

Introduction

Violence perpetrated by an armed group comprising members of the Fulani ethnic group (also known as the Fulani militia) has occurred since March 2010, when over 400 people died in attacks on villages of Dogo Nahawa, Zot, and Ratsat in Plateau State. Violence increased exponentially in 2015, moving across states and now to the south of the country.

Use of the term 'Fulani militia' is not a condemnation of a people group. There are many Fulani communities and herders living peaceably alongside farming communities of other ethnicities and/or religious beliefs who oppose this violence. Neither does it imply other ethnic groups do not rear cattle.

These attacks, which claims lives across Nigeria, and which have contributed to the proliferation of light weaponry and a general rise in lawlessness, appear to be perpetrated exclusively by members of the Fulani tribe, for reasons which require deeper examination.

Former president Olusegun Obasanjo recently warned that the current government had not responded to the Fulani militia effectively, and that the armed forces were unprepared for this kind of conflict. He added "It is no longer an issue of lack of education or lack of employment for our youths in Nigeria which it began as. It is now West African Fulanisation [in the case of the militia, and]; African Islamisation and global organised crimes of human trafficking, money laundering, drug trafficking, gun running, illegal mining and regime change [in the case of ISWAP and Boko Haram]."¹

The Drivers

There is a history of disputes between nomadic herders and farming communities across the Sahel occasioned by competition for resources, and exacerbated by desertification, land encroachment and other factors. Occasionally there were fatalities during these traditional "farmer-herder clashes", with protagonists generally

using sticks, stones, machetes, and at worst, Dane hunting guns.

However, current attacks are occurring with such frequency, organisation and asymmetry that this nomenclature is now insufficient. Death tolls have increased exponentially, and there is no evidence of these attacks being replicated in neighbouring states experiencing similar environmental and climatological challenges.

Armed with increasingly sophisticated weaponry, including AK-47s, and in some cases chemicals and rocket launchers, the militia has been responsible for more deaths since 2015 than Boko Haram, displacing tens of thousands and occupying land. CSW documented 106 attacks on communities in central Nigeria during the first quarter of 2018 alone, which claimed 1061 lives, with seven attacks targeting Fulani herders or communities within the same timeframe, two of them in the south, claiming 61 lives. Within this timeframe 11 attacks were recorded on communities in the south that claimed 21 victims.²

The Role of Religion

The violence has mutated from its traditional form into a sustained, deadly campaign with outworkings reflecting Nigeria's main religious fault line.³ Religion – and ethnicity – appear to be a rallying point for the militia. In this region, ethnicity generally correlates with religion, hence the designation of these attacks as ethno-religious cleansing.

Churches and church leaders are targeted during militia attacks, and often communities are attacked during Christian celebrations.⁴

Voices of victims⁵

When asked why they were targeted, many interviewees expressed bemusement, stating they had lived peacefully

¹ "Mobilising Nigeria's Human and Natural Resources for National Development and Stability" former president Olusegun Obasanjo, delivered at the second session Synod of Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, Delta State, May 2019

² 'Nigeria: Freedom of religion or belief', 9 July 2018, <https://www.csw.org.uk/2018/07/09/report/4036/article.htm>

³ The mutation of the limited traditional conflict into an existential threat to the nation can be attributed, to some extent, to competition for political advantage.

⁴ See appendices for examples of such attacks. Note the list is not meant to be comprehensive, but is illustrative of the consistency of such targeting.

⁵ CSW has interviews dating back to 2010. This document draws on those conducted from 2017 to March 2019

with their Fulani neighbours. Some survivors spoke of not recognising their assailants:

