An Assessment of the Contemporary Conflict Triggers and Drivers between Herders and Farmers in Southern Taraba Area of Nigeria.

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Abstract

Over the years, the economic activities of herders and farmers have brought them in collision with one another, resulting in very devastating consequences on life and property not only on them, but on other Nigerians and even foreigners in Nigeria. The question that needs answer is, 'what are the triggers or drivers of the conflict between herders and farmers in the 21st century? This paper is therefore an attempt to examine the contemporary triggers and drivers of conflict between herders and farmers in Southern Taraba Area of Nigeria using multidisciplinary approach. These triggers include environmental and climate change; rights over grazing reserves and routes; changes in farming and herding practices; cattle theft/rustling and other crimes; and porosity of international borders, among others. The paper concludes that conflict between herders and farmers in the Southern Taraba Area cannot be allowed to linger, and therefore recommends, among others, the need for the establishment of ranches in the area, with all the necessary social amenities in them; the honest implementation of the Taraba State Government anti open grazing law; improvement of the security of lives and

property of both herders and farmers; establishment of regular conflict resolution forums among the people in the localities; and the need for political will by those in position of authority to check the negative trend.

Key words: Conflict, Drivers, Farmers, Grazing, Herders, Security.

Introduction.

The Unity of Nigeria as one political entity has been given a deadly blow by several conflicts, motivated either by political, economic, religious or ethnic related issues. These conflicts have not only led to deaths of thousands of persons, but have led to destruction of people's livelihood and property; causing severe doubt, as well as, distrust among the various ethnic, religious and political groups in the country.

According to Agbu, Musa & Zhema (2020, p.64), since the Second Republic to date, Nigeria has been battling with ethno-religious conflicts which have divided the country along ethnic and religious lines. Examples of such conflicts include the Sharia crisis in the north, OPC Movement in the south-west, the Bakassi Boys and IPOB in the eastern region, the Niger-Delta crisis in the south-south region, the devastating ethno-religious crises in the middle-belt region, the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-eastern region; armed herdsmen attacks on farming communities, particularly in the Middle-Belt region, down to the southern part of Nigeria. There are also the cases of cattle rustling and armed banditry on communities in the north-western region of Nigeria.

Over the years, the activities of armed herdsmen in Nigeria have become worrisome and a source of great concern to many Nigerians, both within and in diaspora (Akpor-Robaro & Lanre-Babalola 2018, p.47). Their activities have gone beyond what can be termed as mere crimes or pockets of killings by unidentified individuals. Thus, many people now live in fear and under great psychological trauma (Akpor-Robaro & Lanre-Babalola 2018). Kwaghga (2018, p.100) states that violence between herdsmen and farmers is one of the most persistent security problems, and have left thousands of people dead in recent decades. This statement is corroborating ICG (2017) which states that violent conflicts between nomadic herders from northern Nigeria and sedentary agrarian communities in the central and southern zones have escalated in recent years, spreading southward, threatening the country's security and stability.

Similarly, Agbu, Musa & Zhema (2020, p.69) further states that the activities of armed herdsmen who have been terrorizing, particularly, farming communities in the Middle-Belt region of Nigeria have been a great concern. Since 2012, they have crossed from the Middle-Belt region to the southern parts of Nigeria, with their activities, which have,

without doubt, aggravated the feeling of mutual suspicion between host communities and the herdsmen.

Historically, relations between herdsmen and farming communities had been harmonious before the emergence of the current unfortunate trend. By and large, they lived in a peaceful, symbiotic relationship where herder's cattle would fertilise the farmer's land in exchange for grazing rights (ICG, 2017). Communities in the north and elsewhere never had serious disagreement with herdsmen in the past. It was a common practise to invite herders to stay on the farms in communities after the harvest, for the purpose of enriching the farmlands and other socio-economic benefits as the herders benefited from the leftover on the farms as cattle feeds (Gadzama 2018; Rukwe, et al, 2019; Oruonye, et al, 2020).

