CONFLICT ASSESSMENT OF NIGERIA

CHRIS OGUNBANJO FOUNDATION

+2348109468263
info@thechrisogunbanjofoundation.org
www.thechrisogunbanjofoundation.org
Ground Floor, 3 Hospital Road, Onikan, Lagos
PEACE WITH STRENGTH

+2348109468263
info@thechrisogunbanjofoundation.org
www.thechrisogunbanjofoundation.org
Ground Floor, 3 Hospital Road, Onikan, Lagos
THE CHRIS OGUNBANJO FOUNDATION
The Chris Ogunbanjo Foundation is a charitable, non-governmental organization (NGO) established to carry out the objects in its charter under its two centers:

1. The Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution
2. The Center for the Promotion of Industrial Society and Private Enterprise

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

- To promote the achievement of a stable society through the analysis of conflict causes and resolution of the same
- To promote and sponsor the development of science and technology-based education for the attainment of an industrial society in Nigeria
- To sponsor and promote academic research and scholarship primarily in the field of education
- To collaborate with relevant government departments, statutory bodies, organized private sectors etc., for carrying out research into all aspects of government policies and measures affecting the economy of Nigeria.

THE CENTER FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Peace and conflict resolution involve:

- Identifying patterns and trends of conflict areas
- Understanding violent and non-violent behaviors that contribute towards conflict and insecurity in the society
- Finding opportunities for peace building and mediation
- Measuring the impact of the programs and activities.

The Chris Ogunbanjo Foundation’s Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution focuses on supporting activities that encourage peace building and conflict resolution across Nigeria. The foundation’s support can come in many ways including;

- Sponsoring research papers
- Conflict assessments of various geographic areas
- Workshops and training programs that improve citizens’ understanding of mediation, peace building and non-violent methods of conflict resolution
- Donation to Direct Impact Organizations that actively run programs which directly support otherwise conflict prone persons and communities

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This brief assessment was written in collaboration with Bulwark Intelligence Solutions Limited. The Nigerian Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution’s 2016 reports on the Strategic Conflict Assessment of Nigeria (Consolidated and Zonal Reports) served as a literature review guide and provided a solid backdrop and reference point utilized for this assessment report.

Published 2018
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nigeria today is plagued with conflicts across various parts of the country. Many research documents have been written on the causes of conflict in Nigeria. However, the main conflict drivers in Nigeria can be grouped into socio-economic, socio-cultural, political and environmental drivers. Socio-economic drivers are said to be the underlying cause of most conflicts in Nigeria, as conflict is mostly triggered by the need to partake in or control scarce resources.

- Socio-cultural drivers are a principal cause of conflict in Nigeria as its premise is on giving prominence to the differences between various groups within the society.
- Political drivers of conflict are among the deadliest and most infuriated because it is based largely on the exploitation of a heterogenous, marginalized, impoverished and unknowledgeable populous for political gains.
- Environmental conflict drivers are a recent and emerging conflict threat. Every region in Nigeria and almost every state in the federation has reported cases of environment-related conflicts; mostly in the form of herder-farmer conflict.

The nature of conflict in Nigeria varies from region to region;

- The North-West geo-political zone deals mainly with politico-religious conflicts and crime-induced conflict.
- The North-East geo-political zone is faced with terrorism. This is primarily due to the Boko Haram insurgency. There are other causes of conflict which are seldom reported due to the overwhelming focus on the insurgency. Youth restiveness was also identified as a major conflict cause in the region.
- The North-Central geo-political region is primarily socio-economic (resource based) and socio-cultural (ethnic- identity based). The Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and eastern Middle Belt states (Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau) suffer Ethnic and Ethno-religious conflicts, land and boundary disputes, herder-farmer conflicts and crime-based conflicts.
- Western Middle Belt states (Niger, Kogi, Kwara) face chieftaincy tussles, inter cult/gang clashes and political conflicts.
- The South-South geo-political zone also referred to as the Niger Delta, is burdened with Armed Non-State Actor groups manifesting as oil insurgencies and crime-based conflicts. Being a region surrounded with large water bodies, piracy is commonly practiced.
- The South-East geo-political zone experiences conflicts traceable to the struggle for political, social and economic leverage. The region suffers from land and communal boundary disputes, community leadership conflicts, political conflicts, thuggery, youth restiveness and crime-related conflicts.
- According to the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, the South West geo-political zone accounted for the lowest incidences of violent conflicts compared to the other zones. Ekiti state experiences primarily political related conflicts. Ondo state reported cases of Herder-Farmer conflicts but is still dubbed one of the more peaceful states in the federation. Oyo state reported Herder-Farmer conflict as a major source of conflict in the state. Osun state reported communal conflicts, chieftaincy tussles, land ownership disputes and boundary conflicts. Ogun state’s proximity to Lagos and Oyo states expose it to some of the conflict challenges affecting...
those states. The state reported conflict issues involving land grabbers, but most reported conflicts in Ogun state happen to be more crime-induced.

