). The resettlement schemes collapsed because the government had neither the financial nor the managerial ability to continue with the financially burdensome scheme, and the best alternative use of the land, the government thought, was to convert it into grazing reserves that were less financially committed. Grazing reserve hatched in 1954 after a study of the Fulani production system contained in the “Fulani Amenities Proposal.” The proposal suggested the creation of grazing reserves, the improvement of Fulani welfare, and the transformation of the herd management system. By 1964, the government had gazetted about 6.4 million hectares of the forest reserve, ninety-eight percent in the savanna. Sokoto Province had twenty-one percent of the land, followed by Kabba, Bauchi, Zaria, Ilorin, and Katsina, with 11–15 percent each. The Wase, Zamfara, and Udubo reserves followed in succession.

For the cattle owners, the enactment of the Northern Region Grazing Reserves Law of 1965 was essential because it aims at providing and securing a good portion of land for purposes of grazing. According to Kwaja and Ademola (2018), the Northern Region Grazing Reserves Law of 1965 created corridors for the passage of migrating livestock and 415 grazing reserves throughout the country. They further explained that the reserves were envisioned to map out large swathes of land to be exclusively used by herders to graze their livestock. While initially considered a

legislative solution, population growth, urbanisation and migration encroached on these designated areas, reducing herders' access and usage of the reserves (Kwaja and Ademola 2018). Unfortunately, the federal and state governments have been derelict in the upkeep of these reserves to meet these concerns of farmers and herders, and amidst the absence of a concrete response plan to label and enforce the law on cattle routes by governments at all levels, existing reserves are being distorted (Kwaja and Ademola 2018).

Thus, the tendency of discontinuity of policy implementation appears to be responsible for the deteriorating conditions and total abandonment of cattle routes and reserves in Nigeria. For instance, such policies were not targeted at developing cattle routes alone but there were also efforts towards developing the nomads through education and enlightenment. As a result, the government established National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) in 1989 to ensure reductions, if not complete eradication of illiteracy, ignorance and poverty; to provide education to the majority of the citizens; to enlighten as well as stimulate and accelerate national development. The Commission is saddled with the responsibility of formulating policies concerning nomadic education in Nigeria. The objectives of the Commission are to

1. formulate policy and issue guidelines in all matters relating to nomadic education in Nigeria;
2. provide funds for
 - (a) the research and personnel development for the improvement of nomadic education in Nigeria;
 - (b) the development of programmes on nomadic education;
 - (c) equipment, other instructional materials (including teaching aids and amenities), construction of classrooms and other facilities relating to nomadic education;
3. arrange effective monitoring and evaluation of the activities of agencies concerned with nomadic education; and
4. establish, manage and maintain primary schools for nomadic children (NCNE, ACT 1989, pp. 4–5).

However, decades after the existence of the NCNE in Nigeria, it appears the agency has done little towards achieving the above mandate. The nomads tend to be grossly underdeveloped in many respects and appear to have constituted a higher number of illiterate Nigerians. Beyond this

aspect of education, there were also previous efforts by the government to secure land for grazing purposes. For instance, at the close of 1992, the government identified over 300 areas with 28 million hectares for grazing reserve development, and about 45 of these areas, covering some 600,000 hectares, have been gazetted (Iro 2014). In fact Iro (2014) further explained that 8 of these reserves, totalling 225,000 hectares, are fully established, and already 350 of the projected 950 pastoral families and 11,600 of the planned 46,000 cattle are using these reserves.

Incidentally, the increasing violent confrontations between the herders and the farmers, especially from 2015 to 2018, tend to have re-ignited the need for rules to regulate the activities of both parties. The argument is anchored on the need to fashion out a legal framework that will engender a cordial relationship between herders and farmers to end the loss of lives and growing insecurity. As a result, some federal lawmakers in 2016 introduced the National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill 2016. The aim of the bill was to put to rest the intermittent violence among the two groups. In fact, Amusan et al. (2017) stated that as a strategy for preventing such recurrent conflicts; the sponsors of the bill suggest that the federal government designates grazing routes and reserves across the 36 states of the federation regardless of the cultural and agro-cultural characteristics of the localities. For them, by implication, they seek rights for Fulani herdsmen to have access and possession of lands found suitable in any part thereof within Nigeria, including those situated in non-Fulani communities for the purpose of cattle grazing (Amusan et al. 2017). Unsurprisingly, the bill was killed. Kwaja and Ademola (2018) attributed this largely to the fact that the Land Use Act of 1978 vests all powers related to the regulation of ownership, alienation, acquisition, administration and management of Nigerian land with the state governors. As a result, such legislation may create more political dispute, hence its violation of the Land Use Act of 1978 and usurpation of the powers of the state governors.

