

Rugaism: A Challenge to National Sustainability or a Solution?

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Abstract

Rural Grazing Areas (RUGA) are places set aside for the use of pastoralists and are intended to be the foci of livestock development. However, the RUGA scheme introduced by the Nigerian federal government was outrightly rejected by most state governments particularly in the southern region of the country. The study therefore examined the historical development of grazing reserves in Nigeria as well as the ideas behind the proposed federal government rural grazing areas. The study adopted the analytic cum historical research design. Data were collected through secondary sources. Finding revealed that RUGA was introduced in the past as development of communal villages in grazing reserves and as a means of bringing livestock into peasant agriculture. But this is not the case with the present proposed programme of the Nigeria federal government. Indigenous Nigerians are compelled by Federal Presidential power to have the Fulanis who are aliens to inherit and permanently retain part of their indigenous land as Fulani homeland. The paper thus concluded that the proposed rural grazing area is a challenge to national sustainability and not a solution.

Keywords: Rural, Grazing, Challenge, Nationality, Sustainability

Introduction

In recent times, Nigeria has come under the weight of rising security challenges which include amongst others, insurgency, armed robbery, kidnapping, herdsmen attacks and ethnic conflicts. These challenges have led to deaths of several people and hampered the nation's struggle to make its democratic system work effectively. Notorious among these challenges is the insurgency by Boko Haram which began as a Jihadist organization in 2002 but grew to become one of the deadliest organizations in the world, following its attacks which have left in their trail, pain, blood and death, including the displacement of numerous Nigerians mostly in the Northern part of the country. While attacks by the Boko Haram sect have lingered for years due to the failure and inability of successive governments to completely defeat it, the wave of ethnic violence spurred by attacks allegedly carried out by armed herdsmen of Fulani origin appears to have become the new evil sweeping across the country and making peace elusive, mostly in the southern and middle belt regions.

According to the 2019 Global Peace Index (a report by the Institute for Economics and Peace), Nigeria currently ranks 148 out of 163 countries and is said to have a 'very low' level of peacefulness (IEP, 2019:36). Horrifying tales of these gruesome attacks and their decisive consequences remain fresh in the minds of millions of Nigerians and have continued to threaten the unity of the country. While searching for means of uniting the citizens of the country as well as efforts to end the conflicts between farmers and herdsmen, the Federal government announced the establishment of cattle colonies across the country during the first tenure of the Buhari administration (that is, between 2015 and 2019). Although the idea was warmly accepted by the majority in the northern region of the country with some state governments reported to have donated hectares of land for the project, it was however rejected by many states in the southern region. Again, on June 25, 2019, the federal government announced that it would create Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) settlements across the country for herdsmen in the next five years in order to end open grazing, adding that 12 states had already keyed into the programme which received the endorsements of pro-northern groups including the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN).

This work therefore examined the historical development of grazing reserves in Nigeria and their role in pastoralism and livestock production. It also examined the proposed scheme as a

challenge to national sustainability or a solution.

Literature Review

The attacks by Fulani herdsmen have in recent years adopted more sophisticated approaches with the use of new types of weapons and communication devices. For instance, in May 2019, the federal government announced that it had acquired an amplitude modulation radio broadcast license to educate herdsmen and farmers and foster harmony between the two groups (IEP, 2019:36). As a result, Abass (2012) and McGregor (2014) in their various views stated that the sedentary agrarian communities have resorted to self defence through local vigilante groups. This has further aggravated violence, with destruction of lives and properties. Fasona and Omojola in 2005 noted that conflicts resulting from cattle grazing accounted for 35% of all reported crises between 1991 and 2005 in Nigeria (Fasona and Omojola, 2005 cited in Adekunle and Adisa, 2010). The Middle Belt region states of Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and Taraba have also been identified as the most affected areas in the country (McGregor, 2014).

