

INVOLVEMENT OF FULANI HERDSMEN IN TRANS-BORDER CRIMES AND ITS IMPLICATION ON NIGERIA'S SECURITY

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Abstract

This study examines the implications of trans-border crimes and National Security in Nigeria. Despite the efforts of border security agencies in Nigeria, the nation's borders are oftentimes described as porous, allowing sorts of cross border criminal activities such as illegal migrants, terrorist, and insurgents. Against this backdrop, this study is specifically concerned with the objective of addressing the question: Does the spate of trans-border crimes undermine national security in Nigeria? Relying on the fragile state approach as a theoretical guide, the study investigates the security challenges posed by trans-border activities of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria. Documentary method of data collection based on secondary source was adopted. Correspondingly, Content Analysis was used as our data analysis; and our research design is time series research design. The study finds that the spate of trans-border crimes undermines national security in Nigeria. Among others, the study recommends reconstituting the Nigerian state in such a way as to be proactive in dealing with the rampant cross border criminal activities. The paper concluded that trans-border criminal activities operating throughout the world pose increasing concerns for the international community. The activities of these criminal elements especially illegal Fulani migrants who use Hausa language to penetrate at our borders affect our joint security as well as the stability of our nation and the future progress against the erosions of public trust and core democratic values.

Keywords

Fulani herdsmen, Illegal movements, National security, Porous boundaries. Trans-border crimes.

Introduction

Nigeria is a diverse and vast country covering 923, 768 square kilometres with more than 36, 450 kilometres of land and maritime borders (Okeke 2014). It shares international water with Lake Chad and Niger in the North, and a maritime border coastline in the Gulf of Guinea or Atlantic Ocean. Along the Western border, Nigeria has 770 kilometres of shared land border with the Republic of Benin, in the North, around 1,500 kilometres with Niger and 90 kilometres with Chad and in the West, 1,700 kilometres with Cameroon. Along the Southern coastline, it also shares 853 kilometres of maritime border with the

Atlantic Ocean known as the Gulf of Guinea. All totaling outstretch of about 4910 km of borders (Stohl & Tuttle, 2009; Nte, 2011).

The country has continued to attract global attention since the 1960's due mainly to its buoyant economy and also her political influence has impacted on her neighbours, as well as the entire African continent and even beyond. In the mid-1960s, the administration of General Yakubu Gowon, dazed by the 'boom' from oil revenues, went as far as giving loan to the government of Grenada for the payment of the salaries of the country's civil servants (Abcarian, & Masannat, G. (1970). Gowon was said to have boasted that “the problem with Nigeria is not money, but how to spend it (Garuba, 2010). Nigeria in the 1970s led the 46-member African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) group of countries in the negotiations with the European Community that resulted in the Lomé Convention on 28 February 1975. This initiative helped the ACP states to evolve an identity of their own. It was in the same period that Nigeria took the lead by floating the idea of broad West African integration, which culminated in the establishment of ECOWAS in May 1975, just a few months after the Lomé Convention.

Nigeria's influence in Africa increased significantly in the period of the 1970s and 1980s due in part to its economic power and the relative political stability it enjoyed. In the late 1980s Nigeria conceived of its influence beyond the African continent, and consequently promoted and sponsored the Concept of Medium Powers (the Lagos Forum) along with Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Venezuela, Austria, and Zimbabwe. Around this period the country explored the proposal of developing nuclear power weapons (“black bomb”) in a self- definition of its role and responsibility to challenge the monopoly enjoyed by the North on nuclear weapons. Nigeria has indeed been playing the role of regional hegemony in Africa, serving as a hub for most new regional initiatives. It has potential and actual capabilities as a regional power, in terms of political and socio-economic vision, aspirations to leadership, political legitimacy, military strength, resource endowment and political willingness to implement those visions. Nigeria and South Africa championed the birth of the African Union (AU) and inauguration of the New Economic Partnership for African Development. No other country in the West African sub-region, and very few in Africa as a whole, can compare with Nigeria in terms of economic and military capabilities. The country ranks as the fifth largest contributor to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions. With a strong and growing economy, and considering the above attributes, Nigeria is unquestionably an important regional actor with hegemonic influence (Addo, 2006)). Nigeria accounts for more than half of the population of West Africa which harbours people of common history, traditions and customs separated by national boundaries under the modern state system. To illustrate Hausa and Fulani are in significant presence in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal, Mali, Chad and Niger, while Yoruba is widely spoken in Benin, Togo and Nigeria.

