

## INTERROGATING THE DRIVERS AND TRIGGERS OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*One of the objective realities in Nigeria is her heterogeneity and diversity. It is a nation-state in which religion, status, ethnicity, regionalism, age, citizenship, and indigeneship, among others, find statements. This paper interrogates the menace of violent conflict as the centrifugal forces that push and trigger insecurity which threatens the corporate existence of the Nigerian state in the 21st century. This paper not only exhaustively analyzes many scholars' and writers' views on violent conflict which are internal and external factors, but also sees conflict from the positive and negative points of view. The paper also generated questions on the nexus between violent conflict and insecurity in Nigeria, explaining their implications for the well-being of Nigeria. Relying mostly on the historical method of research, the paper identified and revealed the missing link such as systemic and structural failure of the Nigerian state, politicization of ethnic conflict, and politicization of natural resources as factors that pushed and triggered insecurity in Nigeria. The paper also focused on interrogating the 21<sup>st</sup>-century violent conflicts as major factors that drive and trigger insecurity in Nigeria. At the end of the study, the paper recommended*



*that government must be proactive in dealing with security issues and threats through modern methods of intelligence gathering and sharing among security personnel, training, logistics, motivation, and deployment of advanced technology in managing security challenges.*

**Key words:** Insecurity, Conflict, Driver Trigger

## **Introduction**

Living in a global community with changing and compelling variables that battle and wield positive, negative, or detrimental influences on the system is deeply concerning. The outcomes of the effect of these variables on the stability of such a society are uncertain if not even dicey. No society, be it pluralist or elitist, operates in isolation and without expectations. No society is devoid of the limitations of sustaining its systems such as the political, economic and ethno-religious strata. Such limitations often culminate in violent conflicts with their attendant consequences on society and development. Therefore, whether a society is monolithic, or pluralistic, violent conflict remains its anathema.

For an understanding of violent conflict, the Encyclopedia Americana (Vol. Seven, the International Version) defines violent conflicts as a state of stress or grievances caused by the experience of irreconcilable needs whether individual or societal. Violent conflicts develop from unresolved, unaddressed beef, or asphyxiate aspirations and achievements. It remains a retrospective as well as a prospective issue in society particularly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where gossip and egocentrism are endorsed and renowned.

Violent conflict has been responsible for the direct and indirect deaths of millions of civilians and has contributed significantly to the low levels of human security in the region. Nigeria has been embroiled in violent conflict as a result of poverty, political instability, retarded economic growth and other challenges to overall development that deter the enhancement of human security.<sup>1</sup>



Nigeria is a plural country with over 250 ethnic and linguistic groups as well as many other factions or sects within the body polity that must be satisfied or at least treated justly for peaceful co-existence. Thus, since independence, the country has faced several challenges in its bid to hold the different groups and factions together as one indivisible political unit or nation for proper development and progress in the nation. However, due to the complex nature of the Nigerian state and the mutual feeling of dissatisfaction and suspicion between and among the various groups in the country, some elements have over the years risen to voice their grievances; some have even taken to arms to make their cases or resentment known while holding the nation to ransom, and threatening the unity and security of the Nigerian state; hence, many lives have been lost and property worth billions of Naira destroyed in the course of violent demonstration of grievances in the country, the height of which was the case of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War of 1967-1970.

In the post-civil war period, many groups still stood up as being unjustly treated or marginalized, thus resorting to violent protests like in the case of the Niger Delta Militancy, etc. The current aggrieved groups that are on the rampage and posing serious security threats to the Nigerian states are the Boko Haram Sect, and their twin Fulani Herdsmen ravaging the country with their incessant killings and massacre of Nigerian citizens in the country even with the presence of the defence and security institutions and mechanism in the country - of course, not forgetting other criminal elements and their activities like armed robbers, thieves, rapists, internet fraudsters, among others. Hence, many conflicts and criminal activities constitute threats to the peaceful disposition and security of the nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It, therefore, becomes imperative to discuss the factors promoting violent conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria. The words “interrogating drivers and push-triggers” are here used figuratively to mean the factors promoting conflict and insecurity in Nigeria which is the main objective of this paper.



