

1 Pastoralism as a New Phase of Terrorism in Nigeria

2 Idowu Adetayo Johnson¹ and Idowu Adetayo Johnson²

3 ¹ University of Ibadan

4 *Received: 8 December 2016 Accepted: 5 January 2017 Published: 15 January 2017*

5 **Abstract**

6 The need to feed livestock of herdsmen necessitates their migration from their communities
7 due to inadequate pastures to other communities and this has led to the trespass of these
8 pastoralists to the farmlands of local agriculturalists and destruction of their crops thereby
9 leading to conflict. This study therefore analyses the causes, evolution, dynamics and
10 solutions to the conflicts generated from the farmers-herdsmen clashes in Nigeria. The study
11 also recommends the formulation of national livestock development policy, effective
12 community policing model, demarcation of livestock grazing reserves, provision of
13 constitutional roles and recognition for traditional rulers and convening of stakeholders?
14 conference on nomadic pastoralism as strategies for ensuring peace.

17 **Index terms**— pastoralism, terrorism, livestock, herdsmen, farmers, local communities.

18 **1 I. Introduction**

19 The Nigerian nation has persistently been in a fierce vortex and seemingly boiling cauldron of state terrorism. The
20 Nigerian state has witnessed series of mind-boggling and unthinkable bloodshed and the geographical space -the
21 terra-firma on the school atlas christened 'Nigeria' has in its earth the bones of millions of innocent people who
22 lost their lives to avoidable clashes, the sun has dried the tears of many helpless and hopeless people who have
23 lost their loved ones and the ground has also gulped the innocent blood of many who perished in various wars
24 and violent movements which have characterised the state.

25 These violence are such as the Biafran war, the Zaki Biam massacre, the Odi massacre, the Niger Delta
26 violence, operation Wetie, the Modakeke-Ife war, Maitatsine religious uprising, the Fulani-Birom clashes in Jos,
27 the Bauchi religious riots, the Boko Haram terrorist activities, the Shiite group massacre in Zaria and the recent
28 Fulani herdsmen terrorist activities which pervades every region of the country. These acts of violence have
29 largely disrupted the state of peace and development in the Nigerian state. It is therefore imperative for the
30 government of Nigeria to act swiftly to curb the conflict between the two groups to forestall the metastasis of the
31 conflict to full blown terrorism in an already ethnically-strained country Nigeria which is just recovering from
32 the violent acts of the Boko Haram terrorism.

33 **2 II. Historical Origin of the Fulanis**

34 Found across West Central Africa, the Fulanis are said to be perhaps the largest semi-nomadic group in the world
35 (BBC, 2016). They are found in large number in Nigeria but while some have moved into the cities, many are
36 still living as semi-nomadic herders. The nomadic group basically spend most of their lives in the bush and are
37 the ones largely involved in clashes.

38 According to Anter (2011) the Fulani is an ethnic group who are spread over several West African countries and
39 in some places in Central African and the Sudan. The Fulani people can be found in Gambia, Mali, Mauritania,
40 The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Togo, Nigeria,
41 Niger, Senegal, Guinea, Benin, Ghana, Liberia, Sudan and Cameroon. In Guinea, the Fulani represents the
42 largest population and they are basically pastoralist agriculturists whose main occupation is nomadic farming,
43 pastoralism, trading, herding of cattle, goats and sheep which they do across the vast hinterland of where they

3 III. THE FULANI PASTORALISTS AND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES

44 consider their domain and in many cases, keeping away from local agricultural population (Anter, 2011). The
45 religious, political and socio-cultural identity of the Fulani of West and Central Africa can be traced to the
46 eighteenth and nineteenth century Jihad with conquered communities ??Azarya, 1996). According to Blench
47 (1994), the Fulani originated from the Senegambia before spreading out into about 20 states which cut across
48 West Africa and the Sahel as well as western Sudan and Central African Republic ??McGregor, 2014).

