BORDER SECURITY AND HERDSMEN TERRORISM IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: A CALL FOR A NEW NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

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ABSTRAK

Strengthened security architecture of any nation is dependent on the ability to ensure safe and well-defined borders. Borders security is central to national security as the first line of defence against threats. In Nigeria, borders are sources of the unending insecurity being one of the most porous in Africa. Thus, the study, descriptive in nature examined border security and herdsmen terrorism in northern Nigeria. It adopted securitisation theory as its theoretical framework and relied heavily on secondary data. The study argued that Nigeria's borders are susceptible to criminal infiltration due to poor management. This had heightened ruthless killings and destruction of properties by herdsmen in northern Nigeria. The borders, demarcated by expired tires, blocks and sticks are manned by unqualified, inadequately equipped and corrupt personnel, and allowed herdsmen terrorists to constantly enjoy free movement into the nation becoming a threat to security, peace and stability. The study concluded that if Nigeria's borders are not securitised as high priority, state authority will be weakened and sovereignty wane continuously. The study therefore recommended that borders should be properly policed with adequate provisions for advance surveillance technology installed at all border areas and international cooperation should be encouraged in the fight against herdsmen terrorism.

Keywords: *Border, herdsmen, herdsmen, insecurity, security*

ABSTRACT

Arsitektur keamanan yang diperkuat dari negara mana pun bergantung pada kemampuan untuk memastikan perbatasan yang aman dan terdefinisi dengan baik. Keamanan perbatasan merupakan inti dari keamanan nasional sebagai

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garis pertahanan pertama terhadap ancaman. Di Nigeria, perbatasan merupakan sumber ketidakamanan yang tiada henti dan menjadi salah satu yang paling rentan di Afrika. Dengan demikian, penelitian yang bersifat deskriptif ini meneliti keamanan perbatasan dan terorisme penggembala di Nigeria utara. Penelitian ini mengadopsi teori sekuritisasi sebagai kerangka teoritisnya dan sangat bergantung pada data sekunder. Penelitian ini berpendapat bahwa perbatasan Nigeria rentan terhadap infiltrasi kriminal karena manajemen yang buruk. Hal ini telah meningkatkan pembunuhan kejam dan perusakan properti oleh para penggembala di Nigeria utara. Perbatasan, yang dibatasi oleh ban, balok, dan tongkat yang kedaluwarsa, diawaki oleh personel yang tidak memenuhi syarat, tidak memiliki perlengkapan yang memadai, dan korup, dan memungkinkan teroris penggembala untuk terus-menerus menikmati kebebasan bergerak ke negara tersebut sehingga menjadi ancaman bagi keamanan, perdamaian, dan stabilitas. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa jika perbatasan Nigeria tidak disekuritisasi sebagai prioritas tinggi, otoritas negara akan melemah dan kedaulatan akan terus berkurang. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan agar perbatasan dijaga dengan baik dengan ketentuan yang memadai untuk teknologi pengawasan canggih yang dipasang di semua wilayah perbatasan dan kerja sama internasional harus didorong dalam memerangi terorisme penggembala.

Kata kunci: Perbatasan, penggembala, penggembala, ketidakamanan, keamanan

INTRODUCTION

The capacity to define and maintain boundaries is unquestionably a crucial component of a nation's territorial component and national security. The rationale behind this is that security, which is the safeguarding of individuals and assets in a defined area from external threats, is widely regarded as the most vital aspect of a nation. One of the most crucial ways for a country to maintain national security is to have safe and well-defined borders.[1] One crucial factor that greatly affects and decides national security is border security. The degree of protection at a nation's borders and its ability to enforce border security for the nation's own territorial well-being, sovereign integrity, and internal socio-economic growth and development are major factors that determine the efficacy and strength of national security.

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[1] Nwankwo et al., "Borderlands Policy and National Security in Nigeria: An Exploratory Study of the 2019 Border Closure." *International Journal of Development and Public Policy,* 2 no 9(December 2020): 14-27

Effective border security serves as a country's first line of defense and last line of territorial integrity as inadequate law enforcement and poorly ensured border security will inevitably lead to extreme insecurity.[2]

Pertinently, movement at the borderlines is necessary to ensure the smooth flow of people and goods from one country to another because no nation can fully isolate itself without allowing others to enter for trade, tourism, and other purposes. However, poor border security is a precursor to disruptive human movements and dysfunctional economy. Border weakness matrix is a propensity for a threatened national security and public legitimacy. Further analytic consequences of poorly policed national borderlines can be precipice for illegal transfer of arms in variations into the country.[3] Africa is a classic example of weak national borders. Evidence abounds that the continent now reeks of porous borders with accentuated cross-border crimes, such as terrorism, illicit oil bunkering, smuggling of contraband goods like shoes, poultry products, duty-free cars, food items etc., money laundering, drug trafficking, diamonds and child. In addition, this situation has resulted in an uncontrolled influx of weapons, arms, and illegal migrants, which has caused serious problems for the governments of African States[4].

The situation is burdensome in Nigeria, where illegal migrants' movements are largely untracked, profiled and unchecked. The Nigeria's borders remain one of the most porous in Africa. A careful review of the neighbouring countries surrounding Nigeria across the North-South further exposes the ensuing vulnerability of her national

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[2] Oladotun Awosusi and Ferim Valery. "Are Borders a Burden? Debates and Counter-Narratives on Nigeria's National Security." *Insight on Africa* 16 no 1 (January 2024): 73-92

[3] Nwankwo et al, (2022): 14-27

[4] Ukwayi Joseph and Bassey Annam, "Cross-Border Crimes and Security Challenges in Nigeria." *International Journal of Scientific Research in Humanities, Legal Studies and International Relations* 4 no 1(2019): 103-114.

boundaries to transnational crimes. Corroborating this,[5] argued that Nigeria is currently enmeshed in a complex network of interconnected security complexes that is both destructive and traumatizing; these problems which include a variety of ethnic chauvinism , religious, communal and resource-related conflicts ranging from Boko Haram terrorism, banditry, Niger Delta militancy, kidnapping, armed robberies, violence related to cults and specially herdsmen attacks have all contributed to the disruption of peace and stability in Nigeria.