## Conceptual Clarification

### Conflict

Conflict as a phenomenon has been formulated differently by individual writers and scholars. Although some scholars see conflict from a negative viewpoint as regards its destructive and damaging effects, others view it from the positive side regarding some positive impacts and changes that conflict can bring. Accordingly, Green 2006: xvi cited in Etuk and Folashade opines that “Many sociologists and psychologists have said that it is through conflict that problems are often cleared up and unresolved problems are resolved or reconciled.”<sup>2</sup>

On the contrary, Deutsch thinks that conflict as an action, “prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures or renders in counterproductive action another with which it is irreconcilable.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, his view is from a negative perspective. It seems to be a bit exhaustive and it gives the pictures of the contending end. However, it does not comprehend or embrace the aim or an end of the conflict which might be positive impacts or changes. Hanna and Wilson as cited in Etuk and Folashade are of the view that conflict is “a struggle embracing ideas, values, and limited resources.”<sup>4</sup> Osita on the other hand views conflict as “an opportunity to change.” From these two conceptions of conflict, Folashade and Etuk, taking Wilson and Henna’s view with that of Osita state that:

*Conflict becomes a struggle that involves ideas, values, and limited resources that can create a change which is likely to be positive or better. It, therefore, implies that conflict is neither negative nor positive per se. thus, it is an attitude that determines the pattern of conflict, the strategies to deal with it as well as its end or implication on the system all of which has a lot to do with the perception of conflict.*<sup>5</sup>

The thrust and aim of this paper, regardless of many positive comments on conflict by many scholars, view the conflict from a negative



standpoint as an action or event which impedes, prevents, interferes with, injures or renders counterproductive another force with which it is incompatible. Therefore, it is mainly destructive, devastating, lethal and inimical to reasonable growth and development with its space occurrences.

### **Insecurity**

Before one proceeds with the discussion of the factors that influence and promote insecurity in Nigeria, it is relevant to know what insecurity means, specifically in the context of this paper. Many scholars have defined security in their own different words and perspectives. However, this paper will not go into examining all of those different conceptualizations or definitions of security. However, in all, one thing sticks out: insecurity cannot be discussed in concealment from security. Thus, Ade Abolurin asserts that “There is a consensus that insecurity is a social phenomenon that continues to jeopardize all-round development and democratic governance in some countries in the world, especially Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> Hence, the real and abeyant threats of insecurity to the Nigerian state make it an issue of frequent review and discussions among scholars.” Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim, also opine that “to ably define insecurity, it is pertinent to have a brief discussion on what security is.”<sup>7</sup>

Just like most concepts in the Humanities and Social sciences, the concept of security has been seen and described in many ways and perspectives by different academics and writers. With time, the concept has changed with the changing nature of events in society which threatens the safety of lives and property of the citizens of a state, and by extension, the sovereignty and cohesion of the state. Security has therefore been conceived as secularization, that is, if something can be defined as a threat to security then it can be used to provide defence for emergency measures which gives authorities more power than they would otherwise have.<sup>8</sup>



For Lawrence Freedman, a new understanding of security has emerged because of the changing nature of war over 250 years and to him security means the defence of a nation against conflicts and infectious diseases.<sup>9</sup> Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and other scholars of social contract argue that security is the most important duty of the state. This implies that the need for security as a catalyst for the growth and development of any sovereign state is fundamental because poor security systems hamper economic growth and development as investors may be discouraged from investing in the security risk area. Security, therefore, encompasses the idea of safety with the presence of peace, justice and the absence of threat and conflict which might be, among others, economically, socially, politically, ethnically, and religiously driven.<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly, Omede sees security as a compelling condition which encompasses the proportionate capability of a state to resist threats to its core values and interests.<sup>11</sup> Thus, what is essential to security here is the state with its core values and interests. It, therefore, becomes the duty or obligation of the state (which is usually represented by the government) to provide security for its citizens and properties because it is its first duty. More so, Hobbes argues that it is only the state that has what it takes to guarantee security and save society from anarchy, and since the state is represented by its government, the state should through its government provide adequate security to justify its *raison d'être* which is reason of being or purpose of existence.<sup>12</sup>

In all one can say that insecurity is the antithesis of security. Therefore, insecurity is viewed from two perspectives to include: a state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger and danger denotes the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury; a state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, and anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune.<sup>13</sup> Thus, in a situation of insecurity, those affected are ambiguous about what would happen and they cannot also protect themselves against any harm that



may happen. Hence, this paper defines insecurity as the lack or truancy of safety or the fear of uncertain anticipated harm or danger with no knowledge of preventing it or protecting oneself in the society or state of occurrence.