49 The Fulani are the major providers of milk and meat in Nigeria. Their contribution to the dairy and meat
50 industry is phenomenal and about 90% of the cattle in Nigeria are owned by the Fulani and they contribute
51 about 3.2% to Nigeria's gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Abass, 2012). The Fulani are also responsible for the
52 provision and hides and skin in Nigeria. In the pastoral system, young people more especially the male tend the
53 herd to ensure their feeding. The conflict between herdsmen and the local communities can be traced to the
54 beginning of agriculture (Abbass 2012). Okello et al. (2014) submits that it was the fall of the Sokoto Caliphate;
55 colonialism and the introduction of the cattle tax were the major reasons for the initial dispersal of the Fulani to
56 the southern part of the country. Basically, Nigeria has two major seasons -the rainy and the dry seasons. During
57 the rainy season, the pastures begin to appear and this is the time when the clashes between the herdsmen and
58 the people of local communities begin to occur due to their trespass into arable lands (Abass, 2012).

59 3 III. The Fulani Pastoralists and Terrorist Activities

60 There have been repeated and bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and host communities for several
61 years. These clashes according to BBC (2016) have claimed thousands of lives within a period of twenty years.
62 It is further stated that in 2014, over 1,200 lives were lost which made these set of people the world's fourth
63 deadliest militant group. In February 2016, there was an attack on farmers in Benue State which according to
64 reports killed some 300 people (BBC, 2016). In April, 2016, there was another attack in Southern Enugu State
65 which claimed about 40 lives and destroyed properties worth millions of naira leaving thousands fleeing their
66 homes and rendering children orphaned.

67 On the part of the farmers seeking defence, some angry youths, local hunters and farmers in many communities
68 in the country have however acquired weapons against unprovoked attacks by Fulani herdsmen. These people have
69 also vowed to stop what they have described as mindless killings and destruction of their farmlands by rampaging
70 Fulani herdsmen (Punch, 2016). In recent times, the Fulani herdsmen have reportedly killed hundreds in different
71 states of the federation including Plateau, Adamawa, Benue, Enugu and lot of other states (Punch, 2016) the
72 more disturbing aspect is that no prosecution has been made despite promises by security agencies in country. It
73 is instructive to note that these herders are involved in criminal activities as they were reported to have invaded
74 some places in Lagelu Local Government of Oyo State and made away with goods and cash worth N500,000
75 (Punch, 2015). The group is said to have grown very audacious such that they obstructed the convoy of the
76 governor of Imo State, Rochas Okorocha at the state capital while the governor was inspecting state projects
77 (Thisday, 2016).

78 Cattle grazing-related violence has been on the increase in Nigeria. According to Olayoku (2014) about 615
79 violent deaths have been recorded by the database of Nigerian Watch and there have been about 61,314 fatalities
80 that can be described as violent. According to the scholar, in 2008, there were 31 reported cases of cattle conflict
81 while in 2009 the fatalities soared to 83 all occurring most primarily in the northern states of the country. In
82 2010, it was also observed that the occurrence of cattle grazing violence dropped to 39 fatalities with most of
83 the cases occurring in the north but sad enough, in the following year, the occurrence rose to 116 fatalities with
84 the highest occurrence being in Plateau state and the most sustained, lasting five days occurring in Benue State
85 (Olayoku, 2014).

86 The major cause of this violence has been recognised as the invasion of farmlands by the herders and destruction
87 of agricultural farmlands of people of the communities. In 2012, Nigeria recorded the highest number of fatalities
88 when the record was put at 128 fatalities. Also, according to Joseph (2012) about 500 cows were reportedly lost
89 by the Fulani herdsmen. It was reported that in Delta State, the herdsmen were armed and dressed in uniforms
90 and when they were attacked by the local communities, it led to the display of headless bodies and raping of
91 women and when the military tried to restore peace, another two persons were killed while militants were also
92 involved in the fight using the opportunity to engage in robbery activities (O'Neil, 2012).

93 There were also violent cases in 2013 and about 115 casualties were said to have been reported and this spate
94 of terrorism has remained a continuum. Several communities have therefore become hostile to the pastoralists
95 farmers and particularly the Fulani herdsmen who have been dubbed a semblance of the Boko Haram insurgents
96 due to their terrorising habit of host communities. In a sleepy town of Oke Ako in Ikole Local government area of
97 Ekiti State some suspected herdsmen attacked the town and killed one of the residents (Olakitan, 2016). Also, in
98 Uzaar in Tombo, Anyii in Logo and Vase in Ukum local government areas of Benue State, the herdsmen attacked
99 killing 8 and 12 persons respectively (Duru, 2016) this incident led to the displacement of about 1,000 people
100 from this localities rendering them homeless.

