

FULANI HERDSMEN–FARMER CONFLICT AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW: IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN SECURITY IN NIGERIA (2015–2024)

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Abstract

This study examines the implications of the Fulani herdsmen–farmer conflict for human security in Nigeria between 2015 and 2024 through the lens of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Security Theory. Relying on qualitative analysis of institutional reports, humanitarian datasets, and investigative media documents, the research identifies a direct correlation between conflict intensity, internal displacement, and deterioration in civilian welfare. Findings reveal that more than 3.6 million people were displaced during the period under review, with food insecurity, inadequate access to healthcare, and the destruction of livelihoods representing significant violations of international protection standards. Although Nigeria has adopted frameworks such as the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and ECOWAS transhumance regulations, weak implementation and limited enforcement capacity have hindered effective protection and conflict mitigation. The study concludes that the conflict constitutes an enduring human security crisis rather than isolated communal clashes, necessitating improved humanitarian compliance, strengthened early-warning systems, and regional diplomatic cooperation. Ultimately, the research highlights the need for policy interventions that prioritize civilian safety, livelihood restoration, and long-term peacebuilding to address systemic vulnerabilities and prevent further displacement.

Introduction

The Fulani herdsmen–farmer conflict in Nigeria intensified between 2015 and 2024, becoming one of the most persistent internal security challenges confronting the nation. This period witnessed widespread displacement,

food insecurity, and escalating violence, particularly in states like Benue, Oyo, Plateau, and Kaduna. The crisis is often driven by climate change, land scarcity, and socio-economic pressures, heightening competition for agricultural and grazing resources. Given the extensive humanitarian consequences, international humanitarian law and regional frameworks such as the ECOWAS transhumance protocols have become central to analyzing state responsibility and civilian protection. Scholars increasingly view this conflict not merely as a security issue, but as a humanitarian emergency with significant implications for internal displacement and vulnerability. Hence, this paper examines how the conflict intersects with international humanitarian law and human security, using displacement, food insecurity, and peace frameworks as major indicators.

Internal displacement remains one of the gravest outcomes of the herdsman–farmer clashes, with thousands forced from their communities in search of safety. According to Iorbo (2024), the humanitarian crisis in Benue State demonstrates how recurrent attacks lead to forced migration, creating pressure on overwhelmed host communities and internally displaced persons camps. Such displacement disrupts livelihoods and exposes civilians to hunger, disease, and insecurity. The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement emphasize state obligation to protect populations and provide assistance, yet Nigeria has struggled to meet these standards. The impact of displacement also extends to education and access to healthcare, weakening development indices in affected states. Ultimately, the internal displacement patterns highlight a widening gap between Nigeria’s domestic response and international humanitarian expectations.

Food security is another critical dimension of the crisis, particularly in agrarian regions where farming is the primary livelihood. Ogungbenro (2024) shows that farmers and herders conflicts significantly reduce agricultural productivity, leading to elevated food prices and reduced market supply in rural communities. When farmlands are destroyed, and farmers flee from conflict zones, long-term hunger becomes a major concern. Disruption of food production threatens national stability, making the crisis not only regional but national in scale. International humanitarian law stresses the protection of civilian livelihoods during armed conflict; however, implementation remains weak. The food insecurity generated by the conflict demonstrates the fragility of Nigeria’s human security architecture.

Climate change is a major underlying driver of herder migration and land disputes. Egbule and Okonta (2024) observe that desertification and drought have pushed Fulani herder’s southward, prompting competition with settled farmers. This forced migration has fueled tensions in the Middle Belt and Southwest, transforming localized disputes into large-scale conflicts. Climate-driven mobility challenges existing legal frameworks and calls for adaptive policy approaches aligned with ECOWAS and African Union protocols. International humanitarian law, though traditionally applied to armed conflicts, is increasingly invoked in climate-related displacement debates. Thus, environmental changes amplify conflict triggers and complicate humanitarian responses.