- Male from Ukaka in Guma LGA, Benue state⁶ displaced following an attack on 23 December 2017: “I don’t know what brought them there from where they were before.”
- Male from Bujum Kasuwa village, Lau LGA Taraba state described a series of attacks on the surrounding area from 11 November 2017 to 6 September 2018: “We don’t know... we did nothing to them. We have never ever one day attacked them. They are the people attacking us all the time. We never had problems with them before.”⁷
- Female displaced from Sabon Gbam village, Adamawa state on 4 January 2018: “We have no idea why this thing happened. We had no crises but then we just saw Fulanis leaving before the attack. We had lived next to each other. They were nomadic; they would come and settle in December, but a few had settlements there permanently. Those are the ones that packed up and left about a week before the attack. Fulanis are the ones attacking us. We have never one day attacked their village (...).”
- Female displaced for a second time from her new home in the Mbabai community: “We didn’t grow up seeing Fulanis in the area so we don’t know why they are here. Something brought them.”
- Blind male from Ungwan Gora, Kajuru LGA, Kaduna state who survived an attack on 11 March 2019, despite being captured, severely assaulted, and left to die:⁸ “the language they use is different from local Fulanis. They are not the same people. I have never heard that kind of accent before.”

One female interviewee displaced from Exland in Plateau state claimed other Muslims had joined the attack on 23 June 2018: “The Fulanis attacked and Muslims from other tribes joined in. They are attacking us without cause.” Another survivor from Exland informed CSW that the

“majority of [the assailants] were Fulani: “Some of the other Muslims are afraid of the Fulani.”

Several victims concluded that the attacks were occurring because the Fulani wanted the land for grazing:

- Male displaced from Torkula village in Guma LGA, Benue state on 1 January 2018: “it is happening because the herdsman want to graze and we are farmers. They destroy our farms and when we complain, they attack.”
- Female displaced from Awe Doma in Nassarawa state following an attack on 2 January 2018: “the problem between the Tiv tribe and the Fulani tribe is land. They need it for grazing, the Tiv need it for farming, and this causes a crisis.
- Male displaced from Nassarawa state: “they want to take over the area so that the inhabitants will become Muslim and be subservient. One of the main attractions is the grass in the area is very good for cattle and there are a lot of streams. They believe it causes their cattle to produce more offspring – but the religious angle is also there.”
- Elderly female from the Exland Community, Barkin Ladi LGA, Plateau state, displaced on 23 June 2018: “They want to take over the entire land. They will kill all of us to take it over.”
- Elderly male displaced from the Zargom community, Plateau state on 23 June 2018: “I cannot tell why this is happening, but since I was born we have been staying peacefully with these people and nothing such as this has happened before. Also, local Fulanis are responsible because they could have stopped the invasion”
- Female displaced from Shonong village, Riyom LGA, Plateau state on 23 June 2018: “The Fulanis are killers.⁹ That is the reason for all these attacks. They want the place at all costs. They have already sacked five communities, and this is the sixth one. They want them to leave so they can occupy.”

⁶ Claims that the Benue laws against open grazing were a driver of the violence were dismissed by several victims. Not only did the violence precede the introduction of the laws – the violence in Benue began in 2011, the killings are also occurring with similar ferocity in states that do not have these laws.

⁷ CSW was informed that the tensions between the militia and the Bachama people began when a Fulani killed two Bachama people on their farmland, and the Bachama retaliated at night, killing two Fulanis.

⁸ He was untied and told to leave by a local Fulani who was part of the attack but who had benefited from his traditional medicine.

⁹ A female interviewee displaced from Pasakori, southern Kaduna in November 2017, and whose husband was killed after sending her to safety, informed CSW that when she rang his number thinking he was alive, his killer answered and told her: “you haven’t seen anything yet. We will not rest until we kill everybody.”

- Female displaced from Jungo village in Lau LGA, Taraba state on 25 December 2018: “I don’t really know why this is happening. They destroyed our farmland – is it because they want to feed their cattle? They are still there.”

A widow displaced from the Gana Ropp Community in Plateau state on 23 June, who said her properties were targeted because she was known as a prosperous farmer, gave an additional explanation for the violence:

“It is because the locals are predominantly farmers and there is a large deposit of tin in the area. By this attack they want to scare people away from tin mining.”

Some interviewees detected a method to attacks. For example, an elderly man from Yitti village in Taraba said he had watched as the militia attacked other settlements and thought that it would end soon. Instead the attacks spread, with the Fulani burning, killing and looting. “Later they went to Mayalope, then from village to village encircling us. They want to clear the place and leave it fallow for cattle all the way to the nearby river.”

