



HUMAN SECURITY AND THE PERVADING HERDERS-FARMERS CRISIS IN IGANGAN AND IGBO-ORA COMMUNITIES, OYO STATE.

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Abstract

Farmers-Herders conflict in Nigeria has been a reoccurring decimal in the last decade. The dynamics of the conflict has equally been reflected in the killings, wounding and maiming by mainly the Herders-Farmers. Although there were underlying ethnic factors, the spread in this violent conflicts have increased beyond the borders of the Northern Nigeria with nose-diving effects to other States in the Southern parts while scores have also been recorded despite decimation tactics. Therefore, the study examined the pattern of herder's migration along the Igangan and Igbo Ora communities in Oyo State to ascertain the level of Human security due to Herders-Farmers crisis.

The study explored the human security and migration pattern in Igangan and Igbo Ora using the Environmental Criminology Theory advanced by Jefferson (1971) and as was modified by the Brantingham's (1980). The exploratory research design was adopted for the study while data were derived using primary and secondary sources of data. A total of 25 respondents were sampled using largely the qualitative means of data collection. Therefore, 20 In-depth Interviews were conducted to sample the opinions of Farmers, Herders and the Fulani chiefs in the Yoruba communities. Similarly, 5 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) was used to sample the opinions of community members, and the Nigerian Police and member of the vigilante group. Secondary data included journals, articles, books and theses. The data were analysed using ethnographic summaries and verbatim quotation from respondents.

Impoverishment, displacement and job shift, and the search for greener pasture were the push-pull factors identified as ravaging end results of the exodus movement of Herders down South-western communities which in turn prompted conflicts between Igbo-Ora and Igangan dwellers. The study revealed that Igaganan, Igbo Ora farmers and herders conflicts has generated dimensions of inter-ethnic nature especially between the migrated Herders and their host communities leading to food poisoning, rape and intimidation and fear of moving freely in the



community. Furthermore, lapses in policing these communities and conflict resolution measures overtime have continue to smear crisis especially as the heads of Herders, and Farmers and community leaders rarely see their commonness rather their claims for superiority unfolds and which have affected human and food security.

The study concluded that ranching sites is necessary in these communities and across Nigeria as a short time measure to decimate herders-farmers conflicts while also addressing the flows of herders to these communities. Similarly, the enforcement of law(s) against open grazing and incursion into farm land and water poisoning and the violations to these laws be severely punished.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Farmers, Herders, Human Security, and Igangan/Igbo Ora

Introduction

Human society has primarily been associated with security challenges and the lack of adequate security measures, which prompted the presence of increased security personnel and procurement of security gadgets (UNDP, 2003). Security is the fundamental responsibility of the state, due to the provision of order it possesses (Nwerker & Nwachukw, 2014), that includes the security of citizens, institutions at all levels and essentially the economy which is the duty of the government of such state (Gasper, 2008). Within this context, security provided by state government in Thomas (2009) comprises security from insurgency and terrorism, extreme poverty, economic insecurity, environmental insecurity, food

insecurity etc. In other words, a state is termed insecure if its people are porous to threat from either state or non-state actors.

Hence, was a global rising concern for human welfare, which prompted the 1990 Human Development Report that introduced a new security paradigm. The report contended that security must have a principal theme of peoples' security and welfare instead of territorial security. More essentially, the concept of human security according to Djinnit (2008) was broadened as health, education and political freedoms which are integral features coupled with issues pertaining to economic development amounting to human security. Unfortunately, Buzan (2007) describes



Africa as one fragment of the globe where human security is most endangered by many inherent factors such as poor governance, abject poverty, inter and intra-state wars, uncensored population growth, unrestricted human migration, inhuman violation of human rights, chronic and deadly diseases, environmental degradation alongside frequent natural disasters, climate change, insurgency and terrorism.

Around the world, violent conflicts causes human insecurity as it affects all and sundry making thousands homeless and in dire need of water, food and shelter. In a research's report by The International Rescue Committee's Assessment (2020) of top 10 countries most affected by violent conflicts, 87.5% of conflicts in Central and Sub-Saharan Africa are resource and environmental based with "land based conflicts" being underlined. In the same report, countries like Central Africa Republic has over 2.6 million people displaced, and 35% of the population experiencing food insecurity. Regarding extreme poverty caused by conflicts, the report from Mercy Corps International (2018)'s research affirmed that, Somalia has

over 740, 000 people in extreme poverty. As at October 2019, Mercy Corps International (2020) expressed that 500, 000 Venezuelans are internally displaced by land based conflicts, while in South Sudan, 7.5 million experience acute hunger. Among countries with citizens in abject poverty and faced insecurity released by ABHS (2019), Nigeria comes fourth as 33.4 million of its citizens are in need of medical and social amenities after been displaced by conflicts.

Meanwhile, according to Global Terrorism Index (2019) report, while terrorism declined by 52% between 2016 -2019, land conflicts got an 8.5% increase in deaths. Nigeria had a 15.2% increase in the amount of deaths caused by land conflicts between 2016 and 2019, therefore becoming third on the table. Between 2014-2019, Global Terrorism Index report (2019) notes that Herdsmen in Sub-Saharan Africa came fourth in the rankings of deadly combative group globally with a record of 1,229 victims in the year 2014, 2,000 victims by 2016 and 2,040 by 2019. More so, International Crisis Group Report (2016) released that approximately 2500 people have died from land conflicts between



herders and farmers with major focus on Nigeria. Also, between 2006 and 2014, land conflict which has frequently involved herdsmen has incessantly claimed an average of 100 lives yearly (Nigerian Watch, 2015). In a research report released by Nigerian Watch (2018), over 109 lives are lost yearly to land conflicts.

Deadly groups around the world have been identified large amounts of deaths from such conflicts, but of them all land conflicts has claimed more lives, as in Nigeria for example Global terrorism Index (2018) reports that 1700 citizens were killed by herdsmen which surpasses the 1200 lives claimed by dreaded Boko Haram in 2018 alone. Human Right Watch (2019) reported that herdsmen killed 86 people in one week in Nigeria across three states. Thus, this justifies that herdsmen attained the height they have reached among the most toxic group in the world based on their ravaging operations.

