



**A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS
OF
HERDER/FARMER/FISHER
CLASHES
IN PARTS OF
NIGERIA AND CAMEROON**

Authored by
Lawyers Alert and Centre for the Human Rights &
Democracy in Africa

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FOREWORD

The recurring decimal of violent conflicts in Nigeria and Cameroon is a matter of great concern, particularly in its implications for the rights of vulnerable persons, such as women and girls. Security agencies are often drafted to affected areas to maintain peace and order. However, this commendable practice is often marred by attendant violations like the exclusion of locals from the peacebuilding process and the rights violations of vulnerable people by security agents.

Lawyers Alert and the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) have taken it upon themselves to validate these claims and offer a rights-based approach to security sector governance and accountability in Cameroon and Nigeria. Through this study, the two organisations aim to reduce Human Rights violations in project target communities. The project will also establish the state of affairs in project target areas and empower communities on the principles of community policing. This report highlights the extent of rights violations in project target areas through reviews and on-the-spot assessments.

Researchers were sent into the field to harvest on-the-spot assessments of the situation in project target communities through preliminary Focal Group Discussions with 50 respondents selected from the respective communities.

This baseline survey is a significant stride towards reducing incidences of Human Rights violations. It sets the tone for the effective and efficient accomplishment of the project's overall objectives by establishing a state of affairs in the target areas and proffering recommendations based on the same.

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for policymakers, security agencies, and other stakeholders towards ensuring sustainable peace and development in these communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The seemingly unending violence in parts of Nigeria and Cameroon is a cause for concern. In Nigeria, particularly in Benue state, some security challenges have occurred in some areas. Pastoralist-farmer conflict, banditry, communal clashes, gang wars, political thuggery etc., characterise these conflicts. These violent conflicts have claimed many lives and given rise to grave violations of the rights of law-abiding citizens, especially those women and girls. Clashes between farmers, ranchers and fishermen escalated in Cameroon due to water shortages on Cameroon's northern border with Chad.

Security agencies are often drafted and sent to those affected areas to maintain peace and order when such conflicts occur. As commendable as this practice seems, issues are always frequently encountered in the process. Such reported issues include rights violations of vulnerable people by security agents, exclusion of the locals in the peacebuilding process and other attendant violations, amongst other reported issues.

Lawyers Alert (LA) and the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA), both Human Rights and advocacy-based organisations in Nigeria and Cameroon, are desirous of protecting the rights of vulnerable persons in these areas. The two organisations equally aim to empower the communities on the principles of community policing, with a view to a rights-based approach to security sector governance and accountability in Cameroon and Nigeria. They have therefore undertaken this study of conflict-prone areas in both countries to establish an effective and efficient baseline survey through which a project will be carried out to reduce incidences of Human Rights Violations in project target communities.

The study will also highlight the extent of rights violations in project target areas through desk reviews and on-the-spot assessments. This is to enable the effective and efficient accomplishment of the project's overall objectives by establishing a state of affairs in project target areas.

In keeping with this mandate, Lawyers Alert will work in Katsina-Ala and Guma Local Government areas of Benue State, two out of the crises prone Local Government Areas in Benue State of Nigeria, while the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) carries out the project in affected parts of Cameroon.

The project is tagged "Empowering Community Policing Committees Towards a Rights-based Approach to Security Sector Governance and Accountability in Cameroon and Nigeria".

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BNARDA	Benue State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority
CHRDA	Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA)
CPDM	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
SDO	Senior Divisional Officer
FGD	Focal Group Discussions
KII	Key Informant Interview
LA	Lawyers Alert
LGA	Local Government Area



CHAPTER 1

Context of the Prevailing Situation in Katsina-Ala, Guma and Northern Cameroon

Human Rights violations occur more frequently in times of conflict than in times of peace. These violations are carried out by several actors within the conflict space, and victims tend to be women and children. It is common for security agents to be drafted to troubled areas at such times to restore peace and protect innocent citizens caught in the thick of the conflict.

However, these security agencies are not accountable to the members of the community they are sent to protect neither do they involve, intimate, nor carry them along in the discharge of their duties. Rather, what obtains in most situations is the rights violations of the locals by the same security agents who are meant to protect them. This creates a gulf between the security agents and members of the community.

A mutual and inclusive relationship between security agents and community members in conflict areas would help reduce rights violations and hasten the process of peace-building and conflict resolution in the community. This is more likely where the security agents are accountable to the people and carry them along in peacebuilding by keeping them informed of the peace process.

This project will likely close this gap by building the capacity of community members on community policing and how to hold security agents to account in times of conflict in their communities. This project's success will reduce human rights violations in troubled communities.

Project Locations

In Nigeria, particularly in Benue state, issues of pastoralist-farmer conflict have claimed many lives and given rise to grave violations of the rights of law-abiding citizens, especially those of women and girls. Clashes have escalated between farmers, ranchers, and fishermen in Cameroon due to water shortages on Cameroon's northern border with Chad.

Given the above, therefore, LA, through appointed Consultant(s), will strive to reduce incidences of Human Rights Violations in project target communities through an effective and efficient baseline survey in Katsina-Ala LGA to highlight the extent of rights violations in project target areas and establish a state of affairs in project target areas between January 15 to February 2023.

This will be achieved by reviewing Katsina-Ala and Guma Local government Areas of Nigeria and affected parts of Cameroon's northern border with Chad. The focus will be on the Political, Economic, Social and Cultural landscape of these locations against the backdrop of insecurity and ancillary situations.

CHAPTER 2

Historical Background and Profile of Project Locations

Overview of Katsina-Ala LGA

Background

Katsina-Ala is a Local Government Area (LGA) in Benue State, Nigeria. It is headquartered in Katsina-Ala, where the A344 highway starts. Katsina-Ala has an area of 2,402 km² (927 sq. mi) and a population of **224,718** as of the 2006 census and projected to be 325,500 in 2022.