Unfortunately, the reverse has been the case in the first two decades of the 21st century. This is associated with the activities of the herdsmen who use sophisticated arms to cause unimaginable destruction of crops and displacement of many farming communities, leading to loss of thousands of lives. Consequently, farming communities in Adamawa, Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, and Taraba States in the Middle-Belt region of Nigeria, have been adversely affected, and with the conflict already spread across to communities in Enugu, Imo and Ebonyi States in the eastern region; Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Osun and Ekiti States in western Nigeria (Obi, et al, 2018, p66; Oke & Olawale 2019, p85).

The foregoing development have made Agbu, Musa & Zhema (2020, p69) to state that since their emergence, the armed herders have terrorized, kidnapped, killed, raped, burnt farming communities and property; and have taken over lands belonging to the farming communities for their grazing activities. It is based on this development that this study focuses on exploring the contemporary conflict triggers or drivers between herdsmen and farmers in the Southern Taraba Area between 2010 and 2020 with the aim of proffering feasible solutions towards cordial relationship between herders and farmers in the area.

Cases of Herders and Farmers Clashes in Southern the Taraba Area since 2006

There have been numerous cases of clashes between herders and farmers across Nigeria. In this section, instances of the clashes between the two groups, particularly in the southern part of Taraba State between 2006 and 2020 are presented. According to Rukwe, et al (2019, p.107), in Taraba State, there have been instances of conflicts between herders and farmers in Takum, Ussa, Wukari, Ibi and Gassol Local Government Areas, among others. Thus, the table below is a random sampling, showing instances of where and when herders and farmers clashed in the Southern Taraba Area between 2006 and 2019.

Table 1: Sample of incidents of herders and farmers' clashes in Southern Taraba Area, 2006-2019.

S/N	Community & LGA	Year
1	Kumutu, Wukari LGA	May, 2006
2	Nwuban, Wukari LGA	June, 2006
3	Akwana & Ando Katswen, Wukari LGA	March, 2013
4	Bakyu, Ibi LGA	Feb, 2014
5	Ando Manu, Ibi LGA	March, 2014
6	Nwukyon, Wukari LGA	April, 2014
7	Nwuko, Wukari LGA	May, 2014
8	Tunari, Wukari LGA (multiple attacks)	May, June & Sept 2014; Jan, 2015
9	Sarkin Kudu, Ibi LGA	Jan, 2015
10	Gafa, Ussa LGA	Jan, 2015
11	Bika, Ussa LGA	Feb, 2015
12	Kwesati, Ussa LGA	March, 2015
13	Lissam, Ussa LGA	May, 2015
14	Kwambai, Yangtu SDA	March, 2016
15	Jenuwa Kogi, Yangtu SDA	March, 2016
16	Jenuwa Nyifiye, Yangtu SDA	March, 2016
17	Jenuwa Gida,Yangtu SDA	April, 2017
18	Gangum, Takum LGA	May, 2017
19	Kando, Tsuwan & Ucha, Takum LGA	May, 2017
20	Kpashimbe, Takum LGA	May, 2017
21	Tati, Takum LGA	May, 2017
22	Kucha, Ussa LGA	Nov,2017
23	Gborucha, Wukari LGA	Feb & May, 2018
24	Jandekura, Wukari LGA	Feb, 2018
25	Tse-Ajaver, Wukari LGA	April, 2018
26	Tamiya, Ussa LGA	May, 2018
27	Pangtso, Ussa LGA	May, 2018
28	Konkani, Ussa LGA	June, 2019
29	Tutuwa, Ussa LGA	Aug, 2019

Source: Field Investigation by the Researchers, 2021

The table above is a sample of clashes between herders and farmers in the Southern Taraba Area since 2006. There are several other instances of clashes between herders and farmers in Southern Taraba Area, which can be seen in some reports, such as TCSA (2014), TCSA (2016), NSCDC (2018) & Agbu, Zhema & Useini (2019). In 2020, the clashes between

herders and farmers declined drastically due to the conflict between the Jukun and Tiv in the area.