In addition to herdsmen operation in Nigeria, Institute for Security Studies (2018) stated that incessant clashes between commercial farmers and nomads is a

universal occurrence that can be traced hundreds of century back to human race. Odoh and Chilaka (2012) view farmers-herders conflict by tracing it to the Biblical incidence where Cain (a farmer) slew his brother Abel (a herder). Furthermore, these authors were of the insight that “the Chinese emperors from time immemorial built the Great Wall to keep out the marauding hordes.” In Africa, particularly in the Western Sahel region, farmers and pastoralists clash have increased since the early 1990s (Okolie and Atelhe, 2014).

According to Nathaniel (2017), the struggle between the two factions over land dates back to pre-colonial era in Nigeria when ownership and identity were the triggering causes but by 2005, killings aggravated when for example in Adamawa State, Nigeria, about 28 indigenous citizens got murdered when about 2,500 local dwellers who are farmers had to leave their place of residence in a rift that ensued between herders and farmers Demsa Local Government area. Ajuwon (2004), being mentioned in Nweze (2005), unveiled that similar occurrence ensued in Imo State, Nigeria, when from the year 1996 to 2005,



about 19 people have been killed while almost 42 people have been seriously battered in the crisis that occur between farmers and herders. Furthermore, as reported in The Integrated Regional Information Network's report (IRIN, 2009), there were two consecutive days of hostility between once receptive farmers and then hostile herdsmen. This happened around June 2009, leaving 3 people dead while series of herdsmen abode burnt down in Plateau State.

Summing up the casualties of these conflicts, Nigerian Watch (2018) explained that, between 2015 and 2018, nearly 3780 Nigerians have been killed in Farmers-Herdsmen conflicts, as 35% of the 3780 are from South-Western Nigeria. By 2019, the figure has increased in South-Western Nigeria as periodic killings still persisted. This was substantiated by Fawole's (2019) thesis who reported that over two hundred people have died from clashes between the two factions between 2014 and 2019. Farmers' imminent displacement could be synonymous to food insecurity in key areas in South-Western Nigeria. A swift response

from stakeholders and state actors will help a lot in curbing the menace. The study therefore provided insight to the prevailing factors of herders-farmers crisis in Oyo state and Southern western states in spite of the security measures. The study examined the human security and the implications of herders-farmer crisis in Communities especially where the prevalence of crisis affected socio-economic relationships between the two groups.

Reviewed Literatures

Williams (2018:37) opined that culturally, insecurity in the context of herdsmen and farmer's relations in Nigeria dates back to when in the first instance Fulani people began to feel insecure in their place of origin and began the search for solutions outside their place of origin. To Williams, second insecurity aroused amongst the non-Fulani farming communities when Fulani arrived in their community and engaged in activities that point to attempts to dislodge the local community. As great as that sounds, Fulani herdsmen are nomad livestock breeders and in pre-colonial times their place of origin was the Sahel and semi-arid areas of Futa-



Jalon Mountains in West Africa but arguably daisy.

The resulting threat from recent climatic changes and ever booming population growth, has made herdsmen to move to the savannah and tropical forest regions of Southern West Africa and far northern Nigeria. Their influx and migration into Northern and North Central states in Nigeria dates back to the 13th and 14th centuries according to Williams. Also, after the Uthman Danfodio reign and jihad conquest, they began to infuse and integrate with the Hausa and non-Hausa ethnic groups residing in the middle belt, most especially during the dry season; and when the number and menace of tsetse flies in these regions are reduced in the middle belt of Nigeria as opined.

Produce and crop cultivation and livestock farming connote agricultural actions among local communities for the purpose of providing food and protein for mankind, on the other hand are the nomads who specialize in livestock rearing, but predominantly cattle breeding without crop production. As a result, climate change

conditions and changes thereof in the North therefore propelled herdsmen to move across these regions specifically from the North to the Central and Southern Nigeria to access greener grazing resources in order to ensure quality food security for their herds. This often takes place during crop cultivation season. Olaniyan (2011:69) approaches human security from first a wider view by observing that Africa's population growth rate is the fastest in the world and the continent's total population is projected to reach two billion by 2050. This provides the continent with both opportunities and challenges.

Specifically, starting from 1996, there was a seasonal and operational movements of herders into and within Nigeria that caused not only grappling of lands but barbaric confrontations with the growing presence and unfair activities of herdsmen, all in the name of upholding their nomadic culture of pasturing but more worrisome is the new dimension of bearing sophisticated weapons of war to terrorize seemingly helpless farmers (Vanguard, 2018). Unfortunately, as a result of snubbing these groups who have grown wings beyond considerable



doubts, they now deliberately permit their cattle to wander, trample on the crops and forcefully destroy and eat up farm crops of hard-working farmers, while also contaminating streams which serve as the only source of water for human consumption in recipient farm.

As a build up to the foregoing, Olawale (2018) explains that, this leading act of the herdsmen afterwards led to outbreak of disease in the hospitable community, as dwellers became prone to other forms of chronic disease aside the earlier mentioned ones making them hostile to the herdsmen. These pastoralists then unfairly engaged in raping women, abducting and slaying farmers who fail to run for their dear lives. Further reiterating their pattern of operation, Olawale elucidates that, their tactics involves massive fierce attacks on villages and towns by coming en-mass in hundreds to massively attack people sleeping in the comfort of their rooms at night and carting away other valuables.

In addition to this, it has been reported that they have taken kidnapping alongside arm robbery activities on the highways.

According to reports from filed reporters, the conflict between farmers and herdsmen is essentially centered on rape, massive destruction of grazing sites and farmlands, unsolicited threats to life and properties, as well as physical assault occasioning harm and injury. For example and in accordance to the above, this as matter of worry to seeking ways to enthrone normalcy in various states in Nigeria, the Commissioner of Police in Imo state (2017), Mr. Taiwo Lakanu, made quick trips to the flashpoints, where he appealed to herdsmen and cow dealers to embrace peaceful co-existence.

Consequently, Alaribe (2016:90) explains that over time, they then ran short of where they could claim outright as their grazing paths and grazing land. There and then was an increase in swift movement from one end to another in the eyes of modernized law that succinctly amounted to intrusion and infringement of the properties of others, who are mostly natives. Over the years, extant literature cemented the fact that this later led to conflicts of interest regarding land in some places. In response to this, the Federal Government had to identify areas mapped out but later known as grazing paths and



reserve. This did not quite solve the imminent problem because there was no equal compensation as contained in the law to habitual land owners. This needlessly gave herdsmen the audacity to deliberately stray out of their grazing routes into natives' respective cultivated lands.

