

TERRORISM & COUNTER TERRORISM WAR IN NIGERIA



**Essays in Honour of
Lieutenant General
Tukur Yusuf Buratai**

Edited by
Pius Adejoh & Waziri Adisa

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WAR IN NIGERIA**

ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF LT.GEN. TUKUR Y. BURATAI,
NAM GSS psc(+) ndc (BD) BA (Hons) MA MPhil

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Idowu Johnson

Cattle Rustling, Herdsmen Violence
and National Security in Nigeria**Introduction**

Conflicts arising from herdsmen attacks on farmers and their host communities have become recurrent in many African countries including Kenya, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mauritania and Nigeria. These conflicts have had grave consequences for human and animal lives, properties and above all, peaceful coexistence. In Nigeria, cattle rustling and herdsmen violence have increased in recent times. This phenomenon has become a major challenge to the country's national security. Reports of bandits with automatic weapons storming herders' settlements and farms with the mission of killing people and pillaging cows proliferate (Olaniyan and Yahaya, 2016: 94). Cattle rustling inspire suspicion and mistrust between community members as well as between farmers and pastoralists. Thus, the tension and contestation arising from cattle rustling and also from land disputes make acts of vengeance inevitable (Kwaja and Abdul, 2015).

The dynamics of cattle rustling and herdsmen violence suggest that victims include large-scale, commercial livestock farmers and nomadic pastoralists who graze their cattle across the country. Cattle rustling has a global character, and clear economic consequences for countries where it is entrenched. Recent Nigerian evidence shows just how frightening it has become. Aside from estimated high figures of internally displaced persons (IDPS) and forced migrations of some victims into neighbouring countries, the estimated 300 deaths and 60,000 rustled cattle in both urban and rural settings indicate how pervasive cattle rustling has become (Egwu, 2015).

Specifically, the growing problem of cattle rustling and violent clashes between the herders and indigenous farmers across the country is the main focus of this chapter. This is because the situation has degenerated into ethnic based violence. To be sure, the strained inter-group relations between the farmers and herders have engendered a deluge of ethno-religious contradictions that find expression in spite of inter-ethnic violence in Nigeria. Rustling, including animal theft and other unchecked actions in grazing reserve areas has a different significance in the context of the perennial conflict between Fulani herdsmen and crop farmers across Nigeria. This, however threatens Nigeria's national security.

This chapter is wholly qualitative in approach. It is predominantly based on information from secondary sources. Hence, much of the data were accessed through the review of relevant texts, journals, magazines, newspapers, official publications, historical documents and the internet, which served as tangible sources of insight into the causes of cattle rustling and herdsmen violence in Nigeria and their impacts on Nigeria's national security.

This chapter is divided into five sections: Conceptual and Theoretical Discourse; The Relevance of Herdsmen in Nigeria; Causes of Cattle Rustling and Herdsmen Violence in Nigeria; Cattle Rustling and Herdsmen Violence as Major Challenge to Nigeria's National Security; Conclusion.

Conceptual and Theoretical Discourse

In this section, an attempt will be made to carefully conceptualise the term cattle rustling, herdsmen, violence and national security.

Cattle Rustling

Cattle rustling is a criminal activity involving the raiding of communities for cattle and other livestock (Adan and Pkalya, 2005:16). Cattle rustling is regarded as a form of armed banditry which is wider in scope and includes different forms of crimes such as highway robbery and gang-like invasion of settlements to confiscate wealth and properties (Cheserek, et al. cited in Momale, 2015). For Osamba (2000: 12) cattle rustling is a system of predatory exploitation of economic resources in the form of armed attacks by one group or another with the purpose of stealing livestock and not necessarily territorial expansion.

However, Cheserek et al. (cited in Momale 2015: 79) distinguish between two forms of cattle rustling:

- i. Rustling of livestock by opposing ethnic groups or clans. This form of rustling often involves a large number of people from a defined ethnic or family background. The purpose of this form of rustling is to build-up the stock of livestock wealth for the ethnic group or clan. The rustled cows are shared among the family or group members for breeding. In some situations, part of the cows may be given back to families or groups whose animals were previously rustled by the opposing parties. Examples of these forms of rustling are common in the Greater Horn of Africa, particularly countries like Somalia, Kenya and Uganda.
- ii. Rustling of cattle by criminal gangs or thieves who sell-off the stolen cows. The purpose of this form of rustling is purely criminal; it is to steal the cows and sell them off for monetary gains.

