

Policy Options and Strategies Towards a Resolution of Farmers -Nomadic Cattle Herders Conflicts in Nigeria

BY

Patrick I. Ukase, Ph.D

Department of History and International Studies,
Kogi State University, Anyigba, Kogi State
patrickukase@yahoo.com (07035842604).

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Thaddeus T. Ityonzughul, Ph.D

Department of History & Diplomatic Studies
KolaDaisi University, Ibadan
ityonzughult@gmail.com (07068283767)

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Abstract

Farmers-Herders' crisis is one of the most raging resource wars in the 21st century. This justifies why the dominant news items in international, national, and local newspapers carried captions relating to the said conflict. Some of these captions are: "Nigerian Army Deployed to State Rocked by Deadly Herdsmen Violence", End Killings by Herdsmen Now, Ohaeneze charges Buhari", Declare Fulani Herdsmen Terrorists Now – Southern, Middle Belt Leaders charge Buhari", and "Mass Burial for 73 Nigerian Farmers Killed in Herder Clashes", among other headlines. Even with the above lamentations, Farmer-herders' conflict persists in Nigeria and Africa from a broader perspective. In this connection, this study charts the policy option/strategies towards a resolution of farmers-nomadic cattle herders' conflict in Nigeria. To do this effectively, the study investigates the historical perspective of the conflict under review. It also discusses the causes of the farmers-nomadic cattle herders' conflict in Nigeria. Following this, the paper unravels the effects of the conflict on the Nigeria State as well as the previous and present efforts at resolving the conflict. The study concludes that so far, all efforts made at resolving the farmers-herders' conflicts have ended in futility because this conflict is witness almost on daily basis in the country. The study recommends the herders to engage in ranching as the best option in addressing this societal malady. All these have been done using the historical methodology.

Keywords Conflict Resolution, Farmers-Herders Clash; Nigeria; Policy Options; Strategies

Introduction

There has arisen... blood against formal reason, the race against purposeful rationality, honour against profit, unity against individualistic disintegration; smartial virtue against bourgeois security. The folk against the individual and the mass (Kriek cited in Sabine & Thorson, 1973:816).

Conflict is a social problem in which two or more persons, families, districts, communities, states, or nations are at war with each other. Other words used for conflict are disagreement characterized by quarrel, fighting, severe anger, aggression, violence, and bloodshed. Conflicts lead to tensions, threats, fears, anxieties, and uncertainties (Dzurgba, 2010:1). In a fight against one another, military

men or soldiers shoot, cut, hack or club one another to death. The death toll rises as casualties also increase. Combatants use arrows, knives, cutlasses, guns missiles, bombs, chemicals, and nuclear arms, depending on whether or not the war is a local war or an international war (Dzurghba, 2010:1). In the contemporary world, human anger and cruelty are extremely bad to the extent that military men use sophisticated and dangerous weapons to fight even in district wars. In this context, conflict destroys life and property without limit.

It cannot be denied that the dominant news items in the 21st century are that of violence orchestrated by individuals and groups in pursuits of different goals. This violence is experienced by individuals, groups, communities, countries, and perhaps globally. The intensity of violence oscillates from low to a very high level with deep pains. Violence is indeed widespread. Reports of violent conflict that destroys lives and materials resources disrupt entire communities, states, and affect regions are commonplace (George-Genyi, 2014:1). Similarly, Heassly (2009:2) affirms that: “One of the most significant challenges facing citizens of the world in the 21st century is how to live and work peacefully with others in all spheres of personal and public life”. The above quotation expresses the difficulty of citizens in living smoothly with each other including the crop farmers and pastoral farmers.

It is in light of the above that, this chapter harps on the farmers- nomadic cattle herders conflicts in Nigeria. It contends that the relationship between farmers and herders is acrimonious in that cattle and crops cannot co-exist on the same piece of farmland. In giving this analysis the chapter veers into a historical perspective of farmers-nomadic conflict in Nigeria. It unravels the causes and the effects of the said conflicts. The paper also examines previous attempts at surmounting the lingering conflicts. Also, the study provides some policy options for the resolution of the conflicts under review and equally attempts a useful conclusion based on the issues examined. Our analysis shall be essentially historical, employing both descriptive narrative and empirical tools in analyzing the subject matter.

Historical Perspective on Farmers-Nomadic Cattle Herders Conflicts in Nigeria

Historically, pastoralists and agriculturalists (farmers and herders) in Nigeria enjoyed a fairly symbiotic relationship. Herders’ livestock provided farmers with daily goods, as well as manure to fertilize their fields. In turn, pastoralists obtained gains and other farm products from agriculturalist communities (Baca, 2015). However, this system increasingly shows signs of breaking down as the growth of farming activities has drastically diminished Nigeria’s supply of grazing land. The herds and flocks of pastoralists now frequently encroach upon cultivated fields, much to the outrage of local agriculturalists. Ensuing confrontations can quickly degenerate into armed clashes that poison

communal relations and lead to further instances of violence (Baca, 2015). However, Mohammed (2013) cited Roger Bleneh (a leading expert in this field) argues that:

Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers had existed since the beginning of agriculture, but the prevalence of tsetse flies and cow settlement densities had kept the incidence of clashes at low frequency until the 20th century.