The failure of the National Assembly to enact a new law on old challenges (herders-farmers squabbles) motivated state assemblies to assume their legitimate responsibilities of making laws in this regard. States like Ekiti, Benue and Taraba have enacted laws on Open Grazing Prohibition. Apart from the latter, other two states have begun implementation of the law. Unfortunately, the implementation seems to be counter-productive in Benue while Ekiti has enjoyed reasonable tranquillity.

The Benue State government on May 22, 2017 enacted an Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law which came into force on November 1, 2017. The main objectives of this law are the following:

1. Prevent the destruction of crops, farms, community ponds, settlements and property by open rearing and grazing of livestock.
2. Prevent clashes between nomadic livestock herders and crop farmers.
3. Protect the environment from degradation and pollution caused by open rearing and over grazing of livestock.
4. Optimise the use of land resources in the face of overstretched land and increasing population.
5. Prevent, control and manage the spread of diseases as well as ease the implementation of policies that enhance the production of high-quality and healthy livestock for local and international markets.
6. Create a conducive environment for large-scale crop production (Benue State Anti-open Grazing Law 2017, p. 3).

Section 19(1) of the law stipulates that no individual or group shall after the commencement of this law engage in open nomadic livestock herding or grazing in the state outside the permitted ranches. It further stated in Section 19(2) that any person or group of persons who contravenes Sub-section (1) shall be guilty of an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to five years of imprisonment or one million naira (₦1,000,000) fine or both. Section 19(3) stipulates that in the event of damage to farm, crops or property of any person, the owner or manager of such livestock shall, after evaluation of the damage by the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, pay the prevailing value of monetary compensation of the farm, crops or property so damaged to the owner. In accordance with Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the law, the establishment of ranches remains the only option for cattle rearing in the state.

As can be seen, it could be stated that in spite of the numerous laws and attempts to gag the monstrous herders-farmers violence, the wanton killings of innocent citizens have continued unabated. The gory pictures of the dead and indeed the vestiges of war make one's mind frigid and cold. The violence knows no bounds. Children, women and the elderly are not just caught in the web of the crisis but are the major targets by the invaders. Generally, Nigeria has evolved several laws, acts and legislations, yet all the efforts produced only one result—more violence, more blood.

CATALOGUES OF HERDERS-FARMERS CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA

The increasing Fulani herders-farmers violence in Nigeria has endangered the lives and property of many Nigerians in affected states. Ending the violence in the nearest future appears not visible, especially given the fact that security agencies tend to have compromised their onerous responsibility of protecting defenceless people. For instance, the former Minister of Defence, General Theophilus Danjuma (Rtd), recently alleged in a public lecture that the Nigerian military is colluding with the murderous herdsmen. According to Danjuma, “you must rise to protect yourselves from these people; if you depend on the armed forces to protect you, you will all die” (Mkom 2018, p. 7).

It is therefore clear why this crisis has become a daily routine. The act of slaughtering innocent Nigerians by Fulani herders is irresistibly deepening the existing resentment and disillusionment among Nigerians. In fact, the persistent spread of this crisis also questions the utility and vision of Nigeria’s democracy. The beauty of dialogue and negotiation in a democratic society is vital in containing and averting violence of this magnitude. Between 2011 and 2018, hundreds of Nigerians have been cruelly murdered for reasons many of the victims are unacquainted with.