Rural grazing area (RUGA) or cattle colony is a settlement for Fulani Herdsmen, their families and cattle/livestock. It contains ranches, grass or feed farms, abattoirs, dairy, meat and skin/leather processing plants, housing, religious houses, schools, roads, power and water supplies and the complete range of infrastructure required to support and sustain an ultra-modern local government area. Grazing Reserves in Nigeria are areas set aside for the use of pastoralists and are intended to be the foci of livestock development. Grazing reserves resemble group ranches in that both consist of clearly defined areas of rangeland which provides grazing for determined herds of livestock (Oxby, 1982a cited in Ingawa *et al.*, 1989). On group ranches in Kenya, pastoralists have a right to land under national law. In Nigeria, they have not in the past had such rights and grazing reserves more closely resemble what Oxby (1982a cited in Ingawa *et al.*, 1989) termed 'grazing blocks'. There are now plans for issuing 30 year leases for parcels of land within the grazing reserves in order to encourage them to invest in land improvement.

The stated purpose of Grazing Reserves is the settlement of 'nomadic' pastoralists; they offer security of tenure as an inducement to sedentarization through the provision of land for grazing and permanent water (Suleiman, 1986). Large pieces of land have been demarcated, some legally sanctioned by order in the Official Gazette and infrastructure, such as dams and boreholes constructed. Potential settlers are recruited through the livestock extension service.

In Nigeria, the practice of preserving land for exclusive use by livestock existed prior to colonial times. Allocations of grazing grounds to pastoralists around towns and villages for use particularly during the cultivation season were socially sanctioned (Waters-Bayer and Taylor-Powell, 1986). However, since there was no legal instrument to prevent encroachment by crop farmers, such reserved areas subsequently disappeared with increasing population and cropping intensity. This phenomenon was most visible in the sub-humid zone of Nigeria where pastoralists from the semi-arid zone further north traditionally moved to exploit dry-season pastures. Additionally, improved veterinary services and tsetse control and eradication campaigns have resulted in an expanding ruminant livestock population in the sub-humid zone itself and in restricting pastoralists' access to the grazing lands (Waters-Bayer and Taylor-Powell, 1986). Combined with this, the greater preference afforded to local (that is, sub-humid zone) farmers' livestock both for grazing and water has contributed to the further reduction of the resources available. Conflicts between farmers and pastoralists frequently occurred as a consequence.

The Nigerian Government's Grazing Reserve Act of 1964 was a response to the problem of alienation of grazing lands increasingly being faced by the pastoral population at the time. In a broader framework, the law was also taken as one of the policy measures to address some of the constraints confronting livestock development in Nigeria. Thus, grazing reserves were established not only to protect grazing lands from crop farming and provide easier access to them by pastoralists but also to encourage the sedenterisation of nomadic/transhumant pastoralists through legally secure titles to grazing water and, in general, as one means of promoting livestock development. By 1980, 2.3million hectares of land were acquired as grazing reserves by the northern state governments (Oxby, 1982b cited in Ingawa *et al.*, 1989), constituting 10% of the total 22million hectares of land envisaged under the Third National Plan (Ministry of Agriculture, 1981 cited in Ingawa *et al.*, 1989). High compensation levels for acquisition of grazing reserves recommended by the Federal Land Act of 1978 is indicated as a major cause for the low implementation in establishing grazing reserves.

Further, only few of those established were formally gazetted leaving the original objectives largely unfulfilled (Waters-Bayer and Taylor-Powell, 1986). In some specific cases, none of the pastoral Fulani households settled on the reserves were previously nomadic having been residents around the crop farming villages prior to the establishment of the grazing reserves.

Permanent residence of pastoral herds in the sub-humid zone is a relatively recent phenomenon. Various surveys in the 1980s showed that there were an increasingly large proportion of herders which were permanent residents in the zone throughout the year.