Traditionally when conflicts occur, pressure is higher and to resolve the conflict, farm owners had to report the cases of conflict to the respective traditional rulers and the police. This followed by confirmation on whether the herdsmen are been responsible for the destruction of crops, and if yes, such herdsmen are keenly fined humongous compensation. Corroborating this, Chukwuma and Atehli (2014) expound that there afterwards came a time when farmers refused the idea of collecting compensation as they do not feel comfortable living on mere compensation that lacks life sustenance constituent. These farmers keenly believed that their crops are as important as cattle is important to the herdsmen as such have requested herdsmen to stop courting trouble by taking their cattle away from farmlands (Ugwu, 2017).

Nevertheless as this occurred, they cohabited, as from time to time traditional rulers came in to settle and adjudicate just to ensure that whoever was found guilty paid substantial compensation (Okoli, 2017). In spite of this, it was detected that at the time when there were ravaging wild animals, cattle breeders only held only sticks to defend themselves and their beloved animals. Presently, there are no wild animals but the cattle breeder now handle and threaten people with AK 47 rifles or sophisticated guns which is definitely not to attack their cherished animals but innocent fellow human being irrespective of alternative peaceful dispute resolution methods anyone proffers. In a report by International Crisis Group (2017), these herdsmen who have turned to terrorist group after possessing all needed attribute to be called so have also justified carrying guns to protect themselves and animals against cattle rustlers.

Within the past four decades, Nigeria has witnessed awful scenes of ceaseless dysfunctional conflicts, fought on the altar of ethnic affiliation, religious belief and pessimistic perceptions, which have



occurred between ethnic groups. These conflicts starting from 1960 have had colossal consequences in the development of Nigeria as it seeks to expand and grow. The conflicts involve killings and spilling of innocent blood of people who know nothing about the conflict, as it affects the South-South, South-East, South-West but most importantly North Central were thousands have lost their lives.

Between 2015 and 2018, there were casualties reports of over 50%, which were recorded in the South-East and North-Central geographical regions of Nigeria. Since this conflict centres mainly on land availability, farming communities in North-Central States like Benue, Kogi, Taraba and Nassarawa, alongside South-East States like Enugu, Abia and Anambra have sustained the highest casualties. Therefore, with the uprising and reoccurring attacks, most Nigerian states have enacted anti-grazing laws that make grazing in the open field an offence (Udeh, 2018). This act further explains how most communities uphold their cultural heritage of which land is among them.

This is a cogent reason why for example, in Enugu State in Eastern Nigeria, all the 482 local communities have at a point experienced one form of deadly attack perpetrated by the Fulani herdsmen. And as if this were not enough, The Amnesty International in a submission affirmed that, in 2017 alone, 549 deaths were recorded in fourteen states in which thousands were ripped off of their belongings and consequentially displaced in Benue, Enugu, Zamfara, Taraba, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Cross River, Niger, Adamawa, Delta, Katsina, Ekiti and Plateau States. In a local community in Adamawa State called Kikan, there was a gruesome massacre of 51 people in that community, of which over eighty percent are farmers who are helpless or defenceless. This led The Nigerian Air Force into deploying designated fighter jet and sophisticated rockets as a warning to the herders community.

Environmental Criminology Theory

First, any crime committed by humans will definitely take place in the eco-system since humans are part of it. So, when crimes are committed, nature and the environment has a stake in either propelling its occurrence or



preventing it. That is, the environment could be a motivating factor as well as a stage for a conflict to ensue between humans. This is a reason why over 90% of all conflicts ever witnessed on planet earth are deeply rooted in battle over land, if it is not over land, it will be over its habitations.

The theory was propounded in 1971 by British renowned advocate Ray Jeffery who examined the cogent roles that human's immediate environments played in the occurrence of crime and thereby suggested logical ranges of strategies for decimating crimes by modifying immediate environments which led to the coinage of the theory. In view of this, he illustrated that conflicts are spurred and aggravated by environmental and ecological factors either prompted by humans or forestalled by humans, it is human centred. It was later improved on by Paul and Patricia Brantingham, they emphasized that factors that influence criminal activities are inherent in the environment.

According to them, environmental criminology is a family of theories that share a common interest in criminal events and the

immediate circumstances in which they occur. They argue that criminal events must be understood as confluences of offenders, victims or criminal targets, and laws in specific settings at particular times and places'. Environmental criminologists look for crime patterns and seek to explain them in terms of environmental influences. This means that, the environment has a direct impact on any crime against humanity perpetuated and is sustained by the environment in depleting the environment. From these explanations they derive rules that enable predictions to be made about emerging crime problems, and that ultimately inform the development of strategies that might be employed to prevent crime.

The environmental perspective is based on three premises, which are:

1. Criminal behaviour is significantly influenced by the nature of the immediate environment in which it occurs. The environmental perspective depends upon the principle that all behaviour results from a person situation interaction. The environment is not just a



passive backdrop for criminal behaviour but rather, it plays a fundamental role in initiating the crime and shaping its course. Thus, crime events result not only from criminogenic individuals; they are equally caused by criminogenic elements of the crime scene. Environmental criminology explains how immediate environments affect behaviour and why some environments are criminogenic.

2. The distribution of crime in time and space is non-random. This is because criminal behaviour is dependent upon situational factors, crime is patterned according to the location of criminogenic environments. Crime will be concentrated around crime opportunities and other environmental features that facilitate criminal activity. Crime rates vary from suburb to suburb and from street to street, and may peak at different times of the day, different days of the week, and different weeks of the year. The purpose of crime analysis is to identify and describe these crime patterns.

3. Understanding the role of criminogenic environments and being aware of the way that crime is patterned are powerful weapons in the investigation, control and prevention of crime. This knowledge allows police, crime prevention practitioner and other interested groups to concentrate resources on particular crime problems in particular locations. Changing the criminogenic aspects of targeted environment can reduce the incidence of crime in that location. Environmental criminology and crime analysis combine to provide practical solutions to crime problems.

In application to this study, this theory clearly denotes that crimes that have occurred in two the communities under study have something to do with nature and the environment. The environment here refers to the physical, political and economic environment in which, the climatic condition led herders down south to a habitation with arable lands alongside a political enabling environment for shadow parties to operate and deprive the people of their rights. Therefore to prevent crimes of this type, measure must be put in place by the



government and other parastatals, even though their failure is part of the propellers of the conflict. A simple ranching site could be the point of declination for the conflict, as it will put a drastic end to the conflict which when achieved, it is environmental based.