Unfortunately, determining the exact number of victims in most conflict situations in Nigeria is virtually impossible. In fact, while the community where crisis occurs provides a certain number of loved ones lost, security agencies provide different and sometimes conflicting figures. So, in most circumstances, what seems to be the official figure contradicts community claims and the position of the people involved. Incidentally, conflicts in remote areas are sometimes either not attended to by security agencies because of the terrain or intentionally averted for unexplained reasons. All of these have remained major obstacles for data generation vis-à-vis conflict situations in Nigeria. Tables 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 show some reported Fulani herdsman attacks in six states in Nigeria between 2011 and May 2018.

Following from the above, it can be arithmetically stated that herdsman attacks in Nigeria have resulted in the death of over 2, 454 people within the period under review. Table 6.7 and Fig. 6.1 show that 2011 recorded the lowest incidences of attacks and also the lowest death occurrences arising from Fulani herdsman activities in Nigeria. Thus, the increasing manifestations and incidences of these attacks since 2011 cannot be unconnected to the fact that the Nigerian state has not devised any effective contain-

Table 6.1 Some reported Fulani herdsmen attacks in Nasarawa State between 2011 and May 2018

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Month/Day</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Place in Nasarawa State</i>	<i>Number of people killed</i>	<i>Number of people displaced and injured</i>
1	November 12	2011	Akpanaja, Ondon Rukubi in Doma local government area (LGA)	4	Not stated
2	February 8	2011	Udeni-Gida, Nasarawa LGA	1	Not stated
3	April 2	2011	Boarder communities between Nasarawa and Guma LGA in Benue	30	Not stated
4	January 16	2012	Doka, Kwara and Ungwan Mada in Keana and Doma LGA	10	Not stated
5	March 1	2012	Yelow in Ekye, Doma LGA	10	Not stated
6	July 13	2012	Kotsona in Tunga Awe LGA	35	Not stated
7	February 3	2013	Eggon	30	Not stated
8	January 15	2013	Agbashi, Ekya development area	10	Not stated
9	January 5	2013	Agbashi town in Doma LGA	5	Not stated
10	January 6	2013	Agbashi town in Doma LGA	16	Not stated
11	March 16	2013	Ambane-Egga Ladi Ende	5	Not stated
12	August 10	2013	Kuduku, Ajo villages in Keane LGA	20	Not stated
13	October 9	2014	Kompany and Bakun Allu, Lafia, Nasarawa	19	Not stated
14	November 8	2014	Arikyia-Soni, Nasarawa	25	Not stated
15	April 6	2014	Giza town in Keana LGA	30	Not stated
16	September 7	2014	Eggo community of Gidan Gambo in Lafia east development area	10	Not stated
17	May 22	2014	Bature village in Giza development area of Keana LGA	1	Not stated
18	April 10	2015	Uoosu village in Keana LGA	11	Not stated

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Month/Day</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Place in Nasarawa State</i>	<i>Number of people killed</i>	<i>Number of people displaced and injured</i>
19	July 1	2015	Kofar Gwari, Kokona LGA	2	Not stated
20	May 25	2016	Adayi and Loko areas of Nasarawa	20	Not stated
21	July 3	2016	Obi	1	Not stated
22	November 14	2017	Jangaru, Awe LGA	1	Not stated
23	March 8	2017	Uloko development area	1	Not stated
24	January 7	2018	Awe, Keana and Doma LGA	25	Not stated
25	January 31	2018	Keana LGA	12	Over 300 people displaced
26	February 11	2018	Kadarko, Keana LGA	12	30 people hospitalised
27	February 19	2018	Obi LGA	50	Not stated
28	April 17	2018	Awe, Keana, Obi and Doma LGA	39	Not stated
29	April 10	2018	Jimin Nyaku	6	Not stated
30	April 6	2018	Awe, Keana and Doma LGAs	25	Not stated
31	April 19	2018	Obi	17	Not stated

Source: Compiled by the author (*Sun*, February 8, 2011; *Daily Post*, March 1, 2012; *Punch*, July 13, 2012; *Sun*, February 3, 2013; *Vanguard*, May 22, 2014; *The Nation*, April 10, 2015; *Vanguard*, February 19, 2018; *The Nation*, November 14, 2017; *Premium Times*, August 21, 2016; *This Day*, July 11, 2016; *Vanguard*, July 26, 2016; *Punch*, June 19, 2016; *Daily Post*, February 23, 2016)

ment strategy. This has not only availed the invaders (Fulani herdsmen) the temerity to continue to commit crime with impunity but has also elevated herdsmen crisis to assume more complex dimensions. In fact, with the level of indulgent dispositions of the Nigerian state, the crisis is gradually overwhelming peoples' tolerance and undermining legitimacy of the state.

