

Political and Religious Implications of Herdsmen and Farmers Crises in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the Religious and Political implications of Herdsmen and Farmers crisis in Nigeria. The methodology adopted is documentary survey and analysis done qualitatively, the major findings of the causes of crisis is as a result of destructions of farmers crops, cattle rustling, demographic / climate change, large acquisition of land by the capitalist, impunity and nepotism, and monetization of land to herdsmen by the Traditional rulers among others. The research reveals also the religious and political implications of the crisis in the country which if properly not handle can generate to ethno- religious crisis and subsequently another civil war. Its recommended that security agencies should not be politicize by the power that be, but they should be independent to protect lives and property irrespective of tribes or religions in a multinational country like Nigeria.

Keywords: Politics, Religion, Herdsmen and Farmer

INTRODUCTION

Pastoralist – farmer’s conflicts in Nigeria have grown spread and intensified over the past decade and today poses a threat to national survival. Thousands of people have been killed, communities have been destroyed and so many farmers and pastoralist have been killed, communities have been destroyed and property in an orgy of killings and destruction that is not only destroying livelihood but also affecting national cohesion (Premium time, January 12, 2018).The coming of the Forth Republic in Nigeria where new political parties were formed and elections conducted at various levels of government i.e. Locals, States, and Federal in 1999 having witnessed bitterness during the long regimes of various Military Heads of State makes a lots of Nigerians believed that democracy have come to stay with joy and happiness. Not knowing that the game religious and politics came to play in Nigeria till date, series of crises ranging from ethno – religious, political, militancy, Boko Haram, Niger Delta Avengers and the most dishearten one that is occurring between herdsmen and farmers across the country are all posing security challenges for the growth and development of Nigeria. All

these have religious and political implications as may be discussed below. Other subsequent areas of this paper include classification of the concepts, causes of herdsmen and farmers crises and recommendations.

CONCEPTUAL EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS

Politics

Etymologically, the word politics comes from the Greek word politikos, meaning, “of for, or relating to citizens,” affairs of the cities”, a dissertation on governing and governments, which was rendered in English in the mid – 15th century as Latinized” polettiques”. Thus, it became “politics” in English (Jennings, 1990). Politics according to Losco (2010, p.3) is the practice and theory of influencing other people on a civic or individual level. More narrowly, it refers to achieving and exercising positions of governance – organized control over human community, particularly a state. Also, Brainy (2013) defines politics as :

The science of government; that part of ethics which has to do with regulation an government of a nation or state, the preservation of its safety, peace and prosperity, the defense of its

existence and rights against foreign control or conquest, the augmentation of its strength and resources, and the protection of its citizens in their rights, with the preservation and improvement of morals (p.1)

Onyekpe (1998) on the other hand defines the term politics as ; “The struggle for power which itself is the authority to determine or formulate and execute decisions and politics, which must be accepted by the society... it is the struggle for power of governance; especially authority”(Onyekpe, p.16). The aim of politics is to discover first, what mode of life man’s happiness consists. Then, by what form of government and what social institutions that mode of life can be secured (Yamsat, 2001). Another definition of politics is the one by Harold Laswell, according to him politics is defined as “who gets what, when and how (in Egwemi 2011, p.52).

According to Ngbea (2017,p.18) the word politics is understood today as a science and art of canvassing for votes from electorates into positions of power in a given nation. It is the science and art of how to govern them. It is the art of directing a people in the path of order, peace and justice in a way that will better their lot. In short, politics statecraft or statesmanship, the ability, skill, vision, and wisdom of managing public or government affairs.

Religion

The term religion comes from a Latin word religio, the ultimate origins of which are obscure. One possibility is derivation from reduplicated Religare – meaning, being bound or meaning, “gather together,” an interpretation traced to Cicero connecting Lego “read” (Bill,1990). The major role of religion, therefore, is to bind or bring together people in harmony irrespective of tribe or other differences. The term is used today is more from the word relegere (read again) i.e. turning to something again and again or to consider it more carefully (Spiro, 1966 cited in Ngbea, 2017). Religion is that which grows out of, and gives expression to experience of the holy in its various aspects (Otto 1958, cited in Ngbea, 2017). Durkheim (1969) a sociologist cited in Ngbea (2017, p.19) defined religion as “A system of beliefs and practices, which cluster around the sacred and unite the followers into a single community”. Idowu (1973,p.9) defines religion as “The means by which God as spirit communicates with man’s essential self”. Dewey’s a psychologist defined religion as

quoted by Livingstone (2011, p.7) as “Any activity pursued on behalf of an idea end against obstacles and in spite of threats of personal loss because of its general and enduring value”. Connelly (2013) attempts a definition that takes certain factors into account. According to Connelly, Religion originates in an attempt to present and order beliefs, feeling, imaginings and actions that arise in response to direct experience of the sacred and the spiritual. As this attempt expands in its formulation and elaboration, it becomes a process that creates meaning for itself on a sustaining basis, in terms of both its originating experiences and its own continuing responses. Okwuese (2003, p.3) defined religion as “A regulated pattern of life of a people in which experience, beliefs and knowledge are reflected in man’s conception of himself in relation to others, his social world, the physical as well as the metaphysical world.”

