

Insecurity in Nigeria: The Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers Experience

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Abstract

Insecurity is a global phenomenon with different degrees and intensity which government of each country is attending to. Although, insecurity is not peculiar to Nigeria alone but the main point of departure is the way the social menace is managed which made it appear as if the government of the day is not doing much or only paying lip service to security matters. It is assuming an alarming rate recently and affecting every facet of Nigerian life with no end in sight and it cuts across the six geographical regions the North-East, North Central, South-East and even the South West is now their target. Residents now sleep with one eye open while government who ordinarily is charged with the protection of lives and properties seems lost and incapable of securing lives. With mass displacements of farmers, from their communities, there will be drastic reduction of agricultural products and inflation will continue to increase. The situation has gotten so bad that Airports are attacked, Train derailed, Assistant Inspector General of Police shot, Kuje prison attacked, Presidential guards falling into the hands of bandit, Fulani herdsmen killing and kidnapping people and displacing farmers from their native land. If these problems are not addressed promptly, Nigeria will be heading towards a failed country and this will be an impediment to us as a nation.. Although this paper focuses on insecurity holistically but is more concern about the way it affects farmers who are daily displaced from their native land. Data was extensively obtained from the primary and secondary sources. Porous border, boundary disputes and just to mention, but a few which are responsible for insecurity in Nigeria are the findings of the study. We find out that several factors were responsible for the farmers-herds clashes. Some of the recommendations include strategies that could enhance the activities of government to proffer security measures to its citizenry and introduce the Fulani to modernise grazing methods instead of the nomadic style which made them live in the bush.

Keywords: insecurity, Fulani herdsmen, national security

Introduction

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa is presently embroidered in security crises and daily assuming an alarming rate. It is affecting every facet of Nigerian life with no end in sight. Although, insecurity is not peculiar to Nigeria alone, but the main point of departure is in the way it is being managed by the government of the day. The problem of Insecurity cuts cross the six geograph-

ical regions in Nigeria starting from the North-East, North Central, South-East, and even now in South West. The level of insecurity is so bad to the extent that there was a credible intelligence mail received by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) that Boko-Haram and the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) terrorist groups have plots for a massive and coordinated attack on different states of the federation including Lagos. Their mail indicated that they have mobilised fighters and high-calibre weapons such as rocket-propelled Grenade Launchers, Anti-Aircraft guns and general purpose machine guns which they intend to deploy against schools, worship centres and important places across all states. True to this, the Premium Times of 5th September 2022 reported that the Boko-Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) attacked the Kuje Medium Security Custodial Centre in Abuja on the 5th July 2022 where over 800 inmates escaped including high profile Boko Haram members. ISWAP, a faction of the Boko Haram terror group claimed responsibility for the attack and even released a video of the attack.

After the incidence, the activities of criminals has been on the increase and news of their various activities makes news headlines in all newspaper to the extent that the federal government hurriedly shut down some schools in Abuja. Equally on the 28th July 2022, the presidential guards structure fell into the hands of terrorists where two officers and six soldiers were killed and four injured. While on 1st August 2022, the Nigeria Railway Corporation temporarily suspended Ajaokuta service station due to fear of terrorists attack and on 2nd August 2022, the Assistant Inspector General of Police in charge of zone 12 in person of Audu Madaki was attacked by suspected bandit along the Kaduna-Abuja road. The AIG sustained bullets injury on his leg while his orderly was shot dead on the spot. The tension was so high that senate president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Ahmad Lawan) openly express great concern over the frightening state of insecurity in the country during his meeting with the security chiefs on 3rd of August 2022. He explained how the situation has affected Agriculture, direct foreign investments and crude oil production. According to him the Nigerian population is largely peasant and most of our people are in the rural areas and live their lives by going to farm to earn their living. But now both the farms and cities are no longer save because we all sleep with one eye open while government who ordinarily is charged with the responsibility of protecting lives and property seems lost and incapable of doing this. According to the Premium Times of 3rd August 2022, agent from the State Security Service (SSS) apprehended a top Boko Haram official in Ogun state who confessed that he came from Katsina state to take up security job around Ijaiye axis of Lagos state in other to establish a terror cell and gather information ahead of the impending attack on the south west. The News Agency of Nigeria also re-

ported on 17th August 2022 that the terror alert in Lagos is very high based on the information reaching them. According to Mr. Alabi as reported in the *gazetengr*, he appealed to night crawlers, to be careful, and entertainment of large gathering should be discouraged because it is one of such places that terrorists are planning to attack. The wave, dynamics and sophistication of security crisis has been on the increase with very serious social consequences particularly on the economy and governance which has affected every facet of the country. According to Adejumo (2011), security problem which appears intractable is because Nigerian government is not transparent, exhibits nonchalant attitude, and the 1999 Nigerian Constitution is not upheld according to Section 12 (2) which states that “all Nigerian has the right to life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion”.