Trans border crimes have posed a serious security threat to the corporate existence of country. Much of the violent attacks and losses are recorded in the North- Central and the North- Eastern part of the country. A number of suggestions have been made by well meaning individuals, and organizations on how to successfully combat Military in Nigeria.

According to Nigeria's former minister of police affairs, Caleb Olubolade who do not mince words and acknowledged that: “The nation now faces new security threats that are quite different from what we used to face before, But as these threats confront us, we'll find solutions to them, it is now a period to look forward and overcome the challenges that face us” (N.I.R.S, 2011). The security situation in Nigeria expectedly has attracted much attention in view of its status and role as a regional power whose security is

threaten by transnational organised criminality activities especially the Fulani herdsmen. To scholars like Park, (2006)) and Francis Stewart (2006), once the issue of security of a territory is placed as topmost in priority, development follows. However, despite the effort of cross-border security agencies like the Nigeria police, customs service, immigration services, etc, Nigeria borders have been described as porous allowing all sorts of cross border or trans-border criminal activities such as insurgency, illegal migrants like Fulani herdsmen especially within Niger, Chad and Cameroun who used Hausa Language to have access at the border lines.

Between 2007 and 2014, there were over 30 communal clashes, and sectarian violence with each claiming hundreds of lives and properties, and internal displacement of women and children (Ikyase, 2015). For example, the Fulani herdsmen clashes have killed more than 10,000 Nigerians, an average of 1000 people per year since 2007, Fulani herdsmen killings in Benue, Plateau, and Enugu where victims sustaining permanent disabilities while others were killed. Transnational crimes are crimes that have actual or potential effect across national borders and crimes which are intra-State but which offend fundamental values of the international community (Boister, 2003).

The task of defining or describing “trans-border crime” would not be an easy one, because many elements have been recognized as constituting it. However, “trans-border crime” represents a number of illegal and notorious activities carried out by individuals and groups across national and international borders, either for financial or economic benefits and also socio political cum religious considerations. It is a set of criminal acts whose perpetrators and repercussions go beyond territorial borders. These would include illegal migrants, human trafficking, terrorist, money laundering, drug trafficking, arms smuggling or trafficking of weapons, cross-border terrorism, illegal oil bunkering, illicit trafficking in diamonds, corruption, business fraud, to mention but these notable few (Asiwaju, 1992; Ering, 2011,)

Since the end of the Nigerian civil war in January 1970 the West Africa’s regional superpower Nigeria continues to face serious security challenges due to cross border or trans-border criminal activities. African countries generally have experienced direct or indirect impacts of illegal migrants at the border lines. Yet, even when security is beefed up at the borders, these criminals use Hausa language to have access to move across the Nigeria borders without hindrance and have even continue with illicit business with impunity that undermines national security and development,. (Stohl & Tuttle, 2009 According to Ogbonnaya & Ehigimusoe (2013) The North Central states of Nigeria (Benue, and Plateau) as well as Eastern States of (Enugu, and Imo) have become the epicentre of Fulani herdsmen, killings and destruction have occurred in these areas since 2009. This has resulted in the loss of thousands of lives, extensive damage to property as the socio-economic, development prospects of the region have been a setback. Altogether, writers on weak border monitoring, mechanism and surveillance which account for the state weakness to contain cross border crime in Nigeria focus on the porous nature of Nigeria’s border, inconsistent intelligence gathering network, sabotage by officials at the border posts, non co-operative attitude of some of the Nigeria’s neighbouring countries. These studies amply suggest that Nigeria has been faced with severe security challenge.