Research Methods

The study adopted the exploratory research design to purposely gain a comprehensive, detailed and concise information and data on the farmers-herders conflict in Igbo-Ora and Igangan communities. Furthermore, this research design became necessary to explore the conflict trends and resolution mechanisms used. purposive sampling technique was adopted, therefore farmers and herders were purposively selected to provide rich knowledge of the prevailing factors and implications of human security especially due to herders-farmers crisis. In Ibaroa central local Government area of Oyo state. Igangan is situated in Ibarapa North Local Government Area, Oyo State.. It possesses lands fertile enough to grow most cash crops known. Igbo-Ora is equally located-in Ibarapa Central Local

Government Area in Oyo State. It is the capital and also the main hub of business activities in Ibarapa Central as a whole. It produces most of the cocoyam and cassava consumed in Oyo State.

While the study adopted the qualitative method of data collection, the sample size of 25 study participants was derived using a numerical guide in the determination of a-priori sample size. Previous studies by Okiki (2018), Olawale (2018) adopted sample size of 20-35. Thus the study relied on the guide of these previous studies to sample the options of 25 study participants. A total of thirteen (13) farmers, 10 herders and 2 security agents were interviewed in Igbo-Ora and Igangan communities of Ibarapa central Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The farmers were both members of these communities and those of farmers associations. The Herders included the Sarkin (king) of Fulani's in the communities as well as those who herd cows in the local government area of the state. The security personnel were senior police divisional crime officers in the two communities. The Key Informant interview (KII) was used to sample opinions of



member of the Farmers Association and the Sariki Fulani of The communities. Similarly, the KII was conducted with security operatives. The In-depth Interview was conducted with farmers from the two communities and the herdsmen within Igbo-Ora and Igangan communities .

Findings

Socio-Demographic Profiles of Study Participants

The demographic profiles of the interviewees consist of characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, occupation, ethnic background, income level and educational qualification.

Findings revealed that study participants were all males because herding is mostly done by men and in farming where both genders are involved, leadership positions are mostly reserved for males due to the patriarchal nature of Yoruba cultures. This is coupled with the fact that the clashes between the two groups are majorly between the males, while females are sometimes the victims. In the age distribution of respondents, findings show that 36% (9) interviewees were above the age of 51 years,

16% (4) are between the ages of 41 – 50 while 20% (5) are between below 18 and 30years with 28% (7) between the ages of 31 – 41. The implication of this is that most of the respondents come within very youthful and agile age hence giving room for physical conflict when there are disputes of any kind. Since most of the participants were farmers and herders themselves, the agility of age makes a physical conflict more likely when there is a provocation. The religion distribution of the respondents indicates that 36% (9) of the respondents are Christians, 28% (7) are Islamic adherents and 36% (9) are traditional worshippers. This is likely because the area under study is a rural community and also because the Yoruba culture plays host to the Christian and Islamic faiths in almost equal proportions.

MODUS OPERANDI BY HERDERS AND THE IMPLICATIONS

Study participants noted that the forefathers of the Fulanis came down South from the North in search of settlements and greener pastures at different times. The migration pattern is sometimes en masse as the herders



come in numbers ranging from 50 to 100 and above. A respondent explaining a recent example of such migrations and an estimated number of the migrants recalled that,

We were over one hundred when I came to Igangan in 2018 because we were told that this place is good to rear our cattle. We arrived in the Night because we have lesser checkpoints at night and we can easily disembark whatever we brought without the questioning from community vigilante who sometimes alert dwellers of our arrival but we do not care about that. These trucks come towards this place every week, but some of us go elsewhere to Ayete, Igbo-Ora and Idere. About 20 (20%) of us got here because some dropped just before Ilorin, while others kept dropping at various points till we arrived neighbouring towns, but we got here because we have friends here **(IDI/M/32years/Herdsmen/Igangan/2020)**

The above shows that the migration patterns are not targeted at a particular community or State rather these herders migrate to various communities, towns, and cities in the South where they can find pasture for their cattle. Relating a similar trend on the migration patterns of Fulani herdsmen from the north to the west, an executive member of the Farmers' Association in Ibarapa, Oyo State, opined that,

Herdsmen arrive here in huge trucks at night and on arrival, they are given a herd of cattle to look after and equipped with necessary weapons which dwellers cannot possess. In our association, it is our belief that the intrusion of the Fulani herdsmen is a result of in-house backstabbing of Yoruba race for mere gratification. It is some fraudulent stakeholders we can call murderers and corrupt kings (Baales) who synergised with the Fulanis to steal our heritage and to cause disturbance in our community **(IDI/M/63years/Farmer/Igangan/2020)**

The above view aligns with Ayodele's (2017) claim that the activities and movement of herders in the South is backed up by leaders in the region, sometimes leading up to the presidency. He claims that this is so because in cases where these herdsmen are apprehended for illegal entry by trucks loaded with suspicious possessions, they are quickly released and allowed to go without due investigation. This unchecked influence and migration into the west is discovered from the study to be one of the bases for unhealthy relations between these groups.

The migration pattern becomes worse considering the fact that the nationality of these herdsmen is still uncertain based on recent reports of security in the continent.



The uncertainty of their identity as a propelling factor to the perpetuation of the killings they indulge in was identified by Hassan (2019), where he noted that “the killings of indigenes by herdsmen in Nigerian communities is without any consequence, because collaborators help pave a way of escape for herders who go scot-free in trucks to the North and sometimes neighbouring countries like Niger and Chad after perpetuating this act, backed up by state actors”.

