



## Economic Effects of Fulani Herdsmen-Farmers Clashes in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *The objective of this paper is to examine the economic cost of Fulani-Farmers Clashes on the populace in general and the nation's economy in particular. This is because insecurity and its various multifaceted manifestations like bombings, cattle rustling, farmland destruction, kidnapping/hostage taking, destruction of life and property, creation of fear among others has become a hydra headed monster which security agents in Nigeria appear incapable of addressing. Bloody clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers over grazing lands have led to the killing or maiming of people and razing down of houses as well as food storage facilities. The herdsmen claimed that they are the original owners of the land in the agrarian areas. According to them, the natives had sold it to them for their cows to graze. This is an allegation the farmers have consistently debunked, saying that the land was never at any instance sold to the herdsmen and that the cows damage their crops while grazing. Cattle-rustling has also been a major cause of unrest as cows are stolen by criminal-minded youths. This scenario has played out many times in Guma, Makurdi, Gwer West, Agatu, Logo, Kwande, Buruku and parts of Kastina-Ala local government areas of Benue State. The same is common in Enugu, Delta, Taraba and Plateau states. This paper takes a look the economic effects of these conflicts by identifying the remote causes and possible solutions to the challenge. The theory of Human needs served as our framework of analysis while documentary methods of analysis and content analysis were used to generate and analyze data. The study revealed that this pattern of insecurity challenge is detrimental to general well being of the people with its resultant effects in the area low quality of life, food insecurity, high cost of food, population displacement and even death, the destruction of business, properties and equipments, relocation and closing down of businesses. The study suggests that the Nigerian government and her security agencies should be pro-active in their responses, improve their intelligence gathering techniques and peace building and equip and motivate her security forces better.*

**Key words:** *Insecurity, Cattle-rustling, Fulani- Farmers Clashes, Human Needs Theory and Nigeria.*

### INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the former Jonathan administration scored good marks in the area of agriculture. However, recent developments, especially the frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers in the predominantly farming areas of the six geo-political regions which have resulted in the destruction of lives and farmlands have become a major threat to efforts to boost food production. From Benue to Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau in the North Central region and Zamfara and Kaduna States in the North West, Enugu, Anambra, Abia in the South-East, Delta and Edo in the South-south, clashes between farmers and herdsmen have left in its trail heavy losses of lives and property. These losses of lives have adversely affected farming activities and other related businesses. This has resulted in a drastic reduction in farm outputs, a development that has heightened the fear of hunger. Already most farmers in the affected states have abandoned farms for fear of being attacked by the herdsmen. For the predominantly farming communities of

Benue and border communities of Nasarawa and Taraba states, farming is no longer business as usual. Several farmers have been displaced and dispossessed of their farms by armed men believed to be Fulani herdsmen.

Agricultural and development experts are unanimous in their predictions that the gains recorded in the agricultural sector of the economy, especially in the area of food production, may suffer a serious setback as a result of the negative effects of terrorist activities on farmers in Benue and neighbouring states. Already, seven out of the 23 local governments in Benue state, namely Guma, Gwer-West, Agatu, Logo, Kwande and the Northern part of Makurdi mostly affected by the rampaging herdsmen have tale of woes to tell. The effects of the sustained Fulani war in the affected localities have led to farmers' reluctance to go back to their farms even as the current farming season is far gone. In Benue state, for example, women from Guma and Gwer west local governments have stayed away from farms for fear of being killed or raped by the marauders. Curiously, both groups are pointing accusing fingers, each blaming the other for the havoc being perpetrated in the farming communities. As the blame game continues, several reprisal attacks have continued to occur in the attacks, heavy casualties in human lives and properties are recorded on both sides. According to Tyohmba(2014),government and analysts believe that the rising livestock population and encroachment on grazing lands were some of the causes of the clashes. Statistics have shown that in Nigeria, only 141grazing reserves have been gazetted with less than 20 equipped with resources for pastoralists. A proposed National grazing Route and Reserve Commission, if established, would acquire and manage parcels of land across the 36 states of Nigeria for the purpose of providing pastures for these nomads and their herds of cattle. This proposal will help in returning farmers to their farm lands thereby check mating food insecurity in Nigeria. States affected by these frequent clashes are making moves to find lasting solutions, just as similar efforts are being made at the federal level.