Many interviewees concluded the violence is religiously-motivated, while others stated it is due to a combination of concentric issues, with religion featuring strongly:

“The Fulanis want to take over our land for grazing. The Fulanis we know are not the ones now coming. We were living with them before. We used to be exchanging milk and food and living peacefully. We don’t know these ones that are coming now. I can only conclude that there may be religious purposes. The ones that are grazing speak the same as the ones that we know but they are different from what they are. These ones are unknown – the ones before knew our names. These don’t look the same. They are coming from a different country. Probably Niger.”¹⁰

A common theme emerging from victim testimonies, from disparate communities, highlights a religious aspect to the violence: the use of religious slogans during violence by assailants:

- Female displaced from Palang Village in Riyom LGA in Plateau on 26 June 2018: “I ran into the bush and I could only hear shooting and shouting – ‘Allah Akbar.’ The Fulanis left once they had run out of ammunition (...).”

- Female from Juzan village, Gashish District Plateau state, who had attended the burial on 23 June 2018: “around 4pm we heard shouts of ‘Allah u Akbar’ coming from the mountains surrounding the village, then shooting began from all angles. We ran into the bush with the children and saw that several surrounding villages were already on fire and some of their people were running to our village for shelter. They destroyed everything... everything. They are doing it because of their religion, because we did not do anything to them, and they were shouting ‘where is your God? Let him come and save you.’”
- Elderly male from Bugun Angwan Konawaya in Adamawa state: “[the communities had] lived in peace with all tribes until July 2017 when they attacked Demsa. It is a religious war (...) when they are coming they are shouting ‘Allah u Akbar’; they have an Islamic flag and they want to take the land as their own. It is purely a religious war.” The interviewee described the flag as having “a moon, a star and a cutlass. Ten men were killed that day. They said they would spare the women so they can be their slaves. They (...) destroyed our whole village.”
- Female displaced from Gana Ropp in Plateau state on 23 June 2019: “We had no problems with the Fulanis. The Hausas invited the Fulanis to help clear the natives and Christians. It’s just because they hate Christianity.”
- Another Female displaced from Gana Ropp: “I saw people running from the other side of the community. I heard people shouting: ‘Today be today!’ Next I heard shouts of ‘Allah u Akbar! We shall fight the infidels.’ My mother, sister and I ran and hid in the house. A local Muslim saved my son-in-law by hiding him.”
- Male displaced from Gana Ropp: “at around 5pm I heard continuous gunshots and saw Fulanis running from all sides shouting “Today be today.”¹¹ They were dressed in black long robes. I started running. It’s a religious something. The reason I say this is because they have invited other Muslims from other places to help them.”
- Female from Ratsat Community, Plateau state on 28 June 2018: “at around 2pm we started to hear heavy shooting it continued to evening. The military men in

¹⁰ Community leader from Benue, displaced from Torkula village on 26 January 2018 and interviewed on 14 December 2018

¹¹ “It is today”

the community called for reinforcements, but none came. They fled with villagers at around 11 pm when they could no longer resist. They arrived shouting 'Allah u Akbar' and began burning the village. Thirty of us were hiding in a room. Some were so afraid they urinated."

- Elderly man from the Zargom community, Plateau state displaced on 23 June 2018: "At around 2pm we saw strange Fulanis shouting 'Allah u Akbar' repeatedly. They were in black from head to toe. They burnt three churches and an unknown number of houses."
- Elderly male displaced from Ratsat on 28 June: "They were real Fulani men. Their uniform was completely black and there were plenty, PLENTY of them. They were shooting; they were calling the name of Allah and shouting they would take the land from us. They kept on saying it. That is the main reason for attacking. If they want to collect it, they have to keep on burning houses so we are scared to go back."
- Male from Bujum Wayam village, Taraba state: "at around 3pm on 18 July 2018 I heard the sound of big machines, then shouts of 'Auzu bin lahi'¹² and 'Allah u Akbar.' I stood up and saw the Fulanis coming on motorcycles with guns. There were three people on each machine, two with guns."
- Female from Shakawa village, Taraba state: "We have no problem and no grudge, but we didn't know they were planning evil against us. What they are doing is religious. It is only because we are Christians. They have shown it is pure religion. Only Christian villages are burnt down, In Shakawa Fulanis and Christians lived next door – they only burnt the Christian village. In Katara, only Christians, in Soba Gida, only Christians and both were burnt down. Muslim villages have not been attacked."
- Female from Ungwan Barde, Kajuru LGA, Kaduna state, displaced in February 2019: "it is because of their religion. We are not Muslims; we are Christians and those who attacked us are Muslims."
- Female from Dogon Noma, Kaduna state displaced on 11 March 2019: "They were shouting Allah u Akbar. They destroyed the whole village and killed 72 people, burning one of them to ashes."