Katsina-Ala lies in the Guinea Savannah belt, while the eastern portion consists of undulating hills with shrubs. Katsina-Ala was a river port town used extensively in the colonial period by the Royal Niger Company as a produce buying and evacuation centre for agricultural produce. It is a cosmopolitan settlement on the Northern Bank of the river from which the town takes its name. It shares boundaries to the North with Logo and Ukum Local Government Areas; to the South with Kwande and Ushongo Local Government Areas; and to the West, Buruku Local Government Area.



Economic Analysis

The economic landscape of Katsina-Ala, an integral part of Benue State, is primarily subsistence farming, micro-fishing, and petty trade. Over 95% of the population depends on farming and fishing for their livelihood, while young people also engage in transportation businesses. In a recent survey, 90% of the respondents noted that farming, which includes fishing, is the primary source of livelihood for the people of Katsina-Ala. Although farming is the primary source of livelihood, 10% of the respondents noted an increase in transportation businesses, such as tricycles, before the eruption of conflict. The tricycles, popularly referred to as "KEKE NAPEP," are the primary means of commuting for the residents.

However, owing to rising unrest, the Government of Benue State banned motorcycles in Katsina-Ala due to the activities of extremists, pastoralists, bandits, and kidnappers, who use them as a quick transportation method to

perpetrate crimes in the community. This ban made it difficult for residents who rely on motorcycles to move their farm produce to the market, constraining them from spending more money on other means of transportation.

Apart from farming crops and livestock, micro-fishing and petty trade are other sources of economic survival for the people of the local Government. Some inhabitants take advantage of the Katsina-Ala River surrounding the town to undertake boat riding, supply water to households, and carry out riverside dry-season farming and irrigation, among other economic activities.

Local markets also hold on certain days of the week, including Abaji, Sati, Tom Anyiin, Gbor, and Amafu, among others. These markets serve as hubs for the buying and selling of major crops such as rice, groundnuts, yams, cassava-based products, etc. However, only a few financial institutions based in Katsina-Ala offer financial services to the entire local government community, with First Bank being the only commercial bank in the city. The gap in financial services is augmented by POS operators and local thrift and loan scheme units popularly known as Bam.

Despite these challenges, there are still opportunities for economic growth in Katsina-Ala. The rich agricultural resources of the community provide the potential for expanding the agricultural sector. The Government can provide incentives and support for farmers to increase their productivity and output. There is also potential for the growth of the fishing industry, as the community is surrounded by the river Katsina-Ala, which can be used for fishing and other water-based activities.

In addition, there is an opportunity for the growth of the transportation industry, particularly in the use of tricycles for commuting within the community. This will provide job opportunities for young people and create a means of transportation for goods and people within the community. However, the Government must ensure adequate security measures are put in place to ensure commuters' safety and goods' safety.

In recent times though, insecurity in the area has limited economic expansion opportunities and caused undue suffering, particularly for women, youths, and other vulnerable groups. Insecurity has also caused the displacement of many residents, leading to a decrease in the population and, therefore, a reduction in the market size. This has negatively impacted small business owners who rely on the local market to sell their goods and services.

Tabular Representation of the Economic Analysis (Katsina-Ala)

s/no	Question	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	No	Don't know
1	What are the major economic resources of the community (Farming,	50	50. or 100%		

	fishing, transportation business)				
2	How does the resources affect your livelihood (High)	50	50 or 100%		
3	How has insecurity affected their source of livelihood? (Negatively)	50	41 or 82%	5 or 10%	4 or 8%
4	Has the Government carried out any economic intervention?	50	10 or 20%		40 or 80%

Socio-Cultural Analysis

Katsina-Ala LGA is situated in the North-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria and is home to over **224,718** inhabitants, most of whom are of Tiv extraction. Tiv language is widely spoken in the area, and Christianity and Traditional Religion are the predominant religions in the region.

Katsina-Ala is rich in culture and tradition, which traditional rulers and kindred heads oversee. The traditional chieftaincy system is headed by the Ter Katsina-Ala, who is assisted by other local chiefs. The elders and local chiefs often resolve communal disputes. The Local Government Area is multicultural, so despite the dominance of the Tiv people, Katsina-Ala is also home to seven other ethnic groups that coexist harmoniously.

Prior to the conflict in Katsina-Ala, the LGA was regarded as a friendly and welcoming town. During different seasons such as harvesting and festivals, the area experiences an influx of people, making it a popular destination for tourists and merchants. The people's customs, traditions, and religion heavily influence their way of life. As such, the community's gatekeepers are family heads, traditional and religious leaders, women, and youth leaders. The youths have a significant influence on the social construct of Katsina-Ala.

Gender roles are assigned based on customs and traditions, with men responsible for tasks such as making ridges and fishing, while women are expected to weed the farms and retail farm products at the market. Although 100% of the respondents agreed that gender roles are defined, 13% opined that women can still own and cultivate their farms, especially when the head of the household is deceased.

The conflict has had a significant impact on the social and cultural settings of Katsina-Ala. According to the respondents, 65% reported a high impact, 30% had a medium impact, and only 5% reported a low impact. The effect of conflict on the socio-cultural settings of the community is demonstrated by the abrupt departure of the traditional ruler from the community to safeguard his life and the cessation of festivities, among other things.

In conclusion, Katsina-Ala LGA is a diverse and multicultural society dominated by the Tiv tribe. The area is rich in culture and tradition, which traditional rulers and kindred heads oversee. The people's customs, traditions, and religion heavily influence their way of life. Gender roles are assigned based on customs and traditions, and the youths significantly influence the social construct of Katsina-Ala. The conflict has had a significant impact on the social and cultural settings of the area, leading to the abrupt departure of the traditional ruler from the community and the cessation of festivities. As such, there is a need for peacebuilding efforts to ensure that the area's cultural heritage is preserved and communal harmony is maintained.

