

Review Article

Pastoralist Transhumance and Conflicts in the Sahelian zone of the Nigeria-Niger Borderlands

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Abstract: Pastoralism has been an old practice in the Sahel region of West Africa. In recent years, pastoralists in Nigeria have increasingly been migrating on seasonal transhumance southward from the neighboring countries especially Niger Republic in search of better grazing conditions. This has increased pressure on farmlands which instigate farmer-herder conflicts. These conflicts occur mainly between farmers and pastoralists, but also between pastoralist groups themselves. However, there has been a shift in these conflicts recently to involve traditional institutions and in some cases the local authorities along the borderlands. The involvement of local institutions in the conflict has created an incentive for local actors, particularly pastoral community-based groups in responding to these violent threats. As pastoralists are mobile, these conflicts became difficult to contain and thus, spill across borders. Consequently, the conflict has now transformed into an urbanized regional conflict that involves some major cities along the Nigeria-Niger borderlands; Sokoto, Zamfara, and Katsina on the Nigerian side and Dosso, Taho, and Maradi in the Niger Republic. These areas are now experiencing an unprecedented growing wave of violence that has become complex and escalated into a hydra-social conflict. This research aims to investigate how the fluidities of the Nigeria-Niger borderland intensified armed conflicts between the local pastoral organizations and the sedentary population spreading to some urban cities along the borderlands.

Keywords: Pastoralism, conflict, Sahel, Nigeria, Niger.

I. INTRODUCTION

Recent years have witnessed an increase in violent conflicts involving pastoralists in some parts of Nigeria's Northwest. They often take the form of banditry and cattle rustling. This is now transforming towards reappraisal attacks and counterattacks, targeting mostly, Fulani settlements *Ruggage* and their cattle. These are of increasing concern to the two countries. A preliminary investigation of Nigeria-Niger border areas confirms that growing criminality across the borderlands is mainly caused by the degradation of the ecosystem. The competition for control over access to water and pasture is a primary driver of the clashes among these groups. This tension is often aggravated by weak enforcement of the rule of law, and political manipulation by local institutions as well as actors. Climate change, on the other hand, has become a global issue in recent times. The effects of climate change are increasingly becoming serious, especially in the Sahelian zone of the Nigeria-Niger borderlands. It poses a threat to all sectors of the socio-economic development of the two countries, including the natural ecosystems and security of life and property. The changing climate in the region increased the growing wave of droughts and desertification with a negative impact on agriculture which has been the mainstay of the region's economy (Watts, 1983 p. 373).

In recent years, pastoralists in the Sahel have increasingly been migrating on seasonal transhumance southward from the neighboring countries especially Niger Republic into Nigeria in search of better grazing conditions. This has increased pressure on farmlands which instigate farmer-herder conflicts. Owing to this, vast land areas along the Nigeria-

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Niger Borderlands covering the Nigerian states of Borno, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, and Kebbi are experiencing a growing wave of pastoral transhumance across borders (Hassan & Jauro, 2005: 125). Violent conflicts involving pastoralists have escalated in parts of West Africa and the Sahel zone in particular, in recent years, claiming thousands of lives across the region. These conflicts mostly occur along the borderlands of the Sahelian countries and are primarily driven by a competition for land, water, and pastures for the pastoralist (Omotola & Idayat, 2015; UNOWAS, 2018). In line with this, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) established a protocol in 1998 which is meant to regulate transhumance and its resultant consequences among the Member States (ECOWAS, 1998:5). The assumption is that cross-border crime was perpetuated by transhumance and it should be curtailed if not stopped completely through bilateral agreements.

Researches indicate that Pastoralists are both victims and actors in these cross-border conflicts. These violent conflicts often occur at known flashpoints, in zones of insecurity (e.g. Sahelian parts of Nigeria, Niger, and Mali). These conflicts mainly occur between farmers and pastoralists, but they also occur between pastoralist groups themselves or involve other actors such as fishermen and illegal miners (Momale, 2015; UNOWAS, 2018:13). However, there has been a shift in these conflicts recently to involve traditional institutions and in some cases the local authorities along the boundaries. The involvement of local institutions/traditional rulers in the conflict has created an incentive for local actors, particularly community-based groups including *Lakuruje*, *Miyetti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN)*, and vigilante groups in responding to these violent threats (Oral Interviews, June-November, 2018). Frustrated with what they regard as the nonchalant attitude of the state and security institutions, these groups within the affected areas made attempts to respond to insecurity (Oral Interviews, June 2018). Furthermore, as pastoralists are mobile, these conflicts are difficult to contain and thus, spill across borders.