Triggers and Drivers of Herders and Farmers' Clashes in the Southern Taraba Area.
Historically, relations between herdsmen and farming communities have been harmonious. By and large, they lived in a peaceful, symbiotic relationship where herder's cattle would fertilise the farmer's land in exchange for grazing rights (ICG, 2017). Communities in the north and elsewhere never had serious disagreement with herdsmen in the past. It was a common practise to invite herders to stay on the farms in communities after the harvest, for the purpose of enriching the farmlands and other socio-economic benefits (Gadzama 2018; Rukwe, et al, 2019; Oruonye, et al, 2020).

Unfortunately, since the beginning of the 21st century, the reverse has been the case in the relationship between farmers and herders. The crucial question is; Why has there been a surge in clashes between herders and farmers, particularly, in the southern part of Taraba State? This question calls for the need for critical assessment of the underlying factors responsible for the escalation of conflicts between the herders and farmers in recent decades. This involves consulting the various narratives that have been used in explaining the triggers and drivers behind the recent escalation of the conflicts between members of the two economic groups.

Many researches (ICG, 2017; Ajibefun, 2018; Ndubuisi, 2018; Okoro, 2018; Kwaghga, 2018; Oke & Olewale, 2019; Rukwe, et al, 2019; Oruonye, et al, 2019 & Gursoy, 2019) have come up with several factors responsible for the surge in clashes between herders and farmers in Nigeria generally in recent decades, which southern Taraba Area is not an exclusion. These factors include, but not limited to the followings: climate change, population growth, technological and economic changes, crime, cultural changes, political and ethnic strife, destruction of farm crops by cattle, harassment of the herders by farming communities, reprisals, border porosity, construction of infrastructural facilities, poor governance, and the anti-open grazing laws in some States such as Benue and Taraba States. In a summarized way, Oruonye, et al (2020, p.154) captured the causes thus:

The increasing human and animal population has led to shortage of crop land and grazing land, thereby resulting into competitions over available land resources. These increased competitions over land have resulted in encroachment of farm lands into grazing reserves and cattle routes. The cattle rearers have often times intentionally or unintentionally allowed their cattle to graze on crop lands, thereby destroying the crops before harvest.

This development has brought about conflicts between the cattle herders and crop farmers all over Nigeria, and in the southern part of Taraba State in particular.

Environmental & Climate Changes: Factors such as desertification, climate change and increase in population have contributed to the escalation of violent conflicts between herders and farmers in Southern Taraba Area in recent decades of the 21st century. According to ICG (2017) and Mohammed (2018), some States in the northern part of Nigeria, such as Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara, are faced with strong desertification, losing about 50 – 70 % of the land area, thus forcing those affected to migrate southwards, in search of resources for their flocks. In the southern part of Taraba State, this migration, initially, was seasonal (May – Dec), but in the beginning of the 21st century, as available pastures shrank in the far north, herders who had already migrated into the area decided to stay longer, if not permanently, to graze their herds. This has triggered increasing disputes over land and water resources for the growing population of herders and farmers. According to Dawuda Agbu (2021), conflicts have continued to erupt between herders and many communities in southern Taraba area over the attitude of herders to take the cows not only to drink from the same water sources with people, but also to cause the shrinking or destruction of many water sources, especially natural ponds.

Rights over Grazing Reserves and Grazing Routes: According to ICG (2017), most of the 415 grazing reserves established by the northern regional government in the 1960s have since been lost. Only 114 were formally demarcated, but there was no legislation guaranteeing exclusive usage, or measures taken to protect the reserves against encroachment. Those ones without official status mostly ended up as construction areas, either for business or housing (Gursoy, 2019).