Tabular Representation of Socio-Cultural Analysis (Katsina-Ala LGA)

s/no	Question	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	No	Don't know
1	How will you describe the social/cultural environment in your community (cordial)	50	17 or 34%	30 or 60%	3 or 6%
2	Are gender roles allotted in your community?	50	50 or 100% 13% (As circumstances present, it can change)		
3	Has insecurity affected the socio-cultural setting in your community	50	35 or 70% (High) 11 or 22% (Medium) 4 or 2% (Low)		

CHAPTER 3

Overview of Guma LGA

Background

Guma is also a Local Government in Benue State, North Central Nigeria, with headquarters in the town of Gbajimba. It has an area of 2,882 km² and a population of 191,599 as of the 2006 population census. The postal code of the area is 970. The Governor of Benue State, 2015- 2023, Chief Dr Samuel Ortom, hails from Guma.

The town has boundaries to the East with Logo LGA, to the South with Makurdi, the state capital and Tarka LGA, respectively, and to the West: Doma LGA of Nasarawa State. The distance from Guma to Makurdi, the

Benue state capital, is 37km (approximately one hour's journey). The LGA was created out of the former Makurdi Local Government Area in 1987 by the then regime of Col. Fidelis A. Makah.

Guma is named after "River Guma" in Benue State. The headquarters Gbajimba is said to have derived its name from the Hausa phrase 'Ban ji ba', which means, "I do not understand." The mother tongue interference of the Tiv led to the current pronunciation, "Gbajimba", as they had difficulty pronouncing the Hausa words properly.



The major towns of Guma LGA are Gbajimba, Daudu, Torkula, Kase-yough, Abinsi, Mbabegha Village, and Agasha. Although the Tiv ethnic group dominates Guma, like Katsina-Ala, other ethnic groups have also made a home there and including Jukun, Hausa, and Kabuwa.

Economic Analysis

Over 75% of Benue State's population is estimated to be farmers. The people of Guma are no different. They are mostly farmers, as revealed in the unanimous consensus of the 50 respondents interviewed. Farming has been the primary source of income for the people of Guma, and it affects their economic livelihood significantly.

Besides farming, other economic activities in Guma Local Government serve as sources of livelihood for the people. These include trading, craftsmanship, and transportation.

Trading is a prominent economic activity in Guma, as evidenced by the numerous markets located in and around the area. The markets are strategically located, and they serve as hubs for the buying and selling of major crops such as rice, groundnuts, yams, cassava-based products, and other commodities. Gbajimba market, Daudu market, Agasha market, and

Abinsi market are some of the local markets that hold on certain days of the week.

Craftsmanship is another significant economic activity in Guma, and it is known for the production of hoes, arrows, cutlasses, axes, and knives for domestic and commercial purposes. The people of Guma are skilled craftsmen and are renowned for their craftsmanship in the production of these items.

Transportation is also an essential aspect of the economic life of the people of Guma. The area is served by roads linking most parts of the local government area with the state capital, Makurdi, and Nasarawa state. Guma also makes use of water transport as River Gbajimba is linked with River Benue, which serves as a means of transportation for goods and people.

However, insecurity has devastated the local communities' livelihood sources, with most people living in poverty due to minimal government intervention.

In conclusion, insecurity has negatively impacted people's economic life, leaving most of them in poverty. There is a critical need for the state government to intervene if the economic landscape of Guma LGA is to be secured to ensure the prosperity of the people and the growth of the local economy.

Tabular Representation of Economic Analysis of Guma LGA

s/no	Question	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	No	Don't know
1	What are the major economic resources of the community (Farming)	50	50 or 100%		
2	How do the resources affect your livelihood (High)	50	50 or 100%		
3	How has insecurity affected their source of livelihood? (Negatively)	50	50 or 100%		
4	Has the Government carried out any economic intervention?	50	36 or 74%	13 or 26%	1 or 2%

Socio-Cultural Analysis

Guma is a place with a rich cultural heritage that is expressed through various festivals and celebrations. These observances cover different aspects of the socio-cultural life of the people, such as marriages, seasonal farming yields, fishing, hunting, burial, and the bestowal of honour and dignity upon individuals or groups.

These festivals and celebrations mark significant events in their lives and are an essential part of their cultural heritage. However, insecurity and violent conflicts have affected people's social life immensely, leading to the jettisoning of these festivals and celebrations. This situation has denied the people the opportunity to express their cultural identity fully and has caused them significant losses in their social, economic and political lives.

The observance and respect of cultural rights are also essential for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the people of Guma LGA. However, out of the 50 respondents interviewed, 86% reported that cultural rights are not respected in times of conflict, while only 10% said they were respected. This situation highlights the need for the Government to put in place mechanisms to protect the cultural rights of the people during conflicts.

In conclusion, the festivals and celebrations among the Guma people are essential to their cultural heritage. However, insecurity and violent conflicts have affected these observances, leading to significant losses in their social, economic, and political lives. To protect the cultural rights of the people and preserve their heritage, the Government must put in place effective measures to address the insecurity and deploy more security personnel to the region.

Tabular Representation of Socio-Cultural Analysis of Guma LGA

s/no	Question	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	No	Don't know
1	How will you describe the social/cultural environment in your community (cordial)	50	15 or 38%	31 or 62%	4 or 8%
2	Are gender roles allotted in your community?	50	50 or 100%		
3	Has insecurity affected the socio-cultural setting in your community	50	50 or 100%		
4	What do you want Government to do differently?	50	46 or 92%		4 or 8%

CHAPTER 4

Overview of North West and Far North of Cameroon

Local crop farmers and pastoralists in the Northwest region of Cameroon generally live side by side. The lack of formal demarcations (“pillars”) of farmland and land for grazers, coupled with the fact that the laws that regulate the matter dates from 1964 (how land use is governed) and 1978

(land conflict regulation between farmers and grazers) often results in land use conflicts. It is a known fact that this has caused the death and destruction of properties.¹ For instance, in Menchum Division, 61% of the land conflicts are agro-pastoral².



