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ASSIGNMENT

WRITE AN ESSAY ON VIOLENT CONFLICT ON THE GEOPOLITICAL ZONE YOU ARE FROM.

CONFLICT VIOLENCE IN NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA

Conflict, can be defined a disagreement or struggle between two or more persons or once self. On the other hand, violent conflict, involves at least two parties using physical force to resolve competing claims or interests. While violent conflict may involve a non- state action, often the term is used in terms of war which involves at least one government.

Violence can be found in all part of the world, focusing on Nigeria, violence could be found in different part of the country and can be categorized based on their geopolitical zones. For instance, in the north, it’s more of religious violence, while in the east, it is post political violence, in the west, it’s also political, in the south is resource and lastly in the north central, popularly known as the middle belt, which will be our main topic for discussion, it is ethnical violence.

Ethnical violence, this has to do with the disagreement between the settlers and the indigenes of that area. There are other violence that the north central has experienced such as political, economic and so on. There are majorly 6 states that make up the north central part of the country, they include, KOGI, TARABA, BENUE, KWARA, PLATEAU, NIGER AND NASSARAWA.

ETHNICAL

Over the years, there has been a conflict between the settlers and the indigenes of the state, for instance in KOGI it has be a war between the igalas and ebiras concerning who is the original owners of the state. This would be discussed subsequently as it progresses.

POLITICAL

The North Central region has witnessed sharp spikes in violence surrounding elections and other critical junctures. The federal government has in recent years declared states of emergency in parts of the North Central region in response to high levels of armed violence there. For instance, in January of 2012, a state of emergency was declared in several local government areas in Plateau and Niger states.104 Most states in the North Central region were won by current president Goodluck Jonathan in the 2011 general elections. Niger was won by the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, President Jonathan’s strongest rival.105

Economics

Across a range of poverty measures, the North Central region performs relatively well: the region (including FCT) has an infant mortality rate of 77 (compared to a national average of 87),106 while it also has a mid-range level of respondents reporting no educational attainment whatsoever.107 This regional figure masks significant variation across the zone, however: Demographic and Health Survey data includes the FCT within North Central, which owing to its status as an economic and political hub, drives up many of these average figures. There is a marked disparity in state-specific data, with over 60% of respondents reporting no educational attainment whatsoever in Niger, for example, compared to 34% in Benue.108

Demographics and geography

The population of the North Central region (excluding FCT) is estimated at 22 million.109 The region’s population is predominantly Christian, with sizeable Muslim minorities.110 The region is extremely ethnically diverse, with significant concentrations of members of the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group, who make up approximately 29% of the national population, alongside a number of smaller ethnic groups in highly diverse areas.111 Conflict in the North Central region is often categorized as religious violence, but regional identities, ethnicity, ‘indigeneity’ and ‘settlement,’ access to land and livelihoods all overlap with religious identities to produce a volatile conflict profile. These tensions are exacerbated through institutional and legal frame works that have historically entrenched community and ethnic divisions as well as the politicisation of inter-group rivalry and fear.112

Armed violence

The North Central region has some of the highest levels of violence involving armed communal groups. Communal militias have been involved in over 40% of incidents of political violence in the North Central region and over 73% of conflict-related fatalities.113 This can be contrasted with national averages in which communal militias were involved in just 17% of all violent events.114 Armed violence in the North Central region is characterised by extreme volatility: relatively low-levels of conflict are interspersed with sudden spikes, usually occurring around critical junctures such as elections.115

In 2001, as many as 1,000 people were killed in the Plateau state capital, Jos, in less than a week in devastating inter-communal tension between ‘indigenes’ and ‘settlers.’ In 2004, an episode of inter-communal violence – primarily Muslims and Christians against one another – claimed as many as 700 lives in Plateau before the military intervened.116 In addition, the region also experiences high rates of violent crime. Nigeria Watch estimates that Plateau State experienced more than 40 deaths by homicide per 100,000 inhabitants between 2006 and 2011: the highest rate in the country.117

Civil society in the North Central: Benue, Kogi, Plateau

A total of 77 stakeholders, including 55 civil society organisations, were mapped in the three states.

Civil society in North Central has capacities below the national median, except for Plateau. The budgetary and staff capacity of the civil society organisations recorded is the lowest among all zones. However, these figures hide important differences between states – civil society organisations in Plateau have a relatively high median budget of eight million Naira, and nine full-time employees, whereas the organisations in Kogi and Benue work with quite limited resources – roughly one million Naira in both states, and four full-time staff.

Like in the South South and the South East, long-standing conflict coupled with international attention seems to have some implications for NGO capacity; where these factors are common, civil society tends to be better organised and funded.

Civil society in North Central implements a high number of victim assistance projects. The highest absolute number of victim assistance projects was recorded in the North Central zone – 41, or 77% of the projects recorded support victims in one way or another. Like in the South South, the most common types of work are psychosocial assistance and data coKogi State

Kogi state is in the North Central zone of Nigeria. It is popularly called the ‘Confluence State’ because the confluence of Rivers Niger and Benue is at its capital, Lokoja (the first administrative capital of modern-day Nigeria). Kogi state was created out of the former Kwara and Benue states on August 27, 1991. The state covers the area of the former Kabba Province, previously split between Kwara state and Benue state in the state creation exercise of 1976.135

Kogi state shares borders with Niger and Nasarawa states and the Federal Capital Territory to the north, Benue and Enugu states to the east, and Edo, Ondo, Ekiti and Kwara States to the west. The state has 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The Fulani herdsmen/ farmers conflict in the North Central Region and other parts of Nigeria has made violent conflict in the country to take another dimension. This study examined herdsmen/farmers conflict as a new dimension of the conflict in Nigeria with a study of the North Central Region. The specific objectives of the study were to discover the factor(s) triggering herdsmen attack in the North Central Region of Nigeria, find out the effects of farmers/herdsmen attack on socioeconomic development and food production in the region and identify and recommend measures to end herdsmen/farmers conflict and waste of lives and properties of innocent people in the North Central `Region of Nigeria. The study adopted survey and documentary research method.

In conclusion, the violence in north central are majorly, ethnical from the above stated. Be ith political, economic, or geographical.