From the foregoing, therefore, we raised the following question:1. Does the spate of Trans-Border Crimes undermine National Security in Nigeria? Arising from the foregoing, this study attempt to examine trans-border crimes and national security in Nigeria with emphases on illegal movement of suspected criminals (Fulani herdsmen) in Nigeria. The study becomes even more worthwhile in the light

of the shrinking role of our security personnel at the border line which has affected our coexistence as a sovereign nation.

Conceptual Review

Trans-Border Crimes & National Security Since Passas in (1980) wrote on *Trans Border Crime and the Interface between Legal and Illegal Actors*, the field has attracted the attention of researchers. In furtherance of the study by Passas, a number of theoretical and empirical studies have analysed the nexus between Tran's border crimes and national security dynamics in different settings. Ortuno & Wiriyachai (2009) maintained that the past few years have been characterized by a significant increase in global criminal activities which undermine the national security of nations. According to them such trans-border crimes include money laundering, trafficking in human and nuclear technology and material, the trade in human organs and migrant smuggling. They opined that emerging crimes such as modern piracy, and trafficking in toxic waste, counterfeit medicines, precious metals or natural resources have been added to the list of traditional illegal activities such as prostitution, drug trafficking and arms trafficking.

Available literature on trans-border crime shows that no region of country of the world is spared of this phenomenon. For instance (Maetens 2007) argued that the problems of crime and violence such as drug trade and trafficking in weapons and others are factors that make people involved in most vulnerable act. To Maetens therefore, they are certain fundamental issues which make people to involve themselves in Tran's border criminality. Ntuli (2000) in his study on Tran's Border crimes found out that they are area or regions with problems of high unemployment levels and lack of physical infrastructure. These have affected the level of criminality in other nations. The high level of unemployment and poverty provide the basis and excuse for the youth and adults to embrace criminality in the society.

Ntuli (2000) point was echoed by Demombynes and Ozler (2002) both of whom maintained that the growing level of criminality at the border may likely discourage investment and stifle long term growth and economic development. The concern is that there are so many socio-economic problems such as poverty and inequality, corruption and high level of crimes in the society, these have the tendency of impacting negatively on regions affected by these criminal acts. Similarly, Park, (2006) contended that developing countries, especially in Africa, present a peculiar dimension in security demands as a result of poverty, unemployment, hunger, and increased belligerency among component entities that make up the continent. The activities of rebel groups, trans-border criminals, and other social misfits add up to the tension that has characterized life on the continent and specifically the West African sub-region. Arising from the argument above, issues of defence and security are salient to sustainable development and national survival. Creating national security awareness has been identified as a new policy initiative to address the diverse nature of instability and insecurity in Nigeria and the West African sub-region (Akinsanmi 2007).

Complimenting Ntuli (2000), Willie (2008) assessed "trans-border crimes" and argue that trans border crimes represents a number of illegal and notorious activities carried out by individuals and groups across national and international borders, either for economic benefits, criminal activities and political cum religious considerations that create negative implication for a country's security. It is a set of criminal acts whose perpetrators and repercussions go beyond territorial borders. These would include human trafficking, money laundering, drug trafficking, arms smuggling or trafficking of weapons, cross-border terrorism, illegal oil bunkering, and illicit trafficking in diamonds, corruption, and business fraud,

to mention but these notable few. Organized criminal groups or individuals carry out their illicit activities using major technological tools such as information networks, the financial system and other sophisticated means.

Luna (2008) was concern more of Trans border crime, with emphases on money laundering and drug trafficking. To him, Money laundering is the practice of engaging in financial transactions to conceal the identity, source, or destination of illegally gained money. It could also be seen as the process of taking any action with property of any form which is either wholly or in part the proceeds of a crime that will disguise the fact that that property is the proceeds of a crime or obscure the beneficial ownership of said property. To him, Drug trafficking on the other hand, typically refers to the possession of an illegal drug in a predetermined quantity that constitutes the drug that is going to be sold and Nigeria were the source of the greatest volumes of cocaine seized on commercial air flights, but they also have the largest international air traffic volumes. Guinea (Conakry) and Mali are disproportionately represented in terms of the number of air couriers detected relative to their air traffic volumes

Concerning National Security, Adebola (2008) argue that, Security in whatever form is a standard measurement of the viability of any state or nation. A state of insecurity means red alert and that a risk factor have been identified which must be contained. This largely may involve military and non-military. All nations have the right under international law to secure its territorial space and protect its citizens from any imminent attack. Similarly, Namara (1999) opines that the new thinking about national security and emerging transnational challenges gained further prominence. He argue that any society that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the background of acute Trans border crimes should also be viable economical internally. Namara was absolutely right in arguing that the security of any nation cannot be primarily restricted to its military preparedness, but also in developing relative stable patterns of economic and political growth internally and globally.

