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PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES (GST201)

 NORTH EAST NIGERIA comprises six states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe. This zone has been the most severely affected by conflict of any zone in Nigeria over the last decade. Conflict and violence in North East Nigeria is primarily attributable to Boko Haram, the terrorist group responsible for human rights abuses across Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. The violent radicalization of the Boko Haram members and the resulting military operations have reportedly affected nearly fifteen million people since 2009. This conflict has triggered an acute humanitarian and forced displacement crisis, with devastating social and economic impacts on the population, further deepening underdevelopment and regional inequalities. The most affected states are the Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. The most affected groups are women, children, and youth. Boko Haram’s tactics have included multiple modes of attack, including suicide bombings, seizure and destruction of entire villages, forced displacement, abductions, sexual violence targeting women, and forced recruitment of men. Although Boko Haram-held territory has reduced in size over the last few years, the group continues to perpetrate consistent attacks in North Eastern states. NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA consists of the states of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau, as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). In recent years, conflict in the North Central zone has both escalated and expanded as tensions between farmers and herders have risen. This conflict is multi-faceted and complex. The conflict centers around agricultural households and nomadic cattle-herding groups who come into conflict over land access. As the population in North Central Nigeria increases, the amount of land used for farming also increases, often into areas that have traditionally served as cattle grazing areas. At the same time, climate change and the Boko Haram insurgency reduce the amount of land suitable for grazing in North East Nigeria, forcing herding communities to expand their routes into increasingly Southern areas. This competition over land and resources is compounded by religion and ethnicity – herders are most members of the minority Fulani ethnic group and are generally Muslim. Farmer-herder conflicts often consist of attacks by one group and subsequent retaliation from the other community. Although attention to this issue is growing, to date there has been little response directed towards affected parties and few resources allocated towards reconciliation and prevention of future conflict. SOUTH SOUTH NIGERIA is made up of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers states. This area is renowned as Nigeria’s source of oil wealth; widely perceived as the economic force driving Nigeria forward. Nevertheless, this resource wealth has not translated to economic success for most inhabitants of these states. Instead, the region suffers from ecological degradation as a result of oil spills, high rates of youth unemployment, and extensive inequality between the local population and employees of oil companies. These issues are compounded by ethnic and political tensions in the region. In particular, ethnic minority groups have frequently clashed in competition for oil wealth; political tensions in this zone also run high. All of these factors have resulted in high levels of crime. Militant and pirate groups have operated in the region for decades, targeting oil companies, pipelines, and individuals. Killings, abductions, and robberies are not uncommon, and many people have been displaced from their homes or community as a result of violence.

 Conflict and violence events in North East Nigeria peaked in 2014 Conflict levels peaked in 2014 in North East Nigeria. In 2010, relatively few conflict events affected households and communities. The figure below shows the distribution of conflict events over time. For example, we can see that less than 5% of all events recorded, both at the household and at the community level took place in 2010 (this also holds for 2011). The number of reported events increased over time, the number of of events affecting household members tripled between 2013 and 2014. While this data is subject to recall bias that may cause underreporting of events that took place long ago, the trend is undeniable. While the number of events to households has gone down each year since 2014, the amount of conflict reported in the North East in these years is still higher than levels reported pre-2012.

 More than half of households in North East Nigeria are directly affected by conflict From 2010 to 2017, 49% of households in the North East experienced at least one event of conflict or violence. Households affected by conflict or violence experienced an average of 3.4 conflict events between 2010 and 2017..More than one in five households had a member displaced (27%), their dwelling robbed (22%), or access to school blocked (21%) at least once between 2010 and 2017. A household member was killed in 7% of households in North East Nigeria in the same time period. When considering conflict at the community level in North East Nigeria, a very high number of citizens have been affected. One third of households (32%) had someone in their community killed between 2010 and 2017. Similarly high numbers of households reported knowing someone in their community who had been robbed (30%), displaced (30%), or had their dwelling robbed (32%). A detailed summary of the number and frequency of conflict events in both households and communities in north east nigeria.

 In the North Central Zone, disputes over access to land or resources was the cause of more than half of the most recent events (55%)4. Land or resource access refers to the responses “livestock grazing on farm,” “land disputes,” and “access to natural resources.” Another fifth of the reported most recent events were caused by terrorism (21%). Similarly, pastoralists were reportedly the perpetrator of 45% of the most recent conflict event experienced by the household, and insurgents were named as the perpetrator of 21% of these acts. It is essential to consider the survey population when interpreting this data; surveyed households were selected from a panel survey and are therefore less likely to be nomadic herders. Therefore, reporting of the perpetrator of crimes may be biased towards reports of events targeting the non-nomadic agricultural populations in this zone.

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Across the three surveyed geopolitical zones, the number of conflict events each year increased between 2010 and 2017. The trends varied widely, however, by geography. In North East Nigeria, the number of conflict events increased until 2014, but was reported at lower levels in 2015 and 2016. In contrast, the number of conflict events more than doubled between 2012 and 2013 in the North Central zone. Since 2013, the number of events has remained stable. Meanwhile, South South Nigeria has shown consistently increasing levels of conflict between 2010 and 2016.

 No consistent national reporting structure exists for events of conflict and violence, and each geopolitical zone surveyed has a distinct reporting pattern. In North East Nigeria, only 23% of the most recent conflict events to the household were reported at all. Those events that were reported were most often taken to community leaders (16% of events). In North Central Nigeria, a larger proportion of events were reported