The humanitarian repercussions are not limited to physical insecurity; they also include gender-based susceptibility. Ali (2025) notes that women and girls in the displacement camps are at an increased risk of sexual violence, exploitation, and economic deprivation. Destruction of farmland, livestock, and social networks are additional sources of dependence on humanitarian aid that worsen vulnerability. The aspects of gender responsiveness are not given much attention in the conflict resolution measures, yet it is the most critical aspect of human security. The international humanitarian law focuses on protecting women and children, and it is not well enforced as a result of which such guidelines are violated. Thus, gender aspects depict the complexity of the humanitarian crisis.

The ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol provides a regional framework that attempts to control the cross-border pastoral movements. According to Ohiri and Kazeem (2024), the protocol identifies transhumance as an economic need and aims to lower cross-border tensions and ensure peaceful coexistence. There are however, loopholes in implementation because of poor border control, poor monitoring, and resistance from locals. The failure to reconcile the regional laws and domestic security priorities, usually creates policy inconsistency. Although theoretically the protocol is good, it has practical constraints that impede the process of preventing conflicts. This is an indication that more diplomacy and collaboration in the region were required.

The internal policy reactions to this situation in Nigeria have been the anti-open grazing policy, peace committees, and deployment of security. Mumuni and Abdulyakeen (2024) state that even these efforts have not managed to resolve the inconsistencies in the enforcement of policies and this aspect has been limited by political interference and consequently limiting the effectiveness of the policies. The regulations often result in resistance against the pastoralists because laws are meant to curb herding activities, which further escalates the situation. This is due to incomplete stakeholder involvement where there is no trust and restrictions to acceptance of the policy. The absence of incorporation of the traditional leaders, civil society, and regional bodies hinders the attainment of sustainable conflict resolution. Good governance should balance the issue of security with humanitarian concerns. Communities that have been hit by the conflict have declined in human security, meaning the absence of want and fear. According to Nwaoburu (2025), the constant attacks demoralize the civilians and destroy the cohesiveness of the community, compelling them to retreat strategically in conflict zones. The cost of the crisis in economics is reflected in decreased agricultural production and the disappearance of investment opportunities. The human security approach broadens the scope of the conflict making it a challenge of development and a humanitarian problem. This view is indicative of policies that focus on civilian protection and the restoration of livelihood. The process of degrading human security shows a lot of gaps in governance.

The political aspects of the conflict also influence the reaction of states and the opinion of people. Onyekwere (2025) points out that the issue of conflict management has turned out to be a political quandary in the North Central region of Nigeria. The mistrust between the herders and the farmers is occasionally enhanced by ethnic stories and media framing. The interference of the conflict by political means is capable of affecting the results of the elections and the course of the policy. Such dynamics make the neutral humanitarian involvement complicated and add to polarization. Therefore, political agendas overlap with humanitarian issues, which restrain the success of managing conflicts.

There has been a rising involvement of international humanitarian organizations in relief and peacebuilding. According to Iorbo (2024), cooperation with foreign institutions helps displaced populations but it is not enough. Delivery of aid is usually impeded by logistical, political, and security challenges to the agencies. Lapses in the long-term rehabilitation programs imply that the displaced persons are not empowered but dependent. Under the guise of international humanitarian law, relief is to be given without discrimination, but in certain instances, aid is being informed by politics. To achieve better results, there is a need to increase the coordination of humanitarian actors.

Such diplomatic methods of resolving conflicts like community dialogue and peacebuilding provide potential solutions when used along with legal systems. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement emphasise proactive protection and solutions, including safe return or resettlement. Local peace agreements and agricultural planning that is sensitive to conflict, can be promoted through regional diplomacy. Military interventions are dangerous without diplomacy as they can only escalate tension and breach humanitarian

standards. International responsibility is also strengthened through diplomatic systems. Therefore, diplomacy plays a critical role in the reconciliation of the humanitarian law and human security goals.