The notoriety of herdsmen has become unabated recent times, leading to unrestrained, uncontained and unchecked vicious migration Southwards in search for pastures for their herds. Their migration Southwards have compounded the security woes of many States and Nigeria at large, thus, creating protracted crises in food and crops production. Herdsmen crisis has led to the killings of innocent people especially farmers, destruction of properties in farm products and farmlands and even led attacks on security personnel who question their unchecked movement. More so, the activities of herdsmen have caused reduced crop output, created the sense of fear and insecurity among the Nigerians. [6],[7]

The northern parts of Nigeria have experienced state fragility arising from insecurity. Reports [8] show that between October 2020 and September alone, there have been 71 insecurity incidences, leading to 406 deaths. Making a further assertion, the North-Central region has been the hotbed of herders' attacks on farmers. The North-West is the most violent per incident with only 4% of insecurity events and 15%

[5] Ebaye Sunday and Okon Bassey, "Porous Borders and Weapons Proliferations: A Threat to Nigeria's Security. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science* 9 no 12 (April 2021): 56-66.

[6] Davidson Ediaye, "The Menace of Fulani Herdsmen Attack and its Effects on the Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria" (2019).
file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/ssrn-3476374. pdf

[7] Ojelade Shola, "Effect of Herdsmen and Farmers' Crises on Food Security in Nigeria." *International Journal of Law and Politics Studies* 1 no 1 (August 2019): 15-26.

[8] Relief Web,"Resolving Farmer Herder Conflicts". November 2, 2021.
https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/ resolving-farmer-herder-conflicts.

of death. Attacks by herdsmen have claimed the lives of over 60,000 people with 654 attacks, killing 2539 Nigerians between 2017 and 2020.[9] The 2023 Christmas Eve massacre in Plateau State leaving over 150 people dead is merely the Fulani herdsmen's criminal bravado, which has become dramatic and persistent over the decades.[10] The greatest attacks by herdsmen in 2014 resulted in the deaths of over 200 people in Zamfara State. Perhaps, this was why the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) in 2015 listed herdsmen as the fourth deadliest militant organisation in the world, haven being responsible for about 1,229 human deaths in 2014.[11],[12]

Herdsmen's attacks endanger the nation's political, social, and economic stability. Lives and properties are lost to the moving threats called herdsmen on a daily basis, with many communities becoming shanties, desolate and IDPC. Indigenes and local settlers have continued to flee to neighbouring states for safety. Herdsmen attacks are a major contributing factor to underdevelopment because they deter foreign and domestic investment, lower living standards; destroy social and human capital, and sour relations between the populace and the government, all of which threaten democracy, the rule of law, and the nation's capacity to foster development.[13]

With the foregoing, it is imperative to interrogate causes of this menace and provide solutions to the curated challenges of the rabid

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[9] Agbakwuru Johnbosco, " Insecurity: 60,000 Lives Lost in Farmers/Herders Clashes– Nextier" *Vanguard News,* January 22, 2024. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/01/insecurity-60000-lives-lost-in-farmers-herders-clashes-nextier/

[10] Sulieman Quosim, "Investigation: Inside Story of Christmas Eve Killings in Plateau" *Premium Times,* February 13, 2024. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/investigationspecial-reports/667922-investigation-inside-story-of-christmas-eve-killings-in-plateau.html?tztc=

[11] Oli Nneka, Ibekwe Chimaobi and Nwankwo Uche, "Prevalence of Herdsmen and Farmers Conflict in Nigeria." *International Journal of Innovative Studies in Sociology and Humanities* 3 no 1 (January 2018): 30-39.

[12] Mikailu Naziru, "Making Sense of Nigeria's Fulani-Farmer Conflict" *BBC News,* May 5, 2016. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36139388

[13] Davidson Edieya (2019)

herdsmen crisis. Scholars like[14] have identified scarcity of land and water, long-existing conflict between the two groups, herdsmen's lack of access to grazing fields, and growing urbanization as the causes of these attacks; others [15],[16] have claimed that religious tensions and ethnic cleansing are due to attacks on Christian religious center and communities since herdsmen are Muslims. However, many of these existing studies have not capture porous border as indicator of insecurity. Failure to prioritise efficient border management and security has allowed herdsmen to infiltrate the nooks and crannies of the nation, wreaking havoc and mayhem. Undoubtedly, this is anti-peace, security and stability of Nigeria. It is against this background that this study examined border security and herdsmen terrorism in northern Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Border Security

The term has distinct meanings and connotations for different individuals. For clarity, borders are fundamental to the concept of political geography and have played a crucial role throughout history in defining territories, controlling movement, and shaping identities.[17] A border is a line that physically or politically separates geographical areas. It refers to the principal line dividing one country from another or as the boundaries or divided line between politically sovereign territorial entities.[18] It is believed that borders are described as

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[14] Oli Nneka, Ibekwe Chimaobi and Nwankwo Uche (2018), 30-39.

[15] Nnoruga Theresa and Ogunbadejo Adebayo. "Religious Coloration of Herdsmen and Crop-farmers Crises in Nigeria." *International Journal of Management, Social Sciences, Peace and Conflict Studies (IJMSSPCS)* 3 no 4(December 2020): 407-424.