Insecurity ranges from the activities of Islamic State West Africa Province Terror (ISWAP) a faction of the Boko Haram sect, Bandits, Fulani herdsmen, Kidnapping, ritual killings, militancy, Biafra agitation, Yoruba Nation agitation, Yahoo boys and Yahoo plus, rape, armed robbery, assassinations among others and it's on the increase on a daily bases with no measures in place, rather it only makes headlines news in Nigeria. Apart from the fact that insecurity is a threat to every Nigerian, it has become the topic for discussion on the lips of every Nigerian and headlines on the social media. Even Nigerians in Diaspora are also not left behind in this phenomenon. In spite of the express provision of Section 14 (2) (1) in the Nigerian Constitution which states that “criminal activities and insecurity such as ritual killings, militancy, Biafra agitation, kidnapping, bombings, murder, arson, armed robbery, corruption, injustice among others should be upheld”, it has not reflected in the day to day activities of Nigerians.

Overview of National Security

The concept of national security could be widely interpreted to mean many similar things or situations by different scholars and analysts but the truth is that the issue of national security is very important to any nation. This is because a nation's state in terms of her peoples' well-being economically, socially, politically and internationally is greatly influenced by her standing in the matter of national security. A nation needs to protect itself from both internal and external forces that try to undermine or harm its collective interests, sovereignty, independence, integrity, as well as its citizens wherever they may be in the world. This is why Nigeria cannot afford to be indifferent or uninterested in issues bothering on their national interest, particularly, national security. National security defines the whole essence of a nation's efforts in its socio-political, cultural, economic and international affairs. Therefore, the issue of national security is one that expresses the status of a nation in terms of its standing

in the globe, in areas like citizen protection, freedom and well-being, property and intelligence safety, national integrity, sovereignty protection and protection of international interests. All these gear towards the overall stability and peaceful co-existence of the citizens of the nation as well as that of the nation at the global level. National security is one element that can adequately help to promote democracy and in time foster good governance which brings socio-economic development in a nation. A nation that fails to place priority on its national security will eventually become a failed state. In line with the aforementioned, the foremost national security issue in Nigeria is the Boko Haram activities and Fulani herdsmen. They have been killing, kidnapping and rendering many innocent citizens homeless. Since independence most threats to national security has been internal rather than external most especially in the North-eastern part of the country.

Afeno (2012) asserts that the Boko Haram uprising is not only a security issue alone; rather it exposed the weakness of governance in the country which ultimately is the responsibility of government and it's primarily the result of the failure of successive governments that is unable to fight corruption, provide equal opportunities for its citizenry, create economic opportunities and establish accountable and effective security institutions. Sahara reports on 30th August 2022 gave an account of how the Buhari government releases 6.25 billion naira for cattle ranches in Katsina State alone amid an ailing economy. No wonder the former United States of America Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton avers that "The most immediate source of disconnect between Nigeria's wealth and its poverty is the failure of governance and insincerity at the federal, state and local levels". Boko Haram therefore provides a platform for unemployed youth and disgruntled persons to attack a system that is not transparent and which they believe is largely responsible for their plight.

The Fulani

The Fulani are the ethnic group with significant presence in many countries of West Africa. In the opinion of Nnoli (1981), wherever the Fulani's are found, they usually constitute the majority on account of their nomadic lifestyle, since they are essentially itinerant cattle rearers and are constantly on the move with their herds of cattle to find grazing fields. They are believed to be the largest semi-nomadic group in the world and they spend most of their lives in the bush and they are the ones largely involved in various herders/farmers crises in Nigeria. The Fulani's have resisted modernity just like the Boko Haram sect; hence their system of production and consumption has remained largely unaltered in the face of population growth and modernisation. The pressure for access

of grazing lands has forced the nomadic herdsmen to move downward to the South, while efforts by the native people to protect their cultivated farmland have pitted them against the Fulani herdsmen. Since 2001 the movement of the Fulani to the south has been on the increase and often resulted into conflicts especially during raining seasons when farmer would have planted and nurtured their crops for harvest. This does not require a prophet for one to know that cattle grazing on the cultivated farmlands would incur the wrath of farmers whose livelihood is threatened by these acts of destruction by herdsmen. Any response from farmers to protect their crops, however, resulted in conflicts leading to widespread destruction of lives and properties. Herders and farmers conflict has spawned proliferation of ethnic and religious divides hence, aggravated inter-ethnic tensions which have resulted into several deaths.