Ekwunife (1992,p.3) in his own definition stated that “Religion is man’s awareness and recognition of his dependent relationship on a transcendent being.”

Herdsmen

Fulani herdsmen or Fulani pastoralist according to Wikipedia (2018) are nomadic or semi nomadic Fulani herders whose primary occupation is raising livestock. The pure Fulani pastoralist engages in random movement of cattle while the semi- nomadic makes transhumance migration and return to their camps or homes. Herdsmen according to (Abdulbarkindo and Alupsen, 2017 p.8) can be “perceived as people who are simply inconstant search for greener pastures for feeding their herds”.

Farmer

An individual whose primary job function involves livestock and / or agriculture. A farmer takes all the necessary steps to ensure that he/she raises and then sells the items to purchasers (Business Dictionary.com 2018)

CAUSES OF HERDSMEN AND FARMERS CRISIS IN NIGERIA

Traditional Institution Factor

The causes of Farmers and Herdsmen crisis in Nigeria and particularly in Benue state according to Jibo (2014) is the allegation that some traditional rulers often collect money from Fulani pastoralists with the intention of allowing grazing activities within their domain. These arrangement are often unacceptable to the

common farmers. The late Tor Tiv Alfred Akawe Torkula in his reacting on the killing of the Tiv farmers by herdsmen why speaking at Anyin, where he attended the Funeral of the Late Pa Undzuul Anyin (his maternal uncle) the Tor Tiv thus stated:

He regretted the heavy loss of lives and properties as a result of Fulani attacks and Warm (sic) those particularly the chiefs who monetize certain portion of land with Fulani without the knowledge of the public to desist in doing so (Jibo 2014p, 201)

The above view indicate clearly that the crisis between herdsmen and farmers crisis is attributed to the economic benefit of selling land to Fulani for grazing by the traditional rulers without involving their subjects. This development resulted to rejection by the local communities there by creating problems.

Demography / Climate Change

Increase in the population of people across the country with little land left for farming and grazing of animals by both herdsmen and farmers is causing crisis. The then Governor of Benue state Suswan stated categorically as quoted in Jibo (2014, p.204) that:

the Fulani invasion have, Challenges that are very worrisome to all of us. Let me hasten to say that the Fulani invasion is not just peculiar to Benue. This invasion has assumed a national dimension and the government itself if (sic) very worried. I have made several reports of this to higher authorities for us to take action. You will recall that the Sultan has visited here up to three times on my invitation for us to address this issue together being himself head of the Fulani and the head of the Muslims in this country. He did very well. He was able to address this and put some people who up till now we interact with to address the problem of the invasion. But the problem has different dimension.

One is the fact that there is continues encroachment of the desert moving down. If you go beyond Plateau as you move even to Nasarawa State, you can notice desertification coming in. That reduces the availability of grasses for the animals and for a Fulani man he must necessarily feed the animal that now encroaches on farmers because the population has increased over the years. For instance in the 70s and 80s, the population that we now have was non – existence; so there was large availability of land for grazing. Now we are

officially one hundred and sixty something unofficially we're over two hundred millions. Families that you only had maybe ten people now you have about fifty people in those families so the land available for farming and grazing has reduced and so we necessarily need to do something to avoid conflict otherwise this conflict will continued. And it has assumed a very dangerous dimension where the Fulani would hire mercenaries to come and wipe out a whole village as we witnessed lately in four of our local governments, the latest being the one in Agatu which are still grappling with till date (Jibo, 2014).

The increase in pressure resulting from resource degradation and scarcity is aggravating the situation of competition between farmers and pastoralists. In the areas where the two production systems interact, both communities are increasingly considering the option of expansion to each other's holding. As a result, conflicts are getting recurrent and intensified in many parts of the country (Adelakun, Adurogbangba and Akinbile, 2015).

Okoli and Atelhe (2014) relate the causes of conflict to the global climate change and the contenting desertification and aridity that reduced arable and grazing lands, forcing pastoralist to move southwards in search of pasture for their livestock.

Cattle Rustling

Were known to have caused farmer – herder conflict. In every community, there are miscreants. Some of these have been caught stealing bulls and cows by the nomadic herders. These killings often enraged the host communities.

