

## Herdsman Terror In Nigeria: The Identity Question And Classification Dilemma

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**ABSTRACT:-** *Nigeria in recent years is a home to diversities of terror restricted to specific geo-political zones. Of all these terrors, non cuts across the country as that of the herdsmen. The herdsmen like invading Mongols leave deaths and destructions in their wake.*

*Certainly and troubling too, is the government's unwillingness to classify them as terrorist gang, but instead is dangling on classification dilemma. This too, has created identity question, on who actually are these herdsmen and their exact identity. Government has chosen to identify them as herdsmen and sees their killings as precipitated by conflict over land, between herders and farmers.*

*The paper rejects government's position that the herdsmen are not terrorists; and their activities as conflict over grazing land. To the contrary, the paper argues that the herdsmen are Fulani (in and outside Nigeria) hundred percent Muslim, and their terror fundamentally linked to causes beyond competition over land.*

*It adopts the Samuel Huntington (1996) and Healy "Multiple Factor" theory for its theoretical framework. In methodology, it relies on primary and secondary data, using historical unit analysis for the presentation. The major findings of the study are, (i) the herdsmen are Fulani, (ii) their orchestrated violence across Nigeria is naked terrorism anxiously waiting to be listed as domestic terrorism before it morphoses into international terror (iii) the overall objective is Islamisation and Fulanisation of Nigeria. Finally, the paper recommends for listing of Herdsmen terror as terror gang, and full use of force to conquer them before they fraternize with ISIS and Al Qaeda, already aspiring for grip on West Africa.*

**Key words** – *Herdsman, Terrorism, Fulani, Fulanisation and Massacre*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The press, social media, public opinion and plethora of writings are awash with herdsmen terror in Nigeria (CAN 2018, 2019). It is a stark terror (Shahul 2017), self perpetuating, (Oloko 2018) and has made Nigerians steadily losing security over their lives (Kayode 2019). Beginning slowly and imperceptibly, it has now bourgeoned into full fledged program for Islamisation, "Fulanisation" and forceful occupation of Nigeria (Obasanjo 2019).

Nigerians wear a frightened look of lost in insecurity (Kuka 2018). The fear and anxiety of living alive the next day is uncertainty (Soyinka) beyond their prediction. It is as if the country is "bewitched", under the conquest of invisible "Martians". Their ubiquitous presence and spread all over the land and water (Adesina 2019) dramatise the fundamental weakness in Nigeria's security architecture (Obiahu 2019). Hardly a day passes – by without reports on their gruesome multiple killings (Danjuma 2018) burning and sacking of communities (Afenifere 2019, Kanu 2018/19) and all sorts of unspeakable crimes against humanity (A.I.2018). These are the dark realities of the moment (Sadiq 2019).

The President of Nigeria, himself Fulani and ardent Moslem, rather than "acting decisively to restore confidence in the citizens (composite of heterogenous ethnic groups) chose to quiet diplomacy and blame game on the flaws of previous administration" (Atiku 2019).

Instead, he set for himself limits beyond which he refused to go. This scenario symbolizes the depth of the Fulani herdsmen terror and the reluctance of Nigeria's authorities to classify them as terrorists (Nwabueze 2018, 2019) and treat their unguided hostilities as emergency of war. All it does through the Minister of Information and Presidential media aid is preaching of peace to the "conquered" victims to live in harmony with their Fulani Islamist terrorists – "Conquerors" (Ortom 2018).

Generally, herdsmen terror is depicted as “cow-war”, “Cattle war” between the pastoralists and agriculturists, arising from conflict over grazing land (Nnamdi 2013). Admittedly, granted that this assertion is to a certain degree admissible, there is need for further study to correct this distortion, in the light of emergence of the present realities, the changing trends and patterns of their terror. This is basically what this study is set to accomplish.

The work is sub-divided into four but related sub-themes, namely (i) the land conflict phase (ii) the land and cattle war phase (iii) transformation into terrorism for Islamisation and Fulanisation of Nigeria and finally (iv) Summary, conclusion and recommendations.

### 1. Explanation of key/basic words

Here, the study will explain the basic key-words in the context of this work.

- i. **Fulani:** The Fulani or Fulbe, are primarily Moslems scattered in many parts of West Africa, from the Lake Chad, in the east, to the Atlantic coast. They are concentrated principally in Nigeria, Mali, Guinea, Cameroon, Senegal and Niger with an estimated population of 38 to 40 million. They are scattered across eighteen countries in Africa, with significant populations in West and Central Africa (Richard Juang 2008).
- ii. **Herdsmen:** Fulani pastoralists. Simply put, they are nomadic Fulani people whose primary occupation is rearing of cattle and livestock( felicity (Rowe, 2010). As a result of receding vegetation and water availability, owing to recent changes in climate patterns, many of them have dispersed into the Savannah belt and tropical forest zone of West Africa. This movement further South has openly revealed their innate unsatiable land-hunger and grabbing to displace the indigenous land-owners for the well-being of their livestock. To them, what matters is cattle’s life and safety and not human life. Little wonder, they waste human life in retaliation for a killed or lost cattle.
- iii. **Terrorism:** The US code of Federal Regulations see terrorism as “...the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives”. This study defines terrorism in the context of unlawful premeditated use of violence and force on human targets and property by clandestine agents, which may be in alliance with other sub-national or trans – national gangs.
- iv. **Identity:** In the context of its use here, it is taken to mean knowing and recognizing who the herdsmen are, their ethnic group and religion either individually or corporately.
- v. **Massacre:** It is the intentional killings of multiple defendless victims perpetrated by a group of people, targeted at other group or groups arising from variety of reasons which may include hate for an ethnic group or groups, religion, economic interest belief or struggle for power supremacy.
- vi. **Fulanisation:** It denotes forceful conquest and occupation of land of other ethnic groups in Nigeria by Fulani, through serial and systemic decimation of the native populations for the purpose of displacing them, so as to take full and unhindered possession of their communities and territories. Its other related meaning is the Fulani made-cap desire for magisterial authority by use of force and psychological warfare, and any other means considered appropriate for the sub-ordination of to other ethnic groups, even as they are not among the Nigeria’s majority tribes.
- vii. **The Conflict Phase:** Generally speaking, what later morphosed into land/cattle war in the middle belt region of Northern Nigeria before it turned into Fulani Terrorism for Islamisation and Fulanisation of Nigeria began as conflict over grazing land (Ujege 2017)

This conflict over land in the assertion of Lasitu (2019) dates back to the first decade of the nineteenth century after Uthman dan Fodio (a Fulani) conquest of entire Hausa States.

Pushed by power hunger and greed for hegemon, he subtly hid under the camouflage of religion to embark on a robust jihadist ambition for the conquest of Hausa states in 1804, for spiritual, political, economic and socio-cultural sub-ordination of the entire Hausa-land. (Ajayi 1965, Ajayi and Crowder (1974), Okonkwo (1962), Burdon (1907), (Ole 2018) and several scholars who have written on the Fulani jihad concede to the above fact.