- Lagos state being the most populous and most prosperous state in Nigeria, is attractive to many people who have immigrated into the state from within and outside Nigeria. The wealth disparity in the state makes Lagos prone to crime-induced conflicts. It is important to note that despite the myriad of conflicts and security challenges facing the state, the Lagos state government have put in place considerable security initiatives and institutions that have been effective in confronting, combating, curbing and responding to conflict and insecurity. All factors considered, Lagos is still listed as one of the most peaceful states within the federation.

The Herder-Farmer conflict is said to be the major source of conflict across the South Western states. In Ondo state, the herdsmen have been accused by farmers of leaving the cattle rearing to their little children who carelessly release the animals on to their farmlands. In Oyo, the farmers claimed that herder attacks are deliberate economic sabotage as the herdsmen consciously avoid grazing their cattle on farmlands owned by other herdsmen. Farmers in Oyo state identified two demographics of herdsmen operating in their region as Bororo Herders and Ilorin Herders. The Bororo herdsmen originated from outside Nigeria, are identified as the more violent group and account for rapists on farmlands with the aim of humiliating and displacing them. Unfortunately, the Ilorin herdsmen have recently begun displaying increased aggression towards the farmers.

In Osun, the herdsmen were also classified into three distinct demographics:

- Local herdsmen who are indigenous cattle rearers, peaceful and are often married to locals.
- Newly Settled Bororo Herdsmen who are from neighbouring countries. They do not speak any local Nigerian dialect and tend to be violent and unreasonable.
- Migrant Bororo Herdsmen who are dangerous and emotionally erratic.

Farmers in Ogun state identified several causes of Herder-Farmer conflicts including:

- The Sarkin Herdsmen from Northern Nigeria bring in close to 500,000 cattle to the area to graze. In addition, another 250,000 come to the area from outside Nigeria including Mali, Chad and Niger Republic. This large invasion of cattle puts a lot of strain on the farmlands.
- Younger herdsmen are sent out with 200-300 cattle and have no control over them. This leads to the destruction of farmlands.
- The cattle are led to drink from the streams that locals rely on for their daily living. The massive invasion of cattle dries up the streams to the fury of the locals.

With the plethora of conflict drivers that plague the nation, conflict resolution strategies must be approached with multifaceted mitigation measures. This means multiple governmental and non-governmental agencies, ministries, departments and stakeholders are needed to ensure sustainable solutions to conflict within the society. This conflict assessment report shows that most conflicts across the country are socio-economically driven. Elevated levels of poverty, illiteracy, and clamor for control of scarce resources are major conflict drivers. Also identified are the restive youths across the country that are being exploited to participate in conflict or get involved in crime as a means of survival.
Philanthropies can alleviate some of the socio-economic drivers of conflict by supporting programs which address socio-economic challenges in Nigeria such as education. They can also help alleviate socio-cultural drivers by supporting programs which address negative narratives in Nigeria such as:

- Promotion of history and the preservation of culture and heritage
- Journalism training for sensitive reporting and peace promoting narratives
- Conflict resolution skill building trainings.

Philanthropies can alleviate some of the environmental drivers of conflict by supporting programs which address farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria such as:

- Funding grazing reserves and other modern day agricultural and cattle rearing solutions
- Provide support for programs and organizations that promote dialogue, conflict resolution and support the study of other emerging conflict threats across the country.

**METHODOLOGY**

This paper was put together through a qualitative study of other assessments conducted on the causes of conflict in Nigeria. A literature review of the 2016 Strategic Conflict Assessment provided a foundational model for information. The SCA utilized workshops, dialogue sessions, community visits, quantitative and qualitative data to form the basis of its review. The author’s observations, interviews, discussions and analysis of the situation across various ministries, departments and security agencies also reflect in the report.