[16] Kaley Fulton and Benjamin Nickels, " Africa's Pastoralists: A New Battleground for Terrorism" *The Broker*, March 13, 2017. https://www.thebrokeronline.eu/africa-s-pastoralists-a-new-battle ground-for-terrorism/

[17] Mata-Codesal Diana, "*Where We Can Meet: From Borderlands to Contact-Zones.*" MA paper.2007

[18] Musalli Naziru, Azhar Harun and Ruslan Zainuddin, "Performance of Border Management Personnel and its Security Implications in Northern Nigerian Borders: A Pilot Study for Reliability and Validity of Instruments." *Public Policy and Administration Research* 5 no 4 (2015): 7-11.

geographic parameters established by political bodies like governments, sovereign states and other subnational entities, or by natural elements like terrain and oceans. They represent political boundaries drawn by mutual agreements between the political bodies occupying certain lands, by colonisation, or through combat.[19]

Border security is conceived as the control of cross-border travel with the primary objective of lowering illicit flows rather than restricting legitimate flows.[20] It is the set of practices, regulations and laws intended to regulate the flow of people and products across national borders in order to maintain trade, manage immigration, and guarantee security.[21] Border security denotes the duties that governments have over immigration, customs, excise, and policing with the goal to control and manage the flow of people and goods across a country's borders in a way that advances the interests of the country, such as economic growth and ensure total security and peace.[22]

Border security is the administration of borders using rules, procedures, processes, and techniques, as well as the control of activities and transit across precisely defined border zones. The most important aspect of a nation's security is border security as it entails defending its inhabitants against threats including international terrorism, robbery, the proliferation of light weapons, and drug and people trafficking. Poor, ineffective and inefficient border security raises risk and poses dangers to national security. It also leads to a

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[19] Slater Terence, "The Rise and Spread of Capitalism." In *An Introduction to Human Geography. Issues for the 21st Century*, edited by D. Peter, B. Michael, S. Denis, S. James, and H. Tim.(London: Pearson, 2016).

[20] Wayne et al, . "Measuring the Effectiveness of Border Security between Ports-of-Entry." (California: RAND Corporation, 2010).

[21] Donnan Hasting and Thomas Wilson, "*Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State.* (*New York: Routlegde, 2021).

[22] Osimne *et* al, "The Borderless-Border and Internal Security Challenges in Nigeria." *International Journal of Political Science* 3 no 3 (2017): 17-27.

high-cost economy and inefficiencies from redundant paperwork and procedures.[23]

Herdsmen Terrorism

The nomenclature 'herdsmen terrorism' is drawn from two key terms that has become a serious security threat in the 21st century. An understanding of terrorism first would do justice to the concept of herdsmen terrorism. Etymologically, terrorism comes from the Latin and French phrases "*terrire*" and "*terrorisme*" which signify "*to frighten*" and "*state rule by terror*". This means the use of force, terror, fear or threat. The problem of a universally acceptable definition still persists with the term as one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.[24] Terrorism according to[25] is the unlawful use of force or threat to instill fear and force governments or populations to pursue objectives that are usually political and are normally motivated by ideological, religious, or other convictions.

Terrorism refers to unconventional kind of political violence or the threat of political violence carried out by non-state actors or covert state operatives with the aim of influencing both the target audience and the direct victims. It quite clear that non-state actors and covert state operatives use illegal explosive devices to commit acts of unconventional political violence with the goal of affecting both the immediate victims and the audience.[26] Walter Laqueur, a renowned scholar of terrorism, conceived it as an act by a person or group using or threatening to use violence in defiance of established authority with

[23] Jihan Seniora and Cédric Poitevin, "*Managing Land Borders and the Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons".* (Chicago, USA: GRIP, 2010).

[24] Majekodunmi Aderonke. "Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Contemporary Nigeria: Understanding the Emerging Trends". *Journal of Policy and Development Studies* 289 no 2379 (August 2015): 1-18.

[25] The United States Department of Defence, "Defining Terrorism". (2016). https://www.state.gov/executiveorder13224/
#:~:text=For%20the%20purpose%20of%20the,intimidation%20o
r%20coercion%3B%20or%20to

[26] Israel Ikechukwu, "The Effects of Terrorism on Peace and National Development in Nigeria". *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law* no 22 (October 2021): 315-338.

the intention of causing great fear or anxiety, including effects on a target group larger than the actual victims in an attempt to coerce that group to comply with their political or religious demands.[27] Clearly, the most acceptable definition of terrorism is that provided by United Nations[28] in which it opined terrorism as an unsettling tactic of repeated acts of violence carried out for strange, illicit, or political reasons by clandestine people, organisations, or states; which the immediate targets of violence are not the main objective.

On the other hand, herdsmen are those who own and tend to herds of livestock, such as cattle for a living, they are mostly called Fulani herders or pastoralists as their primary job is to raise herds. They originated from Senegambia, and have spread to over 20 countries in West Africa, the Sahel, western Sudan, and the Central African Republic living as semi-nomadic herders; usually go about looking for clean water and fodder for their herds.[29] It has been historicised that mostly of the Fulani ethnic group in Nigeria are headers and are usually armed in defense of their cows, while wondering around farmlands.[30]

Herdsmen migrated into the tropical forest zone and savannah belt of West Africa as a result of recent alterations in climatic conditions that have led to a decrease in the amount of vegetation and water available for their herds. Their innate drive to usurp native landowners for the benefit of their cattle and their ravenous need for land has been made abundantly clear by this further movement southwards. They place a higher importance on the cattle's lives and safety than they do on human lives. The fact that they kill people in order to exact revenge for lost or slain animals does not bring surprises. Their movements southward have raised serious concerns

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[27] Wardlaw Grant,"Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics and Counter-Measures." (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[28] United State Joint Publication, "Counterterrorism". (USA: USA Pub, 2016).

[29] Okoro John, "Herdsmen/Farmers Conflict and its Effects on Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria". *Journal of Peace, Security, and Development* 4 no 1 (April 2021): 143-158.

[30] Mikailu Naziru, "Making Sense of Nigeria's Fulani-Farmer Conflict" *BBC News,* May 5, 2016. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36139388

as they often clash with host communities especially farmers who they usually destroy their farmland in their sojourn and even attack them.[31]

Accordingly, the term "herdsmen terrorism" describes the unlawful, premeditated use of force and violence by herders against individuals who are mostly farmer and properties. It refers to every activity of force, danger and threat posed by herders in their journey southwards for forage and water for their herds. It is worthy of note to demonstrate how some characteristics contribute to the connection between terrorist acts and the horrific actions of herders. Similar to how terrorists target unarmed civilians, herdsmen terrorists also target unarmed civilians usually those living in farming areas. It is worthy to note that unarmed peasants in rural areas are the target of over 81% of herder brutal and ruthless attacks.[32],[33] Terrorist groups usually employ hard-to-reach places, like deep sea caves, deserts, dense forests, and underground tunnels, as their bases and hiding places. Similar practices have been observed recently by Fulani herdsmen who build up bases and hideouts as grazing camps in the dense forests of neighbouring communities, locations that are difficult for even the locals to get, all in the name of finding grazing pastures.[34]

Furthermore, terrorists meticulously plot and organise their assaults with financial support and other resources such as sophisticated weapons and arms against defenceless civilians via multiple attacks in strategic locations to create an atmosphere of fear and psychological trauma in the populace to pass a message and demands to the government. Fulani herders also share same tactics,

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[31] Olaseeni Olaposi, "Climate Change and Farmers/Herders Clashes in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges for Legal Initiatives". *Redeemer's University Nigeria, Journal of Jurisprudence & International Law (RUNJJIL)* 1 (2021): 86-95.