In this work, cattle rustling is seen as a large- scale theft of cattle through violent means and often involves the use of weapons.

Herdsmen

Herdsmen as a concept can be understood from the standpoint of pastoralism. Pastoralism is viewed as a livelihood system that integrates livestock husbandry with other activities; and a rational economic activity with strong social, environmental and cultural objectives (Hesse and Macgregor, 2006). There are different types of pastoralism; Nomadic, Sedentary, and Transhumance pastoralism. Nomadic pastoralism is a system of moving herds to any available pasture, often on opportunistic basis over long distances and with no fixed pattern. For Adriansen (1997) nomadic pastoralist is a pastoralist who uses migration as a means of providing feed for his livestock. Sedentary pastoralism on the other hand is keeping animals in one place most or all of the year, provisioning them with fodder (e.g. hay). Sedentary pastoralism is animal husbandry that does not involve mobility. Unlike other forms of pastoral system, transhumance pastoralism is characterised by cyclical seasonal movement of herds and herders away from a more or less stationary or settled base (Sulieman, 2013). Indeed, transhumance is a dominant mode of pastoralism in Nigeria. As observed by Bobalobi, Ogunjipe and Eguruoso (2000: 1) "a major feature of Nigeria's traditional production system is the seasonal transhumance herd migration between one geographical zone to another, in search of natural pasture, crop residues, water supplies and disease-free environment; and to avoid conflict with arable crop farmers". Thus, herdsmen are basically cattle herders. However, the concept of herdsmen has a wide spectrum that encapsulates herders of camel, sheep, ox, zebra and many other mammals. Thus, the context in which herdsmen is used in this work is that they are cattle breeders who freely graze in specific areas; and when grazing conditions become unfavourable, they migrate elsewhere.

Violence

Violence as a concept means different things to different scholars, depending on the nature of what is being studied. The concept often serves as a catch all for every variety of protest, militancy, coercion, destruction, or muscle flexing which a given observer happens to fear or condemn (Tilly, 1978 cited in Alanamu, 2005). Wolf (1969) conceived violence as the illegitimate and unauthorised use of force to effect decisions against the will or desires of other people in the society. Violence is the aggressive use of physical or psychological force to achieve a goal. Violence also involves the abusive or unjust exercise of power. Violence may become destructive, not only to the immediate parties in conflict but to other members of the society who may not be directly connected with the conflict (Omah, 2013). Thus, this work sees violence as the use of force to settle disputes which is very destructive to societal values. For Nwanegbo and Ochanja (2014) violence includes "crime" against persons such as premeditated and un-meditated homicide, assault and rape. It also includes international deaths and injuries arising as the consequences of war including youth violence.

National Security

There is no universally accepted definition of security, as various scholars define it in various ways, depending on their intellectual and ideological orientations. However, Imobighe (2001) defined the concept of security from a realist perspective which is in a narrow military term, and concentrates on the various forms of military response in the management of threats to security. For Imobighe, security implies the build-up of a formidable military defence to protect the territorial integrity of the state from both internal and external violation. On the other hand, Nnoli (2006:1) argued that national security as a concept seems to have acquired a mystique even mysterious perception. This is because nations and empires construct it to suit their quest for action, especially for the action of self-preservation, which is carried out by arbitrariness, secrecy, spying, repression, and behind the scene of operations. Nnoli notes that during the Cold War national security was conceived in the form of protecting the pattern of politics, which made it easy for enemies to be clearly identified and arms procured to deter the visible enemy. With the end of the Cold War, many problematic issues such as terrorism, insurgency, ethnic conflicts, and the activities of armed criminalised groups have continued to shape the national security question. The dynamic nature of national security, according to Tsuwa and Okoh (2016: 465) necessitated it to be considered as the protection of the people in their physical, mental and social-political conditions. It is a process of guaranteed safety, which is intended to prevent the citizen, not only from elimination, but from maltreatment, deprivations, social inequality and general instability. National security is therefore, a product of security which begins with an individual that desires and works towards protection and preservation, so as to transform this to the societal or national realm (Tsuwa and Okoh, 2016). For Dokubo (2011), national security is the ability of nations to prevent all forms of threats to their survival, ranging from external aggression to threats of economic, political and environmental insecurities while grappling with the challenges of nation building and good governance. In this work, national security is about the confidence that people of a state have in the leadership and national institutions; that their interests can be protected against any act of violence.