The consequences of the conflict go further than short-term humanitarian issues, influencing the progress of the country and social unity. According to Frank and Asian (2023), herdsmen and farmer crises cannot be fully resolved, which discourages food security and sustainable development. Lasting instability undermines the confidence of the investors and derails the economic transformation of the rural areas. Hunger, peace, and development Sustainable Development Goals are also hampered by human security issues. The inability to integrate security reaction with the humanitarian system creates a vicious circle of violence. The urgency of reform is highlighted by the developmental cost.

To sum up, the 2015-2024 Fulbe herdsmen and farmer crisis has far-reaching consequences on the issue of internal displacement, food security, and humanitarian issues in Nigeria. Although the region has been implementing frameworks in transhumance like the ECOWAS transhumance protocol and the international humanitarian law, which give guidance on transhumance, challenges arise in the implementation process. It takes a concerted effort by the government, communities, and international organizations to protect displaced populations and bring back livelihoods. The war should be resolved via a holistic approach based on diplomacy, all-inclusive policies, and legal frameworks that are in tandem with international humanitarian law. It is crucial to deal with structural drivers like climate change, governance, and lack of resources in order to achieve long-term peace. In conclusion, it is important to ensure that human security is the foremost of national security and growth.

Theoretical Framework

Human Security Theory

The reason why Human Security Theory will be useful in explaining the herdsmen-farmer conflict in Nigeria is that the theory offers a holistic way of analyzing it, which is not necessarily based on the conventional state-centric views of national security. It does not just aim at safeguarding people and communities against violence, hunger, displacement, and loss of livelihood but rather concentrates on military threats. This renders the theory very pertinent since the war poses a threat to food security, personal safety, and economic survival of the victimized populations. Human Security Theory expands the horizons of security analysis and replaces the discussion of territorial integrity with that of human well-being. The theory supports the thesis that the crisis is a humanitarian crisis, and not a security crisis.

One of the dimensions of Human Security Theory is food security which is very pertinent considering that during conflict, agricultural farm lands are destroyed, and agricultural productivity is lost. When the farming activities are interrupted by clashes between herdsmen and farmers, food supplies will be low and prices will soar, which will lead to survival at the household and national levels. This is in line with the international humanitarian law of trying to protect the civilian resources and livelihoods in the case of conflict. Thus, Human Security Theory demonstrates that agricultural disruption is not only an economic problem, but it is also a human welfare issue. The theory aids in explaining why the policy efforts should address livelihood restoration by focusing on food access and availability.

The other important aspect of Human Security Theory is the freedom from fear that is associated with security, mobility, and violence protection. Benue, Plateau, and Oyo communities have witnessed a series of attacks that have led to displacement and loss of lives which reduces their security assurance. The concept of civilian protection in the context of international humanitarian law reflects the implications of the theory which demanded the protection of people during crises. The constant fear of attacks restricts agricultural output and interferes with

the social glue. Therefore, the Human Security Theory demonstrates that violence is not limited to physical damage but it also impacts psychological well-being and the community.

It is also through this theory that the internal displacement which is a significant effect of the conflict can be explained. The Human Security Theory states that forced migration is the outcome of insecurity and the desire to find safety, shelter, and the means of survival. This is in line with the responsibilities of the states in the protection of the displaced persons as noted in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The displacement of farmers and herders to conflict areas proves the failure of human security in the affected areas. Therefore, the theory underlines the relevance of the study topic of displacement as an important humanitarian impact of the conflict.

What is more, Human Security Theory exposes the gendered conflict vulnerabilities. Women and children in internally displaced people camps tend to be more vulnerable to exploitation, hunger, and violence. The focus of the theory on individual well-being and social protection brings out the importance of humanitarian reactions taking into account the special needs of vulnerable groups. It substantiates the thesis that policy and legal measures should deal with gender-specific issues. Hence, the theory reinforces the exploration of humanitarian effects on marginalized people in the study.

Besides, Human Security Theory has a close relationship with regional institutions like the ECOWAS transhumance protocol and conflict diplomacy. The theory can be applied to control the pastoral movement in the region using regional strategies by promoting cooperation, preventing conflicts, and ensuring sustainable livelihoods. It proposes that not only are security measures necessary in solving the crisis but a discussion, exchange of resources, and harmonization of policies. This entirely agrees with the diplomatic presence to harmonize pastoral lives and agricultural rights. Therefore, the theory supports the topicality of peacebuilding strategies in dealing with the conflict.