Ironically, some Hausa states had embraced Islam in the mid sixteenth century, prior to the Fulani jihad of 1804 (Ole 2018, Njoku 2016) as explained by Kanem – Borno, a purely Islamic state, under Shehu Al-kanemi (Isichie 1978) yet that state was not spared from dan – Fodio’s onslaught (Ajayi and Espie (1965).

The Fulani migrated into Hausaland from sene-Gambia in trickle from the mid-seventieth century. This later turned into increased out-pouring of their migrations dating from the mid-eighteenth century and thickening from the nineteenth century onwards. By the nineteenth century, many of them have poured into Hausa land and Adamawa (in Northern Cameroun) Ndukwe (1990).

The jihad swept out the Hausa states and engulfed non-Hausa land of Adamawa, Nupe, Bauchi and Yoruba land in the South, after successful invasion of Northern provinces of Oyo, the emirate of Ilorin to the

North East served as the root for expansion of Islam into many parts of Yoruba land (Ajayi 1966). Each conquest was followed by seizure of indigenous people's land and through concession, for Fulani settlements and grazing of their cattle. With each passing year, their migration into what is now Northern Nigeria increased steadily and in continuous stream, until they finally poured into the Middle Belt Zone of Northern Nigeria (field work). It has to be emphasized here that their earlier presence in Northern Nigeria was as passers-by herders who later took permanent residency in 1804, using Islam as diplomatic tool for their acceptance.

One of the results of the Fulani jihad was the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, supplanting the ancient states in Hausa land, including parts of Borno, Nupe, Ilorin, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa etc. merged into a single politico, religious, cultural and social system. The Fulani empire lasted from 1804 – 1902, when it was conquered and dismantled by the British to become the British Northern Protectorate (Fage and Rolan 1975, Levinson (1996). After the jihad, they became the over-lord and hegemon ethnic group in Northern Nigeria. To them, the entire north, the peoples and the territories were their divinely ordained possession to occupy and rule, until the mandate was truncated by the British in 1900 (Paden 1986).

Ahmadu Bello, first and only Premier of Northern Nigeria (1960 – 1966) and the Sarkin Hausaland of Sokoto was the grandson of Bello. Bello was the son of Uthman dan Fodio. Under him, the Sokoto Empire reached its apogee. He was the Military General of the jihad and Emir of Gwandu, while his father was the spiritual leader and head of the Sokoto Caliphate. Uthman dan Fodio died in 1817. Muhammed Bello (his son) succeeded him (Ndukwe 1990) and (Ole 2018).

Unsurprisingly, therefore, when Ahmadu Bello became the Sarkin Hausaland of Sokoto, the leader of Northern People's Congress and later the Premier of Northern Nigeria, he did not hide his burning zeal to complete the unfinished work of Islamisation and Fulanisation of Nigeria by sword or other subterranean means embarked by his ancestors, but thwarted by British rule. He boasted after Nigeria's Independence:

The new nation called Nigeria shall be an estate of our great grand-father, Uthman dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We must use the minorities in the North as willing tools and the South as conquered territory and never allow them to rule us and allow them have control over their future. (Parrot Newspaper, October 12, 1960).

In his address on the 1964 Islamic league he said:

I have spoken of conversion of non-Moslems to Islam. I would say that this is the beginning as there are other areas we have not tapped. I hope when we clean Nigeria, we will go further afield Africa.

From these two speeches and several others credited to him in different fora, the following deductions could be made;

- i. He wanted an independent sovereign Nigeria ruled not by other tribes or Christians, but by those of Fulani Islamic descent or those approved or anointed by them. This is instructive and damaging to other ethnic groups. Nigeria is composed of 371 ethnic nationalities (Ogun 2018).
- ii. His interpretation of post-colonial Nigeria was change of guard from the British to Fulani and limited his sense of Nigeria to Fulani, Hausa and Islam to the exclusion of other stakeholders.

His letter dated May 16, 1962 to the Secretary of World Islamic Congress read in part as follows:

... For two hundred years, my family have been associated with the spread of Islam and I only want to assure (you) all my fullest cooperation for the continued effort to strengthen Islam day by day...

These statements he made go to confirm Ole (2018) Ahmadu Bello perception of Nigeria as dan Fodio's world, marked by his desire to bring the entire people under Islamic vision and leadership.

A task interrupted by British Colonialism. This ambition has arisen from the fact stated by Banu-Zabair (n.d.) that "a Moslem does not differentiate faith and politics. Primarily, the basis of the state is to defend and protect the faith not the state".

These sayings of Ahmadu Bello certainly created fears and suspicions in the minds of other ethnic groups.

Above all, the leadership of the North has done much in the furtherance of Islamic course creating the impression that Islamization of Nigeria is its target (Ole 2018).

Thus, the understanding of the Sokoto jihad of Uthman dan Fodio, Islam and Ahmadu Bello are central to the conflict. This explains why this paper addressed the Fulani jihad, Islam and Ahmed Bello as prelude to its subsequent discussion. The success of the jihad and Fulani supremacy in Northern Nigeria emboldened them to see Nigeria as their divine estate (Paden 1986, Ole 2018).

Cloaking their mind-set and personality with conquerous mentality, ego of superiority and overwhelming overlord's immunity, the Fulani migrated further afar into Taraba, Gombe, Plateau, Kaduna, Adamawa, Yobe, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Niger etc. saturated with the ambition to settle, possess and "colonise" the unsuspecting indigenous population. This second wave of migration came to its peak in the 1940s following

the “transfer of the capital of Northern Region according to (Dance 2018) from Zunguru to Kaduna”. The indigenous people in the opinion of this study accommodated the influx of Fulani and settlements on their territory and even ceded land to them, in order not to be seen as antagonistic with the Fulani ruling class and primarily to have a sense of belonging and limited access to power in Northern Nigeria political/economic space under the dominion of Fulani and Hausa.

Then, land unarguably was enough to meet the use of indigenous farmers and pastoralists because of low population density. Thus, the issue of conflict over land did not arise (Jibo 2001, Kwaja 2009) as it now obtains (Dunmoye 2003).

Steadily, over the years, the population of the Middle Belt and other areas the Fulani settled in Nigeria expanded by push factors of drought and desertification. Fundamentally, the scarcity of land for farming and grazing triggered the conflict between herders and farmers. While the Fulani herdsmen are struggling to have access to grazing land of the indigenous tribes, predominantly farmers, the farmers are also sturdily guarding their farms and land against Fulani expansionism. This has given rise to conflict over land, sometimes expressed violently with death tolls on both parties (IPCR 2003,2008,2012/13).

Another dimension of the conflict is Fulani claim over ownership of the grazing routes (field work interviews). This the paper argues is not unconnected with their Ahmadu Bello programmed mentality to see Northern Nigeria in particular and Nigeria in general as their divine estate. The paper had already addressed this issue and it needs not detain us here. The MACBAN (2017) claim for example over ownership of Benue land as conquered war spoil of Fulani jihad of 1804 and Labdo (2018) support of this false claim is seen by Ujege (2017) and Uwazurike (2018) as Fulani attempt to hoist a post – jihad identity on Northern minorities, predominantly Christians.