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC**

Socio-economic drivers are said to be the underlying cause of most conflicts in Nigeria, as conflict is mostly triggered by the need to partake of or control scarce resources. Nigeria’s dependence on oil has created a mono-economy that has triggered poverty and inequality as all states in the federation depend on oil revenue handouts from the federal government to fund their government operations. This has led to lack of access to basic services. According to reports, poverty rate is 72% in the north, 27% in the south and 35% in the Niger Delta area (Herbert and Husaini 2018). The government in most northern states have been ineffective in providing sufficient infrastructure, basic needs, education or healthcare for their citizens.

In addition to these, the poor economic growth has led to increased unemployment among young Nigerians. Nigeria is experiencing a phenomenon termed “youth bulge” where 44% of its 180 million population is under the age of 15. This large and growing number of youth who are not actively engaged in employment or education easily turn to violent crime and conflict as a means of relevance and existence. Low employment levels of Nigerian youth are result from two factors;

- A high number of youth are “unemployable’ due to their lack of education or skills and poor work ethics.
- The persistently poor socio-economic policies have not encouraged job creation in the country.

**SOCIO-CULTURAL DRIVERS**

Nigeria is home to 250 ethnic groups and 500 different languages and dialects. Socio-cultural drivers run across the overlapping ethnic, religious, and communal fault lines.
Religion is a main conflict driver in Nigeria and has been the cause of most deadly conflicts in Nigeria. In 1914, the British colonial government amalgamated the two Nigerian regions – the predominantly Muslim northern region and the predominantly Christian southern region. Since the amalgamation, there have been violent clashes ignited by differences in religious ideologies and intolerance. Nigerian Historians report that the British were aware of the danger of rival ethnic and religious groups fighting one another for power and resources leading to the possibility of ethnic cleansing. However, they proceeded to develop the Richards Constitution designed to promote the unity of Nigeria (Punch Editorial 2016). The military era of Nigeria repressed feelings of ethnic discontent and often opted to use force in dealing with this issue but sadly worsened the problem.

Religiously inspired radical Islamist movements tend to occur in the northern region of Nigeria. Notable incidents include the Maitatsine uprising of the 1980s involving a fanatical Islamic sect who held anti-government views and carried out violent attacks on security authorities across various states in northern Nigeria (Danjibo n.d.). The early 2000s also experienced religion-related conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Northern Nigeria with the initial establishment of Sharia law in some northern Nigerian states. The most recent religious conflict ongoing in Nigeria today is the Boko Haram insurgency that has been ongoing since 2009.

Boko Haram is a terrorist organization that operates primarily out of North-Eastern Nigeria. The official name of the group is Jama'atu Ahlis Suna Lidda'awati Wal Jihad (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad) (Oyewole 2015). The name Boko Haram which literally means “western education is a sin” (Boyle 2009), was given to the group by the locals based on the group’s philosophy and ideological mission which is to “overthrow the Nigerian State and impose strict Islamic Sharia Law in the entire country” (Onuoha 2012).

Although the group claims religious ideologies and motivation, their operations and activities point more to a terrorist organization seeking to cause havoc and destruction as some of their attacks are on their fellow Muslims. What makes religious conflicts such as Boko Haram attacks particularly deadly is the willingness of perpetrators to carry out widescale harm on innocent civilians, all in the name of their beliefs.

Ethno-related conflicts are a foundational cause of conflict in Nigeria particularly in large heterogeneous populations such as the middle belt. Ethno-religious conflicts involve groups that have religion as an integral part of their social and cultural life where conflicting groups define themselves along their ethnicity and religion (iproject 2016).

Ethnicity is a social phenomenon that is manifested in interactions among individuals of different ethnic groups within a political system where language and culture are the most prominent attributes (ÇANCI and ODUKOYA 2016). They are particularly heightened in Nigeria because most Nigerians are made to view their identities in the context of their ethnic nationalities, driven by their core values which could occasionally be at variance with national values (Turaki n.d.).

While ethnic conflicts are usually about one ethnic group pitched against another to address land disputes or marginalization, ethno-religious conflicts converge on ethnic and religious lines. These tend to elicit the most violent crisis in the country and resolution is often a challenge as it must overcome identity and ideological hurdles.
There have been several examples of fatal ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria including the Jos insurrection of 2001 triggered by cattle grazing and control over farmlands. The conflict pitched indigenous Christian Berom people against the Hausa-Fulani Muslim population (Punch Editorial 2016). There was also the conflict in Sagamu, Ogun state which later had ripple effects in Kano, after Hausa women in Oro were accused of coming outside while the cultists were in the middle of their religious practice. The arguments escalated to Yoruba-Hausa clash that left many dead in Sagamu, with reprisal attacks in Kano (ÇANCI and ODUKOYA 2016).