An attempt to resolve the face-off between farmers and Fulani herdsmen seems to be underway. To analysts, the move is seen as a step in the right direction. The move considered a deft one will address the Fulani herdsmen not only in the country but in the Middle Belt. Before now, the nefarious activities of the Fulani herdsmen have been frowned at by all and sundry. There have been arguments for and against the setting up of grazing areas for the cattle-rearers which aims to restrict the movement of Fulani herdsmen in some geo political zones. Aside, suggestions has been thrown up on ways at preventing further confrontation with farmers, a step the Federal Government is yet to take. The essence of this paper is to examine the economic effects of the Fulani/herdsmen- farmers' conflicts in Nigeria. To achieve this objective, the first part of the paper addresses this clashes in a theoretical-thematic format. Theoretical framework of analysis followed. The third section addresses the economic effects of the conflict. The final segment offered recommendations and concludes the paper.

### **Thematic Exposition of Fulani Herdsmen-Farmers Clashes**

There are two major contending views on the between Fulani- farmers clashes. These views are summarized below. Although it is the general belief that the Fulani herdsmen attacks are an arbitrary attack not premeditated or planned to vacate their hosts from their land, many now believe that the attacks have been planned and executed with the knowledge and participation of certain government and traditional leaders. Drawing from the nature of attacks that have been carried out, there is a thesis that believes the attacks are not random or resultant of encounters with their hosts but a series of orchestrated attacks with vindictive motives. Those who believe in this assumption see the nationwide attacks as a chain of actions draw from a grand plan. According to Akume who represents Benue North West Senatorial Districts, the attacks, which have spread to Gwer west, Makurdi, Guma, Logo and Kwande local government areas, were carried out with automatic weapons far more superior than those manned by the police. He further said,

We may be regarded as minority, but we can fight back if that becomes the only way to save our people from these inhuman attacks. We are peace-loving people and do not always complain. May be that is why we are being taken for granted. If government cannot do anything to help save the Tiv people, we may be compelled to fight back. The manner of attacks on the communities we represent at the National Assembly by well-armed groups show that the entire state is under siege (Ekah,et.al,2014:52).

Looking at the attacks in the Middle Belt in a holistic view, they posit that it cannot be coincidental that they have decided to assault the North central region of the nation, citing reasons, according to these proponents, the attacks are planned to destabilize the region for either religious or political reasons. They

argue that the Fulani attacks are a campaign of some sort carrying along with the war, a religion; Islam, which they intend to establish after their conquest in the style of the Jihadists of old. This view failed to understand the peculiarities of the polity. While for, instance, the trend of violence and criminally ongoing in the northern region bother essentially on ethno- religious fundamentalism, the South-East and South-South regions have always grappled with kidnapping, armed robbery, youth militancy and vandalism as their own peculiar security situation. Within the Southwest Region, especially Metropolitan Lagos, *area Boys* syndrome and hooliganism have remained a unique future of the environment.

This thesis also posits that the Fulani jihadists in seeming collaboration with Boko Haram and other foreign mercenaries are causing wanton destruction to lives and property. This position was further strengthened when recently, some soldiers were claimed to have been captured during one of such attacks on Tiv farmers in Benue State. Moreover pundits of this view further base their premise on the inability of the heavy presence of security operatives to stem the tide when the state harbours two prominent army barracks, a tactical air command, Naval Training school and a mobile police barracks around which the insurgents have sacked the surrounding villages.

Another school of thought of in this analogy say the attacks are politically motivated and was aimed at destabilizing the affected regions ahead of 2015 to unsettle them and make way for opposition politics to take hold by discrediting the leadership of the zones, which is dominated by the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP. This, they assume is aimed at tainting former President Goodluck Jonathan's success in the regions, which are loyal to him and seen as a link to the core North. According to spokesperson of Miyetti Allah, an association of the herdsmen in a recent interview with an online newspaper, Secretary General of the association, Muhammed Bello, said *"It is a conflict basically about resource use...It is the issue of pasture and water"*(Tyohmba,2014:34).He, however, admitted the conflict has recently been infused with politics, legal issues, religion and ethnicity. But he expressed conviction that if the resource use conflict is solved, the clashes would go away. According to him, neglect of agricultural development and Nigeria's inability to regulate influx of foreign herdsmen has contributed immensely to the buildup of the crises that now engulfs Nigeria's arable graze-lands. He recommended the revival of the "jangali" (cattle tax) system, as well as other measures to curb the growing clashes.