From Table 6.7, it can be observed that years preceding general elections in Nigeria tend to record more violence than other years. Herdsmen attacks are not exceptions as regards this trend. For instance, there are 346 deaths recorded in 2014, prior to the 2015 general elections, and the highest death incidence is between 2011 and 2014. There is also reduction in 2015. However, the rising trend started in 2016, with a total of 457 death incidences. By the first quarter of 2018, it skyrocketed to 600 death

Table 6.2 Some reported Fulani herdsmen attacks in Benue State between 2011 and May 2018

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Month/Day</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Place in Benue State</i>	<i>Number of people killed</i>	<i>Number of people displaced and injured</i>
1	November 6	2011	Border communities of Guma in Benue	52	Not stated
2	March 1	2012	Gwer west local government area (LGA) of Benue State	30	Not stated
3	May 18	2012	Gwer west LGA of Benue State	5	Not stated
4	July 21	2013	Border area of Guma in Benue	40	Not stated
5	May 17	2013	Border area of Benue	20	Not stated
6	March 5	2016	Logo LGA of Benue State	2	30 persons displaced
7	February 16	2016	Agatu LGA of Benue State	50	
8	February 19	2016	Ikpele and Okpopolo communities of Benue State	7	6000 persons displaced
9	February 10	2016	Agatu and Buruku LGAs of Benue State	36	300 persons displaced
10	July 2	2016	Logo and Ukum LGAs of Benue State	81	Not stated
11	June 3	2016	Uzaar in Tombo, Anyii in logo LGA and vase in Ukum LGA of Benue State	26	Over 1000 persons displaced
12	June 10	2016	Ugondo community in logo LGA of Benue State	15	Not stated
13	July 7	2016	Gaambe-Tiev community in logo LGA of Benue State	14	Not stated
14	June 10	2016	Logo LGA and Ukum LGAs of Benue State	13	Not stated
15	July 8	2016	Nenzev ward in logo LGA of Benue State	6	Not stated
16	July 12	2016	Chambe and Anawah settlements in logo LGA of Benue State	5	Not stated
17	June 14	2016	Turan council ward in Benue State	59	Not stated
18	January 24	2017	Ipiga Village in Ohimini LGA	15	Not stated
19	March 2	2017	Mbahimin, Gwer east LGA	10	Not stated
20	March 11	2017	Mkgovur Village, Buruku LGA	7	Not stated
21	May 8	2017	Tse-Akaa Village, Ugondo Mbamar District of logo LGA	3	Not stated

(continued)

Table 6.2 (continued)

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Month/Day</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Place in Benue State</i>	<i>Number of people killed</i>	<i>Number of people displaced and injured</i>
22	May 13	2017	Three communities of logo LGA	8	Not stated
23	January 1	2018	Guma and logo LGA	73	Not stated
24	March 5	2018	Omosu village in Ojigo, Okpokwu LGA	10	Not stated
25	March 5	2018	Omenge village in Guma LGA	5	Not stated
26	April 21	2018	Uzughul, Tse Ginde in Guma LGA	15	Not stated
27	April 8	2018	Okoklo in Agatu LGA	2	Not stated
28	March 6	2018	Omutu, in Okpokwu LGA	16	Not stated
29	May 18	2018	Mbakyondo, Mbakpa and Sengae in Gwer west LGA	10	Not stated
30	April 24	2018	Ayar Mbalom in Gwer east LGA	18	Not stated
31	March 7	2018	Omosu village in Okpokwu LGA	27	Not stated

Source: Compiled by the authors (Vanguard, November 6, 2011; Daily Post, March 1, 2012; Sun, May 17, 2013; This Day, June 14, 2016; This Day, July 12, 2016; Vanguard, May 13, 2017; Punch, April 21, 2018; Daily Post, March 7, 2018)

Table 6.3 Some reported Fulani herdsmen attacks in Enugu State between 2011 and May 2018