**POLITICAL DRIVERS**

Politicians often rely on ethnicity, religion and regionalism to elicit voter support. Often, the restive populace chooses its preferred candidate along these conflict driver fault lines and when their candidate of choice does not win, their displeasure is displayed by violent protests and riots. A recent example of this was the violent conflict that broke out following the loss of Muhammadu Buhari to Goodluck Jonathan during the 2011 elections. Aggrieved Buhari supporters claimed the elections were rigged, a narrative that sparked a riot across 12 northern states, claiming the lives of 800 people (Herbert and Husaini 2018).

Politics in Nigeria is viewed as a “do or die” affair and most states within the federation especially the North-Western states take politics very seriously and as a result often report political conflicts. These are manifested in inter and intra party conflicts. Politics is of particular importance to most Northern states because the politician or political party in power controls the minimal resources available. In essence, politics is mostly about resource control, showing socio-economic factors as the underlying drivers of political conflict.

Most political conflicts in Nigeria are triggered by the frequent use of a largely unemployed and uneducated youth population as political weapons. This group of people are also known as “political thugs.” Politicians pay them to cause instability right before and during election campaign seasons. These thugs are armed ahead of the election season and tasked to hunt down or suppress political rivals. However, after the election season and after the politicians have no further use of their political thugs, these armed youths turn to criminal activities such as armed robbery as a means of survival.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DRIVERS**

Environmental conflict drivers are a recent and emerging conflict threat. Every region in Nigeria and in almost every state of the federation have reported cases of environment-related conflicts which occur in form of herder-farmer conflict. The herder-farmer conflict is mostly triggered by increasingly scarce land and water resources. This scarcity has seen a burgeoning Nigerian population turn previous cattle grazing routes into farmlands and a new generation of herders armed with free-flowing weapons from the Sahel, in need of greener pastures due to desertification and encroachment of their usual routes. The herders and farmers attack one another, leading to fatalities and displaced farmers. This has increased the threat of food insecurity.

Another environmental conflict in Nigeria is triggered by the oil spills and environmental pollution in the Niger Delta. Locals in the oil producing states of the Niger Delta have complained that oil spills caused by burst pipelines and vandalism are not promptly dealt with by the government or the oil companies. These continuous oil spills have led to the destruction of their rivers, fishes and lands. This has a devastating socio-economic impact on the people who are no longer able to fish and farm for a living.
With a high uneducated youth population, many have turned to violent crimes and conflicts in protest of their marginalization and as a means of survival.

While oil spills have affected the livelihood of Nigerian farmers and fishermen in the Niger Delta, climate change, particularly desertification is also affecting the livelihood of farmers and herders in Northern Nigeria. The impact is an increasing rate of unemployment and poverty, coupled with a high restive youth population. This conflict driver, if not adequately taken care of will inevitably lead to an increase in conflict and instability.

**STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF CONFLICT**

Structural causes of conflict refer to those structures, agencies, collective and individual actions and inactions which are determining factors of violent conflict (Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution 2016). These structural causes are broken down into; security related manifestations, political manifestations, economic manifestations, social manifestations.

**SECURITY RELATED MANIFESTATION OF CONFLICT**

**Armed Non-State Actors (ANSAs)** - There are numerous ANSAs across the country. This group of people came to be due to the inability of security agencies to effectively maintain internal peace, security and stability in the interior of Nigeria and along the country’s borders. Many communities and even ethnic groups have adapted to this development by creating vigilante or militia groups for the purpose of defending their interests and territories from external attacks. Notable groups of this kind are:

- The Fulani Militia, Berom Militia, Tarok Militia and Ombatse in the North Central;
- Odua People’s Congress (OPC) in the South West;
- Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and Boko Haram in the North East;
- Niger Delta Avengers in the South-South and many others across Nigeria.

They typically start off with the promise of protecting the interest of the people. Some evolve and turn around to attack the same people they were intended to protect as well as government security forces.

Poor border controls have strengthened the existence of ANSAs as there is increased flow of weapons into Nigeria. Research shows that there are 100 million weapons in circulation in Sub-Saharan Africa and of that number, 8-10 million are in West Africa (The Peace and Security Forum 2017). The flow of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) into Nigeria has redefined security-related manifestations of conflict across Nigeria.