Findings from the study revealed that the pattern of migration was based on invitation by those (Fulani herders) already residing in the west. This system of migration is founded on two bases, one of which is search for greener pastures which the west presents to the cattle of herders as well as the morale support accorded these herders by cattle owners in the west who require their skills. Commenting on this connection that aids migration, a Fulani herder revealed that,

I came here through my close friend Mubarak Zara who is a herder in Igbo-Ora. He sent my mother Aisha who deals with cosmetics to me, as I was in Talata Mafara in Zamfara State when I was called to come

down here. I came here at night and arrived at Igangan in the Sheriki's palace. I came here with four other of my friends who were also beckoned on by relatives here in the south

(IDI/M/29years/Herdsmen/Igangan/2020)

The above view is further affirmed by Ayeni and Efosa (2010), who were of the position that herdsmen migrate southwards and contend for space with residents due to the support they enjoy from constituted authorities. In their assessment of herdsmen/farmers conflict, they were of the position that pastoralists are tirelessly on the move, going from place to place all in search of greener grazing sites for their herds. They do these by moving from the North to the middle belt and then the Southern part of Nigeria. Their presence according to the researcher's interview with them is however never without preferential approval of government authorities and local chiefs who connive with herdsmen at the detriment of indigenes.

On the effect of this unhealthy migration pattern that is characterised by massive movements of Fulani herdsmen to Igbo-Ora without adequate plans for residence, a



respondent resident in one of the communities asserts that,

Alarugbe (a community in Igbo-Ora) is gradually waking up to the reality that these herdsmen are contesting for land space with us in our father land, because you daily see four, five six of them who are new arrivals from only God knows where and we would not permit such as we really do not take rubbish like those in Igangan. You will see that Baba (pointing at an elderly man) has been at risk for being the only one voicing his thoughts we would repel such with our blood, which is a reason why they attack and run away here
(IDI/M/50years/Farmer/Igbo-Ora/2020)

The above sentiment reflects the position of the average farmer in the community as the unchecked and illegal migration pattern has resulted in pitching the farmers against the herders. The result of this positional attitude is that either side are conflict ready no matter how light or insignificant an issue of dispute may be. The Sheriki Fulani (traditional leader of the Fulani in Oyo State) according to findings of the study has been occupying the prestigious position as the leader of Fulanis in the last fifty (50) years, all the while encouraging the migration of Fulanis from the north to west for economic and agricultural purposes. While this may normally be the disposition

of any traditional leader to his people, the seeming trend of secret arrivals of these herders has continually made farmers and rural dwellers to question the motive of arriving only at nights and in droves. Sharing this sentiment, a farmer in Igangan, noted that,

The herdsmen arrive in our communities (Igangan) at night in trucks en-mass ranging from between daily to weekly but we know that they enter Igangan on a daily basis and this started way back 2011
(IDI/M/43years/Farmer/Igangan/2020)

Reiterating the implication of unplanned migration to the communities and the effects on the social relationship between farmers and herders in Igangan, the Head of Vigilantes in Igangan and Igbo-Ora revealed that,

The herdsmen came to these communities of ours via their continual search for pastures and vegetation and arable areas in the South. This brought them to places like ours which has vast green-lands that their herds need for survival but since our forefathers gave them some places to stay and accommodate them, they simply exploited this opportunity. Their children have become used to these settlements and are now claiming our lands
(KII/M/55years/Vigilante/Igangan/2020)

Findings suggest that the migration of herders to Igb-Ora and Igangan is well over 51years. This means for well over fifty (50)



years, there has been continual mass migration of Fulanis at various times. This is well attested to by a Fulani respondent, who summarises that,

Our arrival here is well over 50 years and from what I know, some of our people (*Fulani*) lived here before our arrival in these communities
IDI/M/67years/Herdsman/Igangan/2020)

In summary, the findings of this study have been corroborated by scholars as Ayeni and Efosa (2010) who had noted that at the root of farmers/herders clash in various communities in Nigeria is the activity of mass illegal migration in search of greener pastures. While migration to any part of Nigeria is recognised and protected by the constitution, the continual mass movement of Fulanis without authorised planning into areas (farming communities) where there are existing biased sentiments due to past histories only seeks to deepen existing conflict. As noted by Hassan (2019) and Ayodele (2017), the morale supports by various leaders notwithstanding, the soured relationship between these two vital groups of the agricultural sector of the nation is further distorted if legal boundaries are not

maintained and efforts made to check the threat to communal security of farmers.

TRENDS OF HERDERS-FARMERS CRISIS

Findings on the chronological trends of the conflict as well as the causalities revealed that, although there had been frequent disputes between farmers and herders in the community over land spaces, there was escalation of these conflicts in 2013 when a 28year old farmer was killed in his farm as a result of the dispute. Villagers according to the respondent identified the culprits as Bororos who are foreign Fulani herders in Igangan. The respondent further confirmed that,

We found his body in his farm and noticed that his farm crops have been eaten up by cows, which we were those of the Fulanis we saw exiting his farm. There was nothing we could do as they normally intrude without obstruction into our farms, while anyone who puts up a fight loses squarely
(IDI/M/51years/Farmer/Igangan/2020)

Findings also revealed that between April and December 2013 there were four casualties, majority of who are farmers. Since the 2013 attacks however, there have been series of killings and reprisals between the herders and the farmers in both



communities. Data handed to the researchers contains a list of various deaths and injuries resulting from the sour relation between the herders and farmers. For instance, from the data retrieved in the field (which is reproduced in the appendix), in 2014, two farmers were killed in January and November by suspected Fulani herders. Between September and December 2015, three more farmers were killed by suspected Fulani herders, locally known as Bororo. Amongst the casualties was a Christian clergy man. Relating these 2015 attacks, a respondent recalls that,

On 29th and 30th of November 2015, two prominent farmers in Igbo-Ora were machete to death when they tried to put up a fight with the herdsmen who came to forcefully possess and ravage their land. This was a season when only farmers who go the extra mile of digging up wells or are close to wells, enjoy the season as dry season comes with lots of challenges for crops

(IDI/M/43years/Farmer/Igangan/2020)

In 2016 the attacks continued and more farmers were reportedly killed by suspected Fulani herders who were never arrested. Pertinent to note in these attacks is that the farmers are usually the victims while the culprits are never arraigned before a law

court or made to pay for the injustices perpetrated in the communities. In January, February, April and June of 2016, there were records of farmers killed in cold blood either in their homes or in unsuspecting places while their possessions are sometimes stripped off them. Villagers believe these are all fallout of the conflict between the Fulanis and the resident farmers.

The records of deaths in 2017 are reported to have occurred between the months of May and June with a casualty rate of three (3) persons on three different occasions. The 2017 conflicts were as a result of land related disputes. Recounting one of the incidents, an executive member of the farmers' association mentioned that,

A 53 years old village leader Wakali Abideen was killed in Igangan by herdsmen when he commanded them to stop the possession of a portion of land that belongs to him. But unknown to him the herdsmen were with dagger which they used to chop him off. Abideen's family ended up paying for damages after his demise because the state actors covered up many things.