In general, the Human Security Theory is a solid theoretical approach as it incorporates humanitarian law, displacement studies, food security, and conflict resolution theories. It is also directly related to the fact that the focus of the study is on the international humanitarian law and why the conflict has multiple effects. The theory focuses on human well-being and concentrates on the well-being of individuals and communities, which underscores the pressing necessity of human-oriented policies and interventions. It shows that the solution to the conflict between the herdsman and the farmers has to do with saving lives, livelihoods, and dignity. Thus, the Human Security Theory offers an extremely relevant, yet all-inclusive approach to examining the effects of the conflict on human security in Nigeria.

Review of Empirical Studies

A number of the related studies were examined so that their relevance and connection to the current research could be determined.

Addressing the question of how the relations between Fulani herdsman and farmers deteriorated due to the effects of their relationship on insecurity and food production, the researchers in the study, conducted by Abba, Turaki and Mavakumba (2022) in Nigeria, studied the level of deterioration of the relations between the two groups and how this impacted food shortages, displacement, and rural insecurity in Nigeria between the years 2015 and 2024. Using qualitative examination of conflict reports and interviews with rural families, the paper determined that frequent conflicts caused extensive crop damage, death of livestock, and discontinued agricultural patterns, hence human security and livelihoods. The results also indicated that no mediation of the conflict and weak governmental intervention aggravated the humanitarian condition. Comparative analysis with the current study shows that both studies are aware of the connection between the farmer-herder conflicts and the human security

threat. Nonetheless, whereas Abba et al. (2022) concentrated mainly on the issue of food production and insecurity, the current research broadens the perspective to consider the consequences of the violation of the rules of the International Humanitarian Law, especially in relation to internal displacement and adherence to the UN Guiding Principles on IDPs between the years 2015 and 2024.

In a similar research, Terwase, Abubakar, and Tahir (2021) explored the implications of the conflicts between farmers and herders to food security in Taraba State. Based on mixed-method research that incorporated questionnaires and focus group discussions in the main agricultural communities, the authors discovered that the ongoing conflicts caused fear, loss of farming lands, and disruption of farming. The research also observed that these conflicts were correlated with the increasing internal displacement as the people migrated to rural areas to seek protection. When it comes to comparing this research with the one under consideration, it should be noted that both of them acknowledge the importance of conflict-induced displacement and food insecurity as two significant consequences. However, the present paper examines all of these consequences in the context of the International Humanitarian Law and human security, taking into account sources like ECOWAS peace tools and conflict-resolution diplomacy, where the former is limited to Taraba State specifically.

Moreover, Nwangwu (2025) studied the transhumance securitization and the dilemma of national security in Ghana and Nigeria. In the research, it was found through documentary and policy analysis that the more herders moved across borders, the more it increased the insecurity in the region and caused the failure of state protection mechanisms in affected communities. The study indicated that the securitization policies tended to criminalize herders aggravating grievances and provoking revenge attacks. In comparison, although Nwangwu (2025) frames the conflict as a part of transnational dynamics at the regional level, the current study focuses its scope on the issue of Nigeria, particularly, displacement and human security matters under the International Humanitarian Law. As well, the present research gives a high value to humanitarian principles that regulate the treatment of displaced individuals- a field that is not well covered in the study under reference.

On the same note, Jarikre and Nwosu (2025) examined the migration of herders together with the socioeconomic consequences of peace and security in Nigeria. Relying on empirical data on conflicts between 2018 and 2024, the research has suggested that migration induced by climate change increased competition in land resources, which led to violent conflicts and population displacement. They found out that the lack of good early-warning systems and poor diplomatic peacebuilding strategies intensified the humanitarian crisis in states with a high likelihood of conflict. Although their study identifies climate change as the central cause of the conflict, the current study adopts climate-related causes but extends the study to the international humanitarian norms and the role of the Nigerian state in safeguarding internally displaced individuals.

