

Fulani Herdsmen Settlement in Southwest Nigeria and Insecurity in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined Fulani herdsmen settlement in the Southwest region of Nigeria and insecurity problems. Insecurity has been described as the absence of peace in a country and its continuous absence due to impacts of organized crime and terrorism. In Southwest Nigeria, Fulani the activities of Fulani's herdsmen problem had led to the loss of lives, destruction of valuable properties as well as crops, there affecting negatively the socio-economic development of the region. Its objectives include examining the drivers of violence and insecurity in Southwest Nigeria; to examine the impacts of the insecurity in the Southwest region of Nigeria and proffering solutions to this social aberration in the Southwest region of Nigeria. The study was anchored on the theory of Collective Violence and structural functionalism theory. Secondary sources of data such as journals, electronic media, books, newspapers were widely used to analyze the study. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made; government should ensure that all Fulani herdsmen who illegally acquired arms and ammunitions are arrested and prosecuted accordingly. Government should also strengthen police capacity to curb rustling and banditry. In the interim, Vigilante and Local security groups should be equipped with a view to combating incessant Fulani Herdsmen. Finally, community policing should be introduced so that states and local authorities can be accountable for the security of the people. The federal government should run an all-inclusive government where the principle of federal character is upheld.

Keywords: *Herdsmen, Security, Insecurity, Settlement, Terrorism*

INTRODUCTION

Numerous issues bordering on national security are very critical for the socio-economic and political progress of any polity (Burton, 2016). Sutherland and Cressey (1978) as cited in Leke and Ojo (2019) believe that the survival of any society is its law and order which are predicated on national security. Insecurity leaves in its wake tales of woe which the country and its citizens have had to contend with over the years. The Fulani herdsmen crisis is a unique and emerging one in Nigeria that needs an immediate remedy, (Burton, 2016). The Fulani in Nigeria is a part of the Peul, or Fula, ethnic group, which has existed in some form for thousands of years (Iro, 2017). Fulani is more than 20 million in Africa today, and the largest community in the tribe is located in Nigeria, where they make up one of the nation's largest ethnic groups (Abass, 2012). The Fula people are almost solely Muslim, having converted to Islam from their traditional belief system in the 1500s, and most Fulani maintains a semi-nomadic lifestyle, earning them the appellation of Fulani herdsmen (Burton, 2016).

The influence of foreign Fulani groups in search of pasture accounts for the irreconcilable conflicts being witnessed between the Fulani and their host communities. Due to cultural and religious affinity, it is practically difficult to distinguish between Nigeria Fulani and Fulani from other countries across the Sahel region moving into Nigeria (Omitola, 2014). Adisa and

Adekunle (2010) argued that the migration of nomadic pastoralists follows a systematic pattern, dictated by variations in rainfall, grazing stock, pasture and water. The migratory nature of the pastoralists is a source of potential conflicts as there is intense competition between pastoralists and farming communities. Nte (2016) argued that most of the very violent conflicts triggered by Fulani Herdsmen occurred in the Southwest of Nigeria; Oyo, OsunOndo, Ekiti, Ogun, and the Lagos States in particular. Nte, (2016) states that however, the recent attacks on South Western part of Nigeria by Fulani herdsmen on their hosting community in Ekiti, Osun, Oyo, Ogun, and the Ondo States called for proactive actions as many souls were brutally murdered and landed properties, crops, and vegetations destroyed by this marauding Fulani herdsmen. The attacks by Fulani herdsmen have in recent years taken more sophisticated dimensions with the use of new types of weapons and communication devices. In consequence, the sedentary agrarian communities have resorted to self-defense through local vigilante groups (Abass 2012; McGregor 2014). This has further aggravated violence, with the destruction of lives and properties. According to Fasona and Omojola (2005), conflicts resulting from cattle grazing actually accounted for 35% of all reported crises between 1991 and 2005 in Nigeria. Therefore, there is a need for a critical assessment of the underlying factors responsible for the escalation of conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers to untangle the various important but conflicting narratives that have been used in explaining the reason behind the recent escalation of the conflict.

Statement of Problem

Nwokoye (2021) argued that familiar problems relating to land and water use, obstruction of traditional migration routes, livestock theft and crop damage tend to trigger insecurity. Drought and desertification have degraded pastures, dried up many natural water sources across Nigeria's far-northern Sahelian belt and forced large numbers of herders to migrate south in search of grassland and water for their herds. Insecurity in many northern states also prompts increasing numbers of herdsmen to migrate south. The growth of human settlements, expansion of public infrastructure and acquisition of land by large-scale farmers and other private commercial interests, have deprived herders of grazing reserves designated by the post-independence government of the former Northern region which now split into nineteen states. Therefore, the statement of the problem of this study is to explore why Fulani herdsmen had persistent and arbitrarily engaged in homicides and wanton destruction of properties of private persons, thereby degenerating to insecurity.