The prominent Mbororo organisation Mboscuda argues that the prescribed land conflict regulation (i.e. Decree 78/263) does not allow relevant stakeholders to formally engage with each other and claim their land rights, which in turn results in the Mbororo becoming susceptible to land appropriation and exploitation, with cattle routes closed off by the farmers and extortions.³ At the same time, farmers' associations argue for abuse of function and extortion by competent administrative authorities.⁴ The failures in the existing legal framework and mismanagement by competent administrative authorities often resulted in a deteriorated relationship between farmers and grazers.

Economic Analysis

The economy of Northern Cameroon is largely based on agriculture, with the region being known as the "breadbasket" of Cameroon. The main agricultural products include cotton, maize, millet, sorghum, beans, and peanuts. Livestock rearing is also an important economic activity, with cattle, sheep, and goats being raised in the region.

Apart from agriculture, the region also has significant mineral resources, including deposits of uranium, bauxite, and iron ore. However, the

1 See, e.g. in Patience Munge Sone, Conflict over landownership: The case of farmers and cattle grazers in the northwest region of Cameroon, 2012.

2 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341071960_Spatial_Typology_and_Cause-effect_Analysis_of_Recurrent_Agro-pastoral_Conflicts_in_Menchum_North_West_Cameroon

3 See, e.g. in https://d3o3cb4w253x5q.cloudfront.net/media/documents/ilc_case_study_0066_cameroon_en.pdf.

4 See, e.g. in http://capacityfordevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/21092015_Report-to-Governor_r2.pdf and in <http://capacityfordevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NCHRF-NW-antenna-May-2017.pdf>.

exploitation of these resources has been limited due to a lack of investment and infrastructure.

In recent years, there has been a growing focus on tourism in the region, particularly in the Adamawa and Far North regions. The region is home to several national parks and reserves, including the Waza National Park, which is known for its diverse wildlife, including elephants, lions, and giraffes. The Mandara Mountains, which straddle the border between Cameroon and Nigeria, is also a popular destination for hikers and nature enthusiasts.

Overall, the economy of Northern Cameroon is diverse, with agriculture, livestock rearing, and tourism being the main economic activities. However, the region faces significant infrastructure, investment, and economic development challenges, which have hindered its full potential.

Socio-Cultural Analysis

Northern Cameroon is a region of great cultural diversity, with over 80 ethnic groups, each with its own traditions, languages, and social structures. The region is predominantly Muslim, with the exception of the Southwest region, which has a Christian majority.

The region's social fabric is strongly influenced by its history as a crossroads of trade and migration and its location at the confluence of different cultural and religious influences. The Fulani, for example, are a nomadic pastoralist group that has historically played an essential role in the region's economy and society. The Kanuri, a Muslim ethnic group, have also played an important role in the region's history and culture, particularly in the Far North region.

Family and community are highly valued in Northern Cameroon, with extended families and clans forming the basis of social structures. Elders are respected for their wisdom and experience, and communal values such as hospitality and generosity are highly prized. Traditional music, dance, and oral storytelling are important regional cultural expressions.

Despite the region's rich cultural diversity, there have been longstanding tensions and conflicts between different ethnic and religious groups, particularly in the context of political and economic marginalisation. For example, the ongoing conflicts in the Northwest and Southwest regions have been partly driven by concerns over language and cultural rights.

Overall, the socio-cultural landscape of Northern Cameroon is complex and diverse, with a rich history of cultural exchange and innovation, as well as ongoing tensions and conflicts related to ethnicity, religion, and politics.

CHAPTER 5

History and Political Context of Unrest in Project Locations

To better understand why this project is critical, this chapter provides deeper insight into the political structure of project locations and their attendant security challenges.

Political Structure of Katsina-Ala LGA of Benue State, Nigeria

The political and governance structure Katsina-Ala is similar to all other LGAs across Nigeria. It is headed by a local government chairman who exercises executive powers for 2-year tenure, while councillors form the legislative arm.

Katsina-Ala has 185 polling units across its 12 districts in 12 council wards. Each ward is administered by a councillor who reports directly to the LGA chairman. The councillors fall under the legislative arm of the local Government, which is the third tier of Government in Nigeria, below the state and federal government.

The local Government is responsible for carrying out day-to-day maintenance of administrative functions, maintaining law and order, making economic recommendations to the state, collecting taxes and fees, maintaining cemeteries, regulating markets and public conveniences, constructing and maintaining roads, and providing public transportation and refuse disposal, among other things.

The administrative structure, headed by the LGA chairman, wields more power and influence with regard to general governance issues. The traditional leadership, headed by the Ter, is appointed by the Governor through the Bureau of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs and is responsible for peace-building, preserving culture and tradition, and other related functions. Together, both leadership systems determine situations in the local Government by their actions or inactions.

The cultural rights of the people of Katsina-Ala are affected during times of insecurity and violent conflict, as normal cultural activities such as marriages, burials, and naming ceremonies are disrupted. The majority of respondents (85%) agree that insecurity and conflicts affect their cultural rights to a great extent.

Regarding the political structure and leadership in Katsina-Ala LGA, 92% of respondents want the Government to set up special programs to help the people recover from the conflicts and unrest that have affected the area. Only 8% do not want the Government to do anything, while 2% are indifferent.

In summary, Katsina-Ala LGA is governed by a local government chairman and councillors who fall under the legislative arm of the local Government. There is also a traditional leadership system headed by the Ter, who is responsible for peace-building and preserving culture and tradition. The actions or inactions of both systems of leadership determine situations in the

local Government, and conflicts and insecurity affect the cultural rights of the people. The majority of respondents want the Government to set up special programs to help the people recover from the effects of conflicts and unrest.

