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**COURSE TITLE: PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES**

**COURSE CODE: GST 201**

**Assignment: Write an essay on violent conflict on the geopolitical zone you are from**

*Firstly, what is conflict and violence?*

The definition conflict is contentious. However, most scholars are of the opinion that conflict usually reflects a class of interest or goal between parties, which may be individuals or group of individuals, or ethnic groups or states. Conflict according to most scholars occurs “when two or more people engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. a

According to Gambo and Mohammed (2007) violence is a state of tension which exists when one party perceives its goals, needs, desires or expectations are being blocked by the other party. Violence in other words means any act of aggression and abuse which causes injury or harm to person, property and animals.

*Conflict and violence events in South South Nigeria*

I am from the South-South Geopolitical zone and conflict and violence in recent years is on the increase from the Niger Delta militancy in the south to the ethno religious conflicts and later the Fulani Herdsmen insurgency around it. Residents of South South Nigeria are slightly older than the national population, with a mean age of 27 and median age 21 (compared to the national mean of 25 and median of 22). 50% of the population is between the ages of 11 and 40. 58% of households in South South Nigeria use firewood as their main cooking fuel, 77% get the drinking water from a protected source, and 82% have any kind of toilet or latrine. Half of households (49%) use electricity as their main source of light, and 45% of villages have electricity. 83% of individuals have access to a mobile phone.

In the last year, more than half of households worried about having enough money for food (54%), and 40% had members skip a meal due to lack of money. One in five children (22%) went without food in the same period due to a lack of money.

In Nigeria’s South South geopolitical zone, reports of conflict and violence have risen steadily each year from 2010 to 2016. Though the low levels of reported conflict and violence in 2010-2014 are subject to recall bias (that is, respondents are more likely to forget events that happened longer ago), the trend is clear. Whereas in 2010 only 3% of reported conflict events occurred, 17% of the events in South South Nigeria took place in 2015, and 34% took place in 2016. 16% of the events reported occurred between January and May 2017.

Some of Nigeria’s conflict-affected regions have a predominant, identifiable cause and related perpetrator of violence. In the South South, both the cause and the perpetrator of events is less consistent. Approximately one-third of the conflict events reported by households (36%) are said to be caused by cultism or criminality. Another third are caused by personal disputes (32%). Access to land or resources is said to be the cause of 19% of conflict events.

Those named as the perpetrator of conflict events are most often bandits, criminals, or cultists – 45% of conflict events in communities are attributed to these actors. Another 42% of events are attributed to individuals.

**Many households in South South Nigeria move or send their children away due to conflict and violence**

As a result of the most recent conflict event they experienced, nearly one-third of conflict-affected households had at least one member who was displaced or migrated (37%). A considerable amount (16%) lost economic opportunity as a result of this experience. 13% of conflict-affected households lost a household member as a result of the most recent event, and 11% lost assets. Another 11% of households sent their children away or kept them out of school as a result of the most recent conflict event they experienced.

Reporting of conflict events to the authorities is quite high, with 74% of households contacting someone to report the most recent event they have experienced. 54% of these reports were made to religious leaders, and 43% to the police. Only 5% of households received any assistance following the event.