- Male displaced on 11 March 2019: "why I say they are Fulanis is because if they are killing someone, they shout 'Allah u Akbar.'"

Coordination

Coordinated attacks on Dogo Nahawa, Zot and Ratsat in 2010 appear to have provided a blueprint for subsequent militia attacks, with a few modifications.¹³

A series of attacks on 27 villages in Barkin Ladi, Plateau state began on 23 June 2018, and left at least 238 dead. They were described to CSW as "simultaneous and organized – they attack families, burn houses, cut down the maize to create grazing and are occupying some of the houses."¹⁴

Moreover, victims from remote areas in the various targeted states describe heavily-armed assailants often dressed in military attire, or entirely in black:

- Female from Kaching village in Plateau state displaced on 23 June 2018 identified the assailants as "Fulanis and they were wearing a black uniform, a long kaftan."
- Female from Kai Village in Plateau state who survived an attack on the evening of 20 June 2018 by lying on the ground with her three month old son on her chest in the family's goat pen, and covering them both with a zinc roofing sheet: "Some of them were in military [attire], and others wore black kaftan."
- Elderly male from Bujum Angwan Konawaya, Taraba state: "On 7 July 2018 at around 4pm people came running from Kaswan Ladi market shouting 'run, the Fulanis are coming.' There was heavy gunfire – rapid, and they were shouting 'Allah u Akbar.' They were wearing black attire with black caps. The outfit was sleeveless Fulani style with red stripes on the black background. Some covered their faces."
- Male displaced from Junga village, Lau LGA, Taraba state, displaced on Christmas Day 2017: "there was a big number of them. They wore a black outfit with yellow on the pocket."
- Male from Bujum Kasuwa village, Taraba state: assailants numbered "more than 300 - coming with guns and in black."
- Female displaced from Karamai village, Kaduna state on 26 February 2019: "We heard shots that we have

¹² A call used when seeking help from Allah.

¹³ <https://www.csw.org.uk/2010/03/08/press/964/article.htm>

¹⁴ Community leaders interviewed on 7 December 2018.

never heard before and started running with the children. When I turned to look I saw people in all black attire with guns. Someone told me they were Fulani, but I could not confirm because as we were running to the hill they were shooting”

- Female from Dogon Noma, Kaduna state displaced on 11 March 2019: “We were sleeping when we heard gunshots - continuous firing. We came out and ran. Some of the men were able to hide close and saw them. They were all in black and they were Fulanis.”
- Male with a security background displaced from Dogon Numa, Kajuru LGA, Kaduna state on 11 March 2019: “I heard people shouting ‘thieves, thieves.’ I went out and saw many men wearing black and standing still. When they heard the shouting they fired, spread out and started following people. I heard all sorts of gunshots, AK 47, and double barrel shots. Before we had had no problems with the Fulanis.”

Survivors frequently described the militia as riding on “big machines” (motorcycles), and many imitated the sound of semi-automatic fire, which they said was punctuated by single heavy “booms”:

- Female from Shakawa village, Donada Ward, Taraba state: “The Fulanis came on machines riding three on each. We counted 150 machines, then later, 50 more, some were on foot.”
- Male from Bujum Wayam village in Taraba state, displaced on 18 July 2018. At around 3pm he “heard the sound of big machines, then shouts of ‘Auzu bin lahi’ and ‘Allah u Akbar.’” He stood up and saw the militia coming on motorcycles with guns. There were three people on each machine, two with guns. From his hiding place he watched as the militia looted homes and rustled livestock. Five people were killed in the attack, and their faces were so mutilated by machete blows that they were no longer recognisable.
- Elderly male from Taraba state whose village was attacked on 7 July 2018: “They came in a convoy of three rows on big machines. There were three on each machine. The tyres were padded so they won’t

be punctured. One was driving; one was shooting one way and one was shooting the other.”