Manwaring, (2008) equally examine the broad issue of trans border crime which he argue that transnational crimes challenge our national security stability and sovereignty and might attempt either to control or depose governments. In this context, it must be remembered that crime, violence and instability are only symptoms of these threats. The ultimate threat is either that of state failure or violent imposition of a radical socio-Economic political restructuring of the state and its governance.

Evident from the conceptual review above is that there is agreement and unanimity among the scholars and research institutions whose works were reviewed. Unsatisfactorily, none of the scholars specifically addressed the illegal movement of Suspected Criminals (Fulani Herdsmen) across the border and the use of Hausa language as a means by which these suspected Fulani herdsmen uses to convince some security operatives at the border areas to penetrate into the country and caused mayhem in Nigeria. Herein lies the gap in the literature which this study set out to fill.

Theoretical Framework

Despite the efflorescence and profundity of writing on Trans Border Crimes and National Security in Nigeria virtually very little has been done in the area of extending theoretical postulations to the study of migration of Fulani herdsmen activities. Indeed attempts by scholars and practitioners to evolve universally applicable theoretical framework in the explanations of trans border crimes and national security had always ended in contradictory intellectual nullity and barefoot prognosis. However, the theoretical framework we adopted for the analysis is anchored on the fragile state theory. Proponents of

this theory include Patrick Show, Thurer, etc. According to Patrick (2007:644-662) the term “fragile state” is often used to describe a state perceived as having failed at some of basic conditions and responsibilities of a sovereign government. To him, a failed state is one that: 1) Failed social, political and economic institutions. 2) The central government is so weak or ineffective that it has little practical control over much of its territory. 3) Non-provision of public utilities or services. 4) Widespread corruption and criminality. 5) Refugees and involuntary movement of populations and sharp economic decline.

Thurer (1999) notes that failed states are invariably the product of a collapse of the power structures providing political supports for law and order, a process generally triggered and accompanied by anarchic forms of internal violence. It is the collapse of state institutions, especially the police and judiciary with resulting paralysis of governance, a breakdown of law and order, and general banditry and chaos. Not only are the functions of government suspended, but its assets are destroyed or looted; and experienced officials are killed or flee the country. According to Thurer (1999:1-5) failed states have the following attributes or characteristics (a) loss of physical control of its territory, or of the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force (b) erosion of authority to make collective decision (c) an inability to provide reasonable public services and (d) an inability to interact with other states as full member of the international community. Anyanwu (2005) posits that by a failed state, we mean, a state that is unable to meet the needs and aspirations of its masses. A failed state as opposed to capable state is a state which has failed to provide for its citizen such basics needs like adequate security, food, water, electricity, health care, good roads, etc.

The utility of the fragile state framework in the analysis of the trans-border crime and National security in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. The inability of the country to successfully contain threats to her national security with the incessant attack by Fulani herdsmen has turned into a situation where instead of the state being the framework of lawful order and the highest source of governing authority, it now constitutes the greatest threat to itself. With the rise of herdsmen in Nigeria, the country has found it difficult to successfully apply the use of legitimate force to defend her citizens and her sovereignty and forestall the rise of violent groups that have risen up to hijack the nations cooperate existence.

A country where insecurity is at its peak, human beings are shrinking in poverty line, the security of citizens is not guarantee. Fulani herdsmen who move in from neighbouring states (Niger, Chad etc) with the use of Hausa language have been seriously undermining the national security. It is only in Nigeria that borders are porous; our security personnel can't give the citizens the required protection and continue to allow illegal migrants especially the Fulani's who by nature are brutal and value no human being to penetrate and cause serious threat to our existence.

