Between Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen: Organised Crime and Insecurity in Nigeria

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Hey pal! Let me come and try my new Kung Fu kick on him.
Abstract

• Recent literature on terrorism in Nigeria has not only linked Boko Haram with terrorist organisations in the Sahel but also established the former’s complicity with organised criminal networks both in Nigeria and West Africa.

• This paper interrogates such complicity between Boko Haram elements and Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria. The two groups apart from having affinity defined in terms of culture and religion also shared this affinity with communities in neighboring countries. Thus, terrorism and crimes have mingled to define the character of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on farmers in Nigeria. This is increasingly laced with violence through the deployment of trafficked small arms and light weapons from the Sahel.
Abstract Con't

- This paper further examines the mode of operations, tactics, target population and area that are focus of Fulani herdsmen’s attacks in some North-central states in Nigeria to draw attention to complicity with Boko Haram elements and other terror groups in the country.

- The paper concludes that complicity between Boko Haram elements and Fulani herdsmen and other terror and criminal groups can account for the intensity and recurrence of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on farmers and the inability of the security agencies to sustain a halt to the attacks. Thus, taking this into cognizance, the Nigerian authorities while strengthening domestic security need to cooperate with other states within the framework of Economic Community of West African States to tackle terrorism and trans-border crimes.

- **Key words:** Transnational Organised Crimes, Nigeria, Security, Boko Haram, Fulani Herdsmen
Organized crime, Terrorism and Insecurity

- Organized and Transnational organized crime. Organised criminal activities take the form of drug trafficking, advanced free and Internet fraud, human trafficking, diamond smuggling, forgery, cigarette smuggling, illegal manufacture of firearms, trafficking of firearms, armed robbery and the theft and smuggling of oil (Aning, 2008 cited in Aning, 2009:1). When these criminal activities transcend the borders of two or more countries as the case in most West African countries, such criminal activities thus take the character of transnational organised crimes, which “involves people in more than one country maintaining a system of operation and communication that is effective enough to perform criminal transactions sometimes repeatedly” (UNODC Report 2005:14).
• Terrorism. Terrorism as a concept has attracted a lot of controversy; this is especially in the sense that there is no agreement among scholars to the definition of who is a terrorist. For instance, to the West, there is an association of terrorism with extreme and ruthless destructive method employed by revolutionary organisation intent on overthrowing the state (Agwu, 2004:8). This view is contested with the argument that the terror of the state is often historically antecedent to the revolutionary terrorism (Friedman, Hill, Vincent, Wilkson and Windsor, 1986). Thus, terrorism means premeditated, politically motivated violence against the non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience (Barash and Webel. 2009). In this vein, Chomsky (cited in Barash and Webel, 2009:44) maintains that “terrorism is the use of coercive means aimed at civilian populations to achieve political, religious or other aims”. There are various strategies employed by terrorists. These include aircraft hijacking, kidnapping, and destruction of property, hostage taking, bombings, and assassinations (Page and Connell, 2006:505).
Organised Crime, Terrorism and Insecurity Con't

• Insecurity. Insecurity is a state of lack of or absence of security. Security is defined as freedom from or elimination of threat not only to the physical existence of the state, but also to its ability to protect the generality of its citizenry and provide a congenial environment for their development of their well-being (Imobbighe cited in Ejiogba, 2006). In this sense, apart from the physical survival of the country’s territorial integrity, security is seen to have a positive impact on the condition of the individuals within the state and provide them the right atmosphere for their self-actualization (Ejiogba, 2006:305). In other words, insecurity means the absence of the foregoing in a country and their continuous absence due to impacts of organised crime and terrorism can lead to political instability and undermine the existence of such a country as such development can result into state failure or collapse (Zartman, 1995:5). Thus, insecurity in a state is characterized by failure of major institutions of the state especially the loss of ability to perform central state functions, such as guaranteeing security and order, welfare and the rule of law (Zartman, 1995; Omitola, 2012)
Nigerian state and the context of the emergence of Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts

• 1914 Amalgamation of the North and South Protectorate by the British of different administrative systems.
• Continuation of separate rule and perpetuation of differences through indirect rule
• Islamic/Sharia rule in the North based on legacy of political Islam or “Islamic colonization” of other areas of the North through the Fulani Jihad led by Uthman Dan Fodio.
• Political Islam because Islam has been part of the lifestyle and culture of the Hausa/Habe Kingdoms who were overthrown by the Islamic clerics operating in the royal courts of those Kingdoms. This overthrow took place in Sokoto where other clerics received and waged war against other kingdoms and other areas of the North and established Emirates.
• Post Independence period witnessed the continuation of political Islam or Islam colonization in another form--- The Sardauna Premier of the North pursued Islamic Evangelization through various conversion campaigns in the North
Nigerian state and the context of the emergence of Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts

• After 1st Republic, especially during military regime, political Islam took on violent forms, political elites often called on the people to engage in violence to pursue Islamic oriented agenda.