- Male from Mayalope village in Taraba state: “in November 2017, 300 militia men passed the village using the main road at around 12pm saying they were on the way to Dong, where they killed many. They did this three times and had never touched Mayalope until early June 2018, when they attacked on a Wednesday night killing around 12 people, two of whom were beheaded, and whose heads were carried away.”
- Church leader from Ungwan Gora, Kajuru LGA, Kaduna state: “on 11 February 2019 the men were working in the Fadama¹⁵ when Fulanis on three machines began circling the village. A local Fulani farmer said he was not comfortable with their presence and told them to alert their people. As they walked towards them, the Fulanis opened fire, but missed. Suddenly we saw people coming from the east, and another group coming from the other side to circle the village. They would come on machines – three on one machine - park them, then advance on foot. There were about 100 machines. The local Fulanis tried to persuade them not to attack, but they wouldn’t listen. They were dressed in black.”

Occupation

Plateau state

By June 2018 over 54 communities in Plateau State had been occupied and renamed.¹⁶

A community leader informed CSW that three weeks earlier, the military Special Task Force (STF) had visited one of the villages attacked on 23 June 2018 and found herdsmen were living in the remaining houses, had built huts on the land, and had “used red ribbon to demarcate it.”¹⁷

A survivor of the attack on the Exland community claimed some Fulanis told them “the land belongs to them. They are saying that Lalong¹⁸ promised in 2014 that he will give them the Local Government if they clear the people.” Furthermore, a female survivor of the attack on the Ratsat community said “the Fulanis told us they had already

¹⁵ ‘Fadama’ is the Hausa word for irrigable low lying plains with shallow aquifers that are situated along major river systems.

¹⁶ <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.vanguardngr/2018/07/return-54-villages-to-plateau-indigenes/%3famp>

¹⁷ Interviewed on 7 December 2018.

¹⁸ The Governor of Plateau state

earmarked an area for themselves and our communities are inside the area they want to annex.”

Benue state

A male from Yegbo in Guma LGA described being “chased out” of his home in March 2017. When he and others would go to their farm they found that herders had brought cows to graze on their rice crop. “I didn’t know the grazing was to provoke us.” This kept on occurring “until one day a farmer beat up a herdsman.” He had been hearing rumours of fighters amassing in the bush but did not take it seriously, until two nearby hamlets were attacked immediately after the fight. Several people were killed: “they would knock on the door and when you opened, they would shoot.” One day he went out. When he returned his home was destroyed and five people who were there at the time were dead: “The Fulanis still occupy the area until now.”

A 38 year old male from Atongo village near Yelwa informed CSW of the plight of a displaced district head who decided to return to his home in the area in February 2018 to check on his cash crops. All of his trees had been cut, no cassava left in his barn and the pillars of his home were destroyed. He was attacked, severely injured, and was still hospitalized in December 2018.

A 43 year old displaced from the Mbabai community informed CSW “the Fulanis now inhabit the place so we can’t go back.” She also described how Fulani herders used to bring their cattle to farmlands deliberately to provoke the people.

Nassarawa state

A 31 year old male fled Kadarko after the area was attacked on 13 June 2018. He had been at home with his brothers when they heard knocking at the door at around 2am. The men ran out of their bungalow to check what was happening and the Fulani militia surrounded the house and opened the window of a room in which a lady and child were sleeping. The lady was shot in the head, dying instantly; the child was hit in the leg. One of the brothers was shot and incapacitated, and the militia hacked him to death with machetes. “They are now living [in] our houses and using our farmland and produce to graze their cattle. You can’t go to those areas – you will be attacked.”

