

FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

SITUATION DASHBOARD

ON CONFLICTS AND ETHNIC TENSIONS BETWEEN PASTORALISTS AND FARMERS FOR THE PERIOD

ISSUE 6: 1ST MAY, 2020 TO 31ST MAY, 2020)

HIGHLIGHT

There seems to be conflict in more communities in the LGAs monitored within the reporting period, while some other communities have durable peace, and others have stable peace. Below is the peace stability rating of the monitored LGAs:

Awe LGA	
Doma LGA	
Obi LGA	
Guma LGA	
Gwer-West LGA	
Makurdi LGA	
Ukum LGA	
Logo LGA	
Katsina-Ala LGA	
Ado LGA	
Apa LGA	
Obi LGA	

Key: Durable Peace  Stable Peace  Unstable Peace  Conflict 

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

This report reflects the situation of co-existence between pastoralists and farmers in Awe, Obi and Doma Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Nasarawa State, Gwer-West, Guma and Makurdi LGAs and Katsina-Ala, Ukum and Logo LGAs and also Ado, Obi and Apa LGAs of Benue State.

INTRODUCTION

This situation dashboard came out of the need to generate evidence-based information on the tensions and violent conflict between pastoralists and farmers; and to provide basis for tracking the timeline and (de) escalation patterns of violence so that peace building interventions can be planned and carried out effectively. It is an output of the project titled *Dousing Ethnic Tensions and Violent Conflicts between Pastoralists and Farmers in the Benue Valley* implemented by Catholic Diocese of Makurdi Foundation for Justice, Development and Peace (FJDP) with support from MISEREOR, Germany. It is part of a wide range of activities including advocacy, research, media engagements and psychosocial services designed to improve peaceful co-existence between pastoralists and farmers. The dashboard shall be issued monthly in periods of stable peace and twice every month in times of unstable peace. It is intended to reach as many stakeholders who have a responsibility or capacity to douse tensions between pastoralists and farmers as possible.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Economic Inter-relationship between Pastoralists and Farmers

In the month of May, 2020 it was observed that pastoralists and farmers in Awe, Doma and Obi LGAs are attending the same local markets freely and are buying and selling to one another without any form of exploitation or differentials in price. Markets like the Orisiso local market, Agyaragu Friday market of Obi LGA, Doma Wednesday market of Doma LGA and the 5-days interval market of Awe LGA were monitored in which various items were being sold, such as yam, corn, groundnut, ginger, goat, cow, sheep, chicken, fura & nunu and vegetables; all these and other services were performed by pastoralists and farmers to each other without hesitation or bias.

Going by the COVID-19 pandemic that is ravaging every part of the world, the partial lockdown and stay at home is still in force in the state, therefore markets has remained closed and as a result, the level of economic relations between pastoralists and farmers are not noticeable in all the locations monitored in Makurdi, however Guma and Gwer West LGAs experienced violent attacks that led to mutual distrust and breakdown of economic relationships between pastoralists and farmers. In Benue Central area, there was a decline in involvement of pastoralists in commercial activities especially in Guma and Gwer West where these attacks. In Guma LGA, pastoralists had remained static in their previous

settlements around communities such as Kwata (near Agasha), Gbajimba, Yogbo, Udei and parts of Tyulen, but did not buy or sell actively in local stock markets. In Gwer West, pastoralists maintained their settlement in Sengev, Tongov, Tse-Bumkem, Gbaji, Gidan Pepa, New Nigeria and Anguhar.

Katsina-Ala, Ukum and Logo are at this point experiencing a stable peace between pastoralist and farmers. This can be seen as they both enjoy equal opportunities for Economic inter-relationship as observed within the local weekly markets in communities with high population of farmers. In addition, within the three local government areas monitored, pastoralist and farmers engage in commercial activities especially in products such as Rice, Gini-corn, Maze, Yam, Gari, Nunu and others. Meanwhile, teenage members of the pastoral group enjoy music from MP3 players and western attire bought from Zaki-Baim market in Ukum LGA while on the other hand, pastoralist women continues their sale of Nunu in Anyiin in Logo LGA. In Katsina-Ala, the pastoralist dominates a local market and controls even the market union – livestock are mostly the product in the market. It was also observed that farmers who wish to trade in this market do so under the shadows of the pastoralist and it is done without acrimony.

