



based on co-existence.

Several moves to stop the killings, however, failed until the emergence of Malam Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai as governor of Kaduna State. The office of the Inspector-General of Police had, at the wake of the Manchok massacre, initiated a reconciliation committee headed by a Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Michael Zuokumor.

The Zuokumor intervention resulted in a peace pact between the Southern Kaduna People's Union (SOKAPU) and the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN), the Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, the Mobgal Fulbe Development Association and the Moroa Development Association, representing the Hausa/Fulani and herdsmen communities in the area.

Unfortunately however, the peace pact collapsed even before Zuokumor returned to his Abuja base as the bloodletting resumed.

The Kaduna State government also raised a judicial commission of inquiry to probe the killings as well as identify causes and propose solution to the recurrent ethno-religious crises

in the area. But, as usual, the report of the panel was swept under the carpet.

Nonetheless, Governor El-Rufai announced a probe of the killings, especially in Southern Kaduna and Birnin Gwari areas of the state. He raised a committee with a mandate to identify possible socio-political and economic factors that promote the existing conflicts in southern Kaduna State. The committee headed by a former Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Martin Luther Agwai, who incidentally hails from southern Kaduna, had since late 2015 submitted its report and the government appears to implement the recommendations made by panel.

The governor confirmed this while speaking on a national television last week that, "killings in Southern Kaduna have more or less stopped. There has been no killing in the last six months".

Said the governor: "In the south, you have Christians and non-indigenes and in the north, you have mostly Muslims and Hausa speaking northerners and it is very unhealthy", adding that "these repeated cycles of ethnic and religious violence are part of what contributed to what is destroying Kaduna".

Many lives were lost during the post-election violence, he noted, which led to displaced Fulani turning to cattle rustling and reprisal killings in Southern Kaduna.

El-Rufai however attributed his success to the intervention of Gen. Martin Luther Agwai's committee which, according to him, did a very good job by going round and tracing the roots of the killings and finding that most of assailants come from other African countries like Cameroon, Chad, Mali and Senegal. He said: "This happened in April and these cattle rearers had come from these countries and were going back, because they move across the West African sub region and were going back with their cattle and this problem happened, if you remember the elections of 2011 and they were just victims that were passing through."

"And, of course, you know the Fulani have a long memory of revenging any killings; so their relations were coming from other countries to revenge the killings and we had to reach out to some of these countries outside Nigeria, telling them this cannot continue."

He noted that they offered to compensate those affected "and do anything" to bring the killings to an end, insisting that "there is no sense wiping out an entire village just because something happened five years ago".

The governor judged that the tactics fetched the needed result, maintaining that "there has been no killing in the last six months, since Agwai did that job and reached out to these people and talked to them".

#### Angry shots from Edo, Delta

The message emanating from communities in Edo, Bayelsa and Delta States at a stakeholders meeting with the Assistant Inspector-General in charge of Zone 5, Musa Daura, was straightforward: "leave our land". At the meeting held in February this year, leaders of various communities said they could no longer tolerate criminal activities perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen. They delivered a two-week ultimatum for the Fulani herdsmen.

The Ezomon of Idjerhe Kingdom in Delta State, Chief Samuel Okoro, said the Fulani herdsmen must leave their communities on or before February 15 because the community no longer felt safe. He recalled how a woman was recently killed by the herdsmen and how the Fulani herdsmen harvested crops for the cattle to eat. "We don't want them anymore," he said. "We don't want their cattle on our land. Cattle rearers have killed and raped our women. The herdsmen go about with guns and dangerous weapons."

Elsewhere in Edo State, the activities of the herdsmen are as bothersome.

In 2014, three herdsmen Mohammed, Isah and Yusuf, were arrested for attacking and raping a middle-aged woman to death at Odighi village in Ovia North East Local Government. An 18-year son of

the victim managed to escape the attack.

A resident of Iguobazuwa in Ovia South West Local Government Area, Destiny Enabulele, said that activities of Fulani herdsmen in his village were curbed after his uncle was attacked and left for dead in an attempt to stop herdsmen from destroying his crops. "They have raped several women before but after that incident with my uncle, the community elders warned them to stay away from farmlands."

When wild fire earlier this year razed several farmlands at the Sakponba Forest Reserve at Ugo Community in Orhionnwon Local Government Area of Edo State, farmers at the reserve fingered the herdsmen. The farmers warned of impending food crises without help.

The head farmer, Pa Simon Igbiginogun, said the herdsmen fed their cattle with yams in their barn and set their farmland ablaze. He, however, said that the herdsmen promised to pay for damages after an assessment of the destruction.

Serikin Abudu, Alhaji Abdullahi Sule, said he was disturbed by the extent of damage done to the farmland and that he had finalised the process for herdsmen vacating farmlands while compensation would be paid to affected farmers.

Last week, residents of Okada community were at loggerheads with herdsmen following the brutal murder of a 64-year old farmer, Alex Idemutin. His remains were found at a bush near his farm by a search party after he failed to return home.

A youth in the area said that what he saw of Alex remains made him sick. Alex's neck was sliced. He was stabbed in the stomach and had several machete cuts all over his body.

His wife, Magaret, said her late husband complained several times about the destruction of his crops by cattle. She said she was yet to come to terms with the care of the children. Apparently aware of the consequence, the herdsmen fled one of their camps in Okada before angry youths called. The camp was set ablaze.

Attempts by the youth to burn another herdsmen camp was resisted as it was alleged that the herdsmen started firing sophisticated weapons. It took the intervention of a combined team of policemen and soldiers to restore order to Okada community following protests by the youth that they were no longer safe if herdsmen were allowed to own such weapons.

The lawmaker representing Ovia Federal Constituency, Barr. Omosede Igbinedion, who also hails from Okada, said that government at all levels must protect Nigerians from 'annihilation' of Nigerians by Fulani herdsmen. He noted that the solution to stop the threat by some Fulani herdsmen was for law enforcement agencies to be unbiased as well as prosecute those who unleashed violence in different Nigerian communities.

Governor Adams Oshiomhole said



•Chief Falae after his release from captivity last year



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