Historical development of rural grazing areas (RUGA) in Nigeria

The idea behind creating grazing lands for the uses of certain animals and other livestock can be traced to the traditional grazing ground “Hurmi” which were the areas of land in the vicinity of the towns and villages throughout Northern Nigeria (Nuru, 1987 cited in Abdullahi *et al.*, 2015). However, as the need for more farmland arises due to increasing human population, the available “Hurmi” and their connecting “Burtali” (Cattle Path) continue to decrease and their carrying capacity deteriorated. Nuru (1978 and Suleiman, 1988 both cited in Abdullahi, *et al.*, 2015) in their various works noted that any attempt to preserve and restore their potential was undertaken by sowing better seeds in the late 1950's around Kano and Katsina, but without legal status to prevent encroachment. In recognition of the growing problem of diminishing grazing land in the late 1950's, the forestry authorities were approved and an agreement was reached that grazing in certain forest reserves could be allowed in order to provide the wet season “mashekari” for the pastoralists and indeed as a measure to avoid ever-increasing farmers pastoralist clashes of wet season (Nuru, 1978; Ekpere, 1984 both cited in Abdullahi, *et al.*, 2015 and Calderbank, 1991). Consequently, the forest reserves at Wase, Kukar-Jangarai, Zamfara-Anka, Udubo and Falgore were selected.

The Federal Government and International Agencies like United State Agency for International Development (USAID) provided the staff, technical training and financial assistance. Nuru (1978 cited in Abdullahi *et al.*, 2015) stated that control grazing in these forest reserves began in the early 1960's. However, the need to protect and improve the grazing areas and stock route and to understand the pastoral system was recognized by the colonial government in the early '50's (Awogbade, 1983 and Ezeomah, 1987 cited in Abdullahi *et al.*, 2015). According to Nuru (1978; Suleiman, 1988 and Lamorde, 1997 all cited in Abdullahi *et al.*, 2015), the first attempt to change the scope of nomadism in Nigeria dates back to 1901 when a very devastating drought occurred in some parts of Northern Nigeria. The idea to encourage nomads to settle was first made in 1942 and the first trial settlement was at Riyom near Jos, Plateau State. To encourage pastoralists to settle, each herding household unit was allocated a piece of land, encouraged to practice mixed farming and develop pasture areas. The plan did not last long because it was overrun by tin mining operations. In 1954, the World Bank reviewed the nature of pastoralism in Nigeria. In the review, it noted that range grazing practices was a serious impediment to livestock development and modernization. It further recommended that settlement or what is referred to as 'stabilization' was the most important factor in the expansion and modernization of production. Three proposals were advanced for immediate development. They include:

- * Establishment of grazing reserves to be protected by law ;
- * Provision of land rights to the pastoralists and
- * The development of communal villages in grazing reserves as a means of bringing livestock into peasant agriculture.

In 1965, these recommendations were passed into law. The law allowed for a minimum 10% of the country's land area to be legally acquired and constituted into grazing reserves for lease allocation to graziers. Presently, out of 299 proposed grazing reserves in the former Northern States and Abuja totaling 2.3million hectares, only 23 have been gazetted covering a total of just over 500,000 hectares (Abdullahi *et al.*, 2015, 138). Furthermore, in the Nigeria first republic, the Awolowo regime had a ranch at Akunnu (Ondo state), Ahmadu Bello's government had a ranch in Mokwa (Niger state) while the Azikwe regime administration had Obudu cattle ranch (Cross River State). In the second republic, Gov Ajasin built a dairy farm in Ikun (Present day Ekiti state). Nevertheless, all the ranches were ruined by former military dictators. Today, the south west consumes 10,000 heads of cattle daily with Lagos State alone consuming about 6,000.

Ideological analysis of the proposed RUGA by the Nigeria federal government

Grazing is a method of feeding in which an herbivore feeds on plants such as grasses or other multi-cellular organisms such as algae. In agriculture, grazing is one method used whereby domestic livestock are used to convert grass and other forage into meat, milk and other products. Many small selective herbivores follow larger grazers, who skim off the highest, tough growth of plants, exposing tender shoots. For terrestrial animals, grazing is normally distinguished from browsing in that grazing is eating grass or forbs and browsing is eating woody twigs and leaves from trees and shrubs. Grazing differs from true predation because the organism being grazed upon is not generally killed. Grazing differs from parasitism as the two organisms live together in a constant state of physical externality (that is, low intimacy). Water animals that feed for example on algae found on stones are called 'grazers-scrapers'. Grazer-scrapers feed also on micro-organisms and dead organic matter on various substrates.