There was a research consultant called the Armed Conflict location Event Data Project (ACLED) retrieved from africacentre.org on 17th February 2022 who gave some cogent reasons for the middle belt crises within Kaduna and its environment. Firstly he pointed out that Kaduna is close to the Federal capital and the fourth most populous state with over 12 million people. Apart from that it is the political headquarter of Nigeria North West region and centre for commercial and industrial activities. With its Northern population largely comprising Hausa-Fulani Muslims and its southern population mostly ethnically diverse Christians, Kaduna is not only geographically central but it's also straddles Nigeria' ethnic and religious divides, hence Kaduna centrality makes addressing insecurity challenges the more imperative, however, it can be addressed. There was also a report titled the "Working Document: Fulani Militias Terror" which was authorised by Jose Ivis Bazan an independent researcher and analyst based in Brussels, Belgium who says "Nigerians are suffering widespread and systematic terrorist attacks by mainly Boko Haram, the aligned Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), Fulani Militias and Ansaru. In this report there was a comprehensive breakdown of Fulani herdsmen activities between 2017 and May 2020 as widely reported in This Day Newspaper of 7th June 2020.

Causes of Insecurity

There is a dramatic increase in violence, terrorism, kidnappings, bombings, shooting, killings, armed robbery, and arson among others in Nigeria. The problem of insecurity has become a daily occurrence nationwide with new device and strategies.

These are some of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria:-

- Porous borders

- Proliferation of arms and ammunitions
- Kidnapping
- Boundary dispute
- Weak security and judicial system
- Ethno-religious conflicts
- Economy, poverty and unemployment

Porous borders

Porous border are permeable and leaky borders which do not have the presence of border security agencies. Porosity of borders also refers to the penetrability, fluidity occasioned by the absence of any form of regulation and unofficial transactions outside officialdom in several contexts that are unhealthy and harmful. Achumba *et al* (2021) observe that the porous frontiers of the country w here individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the high degree of insecurity in Nigeria. The porosity of the Nigerian borders has aided the uncontrollable influx of migrants through our unguarded borders mainly young men; from neighbouring countries such as Republic of Niger, Chad Republic, and Republic of Benin are responsible for some of the criminal acts. The situation serve as conduits for illicit transnational traffic of small arms, light weapons and drugs and is further exacerbated by limited presence of security and law enforcement official who are also poorly equipped, poorly paid and poorly trained. In addition, it will be difficult for any nation to control its border with almost 770 kilometres of shared land border with the Republic of Benin, around 1,500 kilometres with Cameroun and 90 kilometres with Chad and 850 kilometres of maritime border in the Atlantic Ocean except where there is a strong political will which is lacking in Nigeria. This is because in Nigeria people troop in and out without adequate tracking and checkmating by the immigration service. In the Business Day of 2nd August 2022, Abubakar Kawu Baraj, a former National Party secretary of the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) reported how they brought in Fulani from neighbouring countries like Sierra Leone, Mali, Senegal, Niger and Chad into the country for election purposes in 2015. After the victory the Fulani refuse to leave and are the ones wreaking havoc and not the Nigerian Fulani that we have lived with since independence.

Proliferation of arms and ammunitions

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is recognised as an obstacle to development and has continued to threaten the peace and security of any nation, especially Nigeria. Several arms hauls have been ceased at the Airport,

Sea ports, and Land borders in very large quantities which are not good for the country. These arms and ammunition end up in the hands of criminals who apply same in their nefarious activities in the country thereby making life insecure for the people in their locality whenever there is a little misunderstanding. The smuggling of small arms into Nigeria is clear evidence of the failure of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) protocol. Under this protocol, security agencies in member-countries are expected to cooperate in order to prevent the smuggling of illegal weapons in the sub-region. The proliferation of arms has increased the rate of violence which is often demonstrated during communal clashes, cultism, and kidnappings, ethnic and religious clashes and there are illegal weapons factories locally that produce arms and significant importation and smuggling of arms from international (Olabode and Ajibade 2010).

Kidnapping

Kidnapping or banditry is a visible sign of insecurity and has become rampant since the beginning of the 21st century in Nigeria. Kidnapping by bandits and insurgents is among the biggest organized or gang crime in Nigeria and is a national security challenge. The perpetrators of this crime do not spare anyone and seems to have supplanted armed robbery and other non-contact crimes. Since this act began in Nigeria the young and old, male and female have been kidnapped for ransom. This has made life unbearable as citizens now live in fear of being kidnapped by these criminals, hence both rail and road travelling is no longer safe in Nigeria. The Zamfara State Governor (Bello Malawalle) reported that terrorist collected 3 billion naira as ransom from Zamfara between 2011 and 2019 and 190,000 people displaced. According to the Premium times of 30th August 2022, Abubakar Ahmadu Maishanu reveal that majority of the bandits are indigenous Fulani people from Zamfara who connive with others.