Tabular Representation of the Political Analysis of Katsina-Ala LGA

s/no	Question	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	No	Don't know
1	Does political/leadership power determine situation(s)	50	33. or 65%	15 or 30%	2 or 5%
2	Has insecurity affected the political/leadership structure	50	42.5 or 85%	7 or 14%	1 or 0.5
3	Are cultural rights respected in times of conflict? Yes	50	42.5 or 85%	7 or 14%	1 or 0.5
4	What do you want Government/security agencies to do differently	50	45 or 90%	4 or 8%	1 or 2%

Security Analysis Lawyers Alert

Katsina-Ala Local Government Area (LGA) in Benue State, Nigeria, has been experiencing a deteriorating security situation due to communal clashes, herders' attacks, banditry, kidnappings, armed robberies, and other assaults. This has led to a significant decline in the peace and liveliness of the once-accommodating town.



The frequent violent clashes between the dominant communities, the Ikyurav and the larger Shitile, have been the foundation of most of the unrest in the area. The situation has escalated into chaos and a series of killings involving notorious criminals and gangs from both sides of the divide. In September

2020, the killing of a community leader, Gana, by state security forces added to the insecurity situation in the LGA. He was seen as one of the masterminds of the incessant carnage in those parts.

These unrests are mostly in the rural parts of the LGA, and the security situation is made worse by the clashes between herders and farmers. The herders-farmers conflict is due to competition for resources such as water and grazing land. This conflict has increased the level of insecurity in the LGA and adversely affected the residents' socio-economic activities. The insecurity situation has made it challenging for the people of Katsina-Ala LGA to go about their daily lives and has led to fear and panic.

Political Structure of Guma LGA of Benue State, Nigeria

Regarding the political structure and leadership in Guma LGA, 92% of the respondents want the Government to deploy more security personnel to the region to ensure the adequate protection of lives and property. They also support local efforts to supplement the conventional police system. This desire for more security personnel indicates the insecurity that has affected people's social life and underscores the need for effective measures to address the situation.

Like all other local governments in Nigeria, Guma is the third tier of political power headed by a local government chairman elected into office for a 2-year tenure. The Chairman exercises executive powers while the councillors form the legislative arm. Guma LGA has one hundred and sixty (160) polling units across its ten (10) council wards, including Kaambe, Abinsi, Uvir, Saghev, Nzorov, Nyiev, Mbabai, Mbayer or Yandev, Mbawa, and Mbadwen.



Each ward is administered by a councillor, who reports directly to the LGA chairman. The councillors fall under the legislative arm of the local Government, the third tier of Government in Nigeria, below the state governments and the Federal Government.

Apart from carrying out the day-to-day maintenance of the local Government administrative functions as well as maintaining law and order, the local Government also proffers a wide range of services which include but are not limited to giving economic advice to the state government, collecting taxes and levies; establishing and maintaining cemeteries, and licensing humanly propelled vehicles. Additionally, they register births, deaths and marriages etc.

Guma shares a Federal House of Representative seat with Makurdi local government and has one state House of Assembly seat.

Tabular Representation of the Political Structure of Guma LGA

s/no	Question	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	No	Don't know
1	Does political/leadership power determine situation(s)	50	47% or 94%	2 or 4%	1 or 2%
2	Has insecurity affected the political/leadership structure	50	44% or 88%	4 or 8%	2 or 4%
3	Are cultural rights respected in times of conflict? Yes	50	42% or 86%	5 or 10%	2 or 4%
4	What do you want Government/security agencies to do differently	50	46% or 90%	4 or 8%	1 or 2%

Security Analysis *Promoting Human Rights...*

Guma LGA was once known for its hospitality and abundance of fish from the Guma River. The area attracted people from all over, and market days were always bustling with activity. However, this has changed due to communal clashes, herdsmen attacks, and banditry, resulting in regional insecurity and crisis.

The primary cause of the conflict is the farmer/herder clashes, which stem from the host communities' perception of herders as responsible for the destruction of crops and farmland and water contamination. As a result, herdsmen are often harassed by the host communities, leading to displacement, loss of lives and properties, and decreased agricultural output.

The issue of farmer/herder conflict is a major concern in the community, with all 50 respondents interviewed agreeing that it is the most significant security challenge facing the area. The conflict has caused an unquantifiable number of fatalities and significant destruction of properties.

The Benue State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority, BNARDA, reports that the conflict has severely impacted the agricultural sector in the area, setting back its development. Thus, the need for a solution to this problem cannot be overstated.

The project proposes to address this issue in a timely and relevant, as it aims to reduce the incidences of rights violations by security agents during conflicts in Benue State and Nigeria. If implemented effectively, this project can provide much-needed relief to the affected communities and help restore peace and security to the area.

The project's success will depend on the cooperation of all stakeholders involved in the farmer/herder conflict, including the Government, host communities, and herdsmen. An all-inclusive approach, where everyone's voices are heard and their interests considered, will be critical in achieving sustainable peace in the area.

Tabular Representation of Security Analysis of Guma LGA

	Question	Total no. of Respondents	Yes	No	Don't Know
1	Has there been conflict in your LGA	50	50 or 100%	0 or 0%	0
2	Major Security Concerns in the Community? (Farmer/herder)		50 or 100%		
3	Did the conflict record fatal casualties?	50	50 or 100 %	0 or 0%	0 or 0%
4	Where properties destroyed	50	50 or 100 %	0 or 0%	0 or 0%
5	Did Security Agency(ies) intervene	50	42 or 84 %	5 or 10%	3 or 6%
6	Did the security personnel(s) commit Human Rights violation(s) during this time	50	43 or 86%	3 or 6%	4 or 8%
7	Did the security agency work with the community in addressing the conflict	50	32 or 64%	13 or 26%	5 or 10%
8	To what extent did security agencies account to community members	50	1 or 2% Large extent	34 or 68% To some extent	15 or 30% Not at all

Political Structure of Northern Cameroon

The political landscape of Northern Cameroon is complex and diverse. The region is home to many ethnic groups, each with its own traditions, languages, and political systems. The North and Far North regions are predominantly Muslim, while the Adamawa region is home to a mix of Muslim and Christian populations.

