

INTER-COMMUNAL CONFLICT AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN NIGERIA: ANALYSIS OF ENUGU AND ANAMBRA STATE, 2000-2007

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Abstract

Inter-communal conflict exists in almost all the zones in Nigeria and this has sent some innocent citizens to their untimely graves and properties worth millions of naira have been destroyed, while many have fled their homes for safety. Internal displacement of persons triggered by violent clashes perpetrated by own government or agents of communal/religious clashes, riots, terrorism, and occasional natural disasters has become a formidable problem in Nigeria. In Northern Nigeria, the character of the conflict revolves around farmers and herders, indigene-settler issues sometimes coloured with ethnicity while in Southern Nigeria it is a combination of indigene-settler issues; Farmer-Fulani herdsmen and political resource allocation. It has been observed that most communal conflicts display the paralysis of dialogue between political elites as well as the presence of fundamental socio-economic and political grievances which divide societal groups. The focus of this paper is the study of the underlying social, economic, and political causes of the crises the underlying social, economic, and political causes of the crises. As such the paper employed documentary data for its investigation while content analysis was utilized for data analysis. The paper concludes that the situation constitutes a setback to Nigeria's development as it compounds and complicates the already existing challenge of poor living standard and invariably accounts for Nigeria's low development index. The study recommends among others; that Government at all levels should make concerted effort to provide the needs of the displaced persons; expedite actions to contain insurgency and displacements in the country. These could be made possible through integration of local communities in providing security in their domains.

Keywords: *Internally Displaced Persons, Communal, Conflict, Socio-economic Factors*



Introduction

The frequent manifestation of inter-communal conflict in Nigeria has brought to the fore the issue of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria. The situation has become worrisome since the inauguration of the Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999. The country has witnessed an outbreak of uncountable and multiple violent communal conflicts that rank among its most bitter disappointments (Onwudiwe, 2004). These conflicts cause large scale displacement of people due to destruction of homes and environment, religious and political persecution, or economic necessity (Kett 2005). Inter communal conflict is described as conflict that occurs between competing groups within a state, it may arise over disputes concerning access to scarce resources or political power. Such conflicts may lead to violent warfare between two or more defined communities that are involved in the conflict. Inter communal conflict exists in all the political zones of the country though the character of the conflicts seems to differ between these zones. For instance in Northern Nigeria, the conflict revolves around farmers-herders, indigene-settler issues occur either in pure form or sometimes coloured with ethnicity, while in Southern Nigeria it is a combination of indigene-settler issues or mostly land ownership dispute (Osegbue, 2017).

Many parts of Africa face acute land shortage due to increase in human and cattle population (Asuni, 1999). There are numerous clan and communal conflicts within the borders of single states, but sometimes it spills across state boundaries (Nnoli, 1998). Livelihood in Africa depends so much on land due to the agrarian nature of the societies where over 70% of its populace live in rural areas and engage in peasant agriculture. As observed by Obioha (2013), land provides a portion of livelihoods that make the difference between survival or not. Indirectly, land offers the base structure, and sometimes the only basis for social security throughout life among Africans. The value of land in rural African communities especially in raising incomes, providing employment and exporting crops and other extractable resources as well as providing revenue for the government has transformed land into a social security resource that has been responsible for rationalizing conflicts (Mbah & Nwangwu, 2014). Much of the expropriated land in this area span rural and usually boundaries; disputes ensued between communities sharing borders as exemplified in Umuode-Oruku conflicts in Enugu state, Aguleri-Umuleri conflict in Anambra State, South East Nigeria where the two communities contested for indigene settlers and ownership of Otuocha territory, this has communally exploited both groups (Ekeh, 1999). It is incontrovertible that land and religion respectively form the ecological background in which socio-economic and political activities of the people are determined.

However, more than half of the world's internally displaced persons can be found in Africa, they depend on others for basic amenities either the host community or external intervention (Ejiofor, Oni, and Sejoro, 2017). In all these, internally displaced persons make it difficult for government to actualize Millennium Sustainable Goals. Between January, 2013 and February, 2014, about 470,565 and 143,164 persons were displaced in Nigeria by internal conflicts and natural disasters, respectively, which cuts across 24 states of the Federation (Brookings, 2008, Osagioduwa and Oluwakorede, 2016). Reports have shown that a good number of persons are displaced as results of both Federal and State Governments' activities such as land acquisition, demolitions, and oil explorations. During Governor Fashola's administration, over one million people were displaced after demolishing Ijora, Oshodi, Makoko and many other communities (Hamzat, 2013).

