

FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

SITUATION DASHBOARD

ON TENSIONS AND CONFLICT BETWEEN PASTORALISTS AND FARMERS FOR THE PERIOD

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HIGHLIGHT

The state of peace deteriorated significantly in several LGAs as a result of incidents of violence. These include Kwande, Guma, Otukpo and Gwer West. Despite this, situation of stable peace continued in other LGAs as observed in February, 2020. The indicators of LGAs are as follows:

Awe	
Doma	
Obi	
Ohimini	
Agatu	
Apa	
Otukpo	
Guma	
Gwer-West	
Makurdi	
Ukum	
Logo	
Katsina-Ala	
Buruku	
Kwande	
Tarka	

Key¹: Durable Peace  Stable Peace  Unstable Peace  Conflict 

¹ USIP typology of peace www.usip.org

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

The report reflects the situation of co-existence between pastoralists and farmers in Awe, Obi and Doma Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Nasarawa State; Ohimini, Apa, Oturkpo and Agatu LGAs in Benue South and Gwer-West, Guma and Makurdi LGAs, Katsina-Ala, Ukum and Logo LGAs and Kwande, Buruku and Tarka LGAs of Benue State.

INTRODUCTION

This situation dashboard was birthed out of the need to generate evidence-based information on the conflict between pastoralists and farmers; and to provide basis for tracking the timeline and (de)escalation patterns of violence so that peacebuilding interventions can be planned and carried out effectively. It is an output of the project *Dousing Ethnic Tensions and Violent Conflicts Between Pastoralists and Farmers in the Benue Valley* implemented by 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

Across all monitored locations, there was significant level of economic engagement between pastoralists and farmers except in Logo, Kwande, Agatu and Gwer West LGAs where scores of violent conflict incidents led to mutual fear in breakdown of economic relationships between these two population groups. Monitored indicators of economic inter-relationships between pastoralists and farmers in Awe, Doma and Obi LGAs of Nasarawa state show that, farmers and pastoralist engaged in economic and commercial activities in local markets without elements of exploitation or boycotting demand or supply chains. This situation was common in Awe local market, the Oriso local market in Obi; both of which hold every five days, as well as the Wednesday market (Kasuwan Laraba) in Doma. Products observably sold by both parties in these markets include dairy products, goats, local fowls, yam, vegetables and fruits.

The situation in Benue South area particularly Otukpo LGA was however different as pastoralists were not observed participating in commercial activities in most local markets outside Otukpo township. Local sources such as market women reported in Ikobi that, the pastoralists are not settled in the community, but only graze into the community from their settlement in Odejo in Agatu Agatu LGA as well as others in neighbouring Gwer West LGA; hence, do not attend local markets. The situation in Otukpo is correlational to that of Agatu LGA. Local sources reported that pastoralists are not settled within communities in the Agatu as was the situation in January and February 2020. The pastoralists currently graze in northern

part of Agatu River after crossing River Benue; particularly in the flood plains of Okokolo, Abugbe, Akwu, Ocholonya, Okpachienyi and Obagaji. There are no signs of pastoralists carrying out any economic activities within these communities. The passive or non-involvement of pastoralists in commercial activities according to community based opinion leaders, is not unconnected with frequent arrest of pastoralists who violate the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law (2017) by security agents such as Benue State Livestock Guards (BSLG) and the Police through single agency and interagency operations.² Pastoralists were also reported to have grazed into Ojali in Ohimini from Otukpo but did not participate in commercial activities. High economic engagements between pastoralists and local farming populations were reported in Otukpo and its environs. The communities of Ikobi, Asa II and III and Ojantele have pastoralists whose families trade on Nunu among the people. They freely market their dairy products in Otukpo town and also buy staple foods for household use.

In Benue Central area, there was a decline in involvement of pastoralists in commercial activities especially in Guma and Gwer West where incidents of attacks were recorded. In Guma LGA, pastoralists continued to live in 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-Bukem, Gbaji, Gidan Pepa, New Nigeria and Anguhar. Majority of these pastoralists travelled by boat to buy and sell in Wadata (Makurdi LGA) as tensions arose in Agagbe, Enger and Anguhar markets following conflict incidents. The economic interrelationship between pastoralists and farmers in Makurdi remained very high. In North bank and Wadata areas the town, high economic activities were observed until third week of March 2020 when government restrictions on movement was pronounced as part of the measures put in place contain the Corona Virus or COVID-19 Pandemic. Despite this, significant volume of unhindered trade in diary and protein products was dominated by pastoralists in other markets such as Fiidi, Wurukum and High Level.