Politically, the region has been dominated by the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) party, which has held power in Cameroon since 1982. However, there have been growing calls for greater regional

autonomy and representation, particularly from the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, which include parts of the North and Southwest regions.

There have also been longstanding conflicts in the region, including separatist movements in the Northwest and Southwest regions and ongoing violence from the Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North. These conflicts have had a significant impact on the region's political landscape, with many communities feeling marginalised and disenfranchised.

Overall, the political landscape of Northern Cameroon is marked by a complex web of ethnic, religious, and regional identities, as well as ongoing challenges related to conflict and governance.

Security Analysis

The security situation in Northern Cameroon has been volatile in recent years, with ongoing conflicts and violence affecting different parts of the region. Here's a brief security analysis of the region:

The Far North region of Cameroon has been particularly affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, a spillover from neighbouring Nigeria. Boko Haram is a jihadist group that seeks to establish a caliphate in the Lake Chad basin region and has carried out numerous attacks on civilians, security forces, and infrastructure in Cameroon and other countries in the region. With support from international partners, the Cameroon military has been engaged in a counter-insurgency campaign against Boko Haram, which has successfully pushed the group back.

In addition to the Boko Haram insurgency, there have also been separatist movements in Cameroon's Northwest and Southwest regions, which have led to ongoing clashes between security forces and armed groups. Concerns over language, cultural rights, and political and economic marginalisation have partly driven the conflict. The Government has responded with a heavy-handed approach, including arrests and violent crackdowns, which have further inflamed tensions in the region.

Overall, the security situation in Northern Cameroon is complex and multifaceted, with a range of different actors and conflicts at play. A number of these mitigating factors are examined.

Baba Danpullo Conflicts

The arrival of Baba Danpullo, a businessman in Fundond, in 1986 led to a different dimension of farmer-grazer conflicts in the Northwest region of Cameroon. The Baba Danpullo Group operates in real estate, the agro-industry, transportation, telecommunications, media and trading of goods and commodities in Cameroon, South Africa, Nigeria, and Switzerland.

However, instead of working within the confines of the lands legally acquired from the state, the Baba Danpullo Group proceeded to displace hundreds of farmers and grazers from their lands. This triggered an increase in farmer-

grazer conflicts which meant tens of thousands of community members had to start living and working on limited available land. Baba Danpullo used intimidation tactics, harassment, and reprisals against those who dared to speak out, thereby fueling the situation.

In 2004 an inter-ministerial government commission discovered that 1335ha (hectares) of land Baba Danpullo was allotted was originally used as a transhumance corridor by the Mbororo community. He is said to have illegally expanded to include other villages, including Big Babanki, Bamessing, Babungo, and Njinikijem-Belo, displacing farmers who had used the land for decades without compensation.

Attempts by the local administrative authorities to remove Baba Danpullo from the illegally obtained land and compensate the victims failed. The Government of Cameroon established Baba Danpullo's role in blocking the implementation of administrative decisions using political and administrative influences to victimise detractors and complicating the implementation of administrative decisions in 2013.

Baba Danpullo may have been trying to privatise the Ndawara Alkali court which is a court of first instance and transform it into a criminal jurisdiction, based on witness statements. The Jani Commission concluded that it failed to review the statements due to a lack of time and competence and referred the matter to the local judiciary for follow-up. The conflict between the local communities of the villages Kedjom-Keku, Big Babanki, Mezam division, and Kom, Boyo Division and the Baba Danpullo group continue unabated.

Links with the Anglophone Crisis

Cameroon has long been regarded as a peaceful country, but it has faced numerous security challenges in recent years. The Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria split into Cameroon in 2009, and in 2016, the Anglophone Crisis broke out, creating a serious humanitarian crisis. The Fulani crisis is another problem that threatens to escalate into armed conflict if not addressed promptly.

The Fulani crisis revolves around land rights and the farmer-grazer conflict. Farmers in the North West Region have suffered significant losses due to grazers' cattle feeding on their farms and destroying their crops. This has led to unsparing attacks on the cattle, resulting in Fulani herdsmen (Mbororo) retaliating by burning houses and barns of foodstuffs in many villages and several arrests, detentions, and torture of farmers.

The violence escalated in 2018, with local communities in the North West and South West Regions creating self-defence militia groups to protect their communities. These groups later transformed into the "Ambazonia Restoration Forces," with leadership coordinated from the diaspora. The Mbororos initially tried to distance themselves from the struggle, but intermittent hostilities on the ground affected them, leading to collaboration

with the defence and security forces against the farmers and armed separatist groups.

The Fulani problem in the North West Region, particularly in the recent violence in Nwa Subdivision, Donga-Mantung Division, has seen many lives lost, property destroyed, and farmers displaced. The conflict in Nwa is an outburst of a longstanding battle between the native communities and the Fulani Communities revolving around farmland and grazing land. The Anglophone Crisis has contributed to the problem, with attacks by armed separatist fighters instilling a spirit of revenge in the Fulani and the Government's alleged complicity in using the Fulani against separatists.

The Government and the separatist fighters share responsibility for the Fulani conflict in the North West Region. The violence in Nwa has been attributed to Fulani mercenaries allegedly coming from the Adamawa Region north of Cameroon and some from neighbouring Nigeria. The report provides recommendations to stakeholders, including the Government, Fulani, and separatist fighters, on the steps needed to resolve the problem to avoid violence from the already-embroiled communities into other regions.