Taraba state

When asked about the possibilities of returning to his home, a 70 year old man from Bujum Angwan Konawayaya said: “We can’t go back. We have lost everything, and as of yesterday (15 December) they are still there. (...) We want the government to give security, then we can return and fend for ourselves.”

Southern Kaduna state

A woman displaced from Goska village, which was attacked on 18 and 24 December 2016, informed CSW in October 2017 that it was still too dangerous to return home. Some had attempted to return to tend their farms but met Fulanis who said: “we are not going because the government is keeping us here and until the government asks us to leave, we are not going anywhere.”

Impunity and re-victimisation of victims

The failure by both levels of government to address this violence effectively has exacerbated the situation, and entrenched impunity.

While no attacker has been brought to justice, members of victim communities are regularly threatened, detained arbitrarily and judicially harassed for voicing concerns or faulting ineffective security arrangements.

Following an attack in Fan, Plateau state on 29 August 2018 that claimed one life, the military arrived after the perpetrators left and shot and killed an unarmed woman. She was reportedly trying to stop them from detaining local youth and had asked them to pursue the militia instead.¹⁹

Between 9 February and 16 March 2019 around 130 people died in Kajuru LGA, southern Kaduna state in attacks on the Adara chiefdom, and 12,480 were displaced between February and April. The violence followed a televised statement by the state governor on the eve of the postponed presidential elections, asserting 66 Fulanis, mostly women and children, had been killed in Kajuru.

The claim was widely refuted, including by the Nigeria Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the local police chief. Nevertheless the governor raised the alleged death toll to 130, then nine Elders of the Adara tribe were

¹⁹ <https://www.csw.org.uk/2018/09/04/press/4065/article.htm>

detained between 12 and 15 February 2019, charged with incitement and homicide, and denied bail. On 31 May, six of the Elders were released for lack of evidence, one was released on bail and another held pending further investigation of his hunting gun. However, 23 Adara youth, including several minors, have allegedly been detained arbitrarily since September 2018.

Possible Collusion

Allegations of collusion by army elements have circulated since 2010.

Following an attack on Mazah village, Plateau state, on 16 July 2010, which claimed around eight lives and saw churches and homes burned, villagers alleged the security forces waited until the attack had ended before entering Mazah.²⁰

On 11 August 2011, members of the military were implicated in a militia attack in which three members of the same family were killed and another was injured. According to unconfirmed reports, a military issue helmet and blood-stained belt were found at the site.

Three people were killed in Foron village, Barkin Ladi, Plateau State on 15 August 2011. According to eyewitnesses, the assailants were soldiers who fled in a military-issue Hilux van.

Four military identity documents were allegedly found after an attack on the Heipang community in Plateau state on 15 August 2011, where nine people were killed.

On 27 October 2016, as the sound of shooting neared Angwan Misisi village and the youth prepared to defend it, a military van approached and those inside it asked the youth to drop their weapons and gather for a peaceful discussion at the district head's home. As they approached the home without weapons they heard shots and fled as soldiers killed the village head and left.²¹

An elderly man displaced from Godogodo village in southern Kaduna state in 2016 said he had tried to return in 2017, but "saw a bad military attitude. They assault girls

and women and shoot sporadically on non-military grounds if people disagree. Some people have been killed by security. For example a man we called Young Pastor."

A female survivor of the attack on the Dorowa community in Plateau state on 25 June 2018 informed CSW that as the militia attack intensified, her son was shot by a military tank by Muslim soldiers who gave the militia cover. "There was a previous incident when Christian shops were being burnt and Muslims in the army gave them cover."

Abiding concerns regarding the complicity of elements in the armed forces were lent added credence on 24 March 2018, when former Army Chief of Staff and Defence Minister Lt General Theophilus Y Danjuma stated publicly that the armed forces were "not neutral - they collude" in the "ethnic cleansing" of riverine states by the militia. He advised villagers to defend themselves, because depending on the armed forces would mean dying "one by one."²²

ECOWAS Court of Justice verdict

In a verdict delivered on 26 February 2019²³ the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) ordered the Nigerian government to investigate the mass killings and destruction in Benue state in 2016, following attacks on the Agatu Community in which around 500 people died. The government was ordered to identify and prosecute perpetrators, compensate victims, 'protect the Community and prevent the further occurrences' of such violence.