Objective of Study

The aim of this paper is to examine Fulani herdsmen settlement in Southwest Nigeria and Nigeria's insecurity problems. The specific objectives are:

1. Examine the drivers of violence and insecurity in Southwest Nigeria.
2. Impacts of the state of insecurity in Southwest Nigeria.
3. Proffer solutions to this social aberration in Southwest Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the fundamental drivers of insecurity in Southwest Nigeria?
2. How has insecurity affected the socio-economic life of the people of Southwest Nigeria?
3. What are the possible solutions that can remediate this social aberration in Southwest Nigeria?
- 4.

Theoretical Framework

Under this subheading, it is pertinent to look at this work from the major schools of thought which are the critical and functionalism. The critical school of thought is an approach to social philosophy that focuses on reflective assessment and critique of society and culture in order to reveal and challenge power structures. With origin in sociology and literary criticism, it argues that social problems are influenced and created more by societal structures and cultural assumptions than by individual and psychological factors. Maintaining that ideology is the principal obstacle to human liberation, critical theory was established as a school of thought primarily by the Frankfurt School theoreticians Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), Erich Fromm (1900-1980), and Max Horkheimer (1893-1973), (Akikibofori, 2014).

Theory of Collective Violence

This theory describes the process by which a group assembles material and non-material resources and places them under collective control for the explicit purpose of pursuing a group's interests through collective action. Collecting resources must be accompanied by mobilization of resources (Isyaku, 2013). A group may prosper yet still not contend for power. According to Johari (2015), collective violence may result from the role of failed and failing states. To Johari, he contends that, in some countries, the rulers failed to establish a strong and stable political system, hence, the power-hungry groups came forward to capture power by means of violence. They created serious problems of law and order. Baylis and Smith (2005) as cited in the Johari (2015) expatiates "failed state" as the one that has collapsed and cannot provide protection to its citizens without substantial external support and where the government of the state has ceased to exist inside its territorial border. Therefore, to Baylis and Smith, the effect of a failed state in nonperforming the basic function in the protection of life and properties, maintenance of laws and order that will usher in individual and group to result to collective violence in protection of their life and properties. In the words of Rand as cited in Johari (2015), a failed state or ungovernable state has four attributes as follows: (a) lack of state penetration evidenced by corruption, the prevalence of informal economy, and absence of effective state institutions, (b) lack of monopoly of force indicated by illegal armed groups, criminal networks and population with access to arms (c) lack of border controls and (d) external interference. All these attributes highlighted by Rand; Baylis and Smith; and Johari are prevalent in the causes of collective violence as seen in Nigeria. The porosity in the border leading to the influx of Fulani herdsmen from the other West African States to Nigeria as well as illegal importation of firearms and ammunition from Nigeria neighboring borders of Cameroon, Benin Republic, Niger and Chad Republic (Omitola, 2014). Also, the uncontrollable nature of the movement of militants especially from the neighboring countries that is experience conflict like Somalia, Mali, Niger Republic, Libya with light and heavy weapons and infiltrated the ranks of Fulani herdsmen resulting in the geometrical increase in the attacks in the country (Mohammed, 2018). The justification for collective violence as argued by the realist group conflict theorists argued that if the interest ("interest or goods" as argued by Wallace and Wolf (1991) which include power, status, resources, position, landed properties, etc.) of a particular individual or group is jeopardized or trampled upon, this can lead to conflict between the individual or group and the invaders. To the Fulani herdsmen, their major interests are to source food for their cattle as well as protect their cattle at the expense of their life from danger; any act that hindered them from doing this is always leading to a collective fight between the herdsmen and the hosting community. Also, the frustration and aggression thesis explains the justification for an act of collective violence by a certain individual or group, it attributes violent behavior to frustration, which breeds anger, and finally lead to aggressive behavior (Albert, 2005), while the deprivation thesis holds the belief that, people habitually experience a discrepancy between their expectations in life and their actual achievements, they are likely to resort to violence. This collective violence may also result from the hosting community because of the failure of the government in protecting the life and

properties of their citizens through enabling good laws and providing enforcement officers to protect the lives and properties of the people by putting laws into their hand in safeguarding lives and properties from dangers of attack.