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Month/Day</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Place in Enugu State</i>	<i>Number of people killed</i>	<i>Number of people displaced and injured</i>
1	January 6	2015	Nkpologu community in Uzo-Uwani LGA	1	Not stated
2	March 15	2015	Eke community in Udi LGA	1	Not stated
3	February 11	2016	Abbi community in Uzo-Uwani LGA	2	Not stated
4	April 25	2016	Nimbo, Uzo-Uwani LGA	48	60 injured
5	August 25	2016	Ndiagu Attakwu community in Nkanu west LGA	1	Not stated

Source: Compiled by the authors (*Daily Post*, March 15, 2015; *Sun*, January 6, 2015; *This Day*, April 25, 2016; *This Day*, August 25, 2016)

Table 6.4 Some reported Fulani herdsmen attacks in Taraba State between 2011 and May 2018

S/N	Month/Day	Year	Place in Taraba State	Number of people killed	Number of people displaced and injured
1	June 11	2012	Karim Lamido local government area (LGA)	13	Not stated
2	March 23	2014	Buwa village in Ibi LGA	7	Not stated
3	May 14	2014	Kugwana in Bali iLGA	7	Not stated
4	April 16	2014	Nwokyo village in Wukari LGA	9	Not stated
5	March 24	2015	Ananum village in Donga LGA	5	Not stated
6	December 23	2015	Aungwan Agbadorough in Bali LGA	2	Not stated
7	April 20	2015	Tse-Gbaun and Gaza villages in Donga LGA	7	Not stated
8	January 31	2015	Nwonko village in Wukari LGA	30	Not stated
9	April 12	2016	Dori and Mesuma villages in Gashaka LGA	15	Not stated
10	April 13	2016	Gashaka and Bali LGA	44	Over 100 people
11	May 8	2016	Coromo in Gassol LGA	12	18 injured
12	December 30	2017	Minda in Lua LGA	4	Not stated
13	May 17	2017	Bali LGA	12	Over 15, 000 displaced
14	May 7	2017	Konkaen village in Ussa LGA and Tati village in Takun LGA	18	Not stated
15	June 22	2017	Mambilla Plateau in Sardauna LGA	Over 200	Over 200 people
16	January 20	2018	Gishiri, Dooshima and Danwaza villages	28	Not stated
17	January 20	2018	Jandeikyula village in Wukari LGA	32	Not stated
18	January 10	2018	Lau LGA	55	Not stated
19	March 8	2018	Takun LGA	2	Not stated
20	April 6	2018	Utile in Donga LGA	5	Not stated

Source: Compiled by the author (*The Nation*, January 20, 2018; *Vanguard*, June 11, 2012; *Daily Post*, April 16, 2014; *Sun*, January 31, 2015; *This Day*, January 31, 2015; *This Day*, April 13, 2016; *Vanguard*, May 8, 2016; *Punch*, May 7, 2017; *Daily Post*, March 8, 2018)

Table 6.5 Some reported Fulani herdsmen attacks in Plateau State between 2011 and May 2018

S/N	Month/Day	Year	Place in Plateau State	Number of people killed	Number of people displaced and injured
1	November 22	2011	Barkin Ladi local government area (LGA)	7	20 injured
2	July 8	2012	Gashis District, Jos	105	Not stated
3	June 29	2013	Langtang	28	Not stated
4	May 2	2015	Foron town, Barkin Ladi LGA	27	Not stated
5	October 27	2017	Irigwe kingdom in Bassa LGA	75	13,726 displaced
6	October 16	2017	Nkiedonwhro Village in Irigwe kingdom in Bassa LGA	29	Not stated
7	September 9	2017	Ancha Village in Bassa LGA	19	Five people injured
8	November 8	2017	Rim Village in Riyom LGA	11	Not stated
9	January 27	2018	Huke Village, Miango in Bassa LGA	3	Not stated
10	February 5	2018	Miango in Bassa LGA	75	Not stated
11	March 15	2018	Dong Village	2	Not stated
12	February 14	2018	Jebu, Miango in Bassa LGA	3	Not stated
13	May 19	2018	Ancha Village in Bassa LGA	15	Not stated
14	January 25	2018	Josho Village, Daffo Chiefdom, Bokkos LGA	4	10 injured