Theoretical Discourse

Two theories are germane to this study. The first is a theory of eco-survivalism; while the second one is the frustration and aggression theory. The theory of eco-survivalism is premised on the fact that the rising temperature of the planet represents a common crisis for humanity, hence a threat to security and peace. The hotter the seasons and the more prolonged it remains, the more it affects local conditions (local climates) and their rainfall, which in turn affects vegetation and animal life. The cumulative effect represents a threat to the survival of humanity in general (Bakut, 2006: 239). Okoli and Ayokhai (2015: 231) argued that the theory of eco-survivalism has its epistemological foundations from (i) philosophical existentialism, (ii) eco-violence/eco-scarcity perspective of the environmental security thesis, and (iii) the general political ecology theory. Thus, changes in climatic condition are a major trigger of violent conflicts. Climate change affects the

socio-structural conditions of a person in terms of the quality of resources available to them; and in the event of this it could result in violent conflict as well as an authoritarian attitude (Fristische et al. 2012). The theory holds that the Fulani pastoralist is an estranged player in an ecologically-cum-structurally hostile and indifferent environment where he has to struggle to survive. The old patterns of transhumance practiced by the Fulanis have had to change; the Fulanis who may have passed through a region or stayed for a limited and defined period of time now stay permanently. In other cases, they move into new areas they have not used before. For the Fulani pastoralist, this struggle is an existential imperative. Thus, he has to take his destiny into his own hands, even if that means going violent in a desperate attempt to defend or redeem his endangered livelihood (Okoli and Ayokhai, 2015).

The frustration and aggression theory is a framework of analysis which deals with expectations and realisations, and the resultant conflicts and violence when the expected goals are less than the actualised goals. The theory points to the difference between what people feel they want or deserve, to what they actually get. The theory emphasizes the outcome of relative deprivation which Gurr addresses as:

The greater the discrepancy, however marginal, between what is sought and what seems attainable; the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result (Gurr, 1970: 24).

In essence, the feeling of disappointment may lead a person to express his/her anger through violence that will be directed at those he/she holds responsible or the people who are directly related to them.

In applying the two theories to this study, climate change puts pressure on the herders to move into other regions leading to localised conflicts and tensions. The aggressive behaviour of contemporary herders is due to the high level of frustration experienced from cattle rustling as well as the pressures of climate change. A typical Fulani-pastoralist scarcely cares to live when the survival and sustenance of his herd come under serious threat. This probably explains the scale of aggression and vindictiveness that the Fulani pastoralists often manifest in their disputes with sedentary farming communities (Okoli and Ayokhai, 2015). Apart from this, the Fulani pastoralist feels unprotected by the state in terms of land resource governance. More so, he reprehends the activities of settled crop farmers whom he perceives of usurping his ecological sphere. In this context, he sees the crop farmer's encroachment on his grassland or attack on his herd simply as an "invitation to war" (Abass, 2012: 331). Clearly, revenge missions of the Fulani pastoralist result in a cycle of violence. In other words, the basic source of frustration experienced by both parties is traceable to climate change, which is caused by human and natural factors (Olaniyan et al. 2015: 56).

The Relevance of Herdsmen in Nigeria

The roles and contributions of herdsmen to food security, environmental sustenance, economic stability and security and security monitoring in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. The March 2003 Report of the Presidential Committee on Livestock, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (March 2003) which comprised representatives of government, research institutions, the academia, development and technical institutions, producers organisations and eminent Nigerians estimated Nigeria's livestock population as at 2001 as follows: cattle, 15.6million; sheep, 28.69million; goats, 45.26million; pigs, 5.25million, poultry, 118.59million and horses, donkeys and camels at 1million (Muhammad-Baba and Tukur, (2015:195). This shows that livestock production contributed to about 6% of Nigeria's Cross Domestic Product. Nigeria's abundant livestock resources have continued to provide livelihood for millions of people.