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2013) revealed that as at December 2015, Nigeria had two million IDPs with 91.98 percent being displaced due to insurgency. It must be noted that because internally displaced persons have no binding international convention attached to United Nation Agency for their protection and assistance, these people have been subjected to psychological imbalance, financial instability and other vulnerabilities (Funmi, 2014).

The character of communal conflict in Enugu and Anambra states is a combination of land question, indigene-settler and political resource allocation. Sustainable development is far from any environment full of rancour, disunity, killings, destruction of lives and properties. The consequence of inter-communal conflicts in most communities with particular reference to Enugu and Anambra states of Nigeria is quite devastating and grievous. It is pertinent to note that lack of trust due to suspicion and allegations of partiality against governments has mared efforts in resolving conflicts as well as involving civil society organizations in peace-building processes.

Conceptual Explanation

Conflict

Conflict entails struggle and rivalry for objects to which individuals and groups attach importance. These objects can be material or nonmaterial. The material objects include scarce resources like money, employment and position among political class, promotion in private and public organizations. According to Kesterner & Ray (2002), conflict is a situation in which two or more persons struggle for goals which only one of the persons can attain, or when incompatible



means are to be used to achieve certain goals. This suggests that conflict involves struggles over valuables, including claims to power and scarce resources whereby the objectives of those involved are to remove rivals along the way and get their desired results. Bloisi (2007) defines conflict as a disagreement between two or more parties who perceive that they have incompatible goals and needs. Conflict can occur when interests, goals or values of different individuals or groups become incompatible with one other. A similar definition was proposed by Anioke (2002) when he defined conflict as a disagreement of opinions, ideals or goals between parties, individuals or groups. On the other hand Domenici & Littlejohn (2001), assert that conflict depends on expressed struggle, interdependence and perceived incompatibility of goals, scarce rewards and interference. Hocker and Wilmont (2011) defined conflict as a felt struggle between two or more interdependent individuals over perceived and incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals or over differences in desires for esteem, control and connectedness. This definition, points out several aspects of conflict which needs attention, a sensed struggle between two or more individuals and a result of incompatible differences. Fatile & Adejuwon (2011) see conflict as what happens when two or more persons have opposing ideals over how resources that pertains to their development are to be shared.

In the words of Elaigwu (2005), conflicts arises due to actions that lead to mutual mistrust, polarization of relations, and hostility among groups in competitive interactions. The frustrations arising from unsatisfied human needs which may include psychological, economic, physical, social and others forms; explosion of identity as groups begin to ask for greater participation and rights; seemingly cultural incompatibility among groups with different communication styles; perceived inequality and injustice expressed through competitive socio-political, economic and cultural frameworks. Conflict occurs when people are nested by some sort of social cords. It does not occur in isolation, people must be relating or be depending on one another. Conflict can be defined in terms of good or bad outcome, when the outcome of a conflict scenario is positive; it is a functional or constructive conflict. It is important to note that the outcome of conflict depends on the management approaches.

Conflict in this paper is regarded as a fate of life that occurs where the interactions of people are marked with differences in goals, perceptions, attitudes, views, beliefs, values or needs. Conflicts are inseparable in human affairs and are inherent in social existence and social progress.

Elaigwu (2005) argues that every form of interaction among human beings and groups can generate conflict; it tests the state and creates the basis of future amelioration or adjustments. Conflicts beyond certain thresholds are detrimental

to the survival of the state because they threaten the consensual basis of association. The problem of conflict is inability to accommodate and resolve contradictions in society through arrangements and procedures that eliminate their negative effects and maximize their positive effects. Such failures are inability of the conflicting units to accept the arrangements and procedures that have been worked to resolve the conflict. In other words, conflict resolution boils down to the conditions that will enable conflicting forces to accept these arrangements and procedures.