The conclusion from MACBAN claim goes to prove the land war as continuity of unfinished 1804 jihad under the disguise of conflict over land. The average Fulani person earlier known to wear graceful, angelic and harmless looks has grown according to Uwazurike (2018) increasingly radicalized by influx of extreme Islamic missionary preachings from Saudi Arabia and Iran. Put succinctly, the conflict over land is in the assertion of Ujege (2017) “The Fulani attempt to claim middle Belt land... to be able to exploit the political and religious opportunities that come with such rights”.

As irony of power hegemon, going by the census figure of 1953 and 1963 of Northern Nigeria, the population of the minority tribes (who also are not Muslims but mainly Christians) put together is greater than that of Fulani or Hausa tribe, put separately. Certainly too, the smuggling into Nigerian history the historical tribal nomenclature of Hausa/Fulani even when the Hausa and Fulani tribes are at poles different from each other, is part of the grand conspiracy to Islamise and overwhelm other ethnic minorities in Northern Nigeria. The driving and merging force of the two distinct tribes is Islam, nothing less or more.

## II. LAND AND CATTLE WAR:

Many authors of different persuasions have portrayed the herdsmen hostilities as “Land and Cattle War” (Nnamdi 2013). “Bush War” (Adako 2019), “War of Occupation” (Ludovica 2018, Dukubo 2019, Abrak 2015). Some writers and public affairs analysts refer to it as “War/Jihad” for total Islamisation and Fulanisaiton (Obasanjo 2019, Kuka 2018, Sowunmi 2019, Adejuma 2019, Kayode 2019, Soyinka 2019, Southern & Middle Belt Leaders’ Forum 2019, Ohaneze 2019 etc) subscribe to this view.

Others notably Abayomi (2019) Global Terrorism Index (2018), Buchanam (2015) see and interpret it as naked terrorism walking boldly and conspicuously in day light.

On the contrary, the Nigeria’s authorities, its media wing and apologists deny it is neither a ‘war’ of occupation, Fulanisation nor Islamisation. Instead, they choose to describe the Fulani melee as conflict, cattle rustling, banditry and hooliganism. By using these euphemisms in describing the Fulani terror, the government unknowingly made itself the principal suspect in the enigma surrounding the killings (Danjuma). By this stand, the government created identity question and identification dilemma on who frankly are the herdsmen by denying and non-accepting of herdsmen as Moslem terrorists orchestrated by Fulani. The government further by these denials etched its public image with suspicion, distrust and loss of public confidence. Fani – Kayode (2019), Ortom (2018 and 2019), Soyinka (2019) and Obasanjo (2019) ascribe to the above assertion. Fani – Kayode called it state – sponsored terrorism, while Obasanjo (2019), Soyinka (2019) and several eminent Nigerians see it as a declared war for full Islamisation and “Fulanisation” of the rest of Nigeria. To these critics and nationalists, it is Fulani “hidden” agenda for supremacy through full Islamisation of Nigeria (Okah and Dike 2018).

The paper’s position is that the herdsmen terror is no longer a conflict as it was earlier. This stand becomes irrefutable when we distinguish the elements of war from those of conflict.

Kegleg and Shannon (2011) define conflict as discord, arising from incompatibility in interest and goal. Galtung (1966), Anaele (2015), Vayrynen (1991) see conflict as striving for incompatible goals. The goal and interest under competition in the assertion of Lund (1997) are (i) access to and distribution of resources, (ii)



Control of power (iii) identity (iv) status and ideology.

Anaele (2015), Burton (1993), Homans (1961) and several authors are unanimous in their analysis of conflict as inevitable in the course of human and group interactions. For these scholars and several others, conflict is not necessarily threatening or abnormal. When handled peacefully through appropriate resolution mechanism, it can promote social solidarity (Keyley and Shannon 2011), and cooperation (Cosser 1956). Thus, it becomes abnormal when it turns into violence, threatening to life, social order. When conflict transforms into use of force and violence, it becomes armed conflict, also known as war. Conflict and war are different. Conflict is a source of war, when it degenerates into violence and use of force. So defined, war or armed conflict is the deadliest means of conflict resolution.

War, also called aggression, or armed conflict carries incalculable costs itemized by Lund (1997) on human losses, material losses, destruction of social fabrics and coping mechanism, devastation on the economy, threats to peace if it spills over into neighbouring states, humanitarian crisis, reconstruction and costs of rehabilitation and rebuilding of war-torn areas and lost opportunities in development trade and investment (Lund 1979).

Using the above cited Lund (1997) indices of war and costs, the herdsmen violence carry with it all the attributes of war. At best, it can be classified as bulging violent conflict over land before it metamorphosed into land and cattle war.

A critical analysis of its continuity, trends and transformation shows the following features in sequence, (i) started as conflict (though normal in inter-group relations) over land between herders and farmers dating to distant past (ii) changed into use of arms by both parties for personal and group protection, including protection of live-stock and farms (iii) strained relationship between the two parties arising from cattle and farm losses (iv) retaliation phase (v) attacks and reprisals by both parties (vi) seizure and forceful occupation of land and indigenous people's resistance (vii) killings, destructions, sacking and burning down of indigenous communities to consolidate occupation and (viii) full blown war characterised by war crimes and all kinds of atrocities committed by herdsmen (source: field work).

From study of its trend, continuity and change we can adduce the following conclusions, (i) it began as conflict over land of indigenous population (ii) translated into forceful seizure of land and effective occupation, though not without killings, and (iii) finally, in a twist and swift turned into cattle and land war, before transformation into terrorism, engulfing nearly all states of Nigeria in its web. The cattle and land war phase is over. During this phase, it was restricted to the Middle Belt Zone.

Currently and surprisingly too, it has turned into terrorism with target not only the peoples of Middle Belt States, but also all peoples in Nigeria.

### III. THEATRE AND KILLINGS

Before discussing the Fulani killings, the following clarifications are necessary. (i) The conflict phase over land between herders and farmers, though provoked attacks and reprisals but such attacks and counter attacks did not linger long before uneasy peace was restored. Death toll was not on a high scale because of balance of power and quick de-escalation through resolution mechanism. (ii) The land and cattle war on the contrary involves herders use of assault rifles, light machine guns, improvised explosive device to attack farmers' communities suddenly and unexpectedly, leaving quickly without being hurt, after killing, maiming and razing down whole community. The theatre of the pre-land cattle conflict was farmland viz-a-viz cattle as the object. (iii) The land/cattle war direct opposite. It shifted the conflict theatre from farmland and grazing route to communities of indigenes of the land to massacre them. (source field work) with hired mercenaries (Dance). The land/cattle war covered the period 2013-15.

However, prior to 2013, there were reported cases of killing (Nnamdi 2013). These killings were far in-between. They were quickly doused as quickly as they erupted (source field work). This period as earlier noted can conveniently be called the conflict phase between herders and farmers. Later, it turned into land/cattle war 2013-15.