Land Acquisition by Capitalist Farmers

Also exacerbates the upsurge of conflict as pastoralist can no longer find where to pass even to talk of where to stay (Abbass, 2012 cited in Muhammed, Ismaila and Bibi, 2015; Adisa and Adekunle, 2010)

Contamination of Stream

Is regarded as the source of conflict. The stream is the source of domestic water supply for most rural farming communities. The host community members believe that contamination of the stream leads to outbreak of cholera, typhoid fever and liver fluke. The nomadic herdsmen also allow their cattle to graze on fallow land continuously and over grazing emanates there from. This cause erosion on the plot of land

thereby making it infertile and difficult to cultivate by farmers.

Rape

Is a major cause of conflict which is a taboo to every society in the world and in particular in Africa. It is not taken lightly. The nomads who are singles, in a bid to satisfy their thirst for females fall into such temptations.

Destruction of Crops

There are also issues of nomads entering with their cattle in the farms of farmers and causing havoc to farm products like yam, rice etc. This usually results to conflicts between them. Indiscriminate bush burning also causes conflict among herdsmen and farmers because unharvested products of farmers are usually burnt to ashes (Ofuoku and Isife 2009; Bello 2013; Adelakun, Adurogbang and Akinbile, 2015).

Indigenization

Okeke (2014) in his study attributed the indigenization claim of ownership of a place as a source of conflicts between herdsmen and farmers. He stated an example of conflict between the city – dwelling Hausa and Berom in Plateau state. According to him in the last few years the conflict spread to the rural areas and Fulani became the major enemies of the Berom. The conflict has become bloodier since 2001 to date. The same thing is attributed to Benue and Nasarawa States among others up till date with series of killings of human beings and wanton destruction of farm products and buildings.

Aluaigba (2008) views the Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen invasion of Benue State from the perspective of citizenship ideology. In recent times, questions have been raised in public discourses on the subject of citizenship in Nigeria. In particular, the issue of discrimination against Nigerians who live in places where they were not born or where their forefathers were not born has been perceived as a major cause of conflict. Consequently, the arrival of the Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen into Benue is perceived as reviving this old and unsettled rivalry between the indigene and the settler over socio-economic and environmental resources. The Nigerian Republic, like other African nations, has been blamed for its inability to accommodate the various ethnic groups that exist in the country. Nigeria's post-colonial policies have instead caused further division, adding to the serious quarrels between its varied

groups and leading to yet more violent conflict (Abdulbarkindo and Alupsen, 2017). The law governing indigenization needs to be revisited by both the upper and lower chambers of the house to resolve friction and tension over indigenes and settlers at both the Federal and States government level in order to avoid crisis in Nigeria.

Porosity of Nigerian borders

The porosity of Nigerian borders is the cause of herdsmen and farmers crisis among other insecurity problems in Nigeria, many herdsmen that found their way in the country are discovered to be from Mali, Chad and Niger etc. who hardly speak English nor Hausa as a spoken language that are causing trouble in the country. The former Inspector General of Police, Solomon Arase also said that: "most of the herdsmen are not Nigerians. They are people from Mali and Chad who come into our system, that is why we have to be very careful, our borders are porous" (Abdulbarkindo and Alupsen 2017, and Ngbea and Ngbea, 2016). Nigerian borders need to be tightened in order to avoid influx of foreigners in the country.

Impunity and Nepotism

Impunity and nepotism in Nigeria by the government of the day based on the statement credited by the Inspector General of Police Idris, when he was sent to Benue State by Nigerian President Buhari to investigate the killing of over 70 people in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of the state on the 1st January, 2018 by suspected herdsmen. According to his interpretation, the crisis was a mere communal crisis – this did not go down well in a country with multiple religions and tribes. The public relation officer of the police Mr. Jimoh also threw discourteous words to the Governor of Benue State, Samuel Ortom when he called him a drowning man during his interview on Channels Television, he said in an apparent reference to the governor calling for the immediate resignation or sack of the IGP (Channels Television's Sunrise Daily news at 10:00pm, 6th Feb; 2018 and Ahmed-Gamgum, 2018)

Abdulbarkindo and Alupsen (2017) in their research reports in Benue State says, while questions still remain unanswered about the types of sophisticated weapons used in Benue, the nature of the attacks and the atrocities committed have raised very serious concerns. The Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen deploy fear

as a tactic and thus ensure that victims are traumatized in such a way that they do not wish to return to their homeland after fleeing. This was confirmed by interviews carried out among victims living in refugee camps in Gwer-West, Guma, Tarka, Ukum, Agatu and Logo. According to a community leader in Guma, the nature of the atrocities are chilling and Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen conduct them with arrogance and impunity.