Communal Conflict

Communal conflict is seen as conflict in which the participants or parties to the conflict are community-based identity groups; it is usually a function of communal identity. Communal identity is defined as subjective group identification based on common history, culture or core values (Brosche and Elfversson, 2012). Communal violence is a deeply emotional basis of mobilizing that is not merely distinguishing groups from one another which can dehumanize and demonize the other groups as characterized by violence, emotion and difficult to solve (Nnoli, 2003). A distinctive character of communal conflict is that parties to the conflict are usually subjects of the same state (Elfversson, 2013). They are non-state groups, but unlike other conflicts, disputes are not always on material resources but involve status, culture, identity and value. The membership of a communal group is not attained but ascribed and as such communal identity has the symbolic capability to define the individual, the totality of his or her hopes, fears and sense of the future (Nnoli, 2003). Communal conflict is an expression of disagreement over the control of resources. This can then be seen as a resort to the use of lethal weapons as a means of resolving conflict between non-state identity groups (communities). It is expressed in violent confrontations such as between villages, among ethnic groups in a town or the nation at large, between a village or ethnic group and the state, violence between a religious group and the state, or violence between different ethnic or religious groups within the ruling circle (Nnoli 2003). As an identity conflict, communal violence is defined in ethnic, communal, regional and religious terms, either pitched against themselves in deadly confrontation, or against the central government (Egwu, 2006).

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Internal Displaced persons can be defined as a group of persons who are forced or obligated to flee or leave their place of residence, in order to stay off the consequences of armed conflict, violations of human rights, situations of generalized violence, man-made or natural disaster, to another area that is considered relatively safe within their national borders as internally displaced



persons or travel across their international border as refugees. As observed by scholars (Ladan, 2013, Mooney, 2005) the concept of IDPs has two major components that conceive character of movement and that such movement takes place between national borders. One significant symptom of human insecurity crises is internally displaced persons. These people are unfortunate victims of brutality of man against man or violence confrontation, perpetrated by their own government against them or others like communal clashes, religious conflicts, riots, and natural disasters due to uneven development and urban renewal activities (Olukolajo, 2014, Robinson, 2003). According to Ocha (2003), IDPs are persons or group of persons who because of armed conflict, systematic violations of human rights, internal strife or natural disasters are coerced to flee their homes or places of habitat residence suddenly or unexpectedly to another location but have not crossed their recognized state border. Similarly, Oduwole and Fadeyi, (2013) define internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a group of people who left their abode as a result of floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters, fleeing their homes for safety and protection within the country. These persons leave their comfort for a life of uncertainty elsewhere. This triggers insecurity from within them coupled with the minimal attention received from government thereby exposing these people to economic threats, health threats, personal threats, political threats, environmental threats and community threats. Great concern has been generated by local and international agencies on the poor conditions of these persons which in turn leads to poor sanitations resulting to sickness and disease (Emmanuelar, 2015). Millions of people have been forced to leave their homes to seek safety in places unfamiliar to them are being exposed to enormous hardship. In the midst of these hardships, these displaced persons experience challenges with regards to their rights and their welfare condition.



Cross section of IDP women and children in the camp

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts the theory of Social Inclusion as its framework. The Social Inclusion theory is concerned with groups of people who need assistance due to their prevailing situation. The theory is associated with 'social exclusion' as a theory and is traced to the French notion of *les exclus* in 1970 with the authorship of the expression credited to René Lenoir (Robo, 2014).

This theory postulates that in a socially inclusive society everyone is valued and their basic needs are supplied to them. This in turn leads to a sense of belonging amongst the people. However, there are some values that form the basis of the social inclusion theory such that everyone needs support, can learn, contribute, communicate, is 'useful' and together be better (Robo, 2014). The Social Inclusive theory is apt for the purpose of this paper as it supports the integration of the internally displaced persons into the larger society. In Nigeria, if the internally displaced persons are well integrated into the society, this alignment would allow for better management of the clashes and will enhance security of persons in the country and this will in turn enhance human security especially for those who have been affected by herdsman-farmers clash and other such clashes. More importantly, social inclusion theory professes that if all members of a society (eg Nigeria) enjoy equal opportunities, equal acceptance, and are functionally integrated, then they are more likely to share common aspirations, and conflicts will be minimized.

Nature and Dynamics of Inter Communal Conflicts in Enugu and Anambra States

Communal conflict is a conflict that relates to a group or groups in a society. When it occurs within a group, it is known as intra-communal conflict and referred to as inter-communal conflict when it occurs between groups. It is worth noting that these groups have common social ties, which may make the competition that may ensue to be fierce. The point is that the misuse or unequal distribution of the available resources that should be jointly enjoyed by a group will produce conflict. The conflict will usually be complex to tackle because of the level of hatred that would probably have been cultivated among the parties in the process. Communal conflict was considered by Azuonwu (2002) as a conflict that occurs between two or more communities.