On the opposite, former President Goodluck Jonathan and some state governors in the North-East geo-political zone of the country were trading blames on the cause of the Boko Haram insurgency and the growing insecurity in that part of the country. The then President, at a North-East zonal rally of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Bauchi, slammed governors in the zone for trying to make the Federal Government feel guilty by shifting the blame for the insecurity in the area on it. On the contrary, he blamed the governors for failing to discharge their constitutional responsibility of educating youths in the zone, with majority of the youths having never attended primary school, resulting in the situation where they easily decided to carry arms. He also accused the governors of failing in other parameters of governance.

Former President Jonathan's stance was apparently a direct response to the allegation by 12 Northern governors, during their visit to the White House in America, that he was escalating the Boko Haram crisis ahead of the 2015 election. Former Governor Murtala Nyako of Adamawa State had, at the occasion, accused the Federal Government of fuelling terrorism in the North-East with the objective of reducing the voting population of the zone. Earlier in the year, Borno State Governor, Kashim Shettima, had also criticized the Federal Government's efforts on the insurgency in the North-East, arguing that Boko Haram members were better armed and motivated than the Nigerian military personnel deployed to stop them. The then President had, at the time, took a strong exception to this. We find the shifting of blames on the cause of the raging Boko Haram problem inexpedient. The middle of the battle against the sect's bloody campaign is not the proper time for the president and the affected state governors to be dissipating energy on the causes of this insurgency. This is not a period to ask who is right or wrong on the Boko Haram affair, but to act, and design measures to bring the insurgency to its knees. If the truth must be told, this insurgency is largely fallout of the failure to ensure the education of large numbers of youths in the North-East over the years. Under the 1999 Constitution, each state has a responsibility to do this, and to create enabling environment for the youths to thrive.

State governors are also chief security officers of their states, albeit with the incongruity of Police Commissioners being directly responsible to the Inspector-General of Police in Abuja. The governors have responsibility to ensure that their states are properly secured. It is heartening, however, that the state governors have indicated their appreciation of the importance of education with their recent decision to

introduce free education in all Northern states. This was a step taken in the Western part of the country in 1955, and in the East, in 1958. The challenge for the Northern states, today, is to make primary and secondary school education free and widely available in the region, while the Federal Government does all it can to assist them, because of the enormity of the problem. This is an important shared responsibility, which does not call for throwing of unhelpful brick bats and public castigation of the affected governors by the president.

In the same vein, the Northern Governors claim that the former President was fuelling the Boko Haram insurgency in a bid to decimate the population of the North ahead of the 2015 polls is weird, to put it mildly. The same goes for the Christians in the Middle Belt. These are serious issues that the Federal Government and the affected state governors should be thinking about, not trading blames on the cause of the insurgency and the Fulani-farmers conflicts. One thing that is certain is that the measures so far adopted to confront terrorism in Nigeria are not enough. It has become necessary to re-tool the campaign against Boko Haram and Fulani annihilators to end the menace and restore peace in the affected parts of the country.

### **Theoretical Framework of Analysis**

Human Needs Theory (HNT) was developed in the 1970s and 1980s as a generic or holistic theory of human behaviour. It is based on the hypothesis that humans have basic *needs* that have to be met in order to maintain stable societies. As John Burton describes:

We believe that the human participants in conflict situations are compulsively struggling in their respective institutional environments at all social levels to satisfy primordial and universal needs - needs such as security, identity, recognition, and development. They strive increasingly to gain the control of their environment that is necessary to ensure the satisfaction of these needs. This struggle cannot be curbed; it is primordial (Burton, 1979:72).