Specifically, livestock breeders are one of the primary sources of the food in Nigeria, particularly for the urban areas of the country. Indeed, the role of herdsmen has become increasingly important due to the strong historical, socio-political and cultural alliance that has been formed by the Fulani and Hausa, who are now called Hausa-Fulani in academics and in socioeconomic realities, as they form one of the majority ethnic group in Nigeria. Fulani pastoralists and herdsmen have been relevant to the dietary existence of Nigeria. Their ability to domesticate cattle, sheep and goats have placed them in a strategic position in the Nigerian society, as over 180 million Nigerians depend on their supply of meat, especially red meat for the dietary needs of the Nigerian population. In addition, Nigeria has the largest population of livestock in West Africa and Central Africa. Livestock amounts to about 26% of the agricultural GDP' and about 10% of the Nation's GDP. Meat, milk and butter are important nutritional products derived from the animals, while hides and skins are important foreign exchange earners (Momale, 2015: 76).

Similarly, it has been observed that milk consumed in Nigeria is either imported or industrially processed here in Nigeria. Yet, the herdsmen still hold on to their relevance in their supply of dairy products such as milk and cheese, as rural population still prefer the milk supplied from the cattle of the herdsmen. The existence of highly migratory herdsmen in Nigeria, should be seen as a prospect towards the Nigerian nation building process; because their influx into different regions of Nigerian due to the ecology, geographical variations and herding calendars, tentatively provides a platform for inter-group relations. Even though their presence in what is now known as central Nigeria or Middle Belt is historically coloured with aggression and inter-group conflicts, their presence there and in other parts of Nigeria can be arrested as a platform for fostering unity and prosperity (Ogbogbo, 2016). In fact, the local elites clearly have relationships with the Fulanis who keep cattle for them. Such interdependence may be described as symbiotic, in which the two communities form host-client or host stronger relationships with one another. However, the reverse has been the case in recent times.

Cattle Rustling and Herdsmen Violence in Nigeria: Explaining the Phenomena

Cattle rustling and herdsmen violence have been a common phenomena in Nigeria. The growing phenomenon of cattle rustling is one of the transformations from the hitherto Fulani cultural practice of testing a person's personal bravery and prowess in bloody warfare involving various groups and actors. This transformation has seen the emergence of well-coordinated and well-funded banditry in virtually every state in the northern area, with the Fulani ethnic group often considered at the epicenter of the scenario because of its deep involvement in pastoralism (Olaniyan and Yahaya, 2016: 96). It is important to emphasise that cattle rustling is an age-old and deeply - entrenched feature of pastoralist livelihoods, which fostered, competition between groups that found themselves in harsh and delicate environments. Thus, the Fulanis have practiced cattle rustling for many years as a cultural pattern of showing prowess and of restocking depleted stock. Among Nigerian pastoralist groups and communities, therefore, there is nothing new about cattle rustling; the practice is driven by different needs, which may include the need for cash, some ethnic groups' need for meat, or as a means of revenge for damaged crops (Egwu, 2015: 22). This age-old practice is not a militarised affair or armed confrontation. Over the past decade, however, cattle rustling has been transformed into a vicious criminal activity, far beyond a quasi-cultural practice that had important livelihood enhancing functions, and far beyond the low-intensity conflict that had previously defined the relationship between farmers and grazers (Egwu, 2015).

The manifestation of cattle rustling and herdsmen violence is a complex issue. This is why it is imperative to carefully analyse what triggers it. One of the contributing factors for cattle rustling as a form of organised crime is the quest for wealth accumulation. This syndicated criminality is what Kwaya (2014) referred to as "underground economy", which is linked to the political economy of some agrarian societies. An underground economy thrives on secrecy and the accumulation of tax-free wealth. Thus, the shadow of the economy in this case acts as an outlet for stolen cows and brings in a lot of cash (Olaniyan and Yahaya, 2016).