War in the sense of its losses in human lives, destruction of farms, ravaging and burning of indigenous communities, enormous number of internally displaced persons, reported cases of rape, adoption, kidnapping and missing persons, burden of malnutrition and humanitarian crises, over-crowding in refugee camps, diseases, high-rate of out of school children, killings trauma, psychological and emotional crisis to say but the least (field work collaborated by Adako, 2019) has made many questions why herdsmen have chosen the path of massacre. The theatres of the war are farming and rural communities in Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau States. The land/cattle war, otherwise bush war does not fit in the opinion of this study into any known classification of war types because it is all time offensive attack to kill innocent victims and disappear into the bush unhurt, after inflicting disproportionate harm on the targeted communities. Indeed, it is pogrom against humanity in intent and scale.

The bush nature of Fulani Herdsmen settlement, and language barrier, posed a limitation to this study in reaching them to obtain their own figure of human casualties, if any and material losses. The study therefore concentrated its findings on the farmers and refugee camps. This was made easy because majority of the farmers were literate in English, amiable and generally welcoming. This missing gap calls for further research into the Land/Cattle war.

The study will in the subsequent discussion present a table on casualties of the war January – June, 2013.

**Table 1: Showing Herds-men attacks January 1 – June 30, 2013**

S/N	THEATRE OF WAR AND STATE	DATE	DEATH TOLL
1	Gwako Community in Gwagwalada, Abuja	30/1/2013	5
2	Gultum Community, Adamawa State	5/2/2013	9
3	Atakar Ethnic Group in Kaduna State	3/3/2013	19
4	Another attach on Ataka, Kaduna State	30/3/2013	12
5	Rutu in Doma Local Government Area, Nasarawa State	5/4/2013	5
6	Bokkos, Plateau State	8/4/2013	22
7	Matol and Mangol Communities, Plateau State	8/4/2013	20
8	Anter, Lortim and Ortese Villages, Benue State	11/4/2013	25
9	Agatu Local Government Area, Benue State	12/5/2013	40
10	Suwa and Burukutu in Lamurde, Adamawa State	14/5/2013	20
11	Tse Kyon, Nyam Adaga, Tsenongo and Anom Communities in Nasarawa State	14/5/2013	4
12	Gwande in Manguna District, Plateau State	3/6/2013	8
	TOTAL		189

Source: Culled from The News, 17 June, 2013. P15.

**Table 2: Showing Herdsmen Attacks January – June, 2014**

S/N	THEATRE OF WAR AND STATE	DATE	DEATH TOLL
1	Agatu, Benue State	17/1/2014	56
2	Yandev in Goma Local Government Area, Benue State	2/5/2014	7
3	Mafan, Zalang, Tiliki and Zanglang Villages in Kaura Local Government Area, Kaduna State	2/3/2014-14/4/2014	60
4	Edu LGA, Kwara State	4/3/2014	5
5	Wukari, Taraba State	4/3/2014	75
6	Gwer West LGA, Benue State	2/5/2014	226
7	Yandev in Guma LGA, Benue State	2/5/2014	7
8	Isanlu-Isin in Isin LGA, Kwara State	June 2014	10
9	Akough, Duma LGA, Benue State	3/6/2014	17
10	Sanga, Kaduna State	May-June 2014	123
11	Kabamu and Ankpong, Kaduna State	20/6/2014	38
	TOTAL		624

Source: Field Work, 2019

Tables one and two in a quick glance depict the severity of the war in terms of human lives and its accompanying material destructions. Its scale in human loss justifies the acceptance as war of genocide and nothing less than that. It manifests all attributes of genocide. The killings between January – June 2013 stood at 189. January to June, 2014 was 624 giving a difference of 435. This shows a remarkable increase in death toll of Fulani killings during the cattle/land war.

In scope, the major theatres are the Central States of Nigeria with Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau as the fiercest front. However, other states within this period such as Taraba, Kwara, Kogi, FCT-Abuja, Kaduna, Niger, Adamawa received strokes of violence far in-between by herders but the intensity, frequency and scale of losses were not as plentiful as those of Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau States, the epicentre of the Cattle War.

The same can be said to be true of Southern States, North-East, and North-West states, where there were reported clashes of violence with herders, but did not degenerate into war. These facts are corroborated by the works of Johnson (2016), Adako (2019), Durojaiye (2014) and confirmed by the findings of the study during field work.

#### IV. TERRORISM PHASE 2015 – PRESENT

Following the swearing in of Muhammadu Buhari, a Moslem Fulani, became the President of Nigeria, May 29, 2015, the cattle war turned into terrorism for Islamisation and Fulanisation of the country (Obasanjo, 2019, CAN 2019, Soyinka 2019, Afenifere 2019, Ohanaeze ndi Igbo 2018 and 2019, Eyobok and Akinrefon 2017, Nnana 2016, Barw-az Zubair 2018, Jonnah 2018, Damilolly 2014, Obiahu 2019, Yoruba Summit 2019, and several other concerned Nigerians share this view and have voiced out their condemnation against this benign agenda.

This development has triggered apprehensions all over the country. “Islamisation of Nigeria triggers of fears and feasibility” Mazadu (2019), and similar other statements such as “Nigeria in the throes of jihad (NCEF) 2019), “Islamisation of Nigeria agenda” Ole (2018), “What Buhari is doing is Islamisation of Nigeria” Nwabueze 2018, 2019, “Nigerians must stop Buhari equipping these terrorists” (Chidi 2019), Over 20,000 Nigerians killed in cold blood... none of them is standing trail under Buhari government” (Chidi 2019), “we have hundreds of evidence against Buhari government towards full Fulanisation and genocide” (Adejuna and Mogaji 2019), “Looming genocide: Yoruba must defend themselves against Fulanisation” (Afenifere, 2019), “Benue under “shadow of herdsmen terrorism” (Adamu, 2017), Fulani seeks to conscript Northern minorities into Islamic caliphate (Uwazurike (2018), The Fulani have grown increasingly radicalised (Uwazurike 2018), “Killings targeted at non-Fulani groups across the country are wilful and deliberate in pursuit of expansionist and conquest agenda” (Fasoranti 2019), “there are 1,123 cells run by armed Fulani Militia, populated with armed Fulani men” (Sowunmi and Abiodun 2019), “the drums of war are loud and clear, reverberating across the length and breadth of Nigeria (AOKAYA 2019), “Buhari’s offer of N1bn to Miyetti Allah (i.e. owners of the cattle is “war cash” (AOKAYA 2019). Kayode (2019) refers to this existential threat as “the enemy within” for Islamisation and Fulanisation of Nigeria and cautions Nigerians to be ready before the outburst of full bloom blood bath for accomplishment of Islamisation and Fulanisation via use of terror.

In his reaction of Fulani terror and Islamisation agenda, Soyinka (2019) blames Buhari government for treating herdsmen terror with kid’s gloves. He further insisted that Buhari is “doing little to stop the killings by herdsmen amid the general insecurity in the country”. To Obasanjo (2019) it is agenda to Fulanise and Islamise not only Nigeria but the West African sub-region.