On 23 October 2017, the National President and Secretary of the Fulani socio-cultural association “Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore” called a press conference in Abuja, insisting that the convergence of herdsmen in the Benue valley between November and February every year is historical and inevitable. They claimed that the Anti-Open Grazing Law signed by Benue State Governor in May 2017 (and due to be implemented in November 2017) was therefore denying the herdsmen their legitimate rights as Nigerians. The association called on President Muhammad Buhari to stop the law, otherwise the herdsmen would have to defend their rights and their lifestyle. The uncertainty following this press conference has raised security concerns among local communities in Benue State. The current atmosphere suggests that the indications of ethnic cleansing based on religious affiliation are likely to become increasingly evident through further attacks targeting Christian communities (Abdulbarkindo and Alupsen, 2017).

The inaction of the Nigerian government towards Hausa-Fulani Muslim violence has allowed the culture of impunity to grow. In the absence of government security, some local communities decide to defend themselves against Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen attacks. Critics have blamed the government for using double standards. The government arrests, imprisons and prosecutes members of the indigenous people of Biafra. The government has deployed military forces against the Niger Delta Avengers. Yet, the government has refused to arrest or prosecute Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen. Instead, there appears to be a policy-framework underway to establish grazing fields for the herdsmen. The Minister of State for Agriculture and Rural Development, Heineken Lokpobiri, reaffirmed the government’s plans to establish cattle ranches as a lasting solution to prevent the frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria. He spoke during a one-day public hearing organized by the Senate Committees on

Agriculture, and National Security and Intelligence (Abdulbarkindo and Alupsen, 2017).Based on the above statement made by Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore (National President and Secretary of the Fulani Socio –Cultural Association), on the 1st of January, 2018 over 70 Tiv people including women and children were killed in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas of Benue State by suspected herdsmen and the NPSFSCA secretary has not been arrested for try and persecution by any of the security agencies in the country.All these resulted to a call to defend yourselves against the invasion of Fulani herdsmen that is not only in Benue, but other states like Kaduna, Zamfara and Taraba among others at the organized maiden Taraba State University convocation on 24th of March, 2018 by T.Y Danjuma and some other stakeholders like the Emir of Birnin Gwari Axis of Kaduna Malam Zubairu Jibril Mail Gwari II in the country, which received an ill feeling by the government.

RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF HERDSMEN AND FARMERS CRISIS: AN ANALYSIS

Series of crises in Nigeria have been attributing to ethno – religious and politics since the coming back of the Nigeria government that was under the military rule for over the past 10 years and the most disheartening one been the Herdsmen and Farmers crisis that cut across the six geopolitical zones of the country. This paper will take a look at the religious and political implications of herdsmen and farmers crisis in the country below.

Political Implications

In a bid to be seen at work, its seen the Federal Government is rejecting the concept of ranching to introduce the concept of cattle colony. Whatever it means the same Nigerians who are not Fulani are not comfortable with the concept. And it is perceived as an insult (Nwachukwu 14 Jan.2018; Vanguard 14 Jan 2018; Udeanjah 13 January, 2018 cited in Ahmed-Gamgum, 2018). Never the less the Federal Government has said about 16 states have offered land to enable Fulani herdsmen exercise both economic and political control over the people of the area similar to the formation of the Caliphate and Emirate, hence the rejection of the concept of cattle colony by Nigerians that have suffered from the attacks of migrating Fulani herdsmen (Ahmed – Gamgum, 2018). Politically also, the increasing number of attacks has made most

Nigerians affected by the negative effect of attacks from herdsmen to believed that the president of Nigeria Buhari is mainly interested in supporting the Fulani to continue launching attacks on non-Fulani communities. And this Buhari's interest made informed Nigerians to see him as a betrayed of democracy. In the words of Professor Hagher (5th January, 2017) to Buhari, "You betrayed Nigeria's democracy and promoted genocide". And when Fulani attack they tell the world that it is the local communities that have attacked the Fulani. After the attacks, the attackers based on existing fear and eye service of Oga's (Boss) interest even where there is no express order from oga's (Boss) pre-arranged agreement reach at the lower level which required the security agents to arrest only members of local communities being responsible for attacks. This was the cause of Benue State in Guma and Logo Local Government Area explained. However, another theory was presented to exonerate the Fulani when arrests were made those arrested did not include Fulani attackers, who may have withdrawn from the areas immediately after causing mayhem, usually in state backed pogrom attackers are given the chance to destroy and kill before police arrives. And when police arrives they would only find local youths. It was therefore very easy and not surprising to note that another theory emerged from the police in Nigeria statement credited to the Nigerian Inspector General of Police, Ibrahim Idris claimed that the massacre in Benue was as a result of communal clash between the Tiv (Tori, 2018 cited in Ahmed- Gamgum, 2018). Several pressure groups protested for example Global Peace and Life Initiative (GOPRI) who rightly debunked the IGP boss statement made publicly and apologies demanded who the considered his words as "irresponsible" unprofessional" and misleading". It was then the President directed the IGP to relocate to Benue. The point of emphasis is that the expectation of people is whether it was intra or inter-communal clashes to have prevented the clashes taking place by apprehending the attackers so that the attacks never took place (Ahmed-Gamgum, 2018). According to Ahmed – Gamgum, since the rate of attacks is increasing, and taking place almost that same period in targeted states of Benue, Tararba, Adamawa and Kaduna, the political image of Buhari as a person and All Progressive Congress (APC) party is decreasing. The current herdsmen attack is assumed to be an extension of Bokoharam