This struggle for primordial needs is theoretically related to the Frustration-Aggression theory which is based on the stimulus-response hypothesis. The frustration of not satisfying these needs leads to aggression and subsequently, conflict. What distinguishes Human Needs theory from the Frustration-Aggression theory is that the former is concerned only with absolute requirements (needs) while the later is also concerned with wants and desires. Burton further states:

Now we know that there are fundamental universal values or human needs that must be met if societies are to be stable. That this is so thereby provides a non-ideological basis for the establishment of institutions and policies. Unless identity needs are met in multi-ethnic societies, unless in every social system there is distributive justice, a sense of control, and prospects for the pursuit of all other human societal developmental needs, instability and conflict are inevitable (Burton, 1990)

There are bold assumptions in this theory. This struggle according to Burton (1979 and 1990) cannot be curbed. This is because instability and conflict are inevitable. These are contentious statements with far reaching implications. If the hypotheses of this theory are correct, if there are certain human needs that are required for human development and social stability, than the solution to conflict must be the ability to create an environment in which these needs can be met by all segments of societies. This is where Human Needs theory meets Burton's Conflict Resolution Theory (CRT). Abraham, Maslow identified physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1970). Abraham H. Maslow, a psychologist (1970:35) approached the whole question of human motivation in work situation with the development of widely acclaimed theory of human needs which he classified hieratically into five stages in a definite order of priority. Under his arrangement, the more basic needs or wants which have the greatest potency must have to be gratified in an individual before he would strive to meet the higher needs.

John Burton lists response, stimulation, security, recognition, distributive justice, meaning, need to appear rational and develop rationality, need for sense of control and the need for role defence. He refers to some needs as basic and these include food, shelter, sex, reproduction, etc. (Burton, 1979:72). Edward Azar names some basic needs like security, distinctive identify social recognition of identity and effective participation in the process that shape such identities (Azar, 1994). For Stephen Faleti, basic human needs comprise physical, physiological, social and spiritual needs. According to him, to provide access to one (e.g. food) and deny or hinder access to another (e.g., freedom of worship) will amount to denial and could make people to resort to violence in an effort to protect these needs (Faleti, 2005:51-52). According to Faleti (2005:52),

Burton identified a link between frustration which forces humans into acts of aggression and the need on the part of such individuals to satisfy their basic needs. According to him, individuals cannot be taught to accept practices that destroy their identity and other goals that are attached to their needs and because of this, they are forced to react against the factors, groups and institutions that they see as being responsible for threatening such needs. This is similar to the argument of Gurr's (1970:24) relative deprivation thesis that, "the greater the discrepancy, however marginal, between what is sought and what seem attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result.

No doubt, human needs for existence, survival, security, protection, affection, participation, creativity, understanding and identity are irrepressible and are shared by all people irrespective of social status. No matter how a society or system tries to frustrate or suppress these needs, it will either fail or cause far more damage on the long run. Just like Gurr's thesis on relative deprivation, Max-Neef (cited in Faleti, 2005:52) believes that the tension between deprivation and potential are main issues addressed by the human needs theory because when important needs are not sufficiently satisfied, economic and political problems will continue to grow. Nnoli (2006:9) probably had the human needs theory in mind when he argued that political exclusion, economic marginalization and social discrimination threaten the security of citizens to such an extent that they regard the state as the primary threat to their survival. In desperation, the victimized citizens take the laws into their own hands as a means of safeguarding their fundamental values from the threat of unacceptable government policies.

The significance of this theory is that it recognises and legitimises both Herdsmen and Farmers *needs* in Nigeria. The needs of both must be met, not the needs of one at the expense of the other. This helps to move the conflict from zero-sum to win-win. The abstraction of 'human needs' helps to eliminate the sense of mutually exclusive goals. Rather than fighting over the constitutional future of the grazing routes, with the mutually exclusive goals of maintenance of peace, the situation shifts to one in which both communities seek to fulfill their needs such as security, identity, recognition and development. These needs are not satisfied at the expense of the other community, but are realised along with the other community's needs. These needs are not mutually exclusive or gained at the expense of another; they are universal.