**Local Gangs** - While most militias take root in the largely ungoverned hinterlands of the country, local/neighbourhood gangs have been springing up across the urban cities in various states across Nigeria. Many of them originate from or eventually open up chapters across various states. For example, the “one million boys” gang operated in various states across the south west region. Other such gangs include the Yandaba from Niger state, Badoo from Lagos and Ogun state, Sara Suka operating in Plateau, Kaduna and Gombe states, Skolombo Boys in Cross River and many more.

These groups typically start off as youth groups, evolve into neighbourhood cults and eventually regional gangs. They actively participate in turf wars and gang clashes that lead to destruction of lives and properties of the locals residing within their territories.
POLITICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF CONFLICT
These political manifestations of conflict include election-related conflicts, inter and intra party conflicts, politico-religious conflicts and self-determination or seceding agitations. According to the 2016 Strategic Conflict Assessment of Nigeria report, there has been a notable reduction of election related violence, likely owing to the introduction of PVCs (Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution 2016). In addition, there has been a reduction or weakening influence of political strongmen across the country, further diminishing political assassinations, violence and tensions.

Politico-religious conflicts are characterized by religious conflicts with underlying political agendas. Examples of these are the Boko Haram insurgency which is an entity seeking to impose its religious ideology on political affairs. Another example is the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) or Shiite group as popularly known, which desired to exist as a parallel state in Nigeria and often clashed with state political authorities (Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution 2016). Secession groups such as MASSOB and IPOB were recent political manifestations of conflict in Nigeria, as the groups were seeking to secede from Nigeria and establish Biafra.

ECONOMIC MANIFESTATIONS OF CONFLICT
One of the main economic manifestations of conflict in Nigeria is labour protests. Due to insufficient and mismanaged state economic resources, many states struggle to pay salaries of their workers. As such, several labour protests occur as a display of displeasure of the status quo. Conflict over natural resources is another form of economic conflict. Farmer-Herder conflicts is an example as groups fight over scarce land resources.

Other resource conflicts typically occur in states that boast natural resources such as precious stones which are illegally mined by local gangs. They also manifest as communal clashes between oil producing communities where land ownership is disputed particularly in communities with new oil discoveries.

SOCIAL MANIFESTATIONS OF CONFLICT
Social manifestations of conflict are deeply entrenched in the fabric of Nigeria due to its large diverse population. Differences in ethnicity, religion, region, dialects and so on create different moral codes among the populace. Ethnic, ethno-religious, religious and communal conflicts are forms of social manifestations of conflict. Boundary and land disputes, indigene-settler conflicts, chieftaincy tussle, youth-constituted authority clashes.

CONFLICT ASSESSMENT OF VARIOUS REGIONS IN NIGERIA
Nigeria has experienced various forms of conflict since the 1914 amalgamation referred to by some Nigerians as the “Mistake of 1914” (Punch Editorial 2016). This however is an unfair analysis of the foundational cause of conflict as the amalgamation sought to promote the unity of Nigeria. Defining moments such as the post-independence military era, the civil war, the discovery of oil, the emergence of democracy and now the challenge of climate change have all contributed to conflict in Nigeria.

The nature of conflict varies depending on the region. This section takes a brief review of conflict drivers and actors across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.
NORTH WEST
The states that make up the North-West geo-political zone are: Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara. The people are mostly into farming and livestock production.

The region is faced with;
  - Inter and intra party conflicts
  - Politico-religious conflicts such as the ethnic conflicts predominant between Muslim Hausa and Christian minority ethnic groups
  - Communal clashes
  - Inter and intra religious conflicts such as between the Shiites and other Islamic sects
  - Herder-farmer conflicts.

These were reported in all states within the region.

Politico-cultural conflicts take the following forms;
- Chieftaincy disputes and locals complaining of traditional leaders being imposed on them
- Political thuggery and politically induced civil unrest
- Boundary disputes as well as hijack of lands by influential individuals
- Trade group conflicts involving tussles between the National Union of Road Transport Workers, Tanker Drivers’ Union and Market Associations
- Crime-induced conflicts such as cattle rustling, kidnapping, armed robbery, rural banditry
- Border conflict permitted by porous borders, illegal smuggling, proliferation of small arms and light weapons
- Social problems resulting from a youth bulge, increased drug addition, high unemployment rate

NORTH EAST
The states that make up the North-East geo-political zone are: Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Taraba and Yola. The zone is well known for agriculture, livestock and forestry. The main occupations of the people are farming, herding and fishing.