### **Insecurity in Nigeria: A Discourse**

By the very complex nation of Nigeria with over 250 ethnic nationalities and linguistic groups, coupled with the history of the colonial formation of the country with the myriad of unresolved differences, grievances, and interests, conflict seems to remain an inherent characteristic of the Nigerian body polity. Thus, shortly after independence in 1960, the nation was caught up in a complex web of conflicts—part of which eventually culminated in the civil war (1967-1970). With the end of the civil war and the unresolved underlying causes of the war, coupled with the continuation of the military in the political leadership of the country, grievances, poverty, and mutual suspicion, were still much pronounced in the body polity, hence, conflict was still inevitable. Thus, to political scientists and observers, it was not a surprise that the return to civilian rule or democracy in 1999 which marked the last year of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was only going to launch the country into the dawn of ‘old wine in a new bottle’ as regards conflicts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become almost synonymous with conflicts of various scales, forms, and dimensions across the different regions. It is in the light of this fact that Odozi and Oyelere assert that,

*Currently, violent conflict is launched in all segments of Nigeria. it is essential to recognize that the ferocity of conflict vulnerability differs across Nigeria’s geopolitical zones. The three regions identified with the topmost severity rates are the North East, North Central and South East regions of Nigeria.<sup>14</sup>*

Odozi and Oyelere think that every part of the country, especially North-east, North-central and South-east is enmeshed in insecurity, regardless of its peculiarity, with households in each of the mentioned



regions having peculiar security situation that differs from what is identified in the other region(s).

According to Azad, Crawford and Kaila (2018) as cited by Odozi and Oyelere,

*From 2010 to 2017, 49% of domiciliary in the North East acknowledged that at least one incident of conflict or violence against a household member was documented. In the North Central region, 25% of domiciliary experienced one or two conflict events, and in the South East region, one-fifth of the households (22%) have been instantaneously afflicted by conflict incidence or violence.*<sup>15</sup>

Apparently, from north to south and west to east, Nigeria has been plagued by violent conflicts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These conflicts assume different forms which include ethnic, religious, economic, political, and communal clashes, terrorism, militancy, youth restiveness, and electoral violence, among others.

In the North Eastern states of the country such as Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi, Taraba and Yobe the Boko Haram insurgency has been strong. Hence, Borno is the base of the Boko Haram operation. In the North Central states such as Benue, Kogi, Nassarawa, and Plateau, herders-farmer conflicts have become commonplace. In the South East, there have been pro-Biafra agitations. In the South-South there have been what is popularly known as the Niger Delta conflicts between the locals and the multinational oil firms and the federal government over oil petroleum resources and the benefits accrued to it.<sup>16</sup> In between these conflicts have been the various ethnoreligious clashes between the predominantly Muslim North and predominantly Christian South and electoral conflicts across the nation.

All of these conflicts hinder tremendously, the chances and opportunities for economic growth and development in the country, and become major sources of insecurity. To some extent, these conflicts





could have been avoided or averted. Thus, it has been argued by Eneji and Agri that:

*Resources that could have been used to improve the agricultural sector, and build industries and infrastructure to create employment, have been consumed by budget for insecurity and in the rehabilitation of displaced and injured citizens. This has made national security threats a major issue for the government and has prompted a huge allocation of the national budget to security...*<sup>17</sup>

The resultant effect of insecurity according to the foregoing is that a huge amount of money that would have been used to develop the country is used to handle the security situation, thereby aggravating poverty, hunger and the tendency for more crimes.