[32] Omilusi Michael. "Roving Terrorists or Innocuous Cattle Grazers? Between herdsmen's economic survival and community annihilation in Nigeria". *Perspectives on African's Development* 3 no 3 (2016): 48-76.

[33] Burton Gordon, The Fulani herdsmen. (Nigeria: Project Cyma background report, 2016).

[34] Akpor-Robaro Masoje, "Nomadic Fulani Herdsmen Turn Terrorists? Exploring the Situation and the Security Implications for Nigeria". *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* 23 no 7 (May 2019): 47-57.

they now organise their attacks quickly with heavy weapons and arms, then retreat to their horrible locations in order to avoid being apprehended by security personnel with an apparent message to the government of freedom to graze their cattle anywhere they find grass, regardless of who owns the land or where it is located. Many of the herders are not the real owners of the herds but mere agents with return on the investments to be given to the owners. As such, leaders of the cattle owners will support them with funds and other resources in achieving their quest for grazing areas because it benefits their financial interests.[35] Undeniably, herdsmen carry out attacks that befit them to be called herdsmen terrorist.

Theoretical Underpinning

The study adopted the securitization theory as its theoretical framework to give it a philosophical and explanatory direction. Securitisation theory is associated with how legislators, decision-makers, and other related stakeholders create national security strategies to deal with issues that pose as threat. The theory was propounded[36] and further improved upon.[37] As argued,[38] the assumption of the theory is that political issues are high security matters that require immediate attention as ignoring them can have frightening, menacing, dangerous, and alarming effects on the actor who has the institutional and social power to take the issue beyond politics. Using immigration as an example, immigration was raised from a low political priority to a high priority that requires strict measures, such as border security, when there was a threat to national security. For instance, the issue of immigration became a high political

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[35] Akpor-Robaro Masoje (2019): 47-57.

[36] Wæver Ole, "Securitisation and Desecuritisation". In "On security", edited by Loi Ronnie. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

[37] Buzan Barry, Ole Wæver and Wilde Jaap, Security: A New Framework for Analysis. (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998)

[38] Eroukhmanoff Clara, Securitization Theory: An introduction. E-IR Foundations Beginner's Book. (California, USA: Creative Common License, 2018), 1-4. https://www.e-ir.info/2018/01/14/securitisation-theory-an-introduction/

priority that necessitates strict measures, such border security, in moment of threat to national security.[39]

The theory challenges the accepted notion of security by claiming that an issue only qualifies as a security issue if it is identified as such. Security concepts have expanded to include human security, regional security, cultural security, and identity ideas in addition to the military and political aspects of a threat. The theory also distinguished the political, social, military, and economic spheres of a country. [40],[41],[42] Securitisation theorists contend that issues that succeed in securitisation garner more attention and resources than those that do not and cause harm. Theorist often cite terrorism as prioritised in security discussions despite the reality that auto crashes and avoidable illnesses kill much more people than terrorist acts. Who securitises, on what issues as threats, for whom, why, with what results, and under what conditions is the goal of securitisation. [43],[44]

Theorists maintained that infiltration by terrorist and armed groups spurred the need for stringent border controls through immigration and refugee snags. The September 11, 2001 attacks on the Pentagon in the USA made it simple to securitise problems, and the emphasis on security and safety has overshadowed the economic

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[39] Abdulkarim Abdullahi and Yesmin Abubakar, "The Effects of Border Porosity on Nigeria's National Security: A Study of Nigeria's North-Eastern Border to Cameroon". *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* 5 no 5 (2021): 442-450.

[40] Ibid., 42

[41] Fierke Karin, Critical Approaches to International Security. (Oxford: Polity Press), 132.

[42] Ibid., 42

[43] McGlinchey Stephen, Rosie Waters and Scheinpflug Christian, *Securitization Theory*. (California: LIbretexts Libraries, 2021).https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/InternationalSociology/Book%3AInternationalRelations Theory(McGlincheyWaltersandScheinpflug)/14%3ASecuritizationTheory

[44] Ibid., 42

factors that have always affected migration across international borders. [45],[46],[47]

The theory was adopted for the study because border porosity impacts Nigeria's political and economic stability as this oftentimes amplifies regional security concern. The Nigerian government's disregard for effective border security, control, and strategy has made it possible for all kinds of armed groups, particularly terrorist herdsmen, to invade the country and wreak havoc. During the dry seasons, herders in their numbers move from neighbouring nations like Niger and Chad with the cattle, goats and sheep into the borderlands of Nigeria's northern States and even travel as far down southwards looking for green pastures and water for their animals.

Their constant movements have fuelled clashes with farmers, who are less armed for such encounters. The retaliation by these farmers in northern part of Nigeria to the herders' destruction of their farmlands and attacks have been met with brutal force and terrorist acts which have led to loss of innocent lives , leading to socio-economic downturns and displacements. These security crises would have been easily avoided and if the government have taken into high priority and consideration the securitisation of the borders in the region which is poorly policed and managed.

Herdsmen Terrorism in Northern Nigeria

Herdsmen terrorism in Nigeria is not a new phenomenon, but in recent years, the trend and frequency of incidents have become bewildering. The Fulani herdsmen menace has historically illustrated how the situation has progressively evolved from casual community

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[45] Wai Ching Choy, "The Securitization of Refugees in Hong Kong: Government, Members of the Legislative Council and Chinese Newspapers (2005 to June 2019)". *Social Transformations in Chinese Societies* 18 no 1 (April 2022): 19-45.