### **Economic Effects of the Fulani Herdsmen-Farmer Clashes**

As a result of the growing fears of insecurity over the past few months in the country fuelled by lack of stable supply and rising food prices. Prices of essential commodities and food products have skyrocketed making them unaffordable to the common man, caused by well meaning but seemingly impractical policies of the federal government in these segments. Prices of rice, for instance, has been hitting historic highs of N12,500 per bag, triggering a panic amongst the people across the country. Persistent increase in prices of other staple products such as fish, bread, meat, cereals, chicken, yam, onions, beans, vegetable oil, tomatoes, groundnut oil and others have aggravated the continued woes of the common man. Shortage of products and ever-increasing prices has created unsettling sentiments across communities, dampening the country's efforts to end poverty. There are estimates that more than 65 per cent of the Nigerian population is food insecure (Osagie, 2013).

Nowadays, soaring food prices in major cities across the Nigerian states are being reported with adverse impact on household budgets. The Boko Haram insurgency in the North-east and pockets of conflicts in some states where basic food items for the nation come from are making food commodity prices to rise for a range of foodstuffs, from beef to fruits and vegetables, thus squeezing consumers still struggling with modest wages.

It is axiomatic to posit that the Northern region of the country has remained a major source of food supply to other parts of the country, especially the South. To be sure, about 90 per cent of food items consumed in Lagos and other South-west states come from the North. For example, Ketu, Mile 12 and Oyingbo markets in Lagos, all get supplies from the North on a daily basis as countless trucks are seen unloading quantities of onions, tomatoes, pepper, fruits, potatoes, yams, vegetables and the likes at these markets.

But this is no longer the case as the general insecurity in the Northern part of Nigeria is adversely affecting farmers in the area. Fewer trucks now come down to the South these days, because of the crisis and this is having its effects on prices of food. The effects of the crisis in the North is already being felt, not only by the consumers but the traders as well who depend on supplies from the North for their business. Expectedly, the cost of foodstuffs, especially pepper and tomatoes has hit the roof. Housewives now complain that N500.00

worth of pepper for instance is no longer enough for a pot of soup for a family of four. While transporters are afraid to go to the North because of insecurity, Northern farmers are groaning too as traders from the South have not been going up North to buy the produce. Most crop farmers and those dealing in livestock in the North are fleeing their land en masse and migrating to neighbouring countries because of the crisis.

In September 2013, the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) had warned that Sahel States in Northern Nigeria as are faced with severe food insecurity. The release mentions, "Poor families have used up their food stocks and are facing high food prices awaiting the next harvest." Alarmingly, it points out that over 1.4 million children in the region are at risk of severe malnutrition in 2013. In certain products regrettably, the country's ambitious Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) seems to have been hijacked by unscrupulous operators across the country's borders.

According to the recently released World Bank's Food Price Watch, (2014), Food price shocks can be responsible for the origination and continuation of conflict and, more generally, political instability. Increasing empirical evidence shows that international food prices and the domestic pass through to local markets of these international prices has a significant role in all types of conflict, from interstate wars to civil wars, regime breakdowns, and communal violence.

The World Bank reports that in 51 riots in 37 countries over the last eight years, food was the principal consideration. In the February 2008 food riot in Cameroon, for example, between 24 and 100 individuals were killed and 1,671 were arrested in riots that reportedly paralyzed the capital. The riot was triggered by frustrations over rising food and fuel costs. In Buenos Aires in 2012, teenagers ransacked and robbed working-class neighborhood grocery stores in rioting that left 22 dead and more than 200 injured. In 2009, 20 people were trampled to death in a food riot in Pakistan. And as Nigerian farmers in the North are having difficulty accessing their farms owing to insurgency in that part of the country coupled with climate change effect on agriculture produce, there may be reason for fear of the unknown.

Mrs. Ayomide, a vendor at Iyana Ipaja market told *THISDAY* that since the beginning of the year, prices of pepper and tomatoes have gone up geometrically. She explained thus:

We cannot explain what is actually happening; all we see is that prices go up every day. You cannot foretell what the price of anything will be by tomorrow, what you know is the last price at which you bought it. It was not like this in the past. You just cannot predict prices and this affects our planning. This morning I had to use two tomato-paste, each sold for N40 with small dried pepper to make my stew since the cost of pepper has gone up. True, most consumers have now resorted to using pepper mixed in tomatoes paste to cook their soups because it is more economical (Ekah,et.al,2014:52).