The structural-functional approach provides a useful framework for analyzing a social phenomenon in society. It is the handwork of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), Talcott Parson (1902-1979), and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). These scholars see structural functionalism as the tradition of social cohesion in that society functions in unified systems and structures. Therefore, to survive, society needs to educate its citizens, produce goods and services, govern its affairs base on rule of law and provide security of life and property. These are functions that necessitate several sub-systems such as schools, Labor unions, industries, legislature, judiciary, security agencies, etc that perform in unison thereby making society function like an organism, (Iwarimie-Jaja 2001, Akikibofori, 2020). Understandably, when these structures perform their roles or functions properly, there is order in society and in fact, society inherently moves in the direction of order and stability. Consequently, from a structural-functionalist perspective, peace and socio-economic development are achieved where existing social structures perform their functions adequately, supported by the requisite culture, norms and values. In broadening the definition of peace, Galtung (1990) had earlier outlined two dimensions of peace. First is negative peace, that which is the absence of direct violence, war, fear in society; The second dimension is considered to be positive peace, which is the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships, justice, and inner peace of the individual. In sum, we can conceive peace to be the absence of fear, conflict, anxiety, exclusion, deprivation or suffering and violence. It is primarily concerned with creating and maintaining a just order in society. Galtung (1990) and Fayeye (2011). They are of the view that peace and indeed peace theory is intimately connected not only with conflict theory but equally with development theory. Therefore, peace research must be one that looks into the conditions past, present and future for the realization of peace which is intricately connected with conflict research and indeed development research. Violent conflicts, whether social, political, or environmental have seriously contributed to the crisis situation in loss of human and material resources. This theory, therefore, forms the bedrock of this paper since the structures of government seem to have failed in its responsibility of maintaining peace and security through its organs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarification

Insecurity

Insecurity means the absence of peace in a country and its continuous absence due to impacts of organized crime and terrorism (Omitola, 2014). The continuing impacts of organized crime and terrorism can lead to political instability and undermine the peaceful human co-existence of such a country as such development can result in state failure or collapse (McGregor, 2014). Thus, insecurity in a state is characterized by the failure of major institutions of the state especially the loss of ability to perform central state functions, such as guaranteeing security and order, welfare and the rule of law (Omitola, 2014). Leke and Ojo (2019) were of the opinion that security and insecurity of any nation are no longer considered as conditioned only upon geopolitics and military strength, but also on social, economic, environmental moral, and cultural issues. In this research, insecurity will be seen as a state of instability and continually of livelihood unpredictable living, feeling and safety in the society. The state of danger is considered as unfit, unsafe, and not conducive for a productive activity to take place or when there is the absence of peace, tranquility, or harmony.

Fulani herdsmen are popular for being cattle rearers which makes it essential for them to navigate their prized cows, from one location to another in search of food and water. As a result

of this regular search, it may lead to the invasion of other people's farms by the herdsmen. The Fulani Herdsmen crisis remains a major issue in Nigeria. So far, thousands have been killed and many more have been expelled from their homes, and the Nigerian government does not appear willing to initiate any forceful action against them. Rather, they are requesting pieces of land from states to provide the rampaging herdsmen with a permanent feeding ground. They are largely nomads who go through towns with their cattle. In Nigeria, the Fulani and the Hausa people dominate the northern states, with a population of well over 30 million. Notably, people of the Fulani tribe rarely ever use artificial birth control methods and, as a result of this, the tribe is very fertile, hence their vast population and their presence in almost every state across the country. Due to the peculiarity of the activities of the herdsmen, they move from one place to another in search of pasture. In this process, the herdsmen have reportedly encountered cattle rustlers and made complaints to the relevant authorities who fail to investigate the issue, hence their purported reason for carrying arms about. During their journey, they frequently trespass farmlands owned by locals in their host communities, destroying crops and valuables. Attempts by farmers to prevent them from causing havoc are met with stiff and violent resistance. Most times, the farmers are overpowered, injured and killed, while others are evicted from their homes. Sometimes, the herdsmen are accused of taking these opportunities to steal, rape, raze houses and kill innocent members of the communities they pass through (Akinkuolie, 2018). Before now, the herdsmen have been known to wreak havoc in certain communities in Nigeria, but now, the rate at which they commit these crimes has increased exponentially.

Adejumo (2021) posits that in a bid to address the security challenges rocking the South-west of Nigeria, the governors in the geopolitical zone on Saturday met with traditional rulers at the Oyo State Government House in Agodi, Ibadan. The major highlight of the meeting was to find lasting solutions to crop destruction, killings and kidnapping for ransom that have become the order of the day and the seeming helplessness of security operatives to tackle rising crimes being fueled by Fulani herdsmen. There are a lot of factors that propelled insecurity in the Southwest region of Nigeria

DRIVERS OF VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY

Among the principal causes and aggravating factors behind this escalating conflict are porous border, environmental factors, climatic changes (frequent droughts and desertification); population growth (loss of northern grazing lands to the expansion of human settlements); technological and economic changes (new livestock and farming practices); crime (rural banditry and cattle rustling); political and ethnic strife (intensified by the spread of illicit firearms); and cultural changes (the collapse of traditional conflict management mechanisms). A dysfunctional legal regime that allows crime to go unpunished has encouraged both farmers and pastoralists to take matters into their own hands.