Dan-Azumi (2025) discussed the socio-economic development impact of the farmer-Fulani herdsman conflicts in Southern Kaduna. The study used a survey design and a sample population of 400 respondents and discovered that violent clashes have a significant relationship with the disruption of education, livelihoods, and cohesion of communities. The author concluded that the long-term developmental impacts were caused by displacement and fear especially in the rural communities. In comparison to the present study, both studies emphasize displacement and socio-economic downfall as an outcome of conflict. However, the current research goes a notch higher to question socio-economic aspects in favor of legal and humanitarian issues, namely evaluating the applicability of International Humanitarian Law to the aspect of displacement, civilian protection, and peace institutions in Nigeria between 2015 and 2024.

Ojo and Saibu (2024) investigated the consequences of herder-farmer conflicts on food insecurity in Northern Nigeria and found that over 2,800 people died and numerous people were displaced within a few days. The study

highlighted the fact that violence was restricting farmland, markets, and humanitarian help. Even though they quantitatively estimated the number of casualties and food insecurity levels, the current study deviates by focusing on humanitarian legal duties of the Nigerian government including adherence to UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and evaluation of ECOWAS regional diplomacy to manage the crisis.

Lastly, Omotola (2025) studied herder-farmer wars in Nasarawa State and reported their effects on national security, patterns of displacement, and gender vulnerability. This paper relied on qualitative data to point out that women and children are most affected by this outcome, such as loss of livelihood, trauma, and displacement in the long term. The present research is quite consistent with the above-mentioned findings that consider human security issues, yet goes a step further as it examines the way in which International Humanitarian Law formulates the notion of protection requirements and how the displacement is handled during the period between 2015 and 2024 in the context of the changing conflict situation in Nigeria.

Methodology

The proposed study is a qualitative one, as it is based on the critical examination of the institutional reports, documents on humanitarian policy, conflict-monitoring databases, and investigative media descriptions to evaluate the consequences of the Fulani herdersFarmer conflict on human security in Nigeria between 2015 and 2024. Such sources as the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) Global Report on Internal Displacement (20182024), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Nigeria Humanitarian Needs Overview (20202024), and the African Union/ECOWAS Conflict Prevention and Peace Framework documents are major ones. Other reference materials are National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) situation reports, the 20192024 armed conflict location and event data project (ACLED) datasets, and reports of the security sector in Nigeria. The investigative media articles published by Premium Times, The Cable, and Daily Trust also complemented these primary sources with contextual descriptions, eyewitness accounts, and timelines of conflict.

Content analysis was performed on data sets to determine recurrent themes that included internal displacement, vulnerability of civilians, gaps in adhering to the International Humanitarian Law, and the usefulness of regional diplomatic systems. By triangulation, the research level critically questions the correspondence of internal displacement statistics with legal protection, to assess the connection between farmer-herder violence, humanitarian intervention, and human security.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The examination of data collected based on institutional reports and media sources will show the increasing human security crisis with the Fulani herders-farmer conflict. According to the reports provided by IDMC (2022), over 3.6 million internally displaced people (IDPs) were registered in Nigeria in 2015-mid 2024, and farmer-herder conflict is one of the key factors that led to displacement in the country along with insurgency. The patterns of violent confrontations expressed by ACLED event data appear to be stable, as an additional 5,800 conflict events and targeted attacks on rural settlements of the study period took place. These statistics highlight the inadequacy of the conflict-prevention measures and the continuing exposure of the rural people.