Furthermore, with the enactment of the Land Use Act of 1978, it made it easier for sedentary farmers to get certificate for the usage of the lands, thus, the herders were gradually excluded more from the land use. As farmers expanded their farmlands in the areas that used to be suitable for grazing (reserves), it meant less space for herder's animals (Genyi, 2017). However, in the 21st century, the herders started calling for the availability of these grazing reserves which have been encroached into by the farmers, due to increase in population and technological improvements. According to Oruonye, et al (2020, p.157), there are 9 of such grazing reserves in Taraba State, occupying an area of 279km^2, with only 5 gazetted. 2 of such are located in the southern part of Taraba State, and all the grazing reserves in the State have been encroached upon by farmers. The encroachment on grazing reserves has blocked the traditional cattle migration routes, thereby causing

conflicts between herders and farmers in the course of the herders' migration/movements not only in southern part of Taraba State, but the entire State and Nigeria at large. More so, grazing routes, which were established long ago to requlate the movement of livestock from one state, region or part of the country to another, are also blocked by the farmers (see Oruonye, et al 2020, p.158). Thus, in their resolve to use the reserves for the purpose of grazing, the herders now forcefully graze on the lands, not minding the crops planted by the farmers who claim ignorant of any law establishing the grazing reserves and routes. This has always resulted in violent clashes between the herders and farmers in not only southern part of Taraba State, but the entire State and Nigeria at large.

Changes in Herding and Farming Practices and Culture: There are changes in herding and farming practices in the 21st century as compared to from the colonial years to 1990s. These changes have contributed to straining relationship between herders and farmers, leading to violence. According to ICG (2017) and Gursoy (2019), some cattle herders have gradually, over the years, adopted sedentary lifestyle, leaving cattle herding to younger men and boys, aged 9 to 25 years, who often lack the experience in negotiating with farmers in times of dispute. As noted earlier, and corroborated by a group of farmers in the study area, in the olden days, herders used to go to farmers during dry season, after harvest, to ask for permission to graze on the farm lands. This method was responsible for cordial relationship between the two groups. However, in the recent decades of the 21st century, younger generation of herders do not ask for permission from farmers again, to graze on their farm lands. They intentionally direct their cattle into farm lands for grazing, sometimes with harvests yet to be completed. This act by the younger generation of herders has caused much disputes between the herders and farmers, most times leading to violence.

Furthermore, availability of modern farming technology (improved farming inputs and irrigation farming) have contributed to farmers using large acres of farm lands during rainy and dry seasons, thus, preventing the herders access to grazing space they used to utilize before (ICG, 2017, Gursoy, 2019).

In the area of conflict resolution between herders and farmers, there are changes now, leading to violence. According to Jonah Agbu (2021), in those years of cordial relationship between the herders and farmers in the southern part of Taraba State, disputes over damaged crops by cattle were resolved by community heads and leaders of the herders. Those that were found guilty were fined and payments were made to the farmers whose crops were destroyed. However, this system started declining when modern community leaders and security agents started receiving gratifications (corruption) from the herders,

in order to pronounce judgements in favour of offenders (in this case, herders whose cattle must have damaged farmers' crops). This has caused dissatisfaction and disaffection among farmers, who now do not take such cases of crop destruction to their community leaders or security agents anymore, but resolved to take the laws in their hands, leading to violence. In this regard, ICG (2017) notes that the absence of effective mediation mechanism, including sustained community – level dialogues, can encourage violence.

The failure of local governments to implement recommendations of commissions charged with investigating the conflicts, due to lack of will over time, has contributed to both herders and farmers losing confidence in the ability of the authorities to mediate and conciliate. Therefore, aggrieved parties have turned to violence to seek redress or revenge (ICG, 2017). This development has resulted in many attacks and reprisal attacks on both herders and farmers in the southern part of Taraba State in the years between 2013 and 2020.