Eneji and Agri further assert that:

*No region has been spared the vicious scourge of conflict though their prevalence and intensity have not been the same in occurrence across the length and breadth of the nation. Thus fingers are swift in pointing accusingly to colonial legacies and the continual interplay of external and internal imperialist forces that fan the embers of violence for selfish aggrandizement. The present situation is further intensified by elements of globalization, natural disasters, the proliferation of weapons and light arms, corruption and leadership ineptitude.*<sup>18</sup>

From the above excerpt, it is clear that conflict and insecurity have not only obstructed economic growth and development in Nigeria over the years, but they also caused a diversion of huge public funds into security network operations and services to curb and check the twin vices. This huge public fund would have been used for the provision of infrastructure and the establishment of industries in the nation, which would have created several job opportunities for the teeming youths in the nation. Thus, the cost of insecurity and conflicts within the period



under study remains the nation's socio-economic growth and development. More so, many factors have been identified to be responsible for the prevailing conflicts and insecurity in the country in the above excerpt. The factors could be summed up to be; internal, external, remote and immediate. Hence, at this juncture, this paper turns its focus to its thrust which is factors that promote conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria.

Since conflict and insecurity have remained a constant menace in the Nigerian socio-political landscape affecting and disrupting many activities and developments, to tackle it, it is fundamental to pin-point those factors that birth and promote this ugly phenomenon or situation in the body polity. It is therefore important to sample some scholars' views on the various factors responsible for violent conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. J. Isawa Elaigwu, observed that ethnic consciousness can trigger violent conflict and insecurity in the society in the sense that everyone is loyal and attached to his/her ethnic group either as a social, political and economic entity, or a cultural community.<sup>19</sup> What at all it is, ethnic consciousness is based on the disparateness of one's group as contradicting to other groups. Given the objective stated above, it is often no marvel that groups form images and stereotypes of one another in the process of interaction. At times when the channels of communication become overfilled, 'self-solicitude or hostility may supervene as suspicion and mistrust are reinforced by faulty communication. In such a situation, group A not only becomes keenly aware of itself as a group distinct from B (ethnic consciousness) but also acts out the feeling of attachment and loyalty of its members in interaction with group B when the interests of both groups intersect over the same value and scarce social goods can often let to violent conflict.

Similarly, J. Isawa Elaigwu, opines that religion is a very affectional issue and a matter of primordial identity and means different things to different people. In some societies, religion has taken ideological



colouration to the extent that it provides a guide for faith, action and evaluation in private and public life.<sup>20</sup> In others, it guides only private life. For Nigerians, religion is a set of beliefs and practices based on faith, which is sacred and disregards intelligent examination.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it can quite easily trigger emotional reactions that could cause violent conflict and insecurity. In the same vein, Mike Kwanashie views violent conflict and insecurity in many African societies as a concerted connection between poverty, underdevelopment and internal violence conflicts.<sup>22</sup> The Nigerian experience to a large extent qualified these characterizations. The country has since the pre-colonial period experienced inter and intra-communal crises of various intensities and magnitude. The post-independence experience has been characterized by civil war, and regional, religious, ethnic, class and communal violent conflicts that have taken large-scale on national development. Occasionally, groups have even questioned the basis of the creation of the Nigerian state. Some of these feelings are a result of the feeling of marginalization and exclusiveness. The control of natural resources by a tiny segment of society and the hegemony of major groups over power in an environment in which power determines access to national wealth has created the conditions that trigger persistent violence conflict and insecurity. Kwanashie goes further to say that in a situation in which poverty could be defined as a lack of participation in the economy and lack of access to power and in which power is in the hands of a tiny segment of society, frequent conflict spurred by persistent poverty should be expected.

The factors behind the violent conflict and insecurity that led to military intervention in Nigerian politics and the years of authoritarian rule remain relevant today, indicating the inexorability of persistent violent conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. Also, the inability of the political elite to address some of the basic disputes in society that have accounted for the numerous divides and cleavages on which conflicts feed has made it difficult to conceive an end to these violent conflicts and insecurity.<sup>23</sup> Thus, there are various factors responsible for conflict



and insecurity in Nigeria, however these factors have been grouped into external and internal factors, immediate and remote factors.