Political Motive: The fact that farmer/Fulani clashes are politically motivated with ethnic conflation in Nigeria cannot be undermined. The comments of the Nigerian political class especially Emir of Kano, Sultan of Sokoto and the silence of Mr. President, Muhammad Buhari juxtaposed this fact. Burton (2016) argued that even Nigerian President Muhammad Buhari has been accused of giving the Fulani preferential treatment due to his Fula heritage, and legislation proposed by his party has been met with suspicion and outrage. This legislation, a series of attempts to provide grazing land for the Fulani herdsmen, has been rejected at least once already, though the government continues its attempts to resolve the conflict peacefully (Burton, 2016).

International Crisis Group (2017) and Beetseh (2018) argued that political motivation was soon noticed after assuming office in 2015, President Buhari directed the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to formulate a comprehensive livestock

development plan including measures to curb farmer-herder clashes. In August 2015, an FMARD committee recommended short-, medium- and long-term strategies, including the development of grazing reserves and stock routes. On 25 January 2016, the government announced it was presenting a plan to the Nigerian Governors Forum to map grazing areas in all states as a temporary solution for cattle owners until they could be persuaded to embrace ranching. Most central and southern states, however, opposed the plan, which they viewed as favoring Fulani herders. On 3 March 2016, seeking to mollify this opposition, Agriculture Minister AuduOgbeh announced the government was sending a bill to the National Assembly to prohibit cattle from roaming in cities and villages. He added that the government had ordered fast-growing grass from Brazil to produce “massive hectares of grasses”, which would be ready for consumption “within the next three months”. More than four years later, there has been no further word about the cattle banning bill and the promised grass. As of June 8, 2016, the Nigerian military was not being used to counteract the efforts of Fulani militants, and members of the government have expressed the improbable belief that local police forces have the resources to get the situation under control.

Therefore, the fact that the president gave a deaf ear to complaints and yearnings of the people of Southwest transmits that the group still enjoys continuing support from the presidency. Ochogwu (2021) maintained that Governor NyesomEzenwoWike of Rivers State, says, by politicizing insecurity, the All Progressives Congress (APC)-led Federal Government plunged the security troubled states into an unimaginable scale of banditry that may not end soon. Crime knows no boundary. It can be you tomorrow. If they have brought out zeal to fight crime, with seriousness, and collaboration irrespective of the party you belong to, a good result will be achieved. He further added: “Banditry will never end since they’ve politicized the issue of security. I told them don’t politicize issues of security. They’re paying the price. Whatever you sow, you will reap. If you sow peace you’ll reap peace, if you sow trouble, trouble will always be with you.” He expressed his anger on the federal government over the way security issues are being handled in the country.

Islamization/ Fulanization Agenda

Ochogwu (2021) in his new book titled ‘*Neither Bomb Nor Bullet*, (Lion Hudson)’, writes: ‘Nigeria is being described as the largest killing ground for Christians in the world today. First Boko Haram and now Fulani militants. The plan we see being executed is to wipe Christianity from the face of northern Nigeria.’ As lawlessness spreads, growing numbers of church members and pastors are being killed and kidnapped. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) says that in Kaduna state alone, more than 500 Christians have been abducted in the past four years. On August 29, Fulani herdsmen killed five Christians and destroyed homes in the district of Kiri. Two years ago, armed herdsmen attacked the same Christian district and set fire to churches. Since 2011, an estimated 11,000 people have been killed in a conflict featuring Fulani militia. The death toll is said to be six times higher than that caused by Boko Haram terrorists. The former president tasked Buhari to take the issue of insecurity seriously at all levels and address it at once “without favouritism or cuddling.”

“Both Boko Haram and herdsmen’s acts of violence were not treated as they should at the beginning. They have both incubated and developed beyond what Nigeria can handle alone. They are now combined and internationalised with ISIS in control. “Yet, we could have dealt with both earlier and nip them in the bud, but Boko Haram boys were seen as rascals not requiring serious attention in administering holistic measures of stick and carrot.