Fulani herdsmen terror in the assertion of Abdul’rahman (2019) is part of Buhari Islamisation agenda. Ayokunle (2019), Opejobi (2019) and Danjuma (2018, 2019) vocally accuse Buhari government of pursuing Islamisation of Nigeria through Fulani herdsmen terrors, now spread all over the country beyond attacks on farms and farmers. It has to be emphasised here that victims of the terror earlier farmers now include all persons who have nothing to do with farming occupation. In recent times, it has come to include children, girls, women, travellers, the clergy, civil servants, students, of non-Fulani extraction (Opejobi 2019), and (Ayokunle 2019). Amnesty International (2018) called the Fulani terror “harvest of death” and accused the government of being “inactive” which “fuels impunity, resulting in attacks... with at least 3,641 people killed between 2016 – October 2018”. “No single person has been prosecuted despite the scale of killings...” (YCE 2019). Anaele (2018) called it rebellious-religious ideology for Nigeria’s Islamisation and Fulanisation under the cover of “Bush War”. Global Terrorist Index (2018) grouped it as the fourth ranking deadliest terrorist group in the world. It has turned into full blown naked terror, killing. Over 20,000 persons between 2015 – 2018 (Sahara Reporter 9-4-18). In the North-East Nigeria, for instance they struck 330 times (January to July, 2019) killing 1,640 persons (Amina Shamaki 2019). In Sokoto, Zamfara and Katsina States 400,000 displaced (Newsexpress).

**Table 3: Showing Herdsmen attack and killings across some selected states in Southern Nigeria 2015 – 2019**

S/N	PLACE & STATE	DATE/ YEAR	DEATH TOLL	SOURCE
1	Etsako Central LGA Edo State	2015-2016	3	Field work
2	Auchi, Edo State	2015-2019	6	The News Magazine and Field Work
3	Oguma, Ndokwa West LGA Delta State	April 2012, 2015-2019	1 10	The News Magazine Field Work
4	Agbara Otor, Ughelli, Delta State	April 10, 2013 2015-2019	10 15	The News Magazine Field Work
5	Ogun State	2002-2014 2015-2019	5 15	Field Work Field Work
6	Ukpabi, Nimbo, Uzo Uwani, Enugu State	21 May, 2018	20	The Sun Newspaper 23-5-2018 confirmed by Field Work
7	Akoko, Ondo State	25-5-2019	10	Field Work
8	Lagos-Ibadan Expressway	2015-2019	15 killed 10 kidnapped	Field Work
9	Osun State Nigeria (Kaduna Northern Nigeria)	May, 2019	36 killed 27 kidnapped	Premium Newspaper
10	Ekiti State	2015-2019	10	Field Work
11	Orji Imo State	March, 2019	1	Field Work
12	Umuahia Abia State	2015-19	2	Field Work
13	Anambra North, Anambra State	2015-19	5	Field Work
14	Eket, Ikot Ekpene Akwa Ibom State	2015-19	3	Field Work
15	Etche, Rivers State	2015-19	1	Field Work

Table 3 shows that the herds terror has covered all parts of Southern Nigeria where it never has until 2015, when the alleged Fulanisation and Islamisation plot began to gain wide acceptance. Before 2015, it was a North-Central States cattle and land war with the Fulani, but cannot be said to be such now. By spreading over to the Southern States, it leaves no one any longer in doubt of its underground motive to occupy Nigeria and also Islamise the Southern Nigeria predominantly Christians.

Otherwise what else could be used to offer explanation to the high-way killings, robbery, kidnappings, rape, abduction and disappearance of persons, if it were not Fulani Islamic Terrorists instilling fears in Southerners (a weapon of terrorists) to subdue them psychologically, before overwhelming them with force after occupying their forests, highways and streets, as platform for actualising their Islamisation and Fulanisation ulterior motive. The Communique (2019) by Yoruba Council of Youths Worldwide to Fulani to vacate all Yoruba-land with the deadline 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 authenticates the position of this study on the reason for the Fulani export of terror to predominantly Christian South, known for peaceful disposition in accommodating other ethnicities in Nigeria.

The list and level of their massacre in Southern Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, Taraba, Adamawa, Katsina, Zamfara, Kogi, Kwara, Borno, Yobe, Sokoto, Kano, Gombe and indeed in all states in Nigeria is a daily amusement with wasting of human lives, burning down whole community, rape, robbery, kidnapping in which hundreds of lives are lost daily can no longer be justified as conflict over land, but as grand terror of Fulani to complete Fulanisation of Nigeria (Kayode 2019) truncated by the British conquest of the Sokoto Fulani Empire over Hausa-land and minorities in what came to be known as Northern Nigeria 1900 (Paden 1986).

Earlier, it was seen as farmer-herder clashes (Security Global Observatory 2015) but now turned into naked terror (Global Terrorism Index 2015), Sahel Foreign Affairs (2015), (Quartz Africa 2018), (BBC 2018), (Sahara Report 2018), Nnoko-Mewanu (2018) and Baca (2015). Most worrisome now is what started as land and cattle war has spread into Southern Nigeria (Morning Star News 2016), (Times 2018) to mention but few, yet Nigerian authorities have closed its eyes from seeing herdsmen terror as acts of terrorism (Ekweremadu 2019). Instead in the opinion of (Ekweremadu 2019) it went ahead to declare the Indgeneous People of Biafra (IPOB), a “non-violent group asking for self-determination, a terror group, after killing many of its unarmed members”. He wondered why the government has refused to classify the armed herders gruesome killings as act of terrorism, even as evidences openly show them to be merchants of terror. These array of commentaries and mountainous writings from no other group than eminent Nigerians are substantial enough proof that the Fulani



herdsmen are on a jihad mission for Islamisation and Fulanisation of Nigeria, even as government authorities have continued to allay such fears.

To the information minister, (2019) and Alhaji Sadiq Abubakar (2019) Spiritual Leader of Islam, such allegations gaining grounds, especially among Christians are at best the use of religion by unscrupulous politicians for their selfish political gains. The duo, Moslems, see the allegation as spurious, an impossible agenda no government can ever conceive in Nigeria and both dismissed it as propaganda by those hurt by Buhari administration. Yet the killings go on and on, with increase across the nation with each succeeding day (Kayode 2019). Fayose (2019) agrees with Kayode (2019) by accusing Buhari of “plot to Islamise and Fulanise Nigeria into an Islamic country.” Kayode (2019) presented incontrovertible evidences to prove his case against the government on Islamisation agenda using the Fulani herdsmen, as the vanguard force.

To justify the paper’s stand that what was earlier seen as land war has now crossed the boundary of war into terrorism for Islamisation of Nigeria, it will here present timeline of some of the killings documented by some Nigeria’s newspapers, between 2015-2019, in which herdsmen killed not less than 20,000 and displaced hundreds of thousand” (Premium Newspaper).