Problems facing the region are:
- Terrorism primarily due to the Boko Haram insurgency. There are other causes of conflict which are seldom reported due to the overwhelming focus on the insurgency.

Other conflict manifestations include;
- Ethnic and ethno-linguistic conflict (the region is significantly diverse and the artificially carved borders further complicate ethnic and cultural groups due to clashing values).
- Communal clashes
- Porous Borders and proliferation of SALW
- Indigene-settler claims
- Farmer-Herder conflicts
- IDP community conflicts
- Ethno-religious conflicts
- Land and boundary disputes
- Election and post-election violence
- Inter and Intra faith conflicts
Youth restiveness is a major source of conflict in the region and the youths are often visible and very active. Gang related violence, rape, robbery, banditry, kidnapping, abduction are all activities of the restive youths in the region.

**NORTH CENTRAL**
The states in the North-Central geo-political zone (also referred to as the Middle Belt) are: Kwara, Kogi, Niger, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. 80% of the population derive their income from agriculture (Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution 2016). The nature of conflict in the region is primarily socio-economic (resource based) and socio-cultural (ethnic-identity based).

Abuja and eastern Middle Belt states (Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau) face ethnic clashes, religious violence, ethno-religious conflicts, indigene-settler disputes, land and boundary disputes and herder-farmer conflicts. Crime based conflicts such as cattle rustling, rape of female farmers, kidnapping, proliferation of SALW. Results of conflicts include increased Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), community conflicts, looming food insecurity, increased unemployment rates due to attacks on schools and communities.

The western Middle Belt states (Niger, Kogi, Kwara) are confronted with chieftaincy tussles, boundary and land disputes (especially as a result of resource discovery), farmer-herder conflicts, inter cult/gang clashes, political conflicts arising from legislature/executive clashes, youth restiveness and rebellion against constitutional (traditional, governmental and religious) authorities.

**SOUTH SOUTH**
The states that make up the South-South’s geo-political zone (also referred to as the Niger Delta) are: Edo, Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, and Cross River. The region is rich in hydro-carbon deposits which boost the nation’s economy, but not the region’s. Agriculture and fishing are the main occupations of the people within those communities. Sadly, the discovery of oil and the resultant environmental degradation has affected their livelihoods.

Major issues of concern in the region are Armed Non-State Actor groups, youth restiveness, youth rebellion against traditional rulers, chieftaincy tussles, land disputes, communal clashes, cultism/gangsterism, political issues, economic conflicts, protests, farmer-herder conflicts, self-determination or secession agitations from the Bakassi/Cameroon communities and proliferation of SALW.

Crime based conflicts are also rife in the region and include kidnapping, armed robbery, vandalism, sea piracy, oil bunkering, clashes with security forces, assassinations, political violence and electoral conflicts.

**SOUTH EAST**
The states that make up the South-Eastern geo-political zone are: Imo, Abia, Anambra, Enugu and Ebonyi. The region boasts agriculture, trade and commerce as its economic mainstay. As a result of these factors, there is rapid urbanization and high population density in major cities. However, the infrastructure and social services remain inadequate, leading to several conflict inducing issues traceable to the struggle for political, social and economic leverage.

The region is faced with: land ownership disputes and communal boundary disputes as a result of discovered natural resources, indigene-settler conflicts, biased historical narratives, farmer-herder
conflicts, ethno-religious resentment as a result of the farmer-herder clashes, chieftaincy tussles, community leadership conflicts, political conflicts, thuggery and youth restiveness.

Other problems are protests in reaction to government policies, cultism and gangsterism (resulting from oil discovery) and secession agitations. Crime related conflicts include armed robbery, rape, murder and attacks on communities.

CONFLICT ASSESSMENT OF SOUTH-WEST STATES OF NIGERIA
The states that make up the South West geo-political zone are: Lagos, Ekiti, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, and Osun. The main occupations of the people in the region are agriculture, trade and commerce. The geo-political zone accounted for the lowest incidences of violent conflicts compared to the other zones (Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution 2016).

EKITI STATE
Ekiti state experiences primarily political related conflicts and herder-farmer conflicts. Political divisions within the state is rife leading to rampant political violence especially during election season. Like many other Nigerian states, there is youth restiveness which contributes to electoral violence as the youth are used as political thugs.

There are also reported incidences of group conflicts between the National Union of Road Transport Workers and Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (NURTW/RTEAN). These conflicts are politically motivated. Poor economic opportunities in the state brings a rise in crime (notable is cyber-crime referred to as yahoo plus).