Since the livelihood and predominant occupation of the affected people is farming, these crises have affected food production in the states. For instance In 2011 when the coordinated attacks began in Gwer West, Guma, Makurdi, Agatu and recently Kwande and Logo Local Government Areas, most farmers who produced large crops annually which had earned h sate the acronym, 'Food Basket of the nation' have either been exterminated or displaced.

The situation has grossly reduced the level of food production and as well the activities of small-scale entrepreneurs in the affected areas. Farmers, artisans, as well as businessmen who are supposed to be in their farms to tend their crops or look after their businesses have been forced out of their residents by the insurgents, thereby pushing the state to the precipice of famine, poverty and crime. With sustained violence in the northern part of the country and climate change, major cities like Enugu, Port Harcourt, Ibadan and Lagos are getting food price shocks as rising food prices bite into household budgets.

The nation is also reeling from the severe impact caused by the Boko Haram and Fulani-farmers activities. It has been reported that in Borno, Muhammed Namadi, the Borno State Farmers Association chairman said: "*Hundreds of farmers have been killed or forced to abandon rice and other crops ready for harvesting or just planted*" (The Sun editorial,2014:14). He spoke in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital and a former insurgent stronghold. Without immediate relief, farmers in Borno, who already live with abject poverty, insecurity and isolation, could also face widespread hunger. "We have suffered a great deal as farmers in the last three years," Namadi said, asking the state to provide farmers with money and equipment. "Many young and old farmers have been forced to leave their farms." Nearly 20,000 farmers have been driven from their land by both the insurgency and the military crackdown since then Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan in May 2014 declared a state of emergency in Borno and two other northeastern states, according to the Borno state agriculture commission. Entire villages have been cut off from their farmlands by military roadblocks and insurgents increasingly operate in the countryside.

In June 2014, the Chad Basin Development Authority reported that 10,000 hectares (24,700 acres) of rice paddies had been abandoned at the peak of harvesting season. Large-scale investments made into the farming and milling industries by private businesses are also jeopardy, following Customs' inability to protect the industry from the vagaries of smugglers. Small farmers consume most of the paddy produced in the nation on a sustenance basis. Several rice mills in the country have been fully or partially shut down due to lack of paddy supply, leading to unemployment and mounting losses for the entrepreneurs. These include Olam Nigeria, Ebonyi Agro Industries Limited, Ashi, Mewa, and Umza rice processing mills, and Popular Foods (Ekah, et.al, 2014:52).

Combined with persistent constraints, from fiscal to physical, Nigeria's dependence on agriculture results in food insecurity for large sectors of the population, particularly the urban poor (Singer, 1997). Population growth has also been linked to food insecurity. The current population of the Horn of Africa (HOA), currently at over 100 millions, has doubled since 1974 and is expected to increase by 40% by 2015. The increase is putting intense pressure on scarce natural resources and has resulted in growing urban migration. Despite this, vulnerable people experiencing food insecurity live primarily in rural areas. They have little political leverage, live in scattered and difficult to reach rears, and are left to deal with extreme climate conditions and a fragile ecosystem (Eme, et.al, 2014a).

Nigeria's economic performance has not been impressive over the past few decades. The trend of investment has shown performance below expectation; available data show the growth rate in fixed capital formation for 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995 were 0.16 percent, 0.38 percent, 0.05 per cent and 0.35 per cent respectively. The situation further worsened with negative growth rates -0.06, -0.08, -0.1 percent for 1998, 1999 and 2002, respectively (Eme, et.al, 2014b). This may have largely been due to the unstable macro-economic and political environment during these periods. The low rate of investment may also have been due to poor level of savings as the growth rates in savings over the same period (1998 and 1999) were negative, -1.29 per cent and 5.16 percent respectively. A review of population indicators in Nigeria shows that Nigerians population has more than doubled since 1960. Presently, based on the last census results (2006), Nigeria's population is over 140 million, showing annual estimated growth rate of over 3 per cent. The reality of this situation might not necessarily be with the absolute size of the population but, with the ability of the economy to grow commensurably and sustainable. It is then a fact that the rate of population increase in Nigeria is clearly unsustainable and directly and indirectly affects macroeconomic variables and performance.