There was relative instability in Benue North area although economic engagements between pastoralists and farmers continued in most LGAs at a low scale. In Katsina-Ala and Ukum LGAs, farmers and pastoralist were observed to be partially attending weekly local markets such as Zaki-Baim, Jootar, Peva and Tomanyiin. The most common products bought by farmers from the pastoralists were livestock and beef while the pastoralists patronized food crops at a high level. In Logo, it was observed that the women of the pastoralist who used to bring their dairy products such as Nunu for sale as at November and December 2019 have stopped. The men of the pastoralist have also stopped attending local markets in Logo LGA for now.

Within the reporting period, pastoralists were not settled within communities in Tarka LGA of Benue State. The pastoralists have continued to graze into communities adjoining Binev in Buruku such as Awenabo, Avande, Kontien, Konkyaa and Aboho. They however just as in February, 2020 do not reach Wanune, Tarhembe, Tior-Tyu and other commercial markets but

² It was reported on 18th March, 2020 in Gwer West LGA that a pastoralist named Abdullahi Adamu was arrested along with 200 cows by members of the Benue State Livestock Guards (BSLG) in Saav Ukusu ward for violating the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law (2017) and handed over to the Benue State Government for prosecution. (Source: Eye-witness Report)

instead patronize the Buruku and River-side markets. In Kwande LGA of Benue State, few pastoralists settled in Yaav, Moon and other hinterland communities close to Nigeria's international border with Cameroon and attended the Jato-Aka markets in the first week of March, 2020. However, by second week of March 2020 this ceased as violent attacks were recorded in Yaav and Moon areas of the LGA bringing to a halt, involvement of pastoralists in commercial activities in the local Markets. In Buruku, pastoralists are settled in communities bordering Logo LGA around Binev area and along the coast of the Katsina-Ala River. They were observed to be selling Nunu and other dairy products to local farmers at the coast while buying foodstuffs from local farmers. Open grazing was observed in Binev Area by pastoralists reported by community members to have come from Tombo, Alu and other locations in Logo LGA of Benue State.

There are high populations of pastoralists in Guma LGA. Although local population survey has not been carried out by the government, the hosting communities estimate the population to be over 200. The highest of these populations are around Mbagwen, Gbajimba, Agasha, Udei, Yogbo, Uikpam and Yelewata. In the first two weeks of March 2020, pastoralists visited local markets to buy and sell basic household food items especially groundnut oil, sorghum and maize. They also sold to local farmers Nunu and some dairy products. This however declined in many locations and near to Zero in Gbajimba following violent attacks in the third week of February, 2020. Similarly, semi-settled pastoralists in Sengev, Tongov, Tse-Bukem, Gbaji, Gidan Pepa, New Nigeria and Anguhar attended local markets until 16th March, 2020 when increased arrest of cattle and pastoralists over violation of open grazing prohibition laws of the state generated apprehension and fear. Most pastoralists in these locations have resorted to patronizing markets in Makurdi.

The economic interrelationship between pastoralists and farmers in Makurdi is very high. In North bank Area, pastoralists dominate the cattle market as traders and the market is highly patronized by farmers and herders especially those in need of cattle for festivities. Strong economic relationships were also observed in Wadata, Fiidi, Wurukum and High Level markets. Beside these organized markets, pastoralists are settled in satellite communities such as Lower Benue River Basin base, Air Force Base, Tyohemba, Orkpe, Mobile Barracks, Anter and Apir. Within these communities, pastoralists set up small business facilities for buying and selling with members of hosting communities.

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.

Socio-cultural Inter-relationship between Pastoralists and Farmers

Across all locations, stereotyping names were not used against each other. It was however, observed that pastoralists and farmers call each other jovial names such as *Sarkin Noma, Agwoi/Agwei, Onoho, Munchi, Tiv-njo*, which are not meant to slight one another.