Ado LGA: Farmers and pastoralist are attending local markets and patronizing the products of one another. Monitored local markets such as Igumale, Apa and Idokpo weekly markets, pastoralist women were observed to be selling dairy products called Nunu, Fura, and also buying grains such millet, guinea and maize from traders within these markets. Apa LGA: Pastoralists are not settled within any community of the local government hence no economic activity among farmers and pastoralists. Pastoralists only graze into Ikobi from Ojiliji, Jana and Ajama in Gwer West LGA.

It was also observed that farmers and pastoralists across different communities belonged to market unions and cooperatives such as All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Rafin Jaka, Rumin Giwa, Damba, Fadama, and Kalta-Hore as seen in Awe and parts of Doma and Obi LGAs, but in communities like Imon, Mahanga, Agyaragu, Doka and Akanga, there are no such cooperatives where farmers and pastoralists belonged to same market union or association. Farmers and pastoralists enjoy membership and leadership positions from market unions as loans are given without discrimination but farmers seem to benefit more only due to their population advantage in such cooperatives.

Monitors reported that Pastoralists and farmers belonged to different unions and cooperatives, although the unions and cooperatives were exclusively for each economic group. Pastoralists belonged to unions and cooperatives like Rafin Jaka, Rumin Giwa, Damba, Fadama, Miyetti Allah Kautal-Hore, MACBAN; while farmers belonged to All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) and Bam. The involvement of pastoralists and farmers in market unions and cooperatives is low in all locations except Makurdi. Most of the cooperatives and unions are set up along the genres of products sold. This means, there are separate unions and cooperatives for yam sellers, grains sellers, livestock sellers etc. Generally, pastoralists and farmers all have

equal access to economic opportunities in the various communities visited. Everyone was able to trade in an open market regardless of their economic orientation.

The pastoralist found in the cattle market resides in the Hausa quarters within the township of Katsina-Ala where they enjoy all the Economic empowerment programs by NGOs for example the LAPO financial loan scheme and other program of Foundation for Justice Development and Peace, Katsina-Ala Diocese through the Seleki Hausa quarters who is recognized in Katsina-Ala traditional council.

Pastoralists and farmers both have equal access to economic opportunities in the communities visited in the LGAs of Awe, Doma and Obi respectively. As such the communities provided everyone the opportunity to trade in an open market regardless of their economic orientation.

Socio-cultural Inter-relationship between Pastoralists and Farmers

Across the LGAs monitored in Nasarawa state, there were no stereotyping names that pastoralist or farmers were observed to be calling each other except for jokes or greetings expressions such as Agwei, Tiv-jo or Sarkin Noma.

Monitors revealed that, these names such as *Agwoi/Agwei, Onoho, Munchi, Tiv-njo Mbaagbidegbough* were not meant to demean, mock or derogate each other, pastoralists and farmers refers to each other in a jovial manner without sentiments. In Katsina-Ala LGA both group refer to each other as *Munchi* and *Agbidyegbough* respectively though it's not intended to demean.

In the local governments of Ado, Apa and Obi LGAs; pastoralists and farmers have not developed easy-to-identify names and slogans for each other. The farmers in the three LGAs refer to pastoralists in their local language as cattle rearers, while the pastoralists refer to the farmers as farmers in a comic way of pronouncing their ethnic names.

In the various communities of Awe, Doma and Obi LGAs pastoralists live in isolation or in separate locations, but none of either party lived in an unsafe or places at risk of stigmatization in any of the communities. More and more farmers that were formerly in asylum at Awe town are relocating back to their hamlets and communities such as Jangargari, Gidan Anthony and Mararba all of which were communities that were ravaged during pastoralists and farmers conflicts.

In Obi and Apa LGAs, there are settlements of pastoralists while in Ado LGA; communities allocate spaces on the outskirts of their villages and towns for their residence. This often is to minimize the risk of pollution that cattle dung and feeds can cause. In Ado, pastoralists are located at the outskirts of Apa, Agila and Igumale villages and towns.

There is continuous increase in participation between farmers and pastoralists in socio-cultural activities although pastoralists usually participate more, since they are more privy with

information about intending ceremonies or festivities of farmers even without invitation. On the part of farmers, they rarely attend without invite. In communities like Rukubi, Yelwa and Akwata of Doma LGA and Mahanga of Awe LGA pastoralists and farmers are getting to learn and understanding each other's language.