Herder-farmer conflicts have been reported in the state along with rape of females residing in the areas affected by the herder-farmer crisis. There have been reports of non-violent disputes within the traditional institution (between the Olukere and the Ogoga in Ikere-Ekiti).

ONDO
Ondo state reported cases of herder-farmer conflicts, boundary disputes, chieftaincy tussles, electoral violence, civil protests and crime. It is albeit still dubbed one of the more peaceful states in the federation.

The herder-farmer conflict is said to be the major source of disputes in the state in recent times as 65% of the state is employed in the agrarian sector. Akoko North-East, North-West, South-East and Akure North are the most affected local government areas. In Ogbeda and Igbara-Oke in Ifedore Local Government Areas of the state, farmers were reported to be displaced from their farmlands by armed herdsmen. In addition to the farmer-herder conflicts were cases of rape of female farmers.

The herdsmen have been accused by farmers of leaving the cattle rearing to their little children who carelessly release the animals on to their farmlands. Criminal threats in the state are cyber-crimes and ritual killings. There have also been reports of armed robbery attacks from herdsmen along the Kogi state boundary.
OYO
Oyo state reported cases of herder-farmer conflicts, cult related violence perpetuated by students, gang violence by omo-oniles, miner-community conflicts, labor disputes between state workers and the state government, group conflicts involving the National Union of Road Transport Workers.

The herder-farmer conflict was widely reported as a major source of conflict in Oyo state. The most affected locations were Shaki, Iseyin, Eruwa, Igboora, Lanlate, Igangan, Oke-Ogun and Ibarapa. The farmers claimed herder attacks are deliberate economic sabotage as the herders consciously avoided grazing their cattle on farmlands owned by other herdsmen.

Continuous herdsmen attacks are increasing cases of forced migration or displacement of local farming communities. Farmers in Oyo state identified two demographics of herdsmen operating in their region as Bororo Herders and Ilorin Herders.

The police and community leaders in Oyo have been actively involved in preventing herder-farmer conflicts from escalating by responding to incident reports and compelling the herdsmen to pay for the destroyed farmlands. Farmers claim that this response does not entirely solve the problem as the herdsmen make partial payments and refuse to pay in full. In cases where they do pay in full, they return to the compensated farmland and further plunder it.

OSUN
Osun state reported cases of herder-farmer conflicts, inter-communal conflicts, chieftaincy tussles, land ownership disputes and boundary conflicts. Like the other aforementioned South West states, Osun also reported herder-farmer conflicts. The herdsmen were also classified into the three distinct demographics earlier mentioned in this paper.

The government and traditional institutions in the state have also been proactive in curbing conflict triggers across the state by convening stakeholders for dialogue among other conflict resolution activities.

OGUN
Ogun state’s proximity to Lagos and Oyo states exposes it to some of the challenges affecting those states. The state struggles with chieftaincy tussles, land grabbers (Omo-Onile, Eru-Iku, Tobalase), herder-farmer conflicts, inter and intra party rivalry, group conflicts between the National Union of Road Transport Workers and other groups.

The most reported conflict in Ogun state happens to be more crime-related. Ogun state reported criminal incidents of militancy, pipeline vandalism, oil bunkering, kidnapping, rape and armed robbery. Ogun state also deals with border-related crimes as it hosts Idiroko and Seme border towns, which are two of the most volatile international border communities in South West Nigeria. This proximity to international borders exposes the state to conflicts associated with armed non-state actors, proliferation of SALW and smuggling cartels who smuggle in Tokunbo (fairly used) cars.

The farmer-herder conflicts in Ogun state mostly affects Yewa land. Farmers in Ogun state identified several sources of farmer-herders conflicts which are similar to those mentioned by farmers in other south west states.
One of the major criminal activity recorded in Ogun state is said to originate from “Ijaw boys”; a moniker given to indigenes of the Niger Delta. The locals explained that these people migrate to the state through the creeks. They are said to be responsible for militancy, pipeline vandalism, oil bunkering, kidnapping and rape.

Tokunbo car drivers and smuggling cartels also threaten the peace of the state. These armed groups drive the smuggled vehicles across the border recklessly while shooting sporadically. Many locals have lost their lives during the crossfire between security forces and smugglers.