Source: Compiled by the authors (*Sun*, November 22, 2011; *Premium Times*, July 8, 2012; *Punch*, June 29, 2013; *Sun*, October 16, 2017; *Vanguard*, February 5, 2018; *The Nation*, February 14, 2018)

incidences. Thus, this study does not suggest that herdsmen activities have political connotations, as it noted that in an intense political environment, sentiments can induce acts of violence.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it should be noted that variations in terms of the occurrence of attacks in the six states listed above can also be attributed to a variety of causes of the attacks. However general consensus is that lack of access to water, due to drought and desert encroachment in the far north, has caused herdsmen and their cattle to move towards the south in search of grazing fields, and consequently clash with farm owners. Thus, it is the position of this chapter that criminality and flourishing cattle rustling activities in some of these states, especially Benue State, contributed to the upsurge and devastating dimension of the violence. For instance, the president of the Benue State chapter of the Myetii Allah Breeders Association, Gololo, decried that members of the association frequently lose their cattle. According to Gololo:

Table 6.6 Some reported Fulani herdsmen attacks in Kaduna State between 2011 and May 2018

S/N	Month/ Day	Year	Place in Kaduna State	Number of people killed	Number of people displaced and injured
1	April 2	2013	Kaura District	19	Over 4500 people
2	March 16	2014	Sankwai, Tekum and Unguwarr Gata inhabited by Moroa people in Kaura LGA	200	Not stated
3	June 14	2014	Kabamu in Fadan District and Ankpon in Nandu District	38	Not stated
4	July 18	2017	Banono Village, Kajuru LGA	37	Not stated
5	July 21	2017	Northern Kaduna	33	Not stated
6	July 16 and 17	2017	Kajuru, Kajuru LGA	29	Not stated
7	January 14	2018	Birnin-Gwari LGA	10 people	Not stated

Source: Compiled by the author (*Daily Post*, April 2, 2013; *Sun*, March 16, 2014; *This Day*, July 18, 2017; *Vanguard*, July 16, 2017; *Punch*, January 14, 2018)

Table 6.7 Years and number of deaths recorded

Year	Number of deaths recorded
2011	94
2012	208
2013	193
2014	346
2015	59
2016	457
2017	497
2018	600
Total	2454

Source: Author's compilation

While we were trying to relocate to Taraba State, through Nassarawa State to the border town of Nengere, some rustlers came and stole about 1000 cows from us and we have (SIC) to fight back. The communities affected by the fight include Gaambe-Tiv, Ayilamo, Turan. Umenger, Tse-Akor and Tomaater, near Tse-Aabi in Logo and Guma local government areas. The attacks by the herdsmen, were in self-defense against cattle rustlers, who stole into their camp in the night to steal their cows. (Cited in Oluwalana 2018, p. 3)

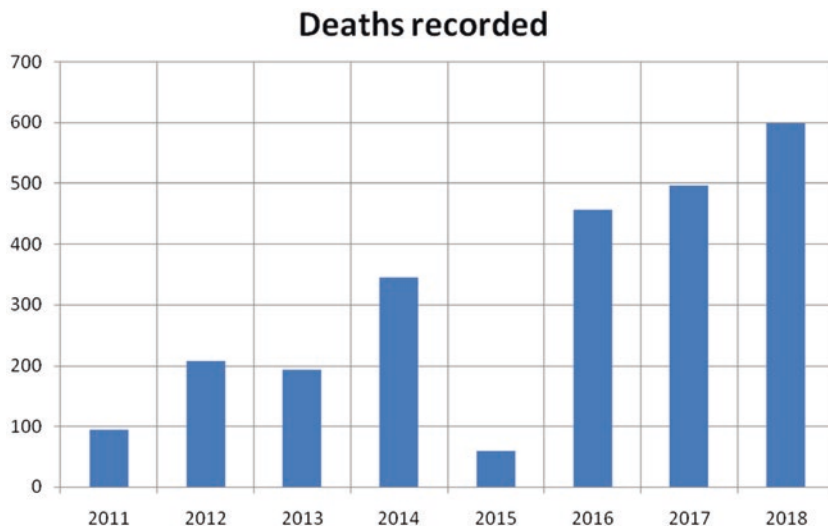


Fig. 6.1 A bar chart showing years and number of death recorded. Source: Author's compilation

Unfortunately, state security failures tend to have been implicated in this rustling act. But more shocking is the horrendous murder of innocent citizens who perhaps did not know the rustlers and are not rustlers. The tendency of disrespecting the inviolability of human life underlies the drive to kill in retaliation for rustled cattle. Also, the fact that only few of these murderous herdsmen have been apprehended and none has been made to face severe sanctions according to the law seems to make killing a worthwhile venture for the herdsmen.