In Nasarawa state there has been continuous inter-marriages across the communities in the state between pastoralists and farmers; more was observed in Awe LGA, though in communities like Akanga, Agwatashi there is rarely such inter-marriages.

In locations monitored Katsina-Ala, attending each other's socio-cultural festivities like Traditional marriages, naming ceremonies, and cultural activities has been minimal though it is not discriminatorily motivated. There is very minimal intermarriage between the members of the pastoral group and farmers especially between female pastoralist and male farmer.

In Awe, Doma and Obi LGAs, the children of both pastoralists and farmers attend Islamic worship and teaching centers (Makaranta Alo) together. Meanwhile, in Shohon Gari and Sabon Gari of Awe LGA, children of both groups attend same schools and health care facilities without prejudice.

There is no special nomadic school for pastoralists children in Ado LGA, a few of them trek to public schools in Apa, Agila and Igumale in Benue state.

Adorning each other's attire the LGAs monitored in Nasarawa state is minimal even though there are instances to behold. Conversely, others opined that attires of others are sometimes adorned for mischief purposes however, non-wearing of others attire is blamed mostly on modernization.

The use of traditional attires between pastoralists and farmers is not common across communities visited in all the LGAs as especially farmers wouldn't want to dressed and called *Orfulani* this is with the intention to mock.

In Ado western fashion is adopted by pastoralists. However, the adoption of fashion associated with pastoralists among farmers is non-existence.

Political Inter-relationship between Pastoralists and Farmers

In Awe LGA, farmers and pastoralists are constantly involved in decision making in the community through a monthly meeting hosted by the emir of Awe, and another of such meeting is organized by the LGC Chairman involving the various group leaders, but as observed in Doma and Obi LGAs of Nasarawa state, farmers and pastoralists have limited involvement in decision making in the communities.

Involvement of pastoralists in decision making processes was high in Makurdi LGA. Pastoralists were part of community policing structures particularly in Makurdi LGA, while in

other LGAs monitored; their involvement in decision making was limited to participation in security dialogues and meetings.

In all the locations monitored in Katsina-Ala, Ukum and Logo LGAs, pastoralist have minimal involvement in decision making however, they participate actively in party politics as members and head the cattle market union where they preside over its affairs.

In the three LGAs of Ado, Apa and Obi which was monitored, pastoralist only participate in party politics as supporters though yet to be given a leadership role that cuts across the two divides.

Farmers and pastoralists undertake sanitization and other civic activities separately due to differentials in their residential abodes in almost all the monitored locations in Nasarawa state save for Awe market in Awe LGA where it is usually done in unison.

Across communities in the Benue Central LGAs of Guma, Makurdi and Gwer-West, farmers and pastoralists live separately this also informs their carrying out civic activities separately.

In Awe, Obi and Doma LGAs of Nasarawa state it was recorded that programmes and distribution of aid targeted both farmers and pastoralists and it is usually shared along the lines of associations and groups who are normally represented by their executives, whom in turn shares such aid to their members to avoid any group or association complaining of been marginalized.

Justice for Pastoralists and Farmers

In the period monitored, the Government of Benue and Nasarawa states held a meeting and agreed on boundary demarcation as well as set up a taskforce for regular visits of traditional and LGC authorities. Meanwhile, in the Awe, Doma and Obi LGAs of Nasarawa state, conflict incidences are now minimal due to local security networks and community leaders while in Awe town, Obi and Rukubi the presence of army has helped in no small measure to douse tensions between the two groups.

In the period monitored, Chief Magistrate Court sitting in Makurdi presided over by Mr. Isaac Ajim had convicted a 20years old herder Jaro Alhaji Ilu to serve 1year in prison or an option to pay N500,000 for contravening Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment law (2017) of Benue State.¹

There is conflict incidences recorded within three communities of the three LGAs monitored in the reporting period. There were killings in Ado, Apa and Obi LGs. The break down indicates as follows: Apa LGA: Ikobi in Ikobi Ward three persons were kill in the night of 2nd May, 2020. The deceased were identified as Ananu Eluma female aged 60, Yakubu Ekaini 35 years

¹ Source: Daily Trust newspaper and Court Registry Source: Daily Trust newspaper and Court Registry

and Baba Ogoh 69 years all farmers while Sule Ahilo 49 years sustained bullet wounds. Ado LGA: Igumale, Igumale Ward, a member of the Benue State Livestock Guards (BSLG) in the process of settling of an alleged crops destruction by cows was attacked and is still missing.