The information above points that clashes between farmers and herders is a long-time phenomenon even though it was at a minimal level; it still existed and much later it became pronounced in the present day. Giving a detailed analysis of this phenomenon, Mohammed (2013) aptly posits:

The introduction of easy veterinary drugs has increased disease resistance and treatment, increase her size coupled with rapid depletion of natural fodder in the Northern states sharing borders with Niger and Chad had compelled herders to seek pasture outside their traditional ecological zones in the Sahel Savannah. At the same period, improved human health, rapid populations, urbanization, and large-scale land acquisitions added pressure on arable land thus increasing the stiff competition of the static commodity.

It is on record that since the 1950s there has been a growth in human as well as livestock population in the coastal countries of West Africa including Nigeria. This gave rise to increased pressure on natural resources and stiff competition for available resources between farmers and herders (Tonah cited in Ofuoku and Isife, 2009). Following 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 presently, there has been a massive increase in the incidence of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria in recent times. For instance, in the Desina Local Government of Adamawa State, 28 people were feared killed, about 2,500 were displaced and rendered homeless in the hostility between cattle rearers and the host community in July 2005 (Tonah cited in Ofuoku and Isife, 2009). In Imo State, precisely between 1996 and 2005, 19 people died and 42 people were injured in the farmers-herders conflicts and violence that often accompanied such conflicts (Nweze: 2005). Igbahenah (2016) in his study of farmers-herders conflict in Gwer Local Government Area, Benue State revealed that in the last decade the clashes between indigenous farming communities and nomadic herdsman have increased in several parts of central Nigeria, including the country's eastern flank. For example, on 4th March 2003 attackers, thought to be nomadic herdsman from neighboring Chad attacked the rural town of Dumnein Borno State killing 40 people. In the same year, Udawa cattle herds attacked and burned 64 farming villages in Adamawa and Gombe State resulting in 63 dead, 563 injured and 23,700 displaced (International Federation of Red Cross-IFRC cited in Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre-IDMC, 2008). Earlier in 2002, a similar conflict occurred in the Mambila Plateau, which is in the same region, which resulted in dozens of deaths and forced more than 25,000 Fulani herdsman to flee across the border to Cameroun (IDMC, 2008). Also on December 18, 2009, another conflict occurred in Nasarawa State where at least 30 persons

were killed in fighting between farmers and cattle herders when armed herders raided the farm village of UdeniGida (Country Report on Human Right Practices, cited in Igbahenah, 2016).

The Global Terrorism Index (2015:43-44) indicates that Fulani militants (mostly herders) were the fourth deadliest terrorist group in 2004, using machine guns and attacking villages to assault and intimidate farmers. After killing around 80 people in total from 2010 to 2013, they killed 1,229 in 2014. Most deaths occurred in Nigeria's Middle Belt Region particularly in the states of Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau, and Taraba, which recorded 847 deaths. The state of ZamfaraNorth Belt recorded 229 deaths. In addition to terrorist attacks, Fulani militants were also involved in non-state armed conflicts with groups from Eggon, Jukun, and Tiv farming communities; these resulted in 712 deaths (*Global Terrorism index, 2015: 43-44*).

Indeed, in the Benue area, farmers-herders' conflicts have become an annual event. Expressing his views on this matter, Commanding Officer of the 72 Battalion, Colonel Timothy Lagbaja alludes that "the deaths were recorded between 2012 and 2015 comprised of four officers and eleven soldiers, out of which eight of them including two officers and six soldiers fell in one day in Agatu raid" (*Daily Trust* 2015:8). It should be mentioned that the above figures capture the number of officers and men of the Nigerian Army that died during the raid, neglecting that of the civilian populace.

Causes of the Conflicts

The causes of conflicts are also known as sources of conflicts. These sources are multifarious or myriad. Igbahenah (2016:84-88) isolates some of the courses to include: Trespass on farmlands, deliberate destruction of farm products, deliberate contamination of drinking water, sexual assault and others criminal acts by cattle nomads, reaction and reprisal by native farmers, and the pursuit of a hidden agenda, among others. Similarly, an informant who is also an indigene of Taraba State, SundayNyam (2010) explains that the cattle nomads are fond of deliberately taking their cattle to graze on farmland without minding whether crops are planted or not. Their actions are usually associated with two basic negative effects on the side of farmers. Firstly, cattle usually consumed cultivated crops. Secondly, the cattle hooves, compact or harden the soil make tiling difficult since the farmers operate under strenuous conditions with crude implements like hoes and cutlasses.

Another victim of the farmers-herders attack, Samuel Ako (2014) argues that the nomads love their cattle as themselves to the extent that they deliberately allow their animals to feed on-farm products kept on the farm. They open yam and grain barns and feed their cattle with; whenever farmers complain in most cases, it results in violent conflicts.