(IDI/M/67years/Farmer/Igangan/2020)

In the following year, 2018, there were a total of four recorded deaths, all occurring between January and February of the year. Amongst the casualty was an officer of the



Special Anti-Robbery Squad unit of the Nigeria Police Force, popularly referred to by its initials, SARS. The others were farmers in the communities. In 2019, between June and July there were a total of three deaths of farmers also allegedly carried out by the Fulani herders. While in February 2020, on two occasions, two farmers were killed, one of them a chief in Igangan while working in his farm and the other a younger farmer.

The above records of deaths indicate a biased trend of perpetrators and casualties on two divides of the line. The farmers according to the data retrieved are undisputedly the casualties while the Fulanis are allegedly the perpetrators although no one has been charged to court or brought to justice because there have been no arrests or prosecutions. The conflicts and deaths recorded above have been chiefly as a result of grazing and farming land spaces. Although there may be various incidents that triggered the attacks and deaths, the most prominent cause of conflict is land intrusion. This entails herders unlawfully going into farms with their herd to eat up crops. In the case of the 28years old farmer killed on 8th

of April 2013, respondents asserted that it was due to farming and grazing spaces.

Another triggering cause of the conflict in the communities is environmental factors which includes rainfall and seasons. It was observed by the researcher that during dry seasons, herders ravage more farms than in rainy seasons. It was also discovered that the weather had a contributory role to play in the course of the conflict. Respondents agreed that during the dry season when it is difficult to get water, cattle herders and farmers struggle for the little water available. These wells of water are usually owned by farmers and used for their crops but herders pay little or no attention to the plight of the farmers as they are concerned with keeping their herd alive throughout the dry seasons. This struggle is believed by respondents to have triggered the deaths recorded in 2015. This was underlined in Ajibefun (2018) who was of the opinion that 65% of the killings of farmers in Benue and Nasarrawa states reduced during rainy season in 2015, 2016 and 2017 consecutively because herders easily find food for their herds without necessarily going far to get them.



Nathaniel (2017) also noted that dry seasons contribute immensely to confrontations of herders and farmers. It is a period where both the cows and crops need water and grasses for survival. This will cause a conflict of interest and stir up rifts and confrontations. Ajibefun (2018) in his research recounted how herdsmen won a case of illegal possession of land over a farmer who is an indigene of Ekiti State which he feels has lots of corruption and gratification. This then shows that ownership of land is a triggering cause of conflict in the study areas as proven.

Intimidation of farmers by herders was also discovered to be a contributing factor to the escalation of the conflicts in Igangan and Igbo-Ora. This, according to a respondent involves militarized ways to claim a land, as adopted by herders in the conflict. Using a militarized way, a seven member group of herdsmen on the 21st of February 2020, approached a 41 years old man in his farm and ordered the man to pave way for them to get some crops and grasses from his farm. Displeased with this move, the man tried to question them but was killed for doing so. In addition to that, his Bajaj motorcycle was

also taken away. This is contained in the document made available to the researcher by a respondent.

Another factor that contributes to the conflict is the effect of shadow parties, who have an underlined interest in the conflict. Shadow parties according to Adams (2018) are the beginning and end to a conflict, because once they hands off the conflict, the conflict ceases to exist. In the case of the farmers/herders clash, explaining the role that various shadow parties have played to impact on the trend of the conflict over the years, a respondent elucidates that,

The Sheriki Fulani Oyo state and the Sheriki Fulani of Igangan are aware of our confrontations and when killings occur, they pay the Asigangan a visit and settle him. The Asigangan will only persuade the affected people to be encouraged as it all ends there. No one arrests us because we are brothers and family, but our major enemies are the farmers who want us dead.

(IDI/M/39years/Herdsmen/Igangan/2020)

Summarily, the conflicts in these communities have been on for a long time although it gained more momentum in the last 10years according to security personnel. Findings from vigilante and police personnel indicate that while the last 10years have recorded casualties as a result of the dispute



over lands in these communities, the conflict has in fact been on for more than 20 years. Some respondents in their mid-fifties also recalled that they were born and bred into the conflict, but also stated that the killings are a relatively recent phenomenon.

MITIGATING AND RESOLUTION MECHANISM

Findings revealed that various forms of resolution mechanisms have been adopted depending on the occurrence and nature of the conflict. It was discovered that negotiation, mediation and confrontation have been engaged by parties to the conflict in an effort to bring an end to the crisis. However, respondents indicate that the most commonly used mechanism is negotiation. These methods have been employed by various stakeholders to bring a lasting solution to the conflict but they have yielded little or no result. The failure of these mechanisms to handle the conflict between the herders and farmers could be linked to the hard or positional tactics that each of the parties employ in negotiating. This means both farmers and herders are reluctant to concede or yield to the other in the process

of negotiation; this makes the process a failure. Findings revealed that both parties employ the conflict management mechanism best suited to them. Relating an experience where he was threatened to concede to a Fulani herder, a farmer recalls his experience thus,

I was called and informed that a Fulani has intruded into my farm and his herd have eaten up my crops which were due for harvest in about three weeks. They told me if I try to struggle or put up a fight with them, they will kill me and my family which for me is a threat to my life after ripping me off of what belongs to me.

(IDI/M/44years/Farmer/Igangan/2020)

The above reflects an instance of intimidation which falls under the purview of confrontation in the categories of conflict handling styles. Instances like this may only temporarily address the conflict as victims are likely to confront their adversaries at an opportune time. However, the adoption of negotiation in resolving disputes between herders and farmers in the study areas was also related by a herder thus,

We know we do intrude into their farms but I think once we make offers (negotiate) to compensate them, it is their responsibility to accept it with great joy from us but they do not do this. Rather they frown at us. We make offers but they reject our offers. For us, offers are best way to say we are sorry.



(IDI/M/32years/Herdsman/Igangan/2020)

The foregoing explicitly shows an example of failed negotiations on the part of conflict parties. Both parties do not agree to address common issues based on personal and cultural biases that have gained deep roots hence negotiation as a means of handling this conflict fails. As aptly noted by Negotiation scholars Rogers & Williams (2002), positional negotiations usually end in a deadlock and this conflict proves that proposition right. The reason for the refusal of farmers to accept compensations offered by the herders are not clearly stated but could be inferred. It could be as a result of the inadequacy of the compensation to pay for the loss or damage done or it could be as a result of deep seated ill-feeling towards the Fulani herders who are still perceived as intruders.