Border Porosity: Irrespective of our economic, cultural, and social aspects, a standard character of the Nigerian boundaries is porous (Burton, 2016). Nigeria has porous borders with Cameroon (1,690 kilometers) in the east, Niger (1,497 kilometers) in the north, Benin (773

kilometers) in the west, and Chad (87 kilometers) in the northeast (Onuoha, 2012, Leke&Ojo, 2019). The three critical immediate neighbors of Nigeria have a predominantly itinerant Fulani Islamic population that share common borders with Nigeria's eight states in the northern region, namely Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobe, Borno, Adamawa, Taraba and Gombe. The cross-border activities are defined in the certain push and pull variables (Onuoha, 2012). According to (Alli, 2011), the push factors consisting of the domestic conditions in Chad, Niger and Cameroun include the severe socio-economic dislocation that stalls sustainable development, perennial drought, famine, political instability, social and ethnic conflicts and near collapse of state control of resources and institutions, as well as the survival pressures on immediate and extended family members. The pull factors to Nigeria are critically socio-economic prospects, food security, religious and cultural affinity with Nigerians and political freedom. To Onuoha (2012) the Fulani herdsmen, moving with guns, causing violence, fighting with farmers are mostly not Nigerians. These are foreigners coming into Nigeria to cause a breach of the peace of the nation. They've all scattered across the country with their animals causing mayhem, especially in Southwest Nigeria. They are, therefore, terrorists and should be treated as such by the Nigerian security agencies. The porous borders are to blame for the infiltration of the extremists. Nigeria has international land borders of about 4,470 kilometres (2,513 miles) with Chad, Cameroon, Benin, and Niger, and a coastline of 774 kilometres (480 miles), which are largely unmanned

Environmental factors: The environmental factors range from desertification, bush burning, and increase in population. Mohammed (2018) observed that lake Chad that used to provide water and other resources to more than 30 million people in four countries including Nigeria in the early 1960s has shrunk by 90% from 25000 square kilometers to 2500 square kilometers, thus forcing those affected to move southward in search of resources for their flocks. Therefore, this migration resulted from the loss of grazing land to expanding settlements, and the migration to the southward is causing unholy violent competition over land within communities in Nigeria. To Mohammed, this and other reasons like desertification have altered the resources landscape, heightened competition for dwindling resources and raise the possibility of clashes between the hosting communities and herders (Mohammed, 2018).

International Crisis Group (2017, Beetseh, 2018) stated that Nigeria's far north is arid and semi-arid, with a long dry season from October to May and low rainfall (600 to 900 mm) from June to September. In 2008, the National Meteorological Agency reported that over the preceding 30 years the annual rainy season dropped from an average of 150 to 120 days. In the last six decades, over 350,000 sq km of the already arid region turned to desert or desert-like conditions, a phenomenon progressing southward at the rate of 0.6km per year. . These environmental changes have wrecked agriculture and human livelihoods, forcing millions of pastoralists and others to migrate south, in search of productive land. Again, Changing practices among both farmers and pastoralists have also strained relations. Over the last three decades, some cattle herders have gradually adopted sedentary lifestyles, leaving cattle herding increasingly to young men or boys, aged nine to 25 years, who often lack the civility and maturity to resolve disputes amicably.

Climate Change: One of the major factors that affecting pastoral farming in Nigeria is climate change, this results from a long dry season in a year. Describing the annual herding cycle and how climate change has affected herders in Nigeria, Iro (2017) stated that the herding season begins with the southward movement of the herds along rivers and stream valleys from October to December – marking the end of the rainy season and beginning of the dry season. January to February is the harmattan season that is characterized by longer grazing hours, herd splitting and more frequent visits to stable water sources. The months of March and April are usually the toughest for the herdsman and his cattle, as it is the hottest period in the grazing calendar. Indeed, he now herds his cattle only in the evenings and nights (Iro, 2017). Iro (2017) believed

that climate change coupled with the hot weather in the north caused the Fulani herdsmen to look for greener pastures southward.

It is therefore argued that Nigeria should stay away from the mathematical definitions of the words “Fulani herdsmen” (which mean that, Fulani are parts of and one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria) to more prohibitive accuracy of the nomadic educational system and migration which are the causes of this menace of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria. Iro (2017, Beetseh, 2018, Adejumo, 2021) has argued for nomadic education as a way to encourage people in doing the business of herdsmen without recon to the nomadic education as a panacea to the menace of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria. It is observed that Fulani with their cattle can wander from one particular location to the other for more than 30-50 years without reaching the major cities. The city life is even absent in their lives coupled with their wandering from age 0-30 or 50 without good and sound education. Their bush lives coupled with the long years of staying with the animals they rear in the bush tend to influence their animalistic behavior. As soldiers see their fellow citizens as bloody civilians because of the numbers of years they have lived in the asylum in the bush without seeing the city is the same way as Fulani herdsmen wandering up and down in the bush, an attempt by any human being to play smart or coming across them without any genuine movement is seen as wolves that wanted to attack their flocks, after all, they valued the lives of their cattle than theirs. More provocative in research is the ideal way Fulani herdsmen carrying a stick to monitor and direct their cattle in their migration from one bush to another or villages and towns, but the incidence has changed to Fulani herdsmen directing their cattle with AK 47 Pump Action Gun or better still Small Machine Gun, (Edieya&Zibiri, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2019). The situation also called for the challenge of the attention of the private individuals’ security that has no right to carry gun from one place to another or move with any dangerous weapon.