Violence has continued to occur in Menchum Division, with links to farmer-grazer conflicts, including the assassination of the Fon of Esu and his spouse by unknown armed men, and the inter-communal conflict between the Aku (Fulani) and the Aghem inhabitants, which left several civilians dead, others wounded, and property destroyed.

Inter-communal Conflict between the Arab Choa and the Mousgoum in the Far North Region of Cameroon

The Far North Region of Cameroon has also been experiencing inter-communal clashes between the Mousgoum and Arab Choa communities since 2021. These conflicts have resulted in the displacement of over 10,000 Cameroonians who sought refuge in Chad. Climate change, particularly desertification, has been identified as a major reason for the clashes.

The clashes resurfaced in June 2021 after the Arab Choa was provoked by a land dispute, leaving two people dead. In August 2021, similar violence between Choa herders and Mousgoum fishermen over a piece of land resulted in 30 deaths and 25 villages being razed in Logone-Birni in the Logone-et-Chari Division of the Far North Region.



On December 5, 2021, clashes broke out among fishermen, farmers, and cattle ranchers over the use of water in Logone-et-Chari. The Arab Choa accused the Mousgoum of digging holes beside the river, resulting in the death of their animals. The Mousgoum claimed the holes were dug to conserve water and lure their catch while accusing the Arab Choa of allowing their cattle to destroy fishing areas. The Massa farmers also accused the Arab Choa of allowing their cattle to destroy plantations.

The Massa and Mousgoum communities joined forces and attacked the Arab Choa cattle ranchers, leading to bloody clashes. The conflict on the first day left around nine dead, and more violent clashes occurred the following Tuesday evening. On Wednesday, December 8, the clashes intensified, resulting in the death of over 32 people and the displacement of more than 30,000 persons who sought refuge in neighbouring Chad.

The transitional Government of Chad has supported the refugees, with the Chadian First Lady visiting them on December 12, 2021. The Cameroonian Government sent the Far North Region a message expressing regret and extended financial assistance to the bereaved and injured families.

To avert further planned attacks, the Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) of Logone-et-Chari prohibited gathering more than ten persons at a time in Kousséri, Logone-Birni, and Zina Subdivisions.

The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) has called on the Cameroonian Government to initiate dialogue between the Arab Choa and Mousgoum communities to bring lasting peace. They also recommend instituting measures to combat desertification and climate change, such as digging wells, creating artificial ponds, and providing economic activities to empower indigenes and accelerate ongoing developmental projects. Clear and concise land stratification is also necessary to avoid land dispute contention.

CHAPTER 6

Research Methodology

Data Collection tools

The research methodology adopted and used in the course of this survey includes a desk review of relevant literature on the project locations, survey reports from development agencies and CSOs, Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews and the administration of Online Questionnaires to elicit information from relevant stakeholders on security, the economic situation, the political situation and also the socio-cultural mix of the project locations. The choice of KII and FGD has been informed by their suitability in enhancing interactions among the participants, which gives them the latitude to express their views openly and honestly. This also afforded the facilitator the opportunity to observe non-verbal communication to ensure adequate probe of the subject of discourse.

Sampling Methods and Size

The sampling methods explored the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The sampling also targeted the selection of key stakeholders that live in the project locations and have key roles to play in their communities of domicile. These include Traditional rulers, youth leaders, Women Leaders and other Key Individuals. Most of the sample population was interviewed through KIIs and Google Docs survey questionnaires.

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Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedures included the identification of stakeholders for KIIs and survey, the development of a tool to be used, the conduct of a desk review of relevant literature, the conduct of KIIs & FGDs, survey link shared, collation of online data, transcribing of KIIs, analysis of information gathered and report writing.

The KII interviews were recorded and transcribed, then analysed to form part of the general analysis of the information gathered. The feedback from the Google Docs forms was also analysed using charts where relevant to depict a pictorial presentation of the information gathered.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Information elicited from the FGDs and KII respondents was transcribed and used to inform the key findings. The data gathered through the survey tool was converted and sorted using Excel sheets to corroborate the KIIs.



Katsina-Ala Key Findings

A total of 50 respondents were identified and mobilised, spread across Women, Traditional Leaders, Youth, People Living with disabilities etc. Responses were obtained through an administered questionnaire, Key Individual Interviews, Focal group discussions etc. Below are the findings from the survey carried out in the project locations.

The Spot findings

There has been a recurring cycle of violent conflicts in Katsina-Ala- for some time. Communal crises, killings, kidnappings etc., characterise this violence. All or 100% of our respondents agree that there have been one or more violent conflicts in the Local Government Area—95%. Over 83 % of the respondents say the conflicts are often a mix of communal clashes, farmer/Herders and local gang wars. Over 98% also agree that such violent conflicts often record fatal injuries. Though no official statistics exist to give a precise figure, over 50% of the respondents put the figures above 200, while others estimate below 100.

All the respondents agree that properties were destroyed in the conflicts, but none could estimate in precise terms how many properties were destroyed in the conflicts. Sadly, no official figure exists to record such losses.



All the respondents agreed that Security agents intervened in the crises. 63% opined that the response was prompt, while 37% disagreed. 55% agree that security personnel committed Human Rights Violations, 20% disagreed, and 30% did not know whether security agents violated rights or not.

In the discharge of their duties in the community, 76% of the respondents said the security agents did not work with the community members. 20% felt they did, while 5% didn't know.

95% of the respondents said the security agencies did not keep the community updated on the progress of their intervention, while 2% said they did, and 3% did not know.

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Going forward, over 97% of the respondents desire more community security agencies interactions in times of conflict in their communities, while 3% do not see the need for anything different.