On the 15th May, 2020 three persons were kidnapped by suspected pastoralists. Those kidnapped are Janet Ochapa, Mercy Attah and James was later rescued by private security guards attached to one chairman of Ado LGC. Obi LGA: Echori–Okpokwu Ward, on the 15th, 16th and 17th of May the community was attacked by suspected pastoralists. Yam were burnt in storage on 15th and 16th May, however on the 17th of May, 2020 three community members were shot dead and twelve persons sustained bullet and machete wounds. The dead were Ajah Emma, Oga Daniel and Abankwa Emma. The wounded are: Item Ogbu, oche Igo, Ogbu Matthew, Ibe Akpa, Ogidi Idaa, Andy Idaa, John Ikogi, Elijah Isaac, Ida Eche and Agi Odomi. The farmers in the three local governments revealed that they trusted community peace building and dispute resolution structures but expressed concerns over extortion associated with litigation.

Security Situation in Communities Hosting Pastoralists and Farmers

In Nasarawa state security operatives are present in most of the communities visited, the Operation Puff Adder is still in full gear, police and vigilante check points are regularly positioned along roads and highways leading to communities in the various LGAs of Awe, Doma and Obi during weekly market days. In Rukubi and Awe soldiers are seen patrolling all over the community due to the presence of Olams farm and Dangote sugar farm in the communities respectively which has in turn helped to foster peaceful coexistence between pastoralists and farmers, such that when there is misunderstanding between them the soldier are sort after for justice.

Similarly the Agro Rangers Squad of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) and the Nigerian Army's Operation Whirl Stroke are responding to conflict incidences whenever they occur within their various areas of command. However, on the 2nd May, 2020 Imande, Tse-Ikyor community and Goh village in Saghev ward of Gwer-West LGA were attacked. On the 9th May, 2020, Yelwata community of Yev ward was attacked, Agasha community in Kaambe ward was attacked on the 11th May, 2020 and Tse-Haaga in Mbabai ward was attacked on the 12th May, 2020. In Agasha and Tse-Haaga both communities of Guma LGA a total number of 6 persons comprising only males were killed by armed pastoralists, while six others survived in the separate attacks, names of victims as follows; Tersoo Igbaugondo, Lanem Mtserikyaa, David Ngbea, Tordighir Ngbea, Mbagwen Alakali and Utsua Ugber, those who survived includes; Sylvanus Akela, Wasem Akighirga, Mnu Tordighir, Lydia Kaashima, Myina Shimaga and Hangeior Mtserikyaa. In Gwer-West LGA, the community of Imande recorded two deaths and two survivals both were male, the victims includes; Aondona Ubee, MsughterTarnongo and Donatus Iorhemen and Udufu Kumum.

The police divisions in Apa, Obi and Ado LGAs as monitored are active and responding to crime and insecurity. Also, check-points have been setup along roads and highways leading to all the LGAs monitored. These check-points are manned by the police, joint security special forces and the military.

Mental Health Situation of Pastoralists and Farmers

There were conflict incidences which were recorded within Guma communities as monitored and a substantial number of the pastoralists and farmers who are victims and survivors continue to exhibit signs and symptoms of divergent psychosocial disorders which the teams have been managing since the beginning of our intervention. Particularly, the team is working in four select pilot areas of Daudu IDP Camps 1, 3 and 3 in Guma LGA as well as the Cattle Market Community in North bank area in Makurdi LGA of Benue state. In all the monitored locations, mental health situation of the farmers in IDP camps as well as Pastoralists in the Cattle Market Community in North bank area have continued to weaken due to the losses and devastation they suffered as a result of the previous conflict. COVID-19 pandemic has also raised the stakes of the mental wellbeing of pastoralist and farmers especially in the past two weeks in the reporting period.

Advocacy Highlight

In all the location monitored there is need for increased dialogues among all key stakeholders. These dialogues need to be localized to widen participation. Furthermore, there is need for security agents and government to close up all ungoverned spaces utilized for perpetuation of violence. A state coordination instrument such as Peace Commissions in Benue state will not be out of Place. The views of traditional rulers, community leaders, youths, women, police divisional offices, vigilante groups; livestock guards units among other randomly selected stakeholders were represented in this report across flashpoint areas.

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