It is imperative to examine the effects of small arms and light weapons proliferation as one of the factors fuelling cattle rustling and banditry. The problem of cattle rustling is worsened by the rapid build-up of SALWs in the communities and regions affected by conflict, especially in the African Sahel region, which has led to a proliferation of arms caused by a lack of successfully-implemented disarmament programmes. More often than not, targeted groups merely cross porous borders, acquiring new identities in the process. This occurs particularly across communities that straddle national borders, as found in states like Adamawa and Borno, both of which share borders with other countries in the Sahel. The arms flow easily into the hands of non-state actors in both urban and rural areas, thereby fuelling crimes and rural banditry. The difficult terrain of many rural areas, coupled with poor communication, a lack of socioeconomic infrastructure, and poverty aggravate the situation, transforming it into the ideal space for rustling, smuggling, and

small arms trade; these conditions also provide potential routes for terrorist activities. The conditions have been exacerbated by the absence of the state, effectively encouraging rustlers to undertake raids with utter impunity (Egwu, 2015: 46). It is this complicated issue that has sprung up violence with great consequences.

The presence of large swaths of forest reserves that are generally out of the reach of the Nigerian security operatives is another contributing factor in the cattle rustling business. Most of the rustling activities take place in state-owned reserves such as the Kamuku, Kiyabana, and Fagore forests in Northern Nigeria. The forests offer perfect locations for the criminals to hide out from security forces. The reluctance of the Nigerian security operatives to enter these forest areas seems to be largely due to inefficiency, collaboration, and corruption. Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016:98) observed that the Nigerian security operatives are ill equipped and ill motivated; in contrast, the criminals are well armed and motivated. In addition, the security forces and the rustlers are often in cahoots. This seems obvious given the open manner of rustling and the reluctance of the security operatives to act, even when provided with intelligence by the local residents.

Similarly, the failure of the grazing reserve policy is attributed to the crises of pastoralism and herdsman violence. It is obvious that nomadic pastoralists are implicated in the rising phenomenon of cattle rustling and rural banditry, both as perpetrators and as victims. However, the popular perceptions shared by non-pastoralist groups portray the Fulani Herdsmen as belligerent, as evidenced by their movement with deadly weapons; that is sometimes their response to the menace of rustlers targeting their own cattle; the cattle not only constitute their primary economic interests, they also define their economic, social, and cultural identity. Insufficient attention has been paid to the threat posed to pastoralism over the years by the failure of the grazing reserves policy, and the overall threats to pastoralism that define the anxiety facing pastoralists in general and pastoralist transhumance (Egwu, 2015). In the same vein, the scourge of Boko Haram insurgency has made grazing activities in many parts of the Northeast very hazardous. This is also true of the incidence of cattle rustling in the far North, which has equally necessitated the southward movement of herders in the central region. The concentration of grazing activities in central Nigeria has resulted in high pressure on land resources in the area. It has, more importantly, raised the stakes of ecological consultation between the two communities of land users-herders and crop farmers. More often than not, the crop farmers and herders are at loggerheads over competitive land access, control and use (Okoli and Ayokhai, 2015: 236). Two issues are deducible from this scenario. One is that the crops cultivated close to Fulani homesteads were eaten by their cattle, thereby leading to low yield and low income for the farmers and thus causing anger and frustration. At times, the farmers killed animals found on their farms. Secondly, the Fulanis retaliated by either driving away the farmers or attacking them in return. Thus, the growing feelings of frustration between the herdsman and farmers are very feasible, leading to violence.

More importantly, the unfavourable climatic condition further explains the phenomena of herdsman and farmer conflicts in contemporary Nigeria. Climate change, especially the challenge posed by desertification and erosion, has contributed to the violence. It is said that the desert is expanding by a kilometer every 35 years. This has affected the availability and fertility of soil for crop farmers. It likewise affects the availability of pastures for grazers, who have increasingly been forced to move southward in search of pastures. Also, gully erosion and the washing off of topsoil have affected both the size and fertility of land available to agricultural farmers in the states in the north-central and southeastern parts of the country. It is a situation that increasingly intensified competition for land and water resources among the farmers and herdsmen (Egwu, 2015).