### **Immediate Factors**

- **Porous Borders:** The porosity of Nigerian borders leads to unchecked and untracked movement into and outside Nigeria, thus making it easy for weapons to come into the country from other countries and this creates a big security challenge for the Nigerian state. The availability and the proliferation of small and light weapons coming from other countries into Nigeria have made it easy for militant and criminal groups to have access to crime. Again, the porosity of borders has led to unwarranted migrants from neighbouring countries like Niger, Lake Chad, and the Benin Republic into the country and this has promoted insecurity in Nigeria.<sup>24</sup> The aforementioned point is one of the varying positions among scholars on the emergence of the Boko Haram sect in the Lake Chad Region and North-Eastern Nigeria that has become a national threat to the Nigerian Armed Forces and other paramilitary agencies through its numerous attacks and kidnappings which have elicited consternation all over the world. The attacks and kidnappings to a certain degree have resulted in human casualties, population displacement, destruction of schools and government buildings and the devastations of an already ravaged economy in the Northeast and other parts of the country. A review of activities of Boko Haram indicates the level at which porous borders in the North-East have aided the spread of the sect to other parts of the country with violent conflict spilling over to other countries in Lake Chad Region, Niger Republic, Cameroon and Chad Republic.<sup>25</sup> Thus, this gives States government in Northeastern Nigeria more reasons to collaborate with the Federal government to adjust their borderlands with security agencies
- **Rural-Urban Migration:** Onuoha, argues that the movement of unemployed Nigerian youths from the rural areas to the cities



also promotes insecurity in Nigeria. Since Nigerian cities have grown beyond the environmental carrying capacities and existing infrastructure resulting in poor living conditions in these cities. Hence, these jobless youths become frustrated and resort to crime which creates insecurity in the country. The migration of unemployed youth from rural to urban areas is caused by a combination of circumstances that either drive them away from their rural homes or pull them towards urban centres.<sup>26</sup> Push issues originating from rural places encompass constrained economic prospects, deficient infrastructure, insufficient social amenities, and agricultural difficulties. Urban environments simultaneously allure individuals with the potential of enhanced employment opportunities, ameliorated living standards, and convenient access to education and healthcare. Merely attributing insecurity to this movement fails to consider the wider systemic failure such as unemployment, poverty, inadequate governance, and socioeconomic inequalities in a comprehensive manner the youths are facing in urban cities. This triggered them into crime and criminality that birthed insecurity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Furthermore, it is crucial to take into account the impact of government policies, community development initiatives, education, and job creation programmes while addressing both rural and urban vulnerabilities.

- **Social Irresponsibility of Corporate Bodies:** The essence of corporate social responsibility by companies is to offset corporate social irresponsibility. Sadly, companies in Nigeria neglect this social responsibility to their communities of operation and this has led to the rise of some terror groups as was the case with the Niger Delta militants which posed a great security challenge to Nigeria as a nation. Hence Kotchenan Moon asserts that social irresponsibility is a set of actions that increases externalized cost and/or promotes distributional conflicts.<sup>27</sup>



- **Terrorism:** Terrorism has remained the most fundamental source of insecurity in Nigeria and its primary roots have been generally located in religious fanaticism and intolerance, especially in Islam-dominated states in Nigeria. Thus terrorism in Nigeria is an Islamic insurgency with a political undertone by a faceless group in the Northern region of the country with the name Boko Haram which takes into account the legitimate political, economic and social grievances of the Northern population. Thus, this terrorist sect called Boko Haram has been responsible for the death of over 1000 lives since 2009.<sup>28</sup>

### Remote Factors

- **Lack of Institutional Capacity/ Government Failure:** Insecurity in Nigeria can be linked to government failure seen in the incapacity of the government to deliver public services and provide for the basic needs of the masses. This lack of necessities creates a pool of frustrated people who are ignited easily by any event to be violent. All of these are connected to the breakdown of Nigeria's institutional infrastructure which lead to the deterioration of state governance and democratic accountability, hence the frustration-aggression tendency in the masses, and the attendant consequence of security threat.<sup>29</sup>
- **Ethno-Religious Conflict:** The presence of various ethnic groups and religions (Christianity and Islam) in the country has caused most of the conflicts and security threats in Nigeria as a result of mutual distrust, suspicion, and intolerance between and among them. Thus, Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002), Hazen and Horner (2007), Salawu (2010), and Igbuzor (2011) think that ethno-religious conflict is the major source of insecurity in Nigeria.
- **Weak Security System:** The inadequacy of the security system in Nigeria both in training and weaponry coupled with the poor attitude and behaviour of security personnel towards security issues has only created loopholes for insecurity in the country.