The farming sector itself needs critical assessment. Apart from the fact that the farmers are under-earning, they are not cultivating enough; there are still enough lands not cultivated. There are a lot of issues that need resolution. Manpower is one of the issues. The older farmers are dying out, and it will be great if farming becomes a popular vocation among the youths. That should be a major structural objective we should be picking as a nation. It also requires some government policies; the use of instrument to manipulate, to control the environment. We are talking of running a free economy that means handwork; everything must run on its own. There is need to bring in a centralised planning; the communist thought of planning everything centrally – what government used to do and which we are moving away from. Government needs to look at the whole picture because the farmers in their small scale cannot see the whole picture; they can see what they farm out. But sometimes it is better when there is more information available to them, if the government helps them to decide what to plant and provide information on soil and market. Government needs to intervene with purchase; that is why government needs to buy or guarantee certain outputs. These are elements of central planning which will help achieve free economy. In advanced countries, government intervenes in the agriculture sector because of the need to put agriculture above all other sectors. There should be partnership between government and all other players in the agriculture sector. We have to move away from where government just tells people what to do; government must be involved and attend to needs.

Certain basic infrastructure in developed countries are lacking in Nigeria. Presently, we are still talking about power; it is basic. A lot of rural activities are based on roads, water. Certain basic infrastructure, which should not be the business of the farmers are not in place. There are some areas that are duty of farmers; that is why you see some of the farmers have become advocates of farmers. If the farmers do not give out output, farmers do not have anything. For instance, Boko Haram has stopped the flow of beans, which we need. Food processing industry should be a secured sector because of its position in the hierarchy of human needs. There should be a market that drives it, where both local and foreign producers can compete and the buyers decide by quality and not price. Farmers are subjected to the hardship that people are

complaining of because they are the manufacturing industry for the agricultural products. Farmers are in the agricultural chain, but the manufacturing environment is not conducive for them. They are faced by multi-taxation and unfavourable government policies. With interest rate at 20 per cent on paper, if you go and borrow, you end up with about 30 per cent. Foreign companies will come with cheaper products because of this. The environment is very bad for food processing.

### **Recommendations**

With no immediate help insight, different approaches have been advanced by persons and groups to find solutions to the end of this crisis. Many have actually called for citizen-self defence measures owing to the failure of government to look into the crisis to a near end to it. A former governor of the state and serving senator, George Akume, has described the attacks as provocative and urged the state federal governments to step up their game in protecting the lives and property of citizens. He said the attacks had led to the destruction of lives and property, including the country home of the late paramount ruler of the Tiv, Tor Tiv Akawe Torkula.

Also, communities should be enabled to defend themselves by forming armed vigilante groups in the affected villages and border communities. This group when they become operational should have their members registered and documented for easy identification. We call on President Muhammadu Buhari to rise to this security challenges by matching words with action. It is not enough to, after each dastardly attack; assure Nigerians that the government and the security agents are not on top of the situation at all. In fact, the government has failed in its primary function of assuring the security of lives and property of citizens in many parts of Nigeria.

Furthermore, the President has identified some of the situations of government which the sect has allegedly infiltrated. He should swing into action by fishing out those involved and prosecute them. He should also get at the sponsors of the insurgent group since the government's partial state of emergency in some states in the north has failed to curtail violence in those areas, it will not be out of place if he invokes full state of emergency in some troubled states in the North as a way out of the current insecurity in the land. Former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, took a similar step during his administration, in Plateau and Ekiti States. No doubt, the impoverishment of the North is traceable to the long history of insecurity in the region. This escalated under Jonathan's Presidency. The insecurity has led to mass exodus of investors from the North. The Northern elites should also broker peace in the region. It is only in peace that the region will witness development. Let the government and all the security agencies do all that is necessary to stop the continuing bloodletting in Northern Nigeria.