Grazing reserves in Nigeria are areas set aside for the use of pastoralists and are intended to be the foci of livestock development. The stated reason for grazing reserves is the settlement of nomadic pastoralists they offer security of tenure as an inducement to sedentarisation through the provision of land for grazing and permanent water. The first RUGA in Nigeria according to Adegbamigbe (2019) was established in Kotongora in Niger State. The land size or landmass of each RUGA is at least 31,000 hectares of land or 310 square kilometers.

Nigeria has seven hundred and seventy-four (774) LGAs spread across thirty six states. The federal government's RUGA program will establish six (6) such exclusive Fulani settlements in each of the thirty-six (36) States in Nigeria. At the completion of the program, there will be two hundred and sixteen (216) new exclusive Fulani Local Government Areas in Nigeria. With the population of the country presently put at 280 million (Adegbamigbe, 2019) the average population of a Local Government Area in Nigeria is roughly two hundred and sixty thousand (260,000) people. It therefore implies that the RUGA program on completion is projected to increase the Fulani population in Nigeria by fifty-six million, one hundred and sixty thousand (56,160,000) Fulanis. There are about Thirteen Million (13,000,000) Fulanis in Nigeria presently which is 6.3% of Nigeria's population according to CIA Factbook on Nigeria. In effect, the federal government's RUGA program on completion will see Nigeria with a projected total Fulani Population of sixty-nine million, one hundred and sixty thousand (69,160,000), 4.32-fold increase in population. In essence, after the proposed RUGA program, the Fulani would have arguably become the most populous ethnic group in Nigeria (in today's population figure terms). In one fell swoop, the Fulani becomes the majority ethnic group in Nigeria. The Tripod balance in Nigeria becomes quad-legged.

According to President Buhari, the Fulani herdsmen terrorists who are engaged in massacres and pillage in Nigeria are not Nigerian citizens (Adegbamigbe, 2019). In other words, the Fulani herders are alien non-Nigerians. Governor El Rufai of Kaduna State also affirmed this. Several powerful sources in Nigeria have repeatedly confirmed that the Fulani herders causing mayhem in Nigeria are aliens from across West and Central Africa. Most Nigerians however agreed that the Fulani herders and terrorists engaged in land grab and terrorist activities in Nigeria are non-Nigerians from West and Central Africa.

More so, the advent of the RUGA program or Fulani Herdsmen Cattle Colony program was preceded by increased Fulani herdsmen terrorist activity and land grabs mainly in the Middle Belt and southern regions in Nigeria. It was also preceded by militant advocacy by Miyetti Allah for grazing routes and grazing reserves to be established in the Middle Belt and Southern States of Nigeria in particular. Without doubt, the federal government has pronounced the fact that the RUGA or Fulani Cattle Colony program is meant to resettle the Fulani herdsmen and satisfy the demands of Miyetti Allah. Nevertheless, almost all states from the Middle Belt to Southern Nigeria vehemently rejected the federal government's Fulani Cattle Colony program and refused to allocate land in their states as demanded by the federal government. Notwithstanding that rejection of the Cattle Colony Program, the federal government opted to rebrand the program as RUGA and instead, use existing Federal Government owned land in the States.

There was actually a historical parallel to rural grazing areas with Justice Adewale Thompson's 17th April, 1969 Judgment on Open Cattle Grazing – Suit no AB/26/66 at Abeokuta Division of the High Court (Adegbamigbe, 2019). He ruled:

“I do not accept the contention of defendants that a custom exists which imposes an obligation on the owner of a farm to fence his farm whilst the owner of cattle allows his cattle to wander like pests and

cause damage. Such a custom if it exists is unreasonable and I hold that it is repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience and therefore unenforceable... in that it is highly unreasonable to impose the burden of fencing a farm on the farmer without the corresponding obligation on the cattle owner to fence in his cattle. Sequence to that, I banned open grazing for it is inimical to peace and tranquility and the cattle owners must fence or ranch their animals for peace to reign in these communities” (Adegbamigbe, 2019).