**Table 4: Showing Newspapers Documentary on Herdsmen Killings across Nigeria June, 2015 – June, 2019**

S/N	Place/State of Killing	Newspaper/ Source	Year	Death Toll
1	Adara, Tiv, Tarok, Udoma in Benue & Nasarawa States	Premium	2015-17	10,000
2	Benue, Taraba, Plateau States	News Express	2015-18	20,000
3	Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba States	Sahara News	2015-18	1,229
4	Eggon, Juku, Tiv Communities	Daily Express	2015-18	800
5	Agatu-Benue State, Nimbo-Enugu State	Daily Independent	2015-17	200
6	Plateau	News Express	June 2018	200
7	Bassa, Kogi, Nasarawa States	Vanguard	October, 2018	19
8	Jema’a during wedding ceremony	Punch	16-12-18	15 & 24 injured
9	Benue State	Christian News, Sahara Reporters and Daily Sun	2018	18 worshippers during mass service, 2 priests killed also, 40 injured
10	Across Nigeria	Amnesty Int’l	2016-18	3,641, 57% in 2018 alone
11	Plateau State	Punch	26-6-18	19 during midnight attack
12	Benue State	Sahara	11-1-18	73
13	Southern Kaduna	Daily Trust	11-12-18	20
		Premium Times	02-11-19	66
14	Dangwal Village, Plateau State	News Express	27-5-19	Family of 6 wiped out
15	Kaduna State	Premium Times	2019	200 but govt. Figure is 131
16	Southern Kaduna	Daily Trust	2019	15 killed and 20 injured
17	Southern Kaduna	This Day	2018	15 killed and 24 injured
18	Kajuru Killings	Tribune	2017	27 and many persons missing
19	Plateau State	ALY News	January 20-1-18	100
20	Across Nigeria	anoedodine.com 2019-0-06 report	2015 to 2019	25,794
21	Taraba State	Vanguard	3-6-19	36 killed, 27 kidnapped
22	Zamfara	City Pulse News, News Express	4-6-19	16

A comparative analysis on number of herdsmen killings during the land war phase presented in tables 1 and 2 show that the number of deaths was not as high as when the war turned into terrorism as shown in table 3. What accounts for this from field work is because during the high-noon of the bush-war, the target communities deserted their homes to places of safety, leaving behind empty homes where there are nobody for Fulani to kill. However, when the herdsmen turned into terrorists, the bush war assumed a terrorist twist, exhibiting all attributes of terror, engulfing the entire Northern Nigeria and extending at a fast speed into Christian Southern Nigeria for Islamisation and Fulanisation of Nigeria, by use of terror. The finding is collaborated by Lekwot (2019), Jemibowen (2019), Danjuma (2019), Nwabueze (2019), Obasanjo (2019), Nwodo (2019) etc.

No fewer than 25,794 Nigerians were killed in Buhari's first tenure 2015-19 (anoedodine.com 2019-0-6-Report).

In Taraba State for instance, first week of June, 51 persons were killed by herdsmen (Vanguard 2019-01—6), 36 killed and 27 kidnapped across Nigeria on June 2, 2019 (City Pulse News), with 16 killed in Zamfara on Sallah Day, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 (News Express). And on and on goes the killings daily (Kayode 2019) without arrests (Soyinka 2019).

## V. IDENTITY QUESTION AND CLASSIFICATION DILEMMA

Government instead of identifying the herdsmen as Fulani of Nigeria (and Fulani spread across West Africa) prefers hiding their identity tribe by calling them herdsmen. Rather than classifying and branding them as terrorist gang, the Nigeria Fulani Moslem dominated authorities have chosen to brand their never ending terror (Mazadu 2017, Ole 2018, Shellnut 2018) as conflict over land.

Busari (2019) and Ortom (2018), to cite but few persons out of reactions from individuals/corporate bodies that see herdsmen as terrorists with Islamisation mandate not only in Nigeria, but in the whole of West Africa (Obasanjo 2019).

Ekweremadu (2019) emphatically called herdsmen terrorists and so wrote Ichaver (2019) after analysis of their violence, killings and destructions. Olorok (2018) sees it as unleashing of terror, now out of proportion to be wished away, and should be addressed squarely as that of Boko Haram. Fani-Kayo interprets it as nothing short of revived terror for "ethnic cleansing to depopulate the Christian Community so as to help in fostering the Islamic agenda".

For name, government refers to them as bandits (Lai Mohammed), cattle rustlers (El-Rufai), Outlaws and bandits from Libya (Buhari), and foreigners (MACBAN). By this wrong identity of name in avoiding to call them Fulani which actually they are, generality of Nigerians now see the government as not being sincere in dealing with the menace. Other names favoured by government for the herdsmen are "unidentified gun-men", "insurgents", "kidnappers", "criminal gangs", "unscrupulous elements", "enemies of the state", "militants", "gun-men", "assassins", "killers", to mention but few. These names unknowing to government are all attributes of terrorists. They are Fulani (in Nigeria and in other states of West Africa) converging to Islamise and Fulanise Nigeria. They are no longer enjoying the cover of hidden identity, as hidden as their hidden agenda. From reactions of many Nigerians, their identity and mission have been exposed. Granted that they are foreign nationals, this assertion makes it all the more necessary for government to see their attack as external aggression, but it has refused to act in this direction with full use of force and seriousness (Soyinka 2019).

This government inaction to live up to her constitutional responsibility of security of lives and property as its primary duty made Kuka (2018), Oniaka (2019) and several others worry why Buhari led government has not considered herdsmen terror as imminent insecurity disaster with potency of rocking the fragile foundation of Nigeria's corporate existence.

Buhari is accused by majority of Nigerians as the hidden identity behind the herdsmen terror.

Muhamamdu Buhari, a Fulani and adroit Muslim, has never hidden his Islamic fanaticism and elevation of Islam over state and national interest. His actions and speeches created this suspicion, even as he has continued to condemn the bastardly acts of herdsmen, but has not matched his words with convincing actions. Kwamkur (2019) interprets the "action taken by government so far suggests collusion or cover up by refusing to call jihad by its proper name. When a crime is committed and acts of subjugation and/or humiliation is added, such as rape or religious signs or cries, this is jihad".

Other critics of Buhari like Fani-Kayode (2019) cites Buhari's appointment of only Muslims and mainly his tribes-men at all the commanding helm of the country's security, the National Assembly, and the Judiciary etc to buttress the allegation against Buhari hidden identity in the killings, in order to have unhindered means for Fulanisation and Islamisation of Nigeria, now on top gear of motion for its realisation.

Former Minister of Defence, General Theophilus Danjuma (Rtd) (2018) specifically emphasized it would be submission to suicide if the victims of Fulani killings rely on the Nigerian Armed Forces to defend them. In this words, "the government security forces collude with the armed bandits that kill people, kill Nigerians... they facilitate their movements, they cover them". Amnesty International (2018) made similar

observation on collaboration of the security forces with the Fulani terrorists. Femi Adesina (2018), spokesman for the Presidency, Federal Republic of Nigeria issued a chilling warning in a statement on African Independent Television (AIT) telling Nigerians with ancestral attachment to their land that “they can only have ancestral attachment when they are alive” Adesina’s statement clearly unfolds the government’s suborn and tardiness to Fulani herdsmen killer terrorists. So far, government’s response to their terror is a sub-par.