Hence, security personnel encourage crimes, sabotage government efforts by supporting and fueling insecurity, supply criminals with arms, and help them to escape the long arm of the law.<sup>30</sup>

- **Inequality/Unfairness:** The unequal distribution of the nation's resources and the unfair treatment of the greater part of the Nigerian population is one major source of socio-economic conflict and a factor promoting insecurity in the country. This always happens from the point of perception of marginalization by a section of the country, and through this, frustration sets in and the people seek a way to express their grievances about the pervasive state of inequality and unfairness in the country.<sup>31</sup>
- **Loss of socio-cultural and communal value system:** Since the traditional value system of Nigerian societies and communities was based on high value on life, collectivity and communalism, moral acts, etc, theft, unjust and unfair treatments, suffering, wealth aggrandizement, all other anti-thesis of the traditional socio-cultural value of Nigerian society introduced by 'modernity through colonialism' have more and more pronounced, and this has led to major conflicts between the people and the corrupt government, thus contributing to security threat in the nation.<sup>32</sup>

Differently from the listed factors, one other important factor identified is the natural factors which include climate change and natural disasters. For instance, the herder-farmers conflict in the country has been attributed to the issue of climate change as the cattle herders have had to migrate from the region of low water and scanty vegetation to a better region southward where they can graze their cattle. This always leads to their trespassing upon peasants' farmland, thus, creating conflict and insecurity in the country. On the other hand, natural disasters like floods also render many people homeless, thus, making them victims of attack as well as potential aggressors of the nation as a result of perceived government negligence of their conditions, the government's disregard



for the well-being of flood victims is a significant cause for concern. The absence of the above-mentioned measures is capable of birthing violent conflict and insecurity in 21st-century Nigeria.

### **The Push and Trigger Factors to Insecurity in Nigeria: The Missing Link**

The present security situation in Nigeria has understandably generated a lot of interest from both local and international experts, and successive scholars and writers like (Onuoha, 2011, Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002), Hazen and Horner (2007), Salawu (2010), and Igbuzor (2011, (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robara, 2013), Kotchenan Moon (2012), Isawa Elaigwu, Beland (2005), Achumba (2013), among others over the past decades have presented a plethora of literature on the security situation and its impact on Nigeria's development and the causes or factors that push or triggers insecurity in Nigeria. Many of these have yet to talk about the contemporary or current factors that push and trigger insecurity in Nigeria. There are missing links in the push and trigger factors to insecurity in Nigeria and that is the main thrust that this paper interrogates. These missing links include the fact that political elites have been using violent conflict as a tool to destabilize the nation for the selfish interest. The next important link is the effect of climate change and the farmers and herdsman conflict which some conflict scholars have not seen, and the multiplier effect of this is state failure, elite-class competition and alienation which triggers the violent conflict and insecurity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Weather and Climatic Conditions, and Their Effects**

One of the most hazardous problems in the world is the poor use of the resources of the environment. As a result, there has been a sustained loss of environmental resources, unpredictable and frequently dangerous weather and climatic conditions, and their effects. These include vulnerable human socioeconomic conditions brought on by declining socioeconomic activities, which frequently result in low production and unsustainable consumption behaviour.





In Sub-Saharan Africa, a variety of natural resource bases are thought to support distinct yet ubiquitous systems of agricultural production and livestock husbandry in the various regions of the continent. Since state officials and the community have not taken prompt policy action to address the threat, this natural resource base has recently been subjected to a serious process of progressive degradation that, in some cases, may be irreversible. In Africa, where the bulk of the population, especially the poor, depends on ecological diversity for survival, agro-pastoral growth is hampered by growing desertification, erratic seasonal rainfall, and subsequent dry periods that disrupt food and water resources that are crucial for survival.<sup>33</sup> There is little indication of the animal's continued presence, and the majority of the once-abundant fauna has disappeared. The UN lists the following as some of the main causes of the degradation of natural resources and the environment: Low rainfall (38%) is a major factor, as are overcutting (32%), over-cultivation (15%), overgrazing (3%), and other elements like broad fires (2%).<sup>34</sup>

The above-mentioned excerpt is significant because it supports the position of the study in this discourse, which is that climate change is crucial to the Fulani people's existence in addition to other causes and factors in the push and trigger of conflicts under discussion.