[46] Huysmans Jef, *The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU*". (London: Routledge, 2006).

[47] Faist Thomas. The Migration-Security Nexus: International Migration and Security. In *Migration, citizenship and ethnos: Incorporation regimes in Germany, Western Europe and North America,* eds Björn Fryklund and Maja Povrzanovic(London: Palgrave Macmillan),103-120.

skirmishes to structured violent confrontations. The trend and pattern have shifted from traditional method of attack by herdsmen which involved the use of spears, machetes, and other locally made weapons on anyone they considered to be on their grazing paths, to the use of more sophisticated weaponry, including shotguns, rifles, and AK-47s.[48],[49] They use refined arms and weapons to attack host communities, killing people mostly farmers, plunder and loot their belongings, and set buildings on fire. Attacks by herdsmen terrorists typically occur mostly when their victims are most vulnerable such at night or prayer hours. Their sophistication and battle readiness give them the courage to target not only host populations but also constituted authorities, who are shielded by state-of-the-art military convoys.[50]

It is particularly annoying and worrisome how frequently they attack, as they do it every day in various places, ruining homes, farms, and other properties. The most concerning aspect of these herdsmen's actions is their cruelty and impunity, showing no respect for the law or the value of human life. Many of the attacks in these magnitudes are carried out by the Fulani militia. Herdsmen terrorism has claimed several thousands of lives and destroyed properties and businesses worth billions of dollars, crippled economic activities, clamped down on law and order. It has also caused spiral growth of human displacements, poverty and unemployment, food insecurity and destabilised the region creating an atmosphere of fear and terror.[51] In Benue State alone, herdsmen terrorist attacks resulted in the deaths of around 5138 farmers between 2015 and 2022. Additionally, about

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[48] Nwezeh Keweh, Menace of Killer Herdsmen and Hit-Men. *This DayLive,* February 1, 2021. https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/02/01/menace-of-killer-herds-men-and-hitmen

[49] Iheanacho Emmanuel, "The Menace of Fulani Herdsmen in Nigeria: A Threat to National Security." *South East Journal of Political Science* 1 no 1 (April 2017): 236-246.

[50] Onuoha Ifeanyi and Onuoha Jonah, Herders-Farmers Crisis and Human Rights Violation in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS),* 29 no 4 (April 2024), 1-7.

[51] Hemabadoon Orsar. "Herders Killed 5138 Benue Farmers in 7 Years-SEMA. *Leadership*, March 13, 2023. https://leadership.ng/herders-killed-5138-benue-farmers-in-7-years-sema/

2,600 people, the majority of whom were children, lost their lives in 2023 and 2024 alone with a higher proportion of those fatalities occurring in Nigeria's Middle Belt region, Benue State.[52] Corroborating this is the table 1 which shows the latest occurrences and causalities of herdsmen terrorist in north-central region of Nigeria.

Table 1: Occurrences of Attacks by Herdsmen in the North Central, Nigeria from 2021 to 2024

S/N	Date of Attack	Place of Attack	Causalities	Sources
1.	January 25, 2024	Mangu Local District, Plateau	30	Aljazeera
2.	April 19, 2024	Plateau State	29	CAN
3.	March 22, 2024	Guma, Benue State	7	Vanguard News
4.	April 7, 2024	Kwande, Benue State	46	Punch News
5.	March 8, 2024	Mbaikyor, Benue State	16	Vanguard News
6.	April 6, 2024	Kogi State	19	Punch News
7.	April 20, 2023	Tattara Mada, Migini, Angwan Barau, Nasarawa State	12	Vanguard News
8.	May 15, 2023	Gitata District of Panda, Nasarawa State	40	The Guardian
9.	April 11-12, 2022	Niger State	25	The Cable
10.	June 9, 2021	Kwara State	7	Vanguard News
11.	March 24, 2024	Keana, Nassarawa State	6	Punch News
12.	June 19, 2023	Lafiya and Gwanja Communities, Nassarawa State	37	Hum Angle

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[52] Duru Peter, "Over 2,600 mostly women, children killed between 2023 and 2024 in Benue– Amnesty Intn'l". *Vanguard News,* June 26, 2024. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/06/over-2600-mostly-women-children-killed-between-2023-and-2024-in-benue-amnesty-intnl/

13.	June 22, 2022	Udei, Guma, Benue State	15	Punch News
14.	June 12, 2022	Igama community, Okpokwu, Benue State	11	Punch News
15.	December 23, 2023	Several villages in Plateau State.	72	Leadership News
16.	August 1, 2022	Danda Chugwi, Plateau State	10	Channels News
17.	April 5, 2024	Omala, Kogi State	21	Reuters
18.	February 27, 2022	Mashegu, Lavun and Wushishi, Niger State	12	Premium Times
19.	June 9, 2021	Asa, Kwara	7	Vanguard News
20.	December 20, 2021	Lafia, Obi and Awe, Nassarawa State	50	Punch News

Source[53]

More so, these killings were not only prevalent and pervasive in the north-central of Nigeria alone, the north-east States have also had their terrible experience of herdsmen terrorism. Table 2 shows the recent attacks by herdsmen terrorist in the north-east region of Nigeria.