Across the states where these farmers/ herders crises are prevalent, there is the urgent need to broker peace between the affected communities by organising realistic peace meetings. This will go along with constitution of proactive peace building committees that will evolve workable policies that would end the crises. There is also the need to designate grazing reserves in the affected areas to prevent destruction of crops by the cows. On the issue of cattle rustling, there is the need to caution and enlighten the farmers that the cows are like veritable farms of the herdsmen which, if rustled, would negatively affect their economy. It is against this background that Plateau State governor, Hon Simon Lalong, recently met with the state leaders of the Fulani herders and the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association to end the feud between the warring parties in the state. The meeting had in attendance, Fulani community leaders and other stakeholders of the Fulanis particularly in Riyom, Jos South and Barkin Ladi, as well as the state Police commissioner. The peace building and community consultation on security which was held at the Government Lodge in Rayfield, Jos, was at the instance of the governor who is concerned about the resumption of hostilities between Fulani herdsmen and the Beroms of Riyom and Barkin Ladi local government areas resulting in series of reprisal attacks.

In the meeting, the governor emphasised the need for peaceful coexistence and tolerance. He pleaded with the Fulani delegations who were the first to be consulted in his community consultation and peace building effort to key into his open door policy and register their grievances and to also suggest recommendations which government would look into to allow peace reign in these communities. The governor further informed the delegation that he would be just and fair in dealing with issues of concern raised and that he would do all that is possible to ensure reconciliation and the restoration of peace.



Finally, delegates to the just concluded National Conference from the North-central zone of the country have made a case for the establishment of a National Grazing Reserves Commission. The delegates in a memorandum, which was jointly sponsored by Senator Iyorchia Ayu and Magdalyne Mbadzendan Dura, both delegates representing North Central and Benue State, said if the recommendation sails through, would specifically provide for the establishment, preservation and control of national grazing reserves and livestock routes. Ayu, a former President of the Senate, in a letter copied to the National Conference committees on agriculture, national security and law, judiciary, human rights and legal reforms, informing them off the development, however hinged the recommendation on the recent clashes involving Fulani herdsman and farmers across the country, where several people were reportedly killed.

### CONCLUSION

Before the March 2016 incident, Fulani herdsman regularly attacked defenceless communities without provocation and slipped back into the bushes to celebrate their victory with traditional Fulani warrior dances. Attacks by Fulani herdsman started in 2010, but it has become more rampant lately and it has taken a disturbing pattern whereby several people are killed almost every month or two, several houses and properties will be looted or burnt and women, married or single will be raped at random before being killed. The atrocities has already attracted international disapproval but has drawn little or no preventive government action except condemnation by officials and promises to assist rehabilitate the victims of the attacks.

Unfortunately, the nonchalant attitude of the Federal Government especially seemed to have emboldened the attackers to strike more frequently now than before at the nerve centre of unprotected communities in many parts of the country. The disturbing rise in Fulani ethnic militancy should be considered as a national tragedy and placed among the priority security challenges facing the country which requires prompt and accelerated military action. It should attract the attention and concern of every well meaning Nigerian who loves this country and every effort should be put in place to assist the Federal Government deal decisively with the situation before it gets completely out of control like the Boko Haram problem which started like a local conflict several years ago before developing into the huge monster it has now become.

In recent times, more than 1,000 people have been killed by Fulani herdsman in Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Bauchi, Plateau, Kwara, Katsina, Gombe and Kogi states. Apart from these frontline territories where migrant Fulani herdsman use as cattle routes on their way to Lagos, Port Harcourt and other southern parts of the country, there have been isolated clashes between farmers and Fulani nomads in some parts of the eastern, the south-south and western states arising mainly from herdsman allowing their cattle to stray into farms, destroy valuable food crops and rape women in the farms. A proper catalogue of raids or clashes between herdsman and villagers in recent times would help put into proper perspective the dangers that the nation faces from turning blind eyes and allowing Fulani ethnic armed militancy to continue in its present uncontrolled manner in any part of the country. It is obvious that the clash between the Farmers and the Cattle Herdsman is a clash of interest and values. The farmer and others live on the product of the farmers while the Herdsman also live on the product of the farmers. In the same way, the farmers need the services of the Herdsman by way of supply of meat. Since these two commodities are needed by both parties and even more of the people, effort should be made to bring the two parties to heart to heart dialogue. The cattle needed to be kept alive but not from the crops of the farmer. The state must put up a regulatory framework for the peaceful collaboration among the different parties.

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