Border porosity in most West African countries has led to an increase in different forms of crime which has undermined social and economic activities along most of the borderlands of West Africa (Fall, 2005). It further heightened suspicion between countries, especially where the perpetrators of such criminalities could not be easily traced. The growing rate of cross-border crimes such as cattle rustling, kidnapping, and armed banditry has recently become a nightmare across different parts of West Africa, especially Nigeria (Barkindo, 2007: XV). Areas mostly affected by these crimes are border regions of frontline countries of Niger Republic, Cameroon, and Chad whose citizens in connivance with Nigerians were allegedly perpetrating such violence.

The persistent security threats posed by the activities of cross-border armed banditry involving pastoralists (both as actors and victims) and other groups that undertake transhumance across the borders in the region with varied intentions, require an in-depth investigation with a view to understanding the nature and dimension of the problem. A study of some of the problems regarding the border areas between Nigeria and the Republic of Niger would be an invaluable intellectual contribution toward understanding the challenges of insecurity. This paper, therefore, intends to look at the relationship between pastoral movements and the growing incidence of cross-border crimes amid increasing security challenges along the border areas connecting the two countries.

II. Conceptual Definition

The essence of conceptual definition in research is to give the reader the meaning of the terms and concepts used by the researcher. This helps the reader to have a clear understanding as he or she goes through the paper. Also, the conceptual definition is mainly essential as it helps the reader to understand the meaning of the issues and context in which they are used especially on the terms or concepts that may have different meanings or that may be conflicting (Bailey, Field, Froggatt & Krishnasamy, 2010). The concepts of Pastoralism, Transhumance, climate change, Conflict, and Trans-border crimes are therefore explained below.

Pastoralism

Pastoralism refers to a specific mode of economic activity by which people eke out a living and a unique way of life (culture) through the management of domesticated animals (called livestock) using natural pasture unimproved by human intervention (Pastoral peoples are those groups for whom economic activity and means of subsistence revolve around animal husbandry to the exclusion or relegation of other activities or for whom other forms of economic production for subsistence are secondary to animal husbandry. Pastoralism refers to extensive livestock breeding, which in West Africa means different breeds of cattle, sheep, goats, and camels, depending on the ecological zone (Hassan & Jauro, 2005). Pastoralism thrives best in areas and regions characterized by suitable ecological and socio-political congeniality. Ecologically, such areas include those with low, scanty, unreliable, and/or sporadic rainfall, factors which severely constrain crop production-typical the Sahelian area of northern Nigeria. Pastoralism generally requires some form of mobility of herders and their animals, often on a seasonal basis between dry and rainy seasons, and day-to-day between pastures and water points. The migration of pastoralists and their livestock between seasonal pastures is called transhumance. There is a diversity of pastoralists in West Africa; they are not homogeneous. Patterns of life among the pastoralists range from nomadic and transhumant pastoralism to settled or semi-settled agro-pastoralism. In recent years,

pastoralists in Nigeria have increasingly been migrating on seasonal transhumance southward from the neighboring countries especially Niger Republic in search of better grazing conditions. This has increased pressure on farmlands which instigate farmer-herder conflicts. Deadly confrontations have ensued between herdsmen and farmers when animals trespass on farmland.

Transhumance

Transhumance is the general management strategy that entails the coordinated movement of herds within and between extensive areas, with or without the homestead, seasonal or periodic, partial or wholly, temporary or permanently, within or between locations (Muhammed-Baba, 1993). Transhumance is undertaken to ensure maximum utilization of pasture and water but also to avoid damaging the environment.

Climate Change

Climate change refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity, and is widely recognized as the most serious environmental threat facing our planet today. According to IPCC, climate changes are attributed directly or indirectly to human activities and alter the composition of the global atmosphere over comparable periods (IPCC, 2007). From this definition, we can understand that climate change is a situation in which climate change continues in one direction at a rapid rate and for an unusually long time (lasting for several years). In the case of the present condition which most parts of northern Nigeria had been experiencing, is a steady and general increase of temperature. The result was a dramatic reduction in rain in some areas and flooding in other areas.