and another political weapon either to bring down Buhari and enthrone another Presidential candidates or to win support for Buhari. They often tell themselves that non Fulani are attacking Fulani or non Muslem as such Hausa – Fulani president should still emerge candidates in 2019 (Ahmed – Gamgum, 2018).

Another political issue was raised immediately after suspected herdsmen killed over 70 people in Benue on the 1st of January, 2018 by the Governor Samuel Ortom that the attackers were hiding at Tunga in Awe Local Government Area of Nasarawa state, who normally come and killed people (Channel news at 10:pm; 10-1-18). Governor Samuel Ortom also reiterated this point when he declared the 8th February, 2018 that the Inspector General of Police, Ibrahim Idris is a "bad influence on President Mohammadu Buhari , having turned himself to be the mouth piece and defender of herdsmen. Ortom made the remark while receiving his counterpart from Ekiti State, Gov. Ayodele Fayose in Makurdi during condolence visit to the state"(Power Steering, p.19). The question one may ask is that, is the Hausa – Fulani the only tribe in the North or the entire country, if there are not why are people campaigning for Mr. President when campaigns have not begun. Benue State, a north central state that voted for Buhari has been on series of attack from herdsmen, the question one may pose is that, would the Benue indigenes vote for Buhari again?. The question that will be answer during 2019 electioneering.

Another political issue made by the president that draw attention of Nigerians were criticized in Medias most especially on the government's appointments in the security sector, were mostly made up of Muslims from northern Nigeria. It worth observing that President Mohammadu Buhari is seen by many in this part of the country as one who has masterfully configured the entire architecture of national security in the hands of the northern Hausa-Fulani Muslims. According to a senior advocate of Nigeria, 88% of the federal appointments into very significant security and national administration posts have been for northern Hausa-Fulani Muslims, with only one coming from the southwest, who is also a Muslim, but making up the remaining 12%. Appointed northern Hausa-Fulani Muslims include:

The Inspector General of Police – Ibrahim Idris (Niger state)

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Chief of Army Staff - Gen. Tukur Buratai (Borno state)

Chief of Air Staff - Air Marshal Abubakar Sadique (Bauchi)

Minister of Defense - Mansur Dan Ali (Zamfara state)

Minister of Interior Affairs – Abdulrahaman Dambazzau (Kano)

National Security Adviser (NSA) - Mouhammed Monguno (Borno state)

Director General, Department of State Services (DSS) – Yusuf Magaji Bichi (Kano state)

Commandant General, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp (NSCDC)- Abdullahi Muhammed (Niger state)

Chief of Defence Intelligence Agency - Muhammed Usman (Kano state)

Director General of NIA - Rufai Abubakar (Katsina state).

Chief of Staff

Aide de Camp to President

Chief Security Officer to President

Principal Secretary

Private Secretary to President

Protocol to President

Comptroller of General Customs – Hameed Ali (Bauchi state)

Director General of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)- Ibrahim Magu (Borno state)

Comptroller General, Nigeria Prisons – Ja’afaru Ahmed (Kebbi state)

Comptroller General, Immigration – Muhammed Babandede (Jigawa state)

Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) - Prof. Mahmood Yakubu (Bauchi state)

Minister for Petroleum

Minister for Federal Capital Territory (FCT)- Muhammad M, Bello (Adamawa state)

Many ethnic nationalities are not happy with these lopsided appointments that seem to favor the Hausa-Fulani Muslims. Due to this dissatisfaction, the Ibo and Christian human rights group “Kingdom Human Rights Foundation” (KHRF), took President

Muhammadu Buhari and the National Assembly to the Federal High Court in Abuja in March 2016 alledging “lopsidedness” in the appointments of military, police, customs, immigration, prison and civil defence chiefs in the executive arm of the federal government. In suit No. FCH/ABJ/CS/737/2015, the group claimed that the present composition and appointments intentionally excluded the Ibo of southeastern Nigeria and therefore did not comply with the federal character of Nigeria laid out in the constitution (Abdulbarkindo and Alupsen, 2017; Power Sterling, 2018 p.15 , Utsaha on net world news interview 11-1-2018 and Punch Newspapers 13-9-2018).The above appointments by the President is not good for a country with multi- religious and ethnicity, the appointment should have reflected the Federal Character Principle for justice, equity and fairness as enshrine in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Since issues of security are very sensitive there should have involved all the six geopolitical zones in all appointments.