Confiscation of grazing reserves is another source of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria. In analyzing this teething problem the *National Mirror Newspaper*, August 06, (2015) pontificates:

Until the mid-1990s there were close to 500 grazing reserves in the country, but the big men both civilian, military, and police have taken over the lands for their commercial agriculture. Even though it is the government property they have shared it among themselves. Today a poor Fulani herder who needs to survive and also needs to feed his cattle has nothing to do other than fighting his brother who is a farmer and also needs a means of survival.

The Surveyor-General of the Federation at the time of this study, Professor Peter Nwile concurs to the above and notes that the grazing reserves in the country vanished because of undue encroachment and lack of maintenance (*National Mirror Newspaper*, August, 06:2015). Nwile stressed that there were over 400 grazing corridors in the country in the past, but that they had all been filtered away for development purpose (SIC). Out of 400 grazing reserves, only 40 were gazetted. He Nwile notes that it was wise to create grazing routes, but when cities grow, they share the grazing routes thinking they were not important (*National Mirror Newspaper*, August 06, 2015).

Assessing the causes of farmers-nomadic cattle conflicts, HasanKuraye, the chairman of *MiyattiAallah* (which is the umbrella association of herders in the country)Katsina State chapter expressed his mixed feelings when he poignantly states that:

A substantial percentage of the grazing routes in Katsina State have been encroached by highly placed individuals, who built farmhouses and other buildings where they retire to from time to time. These individuals turn these government facilities into their facilities (*National Mirror Newspaper*, August, 06).

The preceding paragraph shows that private individuals have confiscated grazing areas for their aggrandizement leaving the herders in a state of confusion having nothing to do rather than moving widely from one place to another without restriction. There is also an emergence of migrant groups of resource users; migrant farmers have added stiff competition for arable land. These migrant farmers move from north to central and southern states to cultivate crops for subsistence and commercial purposes. Traditional grazing fields are gradually being leased out to these groups for a customary fee from pastoralists unlike in the past when it was free thereby generating conflicts. Thus, besides, the pastoralist-sedentary farmers' conflicts; we now have pastoralist- Sedentary farmers/migration farmers' conflicts with its attendant consequences (Mohammed, 2013).

Other causes of these conflicts include the encroachment on traditional livestock migratory routes, cultivation of traditional grazing areas, dry season cultivation of riverine areas and valleys in Northern Nigeria encouraged by the Federal Government of Nigeria *Fadamaprojects*, land grabs by

very trade-political-merchant elites, attachment to land as a political tool to gain access to power have accentuated the conflicts. Blench (2010) paraphrase this scenario as presented thus:

In Nigeria... this conflict is now subsumed into a broader dichotomy of religion and disputed over access to resources are now framed in religious and political terms. The increasing, availability of modern weapons has increased the intensity and violence of these disputes.

Apart from these factors, traditional rulers as well contributed greatly to the cause of these conflicts by collecting a huge amount of monies from herdsmen to give them land. This is because many of the new-breed Fulani herdsmen typically do not know the lay of the land in Tiv society and assume that the structure of land ownership is the same as in the North where land belongs to the traditional rulers. However; in Tiv society, the land belongs to the people. The native farmer cultivates their lands - these lands and the crops on them constitute one of their most important assets as a people (Agbegbedia, 2013). Working on the assumption that the land belongs to traditional rulers, these new-breed herdsmen come in and pay some traditional rulers for leave to graze on lands, and some of the chiefs take money without informing their people. Supporting this position, Morgan (2013) noted that:

It is common knowledge that the common, average, ordinary, regular northerner respects, and reveres traditional ruler far over and above anybody else including the President of Nigeria. Armed with this attitude, the Fulani herdsmen, upon arrival in Tivland, pay courtesy visits to our Chiefs to allow for safe passage and grazing in their domain. They in turn offer them royalties in cash and kind (cattle). This, however, has gone beyond royalties only and has amounted to exploitation.

Ati Kenneth Kengkeng (2018) corroborated this argument that:

Check across the entirety of Tivland and you'll hardly find a traditional ruler without connections to Fulani herdsmen and almost none without a herd of cattle numbering in the hundreds. This relationship has been going on for years until lately when it upgraded to the sale of land. Grazing areas have been sold to Fulani herdsmen and they have been denied access to such lands in specific areas... Attempting to prevent the herdsmen from accessing the land led to rancor and fighting.⁵³

Some Tiv traditional rulers having collected money from herdsmen failed to give them access to grazing land. The Fulani herdsmen, on the other hand, interpreted this as great cheating on their side and retaliated with the destruction of human lives, farms, and property.

Apart from the above causes of the pastoralists and farmers' conflict Idyorough (2017) identifies the following factors as being responsible for the conflict in question:

- i. There is desert encroachment in Central Nigeria that makes open grazing difficult during the dry season from November to May.
- ii. There are environmental pollution and degradation in Central Nigeria caused by overgrazing.
- iii. There is global warming and it affects rainfall and resulting in high temperatures in Central Nigeria.
- iv. There is poor maintenance culture in the provision of social services (such as water, health clinics, and schools) on the grazing reserves that were established in the past under the Grazing Reserves Act of 1965.
- v. There are cattle rustling by thieves and armed bandits on open grazing sites.
- vi. Herdsmen's culture belief that when their cattle are introduced into crops and they consume them, they become more fertile.
- vii. Ethnocentric behavior of the nomads to retain nomadic culture even though it is an obsolete or archaic way of raising animals.
- viii. Herdsmen's constant introduction of their herds into crop farms to destroy crops thereby instigating crisis.