Christopher (2018) maintained that unauthorized encroachment into farmlands has led to serious conflicts between the farmers and herdsmen in recent times, because of the damage they cause to crops and fallow lands left to replenish the nutrients after long years of use. The herdsmen's cows often stray into the farmlands of the farmers without permission and destroy crop nurseries or full-grown crops, which they hope to harvest and sell shortly. This attitude, no doubt, provokes the farmers to go after their animals. Christopher (2018) further reveals that the shrinking of ecological space and resorts creates an atmosphere of eco-scarcity, which raises the stakes and puts a premium on the available resources. What usually results from this is fierce competition and a desperate struggle for subsistence. In this context, therefore, conflict not only becomes inevitable; it simply becomes a matter of survival.

Again, Fulani herdsmen use other people to buy land for them in their name while they lie to the natives that they are people buying the land for one business or the other. However, the owners of the land discover later that they have been tricked by the herdsmen when they see the land being used by herdsmen for cattle business, contrary to their will; this leads to conflicts.

Fulani Herdsmen and Challenges of Insecurity in Southwest Nigeria

Today, several other heinous crimes have been carried out by Fulani herdsmen in Southwest Nigeria which includes the following: In Ondo State, suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked the farm of a former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief OluFalae, at Ilado Village in Akure North Local Government area of Ondo State. The hoodlum burnt down five hectares of the oil palm farm; this attack preceded the attacks later carried out in his farm killing his security guards in the farm this was after the said man OluFalae was kidnapped by suspected Fulani Herdsmen in September 2015 and released after three days (Alabi, 2018). Fulani herdsmen on Saturday night Feb 13, 2021, attacked some farmers at Ijugbere in the Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State, killing three of them. Jan 22, 2021 Fulani herdsmen Friday attacked and stabbed a farmer into unconsciousness in Akure, the Ondo State capital, while he was working on his farm. As reported by Dayo Johnson of Vanguard Newspaper on

February 12, 2021, that suspected Fulani herdsmen have killed two persons during an attack on men of the Ondo state security outfit codenamed Amotekun at the Government forest reserve located at Ago Sanusi Ute Road in Owo, are of the state. Dayo posits that the Fulani herdsmen were armed with AK47, dressed like militiamen with live ammunition wrapped around their shoulders.

In Ogun State, suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked some communities in Ketu local council development area, they invaded farms and hewn down palm trees, vegetable plants, cassava and opened fires on the farmers that challenged them in their farms. The areas attacked in Ketu Local Council Development Area included Ikotun, Ologiri, Akeru, Ilukan, Ijege and Ajibode (Okogba, 2018). Similar experience of Fulani herdsmen attack recorded in Oyo State, Aanuoluwapo (2018) gathered that, farmers in Lagun, Iyana Offa, Offa Atagba, Lapata, and their surrounding communities in Lagelu Local Government Council Area of Ibadan were attacked by a group of Fulani armed men between 30-40 in number and injured a guard, raided farms and carted away valuables. One of the challenges of the menace of Fulani herdsmen is to name the group as the fourth deadliest known terrorist group in the world after Boko Haram, ISIS and Al-Shabab (Burton, 2016).

Oyo state, Chuka (2019) maintained that persistent indiscriminate attack of Fulani herdsmen was also witnessed by farmers in Lagun, Iyan Offa, Offa, Atagba, Lapata, and their surrounding communities in Lagelu Local Government Area of Ibadan, Oyo State. He posits that a group of Fulani's herdsmen armed men attacked these communities and killed 12 persons, carting away valuable properties and destroyed their farmland products. This has heightened the insecurity status of the region.

Ekiti state, Two farmers were killed in IsabaEkiti, in Ikole Local Government Area of Ekiti State on Friday by suspected herders. ON April 15, 2019, Governor KayodeFayemi condemned the murder of two persons which followed the invasion of farmlands by some Fulani herdsmen in IyemeroEkiti community, in Ikole Local Government Area of Ekiti. In Lagos Fulani, herdsmen kill eight people overgrazing and land rights. Fulani herdsmen armed with guns killed 16 people in an attack on a church congregation in Lagos state of Nigeria plagued by communal violence, police said, (VOANEWS, 2018). The bloody clashes were linked to grazing rights and dwindling fertile land, which have raised questions about the government's ability to maintain security in the country center of the economic hub.