### **The Conflict between Farmers and Herdsmen is Being Triggered and Driven by Climate Change**

The environment silently supplies the tools and systems needed to sustain human life. The lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere all function in concert to form a comprehensive environment that is suitable for living organisms like humans and animals. This backs up the claims made by the Federal Ministry of the Environment (FME), which are summed up as follows:

Because it provides a significant amount of the physical environment and the raw materials required for socioeconomic development, the environment is crucial to human well-being and survival. Interacting



with it is the only option. However, human participation, catastrophic catastrophes, and global warming are putting unprecedented strain and impacts on the standard of our environmental situations.<sup>35</sup> Climate change in particular is one of the most important issues facing humanity right now. It severely compromised the ability to defend the way of life and the accelerated efforts by humans to advance ecologically friendly development. Nigeria is substantially more vulnerable to the severe negative effects of climate change than other countries because of the nature of its economy, a lack of resilience, and limited capacity for adaptation. The economy depends on resources that are sensitive to climate change. For example, the forest products industry and agribusiness (crop production, cattle, and fisheries), which together employ up to 70% of the workforce and makeup roughly 22% of the GDP based on data, are both extremely climate-sensitive sectors.<sup>36</sup>

The Northern region of Nigeria, which had previously served as the Fulani people's original or natural home has become an unpleasant place for humans and animals as a result of the catastrophic effects of climate change. The Fulani people and their livestock are forced to flee their homes in the North towards the area of the North-Central Valley like Kogi, Benue, Nassarawa, Niger and other places which are more appealing to the cattle due to their attractive vegetation. Ironically, the North Central region's original population is well known for producing crops, a sort of agriculture that is inappropriate for growing animals. As peasant crop farmers, these people depend solely on the agricultural products they produce for their subsistence. But it's also a question of survival for the Fulani. Unfortunately, because they rely on the cattle for their way of existence, they must pasture unrestrained alongside their herds. This is where the problem arises since their animals commonly tramped on crops and devoured the vegetation. Local farmers would grumble, and if enough was not done to compensate them, animosity would increase. In retribution, there would be cattle rustling, which would typically culminate in the push and trigger of a violent confrontation.



## **Conclusion**

From the analysis in this paper, it has been established that central to the occurrence of insecurity in Nigeria is a series of violent conflicts. Most of the violent conflicts occasioned by anger and frustration emanated from the inability of the individuals and groups in the country to access the basic things of life and these can push and trigger insecurity in Nigeria. Although the paper asserts that conflict, violence and insecurity is rife today, it is deeply rooted in Nigeria's political history.

Starting from the colonial era, the colonialists manipulated the identity of various ethnic groups in Nigeria and brought about divide and rule. Instead of communal living, Nigerians of different ethnic origins became individualistic but the imperialist had their way. This has not changed much in the post-independent period. The prevalence of poverty in the land emboldens the grievance Nigerians are expressing through violent conflict that festers insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of the scholarly interpretation and understanding of violent conflict, attempts to define insecurity undergo inherent distortions that can interrogate the push and trigger of insecurity in Nigeria. From the above interrogations, it is crystal clear that violent conflict and insecurity are inseparable, and those factors promoting conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria are both immediate and remote factors most of which are internally based and some external factors. However, since these factors can be traced, isolated, and clarified, it therefore means that they can be tackled and surmounted accordingly by both the government and individual/group efforts keeping in mind to eradicate or reduce the obvious and strong denominators like, ethnicity, religious intolerance/fanaticism, inequality/unfairness, corruption/misappropriation of national wealth, unemployment and others. With all of these vices reduced or eradicated, the security disposition of the country will improve and insecurity will be seriously dealt with.



## Recommendations

1. It is imperative to provide sufficient assistance, housing, nourishment, and proper health care to individuals impacted by natural calamities.
2. Advocacy, community engagement, and ensuring authorities are held accountable as crucial measures in overcoming such neglect.

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