Explaining these causes further, Idyorough (2017) notes that the Benue Valley has good rainfall and greener pastures that serve as a pull factor to the migration of Fulani herdsmen while the 8 factors mentioned above serve as the push factors; pushing them away from Central Nigeria into Benue Valley and even beyond and their engagement into conflict with crop farmers. The nomadic herdsmen wherever they are found (the Nuer of East Africa, the Tuareg of North Africa, Fulani of West Africa, etc) are a war-like people; ready to fight anyone who touches their cattle when they introduce such cattle into food crop farm owned by the crop farmer. The herdsmen, identified to be Fulani extraction, are the pastoralists that engage in open grazing, gratuitous movement with animals, and open conflict with crop farmers (Idyorough, 2017).

In this connection, it would not be out of place to conclude that farmers-nomadic Herders conflicts have economic, religious, and political undertones. These factors have been further aggravated by the availability of modern weapons causing a deadly impact on the economy and society of the people of Nigeria.

The Effects of these Conflicts on the Nigerian State

The effects of the Farmers-Herders conflict in Nigeria are legion. It is worthwhile noting that these conflicts affect both farmers and nomads in various ramifications. First and foremost is the loss of lives; a lot of killing by the nomads and reprisal killing of nomads by the host communities takes

place during these conflicts. Herds of cattle belonging to the nomads are also killed. Also some of the victims (young and old) are badly injured or maimed. This has reduced some women farmers to the status of widows. All these have drastically reduced the agricultural labour force in the area. Besides, the incessant conflicts are repugnant to national integration and peaceful co-existence, especially among the various ethnic groups in the country (Ofuoko and Isafe, 2009).

Secondly, there is a radical reduction in output and income of farmers as a result of the destruction of crops by cattle and indiscriminate bush burning. Many farmers lost a substantial part of their yields. This drastically reduced yielding which in turn led to low income on part of farmers who take farming as their core occupation. This negatively affects their savings, credit repayment ability, as well the food security and economic welfare of urban dwellers that depend on these farmers for food supply. This seriously discourages farmers and rural agricultural development (Ofuoko and Isafe, 2009).

Thirdly, farmers-herders conflicts in the area under consideration paved way for the closure of schools. Abdul (2014) discloses that to ensure the safety of both school teachers and pupils or students whenever there is farmers-herders strife the schools in the affected areas are usually closed down. This situation compels many students to be at home for 24 hours daily since some of the parents and guidance have no money to send them to other schools where they can stay temporarily. As a result of this menace, some children engage themselves in other social vices on the grounds of being idle.

Furthermore, a vivid analysis of the effects of the farmers-herders conflict cannot be attained without stating that the crisis has deprived people of their basic rights such as the right to food, clothing, shelter, medical service, and security. Psychologically, the conflicts have created fear among the native farmers to the extent that they are afraid to go to the farm in the affected areas (Igbahenah, 2016:90-91). On the side of nomadic cattle herders, they have gained additional lands for grazing but they also live in fear and carry large arms to scare the people in case of any eventuality (Igbahenah, 2016:90-91).

Besides, there is erosion (land degradation) in Nigeria as a result of zero grazings. The exposures of the soil make it susceptible to erosion which is worsened by the rain. This is accelerated by the topographic nature of some hilly areas. Erosion causes loss of soil materials and difficulty of cultivation (Ofuoko and Isafe, 2009).

Moreover, these conflicts have led to the displacement of farmers. Ofuoko and Isafe (2009) point out that there are reports of displaced farmers and herdsmen who relocate as a result of these conflicts. There are several Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps established to take care of

refugees fleeing from these conflicts. It is important to state that most of these camps are often overcrowded creating serious health challenges and the problem of feeding. Quite often the government has been unable to respond to the pressure exerted on the few make-shift facilities provided in the camps such as water, toilets, and bathrooms, drugs, sanitation facilities, just to mention a few areas.

Apart from the aforementioned effects, there are allegations that some nomads have been involved in armed robbery and rape in different states of the Federation. The *Nation Newspaper*, May, 18 (2016:18) is very apt on this issue:

In the last two decades, there have been numerous reports of Fulani herdsmen committing crimes in their host communities all over the country, such as trespassing and grazing on farms, gang-raping of women, kidnapping, armed invasion and massacre of defenseless villagers; and even ethnic cleansing by battalion-strength Fulani militia armed with AK-47 and other sophisticated weapons. These reports have come from many states including the following: Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa in the North–Central zone, and the southern part of Kaduna State in the North-West zone. Reports have also come from Ondo, Kogi, Oyo, Abia, Ogun, Enugu, and Delta. This report covers the six geo-political zones.