Communal conflict is a situation where violence is perpetuated across ethnic lines, and victims are chosen based upon ethnic group membership (Horowitz, 2000). Dzurgba (2006) is of the opinion that communistic violence is that which occurs between two or more communities over territorial land, farmland and territorial water for fishing. These definitions revealed that communal conflict is



more or less community conflict or subethnic conflict. This is not surprising because “communal” by its interpretation as a phenomenon that is common to a particular group characterizes a community or ethnicity. Onwudiwe (2004) attested to this fact when he stated that communal friction is what is usually described as ethnic conflict. More so, for communal contenders to have been described as culturally distinct people, tribes, or clans in heterogeneous societies, who hold or seek a share in state power. (Gurr and Haxton, 1996) help to buttress the point that communal conflict is often interpreted as community conflict or ethnic conflict. While it is not the focus of this thesis to divulge the differences inherent in these variables, if there is any, it is pertinent to stress that the peculiar identity of “communal” in terms of reference to a group, concerning common issues or elements could as well be attributed to other social groups in a society. This implied that several communal groups make up a community and therefore, in terms of involvement or participation, communal conflict is narrower than community conflict. Communal conflict is a state of incompatibility that emanates from a commonly shared or used property or resource by a group or groups in a society. It occurs between groups that are defined by some forms of social ties over resources that are jointly owned or shared in a community.

Communal conflict arises when two distinct groups in a community disagree over jointly shared resources due to the possibility of inequitable distribution, or when a community seeks to dominate another. The development of this kind of conflict in any society has attachment to commonly shared or valued resources. The identity of communal conflict is rather fluid in nature. This is because it occurs in diverse forms, which can sometimes be misleading to identify. Albert (2001) posited that this form of conflict “often manifest in terms of host-stranger face-offs in which a section of the community tags itself as the (owners of the community and some other groups as strangers. Apart from this, communal conflict is imbued on religious issues, land, politics, resources and chieftaincy issues. There is no part of Nigeria without its share of land related major conflicts, either on-going or recently resolved. These conflicts are mostly protracted and intractable, some last several years. In some cases, a few months after conflicts are settled in these countries, they reoccur in another form.

A number of factors have been identified by scholars as responsible for communal conflict in Nigeria. But land has been linked to most inter-communal conflicts in the country. Yecho (2006) indicated that the causes of communal conflicts are not static but rather dynamic and varied in nature depending on the socio-economic and geopolitical circumstances at the time. Onwudiwe (2004) listed social conditions as population explosion, economic migration, and the

anti-poor policies of the government as triggers of communal friction. Horowitz (2000) opined that communal conflict revolve around politics, politicians, and their pursuit of group advantage. Albert (2001) identified indigene/settler problem, religious differences, ownership of land and its resources, goals and aspirations of people as factors that can ignite communal conflict in the country (Hembe, 2000). In the words of Lyam (2006), loss of soil fertility, soil erosion, and deforestation, bush burning and flooding as some of the causes of communal conflict. Yecho (2006) assert that causes of communal conflict as poor economic conditions, high level of illiteracy, quest and fear of domination by other groups, land disputes, market ownership, chieftaincy tussle and party politics.

The increased demand of land for agriculture, unemployment, rural hunger, poverty and impoverishment triggers communal conflict in the country. Relative deprivation, exploitation and domination of minority groups by major ethnic groups and leadership problem are factors that exert communal crisis. Equally, religious differences, competition for livelihood resources and traditional chieftaincy tussles is not left out (Varvar, 2000, Angya and Doki, 2006. Oboh and Hyande, 2006). In Benue valley, the pressure on land from all directions heightens the proliferation of ethnic and communal conflicts in the region, most of them arise from the land question (Best, 2006).

Communal Conflicts in Enugu and Anambra States

In South-East with particular reference to Enugu and Anambra states are predominantly Ibo and Christians. They are endowed in agriculture, trade and commerce attracts people of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds across the country. The high population density in major cities in the zone has thrown up the challenges of inadequate infrastructure and social services leading to conflict-inducing issues like inter-communal and inter-ethnic competition, unemployment, cultism and criminality. Most of the conflicts in the zone are perennial in nature and often related to land ownership and boundary disputes, chieftaincy and community leadership tussles, political contestation and youth agitation. This has been joined by other insidious conflicts such as cultism, vigilante and criminality, farmers-herdsmen, government policy-induced conflict, oil-related conflict and agitations. It has been noted that the prevalence of conflicts are not uniform in all the states in the zone, rather they are different and sometimes unique from one state to the other. The structure covers the social, economic, political and security classifications. It has been noted that South-East zone witnessed gradual multiplication in conflicts escalate in frequency, intensity, impact and diversity of actors.