Another principal cause of the conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria is the non-responsive nature of government and security agencies to curb the increasing conflict. Government agencies like the National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA) charged with the responsibility of arresting such conflicts from escalating into crises has not been efficient enough in that capacity. Also, they have not been productive in their responsibility of providing first-hand information to many other government apparatus in the bid of finding a lasting solution to these problems. Thus, the lack of government security agencies in responding quickly to address such ugly situations constitutes a trigger for criminal acts for cattle rustlers; which eventually aggravate farmers and herdsmen violence. To be sure, the lack of state-provided security, in turn, fuels criminality, violence, and general insecurity.

Furthermore, herdsman and farmers conflict can be located in the ever present ethnic distrust which have beclouded Nigerian inter-group relations over the years. In the North central region, both the Hausa and Fulani are associated with the Islamic oligarchy, in contrast to the indigenous who are predominantly Christian and perceive themselves as being marginalised. Thus, in Benue in 2013, irate youths invaded and destroyed the Sabo market because its Hausa traders were considered the kith and kin of the Fulani herdsmen. In the same vein, the Benue State government reported the Fulani aggressors directly to the Sultan of Sokoto in 2011. Indeed, many people of the Middle Belt champion and perceive their political cause as a resistance to the Hausa/Fulani ethnic conglomerations of northern Nigeria. Even if there were no explicit religious causes of the attacks, there is an underlying religion-based context of relationships which contributes much to the formation of opposing identities. This historical and ethno-religious dimension makes the stakeholders in cattle conflicts vulnerable to manipulation by politicians, both during elections and while these politicians are in office (Olayoku, 2016: 72).

Cattle Rustling and Herdsmen Violence as a Challenge to Nigeria's National Security

The phenomena of cattle rustling and herdsmen violence have devastating effects on the socio-political and economic development of Nigeria. Cattle rustling and herdsmen violence constitute a serious impediment to peace and stability of the country. In addition, the herdsmen and farmer crisis, which are not totally free from religious colouration have only added more challenges in answering the longest standing security and unity questions in Nigeria. This has led to fragmentation and loss of social cohesion; which has resulted in limited social capital, social trust, a sense of belonging, and an embrace of the principles of hospitality.

In Northern Nigeria, cattle rustling has become a major security challenge. This problem has become more visible and more severe in recent years. The rise in cattle rustling has been accompanied by increasingly frequent communal conflicts, especially in central Nigeria. (see Table 1) Cattle rustling inspires suspicion and mistrust between members of a particular community, as well as between farmers and pastoralists. Arising from the above, cattle rustling and herdsmen violence has led to humanitarian consequences, including loss of livelihoods, population displacement, loss of life and property, and a decline in rural productivity and agricultural output. Loss of livelihoods in turn exposes the affected population to aggravated material destitution, exemplified in hunger, disease and malnutrition. Population displacement involves abrupt dislodgement of rural populations from their localities of original abode and optimal productivity. There has been a mass sack of households by marauding Fulani militants in places like Agatu in Benue state, Wukari in Southern area of Taraba State, Obi in Nasarawa State and Barkin Ladi in Plateau State. The displaced populations are forced to undertake a refugee-like sojourn that further exposes them to stiffer socioeconomic ordeals (Okoli and Ayokhai, 2015: 238).

Table 1: Estimated Incidence of Cattle Rustling in North-Central Nigeria, 2013-2015

State	No. of Cattle Rustled	No. of Human Casualty
Plateau	28,000	254
Nasarawa	25,000	70
Benue	8,680	2,500
Kwara	1,640	150
FCT	1,500	07
Total	64,820	2991

Source: Okoli, A.C. (2015). "Pastoral Transhumance and Dynamics of Social Conflict in Nasarawa State, North Central Nigeria" in Kuna, M.J. and Ibrahim, J. (eds.), *Rural Banditry and Conflicts in Northern Nigeria*. Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development.