The statistics of deaths recorded in 2014 in Nigeria is 1229 caused by Fulani herdsmen as comparable to 80 people killed in 2013 (Burton, 2016). However, the number has increased exponentially in the Southwest of Nigeria. This has not only dented the image of Nigerians but also foreclosed Nigeria as a terrorist zone that is not safe for investment and development.. Federal security and law enforcement agencies have established neither early-warning nor rapid response mechanisms; they have not arrested and prosecuted perpetrators of violence or offered redress to victims (International Crisis Group, 2017). Until recently, officials have paid little if any attention to improving livestock management practices to minimize friction with agrarian communities. State governments' responses overall have been short-sighted; most have failed to encourage community-level dialogue. As a result, both herders and farmers are taking matters into their own hands, further aggravating conflicts and insecurity.

Negative Effects of Fulani herdsmen on Southwest Nigeria

According to Okereke (2012) and Bello (2013), the conflicts in most parts of Nigeria especially the Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash are largely uncalled for. Farmers can no longer farm peacefully because of Fulani herdsmen. These Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash have pitched indigenes and Fulani herdsmen against each other. Recent studies conducted by Okereke (2012) and Kasarachi (2016) have shown that serious conflict erupts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers leading to loss of lives, valuable properties and destruction of the vast expanse of

arable agricultural farmlands thereby posing a serious threat to food security since farmers for fear of attack could no longer go to the farm and harvest their farm produce. The latest attacks by Fulani herdsmen are on the upsurge, with the most latest attacks in February 2018 and 2019 happening in Ondo State, Oyo State, Lagos State and few cases of attack in other states.

In recent times, the killings recorded by Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash has rampaged most communities displacing them of their farmlands and loss of their major source of livelihood. This is becoming unbearable with the Fulani herdsmen always having their ways leaving the farmers at their mercy. Herdsmen attribute the roots of the crisis to religious differences resulting in the killing of their cows while the farmers see the herdsmen as a threat to their crops and agricultural produce since the herdsmen allow their cows to feed on the farmer crops. This recent wave of violence in Nigeria as observed by Kasarachi (2016) has disrupted socio-economic, religious and educational activities, political instability and threatened the national unity in Nigeria. These extra judiciary killings have forced thousands of people to abandon their homes and farmlands for safety. Okereke (2012) asserts that this unfolding violence has become so alarming that there is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria is at a crossroad and gradually drifting to a conflict society. Equally begging for answers are the social issues of the rape of women, robbery and kidnapping with ultimate intent for ransom. The researcher observed that the menace of Fulani-Herdsmen appears to have dire implications for socio-economic development in the states attacked and Nigeria in general. In the states where the Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis is pervasive, the property destroyed and cases of rapes slog their economic and social opulence back by several steps. Besides the destroyed properties, socio-economic life in those states is usually grounded to a halt as people could not freely go about their farming and socio-economic activities for fear of being killed.

The overall implication for sustainable development is that farming, economic and social activities seem to be fast deteriorating. Also, a substantial part of the country's budget has been spent on the compensation of families who lost their relations to the Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis. Also, a huge amount of money is being spent on weapons and ammunition acquisition so as to equip the military to handle the situation on the ground. All these seem to have affected Nigeria's economy.

Institutional Response Deficiencies

Federal Government

The federal government has, over the years, explored various responses. In April 2014, then President Goodluck Jonathan's government inaugurated an inter-ministerial technical committee on grazing reserves, tasked with proposing strategies for ending the conflicts. Concurrently, the government set up a political Committee on Grazing Reserves, chaired by then Benue state Governor Gabriel Suswam. The report issued by Suswam's committee called for the recovery and improvement of all grazing routes encroached upon by farmers and recommended that the Central Bank of Nigeria release a total of N100 billion (\$317 million) to the country's 36 state governments for ranch construction.

The National Executive Council (NEC) approved these recommendations but Jonathan's defeat in the March 2015 elections interrupted their implementation. Although the central bank released N100 billion to state governments, they failed to construct any ranches. On 19 January 2017, the House of Representatives set up a committee to investigate accusations that the funds had been looted and report back within four weeks. The committee's findings remain unpublished to this day.

Soon after assuming office in 2015, President Buhari directed the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to formulate a comprehensive livestock

development plan including measures to curb farmer-herder clashes. In August 2015, a FMARD committee recommended short-, medium- and long-term strategies, including the development of grazing reserves and stock routes. On 25 January 2016, the government announced it was presenting a plan to the Nigerian Governors Forum to map grazing areas in all states as a temporary solution for cattle owners until they could be persuaded to embrace ranching. This was also vehemently opposed as it does not guarantee and secure people's rights and properties.

The federally-controlled Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) are thinly deployed in rural areas and often lack early-warning mechanisms. Even when community and civil society groups get involved, both herders and farmers say the response to distress calls is often late. Herders say they sometimes have to seek revenge because security forces take no action against attackers who kill them and steal their cattle. Farmers say the agencies' failure to respond promptly to distress calls and punish aggressors emboldens the herders.