Boundary dispute

Boundary and territorial disputes refer to disputes over the division of land or water bodies among two or more independent countries. Boundary dispute could be one of the most heated emotional-fuelled matters in a community and it could go on for a long period of time and often end in a complete breakdown in neighbourly relationship just like the Kaduna experience (Olabode and Ajibade 2010). Boundaries are determined by examining the conveyance of land and adjoining land. There are different types of boundary dispute among them are: -

- i. Lot line disputes

- ii. Driveway issues
- iii. Fence border disputes
- iv. Landscaping
- v. Home encroachment
- vi. Garage- encroachment
- vii. Access issues and so on.

In Southern Kaduna there is the Kibori and Atagjah village in Zangon-Kataf local council of Kaduna who shared boundary. Their border disputes predate the colonial era and had persisted till date with no solution in sight. According to Danjuma Musa as reported in the Guardian Newspaper of September 2020, he stated that the Southern Kaduna crises will remain un-resolved as long as the tribal development association under the umbrella body called the Southern Kaduna People Union (SOKAPU) refused to accept the Hausa/Fulani who had long settled in the region as bonafide indigenes and often refer to them as “settler” derogatorily.

Weak security and judicial system

The statutory role of maintaining law and order in any given society rests squarely on law enforcement agents, however in Nigeria it appear as if the law enforcement agents are unaware of the security challenges and more often than not, act after the occurrence of security breaches occur. At other times, even when they hear of violence, criminal activities or likely breach of security, they ignore or are slow to act for the fear of death or harm befalling them. Achumba *et al.* (2013) is of the opinion that the poor attitudinal and behavioural disposition of security personnel is related to the lack of expertise and institutional infrastructure because the foundation of institutional frame work in Nigeria is very shaky and have provoked a deterioration of governance. Temple (2013) also asserts that it is because the law enforcement agents are not well provided for, in terms of life insurance, accommodation, adding that their monthly salary is poor with no welfare packages.

Insecurity is what we get from inadequate equipment for the security arm of government, both in weaponry and training. In addition corruption decreases public trust in justice and weakens the capacity of judicial system to guarantee the protection of human right and has a direct impact on the validity of human rights, largely because of two reasons. On one side, corruption deprives societies of important resources that could be used for basic needs, such as public health, education, infrastructure, or security. On another side, corrup-

tion has direct damaging consequences in general on the functioning of state institution, and in particular on the administration of justice and weakens the capacity of judicial system to guarantee the protection of human rights, and it affects the tasks and duties of the judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and other legal professionals. This is manifested in the lack of basic necessities by the people of Nigeria which has created a pool of frustrated people who are ignited easily by any event to be violent. It appears like the law enforcement agents in Nigeria are different from what is obtainable in other countries of the world.

Ethno-religious conflicts

Ethno-religious conflicts often arise as a result of distrust among various ethnic groups and among the major religions in a country. Scholars have identified ethno-religious conflicts as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria and therefore defined it as a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion, fear, and tendency towards violent confrontation. The two dominant religions in Nigeria which is Islam and Christianity have frequently and persistently clashed and the end seems not to be in sight. Ezeoba (2021) asserts that in all parts of the country, ethno-religious conflicts have assumed alarming rates, making a mockery of the security order. Current and general state of insecurity in most parts of Northern Nigeria today is weighed to different report of Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen. In some cases the personnel officers get influenced by ethnic or religious sentiments and are thus easily swallowed by their personal interest to serve their people instead of the nation. The case of Dorcas from Zuru in Kebbi State came to mind. She was beaten, stoned and burnt to death by some Muslim students in Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto for alleging insulting Prophet Muhammed (S.A.W) in the presence of security personnel all because they are of the same religion or protecting their religion. If the Christian community have retaliated, a religious crisis would have emerged. Also Leah Shaibu was not released alongside other Chibok girls that were kidnapped since 14th April 2014 till date because she refused to deny her faith from Christianity to Islam. If the Christians have reacted, it would have resulted into religious crises. The Owo massacre of 5th June 2022, in (Ondo state) where over 40 Catholic worshippers died and several others injured during a church service is still fresh in the mind. Findings later reveal that all the five criminals paraded were Muslims from Igbira land but belong to Kogi state branch of ISWAP.