• Sharia Debate in the constitutional conference of 1978 and the attendant conflicts
  – 2nd Republic-call to defend traditional institutions in the Kano state leading to the destruction of government properties and killings
  – The Maitatsine riot that led to the death of over 4117 people between 1980 and 1981
  – The riot that resulted from opposition to the staging of Miss World Competition in 2002 at the prompting of the Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (SCIA), Alhaji Lateef Adegbite who protested that the staging of the competition during the month of Ramadan is an affront on Nigerian Muslims.
  – One can conclude that religion and politics have always mixed in the North and that religion especially Islam is always exploited to achieve political ends with attendant negative consequences on the state.
Nigerian state and the context of the emergence of Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts

– However, of all the notable religious riots, the Maitatsine riot stands out as it represents a continuation of the Kanuri opposition to the dominant Islamic establishment in the North.
– The current Boko Haram movement is also been interpreted as a continuation of the struggle against dominant Fulani control of the North. Thus, some scholars and observers refer to the movement as Kanuri Jihad.
– The Fulani though dominates the North politically since the Uthman Dan Fodio Jihad of the 19th Century; the majority of the Fulani remains largely pastoral and poor.
– The semi-nomadic and nomadic groups like the settled group are dispersed among the various communities in Nigeria and are found mostly in several states including the North central states of Nassarawa, Kogi. Benue, Plateau, Kwara and Taraba
Nigerian state and the context of the emergence of Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen Conflicts

- Conflicts intensified with the emergence of several identity groups following the general trend of identity crisis in the country among the Fulani and their host communities
- Partisan roles of security agents that are drafted to resolve various conflicts
- Politicization of the conflicts and further exploitation of the conflicts for political ends by the elite
- Trafficking and proliferation of small arms and light weapons especially by terrorist and criminal groups operating in the Sahel
- Demobilization of mercenaries that fought on the side of former Libyan leader Mohammad Kaddafi
- Increased movement of Fulani from Sahel countries such as Mali and Sudan among others who had been exposed to the terrorist activities into Fulani communities in Nigeria
Understanding the connection between Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram in Nigeria

• Religion, Cultural and Ideological Affinity
• Evidences from diverse scholarly works suggested that the Fulani in Nigeria enjoyed peaceful coexistence with their neighbors before the escalation of various conflicts with farmers in different communities.
• The influence of foreign Fulani groups in search of pasture accounts for the irreconcilable conflicts being witnessed between the Fulani and their host communities. Due to cultural and religious affinity, it is practically difficult to distinguish between Nigeria Fulani and Fulani from other countries across the Sahel region moving into Nigeria.
Understanding the connection between Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram in Nigeria

• Thus, in spite of the observation by some scholars that Boko Haram insurgency can be likened to a Kanuri Jihad as the area of the operations approximated the old Kanuri Empire, Boko Haram operatives connection with Islamist groups in the Sahel especially the Ansar Dine in Mali and Al Shabab in Sudan for training and logistics support thus the group in return defend the interests of Fulani herdsmen from these foreign countries who are operating in Nigeria. Evidences abound of the involvement of Boko Haram elements in the various skirmishes involving Fulani herdsmen and their hosts in Jos, Plateau State and other parts of the North central Nigeria.

• The consistent denial by the umbrella Fulani Miyetti Cattle Breeders Association that the members of the group are not responsible for the wanton killings and destruction going on in various areas of conflicts is a further evidence to suggest that transhumant Fulani from neighboring countries and their connection and exposure to terrorist ideas and organisations are interested in opening new front of operation for Boko Haram in the North-central Nigeria.
Understanding the connection between Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram in Nigeria

- The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Sahel
- Fulani herdsmen have been reported to be involved in transporting small arms to Nigeria through their cattle. The Nigerian military magazine quoting military sources claimed that most of the small arms came to the Boko Haram insurgents (and other dangerous groups and individuals) through Libyan and Malian rebels on the backs of camels and donkeys desperate to exchange arms for money. This has been made possible to a great extent by a combination of both internal and external factors such as Nigerian porous borders, corruption of immigration officers, inadequate record of immigration and emigration and the problem of identifying who is a Nigerian, since the country lacks any means of identifying her citizens.
Understanding the connection between Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram in Nigeria

• Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing. Inspite of UN declaration that Boko Haram is a terrorist organization and examination of sources of its finances, little success has been made in tracing financing patterns of the groups. Report has confirmed that the Fulani herdsmen through their transactions which take place largely outside the banking system is a potential source of money laundering and terrorism financing for Boko Haram.
Understanding the connection between Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram in Nigeria

• Recent Operational strategy and tactics of Boko Haram suggest infiltration of the rank and file of the herdsmen by Boko Haram operatives. Use of Hilux Jeeps, and motorcycles, setting homes ablaze and shooting of escaping villagers, the use of AK 47 weapons and other assorted weapons by Boko Haram and attacking Fulani herdsmen.

• The recent revelations by some ‘captured’ members of Boko Haram members operating as Fulani herdsmen in the North Central states of Nassarawa, Plateau, Southern Kaduna, Benue, Taraba, and Kogi. The statement of President Goodluck Jonathan that security report confirms that Boko Haram insurgents now exploiting the conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the North Central States to open another front for the insurgency against Nigerian State. The comments by former head of State, General Gown that “These children (Nigerian Fulani herdsmen) carry sticks and lead their cattle on pasture across the country, but now some people put on Fulani clothes and perpetuate crisis”.

Understanding the connection between Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram in Nigeria

• The comment by the President General of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACABAN) that those Fulani herdsmen and gun men attacking villages and communities in the North central Nigeria are not members of his association.

• Also, from Gombe State (North-eastern Nigeria) House of Assembly legislative Committee on Security findings, it is further revealed by the chairman of the cattle breeders association in the state that those carrying out attacks on farmers are immigrant Fulani herdsmen mostly from Mali, Chad etc and this fact is corroborated by the Divisional Police officers in the affected communities that the insurgents are aliens who do not have respect for the law of the land (Galaxy Television News, 2013).
Understanding the connection between Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram in Nigeria

- Similar targets of attacks by the Boko Haram elements and the gun men operating under the guise of Fulani Herdsman. The areas that have come under repeated attacks are mostly towns, villages and communities that have predominantly Christian populations. In the North east these include ---- that have been subjected to Boko Haram attacks; while in the North-central areas mostly affected by operations of gunmen include the following; Thus, confirming a general fear that the two groups have a common agenda of persecuting Christians in way to what has been described as “persecution eclipse” during insurgency.
Connection between Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen and the Nigerian state

• Intensification and widespread of conflicts in the country. There is a report that there are conflicts in 30 out of 36 states in the country, most of them related to the Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers conflicts

• Table of some reported cases

• Over stretching of the security apparatus in the country

• Involvement of the military in policing duties. Over exposure of the military to the civilian and implications on the sustenance of democratic values

• Spreading of terrorist activities and attacks to more states in the country.

• Increased in socio-economic and political instability in the country

• Increased threats to the opportunity of Nigeria surviving as a stable polity
The Way Forward

• Measures aim at addressing the challenges posed by the conflicts should include but not limited to the following;
• Government should address the root cause by providing grazing facilities, modern methods of pastorals, tracking of cattle.
• Identification of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria through the instrumentality of issuing of valid identity Cards to Nigerians.
• Modern security infrastructure such as ground and air surveillance to contain the problem of porous borders and associated security challenges
• Cooperation and creation of synergy with neighboring countries. This is especially necessary in the areas of implementation of ECOWAS and AU protocols on trans-border trade, trans-border crimes protection and trans- human activities.
• Government needs to fight crime, arrest and prosecute criminals and pursue the war on terror that is devoid of politics through ensuring no safe haven for sponsors of terror and other crimes.
• Effective tracking of financial dealings of people suspected of money laundering or financing of in the country including Fulani herdsmen
• Developing capacity for appropriate response to contain conflicts through developing local initiative within the confines of the law of the land.
Conclusion