101 The Governor of Ekiti State, Ayodele Fayose was reported to have armed local hunters and urged them to be
102 defensive in any case where there was an attack from the herdsmen (Saharareporters, 2016). A closely related
103 case occurred in Delta State when Hon. Evance Iwurie, a Nigerian lawmaker from Ethiope Constituency of
104 Delta State led security agents into the forest in the outskirt of Abraka Kingdom which had become a hideout
105 for the herdsmen in which the herdsmen had also dug a tunnel in order to gain access to attack the community.

106 It is therefore imperative that the Nigerian government must do something to curb the persistent violence and
107 terrorism of local communities by the Fulani herdsmen to forestall peace and tranquillity in these communities
108 and also aid the friendliness of the Fulanis with local residents as well as ease their pastoral business.

109 **4 IV. Strategies to Curb the Persistent Fulani-Local Commu- 110 nity Fatalities in Nigeria**

111 As a nation just rising from the ashes of the Boko Haram insurgency, the herdsmen-communities clashes is
112 something Nigeria cannot afford at the moment. The country has already lost thousands of lives and property to
113 the Boko Haram insurgency and while more than a million people have been displaced, it is therefore important
114 for the Nigerian nation to look critically into the pastoralist budding conflict before it degenerates into a full
115 blown terrorism.

116 To achieve this therefore, Nigeria must ensure that there is the promulgation of the National Livestock
117 Development Policy which will provide guidelines for livestock resources management. The government should
118 also ensure that there is the development of institutional and technological changes which is necessary for the
119 exploitation of the potentials which lies in the livestock sub-sector. This approach will enhance research and
120 development of livestock breed, disease control and ways of addressing the ecological problems in Nigerian among
121 others. The implementation of this policy is a viable route of solving the herdsmencommunities clashes in Nigeria.
122 The government should ensure that it consults with the major stakeholders in the livestock sector such as the
123 Maiyatti Allah and other relevant groups. The federal ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources should
124 ensure it initiates a consultative interaction with these groups.

125 The government can also implement community policing model can also help to forestall peace in the rural
126 areas since the shortage in officers and men of the Nigeria Police could be seen as one of the reasons the herdsmen
127 gain access into the communities to attack residents. This policy was launched by the Nigeria police force in 2004
128 as a pragmatic approach to police reforms and also a way of substituting traditional reactive and incident-based
129 policing to a proactive problem-solving policing system. It seeks the effective community engagement in the
130 provision of solution to policing issues and also developing partnership in the maintenance of safety and security
131 in the society. This approach will also ensure that effective personnel were deployed to the rural communities
132 and a good structure was maintained in the rural communities.

133 Another important approach is to ensure that there is a demarcation of the grazing reserves to forestall
134 desertification. There is a need for environmental regeneration programme to mitigate the challenges of
135 environmental desertification as most grazing reserves have been lost to this. The implementation of the
136 demarcation of the razing reserves will ensure that there is enough grazing land for the herdsmen and will
137 also encourage them to return to the abandoned grazing lands in the northern part of the country. There is a
138 need for collaboration between the ministry of agriculture and environment to formulate this policy and develop
139 modalities for ensuring that this goal is achieved.

140 There is also a need for convening of national stakeholders' conference on nomadic pastoralism where adequate
141 attention to the peculiarities of pastoralism could be discussed and measures to eliminate clashes will be discussed.
142 This will also be a platform where various parties could discuss their grievances and this will engender mutual
143 understanding among conflicting parties.

144 The traditional institutions in the country should also be given constitutional roles and recognition and this
145 will afford them the opportunity to exercise their authority as grassroots leaders and custodians of cultural
146 heritage. This recognition will also help to reduce the need for traditional rulers to continue seeking relevance
147 through active political patronage and enable them to focus on solving issues that deals with their communities
148 while also thinking of bringing development to their local communities. Once this is achieved, community leaders
149 will know how to engage the pastoral farmers in conflict resolution approach instead of attacks.