The above corroborates the view of Kelvin (2017) when he noted that victims of herders' attacks in Benue State were offered only about 20% of their total loss during negotiation, with the offer for compensation coming from government officials which denotes that gratification must have been

made. Kelvin further reports that the farmers were always on the losing side as many were on loan from micro-finance banks with loans running into millions now going away. The offers being made are sometimes one hundred thousand naira which takes care of nothing.

The second most commonly employed conflict management mechanism is mediation which is championed by the community heads, farmers' association executives and security operatives. Findings revealed that in an incidence that occurred in Igbo-Ora, herders were called for a mediation process that had been approved by the Sarki but on the day of the mediation, herders did not show up. The Nigerian Police also on various occasions were turned down by the herders when victims report cases to the police station at Ayete and a date is fixed for hearing. The usual practice as indicated by respondents is that the herders simply send condolences to the victims but will not show up for any mediation sessions/meeting. In an interview with the Vigilante head in Igangan, he explained that,



In 2019, one of their boys (Fulani) stabbed a 55 years old man in his farm for refusing to exchange pleasantries with them and when we asked them to meet at the police station for redress and compensation, the victim's brothers were arrested instead. This made us believe that the mediation the police set out to do was a trap. This broke our hearts.

(KII/M/51years/Vigilante/Igangan/2020)

The above is a reflection of the failure of the herders to adhere to mediation or facilitated negotiation to resolve their differences. The fact however that the herders are alleged to have ignored a mediation meeting set by their traditional rulers leaves room for more questions as to the level of recognition and honour the Sariki Fulani gets from the herders in the study areas. Findings show that the failure of negotiation and mediation to address disputes makes farmers who are indigenes resort to confrontation as self-defence. This was insinuated in an interview with a prominent farmer in Igangan and Igbo-Ora, Atawagbaye area, when he noted in his words that,

I had to adopt traditional ways of self-defence to protect myself from these ravaging herdsmen. As for me, I am always ready to face them as their daggers cannot harm me nor pierce me. There was a time when one of them came to my farm. I dared him because they know me that I do not care

about anyone but will respond first before I report to anyone.

(IDI/M/44years/Farmer/Igangan/2020)

This adoption of self-defence by employing confrontation correlates with Abel's (2015) position on the inevitability of violence when incessant killings and attacks go uninvestigated and unprosecuted by legal authorities. He infers this notion from cases of incessant killings in Benue and Nassarawa States where farmers now engage herders in open violent confrontation that has resulted in the loss of many lives on both sides since the government has failed to resolve the conflict. According to him, "when the farmers get tired of being killed needlessly by herders, they will confront these herdsmen which could result to ethnic cleansing or war that could leave hundreds of thousands dead in days, since they reside close to each other" (Abel, 2015).

Summarily, the failure of the methods employed to reach an agreement or lasting settlement in the farmers/herders conflict in the study area can be well attributed to the failure of both the primary parties and relevant stakeholders to address the conflict with the seriousness it deserves. Findings from the study have indicated that the Police



personnel who are supposed to keep law and order have also failed to live up to expectations as they make no arrests or make any attempts to prosecute or set suspects up for trials. The almost one sided killings, which puts farmers as sole casualties since 2013 in the communities, is enough evidence to adopt Police actions in arresting culprits and prosecuting same. This has however not been the case hence the resort to confrontation on the part of farmers.

Suffice it to say that any negotiation or mediation process that does not address the incessant influx of Fulani herdsmen from the northern region of the country to the south may not yield the desired results of peace in the communities.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF HERDERS-FARMERS CRISIS

Findings from the study indicate that the human security of residents and farmers of the communities under study have been grossly affected. For one, personal security of farmers has reduced with the implication that more able bodied young men are abandoning the farms for fear of being murdered. It was discovered that communal

safety is not guaranteed as it used to be before the influx of herders as well as the killings of farmers. Communal peace gets fragile by the day as the current disposition of farmers could escalate into full communal conflict against herders at any time. Reflecting the fears of personal and communal security, a farmer in Igbo-Ora notes that,

Since the aggravation of the conflict, farmers now live in fear while going to the farm as the fear of been killed has moved all our children and youths into riding Okada (motorcycle) and then plunged them into frustration. Part of the frustration is herdsmen started selling off the remaining crops after killing victims for as low as #10, 000 per a pickup van.

(IDI/M/54years/Farmer/Igbo-Ora/2020)

A direct fall out of the above is the migration of youths. Since the aggravation of the conflict, farming activities has reduced and this corroborates statements of farmers who mentioned that farming is no longer lucrative due to killings that ensue in their communities by herdsmen. Most men take to Okada riding, while others migrate to Ibadan, Omu-Aran in Kwara State and Lagos, others move to Abeokuta and Iseyin or Saaki.



Economically, farmers are becoming more insecure as the activities of herders and the continual trend of killing farmers and taking their farmlands, sometimes harvesting their crops by herders in both Igangan and Igbo-Ora have resulted in huge drop of farm produce and the price of the same. Respondents revealed that women who ordinarily would accompany their husbands to farm or own their own farms are discouraged for fear of herders and instead have resorted to charcoal businesses and petty trades. Expressing the effect on the economy of farming in the communities, a farmer relates the nature of economic insecurity thus;

Our cassava now is sold for as low as #10,000 to #12,000 per truck which was not so previously. Just before the year 2016, a pick-up van loads and sells for as much as 29k -32k. Things have now worsened to the process of we farmers buying food stuffs from the herdsmen who came to the market. It should be noted that just before the aggravation, many of us harvest up to six to seven acres of crops where we get up to twelve trucks or thirteen. But now, you hardly get a truck which has sent many of us out of town and business.

(IDI/M/38years/Farmer/Igangan/2020)

The implication of the above is that farmers and their families who depend on farm produce and their sales for livelihood have

been extremely impoverished and have been pushed into other means of livelihood. With more than half drop in prices of farm produces in less than two three years as indicated in the views expressed above, without a support structure or reduction in standard of living, life and living can only be very difficult for farmers. By extension, the agricultural supply chain that comes from these communities to major towns and cities in Oyo State and neighbouring States has been grossly negatively affected. A continuation of this trend in coming years may result in hike of prices of agricultural produce.