Conflict

Conflict refers to conditions in which one identifiable group of humans beings is engaged in conscious opposition to one or more groups because they are pursuing incompatible interests (Anthony, 2012 p. 254). It can also be defined as “physical and nonphysical harm that causes damage; pain, injury or fear.

Trans-border crime

Trans-border crime is defined as an offense that has an international dimension and implies crossing at least one national border before during or after the act (Passas, 2002). Trans-border crime is perhaps best understood as the clandestine economic activities across the border of two or more countries. The increase in Cross-border crimes in the region has instigated a crisis of security in several parts of West Africa. This is because apart from countries emerging from long periods of conflicts with their obvious security challenges, many presumed stable West African countries are confronted by several internal security challenges (including Nigeria and Niger).

III. Pastoralism and Conflict in the Sahel Region of Nigeria-Niger border

There exists a vast literature on Pastoralism in West Africa. Quite a number of these studies addressed the transformation of pastoral transhumance across the Nigeria-Niger border over time. Some of the studies indicate the symbiotic relationship that existed between pastoralists and farmers. Recently, however, there has been an increase in violent conflicts involving pastoralists, especially along border areas of West Africa. Scholars (Muhammad-Baba, 1993; Asiwaju, 2006; Barkindo, 2007; UNOWAS, 2018) mainly look at these conflicts from political and social perspectives. Very few studies consider competition for the control of natural resources as the source of these violent conflicts. In terms of approach, most of the studies did very little to consider the bottom-up approach. Furthermore, other works that are considered relevant in this field have treated the current security challenges that threaten the economy and society of the two countries concerning trafficking in human beings, insurgency, and illicit trade in drugs and arms with little emphasis on the impact of climate change and increasing pastoralist movement on the proliferation of trans-border crimes. The nexus between pastoralism, climate change, and trans-border crimes has not been adequately addressed in the existing literature which is examined below.

The Sahelian and Sudanese regions of Africa have for ages been known to possess lush pastures with traditional stockbreeding as a major economic occupation of its people. Changing climatic and environmental conditions, rapid increase in population, and urbanization of the region have gradually adversely affected this situation (Iliya, *et al.*, 2012 p. 149). Furthermore, the dwindling natural pastures in the region have led to incessant clashes between herdsmen and other farmers when the former are transiting to new pastures or seeking nutrition for their stock. These clashes are now posing serious security danger to the whole region. Those pastoralists who were being affected by the armed banditry and cattle rustling in the region turned to violence as an alternative response in the form of reappraisal attacks, burning villages, and destroying farmlands and kidnappings. Understanding the causes and patterns of these conflicts would go a long way in developing effective mechanisms that could be used in conflict resolution. The study would also be used as a tool for the promotion of peaceful co-existence among border populations in the region. This is through the use of a bottom-up approach involving the local communities and institutions to which they are “stakeholders” in the conflict. By

doing this, the research intends to target the primary actors and their strategies, to provide a new security framework that will complement the efforts of the two countries in countering the problems of cross-border crimes.

Similarly, studying the genesis of the challenges of pastoral transhumance provides the potential to influence the formulation of policy on conflict prevention, management, and resolution across border regions. By using temporary pastoral settlements (Ruggage) along transhumance corridors straddling border areas, the chapter suggests the use of a bottom-up conflict resolution strategy. Furthermore, engaging and involving local pastoral organizations and authorities such as *Ardos*, *Miyetti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN)*, as well as local Fulani organizations (*Lakuruje*), allows for closer proximity to the people who are recipients of conflict resolution and peace-building processes. This provides the opportunity and potential to bridge the gaps of access and self-belonging among the pastoral groups who engage in such crimes.

To put these issues in proper context, one needs to understand that the nature and pattern of the conflict in Northwest Nigeria are multi-faceted and can be divided into three major categories. The first category includes violence, pitting mainly ethnic Hausa sedentary farmers and vigilantes acting on their behalf against predominantly Fulani roving herders (International Crisis Group, 2020). In response, there is also a Fulani herders' sponsored militia that operates in a largely decentralized manner under local commanders' autonomous control. They are motivated by fighting on behalf of herders in their disputes with farmers. The second category is violence committed by criminal gangs involved in large-scale cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, pillage, and attacks on gold miners and traders (SWAC/OECD, 2020). The final category involves the political manipulation of the conflict situation to achieve certain political ends through targeted assassinations, kidnappings, and sponsored banditry (Interviews, July–October 2020).