Religious Implications

As noted in the World Watch Research report on Nasarawa State, the ideology of herdsmen is linked to the Hausa-Fulani Muslim invasion of Benue which is based on the understanding that “*Komai na Allah ne. Ko wane fili na Allah ne, ba naku ba, ba na kafirai ba, na Allah ne*” (Translation: Everything belongs to Allah. Every piece of land belongs to Allah and not you; it is not for you infidels but for Allah). Thus, with climate change, competition over limited resources and environmental threat to the ways of life of the herdsmen, the use of terror and its religious justification has been intensified, particularly in Benue. Herdsmen use terror tactics to conduct jihad, displacing local communities from their land to make room for their herds, to occupy those lands and to spread Islam. The phrase “everything belongs to Allah” reflects the Muslim understanding of God. The Muslim God is seen as being the one true God, with no equal. Therefore, the sovereignty of Allah is the foundation for all Islamic socio-political and economic systems, and society must be governed in accordance with the Quran and the *Sunna* of the Prophet (Ahmed – Gamgum, 2018).These herdsmen use sophisticated weapons and ammunition. In Nigeria, there is a resurgence of violent conflict and Islamic *jihad* perpetrated by Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen in majority parts of the Middle Belt region, particularly Kaduna,

Plateau, Taraba, Benue and Nasarawa States. Attempts to claim that these herdsmen have nothing to do with Islam or Islamic *jihad* is incorrect and a failed narrative that is likely to derail any coherent government policy. Another phase has been the resurgence of the Islamic infiltration, invasion and occupation of local communities, farmlands and territories belonging to Christians in central and southern Nigeria. Thousands of churches have been destroyed and thousands of Christians have been killed, displaced or injured. Like conventional terrorist organizations, Islamic radical sects and jihadi groups, the ideology of the Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen goes beyond the mere feeding of sheep and the search for greener pastures (Ahmed – Gamgum, 2018). According to Ahmed –Gamgum a Muslim survivor of the February 2016 Agatu attacks interviewed in Makurdi, confirmed how he was set free by the Fulani because he recited the *Shahadah* and the *Fatiha* (Islamic article of faith and the first verse of the Quran) in fact, there are indeed parallels between the Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen and Boko Haram. Like Boko Haram, the Fulani are Muslim and their victims are overwhelmingly Christians and non-Muslims. They cry “Allahu Akbar” (God is great) during their attacks, and they leave horrendous atrocities in their wake (Ahmed – Gamgum, 2018).

Ngbea (2017) also says that, the Fulani herdsmen, nomadic cattle grazers have been named one of the deadliest terror groups in the world comparable to Boko Haram, ISIS, the Taliban and Al-Shabab. They brutally killed natives of invaded farming communities including women and Children. Church leaders in Nigeria have come up to say that attacks on Christians communities by herdsmen constitutes a war by Islam to eliminate Christianity in Nigeria. In recently attacked in Benue state dated on 1st January, 2018 most especially in Guma and Logo Local Governments over 70 people were killed (Channel headline news 10-1-18). In 2014 as reported by (Abdulbarkindo and Alupsen, 2017), the Tiv Christian in Guma, Gwer, Gwer – West and Makurdi and other town on the border with Taraba State recorded approximately 458 deaths and attacks on over 350 communities with their inhabitants now living in refugee camps, a situation that is still on till date. The sporadic killing of Tiv farmers and destruction of their property in Taraba, Benue and Nasarawa states by the Fulani herdsmen continue till date with impunity, Tiv

settlements in Awe, Keana and Doma local government area of Southern Senatorial zone Nasarawa state that the population of Christian is over warmly growing according to an informant have been on series of attacks by suspected Fulani herdsmen. Scholars of religious and politics are of the opinion that the attempt is to weaken the Christian gospel and Islamize them at all course and to take over their land so as to control them politically. Nleewen and Okoli (2017) are of the views that the degeneration of farmer – herder strife in Nasarawa state has been marked by immense arms bearing and confrontation. Sometimes weapons such as AK – 47 and automatic rifles are been used by feuding parties.