Different scholars and legal luminaries have interpreted this ruling to suit their own position. Proponents of RUGA may say that it is in order to avoid a situation “whilst the owner of cattle allows his cattle to wander like pests and cause damage,” they are asking that some areas be carved out for them. The only trouble is that who has the power to carve out lands for the cattle breeders? As far as the Land Use Act is concerned, the federal government has no control over any land outside the federal capital territory. Therefore, Nigerians should rest assured that the federal government cannot forcefully acquire any land for RUGA or ranch in any state without the consent of the governor.

The genesis of the recently proposed RUGA crisis

On the 24th of June 2019, residents of communities in Ukum, Otukpo and Tarka Local Government Areas of Benue State woke up to behold signposts in their respective areas with inscriptions which read “Federal Government of Nigeria., Client: Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Project: The Establishment of Pasture Plots grazing reserve, Benue State, Otobi road; Contractor: Clear Sky Broad Band Ventures Limited. Ujah et al., (2019) reported that when pictures of the signposts started trending on social media, the development swiftly aroused fierce anger across the state as youths and other interest groups within and outside the state embarked on protests condemning the intention of the Federal government to forcefully acquire their land. In reaction to the federal government decision, the Benue State government explained that:

Few weeks ago, the Director, Federal Ministry of Agriculture with his team in Benue State informed officials of the State Ministry of Agriculture that he had received directives from the ministry's headquarters Abuja to establish RUGA which means 'Fulani settlement' in parts of the state. According to the Director, the local government areas selected for the settlements were Otukpo, Tarka and Ukum but the permanent Secretary, Benue State Ministry of Agriculture drew the attention of the Director and his team to the open grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law 2017 being implemented in the state. When they were also reminded about the Land Use Act which confers on the governor, the powers to administer lands in all parts of the state, the officials left with a promise to relay the message to their headquarters. They surprisingly returned a few days later with contractors to begin work on the RUGA settlements. We find the approach of the ministry of Agriculture not only as a gross violation of the Ranching Law, but also as an insult to the sensibilities of the entire people of Benue State (Ujah *et al.*, 2019).

Duru (2019) concurred with the above opinion when he stated that the Benue State government expressed shock at the huge sum of over ₦2.2billion allocated by the federal government in the 2019 budget to prosecute the RUGA settlement project insisting that the state would not be part of the plan. Quoting the Chief Press Secretary to the state Governor, Mr. Terver Akase, Duru (2019) stated further that the federal government was being economical with the truth as regards its real intentions. Benue has already taken a firm position against RUGA in whatever form it is introduced and there is no going back. More so, there is no land for RUGA in Benue State and the position is that there is land only for ranches as prescribed by the state's open grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law 2017. Hence, anything outside that will not be accepted in Benue State.

Positions/Reactions of Some Selected States in the Country on the Proposed Ruga Settlement

The proposed RUGA settlement programme was disowned and also absolutely rejected by

some state Governments/Governors across Nigeria. For instance, Governor Umuahi Dave of Ebonyi State noted that there will be no part of the South East that will be given out for the establishment of RUGA settlement. The governor stated further that the state was not interested in ranching as a government, but would support any Ebonyi person who wishes to expand his livestock businesses using National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP). According to him, this is our way of helping our people who are already in livestock business to grow.

Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State declared that no part of Ekiti land would be ceded to outsiders because the land was not even enough for the indigenes. He maintained that the state government has not received any money from the federal government on the execution of RUGA project and has not ceded any part of the state for the programme.

On the part of Akwa-Ibom state government, the state does not have land for the RUGA project and thus, would not participate in the programme. According to the state government, the state does not need RUGA since it has already put in place a cattle ranching project in Uruan local government area since 2016 and which is being driven by private investors from Mexico and would soon commence operation.

Rivers State government on its part affirmed that it has no land to accommodate federal government's RUGA settlement for herdsmen. The government thus enjoined all the people of the state to report any trace or form of encroachment by RUGA settlers.