Some scholars believe that the conflict has followed the traditional line of farmer-herder conflict where Fulani pastoralists encroach into farmlands through the use of sophisticated weapons, hereafter violence erupts (Olayaku 2014; UNOWAS, 2018; WANEP, 2020). Evidence on the ground however suggests the contrary. The geographical and historical trajectories of the region, being strategically located along the Sahel, provides easy ground for the growth of trade and contacts among the communities straddling the Nigeria-Niger border areas. Due to the porous nature of the borderlands, trade in small arms and light weapons among well-organized syndicates led to the proliferation of armed gangs operating from ungoverned forest areas connecting the borderlands, engaging in cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, and armed robbery (Ayissi & Sall 2005). It is in this context that we can understand that the breakdown of authority at the local and state levels has created an enabling environment for the emergence of a complex informal security sector in the region. The emergence of competing and rival armed and criminal gangs in the region in the name of vigilantism and reprisal attacks has created an ungovernable space. In as much as armed banditry has created conditions of unsecured borderlands, the activities of vigilante groups in countering the bandits further intensified the role of criminal groups in creating their governance structures. This moves into the traditional trade corridor extremely dangerous. This invariably created conditions that crippled the local economies of the neighboring border communities with food production, pastoralism, animal husbandry, and cross-border trade dropping considerably (WANEP, 2020 p. 7).

Given this situation, it is possible, therefore, to expect the prevalence of informal institutions to take over the control of grazing routes in the region thereby determining the cross-border movement of herders along the border areas. Nigeria's North West border with the Niger Republic is one of the porous border areas Nigeria had with its neighbors as it cut across well-established historical, ethnic, political, and cultural linkages that predated colonial rule (Asiwaju & Barkindo, 1993). The region has been heterogeneous with varied ecological/geographical zones inhabited by various political communities with different socio-cultural and linguistic orientations (Yaqub 2011 p. 201). Areas mostly affected by these crimes are the Sahelian border regions of frontline countries of Nigeria whose citizens in connivance with Nigeriens are allegedly perpetrating such violence. For instance, the internal conflict in some parts of northern Nigeria tends to spread across state borders because armed groups relocate/migrate to other countries when defeated/threatened by counter-insurgency efforts as seen in some parts of Sokoto, Zamfara, and Katsina states. Insurgents in these areas relocate to some parts of Niger border areas when they were attacked by Nigerian armies (International Crisis Group, 2020).

Reports by the International Crisis Group (2021), have pointed to the potential of local conflict connected to pastoralism transforming to the emergence of insurgencies and banditry and gradually spreading into local areas. The violence, as the report puts it, not only is spreading, but it is increasing in scale: animal rustling now involves entire herds, kidnappings are becoming common and targeted killings – infrequent until 2019 – are on the rise (ICG, 2021). The violence is partly fueled by a crisis of pastoralism. This crisis, which affects the border strip between Doutchi and Maradi like other Sahelian areas, stirs up tensions between ethnic groups and lays the groundwork for the emergence of insurgencies (ICG, 2021:5). The crisis of pastoralism affecting the Sahel is hitting herders hard in the regions of Tahoua, Maradi, and Dosso. Here, more than elsewhere, the expansion of agriculture, combined with increased demographic

pressure, is reducing the space dedicated to livestock. The whittling away of grazing areas and transhumance corridors complicates the migration routes of nomadic pastoralists (Muhammad-Baba, 1993:2). The growing difficulty in practicing mobile livestock raising – including transhumance – is contributing to the gradual impoverishment of pastoralists. It results in the loss, sale, or theft of animals. The reduction of cattle farming areas is leading to conflicts with other land users, especially crop farmers.

Furthermore, changing migration routes force herders to take itineraries that are less secure or with fewer watering points, at the risk of losing part of their herds. More broadly, the evolution of agropastoral relations is making the situation worse. To diversify their activities or to accumulate savings, crop farmers are becoming owners of livestock and are in turn seeking land for pasture. Land pressure is thus accentuated, causing the once-reciprocal relations between pastoralists and crop farmers to suffer. Finally, cattle rustling on both sides of the border is a major threat to pastoralists in the area. The Nigerien state is trying to regulate and protect the pastoral sector. Niger is a pioneer in the Sahel for its rural code and conflict resolution mechanisms. Most Fulani pastoralists are no longer able to live off livestock alone, and some adopt an agropastoral way of life if they can. Some Fulani are becoming more or less sedentary. Others are abandoning the pastoral world altogether. Yet they are poorly prepared for vocational retraining, and their professional prospects are limited, as they have less schooling than sedentary people. As the alternatives are few, a small number of pastoralists fall into banditry.