Politically and socially, the farmers feel more unrepresented and repressed as their calls and pleas for redress and justice are continually unheard and unattended to. While the number of farmers getting killed has continued to increase in the last seven years, the political representation and authority to make communal reforms to ease the plight of vulnerable and helpless farmers are lacking. Although previous governments in the State have tried to address the conflict, the approach has not yielded total success hence the continued escalation of



violence by suspected herders. This makes farmers socially and politically insecure in their homes as they cannot live in safety or live with the consciousness that their voices and pleas for political intervention will be heard or adhered to.

These findings are in line with the worries expressed by scholars as Imo (2017), Adisa (2017), Bello (2016) etc. Reflecting the insecurity the killing of farmers and the destruction of farmlands by herders pose to Nigeria as a nation, Imo (2017) contends that with the rate of herders/farmers conflict in the country, there may be shortage in the supply of food in a few years if the conflicts are allowed to go unabated. For Adisa (2017), expressing the effects on the security of farmers, he contends that farmers may be forced to abandon farming for fear of herders as it is rightly the case in the study communities.

Ajibefun (2017) and Bello (2016) both expresses concern over the social cohesion of Nigeria in the face of continued economic and cultural violence as well as the economic development of Nigeria. According to Bello (2016), the economic development of Nigeria which is very

important for her sustainability as a nation is highly threatened by economic related violence as farmers and herders clash. Summarily the continued conflict in Igbo-Ora and Igangan has resulted in a high level of insecurity, as respondents noted that the most obvious issues facing the farming communities is insecurity which is as a result of herders' threats and killings. Several areas in the communities are not advisable for movement at certain periods of the day for safety reasons.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current spate of killings in the country traceable to the activities of herders and militants can be said to be as a result of the failure and negligence of the leadership of the Nigerian nation. This, as well as the failure of important stakeholders to take seriously the question of security of lives and properties of her citizens has resulted in the spiralling of the on-going dispute. Scholarly and expert opinions and works on the management of the crises facing the nation can be adequately put to use and applied in tackling and addressing the crises. But this can only be achieved if the available resources are put to judicious



use. With the trend of events and fragile state of the nation, if the current crisis of herders and farmers is not adequately and timely addressed, the possibility of escalating to a full scale civil war cannot be undermined or swept under the carpet, especially in light of varying interests and distrust by various stakeholders and actors involved in the conflict.

The strategic economic position that Igbo-Ora and Igangan as well as other farming communities across Nigeria poses for the nation makes them important security areas that should be guarded and protected from the herdsmen onslaught rampaging across the country. Already acclaimed to be the world's fourth deadliest group, the herdsmen phenomenon has proven to be too much a burden for local authorities as well as security operatives. Leaving farmers whose duty it is to feed the nation to be at the mercy of these herders does more harm than good to the States and nation at large. The rampage of Agatu and neighbouring communities in Benue state by suspected herders in 2015 stands clear in the minds of Nigeria. It is important to note that the rampage that happened in that year did not

begin suddenly but just like the Igbo-Ora and Igangan cases, spanned a number of years with no improvement in relations.

If every farming community in the country experiences the havoc that farming communities in Benue state experienced between 2014 and 2018, it will not be gainsaying the fact that food security in Nigeria will be in a state of emergency. The culture of treating the fruits or manifestation of conflicts in Nigeria is one that will hinder the nation's growth and overall security if not changed for the better. Hence, relevant authorities but traditional and constitutional must take action to restore peace to farming communities across the country.

The killings of farmers that continue to occur on a monthly and yearly basis in farming communities across the country must be discouraged and totally eradicated. If farmers and herders are left to settle their disputes through confrontation, the worst can be expected as records and reports both from this study and others have shown that herders seem to be more sophisticatedly equipped than their farming counterparts. Farmers can only suffer defeat and oppression by foreigners in their ancestral



lands for so long. If there is a retaliatory attack, it may spill into neighbouring communities or even state as ethno-cultural conflicts tend to do in Nigerian.

Recommendations

In lieu of the findings from the study, the following recommendations are hereby made;

1. First, herdsmen should be disarmed and forced to undergo an amnesty program where they are made to submit all weapons they possess. A person who is not a security operative under the law should on no account possess any weapon and if they do, they should be apprehended. This should be accompanied with stiffer laws that restrict confrontation on both factions.
2. Next, a ranching site is needed to deescalate the conflict in Ibarapa communities (Igbo-Ora and Igangan) with neighbouring communities. This will in many ways confine the herdsmen movement and this must be followed with enforced laws which herdsmen must adhere to. Most importantly should

be deploying operatives like the Amotekuns and Agbekoyas to help safeguard the people to ensure that aforementioned points are adhered to.

3. A law should be enacted by policy makers in the federal upper and lower chamber to criminalize any form of intrusion into anyone's farm with no option of bail. This will help curb this act totally and bring sanity to the country at large. In addition, there should be supplementary door to door sensitization by various civil society organizations and various non-governmental organization on how to manage conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms among Igbo-Ora and Igangan residents, as a way to forestall agitations that could lead to a full fled war.
4. Similarly, an enforced representation of farmers in these communities and Fulani herdsmen should be organized in form of a public forum where security operatives and law makers are the directors of the meetings. This will help both factions pour out their minds on what they suffer and where help is needed. Equally, the federal and state government should



ruminate on eliminating offensive words that reduce any of the factions to pity or exalt such as Cattle colonies, anti-open grazing among others in policies and laws.

5. Most importantly, respective states should endeavour to make budgetary provisions for ranch development, as concerned International agencies should come keenly to the aids of States and Federal Governments by partnering with them to facilitate the provision of social amenities like fencing materials for farmland and ranches. The facilities should however include electricity hospitals, veterinary clinics, schools, security outpost, cattle routes, earth dam, boreholes and markets in and for neighbourhood ranches and grazing reserves. Based on technological advancement, there is a swift changed among Fulanis from wearing leafs and animal skin to wearing clothes, which is in addition to using of sticks for herding to usage of dangerous weapons being manufactured by the whites. Therefore, herdsmen of all cultures should then embrace the call for a change from the

primitive culture of open grazing to the culture of ranching or grazing reserve or ranching alias cattle colony in good faith.

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