In all the communities visited in the LGAs of Awe, Doma and Obi a few pastoralists lived just within the community, while majority lived in separate locations, but none of either party lived in unsafe location or places at risk of stigmatization.

Within the reporting period, there was consistent increase in farmers and pastoralists participation in each other's socio-cultural activities though generally the pastoralists have been the ones participating more, because they get information about farmers events easily and even if they are not invited sometimes they still turn-up to be a part of it, while farmers usually participate in pastoralists events when they are invited or a few times if they coincidentally met them having an event. It was also observed that in communities like Yelwa and Akwata of Doma LGA and Awe LGA pastoralists and farmers are increasingly learning or understanding each other's local dialect.

Political Inter-relationship between Pastoralists and Farmers

Involvement of pastoralists in decision making processes was high in Awe LGA of Nasarawa state and Otukpo and Makurdi LGAs of Benue state. In Awe LGA, farmers and pastoralists were constantly involved in decision making in the community as there is monthly meeting held by the Emir of Awe, also the LGC Chairman converges monthly meetings with the various group leaders; in Doma and Obi LGAs of Nasarawa state farmers and pastoralists have a limited involvement in decision making in the communities. In Otukpo pastoralists and farmers have a joint conflict resolution committee chaired by the district head of Otukpo. They have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on compensation of crops and livestock stolen or damaged as well as human rights violations suffered. Pastoralists were part of community policing structures particularly in Makurdi LGA, while in other LGAs their involvement in decision making was limited to participation in security dialogues and meetings. In other LGAs monitored, there was minimal involvement of pastoralist in decision making compared to farmers.

Generally, in all monitored communities across Benue and Nasarawa states, farmers and pastoralists significantly observed the state and federal government directives on COVID-19 prevention. Aside this, pastoralists and farmers did not carry out joint civic activities like sanitation together, due to the fact that they rarely live within the community together, as such everyone carries out their civic activities separately.

Mental Health Situation of Pastoralists and Farmers

Although, conflict incidences were not recorded within the communities monitored in Nasarawa and Benue States, 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.

Justice for Pastoralists and Farmers

In Benue state, there was a sharp increase in the arrest and prosecution of pastoralists for alleged violation of Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law (2017). The Benue State Livestock Guards optimized their operation leading to arrest of over 200 cattle and 4 pastoralists in Gwer West LGA, over 250 cattle in Agatu LGA, 270 cattle in Makurdi LGA in different operations. Farmers sampled do not adequately trust that they can get justice from the police and other security agents. They expressed fear that bribery could pervert the course of justice. On this basis pastoralists and farmers usually take cases out of Police station or court to resolve them peacefully through mediation and dialogue, showing their trust in the local justice structures available. On the other hand, populations of pastoralists and farmers in Ohimini and Agatu trust law enforcement agents above communal justice system as the people view their leaders as betrayers. In Otukpo, farmers and pastoralists receive justice; when pastoralists destroy crops they are investigated by a chief assigned the duty of assessing damaged farms, the pastoralist identified, and cost of damaged crops determined and the pastoralist pays for the damages. Farmers in particular expressed concerns over extortion associated with litigation. Also, respect for the rule of law was rated as minimal. In all LGAs monitored in Benue state, it was observed that pastoralists engaged in open grazing activities despite laws proscribing it in the state.³

As for Logo LGA in particular, Awashua, Ukembereagya/Tswarev, Ayilmo, the justice system is weak. Local sources reported that security agents do not use equal standards in managing cases of violations and crimes against pastoralists and farmers. This is however, different from justice systems in Katsina-Ala and Ukum where the justice is trusted to a great extent by both

³ Chief Magistrate Court sitting in Makurdi presided over by Isaac Ajim had during the period under review convicted four persons to serve 1year in prison namely Mohammed Abdulahi, Danladi Damess, Ibrahim Adamu, Haruna Adamu and Ilyeasu Adamu for contravening Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment law 2017 of Benue State. (Source: Radio Benue News, Radio Nigeria News and Court Registry)

pastoralist and farmers. The Nigeria police was applauded for fair handling of cases in these two LGAs.