- The paper concludes that whereas there are noticeable connections between Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen, the current escalation and recurrent violent attacks on various farming communities in the North central Nigeria cannot but be linked to the infiltration of the Fulani herdsmen by Fulani from neighboring countries. These Fulani infiltrators who have been exposed to terrorist ideas and operations also operated as mercenaries demobilized from various conflicts in the Sahel are pushing the front of Boko Haram operations in the North central states of Nigeria. Thus, the Nigerian authorities need to take cognizance of them and their level of involvement in fashioning out an acceptable and sustainable solution to all concerned parties in the Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers’ conflicts in the country.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Casualty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1999</td>
<td>Taraba state Karim Lamido</td>
<td>Herdsmen invaded villages in Karim Lamido</td>
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<td>August 2000</td>
<td>Plateau state, Wase pische</td>
<td>Tarok, Langtnag versus, Hausa, Fulani</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mgontabo, Ganlary, Zanbang,</td>
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<td>Dadinkowa and Walnem</td>
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<td>October 2000</td>
<td>Oyo state, Oyo North</td>
<td>Yoruba farmers versus Fulani (Bororo) herders</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Herdsmen were accused of allowing their cattle to destroy farmlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Location Details</td>
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| October, 2001      | Plateau state Tarok             | Taroks & Fulani Herdsmen  
Fulani headsmen allowed their cattle to destroy local farms           |                                                                                  |
| August 2002        | Plateau state, Wase             | Hausa Fulani versus Tarok people  
Land and water resources                                                 | Unknown                                                                          |
| 2002               | Maza                            | Hausa-Fulani and Local farmers  
Fulani headsmen allowed their cattle to destroy local farms           |                                                                                  |
| March 1, 2003      | Adamawa state, Sony local          | Yungar people versus Fulani Herdsman  
Dispute arose over grazing land for cattle | 40                                                                               |
| December, 2009     | Nassarawa state Udenigida        | Fulani herdsmen with Jukun and Ebira mercenaries  
attacked the communities                                                 | 70 persons killed                                                               |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Casualties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2010</td>
<td>Beye and Batern villages</td>
<td>Hausa-Fulani &amp; the Local farmers&lt;br&gt;Fulani headsmen allowed their cattle to destroy local farms</td>
<td>13 people killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2010</td>
<td>Plateau state</td>
<td>Suspected Fulani Herdsmen attacked a Beron village</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td>Plateau state</td>
<td>Attack of 3 Fulani herdsmen by people suspected to be Beron youths at Tusung village in Barkin Local Government</td>
<td>3 people killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>Plateau state</td>
<td>Muslim Fulani herdsmen launched an attack on a Christian village, Mazah</td>
<td>8 people killed and several houses burnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2011</td>
<td>Benue state</td>
<td>About 200-300 Fulani men sacked 3 districts in Gowen Local Government</td>
<td>Scores were killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2011</td>
<td>Benue state</td>
<td>Clash between Fulani herdsmen and Tiv farmers in Guma Local Government Area</td>
<td>2 soldiers and 18 others killed while more than 3000 people were displaced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>Benue state</td>
<td>Fulani herdsmen armed with AK 47, Mark 4 and other assaults weapons attacked Tiv farming communities Tse Abatse and Tse Yoo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 2012</td>
<td>Benue &amp; Cross River states</td>
<td>Clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers</td>
<td>3000 fulani herdsmen displaced from their settlement in Katsina-Alla (Benue) and fled to Utanga in Obaniku local government area (Cross-River).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October, 2012</td>
<td>Benue state</td>
<td>Fulani herdsmen attacked a village</td>
<td>30 people killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2, 2013</td>
<td>Plateau state</td>
<td>Allegation of herdsmen attacked on Tarok people of Wase local government area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Casualties</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>October, 2013</td>
<td>Ogun state Ketu (Nigeria/Benin border town)</td>
<td>Fulani Herdsmen attacked and killed one Yoruba farmer</td>
<td>1 person killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Oct, 2013</td>
<td>Benue state Agalie Local Government, Eguma settlement</td>
<td>Fulani herdsmen attacked Egum settlement. Attack connected to grazing/farming activities in the area.</td>
<td>6 people’s property with millions of Naira destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th Oct, 2013</td>
<td>Plateau state Barkin Ladi Local Government Area, Kukek community</td>
<td>Gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen attacked a family and some cows were stolen in the process</td>
<td>21 people including 9 members of a family and 12 herdsmen killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October, 2013</td>
<td>Kaduna state Atakar and Zandang</td>
<td>Gun men suspected to be herdsmen attacked the community in Kaira local government.</td>
<td>100 people killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4, 2014</td>
<td>Kirim, Zagar and Zandyan villages in Southern part of Kaduna State</td>
<td>Gun men suspected to be Fulani mercenaries attacked the various villages.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack on the Village Home of Tor Tiv (king) in Benue State</td>
<td>700 Fulani allegedly attacked the village</td>
<td>Several people killed and many displaced from their homes</td>
<td>Sources: Various Nigerian Newspapers (Print and Online) details in the references</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the houses set ablaze during Tuesday’s attack by suspected gunmen on Tse-Akenyi and Ukpan communities in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. Photo: NAN

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