IV. Farmer-Herder Conflict and the 'Politics' of Grazing Reserves in Nigeria

Pastoralist-farmer conflicts in Nigeria have grown, spread, and intensified over the past decade and today pose a threat to national survival. Thousands of people have been killed, communities have been destroyed and so many farmers and pastoralists have lost their lives and property in an orgy of killings and destruction that is not only destroying livelihoods but also affecting national cohesion. Nigeria and Niger have a large pastoral population, the logic of whose livelihood is often misunderstood. Pastoralism is the main livestock production system in much of Africa, where pastoralists live in semi-arid zones. It is a historically developed strategy to cope with the uncertainties associated with climate change, the buildup of parasites, and other related challenges. Above all, it is an efficient way to produce livestock at relatively low prices through the use of non-commercial feeding stock. Historically, pastoralists have been able to meet the meat demand in West Africa with a relatively high level of efficiency without government subsidy for generations. Different methods through the use of farm residue and open-range grazing have allowed this trend to flourish. Nigeria has a landmass of 98.3 million hectares, 82 million hectares of arable land of which about 34 million hectares are currently under cultivation (Premium Times, 2018:2). In crop farming, human beings only directly utilize about a quarter of the total biomass. The other three quarters are in the form of crop residue and low-quality crop, which is not directly useful to people (Premium Times, 2018). It is this residue that cattle (ruminants) convert into meat and milk. In addition to this, cattle also utilize grasses on fallow lands, non-arable poor quality lands, open ranges, and fadama in the same manner. Pastoralists move their animals to these locations to access these opportunities. This system of production is breaking down today as violent conflicts between pastoralists and farmers have arisen and created a major national crisis in the form of banditry and cattle rustling.

Currently, Nigeria has a total of 417 grazing reserves all over the country, out of which only about 113 have been gazette (Vanguard, 2023 p. 1). However, only about 40 of them are currently available and useful to pastoralists. The long-term goal of government has always been to change nomadic pastoralists to settled and semi-settled agropastoralists and ultimately mixed farmers. Mixed farming is a system of farming in which crop growing is combined with keeping livestock for profit. The grazing reserve concept originated from a study conducted by the Colonial Government in 1954 to review the conditions of Fulani pastoralists (Hassan & Jauro, 2005). After independence in 1960, the programme was reviewed and consolidated into a comprehensive plan that included the establishment of grazing reserves in major pastoral areas in Northern Nigeria. As with virtually all Nigerian plans, however, it was never implemented even when it was integrated into the Second and then the Third National Development Plans. The fact is that, at least in the short and medium term, many herds must continue to practice seasonal migration between dry and wet season grazing areas, incorporating past harvest grazing farmland in the highly developed and ecologically sound pattern of transhumance evolved by the pastoralist over the centuries (Jibrin Ibrahim, 2017).

One of the greatest difficulties in addressing and resolving issues surrounding pastoralism in the Nigeria-Niger Sahelian region is the politicization of legal regimes and the blockages to the enactment of or implementation of laws that can redress the key challenges we have been discussing. In 2016 for example, a bill was proposed – the National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill 2016 (Jibrin Ibrahim, 2017). The Bill was aimed at actualizing the long-enunciated but yet-to-be-implemented policy of developing grazing reserves in all States in the Federation. The Bill collapsed due to deep-rooted suspicion and the argument that emerged that it would favour one group and therefore runs contrary to the principle of fairness and equity. Others argued that it would negatively affect the rights of States to dispose of their land as they deem fit. There is an emerging conflict between the constitutional principle on the free movement of persons and goods and laws emerging in some States restricting movement. In Section 41(1) of the Nigerian Constitution, it is stated

that: ‘Every citizen of Nigeria is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria and to reside in any part thereof, and no citizen of Nigeria shall be expelled from Nigeria or refused entry thereby or exit therefrom (Vanguard, 2023).’