Methodology

This research used qualitative research and followed strictly on secondary sources of data which we obtained from the study of literatures in the form of books, newspapers, as well as other works that provide scientific information relevant to the issue under study. The paper made use of ex-post factor research design, and content analysis as it method of data analysis.

Trans-Border Crimes and Insecurity in Nigeria: A Perspective on Fulani Herdsmen

The incessant incidents of illegal movement by suspected Fulani herdsmen activities that now endanger individuals rights and undermine Nigeria's national security is as the result of the porosity of our borders, thereby creating insecurity in the land, which culminate as a result of opportunities provided by ECOWAS protocol on free movement of people (Obasi, 2010; Garuba, 2010). The porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked is worrisome to everybody in the country. Most fundamentally is the use of Hausa Language by these criminals at the border line which aid them to enter into the country. The porosity of Nigeria's borders has serious security implications for the country. Given the porous borders as well as the weak security system, different weapons have been easily imported and used by these herdsmen into Nigeria from other countries especially Chad, and Niger (Hazen & Horner, 2007). Complementing Hazan & Homer, Adeola & Oluyemi, 2012), opines that, the porosity of the Nigerian borders has made it possible for unwarranted influx of migrants from neighbouring countries such as Republic of Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin. The combination of arms proliferation and illegal migrants arising from porous borders tend to aggravate situation of insecurity in Nigeria. Yet government has done little to either address border challenges or evolve strategic approach to contain proliferation of illegal arms and aliens.

Figure 1: MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING BORDERS OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES



Source: [http://www .Mindspark](http://www.Mindspark) Interactive Network.Inc (2016)

The North Central Nigeria and most recently the Eastern part of the nation have suffers greatly under the grinds of the Fulani Herdsmen attackers. Hundreds of villagers have perished in the hands of suspected Fulani militiamen in Benue, Plateau, Nassarawa, Taraba, Imo, and Enugu States. Armed men would storm villages in the night, slaughter people, cart away valuables, livestock, and many a times set the villages ablaze. Some of these villages include Agatu, Logo, Tarka, Barkin, Nasarawa Eggom,

Nimbo, Wukari, etc. These gruesome attacks have been repeated and have become constant story in the aforementioned communities.

Following from the above argument one wonder if our security personnel are still protecting lives and property in our nation. Most scholars have argued that apparently, the security situation in Nigeria appears to have deteriorated and has continued to threaten our territory and individuals lives with huge consequences on development. According to Ibidapo-Obe (2008), Igbuzor (2011) Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) are of the opinion that government at all levels appears not to have deployed adequate measures to checkmate the onslaught. Individuals are leaving at the mercy of God, our territories are open to all manner of individuals who by all means enter our territory and caused mayhem for the nation. Whichever way one looks at it, the situation has led to unimaginable destruction. The images bellow shows the Map of Nigeria indicating some neighbouring states with some pictures of the herdsmen with their cattle as well as protesting youths. Will also shows a table in a brief some of the recorded consequences of the attacks.

Figure 2: A FULANI HERDSMAN WITH HIS HERDS OF CATTLE



Source: <http://www.Mindspark> Interactive Network.Inc (2016)

Figure 3: PROTESTING YOUTHS FROM FULANI INVADED NIMBO COMMUNITY



Source: <http://www.Mindspark> Interactive Network.Inc (2016)

Figure 4: A BURNT BUILDING BY THE FULANI HERDSMEN IN AGATU BENUE STATE.