Security Situation in Communities Hosting Pastoralists and Farmers

There are security operative's presence in most of the communities visited, with the Operation Puff Adder still in full force, while police and vigilante check points are regularly positioned along roads and highways leading to all the communities in the various LGAs monitored during weekly markets days.

The four law enforcement organs in the area responding to security situations in Otukpo are the Police, Army, Civil Defense, and Vigilante assist in maintaining order among the pastoralists and farmers. In the case of Agatu, there are several road blocks mounted by the Police- Army-Vigilante taskforce. These checkpoints are mounted more from Obagaji to Okokolo and Oshigbudu to Oweto in Agatu LGA. The situation is a reflection of an uneasy calm even though pastoralists are none resident in the area Ikobi Apa LGA has no Police out post and the farmers rely on vigilant groups for security surveillance and protection.

Police and other security agencies maintained presence in many locations as reported in February, 2020. Despite the presence of this security agencies, a number of communities were attacked in Guma and Gwer West LGAs. In Mbanyiar community of Mbawa Council ward in Guma LGA came under attack on 5th March, 2020.⁴ This was followed by another attack on 14th March, 2020.⁵ Similarly, in Kwande LGA, serial attacks were launched against communities in Diiv and Igyobua communities in Yaav ward.⁶ There were also incidents of contamination of water sources by cattle in Omebe-Akpa village along Utonkon road, Otukpo Local Government within the reporting period from 28th February 2020 through first week of March, 2020.⁷

⁴ There was an incident of arrest and torture in Mbanyiar community of Mbawa Council Ward, Guma LGA. The wife of Chief Oliver Chado, the District head of Mbawa in Guma and two other women from the community were tortured and raped by a gang of armed men in pastoralists' regalia. The village was later attacked at night while inhabitants were asleep. The survivors believe the strong opposition of open grazing activities in the area by the traditional leader prompted the attack at his family. The traditional leader and other inhabitants were displaced from the community. (Source: Survivor & Vigilante Officer)

⁵ In Tse Ayeve and Tyohembe villages of Mbanyiar community in Mbawa Council, Guma LGA, a total of 5 persons comprising of four males and one female were killed by armed pastoralists, while two females survived the attacks. Victims of the attack were Tarnongu Vincent, Shinengen Anzamber, Chikwa T, Tarza Abuur Iorshelagh, Abindi Gyoro. The victims lost their lives while attending the wake of a community opinion leader. The armed herders opened fire at the crowd of mourners. The inhabitants of the community took to social media linking the attacks with earlier arrest of herdsmen and herds for violation of open grazing prohibition law in the state. (Source: Secretary Vigilante Mbawa Ward Unit)

⁶ In Diiv community of Yaav ward, armed herdsmen attacked villages on 22nd March, 2020 resulting to the killing of 3 persons (all male). These include Tarfa Simon, (31 years farmer), Asoo Gbagile (42 years farming), and Terwase Mhoonum (40 Years farmer). While Tarfa and Asoo were macheted to death, Terwase was killed by gun fire. In Igyurbua village near Nyihemba, also in Yaav community, three females were killed while one survived. Prior to the attack, increased grazing activities were observed near Kashimbila community in neighboring Taraba. (Source: 29 Years Female survivor and 47 years Male Eye Witness)

⁷ The estimated population at risk of the contamination stands at 1,107 comprising of 453 males and 654 females. Cattle drank from stagnant water pools and artesian wells that provide sole source of water for domestic use by humans, turning it muddy and defecating dungs around the water source. Outbreak of gastro enteritis hit the community resulting into 4 deaths (two males' two females). Victims include Abel Odeh (12 years, in-

Advocacy Highlight

In all the LGAs 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 and Nasarawa states will not be out of Place.

This report is representing the views of traditional rulers, community leaders, youths, police divisional offices, vigilante groups; livestock guards units among other randomly selected individuals in the flashpoint LGAs.

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school), Ada Omebe (8 years, in-school), Agnes Okoko (10 years, in-school); and Ogbe Adaji (7 years, in-school). Three chronically ill cases comprising of two females and one male survived the outbreak. (Source: 35 years Male Eye witness)