In the course of this violence, a lot of people were displaced in the name of seeking the safety of their lives. Contributing to this matter, Varvar (2017) shows that:

...ethnic conflicts have been the third factor of the Farmers/herdsmen crisis. The period from 2010 to the present has witnessed sustained brutal attacks on the rural farming communities of the Benue Valley area, leading to loss of lives and displacement of populations. Tiv farmers have seriously been affected as agricultural and socio-economic activities have been crippled in some of the affected areas. Many of the Tiv migrant farming communities have been displaced and forcefully taken over by herdsmen.

In discussing the same matter, Idyorough (2017) notes that during the invasion and occupation of some LGAs in Benue State the killings, displacement, and loss of valued property occurred was the order of the day. Some districts in these LGAs were occupied by the marauding herdsmen. The local crop farmers have been displaced from their farmland and are helpless.⁶¹ Food crop production in some of these areas has stopped and the local communities are made dependent.

Table 1: Fulani Herdsmen/Farmers Clashes in Nigeria (2014-2019).

S/N	D a t e	S t a t e	Nature and place of incident	Number of Death	Other effects
1	05-03-2014	Plateau	People of Riyom LGA were attacked by herdsmen	10 people	More than 100 houses burnt

2	09-03-2014	Kaduna	57 gunmen, suspected to be Fulani herdsmen attacked the community of Angwan Sakwai in Kaura LGA	57 people killed	Houses were burnt and properties destroyed.
3	19-04-2014	Delta	Residents of 251 LGA in Delta State grounded activities on the Benin-Asaba Expressway, protesting over attack and killings of nomadic herdsmen	23 killed from the attack	N / A
4	Nov. 2014	Nassarawa	Herders attack villages	3 3	N / A
5	2 0 1 4	Benue	N / A	1 2 2 9	N / A
6	7-04-2015	Benue	Fulani herdsmen attack community in Benue State, injured many, sacked three (3) communities	2 8	N / A
7	27-04-2015	Benue	Suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked Benue Community, Akeke, Mhadiwan, in Garua district of the Local Government. Injured many	2 1	N / A
8	19-06-2015	Rivers	Herdsmen attacked and killed farmers which resulted in pandemonium in Port Harcourt	10 farmers killed	N / A
9	October 2015	Kogi	Herders attacked Agojeju-Idkain Dekina LGA	2 3	Properties destroyed and houses burnt
10.					
11.	12 to 13-12-2015	Kaduna	Zaria Massacre	700-1000 were killed	N / A
12.	13-12-2015	Plateau	Fulani herdsmen attacked Kwata Community in Southern Jos	2 2	N / A
13.	24-01-2016	Benue	Fulani herdsmen ambushed police officers including Division Police Officer as revenge over the feud between the local farmers and herdsmen.	3 1	N / A
14.	08-02-2016	Benue	Fulani herdsmen attack Benue Village at Tom-Anyin and Tom Ataan Communities of Mbaya, Tombo in Buruku LGA	1 0	Over 300 people have been displayed
15.	18-02-2016	Benue	Herdsmen attack on Okokolo village in Agatu LGA of Benue State	5	Properties destroyed
16.	14-03-2016	Benue	Many fired and killed as Fulani herdsmen invaded Agatu. The attacks lasted for days according to the Vanguard Newspapers.	3 0 0	Burnt houses, many slaughtered and many displaced
17.	31-03-2016	Benue	Herdsmen attacked Agasha Community in Guma LGA	7	N / A
18.	10-04-2016	Benue	Fulani herdsmen attacked Dori and Maisuma village	1	N / A
19.	21-04-2016	Benue	Ten communities were razed while many killed by herdsmen in Agatu, Benue State	About 500	N / A
20.	24-04-2016	Benue	Fulani herdsmen killed many in Benue State	3 5	Many displaced
21.	24-04-2016	Plateau	Kwata, Zamwara of Jos South fewer kilometers from NPPS at about 8:30pm Sunday night in Plateau was attacked killed mainly women and children	1 4	Burnt houses
22.	25-04-2016	Enugu	Ukpabi Nimbo attack of imported mercenary by Fulani herdsmen	40 above	Survivors fled to nearby communities.
23.	07-05-2016	Kogi	Gunmen attacked Fulani camp at Enjema Community in Ankpa LGA of Kogi State.	41 cows killed	300 cows missing
24.	03-08-2016	Kaduna	Armed Fulani herdsmen attacked in Jama's LGA of Kaduna State	5	N / A
25.	04-09-2016	Adamawa	Attack by Fulani herdsmen raiding Damsare, Wunamokoh, Dikajam and Taboungo villages	30 killed and a DPO	Several houses and other properties burnt
26.	13-10-2016	Kaduna	Attack by suspected Fulani herdsmen along Kagoro Gidan Waya road in Kaura LGA	2 police officers were ambushed and killed	2 police officers injured
27.	15 to 16-10-2016	Kaduna	Gunmen, suspected to be Fulani herdsmen attacked Godogodo area of southern Kaduna in Jama'ah LGA	20 killed	Several injured
28.	14-11-2016	Abia	Suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked farmers harvesting rice on their farm in Abam community of Arochuku LGA	Several killed	Others injured
29.	17-11-2016	Niger	Fulani herdsmen attacked Kukaki community of Shiroro LGA	6	50 injured, 700 cows, goats and sheep carted away.
30.	2 0 1 6	Kaduna	Herdsmen attacked 53 villages	8 0 8	57 injured and 1921 houses, 16 churches, 19 boys and 1 primary school destroyed. 6000 cows lost.
31.	26-03-2017	Rivers	Herdsmen attack in Abraka	A lecturer and 16 villagers killed	N / A
32.	12-04-2017	Taraba	Two villages in Gashaka LGAs of Taraba State	1 5	N / A
33.	19-04-2017	Edo	25 local Govt. blocked Benin-Asaba Highway in protest of the killing of 23 persons by Fulani herdsmen.	2 3	N / A
34.	21-04-2017	Oyo	Herdsmen attacked Lagun village in Iyana Offa, Atageba, Lapata and surroundings in Lagelu LGA of Oyo State	A night guard killed	Villages ransacked at night and valuables carted away.
35.	2 0 1 7	Benue	Herdsmen attack in Zaki Biam	N / A	2000 displayed and 100 injured
36.	2 0 1 7	Kaduna	Herdsmen attack	2 0 4	N / A
37.	28-04-2018	Taraba	Attack by herdsmen on some villages in Wukali	N / A	N / A
38.	16-06-2018	Delta	Fulani herdsmen attacked Ossisa community in Ndokwa East LGA of Delta State	A 45 year old farmer shot dead	N / A
39.	20-06-2018	Benue	Fulani herdsmen attacked Ugondo, Turan and Gabo-Nenzevi in Logo LGA of Benue State	59 person killed	N / A
40.	2 0 1 8	Kogi	Attack in Dekina & Omala LGAs	3 5	Properties destroyed & houses burnt
41.	04-02-2019	Zamfara	Herder's attack 7 villages for revenge of 7 cows	2 6	N / A
42.	11-02-2019	Kaduna	Attack on Adara settlement-ungwar Bardi	1 5 2	65 missing
43.	20-02-2019	Benue	Fulani herdsmen	1 7	N / A
44.	26-02-2019	Kaduna	Fulani herdsmen attack	4 0	N / A
45.	10-03-2019	Kaduna	Attack by suspected Fulani herdsmen	About 35	
46.	11-03-2019	Kaduna	Fulani herdsmen attack for revenge for cow	About 52	N / A
47.	16-03-2019	Kaduna	Fulani herdsmen revenge attack	1 0	N / A