Significantly, the Court rejected the description of this violence as communal clashes between farmers and herders, and upheld the Plaintiffs' argument that armed Fulani Herdsmen were attacking and killing communities in Benue. The Court rejected the contention that the government could not be held responsible for any ethnic crime committed by unidentified and unknown persons.

²⁰ <https://www.csw.org.uk/2010/07/19/press/1014/article.htm>

²¹ Interviews with survivors, October 2017

²² 'Nigeria Armed Forces collude with bandits to Kill Nigerians.' TY Danjuma
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWWEIwoBdCg>

²³ Suit no: ECW/CCJ/APP/11/16 was brought by Reverend Father Solomon Mfa Reverend Joseph Dooga, Dr. Sam Abah,

Dr. David Iordaah, Hon. Ochepo Yakubu, Hon. Terse Tange, Favour Adah Paul, Samuel Msonter Ijoho, Iorbee Bajah, Ashi Bajah, Terseer Iorbee Bajah and the Movement Against Fulani Occupation (MAFO) against the President, the Inspector General of Police (IGP), the Chief of Army Staff and the Minister of Internal Affairs of Nigeria.

Lawlessness

Inadequate government intervention and the proliferation of small arms has facilitated increased lawlessness across the country. In turn, this has resulted in a growth in vigilantism across the country and periodic retaliatory violence, as people conclude they can no longer depend on government for protection or justice.²⁴

Kidnappings for ransom have spiked, particularly on the Kaduna-Abuja road. Thick forests in Niger, Kaduna, Nasarawa, and Kano states and between Jos and Bauchi where kidnap gangs operate are reportedly becoming like the Sambisa forest. "Security operatives are finding it difficult to end kidnapping in that zone (Kaduna-Abuja). It is too massive and occupied by mostly Fulani herdsman. They know the terrain and thus, it will be suicidal, just walking into the forest to search for the hideouts."

There is a link between militia violence and the lawlessness. A captured kidnapper detailed the connection between kidnapping and attacks on communities: "What they normally do is that if there is crisis, they will give us N1000 each to risk our lives. I was only comfortable with it because they gave me access to guns which I sometimes use for kidnapping."²⁵ Abductees released upon payment of ransom consistently assert the bandits are Fulani, violent and quick to kill those who fail to pay.

There growth lawlessness in Birnin Gwari, northern Kaduna state and in Zamfara state has seen bandits kill many thousands. In both Zamfara and Katsina states these assailants increasingly appear to include terrorist elements.

In an indication of the current problem, Nigeria's acting Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Adamu, revealed that during the first quarter of 2019 1,071 people were killed in crime-related cases across the country, mostly in the north, where 767 people were killed. The south recorded 130 deaths.²⁶

Recommendations

Article 14:2 (b) of the Nigerian constitution states that 'the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary

purpose of government'. The Nigerian government must therefore, as a matter of urgency:

- Formulate a comprehensive and holistic security strategy that adequately resources the security forces to address this and other armed non-state actors.
- Guarantee the safety, protection and right to life of all Nigerians, regardless of creed or ethnicity.
- Combat the proliferation of small arms and light weaponry by apprehending and disarming armed non-state actors and prohibiting the possession and use of such weapons by civilians do not comply with the criteria outlined in Article 14 of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons.
- Urgently investigate, block, apprehend and prosecute the sources supplying weaponry to non-state armed groups, including the militia.
- Prioritise rehabilitation and justice for traumatised survivors, and refrain from victimising them further.
- Encourage governments of affected states to provide adequately for the burgeoning number of IDPs caused by militia attacks within their respective territories.
- Facilitate an independent investigation into concerns regarding collusion or inaction on the part of military elements, and ensure that security forces conduct themselves in accordance with human rights and humanitarian norms.
- Initiate a robust advocacy programme to enlighten nomadic herders on modern cattle rearing techniques.
- Reconsider plans to expropriate communal and ancestral lands for grazing ranches that essentially benefit a private business at state expense, particularly given the unfortunate optics and message of appearing to reward violence.
- Promote equality of citizenship, a shared national identity and respect for differing religious beliefs.