Economy, poverty and unemployment

A poor economy with high level of poverty and unemployment appears to have been the bane of the Nigerian society. Every year institutions of higher learning produce many graduates who regrettably, are thrown into the labour market with no hope in sight for jobs. In an effort to keep body and soul together, some become frustrated and go into violent and criminal acts such as the “lucrative” kidnapping, militancy, Yahoo or armed robbery. Others have become prey to terrorists and are easily influenced and indoctrinated into different sects. The case of Boko Haram, Fulani Herdsmen, one million boys, IPOB and Niger Delta militancy easily comes to mind. Nwagbosa (2012) opined that it is because past governments have failed to put in place measures that will reduce the rate of unemployment and poverty, which have been the major causes of insecurity in Nigeria. To a large extent, the Niger Delta region of Nigeria under the late President Umaru Yar’Adua and former President Goodluck Jonathan’s introduction of amnesty in which unemployed and poverty-stricken youths who laid down their arms were sent to training centres for vocational and educational purpose brought amazing peace and tranquillity to that area.

Conclusion

Insecurity is like a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the nation called Nigeria. Sequel to this, it becomes imperative to strengthen the security system with all sincerity and doggedness that it deserves to make Nigeria habitable for its citizen. It would appear that the pattern of insecurity in Nigeria has been regionalized in the sense that there is Militia group’s insurgency and Bandit in the North, kidnapers in the Eastern and Southern part of the country, ritual killings in the West, and political and non-political assassinations across the nation. As a result of the increasing incidence and prevalence of insecurity and in order to ameliorate it, the Federal Government has embarked on the criminalization of terrorism by passing the Anti-terrorism Act (2011), the proscription of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), installation of Computer-based Close Circuit TV Camera (CCTV) in some parts of the country, and broadcast of security tips in mass media. Commendable as these efforts may appear, the level of insecurity in the country is increasing and appears as if the government is unable to control the problem of insecurity which also means that the government has failed. This is because the basic goals of any nation is the survival and security of life and property and where this is missing it will destabilize the economy, agriculture, governance and increases criminality in the society.

Recommendations

In the event of the enormity of resources lost to crisis, the following recommendations are suggested. The incessant attacks and killings by bandit, kidnapers' and Fulani killer's herdsmen should be a source of National concern for the government by doing the followings:

- Identify and punish killers. Those who slit throats and leave blood in their trail must have faces, names and acquaintances. The Fulanis that we have lived with since independence suddenly becomes armed.
- Anti-open grazing laws. It hurts a farmer dearly when cattle trample on yam shoots, level cassava ridges, upturn rice nurseries and devour vegetables with reckless abandonment. I doubt if a Fulani President who cherishes his nomadic peripatetic lifestyle will trade that for any legislation, hence there are no open borders anywhere.
- Invest in grazing ranches. Every state in Nigeria should mandatorily dedicate some parcel of land for green pasture for herdsmen and their cattle and religiously maintained and tended to like it used to be way back. Moreover in civilised societies, herdsmen don't trek from one end of the earth to another, and it should be noted that cattle's restricted to ranches turn out healthier.
- Educate herdsmen. The Fulani's should be introduced to nomadic Education along with their trade and they should be exposed to modern grazing and livestock techniques.
- Disarm Herdsmen. Herdsmen should not be allowed to carry guns or pistols across Nigeria unless they are licensed. The internet is full of pastoralists bearing sophisticated arms as they march round Nigeria.
- All illegal arms dealers should be prosecuted.
- Government should address issues that breed conflict within the different communities.
- Adequate balance should be maintained in citing of public projects and fairness in appointment.
- Rule of law should be strictly adhered to in issues that affect all parties.
- The issue of boundary adjustments should be amicably settled within communities not to enthrone crisis.
- Adequate peace and harmonious brotherly relationship between communities should be encouraged.
- Security agencies should find out what went wrong that turned Fulani with rods to arms carrier
- Kaduna State crises in particular should be looked into holistically. This is

based on its geographical location by nature, in the sense that the Kaduna crisis revolves around three different but overlapping threats which are:

- i. Farmers and headers conflict over access to land and its use between communities due to population and environmental degradation in the North. Pastureland is scarce which made headers search further for grazing land, while farmers and their settlement are also expanding into new area to sow their crops.
- ii. Armed gangs engaged in criminal activities including kidnapping for ransom, arm dealing, cattle rustling and highway robbery.
- iii. Since 2002 when (Ansaru a violent extremist) and leader of a Militant Islamic group re-emerged within the region, militancy has become constant, and there has been elaborate ambush followed by series of other attacks.

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