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Source: Author compilation from *Daily Trust*, April 15, 19,24, May 31, January 24, Punch April 21, Sunday Trust December 13, vanguard February 8, Today online media April 24, Sahara Reporters January 24, the Guardian May 3, Daily Trust May 7, Vanguard May 8.

Table 1 graphically presented the random statistics of casualties in the affected areas. The table shows the locations and nature of attacks and the aftermath. It can be seen as a total of 1,010 civilians (many women and children), Nigeria Police Force personnel killed, and numbers of cattle killed in the act of conflicts in the affected areas. Aside from the death toll, properties worth millions of naira were destroyed. This is as a result of houses, shops, markets burnt in the act of violence by the herdsmen while many civilians in the farming communities have been displaced. This situation suggests that the affected areas are under siege and if care is not taken, it could result in food scarcity due to the economic and social backwardness of the attacked areas.

Relatedly, the intensity, scope, and frequency of such conflicts have shown the fragility of the unity of ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. The tenacity to maintain ‘no retreat and no surrender’ by all parties in the conflict indicates the porosity of the Nigerian federation (Abass, 2017). Prone areas in fierce struggle and competition over the shared resources undermine the relative peace, stability hitherto enjoyed; with threats to social order. The conflicts have brought about fundamental problems of human security in the region, particularly humanitarian crises. These challenges are due to policy implication of the political economy with the formulated policies designed ostensibly to reduce and manage the conflicts but ironically turned to escalate them the more. This development has put the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) under serious threat due to the struggle for natural resources under contention. Conflicts in a federal structure can be effectively and efficiently managed when there are a sound and clear policy respect the feeling of each group, with giving and take devices. Mismanagement of these conflicts shows that there is a weak institutional capacity in Nigeria’s federation to manage them right from traditional to governmental institutions (Abass, 2017).

The harvest of conflicts, especially the stand-off between Pastoralists and farmers, must have been cultivated and irrigated by the leaders and followers in varying forms and magnitude. This has shown the low level of cohesion and fragility amongst numerous ethnic nationalities sequel to the construction and constitution of the Nigerian federal structure leading to the ubiquities of the instability of the failed Nigeria State and federalism (Abass, 2017).