The more typical response has been to deploy the police, and sometimes the army after clashes take place. In a few cases, police have arrested and prosecuted both herders and vigilantes bearing firearms. More often, the country's dysfunctional law enforcement and the criminal justice system fail to arrest or prosecute any perpetrators. Moreover, authorities have generally treated these crimes as political rather than criminal acts, arguing that sanctioning suspects could spark further violence. Even if commissions of inquiry are established, they typically are used as instruments to temper tensions rather than pursue justice. These responses, however well-meaning, create a climate of impunity.

National Assembly

The federal parliament also has failed to respond effectively. In 2011, Niger state Senator Zainab Kure sponsored a bill to create a National Grazing Reserves Commission and establish national grazing reserves and livestock routes, but it was not passed and eventually expired when the Seventh Senate lapsed in May 2015. From 2015 to 2016, three new bills were introduced to create grazing reserves, livestock routes and ranches across the country. After much wrangling, all three were dropped in November 2016 on the grounds that land use was exclusively a state government prerogative.

State Governments

In the absence of clear federal guidance, state government responses vary. Several have established state and local peace commissions or committees to promote herder-farmer dialogue and resolve conflicts. Others, like Ekiti state in the southwest and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja in the centre, have passed laws regulating grazing activities. In Benue and Taraba states, governments have introduced laws banning all open grazing. In Edo state, the government said it would create fenced grazing areas with watering facilities, requiring herdsmen to feed their cattle there and pay for the service. Herders, who consider these regulations restrictive, often fail to comply. In the Federal Capital Territory, herders still roam their cattle widely; in Taraba state, the cattle breeders' association has rejected the grazing ban law, vowing a legal challenge.

Some local reactions have been more forceful. In Borno, Niger and Plateau states, authorities occasionally have expelled herder groups from specific areas, following local protests. In May 2016, the governor of Abia state, Okezie Ikpeazu, revived a local vigilante outfit popularly known as the Bakassi Boys. He directed all community chiefs to nominate ten youths for a two-week intensive training with "reformed" Bakassi vigilantes before deployment to rural communities. Two months later, the Cross River state government announced plans to set up a 3,000-member "Homeland Security Service". Local officials said the members would not carry firearms, but carry out activities such as providing intelligence on herders' movements and

activities. These measures may have reduced clashes in some areas, but elsewhere; they have made the situation worse. The expulsion of herder groups has only deepened their resentment. If community-based vigilante groups attack herders in the south, herders might take revenge against southerners residing in the north, thereby further widening the conflict.

THE PENDING CATASTROPHE

The unlawful activity of Fulani herdsmen and government inability to adequately tackle insecurity challenges has spur many ethnic groups to clamor for independence or disintegration of the country. AsariDokubo on March 14, 2021 declares for Biafra Republic due to Federal Government insensitivity towards amongst other the illegal killings of Fulani herder in the country. ‘We as people have resolved that as Biafra, it’s time for us to take our destiny in our hands and bring freedom to ourselves and our children and the generation of Biafra’s yet unborn.’ (The Cable News, 2021).

On the other hand, PANDEF, a socio-cultural organization made up of Ijaw, Ibibio, Itsekiri, Urhobo, Isoko, Ikwerre, Ogoni, Efik, Binis, etc that occupies the Niger Delta region of Nigeria in its 16 Point Agenda had asked the federal government to develop its region, amendment of the constitution in line towards physical federalism or, faced declaration of Niger Delta Republic. (Daily Trust, August 2017). The Odua People’s Congress also declared its Republic following federal government failure to address Nigeria’s insecurity challenges by Sunday Igboho who said, ‘we don’t want Nigeria again as a nation, we want the Yoruba nation, (Vanguard, March, 17, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Fulani herdsmen activities had generated insecurity in the Southwest so much that utmost attention is needed to engender peace and socio-economic development. This unwholesome crime was facilitated by political motive, climate change, environmental factors and border porosity. In Southwest Nigeria; Oyo, Ekiti, Ondo, Osun, Ogun and Lagos state respectively, Fulani herdsmen's insecurity has hindered its economic activities, led to the loss of lives and wanton destruction of properties. The government at all levels had been blamed for its proactive measures to carry out its constitutional responsibilities. This is may further give rise to more problems in the country as different ethnicities are already asking and declaring an independent republic.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made;

1. Government should ensure that all Fulani herdsmen who illegally acquired arms and ammunition are being arrested and prosecuted according to the laws of the land. Government should also strengthen police capacity to curb rustling and banditry.
2. In the Interim, Vigilante and Local security groups should be equipped with a view to combating incessant Fulani Herdsmen. However, in the long run, community policing should be introduced so that states and local authorities can be accountable to the people.
3. The federal government should run an all-inclusive government where the principle of federal character is upheld.
4. There should be legislation that enhances compulsory registration of both internal and external migrants in any place of doing business/ visit.

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