Table 1: Internal Displacement Linked to Farmer–Herder Conflict (2018–2024)

Year	Estimated Displacements	Major Affected States
2018	480,000	Benue, Taraba, Plateau
2019	520,000	Kaduna, Nasarawa, Adamawa
2020	610,000	Niger, Plateau, Benue

Year	Estimated Displacements	Major Affected States
2021	665,000	Taraba, Kaduna, Oyo
2022	720,000	Benue, Nasarawa, Zamfara
2023	680,000	Plateau, Kogi, Katsina
2024 (mid-year)	530,000	Kaduna, Benue, Niger

Source: IDMC Reports (2018–2024)

The consistent rise in displacement until 2022 demonstrates the failure of conflict-resolution frameworks to curb violence. Although slight decline occurred in 2023 and 2024 due to localized peace dialogues, the displacement numbers still reveal systemic instability and indicate that the underlying structural drivers remain unresolved. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement mandate state protection for civilians, yet OCHA (2023) reports inadequate provision of shelter, healthcare, and livelihood support in overcrowded IDP camps.

Table 2: Humanitarian Needs in Conflict-Affected Zones (2020–2024)

Indicator	2020	2022	2024
Camp Occupancy (IDPs)	1.8 million	2.3 million	2.1 million
Access to Clean Water	45%	38%	40%
Access to Healthcare	52%	44%	46%
Food Insecurity	35%	48%	51%

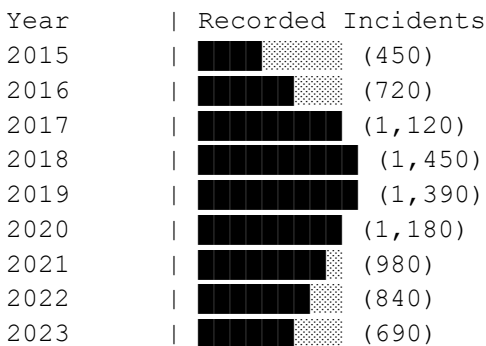
Source: OCHA Nigeria HNO (2020–2024)

These statistics highlight that displacement does not merely constitute movement from rural areas, but a prolonged humanitarian condition marked by deprivation and protection failure. In alignment with International Humanitarian Law, displaced civilians should enjoy rights to safety, non-discrimination, and essential services. The documented gaps, however, reveal substantial deviations from IHL compliance.

Investigative reports further expose the gendered and socio-economic dimensions of displacement. A Daily Trust investigation (2022) titled “Fields Abandoned, Futures Lost” revealed that farmers in Benue and Taraba abandoned over 200,000 hectares of cultivable land due to recurrent attacks. Similarly, The Cable (2023) documented inadequate policing and weak early-warning systems that left communities vulnerable to repeat violence, despite prior intelligence.

ECOWAS diplomatic frameworks—such as the 2019 Transhumance Regulation—aim to regulate cross-border herding, yet implementation remains fragmented. Monitoring reports show limited enforcement capacity, poor border coordination, and minimal community engagement, thereby reducing the effectiveness of regional peace mechanisms.

Chart 1: ACLED Recorded Violent Farmer–Herder Incidents (2015–2024)



Source: ACLED Conflict Event Dataset (2015–2024)

ACLED trends show that peak conflict years (2017–2021) correspond with heightened displacement and humanitarian need, indicating direct correlation between conflict intensity and human security deterioration.

Media-verified testimonies highlight frequent violations of IHL principles, including attacks on civilian settlements, destruction of crops and livestock, and obstruction of humanitarian access. These patterns imply that protection obligations under the UN Guiding Principles on IDPs and ECOWAS peace instruments remain more rhetorical than operational.

In sum, triangulated data from institutional reports, conflict datasets, and investigative journalism demonstrate that the Fulani herdsman–farmer conflict continues to undermine human security through displacement, livelihood loss, and weakened state protection. Although policy frameworks exist at national and regional levels, inadequate implementation and weak diplomatic conflict-resolution strategies allow violations to persist, emphasizing the need for stronger humanitarian compliance and proactive peacebuilding.