Similarly, the limited security provided to rural areas is responsible for the extensive violence and criminality. It is very clear that the primary challenge hinges on the state's

inability to effectively provide security in the hinterlands. The lack of state-provided security, in turn, fuels criminality, violence, and general insecurity. Across more local government areas where conflict and insecurity thrive as a result of criminality fuelled by cattle rustling, the state's inability to check and contain violence is viewed as an obstacle to protecting people, livelihoods, and economic development. Thus, individuals' access to arms facilitate cattle rustling and herdsmen - farmer conflict. The implication is the inflow of small arms and light weapons in the conflict zones; which further aggravates communal conflicts and violence. The consequence of SALW is the wanton destruction of property and the threat to human lives. Innocent citizens are in most cases the victims of violence. Apart from the termination of human lives, Fulani herdsmen assaults with SALWs have caused much killings and destructions of properties worth millions, leading to thousands of displaced persons, and also the loss of confidence not only by the inhabitants of the ravaged areas, but to the entire communities. A timeline of Fulani herdsmen and farmer clashes in Nigeria as compiled from various news headlines by (Eyekpimi, 2016) and updated by the author offers the devastating effects of the violence to Nigeria's national security (See Table 2).

Table 2: Cases of Major Herdsmen/Farmers Clashes in Nigeria, 2014 - 2017

Date	Place	Impact
September 30, 2012	Isoko North Local Government Council in Delta State	A Fulani herdsmen had been accused of murdering one Benjamin Chegue on his farm, the Director of Personal Management in Isoko North Local Government Council in Delta State
April 5th, 2014	Galadiman village	Assailants opened fire on community leaders and residents that were meeting in Galadiman village. At least 200 people were killed and an unknown number were injured in the attack.
February 18th, 2016	Okokoto village in an Agatu Local government Area of Benue State	Five persons were killed by Fulani herdsmen.
March 5th, 2016	Agatu local government area of Benue State. These communities include; Aila, Akwu, Adagbo, Okokolo, Ugboju, Odugbeho, Ogbaulu, Egba and Obagaji.	About 500 persons were killed by the rampaging herdsmen.
April 12th, 2016	Gashaka Local Government Area of Taraba State	Fulani herdsmen attacked two villages in this Local Government
April 19th, 2016	Twenty-five local government areas in Delta State grounded activities on the Benin-Asaba Expressway.	Herdsmen allegedly killed over 23 persons. Interestingly, the police recovered 20 AK-47 rifles, 70 dane guns, 30 double-barrel guns and over 1,000 live ammunition, mostly from Fulani herdsmen during this period.
	Iyana Offa, Atagba, Lapata and	Farmers alleged that a group of Fulani

April 21st, 2016	their surrounding communities in Lagelu Local Council Area of Ibadan, Oyo State	armed men attacked their communities at night, injured a guard and carted away valuables.
April 25th, 2016	Seven villages in Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State.	Fulani herdsmen reportedly killed about 40 persons.
June 16th, 2016	Ossissa community in Ndokwa east local government area of Delta state.	A 45-year-old renowned farmer was shot by gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen.
June 20th, 2016	Benue communities such as Ugondo, Turan, GaboNenzev - in the Logo Local government Area.	At least 59 deaths have been recorded following recent attacks by Suspected Herdsmen.
December 24th, 2016	Goskia Village in Southern Kaduna.	Suspected Fulani herdsmen killed 11 people and injure 15 people.
March 12th, 2017	Ako Community in Mbalagh, District, Tombo Buruku Local Government Area, Benue State.	9 persons including head of Ako Community were killed by Fulani herdsmen.
March 27th, 2017	Obio Usiere in Eniong Abatim, Odukapni, Local Government Area, Cross Rivers State.	10 people were killed by Fulani herdsmen; 3500 were also homeless.
April 15th, 2017	Asso Village in Jema'a Local Government Area, Southern Kaduna.	No fewer than 13 people were killed by Fulani herdsmen, including a parish priest, Reverend Father Alexander Yayock.
May 18th, 2017	Atam Uku, in Oyigbo Local Government Area, Rivers State	Fulani herdmen killed 2.
May 24th, 2017	Abraka, Ethiopie East Local Government Area, Delta State	Fulani Herdsmen killed one and injured 3 policemen.

Source: Eyekpimi, O. (2016). "History of Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers Clashes in Nigeria", www.infoguidernigeria.com; updated by the author from Major Nigerian Newspapers.

