

Fulani Herdsmen and the Threat to Grassroots Security in Rural Nigeria

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Abstract : There is an ongoing grassroots war in Nigeria, particularly in its north central zone, as well as all through its southern parts, which have been most bloody. The war is between Fulani herdsmen and farming communities – an age-long problem which has escalated in the last decade and has assumed a very deadly dimension. In a typical scenario, Fulani herdsmen move into non-Fulani homelands with their cattle which graze on local farmlands, destroying farmers' crops. This provokes their victims – the farmers – to acts of resistance, preventing the Fulani and their cattle from entering into farmlands. In some cases, there have been incidences of killing and/or stealing cattle, or poisoning of fields. In response, the herders wage deadly attacks on farming communities, leading to the death of thousands of people. To be sure, this has been a major factor of instability in the rural areas of Nigeria. This paper aims at engaging the issues and cross-cutting issues of interest, as well as providing context and perspectives to the violent conflicts between Fulani herders and local communities in Nigeria. It particularly interrogates four central issues: (1) the nature and dynamics of the crisis, (2) the positions and stakes of the parties to the crisis, (3) the remedies available for containing/managing the conflicts and their desirability, and (4) perspectives on the positions of government(s) (and the African Union) on this conflict. Both primary and secondary sources were used for the purposes of this essay.

Keywords : Fulani Herdsmen, violent conflicts and insecurity, sustainable remedies, Nigeria

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