Cattle Theft: Another important trigger or driver of herders and farmers conflict in not only southern part of Taraba State, but northern Nigeria generally, is cattle theft (cattle rustling). In northern Nigeria, cattle rustling or theft has grown in scale and organisation where large bandit groups operate with mounting audacity. Cattle theft, reportedly, has also been a major source of funding for Boko Haram in the north east (ICG, 2017, Oke & Olewale, 2019 and Gursoy, 2019).

Oke & Olewale (2019, p.89) observed that the paucity of data make it difficult to ascertain the exact statistics on the trend of cattle rustling, nevertheless, isolated figures that exist with Cattle Breeders' Association put the death toll of herders at 322 and loss of 60, 000 cattle stolen by rustlers in 2013 alone, across Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, Kaduna, Taraba, Benue and Zamfara States (see Burton 2016). In the southern part of Taraba State, the herders have accused, most importantly, the Tiv, for cattle rustling, particularly, Terwase Agwaza (Gana) and his gangs; and recently, the Jukun also joined in the cattle theft, in collaboration with the younger Fulani herders (Ardo Husseini, 2021 & Muhammad, 2017). Recall that in 2001, one of the reasons for the Fulani and Tiv conflict was cattle rustling by the Tiv at Ikyaior into Benue State; also in 2013 the Tiv, again, allegedly rustled Fulani cattle, passing through Ando-Manu community in Ibi LGA. When the Fulani followed their cattle to retrieve them, they were attacked by the Tiv, and in retaliation, violence erupted between the two groups all over Wukari Local Government Area between 2013 and 2015.

Border Porosity: The porosity of Nigeria's border with other countries such as Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Benin Republics has been alluded as one of the reasons responsible for the infiltration of foreign herders, who move with sophisticated arms, unleashing terror on farming communities. To Onuaha (2012) cited in Oke & Olewale (2019), these foreigners come to Nigeria to cause breach of peace of the nation. According to farmers in Ussa, Takum, Wukari and Ibi Local Government Areas, the calibre of herders that are seen to be attacking farming communities in southern part of Taraba State are mostly foreigners.

Kidnapping and Banditry: In addition to cattle theft or rustling, there are other crimes that are triggers of herders and farmers conflicts in southern part of Taraba State. These include kidnapping, sexual assault and arm robbery. Many of the farmers in southern part of Taraba State believe that the herders are among the kidnappers terrorizing the area, particularly along Wukari to Ibi to Sarkin/Kudu axis; Wukari to Bantaje to Kwararafa axis, and along Takum to Suntai to Bali axis (Danasabe Danladi & Adi Ba'aku, 2021). Some of the people kidnapped along these routes, such as Rev Bulus Adama Gani, attested to the fact that their abductors were herders, herding in the deserted bushes of the area. Thus, in retaliation, farmers also attacked herding communities they suspected to be engaged in kidnapping thereby resulting in a vicious circle of conflicts.

Lack of Political Will by Appropriate Authorities: Kwaghga (2018) noted that, in recent years, the violence has increased with some herdsmen carrying heavy arms, and the farmers mobilising militias. Consequently, both sides are now engaged in a devastating cycle of attacks and counter attacks, particularly, in the central region. Unfortunately, government has not shown any serious effort in dealing with the issue, leading to both the herders and farmers taking up laws in their own hands to settle scores. This invariably means that there is no accountability on the part of the government in resolving the issue of herders and farmers in southern part of Taraba State, and Nigeria at large.

Considering the issues discussed in the foregoing as triggers and drivers of herders and farmers conflicts in Southern Taraba Area, it is not out of place to conclude with the findings of Rukwe, et al (2019, p.107) that farmers – herders' conflicts arose from increase competition over arable land use as a result of the increase in population of both the farmers and herders. Other causes of the conflicts include encroachment of farming activities on pastures, invasion of farmlands by cattle, assaults on female farmers by herders, blockage of stock routes and water points, cattle theft, change in climatic conditions, improvement in technology and grazing reserves among others.