The table above shows the gross inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the state security system in the face of violent outrages. It is also posing a serious threat to the nation's corporate existence. In addition, it has the potential of warding off foreign investors and creating a negative image about Nigeria. Above all, it retards economic development and national development, and has blacklisted and elevated Nigeria to the status of a terrorist nation. This why the 2015 Global Terrorism Index categorised Fulani militants as the fourth deadliest militant group in the world with a record killing of 1229 people in 2014. Apart from internal security issue, cattle rustling and herdsmen violence have a negative impact on food production. Rural productivity and agricultural output have been particularly devastating. With the mass exodus of farmers from areas affected by Fulani attacks, there is a colossal decline in agricultural production and output in those areas. This has been demonstrated by the relative shortage of farm produce in the rural and urban markets of central Nigeria (Okoli and Ayokhai, 2015). Thus, farming activities were seriously disrupted in the affected areas; and this has spread to almost all the regions in Nigeria. This has implications for food security, nutrition, health and food price stability, both locally and regionally.

Finally, the future security threat of cattle rustling, herdsmen and farmers violence in Nigeria may include the internationalisation of the act. This may be possible because of poor border security and weak policing capabilities. It has been observed that most of these herdsmen migrated from Nigeria, Mali, Senegal and Cameroon. Some people have labelled the herdsmen as foreigners. It is very difficult to correlate the activities of Boko Haram Jihadists to that of the Fulani herdsmen, but the use of sophisticated weapons of both groups no doubt give suspicion to their collaborative act. In this kind of environment and scenario, international connection is aptly suited. On the other hand, due to the ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol; which has given the right of free movement to citizens of member countries, the Nigerian government cannot stop non-citizens from grazing their cattle across the country. The implication is that foreign herdsmen can serve as agents of terrorism. This will further aggravate the activities of domestic terrorist in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

It is evident in this chapter that there is a clear connection between cattle rustling, herdsmen violence and security challenge in Nigeria. The rise in cattle rustling has been accompanied by increasingly frequent communal conflicts, especially in North-central Nigeria. The phenomenon has spread to the southern part of Nigeria, as witnessed in herdsmen clashes with local farmers. The tension and contestation arising from cattle rustling as well as from land disputes makes an act of vengeance inevitable. The implications of cattle rustling and herdsmen violence in Nigeria are enormous, and undoubtedly constitute a serious impediment to peace, stability and development of the nation. They also hinder the conditions necessary for entrenching a united, strong and virile country. Apart from the fears, anxieties, and uneasy inter-ethnic group relationship they impose on the polity, cattle rustling and herdsmen violence constantly fan ethnic hatred and disharmony.

Arising from the above, this paper suggests some policy recommendations to address the phenomenon of cattle rustling and herdsmen violence in Nigeria. These include:

1. The root cause of cattle rustling should be investigated. A holistic understanding of the phenomenon will provide a permanent solution.
2. Cattle rustling can be prevented and controlled through governmental firmness and enforcement of criminal law which include arrest, prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators of cattle rustling related violence.
3. Government should deploy security agencies to the forests that serve as hideouts for the marauders. Thus, the forests must be governed and the illegal users must be dislodged and permanently prevented from controlling the spaces.
4. Constant security surveillance is another measure of combating cattle rustling. Therefore, government should ensure that the demand and supply chain as well as the operational routes, markets, networks, syndicates and infrastructures of cattle

rustling are systematically identified and dismantled so as to do away with the criminal practice.

5. The Federal Government should ensure the promulgation and efficient enforcement of laws and policies to govern transhumance practice and harmonise farmer/herder relations. Farmer/herder violence remains a major challenge to the nation in our time. Efforts to understand the challenge and seek ways to meet it, must continue. Governments, community and religious leaders, NGOs, individual citizens and the media all have a part to play.
6. There should be a good mechanism for stakeholder participation in the transhumance process and an early warning system in the event of change in climate cycles, conflict eruption and disease outbreak that will necessitate sudden migration of herds and movements.
7. State and local governments should earmark and protect grazing land in all LGAs where pastoralists seasonally traverse with their cattle.
8. The government should establish a commission for the control of small arms and light weapons. Individuals' access to arms facilitates cattle rustling and farmer/herder violence.
9. The influx of foreign nomadic pastoralists or herdsmen into Nigeria should be controlled. The Ministry of Interior should interrogate the matter in collaboration with relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and neighbouring countries.
10. Government needs to address problems arising from lack of access to education, poverty, joblessness and youth unemployment. These problems create conditions to be involved in criminal activity and violence.

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