Previous Efforts at Resolving the Conflicts

The attempt at curbing the farmers-nomadic cattle herders conflicts in Nigeria have been made at different periods by different categories of people. Here, the chapter considers the role of the

Federal Government (FGN), government agencies, and local militias in surmounting the conflicts under study. The first step taken by the Federal Government to do away with this problem was the creation of ranches. The rationale for the creation of ranches in the country was to stop the wider and free movement of herders with cattle. But unfortunately, because of personal interest and corruption, almost all the cattle ranches have been taken by selfish individuals leaving the whole country in a total mess (Tsonov, 2016). It is praiseworthy to note that the FGN demonstrated a penchant attitude towards her policy of completing ranches. Concerning the above matter, Nwilo disclosed that out of the 400 ranches created in the country only 40 of them were grazing (*National Mirror Newspaper*, August (2005)).

Also, the FGN under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari (a Fulani man) has responded to the public outcry and ordered security forces to crack down on the cattle raiders (Mikailu, *BBC News*, 15th May 2016). Associated with the above, another source explains that President Muhammadu Buhari on Wednesday, April 27, 2015, ordered the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Major General Abayomi Olonishakan and the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Solomon Arase to go after the herdsmen who are killing in several parts of the country. The president also assured of his administration's readiness to deploy all required resources to remove this new threat to the collective security of the Nation (*Daily Trust Newspaper*, April 28, 216:3).

Since there are speculations that the herdsmen ravaging the Nigerian communities are foreign invaders, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) is working assiduously to ascertain whether such claim is true and if possible proffer a solution to it. However, the spokesman of the NIS, Ekpedeme King, was captured (in the *National Newspaper*, May, 29 2016:2) postulating that:

There is no evidence that the herdsmen are foreigners, and the NIS does not profile immigrants based on their ethnicity, so the NIS cannot say whether the herdsmen are Nigerians or not because nobody has produced them for us to profile them. We are at the borders and we have not seen any herdsman coming into the country. We have our men at the borders and they are doing their job. What we have so far is speculation, it is not possible that they could be foreigners.

The idea here is not just a debate on whether the violent nomads are outsiders or insiders but to assess the contribution of the NIS towards curbing the farmers-herders conflicts in Nigeria. It is also revealed that in the week preceding May 29, 2016, the police arrested five herdsmen alleged to have masterminded the attack on Ukpabi Nimbe community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. According to the police, the suspects had a video of the attack (*The National Newspaper*, May 29, 2016:2). Similarly, in many states, the mobile police are usually deployed for peacekeeping in the affected communities.

In the face of the incessant security challenges in the country, natives of different communities resulted in forming militia and vigilante groups. It is glaring that during the conflict between farmers and herders these groups do come out to fight for the interest of the people. In many cases, they defeat the herders since they are more conversant with the terrain of their communities than the nomadic cattle herders (Piev, 2016). Despite the above-chronicled efforts, it should be recognized and acknowledge that efforts at stopping farmers-herders conflicts area are yet to yield the desired results and as such this call for policy suggestions.

Resolving the Present Conflicts: Some Policy Options

To do away with the farmers-nomadic cattle herders' conflicts in Nigeria, certain measures must be put in place. Firstly, there is a need for the FGN and the affected state governments to institute some necessary actions towards tackling the incessant problem of acute water shortage and drought, which are the key issues that drive the herdsmen out from their immediate environment to seek fresh pasture and clear water elsewhere.

Secondly, the FGN should implement the United Nations and African Union-backed Great Green Wall Programme, which brings together 11 countries to plant trees across Africa, to lessen the effects of desertification and improve the ecosystem integrity in the dry northern parts of the country stretching from Zamfara and Kebbi State in North-West, along the northern border of Nigeria to extreme eastern border of Borno States and involving 8 states in all. If this is done, it will go a very long way in reducing the insecurity involving pastoral herdsmen in the region (Okpaleke, 2016).

Thirdly, the FGN should enact relevant legislation to enable the grant of pastoral lease in some designated areas, taking into consideration, native or indigenous land rights, as the case may be. A pastoral lease is an arrangement whereby a lease is granted to livestock owners overstate or government-owned land for grazing or other pastoral use (Opkaleke, 2016). Widely used in some countries like Australia and New Zealand, this lease concept should perhaps be studied, with a view to, if possible, adapting same in Nigeria, that is if found to be relevant and suitable. This will at least drastically reduce farmers-herders' conflicts.

Importantly and much more fundamentally, the FGN should encourage herders to establish ranches and make sure that they are effective. If this is done it will prevent cattle and herders from moving out freely and generating violent conflicts in the process. Nigerians should take a cue from other countries whose have huge cattle such as Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uganda, and Israel, among other but who have strictly adopted the practice of building and situating their cattle in well-irrigated ranches, thereby stopping or reducing to the barest minimum the problem of pastoral conflicts. The Minister of Agriculture, Dr.AuduOgbealso subscribes to the idea of ranching. According to him:

The Fulani cow yield 1 little of milk a day, the ones in Uganda and Israel that are ranches produce 15 and 40 liters a day, respectively. Countries in Europe, America, and Asia have long discarded the system of open grazing of cattle and they are reaping the socio-economic benefits. It is against the law in many of these countries to herd livestock in the open as is a practice in Nigeria (*The Union Newspaper*, September 1, 2015).

