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**MATRIC NO: 19/sms02/019**

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**COURSE CODE: AFE201**

**An Essay On Violent Conflict On A Geo-Political Zone In Nigeria**

**Nigeria's arid north west is the beset by violence between the herders and the farmers which has been compounded by an explosion in criminal activity and infiltration by jihadist groups into the region. The last decade, thousands of people have been and hundreds of thousands have been displaced, with many fleeing into Niger Republic.**

**The causes of violence in the North West are complex and inter-related, as its root, the region’s security crisis derives from long-running competition over land and water resources between Fulani herders and Hausa farmers. Both of whom have over time mobilized armed groups referred to by the authorities as “bandits” and “vigilantes” respectively, for protection. Organized bandits operating from ungoverned forests have increased in number, engaging in cattle stealing, kidnapping for ransom and armed robbery, etc . Having originated in Zamfara state, gang violence has since spread to five other nearby states, namely Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi and Niger, the last of which is in North Central Nigeria.**

**As security has worsen, the region has steadily come under the renewed influence of jihadist groups, which have sometimes attacked security forces. The increase in jihadist activity in the North West has raised fears that the region could soon become a land bridge connecting Islamic insurgencies of central and north-eastern Nigeria (Boko Haram).**

**Violence has had a humanitarian and economic impact on the region and created a domino effect of security problems. Over the last decade, more than 8,000 people have been killed mainly in Zamfara state, with over 200,000 internally displaced and about 60,000 fleeing into Niger Republic. Livestock and crops have been eradicated and depressing human livelihood indices that were already the country’s lowest. The violence is worsening other security challenges( it has forced more herders southward into the country’s Middle Belt, thus increasing herder-farmer tension in that region and beyond).** **The most recent dimension of the violence involves confrontations is between government security forces and jihadist groups that are increasingly active in the region.**

**The effect of violence in north-western Nigeria has claimed thousands of lives over the last decade. The conflict has also triggered a humanitarian challenge as hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced. The conflict has had gender-differentiated effects on the area’s population, as thousands of men and boys have been kidnapped, killed, robbed of their cattle or possessions, leaving thousands of women as both widows and sole remaining breadwinners.**

**Also women and girls have also been targeted for attacks, as many have been kidnapped, raped, sexually assaulted during raids and forced into marriage especially to members of the herder-allied armed groups whose attacks on farming villages are partly motivated by communal dispute. The violence conflict has had a severe toll on children, as in Zamfara state, the government reports that over 16,000 children have been orphaned as a result of violence in the last decade. The provision of social services and public amenities by federal and state governments has been adversely affected by the violence conflict.**

**To stop the violence and promote a long-lasting peace, Nigeria’s federal authorities and state governments in the North West should work closely and not only to heal longstanding disagreement within communities and eradicate violence but also to address the structural causes of insecurity in the region.** **International partners, organizations and government should lend their support and expertise( technologies and man power) as well. The government should educate the people on violence, its effect and the benefits of peace in that region. Since there is no specific solution for what goes on in the Nigeria’s North West, a wide range of efforts/opinions/possible solutions should be used to address both immediate and longer-term challenges which could help bring an end to the mayhem that has too long burden the people of the north west region and keep it from spreading across the country.**