Transhumance operates at the wider level of West and Central Africa within which the pastoralists operate in. At the regional level, Decision A/DEC.5/10/98 Relating to the regulations on Transhumance between ECOWAS Member States that: ‘All animals of the bovine, caprine, cameline, equine plus asinine species shall be allowed free passage across the borders of all Member States, under the conditions set out in this Decision.’ In Nigeria so far, four States have enacted laws or are processing bills to prevent open grazing on their territory. They are Ekiti, Taraba, Benue, and Edo States. The Benue law for example prohibits open nomadic livestock rearing and grazing in the State and the law provides that no individual or group shall, after the commencement of this law engage in open nomadic livestock herding or grazing in the State outside the permitted ranches. The immediate impact of these laws is to restrict the movement of herdsmen excessively into limited areas where they are likely to overgraze limited resources. Indeed, following the coming into effect of the Benue Law on 1st November 2017, the Nasarawa State branch of the Miyeti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN) has already spoken about a looming crisis in this regard: ‘MACBAN Chairman in Nasarawa State Mohammad Hussaini expressed concern over the situation of non-availability of grasses, other animal feeds and water to graze with about two million cattle that migrated from Benue into the State, saying that if not urgently addressed it could lead to clashes between herders and farmers’ (Daily Trust, 6th November 2017:14). The danger facing the region is that as more States block out the herders, they would be forced to concentrate in only States that agree to accommodate them but their concentration in a few States will result in over-grazing and even more destruction of crops multiplying push factors towards increased conflicts and ecological hazards.

There is a need for an effective plan for the transformation of pastoralism into settled forms of animal husbandry along the Nigeria-Niger border. The establishment of grazing reserves provides the opportunity for practicing a more limited form of pastoralism and is, therefore, a pathway toward a more settled form of animal husbandry. As the population continues to multiply and violent conflicts make extensive pastoralism more difficult to sustain, alternative solutions would be required and some planning period for conversion set aside and above all gets acted upon. Grazing reserves are areas of land demarcated, set aside, and reserved for exclusive or semi-exclusive use by pastoralists (Jibrin, 2017:2).

V. CONCLUSION

Nigeria-Niger borderland, hitherto, one of the most peaceful borderlands in Africa but recently became a theater of conflict in the form of insurgency, cattle rustling, and kidnapping. The violence is gradually affecting the sources of livelihoods of the border region: farming, trade, crafts production, etc. Pastoralism, one of the oldest occupations of the Sahel has been seriously threatened. Nigeria has one of the lowest productivity levels of livestock in the world. It is for this reason that Nigeria imports very large quantities of milk, fish, and chicken. The Nigerian herd requires sustained efforts at quality development based on a modernisation strategy that would transform the industry and move the country towards the objective of self-reliance. In recent years, pastoralists in Nigeria have increasingly been migrating on seasonal transhumance southward from the neighboring countries especially Niger Republic in search of better grazing conditions. This has increased pressure on farmlands which instigate farmer-herder conflicts. These conflicts occur mainly between farmers and pastoralists, but also between pastoralist groups themselves. However, there has been a shift in these conflicts recently to involve traditional institutions and in some cases the local authorities along the borderlands. The involvement of local institutions in the conflict has created an incentive for local actors, particularly pastoral community-based groups in responding to these violent threats. As pastoralists are mobile, these conflicts became difficult to contain and thus, spill across borders. It is therefore clear from the findings in the paper that over the past decade, there has been a dramatic explosion of violent conflicts associated with the deteriorating relationship between farmers and herders which breeds the problem of cattle rustling and rural banditry in Nigeria. There is also limited knowledge about who the perpetrators are and their motives. A comprehensive approach, therefore, is necessary to address the growing crisis associated with violence affecting pastoralism and farmers on the Nigeria-Niger border. Similarly, most communities in the prone areas have vigilante groups. Some border communities began to build partnerships with those groups on the other side of the border to form inter-border vigilante groups to reinforce security. Some other drivers of the conflict include; Negative perception: allegations of extra-judicial killings of pastoralists and banditry suspects; confiscation of livestock; burning and looting of pastoral households and forced evictions perpetrated by vigilante has resulted in reprisal attacks by the pastoralist. Finally, worth mentioning is the strong need for synergy between the two countries to harmonize their pastoral policies to safeguard the movement of pastoral communities across the Sahel. Unfortunately, the inability of these two neighboring countries to devise effective mechanisms either unilaterally or multilaterally to adequately manage their borderland space has created a vacuum manipulated by some international terrorist organizations to manipulate the local pastoral-farmer conflicts in the region.

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