Another major source of conflict identified in Ogun state is the Omo-Onile menace. Omo-Onile means “Land owner.” They are local thugs who instigate land disputes with the intent of making money. The rapid urbanization of Lagos has brought about increased demand for more affordable land and housing in neighbouring Ogun state. This increased demand brought about their rise. Omo-Onile conflicts can also be linked to youth restiveness as youth, cultists and street touts make up the Omo-Onile workforce.

Other actors in this land grabbing conflicts include “Eru-Iku” who are hired personnel from the stock of highly aggressive jobless youth between the ages of 18-40 years who take on part time jobs of fighting, militarism, defense and security of others for a fee. The “Tobalase” on the other hand, is a rivalry group to Eru-Iku. They utilize SALW and local charms to conduct their activities and get their financial gains from the sale of land.

Infrastructural and social development have not kept up the pace with population increase in Ogun state which is caused by increased urbanization of Lagos. The lack of adequate healthcare, education, power supply, jobs and other needs of the populace push able-bodied citizens of the state into conflict activities as a means of survival.

LAGOS
Lagos state is the most populous state in Nigeria with an approximated 20 million people forming its population. It is the most prosperous state in Nigeria, making it attractive to many people who have immigrated into the state from within and outside Nigeria. Due to the wealth disparity in the state which sees the spectrum go from the very wealthy to the extremely poor, Lagos is prone to a number of crime-induced conflicts.

Lagos state deals with crime-induced conflicts, youth restiveness (as a result of high levels of youth unemployment), land grabbing disputes, oil-related conflicts, inter-ethnic clashes, cultism, political conflicts, gangsterism termed “area boys” (local touts), leadership tussle, group conflicts involving the National Union of Road Transport Workers and other groups.

Conflict in Lagos ranges from oil-related conflicts such as pipeline vandalism and oil bunkering. At the height of this oil related conflict, the “Ijaw boys” were once again pointed to as key actors and perpetrators. The state government along with the government security forces conducted several operations that effectively dislodged them from their hideouts.

There are also growing reports of Omo-Onile crises in parts of the state such as Ajah, and Ikorodu. In response to this issue, the state government issued laws to stop the harassment of citizens by Omo-Oniles. The state has also dealt with gangs/cult groups such as Badoo in Ikorodu who were known to raid and kill locals within the communities where they operated. Once again, the state responded with police operations that dislodged the group and brought an end to their activities.
Environmental drivers of conflict are a future threat in Lagos due to the climate change effect on the south west geo-political zone. The prospects of devastating floods and sea encroachment in parts of Lagos could lead to mass displacement of people and major economic impact on the state and country.

**PHILANTHROPIC SOLUTIONS (RECOMMENDATIONS)**

With the plethora of conflict drivers that plague the nation, conflict resolution strategies must be approached with multifaceted mitigation measures. This means multiple governmental and non-governmental agencies, ministries, departments and stakeholders are needed to ensure sustainable solutions to conflict within the society.

This rapid conflict assessment report shows that most conflicts across the country are socio-economically driven. High levels of poverty, illiteracy, and clamor for control of scarce resources are major conflict drivers. Also identified are the restive youths across the country who are exploited to participate in conflicts or get involved in crime as a means of survival.

Philanthropies can alleviate some of the socio-economic drivers of conflict by supporting programs which address socio-economic challenges in Nigeria such as education, job creation, rehabilitation and mentorship programs for youth. They can also financially support law enforcement agencies and security trust funds that effectively, non-violently and humanely combat crime within the society.

Socio-cultural drivers are responsible for some of the deadlier clashes reported across the country. Narratives that accentuate the differences among Nigerians along ethnic and religious lines are a major contributory factor.

Philanthropies can alleviate some of the socio-cultural drivers of conflict by supporting programs which address negative narratives in Nigeria. These programs (which have been earlier mentioned in this paper) are:

- Promotion of history and the preservation of culture and heritage
- Journalism training for sensitive reporting and peace promoting narratives
- Conflict resolution skill building trainings.

Environmental Drivers of conflict are the emerging threat trending now. Farmer-herder clashes are spreading across the country. While the immediate impact includes loss of lives, displacement of people, increased poverty and destruction of farmlands, the future (long term) impact, if not addressed today will escalate to food scarcity and full-blown conflict across the federation.

Philanthropies can alleviate some of the environmental drivers of conflict by supporting programs which address farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria such as:

- Funding grazing reserves and other modern day agricultural and cattle rearing solutions
- Provide support for programs and organizations that promote dialogue, conflict resolution and support the study of other emerging conflict threats across the country.
REFERENCES