Overview of Magnitude of devastating effects of Herders – Farmers' Conflicts in the Southern Taraba Area. The magnitude of herder – farmers' conflicts in Southern Taraba Area cannot be overemphasized. It has led to high number of deaths, injuries to many, as well as displacement of farmers from their homes; it has also led to disruption of livelihood, social and cultural endeavours, among others.

According to ICG (2017), conflicts between herders and farmers have killed more people than the attacks by the terrorist group, Boko Haram, in recent years. In fact, the herders – farmers' conflicts killed more people in southern part of Taraba State than any other conflict in the area (See NCSAN, 2015 & Amnesty International, 2018).

In addition to deaths, many were injured severely, while others were displaced and had to take refuge, either in IDP centers (See NCSAN, 2015 & Amnesty International, 2018) or moved into the major towns of Wukari, Takum, Donga, Bali, Mutum-Biyu, among others. Thus, it became an impediment to food security, because, the displacement of farmers from their communities seriously reduced agricultural production (Okoro 2018 & Rukwe, et al, 2019

Farmlands and farming communities were completely destroyed, consequence of the herders – farmers' conflicts. Agbu, Zhema & Useini (2019, p.13) stated that between 2013 and 2015, almost all communities in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State faced devastating attacks by the rampaging violent armed-herdsmen. These communities, together with other Jukun and Tiv settlements on the border between Taraba and Benue States, were completely destroyed. More so, crops in the farms located in these communities were similarly destroyed. Zinvini Danladi (2021) stated that in any route used by the herders to attack any farming community, all crops along the route were destroyed.

In the light of the foregoing, Rukwe et al (2019, p110) noted that herders-farmers conflicts have led to reduction in output and income of farmers, absence of agricultural labour force and loss of crops on the field and in the stores. Other social amenities in Southern Taraba Area, such as health centers, schools, and even worship centers (Churches & Mosques) were razed down in the course of herders and farmers' conflicts. Consequently, many school-aged children dropped out of school, contributing to high number of uneducated in the region.

Furthermore, the conflicts between herders and farmers created serious gap of trust between the two groups in not only the area of study, but Nigeria at large. In the southern

part of Taraba now, farmers have no confidence in herders around, and so see them (herders) as intruders and enemies that should not be treated with love. On the other hand, the herders see the farmers as enemies of their progress, and also need to be handled roughly in order to survive in the area (views of some farmers and herders interviewed in 2021). This is in agreement with the result of Burton (2016) that majority of the members of the expanse Fulani ethnic group are solely pastoralists without connection to militant violence. Even these peaceful ones, however, are largely viewed with suspicion and anger by the sedentary communities on whose land they take their cattle, largely as a result of the actions of the violent groups.

Finally, it is important to note that in States like Taraba, Benue, Plateau and Adamawa, herders – farmers' conflicts have endangered the lives of women and children, and have crippled the socio-economic and political activities of the people. The conflicts have also caused serious unemployment, posing a serious threat to national security.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

The article has established the fact that, historically, there existed a symbiotic relationship between herders and farmers in Southern Taraba area. However, by the beginning of the 21st century, the good relationship began to dwindle and became worst, particularly, between 2013 and 2018.

The study further examined the triggers and drivers to the conflicts between the two groups, which include, among others, environmental and climate changes, claim of rights over grazing reserves and routes, changes in the herding and farming practices of the herders and farmers respectively, cattle theft/rustling and other crimes, porosity of international borders and lack of political will by the appropriate authorities in handling the issue.

The study also established the fact that the conflicts have devastating consequences on both the herders and the farmers, which include, among others, loss of human lives, injuries to several persons, and destruction of farmlands and crops, killing of cattle, increase in number of internally displaced persons and disruption of educational programs, leading to increase in the number of uneducated persons. Social amenities such as schools, health centers and even religious worship centers were not left unaffected. Finally, a gap of distrust has been created between the herders and farmers in the Southern Taraba Area.