The Southern Kaduna in Kaduna state that is dominated by Christians have also been under series of attacked by herdsmen, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) on the 8th of January, 2017 declared a national day of mourning over Southern Kaduna killing by herdsmen lamented that:

Though the church in Nigeria since 2009 has been subjected to a systematic genocide And persecution through the instrumentality of Islamic Fundamentalists, Boko Haram Leading to the killing of thousands of Christian and destruction of hundreds of churches And over 50, 000 houses, but the current unprecedented onslaught against Christian in Southern Kaduna by the Islamic Fundamentalist disguising as the Fulani herdsmen under The watch of Kaduna State Government, Mallam Nasir El- Rufai and President Buhari Has reached an alarming stage (JaluPon, 2017, p.1).

In a press conference by the Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan in reaction to killing in Southern Kaduna, the Diocese in its statement pointed to the fact that southern Kaduna had become victims of systematic attacks by Fulani herdsmen who were hell bent on pursuing an agenda that was aimed at subjugating the Southern Kaduna people and weakening the Gospel. The Diocese alleged that, it was a hidden agenda targeted at the Christian majority of Southern Kaduna and the Jihad was well funded, planned and executed (Ngbea 2017, p.177). According to Femi –Kayode cited in Power Steering (2018,p.39) in 2016 President Buhari spokesman at the Presidency, Mr. Femi Adesina, told the Nigeria people that Buhari would not comment on the cold – blooded butchering and murdering of no less than 808 Christians in Southern Kaduna on Christmas eve

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by Fulani terrorists because the Presidency “regarded the matter as a state –affair. On the 24th of April, 2018 suspected herdsmen stormed St. Ignatius Catholic Church worshipers in Ukpor-Mbalom Gwer- East LGA of Benue State and killed two Catholic priests and 17 others

(Vanguard, 25 -4- 18). Below is the estimated number of Christians killed and injured in Local Government Area (LGAs) under consideration in Benue State, Nigeria as an example (2014 – 2016) in table (1)

LGA	NO. of Christians killed	No. of Christians injured
Agatu	967	1051
Gwer – East	15	21
Makurdi	494	248
Guma	1426	606
Tarka	52	16
Buruku	25	0
Katsina – Ala	91	0
Logo	204	721
Ukum	42	24
Kwande	72	6
Obi	34	0
Total for all LGAs above	4194	2957

Source: ACSAN field work and data collected from Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BSEMA) and Young Professional Association in Makurdi, cited in (Abdulbarkindo & Alupsen 2017, p. 23).

The above table indicated that the numbers of people killed in Guma LGA is **1426** follow by Agatu **967** and respectively which is much, this shows that these local governments are at the border level of the state between Nasarawa and Enugu states respectively and the attackers do hide at the border who usually come and killed people. This view is supported by the statement made by the government of Benue state, Samuel Ortom that the attacker are hidden at Tunga in Nasarawa state when an attacks was launched

on 1st of January, 2018 where over **70** people were killed and thousands displaced taken refuge at different camps in the state. It is hard time for the government of Nigeria to do something and arrest the killer, before this could result to inter- state crisis between Benue and Nasarawa states and it will be difficult to control. Estimated Number of Christian homes and Churches reported damaged or destroyed per LGAs under consideration in table (2)

LGAs	NO. of thatched & tin roof Christian homes damaged or destroyed	NO. of Churches damage & destroyed
Agatu	7,663	4
Guma	63,718	5
Gwer – East	447	0
Gwer – West	37,416	7
Katsina – Ala	11,399	1
Kwanda (sic)	21,443	2
Logo	28,807	4
Makurdi	24,683	7
Total for all LGAs listed above	195,576	30

Source: ACSAN fieldwork and information obtained from documents made available by Benue State Emergency Management Agency, Benue State Chapter of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Benue State Chapter of Jamatul Nasril Islam in Makurdi, cited in (Abdulbarkindo & Alupsen 2017, p. 24).

The table above indicated that the numbers of Christian homes and Church destroyed is very much in LGAs of Guma (63,718), Gwer – West (37,416), Logo (28,807), Makurdi (24,683) among others, this is because the Local Governments are at the border areas of Nasarawa and Taraba states where the attacker usually come from using their guerilla strategies

to kill, destroy property and rape women and children.

The number of children out of school because of this barbaric killing also is in thousands, living in internal displace camps of the state experiencing psychological trauma, stress, depression, hunger and various form of disease. Below is a survey of the crisis between

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herdsmen and farmers crisis in Nigeria with description and dates in media reports as cited by Jibo (2014), Imo (2017) and Authors compilation in Table (3)