Table2: Occurrences of Attacks by Herdsmen in the North-East Region, Nigeria from 2021- 2024

S/N	Date of Attack	Place of Attack	Causalities	Sources
1.	February 13, 2024	Fika, Yobe State	2	Guardian News
2.	January 5, 2024	Yobe State	6	Channels News
3.	November 4, 2022	Modu Mairamti, Borno State	3	The Cable
4.	November 26, 2021	Maiduguri, Borno State	5	Hum Angle News

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[53] Author's Compilation, 2024**.**

5.	November 27, 2021	Borno State	5	Independent News
6.	January 1, 2021	Zaki, Bauch State	2	Punch News
7.	January 14, 2022	Gombe State	13	Daily Post
8.	December 29, 2021	Billiri, Gombe State	8	News Band
9.	June 17, 2024	Jalingo, Taraba State	6	Punch News
10.	April 24, 2022	Ussa and Takuim Area, Taraba State	46	This Day Live
11.	April 27, 2023	Ussa and Takuim Area, Taraba State	25	Channel News
12.	June 18, 2023	Bali, Taraba States	6	Punch News
13.	July 24-25, 2023	Kukawa & Monguno, Borno State	27	Crisis 24
14.	December 13, 2021	Misau, Bauchi State	3	EONS Intelligence
15.	January 1, 2021	Zaki, Bauchi State	2	Punch News

Source:[54]

The menace of herdsmen terrorism in the northern part of the country has further not spared the northwest which is also another region that serves as the hotbed. Table 3 shows recent attacks and occurrences in the region to corroborate this.

Table 3: Occurrences of Attacks by Herdsmen in the North-West Region, Nigeria from 2020 to 2024

S/N	Date of Attack	Place of Attack	Causalities	Sources
1.	June 29, 2024	Birninkudu, Dutse and Kiyawa, Jigawa State	8	Punch News
2.	June 3, 2024	Brinin Kudu, Jigawa State	2	Vanguard News

[54] Author's Compilation, 2024.

3.	December 12, 2022	Guri, Jigawa State	6	Premium Times
4.	May 27, 2024	Birninkudu, Jigawa State	5	
5.	April 18, 2023	Zangon Kataf, Kaduna State	33	Voice of America
6.	December 20, 2022	Southern Kaduna	38	Reuters
7.	August 7, 2020	Zangon Kataf, Kaduna State	19	Crisis 24
8.	July 15, 2021	Atyap, Magata and other communities, Kaduna	40	Sahara Reporters
9.	July 12, 2020	Kauru, Kaduna	20	This Day Live
10.	September 28, 2022	Kaura and Zangon Kataf, Kaduna State	42	All Africa News
11.	November 10, 2022	Minjibir, Kano	2	Daily Post
12.	December 21, 2021	Faskari, Katsina State	7	Premium Times
13.	June 23, 2024	Kankara, Katsina State	7	Voice of America
14.	October 9, 2021	Gwadabawa, Sokoto State	12	New Telegraph
15.	May 20, 2020	Tsafe, Zamfara State	14	Daily Post

Source:[55]

Extant studies have identified several drivers of herdsmen terrorism in northern Nigeria. The studies of scholars have acknowledged environmental and climatic changes as a major driver of herdsmen terrorist attacks; others[56],[57],[58] believed the attacks by herdsmen terrorist have a religious and ethnic coloration due to their

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[55] Author's Compilation, 2024.

[56] Ojo John, Samuel Oyewole and Folahanmi Aina, "Forces of Terror: Armed Banditry and Insecurity in North-west Nigeria." *Democracy and Security* 19 no 4 (October 2023): 319-346.

[57] Nnoruga and Ogunbadejo (2022), 407-424

[58] Umar Zubairu and Terna Paise, "Environment and Conflicts in Nigeria: Causes and Trends of Farmers–Herders Conflicts." *Wukari International Studies Journal* 7, no. 5 (December 2023): 111-121.

attacks on Christian communities and churches alongside other ethnic nationalities in the north. More so, the proliferation of sophisticated arms and weapons such as Ak47s, shotgun and rifles in possession of the herdsmen terrorist also contributes terribly to the menace. They are able wreak so much carnage as a result of unchecked and unrestricted access to arms and ammunitions. [59],[60],[61]

The increase in crime rate especially cattle rustling gave rise to herdsmen terrorist, as in a bid to protect their herds from been rustled employed the use of weapons to wade attacks on those they considered as threat. The dysfunctional legal system and prevalence of jungle justice stands as another driver of herdsmen terrorism in the region. Herders when caught for attacks on farmers and villages most of the time do not face any penalties and charges as such are able to continue to carry out these impunities in the region. [62],[63]

Overview of the Nature of Borders in Nigeria

Africa as a continent has 109 international borders, with only less than 25% clearly defined and secured. African nations are connected via 414 highways with 69 of these roads free of customs, making the continent one of the most porous in the world. This is due in fact to existing porous border arising collapse border security architecture.[64] While the Nigeria's international boundaries with her neighbours are around 4745 square kilometers, the main nations that border Nigeria are Chad (87 kilometres) in the northeast, Benin (773 kilometres) in

[59] Akpa Paulina, Terver Akpar and Samson Fada, "Infiltration of Small Arms and Light Weapons into Benue Valley and its Impact on the Conflict between Pastoralists and Farmers." *Wukari international studies journal* 7 no 1 (November 2023): 491-501.

[60] Yusuf Abubakar, "Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) in the North West Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria: An Overview." February 22, 2021. https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3790961

[61] Ogu Michael, "Resurgent Violent Farmer-Herder Conflicts and Nightmares in Northern Nigeria". *NILDS Journal of Democratic Studies* 1 no 1 (2020): 109-131.

[62] Obasanmi Jude and Enoma Anthony, "The Effects of Farmer/Herder Conflict on Socioeconomic Development of Nigeria". *Saudi Journal of Economics and Finance* 6 no 4 (April 2022): 118-125.

[63] Adejumobi Said, "Farmer/Herdsmen Conflict: The Political Dimension." *International social scheme Journal* 115 (2019): 15-35

[64] Abdulkarim Abdullahi and Yesmin Abubakar (2021): 442-450.