Tabular Representation of Relationship between Community and Security Agents – Katsina-Ala LGA

s/no	Question	Total no. of Respondents	Yes	No	Don't Know
1	Have there been conflicts in your LGA	50	50 or 100%	0 or 0%	0
2	Major Security Concerns in the Community?		35 or 70% communal clash, 10 or 20% Farmers/Herders, while 5 or 10% others		
3	Did the conflict record fatalities?	50	50 or 100 %	0 or 0%	0 or 0%
	Were properties destroyed	50	50 or 100 %	0 or 0%	0 or 0%

4	Did Security Agency(ies) intervene	50	50 or 100 %	0 or 0%	0 or 0%
5	Did the security personnel(s) commit Human Rights violation(s) during this time	50	27 or 54%	10 or 20%	13 or 26%
6	Did the security agency work with the community in addressing the conflict	50	10 or 20%	38 or 76%	2 or 4%

Guma LGA Key Findings

Political Analysis

Out of the 50 (nos.) persons interviewed from the five classifications of stakeholders, ranging from Youths, Adults, Women, People living with disability and Security Agencies, there was a unanimous consensus that there is a dual leadership structure in Guma local government area of the state. This structure ranges from political to traditional leadership systems.

The Political structure is headed by a Local government Chairman, who is the repository of all executive powers within the local government area, dispensing both political and executive duties. The Local Government Chairman is elected into office through a political party platform for a period of 2 years. The Chairman heads the administrative system of the local Government. He is assisted by elected ward councillors who double as legislative council structure.

The second structure is the traditional leadership system, headed by the Ter Guma, a second-class chief appointed by the Governor through the Bureau of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs. The Ter Guma administers his powers through the council of other traditional rulers responsible for peacebuilding, preservation of culture and tradition and other related functions. Both leadership structures work in synergy and cohesive units to cause either change or development in the communities.

Out of the 50 respondents interviewed, 47 or 94% think that both the local government Chairman and traditional rulers can effect changes and determine situations at the grassroots by their actions or inactions. 2 persons or 4 % responded negatively, while one person or 2% was, totally indifferent to whether the political/leadership structure has any effect in the community.

CHAPTER 7

Recommendations

From the situational analysis of the project areas, recommendations have been distilled as follows:

1. **Dialogue:** The Government should initiate dialogue between farmers and herders, bringing both parties to the negotiating table. This would enable them to air their grievances and find common ground for peaceful coexistence. The dialogue should be conducted in a neutral and safe environment, involving relevant stakeholders, including traditional rulers, community leaders, and civil society organisations. A general recommendation that is found in the various reports from local farmers and Mbororo associations and organisations is the need for dialogue platforms.⁵ These systems have been tested in more than 20 villages in the Northwest region of Cameroon. Dialogue platform leaders were male and female herders and farmers elected democratically by the communities. They lead the dialogue process and mediate between herders and farmers when conflicts related to agro-pastoral resources arise. In addition to reducing conflicts between herders and farmers, this approach has effectively led to negotiated and shared use of agro-pastoral resources and, consequently, a more peaceful cohabitation of the beneficiary communities.⁶ This could also be replicated in Nigeria with similar success rates.
2. **Communication between Security Agencies and Communities:** A large section of the respondents referred to bias on the part of security agencies. Therefore, a need to involve the community in the process of community policing. This would also foster mutual trust and facilitate cooperation, yielding positive outcomes.
3. **Establishing Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:** The Government should establish conflict resolution mechanisms that are accessible, impartial, and effective. These mechanisms could include mediation, arbitration, and conciliation. They should be designed to address the root causes of the conflicts and provide lasting solutions.

5 See, e.g. in See, e.g. in https://d3o3cb4w253x5q.cloudfront.net/media/documents/ilc_case_study_0066_cameroon_en.pdf and See, e.g. in http://capacityfordevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/21092015_Report-to-Governor_r2.pdf, <http://capacityfordevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NCHRF-NW-antenna-May-2017.pdf>, which covers examples in more than 20 villages in the Northwest region.

6 Ibid.

4. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** The Government should invest in education and awareness campaigns to promote peaceful coexistence between farmers and herders. This would involve sensitizing both parties on the need to respect each other's rights and livelihoods and the importance of peaceful conflict resolution.
5. **Re-establishing/Creating Grazing Reserves:** The creation of grazing reserves would mitigate frequent clashes as herders shift from traditional methods of animal husbandry to modern methods. This could include training in modern farming and livestock management practices, provision of basic infrastructure such as water, roads, and health facilities, and access to credit facilities. This would reduce the competition for scarce resources and promote peaceful coexistence.
6. **Acknowledging the Importance of all Stakeholders:** To successfully restore peace in conflict-prone communities, everybody must be involved in the process. In many instances, youth are side-lined owing to cultural beliefs that elders are wiser and should play a greater role in decision-making. In reality, though, youth play a vital role in the administration of the affairs in these communities and are major community gatekeepers, even when not formally accorded that distinction. Most of the active participants in these conflicts tend to be young men. Their part in the peacebuilding process must be recognised if success is to be achieved.
Young, well-educated, and meaningfully engaged people are less likely to take up arms against each other.
7. **Reduce Extreme Poverty:** While poverty cannot be completely eradicated, the point needs to be made that extreme/abject poverty can be ameliorated with adequate political will. This would involve ensuring that the resource distribution process is as seamless as possible and that social support mechanisms are instituted at the grassroots level. This would reduce crimes like cattle rustling, land grabbing and general banditry to a minimum.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

This project by Lawyers Alert (LA) and the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) is relevant and timely as it seeks to reduce the incidences of rights violations by security agents in times of conflict in Benue State and Nigeria. This is an essential step towards resolving the security challenges in Nigeria and neighbouring Cameroon.

The Government needs to take the lead in establishing proactive measures to address the root causes of the insecurity in these conflict-prone areas, such as creating platforms for dialogue; sensitising the public; reducing extreme poverty; establishing grazing reserves and teaching farmers and herders modern techniques.

A highly structured and multi-pronged approach to resolving these crises would yield peaceful coexistence among warring factions.