Name of Media & Date	Description of Violence
Daily Trust Thursday 28-3-14	Tiv/ Fulani crisis: Benue police recover missing colleagues i.e. Sgt. Muktari Ibrahim.
Nigerian Tribune Thursday 11 – 4 – 13	Benue: 27 killed in Tiv/Fulani crisis 4 days.
Daily Trust Thursday 15 – 4 – 13	Tor – Tiv laments killing of his people in Guma.
Blue Print Thursday 25 – 4 – 13	Benue: 10 killed in Tiv/Fulani clash. Fresh attacks on Tiv farmers in Guma Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue State by Fulani herdsmen have led to the death of not less than 10 people.
National Mirror Friday 26 -4 – 13	Three killed, 300 houses razed in renewed Benue, Taraba clash attack by Kuteb and Fulani camouflage dressed in what look like Army flages.
The New Times 26 – 5 – 13	Tiv nation troubled on all sides? [front page] Suspected Fulani herdsmen kill 10 in Guma Six dead in Taraba/Benue crisis
Daily Trust 6 – 5 -13	Attacks on Agatu, 12 people including 5 soldiers attached to 72 army battalion Makurdi were killed
Daily Sun 21 – 1 -2014	Residents of Adeke village in Makurdi LGA were also attacked
Vanguard 1 – 4 – 13	One person was allegedly killed and others seriously injured while a house was razed by Fulani herds men & Hausa natives clashed over stolen motorcycle in Kubwa district Abuja. FCT Commissioner Mr. Femi Ogunbayode, confirmed the clash.
Daily Trust 26 – 4 – 13	Not less than Five women have been allegedly raped while several others beaten to death by herdsmen in Ihie / Umuapu communities of Ohaji / Egbema LGA of Imo state.
Sunday Trust 12 – 5 -13	Beron – Fulani clash in Plateau North senatorial District which resulted to destruction of farmland, killing of herdsmen and farmers in the field.
Vanguard 9 – 4 – 13	About 25 people are believed to have been killed at Zango village in Wase LGA of Plateau state as ethnic militia engaged in fresh hostilities among Tarok and Fulani.
Daily Trust 14 – 8 – 13	In over two years, more than two hundred persons were killed in Zamfara villages by cattle rustlers i.e. Tsanu village while in Dumburum of Zurmi LGA 5 people were killed.
4 – 1 – 14	In Kaduna state, Sa’ad Usman a second class traditional ruler was attacked and seriously injured in a Fulani / Gbagyi clash.
Premium Time 12 – 3 – 16	About 500 people were killed by rampaging herdsmen following a siege on Agatu LGA of Benue State.
21 -4- 18 Daily Post News	Suspected herdsmen have killed about 30 people in Kabaro and Danmani villages in Maru Local Government Area of Zamfara State.
The Sun News 30- 3-18	15 Fulani herdsmen killed in Zamfara

Based on some of the media reports analyses above, most of the killings are concentrated in the Middle belt (North central) states that are dominated by Christians. For example Benue a Christian state with few Muslims concentrated in towns is badly affected, an agenda that the suspected Fulani herdsmen want, to fulfill Usman Danfodio Jihad by conquering the entire state through Islamization policy thereby exercising political control and power over state.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing issues analyzed in the paper, there is no doubt that the herdsmen/farmers crisis in Nigeria based on the findings is as a

result of destruction of farming products, cattle rustling, demographic/climate change, porosity of borders, large acquisition of land by the capitalist, monetization of land to the herdsmen by the traditional rulers and indigenization factor among others. The research also analyzed the religious and political implications of the crisis in Nigeria that if care is not taken by the Government to resolve this crisis, it can result to ethno- religious and subsequently another civil war in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings in the research, the following recommendations are made.

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- The law governing indigenization needs to be revisited by both the Upper and Lower chambers of the house to resolve friction and tension over indigenes and settlers at both the Federal and State Government levels in order to avoid crisis in Nigeria.
- Security agencies should not be politicized by the powers that be, but they should be independent to protect lives and property irrespective of tribes or religions in a diverse country like Nigeria.
- Nigerian borders are very porous, there is need to tighten them in order to prevent influx of foreigners in the country.
- The activities of traditional rulers as regards the monetization of land to the herdsmen need to be checked by the government to avoid further crises.
- The anti- open grazing law passed by some States like Benue, Taraba and Ekiti to protect both the farmers and herdsmen need to be made statutory by the Federal Government, in order to maintain law and order. And more sensitization and awareness should be done in all the medias for people to know the importance of the law. Other advance countries like Mexico and America also operate ranches which is a modern way of rearing animals.
- Appointment of people to head all the security agencies and other positions in the country should not be based on religious / ethnic sentiments, but should cut across all the geopolitical zones of the country, since security issues are very sensitive. And also merit should be promoted.
- Impunity and nepotism should be discouraged in the country with multi ethnic and religiosity. And the perpetrators of the crisis when caught should face the law of the land.
- Other state governments that have in mind also to pass the anti-open– grazing law, should first of all make provision for ranches and provide all the necessary amenities before the law becomes operational.

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