Farmers-Herders Cases

In Anambra State, Farmers-herdsmen clash in Aguleri community, on April 2016, clashes over use of farms for cattle grazing. DSS, community leaders and state government intervened and reached agreement between the farmers and herdsmen. In Ugbenu community in Awka North LGA, herdsmen and farmers confrontation over grazing of cattle on farmlands. Farmers, youths and herdsmen lost their lives and many were injured. The intervention of security agencies in the state brokered an accord. In Ifite Ogwari and Umumbu community, Ayamelum LGA in January and February 2016, farmers and herdsmen clashed over grazing of cattle on farmlands. The intervention of security agencies and Anambra state Governor set up a state cattle menace committee to investigate the recent clashes. In Nando in Anambra East LGA; April 2016, the clash on grazing of cattle on farmlands that destroy farmlands; retaliatory attack on herders at Ojana farm settlement killed many cows, 3 deaths and several injuries. The joint taskforce of police and military was deployed to restore peace, and a peace meeting organized by state government and panel of inquiry established to investigate the matter brought calm to the community.

The people of Nimbo, Uzo-Uwani LGA woke up on Monday, 25 April, 2016 to the fiery swords of irate herdsmen who occupy the bushy parts of the community. The unsuspecting villagers were mainly agrarians who from time to time quarreled with cattle herders who always released their cattle to graze in the villagers' cultivated farms and defecate in their streams. Two villages, namely: Mgwogo and Onueke were first to be attacked, the people state that the cattle herders targeted the able-bodied men and youths, killing many and leaving others with different degrees of injuries, while many fled and settled in neighboring towns in Nsukka LGA (as IDPs). Different accounts estimated that 40 indigenes of Nimbo were killed, and properties worth millions destroyed. In reaction to the incident, a group of anti-herder protesters, made up of a coalition of thirteen nongovernmental organizations and women from Nimbo community took to the streets to protest against the unprovoked attacks. Subsequently, the State Government established a panel of Judicial Inquiry to investigate, and unravel the perpetrators, while security personnel from the military, Police and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) were deployed to the community. Akegbe Amodu in Nkanu West LGA on November 2013 engages in battle due to trespass and destruction of farmlands. There was rape, killing, trauma, fear, ethno-religious resentment, poverty, health issues. The intervention of security agencies, stakeholders; protest by women of Enugu North and East Senatorial Zones against the herdsmen and proposed grazing bill; Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Enugu Chapter put a halt on the inferno.

In Ohani Akpofu Nkerefi, Nkanu East LGA there was confrontation over grazing on cultivated farm, the destruction of crops breach of the peace between farmers and herdsmen. The intervention of NSCDC and leader of herdsmen lead to compensation of affected farmers.

Analysis of the various conflict strands indicates that recurring types of conflicts in the South-East states with particular reference to Enugu and Anambra states are chieftaincy and community leadership conflicts; communal land and boundary disputes. However, a dangerous trend was recently introduced; herders' violence against farmers. These and other widespread conflicts are categorized and attributed to political and socio-economic dynamics in the communities and states under focus, as well as the larger Nigerian society. The disaggregation on the causes, actors and impacts of these conflicts reveals that there are ongoing struggles and tradeoffs between individuals and groups in their bids to access and retain political, social, economic rights, privileges and opportunities. As observed by Mbah and Nwangwu (2014), many multi-ethnic communities in Nigeria states that identity based conflicts would be minimal in setting ethnic homogeneity. The trajectories of these conflicts often depended on the capacity for conflict management and resolution by government, non-government, and other stakeholders.

Challenges Affecting IDPs Management in Nigeria

Challenges that affect IDPs management in Nigeria are as follows:

Funding IDPs management agencies in Nigeria get funds mainly through government allocation, international aids and local donations. The funds they get are insufficient to meet the increasing needs of IDPs in the country. Consequently, deficiency in manpower, commodities, infrastructure, equipment and mobility abound. Where there is paucity of funds, standard facilities will be unavailable and the agencies will be inefficient. This justifies the position of Olagunju cited in Osagioduwa and Oluwakorede (2016) that government in Nigeria does not have adequate machinery in place to address IDPs and the organizations created by the government possess minimal capacity to handle IDPs related problems.