Many concrete irrefutable evidences indentifying Buhari led government for fuelling the Fulani herdsmen terror and the hijadist Islamisation agenda are documented in the Yoruba elders Europe and America (2019) communiqué signed by Michael Olawale, Shadare and Ademola Adekunle. The communiqué in part states that:

The actions of the government of Federal Republic of Nigeria have in the same pattern as contained in various reports and evidences continued to fuel a situation where those attacking innocent citizens in effect: enjoy advantage of resources and logistics (land, money, radio, frequency and communication equipment) from government; benefit from inaction of authorities (for example no single person has been arrested or persecuted despite the scale of the killings), in the North Central, Nigeria; benefit from rules designed by authorities which makes the innocent citizens additionally weak and vulnerable;

Notably, it was reported in Nigeria media that the Federal Government of Nigeria planned giving the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria ₦100 billion. While the government denied the report Miyetti Allah later owned up...; it is believed that such resourcing of the herdsmen was a boost to their acquisition of arms and other materials needed for their agenda of conquering the nation. It is significant that similar payout was not made to the farmers;

In further boost to the campaign of Fulani herdsmen, and a step which further equips them logistically, including in coordination of their activities, the Federal Government of Nigeria announced in May 2019 that it has acquired an amplitude modulation (AM) radio broadcast license to reach herdsmen across the country, a radio station which would operate on frequency of 720KHZ and would air in Fulfude, a language spoken mainly by the Fulani tribe;

In a dramatic twist that has left Nigerians bewildered, President Buhari announced he has signed Executive Order, operative from June 1, 2019, withdrawing from Nigerians the license of all legally issued fire-arms. This final act has left about 200m Nigerians under existential threat. The final act that paves way for genocide to commence.

Earlier before the above communiqué, many concerned citizens notably Femi-Kayode (2018, 2019), Obasanjo (2019), Danjuma (2019), Cultural Ethnic Organisations such as Ohaneze Ndi-Igbo (2018, 2019), Afenifere (2018, 2019), the Middle Belt Forum (2019), and religious organizations specifically the Christian Association of Nigeria (2019) to mention but few had drummed loudly to deaf ears of government on the eclipse of Nigeria by Fulani herdsmen terror and have never kept mute in accusing President Buhari administration as the screened facilitator of the killings. The more Buhari struggles to exonerate his involvement in the Fulani terror, the more the ominous orgy of mass killings escalates daily across Nigeria, which according to Johnson (2019) “will make the Rwanda Genocide appear as a Tea Party”.

What prompted the allegations against Buhari as the unseen driver behind the terror are namely;

- i. His violation of Rev. Jackson Jesse ideology of leadership as “a harder job to do than just choose sides. It must bring together”. Buhari with impunity violated inclusion of other tribes in the security apparatus of Nigeria and appointed only his Moslem Fulani and Hausa in all the choice jobs and positions (Kayode 2019).
- ii. His pre-2015 election speeches in which he openly called on Muslims not to vote for Christian candidates in the 2003 election (Premium Times 2016)
- iii. His appointment of only Muslims into strategic national and International posts (CAN 2019, Kayode 2019).
- iv. Sukuk Islamic Banking in Nigeria and its interest free loan (Riba) but with reciprocity from state beneficiaries to build mosques and allow Islam vivid presence in their states (Damillolly 2014).
- v. Continued attendance/patronage of D8 summit comprising the Islamic states of Egypt, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey.
- vi. Dragging Nigeria to join the 34 members Saudi led Islamic Military Alliance against Terrorism (Premium Newspaper 2016).
- vii. His offer of N100bn to Miyetti Allah (the cabal and owners of the cattle) and his refusal to declare Miyetti Allah as terrorist organisation (INC 2019, Kayode 2019, Ohaneze Ndi Igbo 2019, CAN 2019).
- viii. His treating of herdsmen terror with kid gloves and herdsmen not paying for their crimes against humanity (Soyinka 2019) and treating them with overt leniency (Nubari 2018).
- ix. Approval to establish Radio station for herdsmen to transmit in Fulfude, a language only spoken by the Fulani (CAN 2019, PFN 2019. Nigerlive TV 2019, Kayode 2019, Olawale, Shadare and Adekunle 2019, Ohaneze 2019).

- x. Excise of Christian Religious Studies in Nigerian School curriculum while retaining Arabic studies and making it a compulsory subject for Police, Army and other para-military recruitment interviews (Otu Obiahu 2019) under Buhari government.
- xi. Executive order to repeal all gun licenses while refusing to extend same to the Fulani herdsmen killers (Kayode 2019).
- xii. Continued attendance of OIC summits and refusal to excise Nigeria from its membership despite disapproval from Christians (Catholic Bishops).
- xiii. His support for Sharia and its spread all over Nigeria (Vanguard Newspaper 2019).
- xiv. Proscription of IPOB, (a non-violent movement for self-determination) and branding the members as terrorist without extending same ban to Fulani herdsmen, who are the real terrorist (Ohana Eze 2019, Ekwerenmadu 2019, Kayode 2019).
- xv. Refusal to work for the release of Leah Shaibu, the only student out of the 110 female students, kidnapped from Government Technical College, Chibok for refusing to renounce Christianity after his government had paid undisclosed ransom for the freedom of 109 female Moslem students (CAN 2019).
- xvi. His visit to and support for Palestine (News express 2019) in June 2019, (CAN).
- xvii. Silence over Miyetti Allah combination of conquest of land with religion (Ole 2019, Kwamkur 2019).
- xviii. Pursuance of systematic policy of Islamisation and Fulanisation (Obasanjo 2019).
- xix. Military attack on Shia Muslim procession, killing hundreds of people (Human Rights Watch 2019).
- xx. The Ruga Policy for creation of permanent homes in every state in Nigeria for rootless Fulani scattered all over Africa to live and rear cattle. Considering the enormous mass of land involved and the facilities to be provided for them with government funds, the predominant Christian south and the Middle Belt Zone of Nigeria see the Buhari Ruga Policy as indirect means for Fulanisation and Islamisation of Nigeria and are stubbornly resisting it, even if it demands fighting against it with the last drop of their blood (Falana 2019, Obasanjo 2019, Igbo Youth Council 2019, Middle Belt Forum 2019, CAN 2019 etc). However, sequel to roaring opposition against Ruga, Buhari suspended it. Southern and Middle Belt Zone see the suspension as not enough, because suspending it does not mean outright cancellation of the evil conceived policy (Falana) meant to Fulanise Nigeria (Ohaneze 2019). Another unveiling identity behind the herdsmen killings and terror is the Miyetti Allah Association of Cattle Breeders of Nigeria, MACBAN.

## VI. MIYETTI ALLAH CATTLE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA MACBAN

It is the association of the owners of the cattle and livestock herded by the herds-men. President Buhari after leaving office in 1985 as military head of state turned into livestock farming, till date. Subsequently, he is a member of MACBAN, the owners of the cattle. Nigerians and many groups have called on him to resign his membership of MACBAN (CAN 2019) Kayode (2019), Falana (2019) to mention but few.