Source: [http://www .Mindspark](http://www.Mindspark) Interactive Network.Inc (2016)

Table 1: FULANI HERDSMEN: CATALOGUES OF ATTACKS IN NIGERIA

States	Year, Month & Day	No of Lives Lost	No of Burnt Houses	Sources
Nasarawa	2013/08/ 01	16	37	News Byte
Nasarawa	2013/07/ 07	03	16	Flash newsniger.hotspot.com
Benue	2016/ 07/ 08	34	86	The Vanguard,
Benue	2016/05/23	76	44	Daily Post
Benue	2013/06/02	28	66	Thisday Newspaper
Plateau	2013/06/08	16	14	The Nigerian Tribunes
Plateau	2013/06/03	03	22	The Punch
Plateau	2013/09/03	12	17	The Nigerian News word
Benue	2013/08/01	16	24	News Byte
Plateau	2014/06/08	08	11	The Nations
Nasarawa	2013//18	16	08	The Vanguard
Imo	2016/05/06	12	06	The Premium Times
Benue	2016/04/20	19	07	The Sun
Enugu	2016/05/05	Over 100	14	The Vanguard

Sources; Nigerian Newspapers online (2013-2016).

With these records of the study, particularly with the analysis, we accept and validate our hypothesis that spate of Tran’s border crimes undermined national security in Nigeria. it is clear that the situation calls for an emergency attention to be able to stop it and provide sustainable security for Nigerians in our borders so as to exist or co-exist within these environments.

Conclusion & Recommendation

Trans-border criminal activities operating throughout the world pose increasing concerns for the international community. The activities of these criminal elements especially illegal Fulani migrants who use Hausa language to penetrate at our borders affect our joint security as well as the stability of our nation and the future progress against the erosions of public trust and core democratic values. There is need for Nigeria and indeed the world to employ coordinated and comprehensive strategies to fight these crimes wherever they manifest themselves. These entail developing strong law enforcement approaches, and enhancing our cooperation through public-private partnerships. From the findings of trans-border crimes and national security in Nigeria, some facts have become prominent. Inter alia they are:

- Lack of political will and commitment of resources to effectively manage borders.
- Lack of cooperation within departments, between departments and between countries.
- Inadequate personnel available for deployment on the borders.
- Inadequate skills of personnel deployed to manage borders.
- Poor motivation among border personnel.
- Lack or poor intelligence sharing between agencies and countries.
- Lack of facilities and equipment to secure and manage borders.
- Lack of office spaces & accommodation for border patrol & control personnel (dilapidated houses with collapsing walls and leaking roofs).
- Poor and inadequate communication channels—most of the border personnel do not have the basic communication means such as radios or mobile phones.
- Lack of transport and roads along borders to enable patrols.
- Poorly controlled and managed border points due to absence of offices.
- Poorly demarcated borders; as pointed out above, more than 75% of African boundaries are poorly marked or unmarked.
- Lack or non-functioning border commissions.

In view of the foregoing, we put forward the following recommendations for policy implementation: There is need to reconstitute the Nigerian state in such a way as to be proactive in dealing with the rampant cross border criminal activities that undermine its national security. Strengthen the cross-border law enforcement agencies in order to enable them check the frequent trans-border crimes that impede its external relations. Meaningful engagement of other West African states through both bilateral instruments and multilateral sub-regional organizations like ECOWAS to mitigate cross border crimes in West African sub- region is necessary. The regional governments of West Africa should adopt and implement the United Nations Conventions against Transnational Organised Crime and Corruption (and its Protocols). These international instruments create a broad framework for mutual legal assistance, extradition and law enforcement cooperation and the Convention against Corruption contains an innovative chapter that promotes international cooperation for asset recovery cases.

There is need to strengthen public private partnerships in the fight against organised crime and corruption in the society. In a globalized world, where illicit criminal activities and their actors, threaten both our international security and private sector interests, public and private non-govern- mental entities can be crucial allies. Greater cooperation and co-ordination with non- governmental groups can serve as a force multiplier in the war against international crime. A number of international NGOs and private firms have already been helpful in terms of bringing to light important issues such as corruption in the

extractive industries and illegal logging, the production and trafficking of counterfeit goods, and trafficking in persons, and others. NGOs may also transform themselves into engines of capacity building in the developing world. Regional governments must strengthen their national criminal justice systems. This could be done through a co-ordinated and comprehensive response systems based on a number of measures. One is measures that address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, and through measures that prevent and combats terrorism. The legislatures of the different sub-regional states should work to put in place an Act that will deal with the increasing activities of terrorism. This could be done with- in the broad framework of the regional parliaments such as ECOWAS and African Union etc.

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