The quotation depicts that migratory herding has been archaic and unproductive and should be discouraged. In addition to the above policy options, raids, shootings, killings and abductions or violence of any kind should be outlawed and strict penalties and sanctions should be imposed by status for any infringement. Regulation of the business would modernize the business, enhance its growth as an export business, which can on its own generate revenue for both the owners and the government through the cattle and cattle products which include beef, hides, and hooves, to mention just a few productions.

Policy suggestions for the resolution of the farmers-herders conflict in the country cannot be smoothly examined without stating that there should also be a program for the production of cattle feed by farmers and industrialists. This will help build a symbiotic relationship between cattle ranches and farming communities. Apart from modernizing and boosting livestock production for local consumption and export, the problem would help to put an end to the needless massacre and destruction of properties, particular farmlands, which have been the fallout of the migratory, herding system practiced in the country (*The Union Newspaper*, September 1, 2015).

Furthermore, the Fulani Cattle Breeders Association (Miyehi Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN) should stop misleading their follow cattle breeders by using the 1999 Constitution to justify their alleged right to graze on farms in order states of Nigeria. According to them, because freedom of movement is their Constitutional right, no one can stop us from grazing in the south (*The Nation Newspaper*, May, 18, 2016:18). Explaining their take on this issue, NuruAbdullahi, the chairman of MACBAN, Plateau State insists that:

Nobody can deprive Fulani herdsmen of their constitutional right of free movement because... the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees freedom of movement for every citizen of the country: this includes the right to live, work and carry out any legitimate activity in any part of the country (*The Nation Newspaper*, May, 18, 2016:18).

The conservative notions such as these are likely to create acrimonious relationships rather than peaceful co-existence. In this wise, we recommend that the interpretation of the constitution should be done by the law experts for peace and harmony.

Traditional rulers and other community leaders should stop breaching their contractual agreement on sales of land with the herders. Those who do not want to sell their land to the herders should not

pretend. If this is done, it will resolve to a great extent the farmers-herders conflict in the study area. To resolve the farmers-nomadic cattle herders conflicts, modern and indigenous conflict management techniques should be adopted. Here, all the identified stakeholders should be brought together under a common forum and included in the decision making and allowed to participate actively in the planning process that involves all stakeholders (herdsmen, crop growers, and government) in the dispute resolution mechanism, this will help to promote consensus instead of conflict (Blenh, 2010).

Besides, another approach necessary for the resolution of the lingering conflicts between farmers-herders in Nigeria is that nomadic education should be intensified to properly position nomadic cattle herders to see the need for peaceful co-existence with their host communities. The host communities should stop emphasizing that herders are visitors to their communities but they should rather have a priority of finding ways to accommodate them without conflict.

Lastly, all the states government should enact a law to prohibit open rearing and grazing of livestock and provide for the establishment of ranches and livestock administration, regulation and control, and for other matters connected with it. This has been already started by states like Benue, Kwara, and Taraba State. The purpose of this law is to ensure peace between farmers and pastoralists since both crops and cattle cannot coexist on the same piece of farmland. Benue State Government of Nigeria (2017) has identified the main objectives of this law as to:

- a. Prevent the destruction of crop farms, community pond, settlements, and property by open rearing and grazing of livestock;
- b. Prevent clashes between nomads' livestock herders and crop farmers;
- c. Protect the environment from degradation and pollution caused by open rearing and overgrazing of livestock;
- d. Optimize the use of land resources in the face of overstretched land and increasing population;
- e. 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 international markets;
- f. Create a conducive environment for large scale crop product.

With the above objectives, if all the Nigerian States enact and practice anti-open grazing law the factors that tend to degenerate to the farmers-herders conflict will be done away with or at least reduce to its barest minimum.

Conclusion

This paper on farmers-nomadic cattle herders' conflicts in Nigeria has demonstrated that the relationship between farmers and herders was hitherto based on mutual trust and peaceful co-existence. However, it became acrimonious due to the increase in the number of herders who embark on open nomadism leading to the destruction of waters, farms, and farmlands. Apart from the activities of nomads, the paper outlined and described other sources of the conflicts under consideration. The paper explained that despite the intermittent conflicts between the settled farmers and the herders, they still have a lot of things in common. This is because they need each other for their survival since none of them can wholly supply their needs. The paper also examined the effects of these conflicts on the Nigerian economy and society. The paper contended that so far, all efforts made at resolving these conflicts have ended in futility because the farmers-herders' attacks are witness almost on the daily basis in the country. In the final analysis, the study made some recommendations aimed at resolving the long ravaging conflicts between these groups. Fundamentally, the paper specifically advocates the need for herders to engage in ranching as the best option in addressing this problem. This is because it is out of place in the 21st century for herders to move about with cattle. Apart from the environmental hazards accompanied by grazing, it is believed that ranched cattle produce more milk and beef and are not prone to diseases.

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