Overlapping IDPs Management Institutions: Overlapping policies is a challenge confronting IDPs management agencies. The overlapping responsibilities hinder agencies in the discharge of their duties. In terms of overlapping institutions, it was noticed from the testimony of key informants from government agencies that the government has established several IDPs management institutions or agencies with similar mandates and structures (Osagioduwa & Oluwakorede,



2016). According to them, a clear example cited by key informants is that of the National Commission for Refugees (NCFR). Originally, this institution was saddled with the responsibility of catering for refugees in the country and not IDPs. It is arguable understandable that as a result of upsurge of IDPs in the country, its mandate has been extended to include the responsibilities of NEMA. Today, NCFR has eventually but nominally metamorphosed into the National Commission for Refugees, migrants and Internally Displaced Persons. Considering the mandates and organizational structures of the National Commission for Refugees and NEMA one can opine that both them are analogous. Based on this, both agencies are left with the question of who has the responsibility of doing this or that, what has been done, and what has not been done already. In a situation like this a significant part of the job risks being left undone. The overlapping functions of the above stated organizations established by the government, the partnering NGOs and other humanitarian organizations equally get confused as to which of the two government establishments to be work with.

Attitude of Host Communities Sometimes, as internally displaced persons overburden existing community services, resources and job or economic livelihood opportunities, tension arises between the two populations, making effective local integration difficult (Kangiwa, 2012). Cost of living in host communities increases like food, housing, healthcare and education. It has been observed that a good number of host communities are usually friendly with IDPs. However, this friendly attitude usually gets frosted whenever food and non-food items supplied to the IDPs either from the government agencies or humanitarian groups and host communities are excluded. Durosaro and Ajiboye (2011) observed the influx of non-displaced young people who took advantage of porous IDP camps to enjoy humanitarian services and later leave for their stable homes or businesses, makes it difficult to ordinarily identify the real target individuals. This observation is in tandem with that of Ladan (2013) that fractions between IDPs and host communities resulting from concentration of assistance to IDPs and scarcity of resources for distribution are major hindrances to IDPs management. For Porous IDP camps to enjoy humanitarian services and leave for their stable homes, makes it difficult ordinarily identify the real target individuals. This observation is in tandem with Ladan (2013) that fractions between IDPs and host communities due to concentration of assistance to IDP camps and scarcity of resources for distribution are major hindrances to IDP management.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Most inter-communal conflicts in Nigeria lack clarity on constitutional interpretation this creates opportunity for its abuse in many parts of the country. In the past military government were able to use official violence to suppress ethnic agitations. However, with the return to democracy many identity conflicts have resurfaced all over again and the struggles for political power reflected the insiders versus outsiders' syndrome. The conflict between ethnic groups and those perceived as settlers can no longer be treated as local issue in Nigeria. In this regard comprehensive national efforts to address the citizenship question in Nigeria are urgently needed. There have been agitations in various quarters across the country for sovereign national conference of all nationalities with focus on issues like citizenship question and resource control. There are claims in official circles that government is embarking on land reform but people are yet to feel the impact of the reform. People are struggling for food and shelter both are connected with land, and this explains why struggle for land is sacred over other struggles. The ownership of disputed territories is the cause of the conflict, the animosity arising from a lingering sense of deprivation has assured its persistence. It is in the context of this animosity that land is now the basis for contracting, propagating, primordializing and intensifying differences between two communities. This inter-communal conflict has amass the recent population movements of people from their habitual home to other places especially the increased wave of farmers-herders clash for land resources need to be addressed with comprehensive land legislation, control of agricultural and pastoral resources.

Peace requires a responsive State with adequate capacity to mediate on social conflicts and mitigate social contradictions to create an enabling environment for peace-building efforts. Many land-related conflicts in Nigeria are linked to economic stagnation, inequitable access to public services, lack of transparency and accountability in governance. The pool of unemployed frustrated young men with little or no opportunity for positive engagement in the country is a serious factor on communal conflict. Finally, a broader conflict resolution strategy is recommended: a model in which psychologists and relevant social scientists must spear head to transform the relationships between parties in the midst of, or previously engaged in a given conflict.



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