Founded in the early 1970s, as a loose partisan advocacy group for advancing the welfare of pastoralists, MACBAN according to Samson (2018) has earned notoriety, horror and badges of infamy over the past decade by their utterances and actions over the conflict between herders who herd their live-stock and farmers.

MACBAN has always something to say about these Fulani reckless brutal killings in ways that suggest that they are not merely condoning but orchestrating the attacks (Ohaneze 2018, Afenifere 2018, 2019, Kayode 2019).

In the words of Samuel Ortom (Governor of Benue State) “the group had been making threatening statements in open rebellion to the implementation of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law that outlawed open grazing in the state in 2017.

Samuel Ortom (2019) wondered why the MACBAN would take responsibility for the killings in his state and none of the members arrested. Speaking at the meeting with President Buhari who came to commiserate with the State over the killings of seventy persons in January 2019, Ortom referred to press conference granted by Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore in May where its leader declared that “More blood will flow in Benue (State) if ranching law is not rescinded”.

He further told President Buhari:

*Your Excellency, how can a group claim responsibility for the killings that happened and are going about scot free? How can a group make public these inciting and criminal declarations in an organized society and are not arrested by the Police? Your Excellency, kindly order the immediate arrest of Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore and MACBAN for carrying out their threats to attack Benue on account of Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017.*

MACBAN in January 2018 defended armed Fulani herdsmen who attacked Benue State communities, slaughtered two Catholic Priests and several worshippers at a morning mass and no arrests made, even as they were fingered as being behind the killings (cable news). MACBAN did not deny involvement in the killings but



pontificated their time worn and dubious claim of killing as self defence which they told the Nigeria's security forces categorically (cables news 2019).

What is still a compelling interrogation is what the motivating factor is, for Buhari to insist on not declaring MACBAN as a terror group even when empirical proofs exist to show they actively encourage and sponsor violence against farmers (Onwubiko 2019).

Alhaji Gidado Siddiki, Chairman S.E. Zone MACBAN is quoted by Igbere TV 22/6/19 of issuing a threat to the people and government of S.E. Nigeria comprising of five states that, "since they are claiming to be stubborn, and had refused to give us their land in peace, it will be taken by force and the entire S.E. will be raided and taken over by the herdsmen".

The Igbo National Council June, 2019 indicted the leadership of MACBAN of inflammatory and hate speeches since Buhari was sworn in for second tenure. It called on Buhari to declare MACBAN a terrorist organisation and to order immediate arrest and prosecution of its leaders (Daily Posts).

Onwubiko (2019) saw MACBAN as having the support of President Buhari because of the President refusal to arrest their "officials who go to the media to incite violence against farmers or who provide support for the atrocities committed by armed Fulani herdsmen categorised as among the deadliest terror group in the world.

Going by Nigeria's Terrorist Act, MACBAN in the view of Samson Toromade (2018) is guilty of at least one of the conditions that qualify them to be tagged terrorist. This Act says, "Any person or corporate body who participates as an accomplice in, or contributes to the commission of any act of terrorism, assists, facilitates, organizes, or directs the activities of persons or organisations engaged in any act of terrorism; commits a terrorist offence and is liable on conviction to maximum of death sentence". Going by the public conduct and utterances of MACBAN, Samson (2018) said from May 2017 quoted by Nubari(2018) said from May 29, 2015 – 2017 there had been at least 100 attacks by Fulani herdsmen and close to 5,000 in 2018, yet in all these, not even one person or MACBAN which have from time to time again (in the analysis of Nubari) claimed responsibility for these attacks have been arrested or made to face the law as related to the crime they have committed. From field work findings and literatures on Fulani herdsmen terror, now engulfing Nigeria, one is no longer in doubt of the identity of the herdsmen and their supporters.

They are Fulani state sponsored terror orchestrated and fanned by MACBAN as its economic and spiritual wing, for total Islamisation and Fulanisation of Nigeria.

## VII. MAJOR FINDINGS

From field findings, interviews and literatures on herdsmen killings in Nigeria, the major findings of the study are:

1. The herdsmen responsible for these killings are Fulani (within and outside Nigeria).
2. They are Muslims .
3. Originally, their killings were restricted to North – Central region of Nigeria, then seen as conflict over land between Fulani herdsmen and farmers.
4. From conflict over land, it translated into cattle/land war involving casualties and loss of physical assets on both parties.
5. What was earlier known as cattle and land war then restricted to the North Central of Nigeria has now transformed into terror.

## VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The herdsmen – farmers competition over land started initially as conflict over control of land. During this phase, it was conflict over incompatible goals, involving loss of few lives in-between. Later, it grew into a cattle/land war in which both parties to the conflict sustained losses in lives and physical assets, before it translated into full terror extending to all over Nigeria at varying degrees.

On identity question and classification dilemma, the findings of this study show that the herdsmen killers are Fulani and are Moslems, enjoying state patronage and cover-up by MACBAN. Going by their atrocities, the paper sees them as nothing short of terrorists. It disagrees with government calling them gun-men, insurgents, kidnappers, armed men, etc instead of labeling them as terrorist which should have been their proper name of identification.

Since 1999, Nigeria has unsuccessfully been battling with total defeat and decimation of Boko Haram, a deadly terrorist gang now in alliance with al Qaeda, ISIS and Islamic State of West African Province ISWAP (Obasanjo 2019, Kayode 2019). Boko Haram is restricted to N.E. region of Nigeria, where they have a root of strength difficult for war fatigued Nigerian military to conquer decisively.

Unlike Boko Haram terror which is confined to the North East of Nigeria, the Fulani killer herdsmen are spread all over the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. If nothing is done urgently about their terror, a time will come when they will convert Nigeria into another Syria. Then and only then will Nigeria dismember

because Southern and Middle – Belt soldiers will be most unwilling to fight a Fulani war of hegemon for Fulanisaiton and Islamisaiton of Nigeria.

Above all, if the Fulani herdsmen succeed in alliance with ISIS, al Qaeda, Boko Haram or ISWAP, already gaining weak grip on West Africa, such alliance will definitely bring doom to Nigeria in particular and Africa in general.

### IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

To avert the pending doom not only on Nigeria but Africa generally, the Nigerian authorities must:

1. Classify the Fulani herdsmen killers as terrorists
2. Deal with them ruthlessly as terrorists
3. Ban MACBAN
4. Arrest and prosecute any herdsmen caught in terrorist act
5. Ban open grazing
6. Restrict cattle to ranches
7. Remove sentiments of religion and tribalism if it is to succeed in saving Nigeria, West Africa and Africa from the Fulani hanging anarchy and Islamisation agenda. This becomes instructive when we realize that the Fulani as a people cut across more than eighteen states in Africa. From their home in Sene-Gambia, they encroached and conquered many states in West Africa by jihad in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Northern Nigeria inclusive. They have fought jihads before in West Africa. The herdsmen terror if not stamped out now in Nigeria will engulf West Africa in another jihad.

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