Discussion of Findings

This research study has made it very clear that the Nigerian herdsman–farmer war between the Fulbe and the Hausa between 2015 and 2024 is one of the key humanitarian and human security crises. As per the evidence provided by IDMC and ACLED, an increase in the levels of violence positively correlates with an increase in internal displacement, and millions of civilians are displaced, losing their homes and a means of livelihood. This proves that it is not a domestic issue of a limited nature over resources but a matter of national security with far-reaching social and economic consequences. The patterns of constant displacement that are indicated in the data indicate that the conflict has escalated further than intermittent battles and has become systemic because it assaults rural communities that hamper food production, social cohesion, and basic rights.

The results also indicate that there are enormous gaps in adherence to the International Humanitarian Law and the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The repetitive news about the overpopulated IDP camps, the inability to access the most basic services, and the lack of state security highlight the systemic failures of the duties to protect civilian populations. Such loopholes serve to point to a lack of alignment between policy frameworks and field implementation particularly in matters of safe accommodation, access to medicine, food security, and humane treatment of displaced individuals. The repetitive strikes against civilian populations and the burning of farms and animals are also against the major principles of IHL that forbid attacking civilian groups and the destruction of the means of life.

Also, the study reveals that the humanitarian problems are increased by the ineffective conflict-resolution systems and insufficient implementation of ECOWAS transhumance and peace systems. Although the policies of the region were aimed at regulating the cross-border herding, the absence of the enforcement capacity and the low level of coordination have not allowed anything to be done regarding de-escalation. Local peace dialogues have been rather unsuccessful, with some slight decreases in violence cases in 2023 and 2024, yet the background of the problem with access to the land, scarce resources, and administrative failures has not completely eliminated. Gendered and socio-economic consequences can also be found in the findings, as women, and children are disproportionately affected by displacement, food insecurity, and loss of livelihoods. By abandoning large parcels of agricultural lands, food production and income are decreased and this factor adds to the increase in poverty and reliance on aid. In general, there are indications that the conflict has increased the humanitarian vulnerability, worsened rural poverty, and crippled the human security environment in Nigeria. Having existing policies

indicates that the problem is not a matter of policy not existing, but rather a matter of a weak policy and poor enforcement, and a lack of political motivation.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that the Fulani herders-farmer challenge is still one of the most enduring causes of internal displacement and human insecurity in Nigeria between 2015 and 2024. Although there is International humanitarian law, the UN guiding principles on IDP and ECOWAS peace systems, there have been gaps in these principles which have enabled perpetrators to exploit them to carry out the atrocities against civilians with minimal control. The relationship between the degree of conflicts and displacement points to systemic failures in governance to offer safety to residents and a safe environment for rural livelihoods. The long-term effects on humanitarian conditions such as food insecurity, livelihood disruption, and IDP support services are indicative of a long-term crisis and not a transient dislocation situation. The fact that the conflict persists renders the imperative to intensify legal adherence, institutional reaction systems, and conflict-solving diplomacy to restore human security and limit displacement among the impacted states.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen Early-Warning and Community-Level Peace Mechanisms

the government through local chiefs, vigilante groups, farmer associations, and herder unions should develop working early warning mechanisms and a quick response team in areas that are at high risk. This will involve sharing intelligence, conflict-mediation committees, and community-based dialogue structures to curb escalation and minimize displacement.

2. Improve Humanitarian Protection and Livelihood Support for IDPs

The governments of the federal and states assisted by other international humanitarian actors ought to deliver essential services according to the IHL and IDP protection norms, especially clean water, medical care, and food security, and introduce livelihood recovery initiatives, including agriculture grants, grazing lands, and vocational training to facilitate sustainable resettlement.

3. Enhance Implementation and Monitoring of ECOWAS Transhumance Regulations

Nigeria needs to go beyond policy rhetoric and needs to enhance the border management capacity, monitoring of cross-border herding patterns, and empowering law enforcement agencies to put the 2019 ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol into practice. Enhanced surveillance and cooperation with the neighbouring states will curb illegal migration, trigger conflicts, and diplomacy to promote regional peace.

All these recommendations are proposed to achieve a reduction of displacement, increase adherence to humanitarian principles, and strengthen human security. The implementation would have to be politically committed, regionally based, and community-based peacebuilding to make sure that the conflict is resolved sustainably.

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