However, it is imperative to mention that this situation between herders and farmers in the Southern Taraba Area and Nigeria at large cannot be left unresolved to continue to degenerate to pose a great threat to local and national security. Therefore, various steps must be taken with all seriousness to address the issue. Consequently, this study advocates the following measures as possible panacea to the herders-farmers conflicts.

1. It has been established that open grazing is one of the major sources of friction between herders and farmers all over Nigeria. Therefore, as a shift in traditional method, there is the need for the establishment of ranches in Taraba State and other parts of northern Nigeria to improve livestock production, and reduce tension between herders and farmers. These ranches, among other things, would reduce trans-human movements by the herders, which always caused conflicts between them and farming communities. It would also improve the productivity of the livestock, for they would be stationed in a particular place within a ranch, fed and treated properly. A good example can be seen from the ranches on the Mambilla Plateau in Taraba State. It has contributed immensely in reducing friction between herders and farmers in the area. More so, in the ranches, schools would also be established for the herders, to allow them have basic education, in order to assist them have basic knowledge about interpersonal relations with other cultures different from theirs; and to teach them modern ways of livestock production. However, this can only be possible, if the government at all levels and farmers, are willing to provide the necessary support. In addition, the recently introduced law on the Prohibition of Open Grazing by the Taraba State Government should be honestly implemented.

2. There is the need to improve the security of both herders and farmers in the Southern Taraba Area and Nigeria at large. There should be joint effort by the security operatives – the Army, Police Force, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps and Directorate of State Security, in collaboration with Civilian Task Force, to always secure the lives and property of both farmers and herders in the area. Through this, cattle theft/rustling and crop destruction would be curtailed. To further improve the security, operatives must be equipped properly, trained, and their welfare to be properly taken care of, in order for them to be committed. Also to make the security operatives efficient and to reduce corruption among them, the surveillance units of the security agencies must also be made functional to perform their duties excellently in order to check the excesses of the security personnel in order for peace to be maintained between herders and farmers.

3. According to ICG (2017), local and community-based dispute resolution mechanisms have proved effective in averting violence and helping communities recover from conflict. Thus, this research recommends that a regular conflict resolution forums be formed in all the local government areas of Southern Taraba Area to allow various constituencies such as farmers, herders, community/traditional leaders, religious leaders, political leaders and security agencies to monitor, identify, discuss, and manage potential threats to their areas. In this case, the State and Local Governments Councils, in collaboration with traditional institutions should be responsible for establishing such forums, particularly, in Southern Taraba.

4. Furthermore, stakeholders in the southern Taraba area should always be seen and heard to be speaking out against violence, through the traditional and social media, and the youth should be encouraged to always speak and preach about mutual co-existence.

5. Community leaders, together with the leaders of the herders and farmers should, at all time, put heads together to resolve any issue that is a prospective threat to security of lives and property. They should also put heads together to minimize the influx of foreign herders into their areas, because the resources are already overstretched; and they must make sure that those few that are allowed to graze in their areas agree to be law abiding to the existing rules governing their activities in the host communities, and this should be documented for the purpose of peaceful co-existence.

6. Government security agents manning the international borders must be provided with modern equipment and training to enable them do a thorough job to reduce the influx of criminal-minded foreign herders into Nigeria. Thus, there is the need for consistent patrol of the border of Nigeria and Cameroon in Sarduna, Kurmi, Takum and Ussa Local Government Areas.

7. There must also be the political will on the part of political leaders to implement all measures that have been recommended so far. Government at all levels must be responsible enough to provide the necessary security to all, timely, and be proactive enough to deal with issues that are seen as security threats. Perpetrators and sponsors of conflicts in Southern Taraba Area must be seen to be properly prosecuted, for the purpose of deterring potential culprits.

8. Finally, the people of Southern Taraba Area, both farmers and herders, must cultivate the spirit of tolerance, to be able to accommodate one another and open up to each

other with the view of finding common ground that would improve conviviality among them.

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