STATE RESPONSES TO HERDERS-FARMERS VIOLENCE

The Nigerian state has over the years demonstrated disappointing dispositions as regards the tackling of Fulani herdsmen violence. In spite of the huge number of deaths recorded, no herder has been convicted for crimes committed. Although the elites tend to have divergent positions on the security situation in Nigeria, their disparate views are mainly guided by primordial interests. Unfortunately, the challenge of the Nigerian state centres on the fact that the state expresses itself through the elites rather

than behave and act through institutions. Lack of strong institutions availed the emergence of strong personalities. Consequently, the expressions of these strong personalities are state thoughts and expressions. For instance, the Minister of Defence, Mansur Dan-Ali, recently blamed the massacre of innocent Nigerians by Fulani herdsmen on anti-open grazing laws in Benue and Taraba States. According to him, the blockage of cattle routes across the country is the remote cause of the killings by herdsmen, and the implementation of anti-open grazing laws in some states was the immediate cause of the killings (Nwachukwu 2018). Contrary to this assumption, the state governments are constitutionally empowered to make laws for good governance and peaceful coexistence in their states. Secondly, the killings were there before the laws were made. So, it presupposes that the laws are geared towards ending the killings.

It is important to also note that while rustling of cattle or blockage of routes, enactment of laws and any other sentiments that drive and indeed sustain the violence is condemnable, the state assumptions that tend to justify wanton killing of innocent citizens based on the aforementioned causes are most undignified. In fact, such claims signal the deteriorating level of state insensitivity and unfortunate abandonment of her primary responsibility of protecting lives and property. As Soyinka succinctly argues:

[T]he present national outrage is over impunity. It rejects the right of any set of people, for whatever reason, to take arms against their fellow men and women, to acknowledge their exploits in boastful and justifying accents and, in effect, promise more of the same as long as their terms and demands are not met. In plain language, they have declared war against the nation, and their weapon is undiluted terror. Why have they been permitted to become a menace to the rest of us? (Cited in Ibekwe 2018, p. 2)

In all, the contradictions that tangled the widespread herdsmen violence are incredible. But most unthinkable is the current effort by the incumbent government and many officials of the state to tender reasons why herdsmen kill people rather than the government policy framework towards apprehending and prosecuting the invaders so as to deter others from taking laws into their hands, or at least stop further killings. Most ridiculous are some state governments' decision to pay compensation to herdsmen for the cattle lost and appeal to families to forgive for their loved ones lost in the crisis. The implication is that we appear to place more importance on cattle than on human beings.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis, it is clear that the protracted herders-farmers violence in Nigeria has constituted a deepening form of insecurity. In the last few years, the intensification and rising cases of the herders-farmers crisis from brush fire to an all-consuming conflagration raised issues of conspiracy of the state, poor attitude and inadequate preparation to providing security to the Nigerian people. With the increasing attacks, especially since the emergence of state laws to contain the violence, elitist conspiracy efforts became manifest. The intention and drive to escalate the violence is only to undermine the importance of the law, hence the agitation for its removal. This study is of the view that these laws are worthwhile and have the capacity to address the prevailing crisis if governments at all levels will ensure their implementation. It is based on the above that this chapter, therefore, recommends that the state should rise and perform her responsibility and refrain from the present trend of justifying impunity. Both the killers and sponsors of the conflict should be brought to book irrespective of their status or position. It is also the position of this chapter that there is a need for the gradual process of establishing ranches and the government's proactive response to herdsmen attacks by ensuring decisive punishment of those implicated in the violence in a bid to end the prevailing crisis.

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