150 **5 V. Conclusion**

151 This study examines the Fulani pastoral farmers and local communities' clashes in Nigeria as a form of budding
152 terrorism and threat to national security. The study established that the persistent conflict has a negative
153 relationship on national peace and security and it has been on the increase in recent times more especially in
154 2016 where several people were killed in Enugu and Benue States with several attacks in the South West and
155 prominently, in Ekiti State. The study therefore established that policies and programmes were not effectively
156 implemented with generated issues that influenced the persistence of conflicts between farmers and herdsmen
157 within the country. It was therefore recommended that the Nigerian government should endeavour to implement
158 grazing reserves, laws enforcement and socio-cultural dynamics as possible routes to curb the violence.¹

¹Year 2017Pastoralism as a New Phase of Terrorism in Nigeria

5 V. CONCLUSION

159 [/22/herdsmen-kill-villager-in-ekiti-soldiersdeployed/ on (2016)] /22/herdsmen-kill-villager-in-ekiti-
160 soldiersdeployed/ on, 27 June, 2016.

161 [Joseph (2012)] 4 killed in renewed Farmers/ Herders Feud in Nasarawa, H Joseph . http://www.nigeriawatch.org/media/doc_acc/DT2012-02-17h_2.pdf on 27 2012. June, 2016.

163 [Thisday (2016)] Fulani Herdsmen Obstruct Gov. Okorocha, Journalists in Owerri, Thisday . <http://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2016/05/07/fulani-herdsmen-obstruct-gov-okorocha-journalists-in-owerri/> 2016. May 7. 2016.

166 [Victor ()] Herdsmen Kill Villager in Ekiti, Soldiers Deployed, Olakiitan Victor . <http://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2016/> 2016.

168 [Okello ()] 'Identifying Motivators for State-Pastoralist Dialogue: Exploring the Relationships between Livestock Services, Self-Organisation and Conflict in Nigeria's Pastoralist Fulani'. Okello . *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice* 2014. 4 (12) p. .

171 [Amaize (2016)] In Delta, herdsmen kill three villagers daily, amputate young men, rape girls-Hon, Emma Amaize . <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/06/delta-herdsmen-kill-three-villagers-daily-amputate-young-men-rape-girls-hon-ivwurie/> on 2016. June 27. 2016.

175 [Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict 5 May BBC ()] 'Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict 5 May'. <http://www.bbc.com> 2016. 2016.

177 [Abass ()] 'No Retreat No Surrender Conflict for Survival between the Fulani Pastoralist and Farmers in Northern Nigeria.' I Abass . *European Scientific Journal* 2012. 8 p. .

179 [Saharareporters (2016)] Saharareporters . <http://saharareporters.com/2016/05/04/governor-fayose-declares-war-fulani-herdsmen> accessed 27 Governor Fayose Declares War On Fulani Herdsmen, 2016. June, 2016.

182 [Peter ()] Suspected Fulani herdsmen kill 26 persons, injure many in Benue Vanguard Newspaper, Duru Peter . <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/06/suspected-fulani-herdsmen-kill-26-persons-injure-many-benue/> on 27 2016.

185 [Blench ()] 'The Expansion and Adaption of Fulbe Pastoralism to Subhumid and Humid Conditions in Nigeria'. R Blench . *Cahiers D'etudes Africaines* 1994. 34 p. .

187 [Olayoku ()] 'Trends and Patterns of Cattle Grazing and Rural Violence in Nigeria, IFRA-Nigeria working papers series'. P Olayoku . 34. 28/11/2014 12. Punch. <http://www.punchng.com/fulani-herdsmen-farmers-amass-arms-combat-killings/> Fulani herdsmen: Farmers amass arms to combat killings May, 2014. 2016. 2016. 7.

191 [O'neil (2012)] Two Dead as Fulani, Indigenes clash in Delta. *The Nation Newspaper*, S O'neil . http://www.nigeriawatch.org/media/doc_acc/N2012-01-31p9 2012. June, 2016.

193 [Azarya] V (1996) *Pastoralism and the State in Africa: Marginality or Incorporation*, Nomadic Peoples, Azarya . 38 p. .