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the west, Niger (1,497 kilometres) in the northwest, and Cameroon (1,690 km) in the east; Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe share marine borders with Nigeria which corresponds to colonial legacies set up in 1889 by European powers. There exist hundreds of illegal routes in Nigeria that connect to several of these neighbouring African nations within these main borders. Nigeria has extensive borders, with thousands of pathways connecting it to neighbouring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger as well as to Mali, Libya, and Sudan. It is believed conservatively that there are well over 1400 illegal routes that link many African nations to Nigeria. [65],[66]

Nigeria's borders are a hotbed of cross-border crimes committed by migrants who use them as routes for the bordering states of Chad, Niger, and Cameroon due to their permeability and system of illegal routes. It has created the ambience for several cross-border crimes, easy movement of illegal migrants and responsible for the insecurities in the country.[67] The surge in kidnappings, banditries, arms trafficking, insurgencies and herdsmen clashes in the northern border regions on the porous borders. The artificiality and porousness of Nigeria's territorial borders are central to the prevailing narrative on the country's security.[68] Nigeria's border buffer zones are represented by wood logs, empty barrels, and worn-out car, poorly managed by immigration officers who prefer to demand money from travellers than verify the authenticity of their passports at the point of entrance and departure. Illegal migrant especially transnational criminal groups are

[65] Evelyn Usman, Terror: How Arms Flood into Nigeria Through 1000 Illegal Routes. *Vanguard News,* February 12, 2022. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/02/t-e-r-r-o-r-how-arms-flood-into-nigeria-through-1000-illegal-routes/
[66] Edet Akpan and Umelo Favour, "Border Migration and Security Sustainability between Nigeria and Niger Republic". *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development* 3 no 7 (November 2021): 75-82.
[67] Mark Kingsley and Joseph Iwebi. "Border Control and Arms Smuggling in Nigeria: Glitches and Diagnoses". *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology* 4 no 6 (June 2019): 903-910.
[68] West African Network for Peace-building, *Addressing Armed Banditry in the Northwest Region of Nigeria: Exploring the Potentials of a Multi-Dimensional Conflict Management Approach.* (Accra, Ghana: WANPB, 2020)

often able to cross these borders as far as they are willing to bribe or pay border guards.[69]

Corroborating this assertion is Figure 1 and 2 that showing Nigeria's border with her neighbours. Also, table 4 shows the various international borders Nigeria shares with her neighbours and the illegalities peculiar to them.

Table 4: Nigerian International Borders

S/N	Borders	Locations	Items Smuggled through the Border
1.	Idiroko	Nigeria-Benin Republic (Ogun State)	Rice, Second hand clothes (okirika), textile materials, arms and ammunition, used tyres Petroleum Products
2.	Ilella	Nigeria-Niger (Sokoto State)	Foot wares, used vehicles, textiles, Millets, maize, petroleum products
3.	Tibia	Katsina State (Nigeria-Niger)	Used vehicles and used tyre Petroleum Products, beans, yams woods
4.	Mfun	Nigeria-Niger (Calabar-Cameroun border)	Smuggling of illicit drugs, arms and vehicle
5.	Bela Sahoda	Nigeria-Niger (Adamawa State)	Used clothes (okirika) Petroleum Products
6.	Gamboru-Ngala	Nigeria-Niger (Borno Route)	Arms, ammunition, rice, textile, used vehicles Drugs, grains, petroleum products,
7.	Seme	Nigeria-Benin Republic (Badagry route)	Arms, Used vehicles, used clothes, frozen meat ranging from turkey, chicken, Petroleum product.
8.	Coastal Area	Nigeria-Niger (Lagos route)	Human Trafficking, textiles and arms Smuggling of light arms and weapons

Source: [70]

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[69] Gbemre Zik, The Need to Protect the Integrity of Nigeria Borders. *The National* Reformer, May 11, 2016. http://refomeronline. com/the-need-to-protect-the-integrity-of-nigeria-borders

[70] Edet Akpan and Umelo Favour (2021), 75-82.

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The inability of Nigeria's border security institutions to work together undoubtedly hindered intelligence sharing and made borders more porous. Furthermore, the lack of infrastructure development in border communities and the separation of border community people from the management of illegal activities on the borderlands significantly exacerbate the porosity of the borders. In addition, the Nigeria Customs Service, Immigration Service, Police Force, and many other organisations charged by legislation with monitoring Nigeria's borders have continuously complained about inadequate staffing and funding which greatly affects their performances in securing these borders.[71]

Nigeria's Border and Herdsmen Terrorism in Northern Nigeria

International borders are a security challenge for governments especially in Nigeria, where typically border security receives less attention as a national security. When compared to other countries of the world, Nigeria's border security problems are unique due to the country's lax border security and inadequate border management, which have significantly increased the likelihood of threats including cross-border crimes.[72] The Nigeria-chad border through Borno State in northeast passes across the Lake Chad basin and with the Republic of Niger in the north through the states of Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Jigawa, Yobe, and Borno, which is approximately 1,500-kilometer. While the borders in the north have particularly been porous and poorly manned, the Nigeria-Niger border is the most permeable because of its enormous expanse, absence of physical demarcation, challenging terrain, lack of personnel, and monitoring infrastructure.[73] Due to the region's strategic location along the Sahel, communities that border Nigeria and Niger have found it easy to expand their trade and interactions especially in small arms and light

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[71] Idris Aminu and Assel Tutumlu, "Boko Haram's Resilience and the Porosity of Nigerian Border". *IKENGA: International Journal of Institute of African Studies* 22 no 1 (March 2021): 1-21.

[72] Nwankwo et al, (2022), 14-27

[73] Risk Control, Coping with Nigeria's Most Porous Borders. 2023. https://riskcontrolnigeria .com/blog/coping-with-nigerias-most-porous-borders

weapons among well-organised syndicates which contributed to the growth of armed gangs that engaged in a variety of illegal activities out of uncontrolled forest regions that connected the borderlands.[74]

There are well over 250 footpaths from the Damaturu-Maiduguri axis that connect directly to Niger, Cameroon and Chad. Since these channels are unguarded, unmanned, and mostly unknown to security services, they act as conduits for trafficking into Nigeria and criminal activities. The entire border between Nigeria and Niger is made up of forests and large areas of land, the majority of which are unguarded by the patrol team known as Border Drill, handling the border. This is in contrast to Nigeria's other borders, which are in Cross River with Cameroon and in Lagos and Ogun States with the Benin Republic, where there is a major entry and exit route.[75] Locals claimed that route between Sabon Birni and Guidan Roumdji, which is about 130-kilometer, is well-known for being frequented by smugglers and outlaws, including a suspected drug dealer who was just apprehended with N1 billion worth of cocaine. The Nigeria-Niger border is so porous that, in Jibia, a town in Katsina State, people shared stories of how herders travel through their community, which is only 50 kilometres from the Nigerian border, to migrate from Chad and Niger to herd their cattle, primarily during the dry season.[76] More so, the Dansadau forest situated in the Sahelo-Sudan region of northwest Nigeria which stretches into Maradi, Republic of Niger, have also been the route of traffickers, bandits and armed gangs for a long time to carry out their criminal acts.[77]