To the UK

- Continually raise the relentless loss of life in the indigenous communities central Nigeria with the

²⁴ The growth of vigilantism engenders problems of its own, particularly if vigilante groups go rogue, as has occurred in Zamfara state, or attack innocent communities to avenge militia activity.

²⁵ <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/monsters-shocking-revelations-by-captured-herdsmen/>

²⁶ <https://punchng.com/1071-killed-685-kidnapped-in-first-quarter-of-2019-ig/>

government, urging that it is addressed in an unbiased manner.

- Offer counter-insurgency training and support, and any other assistance needed to secure Nigeria's borders.
- Support and facilitate funding for genuinely grassroots reconciliation efforts formulated by communities to address local realities and dampen localised hostilities.

Appendix

On 14 March 2014, 147 people were killed and 285 houses and three churches were razed, when militia men with guns, chemical explosives, and machetes attacked the villages of Ungwar Sankwai, Chenshyi, and Ungwar Gata in Kaura LGA.²⁷

On 3 August 2014, militia men opened fire in the Catholic Church in Ungwar Poppo village in the Kachia LGA, southern Kaduna, killing a youth who was guarding the church and injuring several people, some of them seriously.²⁸

On 30 December 2014, two people were killed and 16 severely injured when militia men stormed a New Year's Eve service at a church in Maikatako village, Bokkos, Plateau State.²⁹

On 15 March 2015, 105 people were killed in Egba village, Benue state. Every church was destroyed. However, mosques were untouched.³⁰

In 2016 the following attacks occurred in southern Kaduna State:³¹

- On 31 May, two ECWA churches a vicarage two auditoriums and a Baptist Church were destroyed in an attack on Ninte village.³²
- Pastor Luka Adamu of the Redeemed Church was one of two people killed in an attack between 1 and 2 August on Unguwar Anjo village, during which the ECWA and Redeemed churches were burnt.
- An attack on Akwa' Village on 2 August resulted in 20 houses, including churches being burnt.
- On 13 November, eight churches in Kigam, Kitakum, Unguwan Magaji, Unguwan Rimi and Kizipi, all in Chawai Chieftdom, of Kauru LGA were burnt down in militia attacks.

On 25 December 2017 as the people of Jungo village in Lao LGA, Taraba state were celebrating Christmas Fulani men passed through the area "bragging about how they had

destroyed someone's farmland." Soon afterwards they returned on motorcycles and attacked and looted the village, killing one person.³³

On 24 April 2018 two Catholic priests, Father Joseph Gor and Father Felix Tyolaha, were murdered along with 15 parishioners by militia men who attacked St Ignatius Church in Mbalom village in Gwer West LGA Benue State during Morning Mass.³⁴

On 7 July 2018 the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria building in Bujum Angwan Konawayaya was destroyed in an attack that razed the entire village to the ground.³⁵

On 28 August 2018, Reverend Adamu Gyang Wurim, 50, of the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN), his wife, and their three children were burnt to death in their home during attacks on communities in Foron District by militia men wielding machetes and AK 47s.³⁶

²⁷ <https://www.csw.org/2014/08/04/press/2193/article.htm>

²⁸ <https://www.csw.org.uk/2014/08/04/press/2193/article.htm>

²⁹ <https://www.csw.org.uk/2014/01/31/press/1639/article.htm>

³⁰ Interview with HRH Chief Dr Godwin Ngbede, Chief of Agatu, October 2017

³¹ <https://scannewsnigeria.com/news/statement-by-evangelical-church-winning-all-ecwa-19-dcc-fellowship-kaduna-state-on-the-persecution-of-the-church-in-kaduna-state/>

³² <https://www.csw.org.uk/2016/06/06/press/3132/article.htm>

³³ Interviews with IDPs, 15 December 2018

³⁴ <https://www.csw.org.uk/2018/04/25/press/3935/article.htm>

³⁵ Interviews with IDPs, 15 December 2018

³⁶ <https://www.csw.org.uk/2018/09/04/press/4065/article.htm>