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[74] Idris, Aminu. The Nigeria-Niger Republic border porosity and insecurity: From surveillance to whistleblowing in the management of transborder arms trafficking (PhD thesis). Near East University Institute of Graduate Studies. Political Science and International Relations Program, Nicosia. 2021. http://docs. neu. edu. tr/library/9288721412. pdf

[75] Osimen et al. (2017), 17-27

[76] The Cable. 2021. Bandit Routes: How Nigeria's Porous Border with Niger Fuels Attacks in North-West. June 25. https://www.thecable.ng/bandit-routes-how-nigerias-porous-border -with-niger-fuels-attacks-in-north-west/

[77] Arnold Okoro, "Banditry and Ungoverned Spaces in Nigeria: A Case Study of Kaduna and Zamfara States." *Lapai Journal of Humanities* 13 no 1 (June 2022): 25-44.

Herdsmen from the bordering Niger were generally peaceful and law-abiding pastoralists who get along well with the host people in the area. They cross into Nigeria on a pretty large scale in these areas, mostly into Jigawa, Kano, and other surrounding States.[78] Residents of Jibia, Katsina State affirmed this that there was such a deep bond between the two countries that physical border was merely mental constructs and unreal created by colonial legacies. These herdsmen pass their communities with their livestock during the rainy season and return to Niger when it is dry here, yet the terrain, the forest, and the people remain the same.[79] Given the condition of the borders in the regions, and in a bid evade major checkpoints; herdsmen are able to move freely in and out of Nigeria without any restrain, checks or monitoring. Corroborating this is Figure 1 showing the movement of herdsmen in and out of Nigeria through various routes in the northern part of Nigeria.

Herdsmen from Niger republic move into Nigeria utilising Jibia, Kankara and Daura, which are key towns of shared by Katsina State with Niger. They have routes with broader landscapes that provides pastures and also shield them from been noticed by the border patrol officers. These routes are also been used by bandits as an escape route to attack communities in the State.[80] More so, herders pass through notorious path to Guidan Roumdji, which is a suburb of Maradi region of Niger into Sabon Birni LGA in Sokoto into Nigeria. The path stretches to about 130km and highly knows for easy crossing into Nigeria due to lax security. Likewise, herders move in and out of the country through a major route, Maraba Baissa, which serves as a meeting point in Kurmi

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[78] Higazi Adam, Are Cross-Border Herders Driving Conflict in Nigeria's Rural Borderlands? *Conciliation Resources*, June 2, 2022. https://www.c-r.org/news-and-insight/are-cross-border-herders-driving-conflict-nigerias-rural-borderlands
[79] The Cable, Bandit Routes: How Nigeria's Porous Border with Niger Fuels Attacks in North-West. June 25, 2021.. https://www.thecable.ng/bandit-routes-how-nigerias-porous-border -with-niger-fuels-attacks-in-north-west/
[80] Sulieman Quosim, Investigation: Inside Story of Christmas Eve Killings in Plateau. *Premium Times,* February 13, 2024. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/investigationspecial-reports/667922-investigation-inside-story-of-christmas-eve-killings-in-plateau.html?tztc=

LGA and move their herds through illegal route, major route, Mambilla Plateau, in Saraduana LGA, Taraba State. Many of security operatives in charge of patrol there mostly demand bribes without proper documentations in the area.[81]

Given the risen evidences of armed groups such as Boko Haram and bandits along these borderlands who also use these routes; cattle rustling and killing of herdsmen have become rampant as herders move through these routes into Nigeria. Herdsmen began to frequently arm themselves with pistols and local guns to protect their cattle in case they run into crises with these armed groups. This further complicated and strained the rapport leading to constant conflict with host communities or rural farmers who accuse them of herding their animals down farming paths and damaging crops in the process. As herders move into the nation from neighbouring countries in dry seasons, they constantly engage in feud with many of the host communities, destroying their farmlands and properties as first a revenge for attacks by armed groups and also, other enabling factors such as reprisal attacks by host communities.

CONCLUSION

The menace of herdsmen terrorism have risen to an alarming level in Nigeria that it constitute a serious and deadly threat to security. Herds are now more valuable than citizens especially in the northern part of Nigeria. Many of these ruthless and vicious herders who are mostly Fulanis from neighbouring Africa nations gained entry into the Nigeria due to nation's borders which have been poorly managed and secured. The study concluded that Nigeria's laxity in border control has contributed to the rise of herdsmen terrorism, wreaking havoc and mayhem on innocent lives and their properties. The study concludes that this dastard act has festered on due to the government inability to secure the national security architecture through the borderlines

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[81] Higazi Adam, Are Cross-Border Herders Driving Conflict in Nigeria's Rural Borderlands? *Conciliation Resources*, June 2, 2022. https://www.c-r.org/news-and-insight/are-cross-border-herders-driving-conflict-nigerias-rural-borderlands

compared to developed nations of the world. If Nigeria fails to improve her border control mechanism in the northern part to curb migrants' herdsmen drastically, the region would be heavily overwhelmed and herdsmen terrorist would continue to have free day and ultimately weaken state sovereignty. In light of this, the study recommends that Nigeria strengthens her borderlines by building advanced proper border demarcations; make adequate provisions for advance surveillance technology installed at all border areas. More so, international cooperation with neighbouring nations and with other stakeholder should be seriously encouraged to pool resources together and strengthened border control in the fighting against herdsmen terrorism; lastly, well trained and equipped personnel be deployed for border patrols and manned on strategic link areas to illegal routes to curb movement of herdsmen into the nation.

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