Bayelsa State government rejected the proposed RUGA programme. According to the immediate past Governor of the state, Seriake Dickson, Bayelsa land is strictly for development purposes and not for RUGA. For him, the policy of RUGA settlement was inimical to national unity and cohesion; he described it as provocative, divisive and unhelpful. He asked in conclusion, do we have Ijaw fishermen settlements in other states?

In Ogun State, the government maintained that it is establishing modern ranches as it is done in most civilised nations which herdsmen can use instead of RUGA. Ondo State government through the Commissioner for Information and Orientation noted that development of ranches is the only effective way to stem the herders-farmers clashes.

Governor Obaseki Godwin of Edo noted that the state does not have land for the controversial RUGA programme but would rather intensify its all-encompassing agricultural policies that would take care of both food crop production and animal husbandry which the state will not deviate from. The governor noted further that the state has its plan for agricultural development which is completely independent of any external intervention; we have our schemes to develop crop production and animal husbandry and all of these have nothing to do with RUGA, so we will not supplant or exchange our existing animal production interventions with any other one so put mildly.

Delta State government insisted that it has no land for the RUGA programme. It noted that the state is in dire need of land for agriculture and other industrial use and the people of the state were also not disposed to RUGA programme. The government therefore maintains that cattle rearing was a personal business and those who are interested should thus seek the best way to do it without asking for free land from government.

In Plateau State, the government maintained that it is ready to be part of RUGA but prefers to call the policy 'ranching' as the state has budgeted a total of ₦250million for the ranching programme in the state's 2019 budget. This will enable them key into the National Livestock Transformation Plan of the federal government. Besides, the state in its peculiarities, has found ranching to be most suitable but even at that, it is just a pilot scheme and that is why government is using an existing grazing reserve, a federal gazetted land in Kanam and Wase local government areas for the pilot project.

Osun state government however pointed out that the state want to be part of the RUGA programme of the federal government if it is not bringing discomfort to the people in all ramifications. The state relied on the fact that ranches were not new in the Southwest region, as there were ranches during the administration of late Chief Obafemi Awolowo and they still abound in the region. The state wishes to be part of the programmes that could generate more money for the people, enhance communal peace among populace, put food on the table of families and guarantee their safety.

Bolaji (2019) reported that Taraba State government restated its ranching model which was proposed in the state's Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranching Law will take precedence over RUGA settlement proposed by the federal government. Katsina State government on its part announced that it has allocated 5,300 hectares of land for the establishment of a cattle colony.

According to the government, the land allocation was part of its proactive measures to prevent clashes between farmers and herdsman in the state.

Unlike most states, the government of Bauchi State reaffirmed its readiness to be part of RUGA programme. There is enough land in the state for the programme. They keyed into the programme because it has potential to end the farmers/herders conflicts and also create jobs for our teeming youths who are unemployed.

Kebbi State governor, Bagudu Abubakar corroborated Bauchi State government that there is enough land in the state and he is also ready to key into the RUGA programme initiated by the federal government. RUGA is a policy to provide shelter for the people through the construction of houses, provision of schools and clinics and supply of good drinking water for both animals and nomads so as to stop Fulani from wandering about.

Governor Babagana Umara Zulum of Borno State noted on his part that the state will key into the RUGA programme to reduce or eliminate the possibility of farmers/herders clash in the state. According to him, the scheme is to provide a place where farmers and herders will live, graze and farm together peacefully and thereby reduce or totally eliminate clashes.

Rugaism: A Challenge to National Sustainability or a Solution?

The rapid population expansion, improved living standards and technological advances, led to increased demand for meat and dairy products, hides and skins which in turn led to the quest and immediate need for commercialization of cattle industry. The control of property exercised by Fulani elders is probably a response to these developments and may be interpreted as means of protecting family assets, which finds absolute expression in Fulani socio-cultural and economic processes. Fulani can hardly resist the impact of external factors on the established cultural milieu and cannot contend with changing aspirations of their children who considered animals as financial commodities negating their forefathers who always regarded animals as symbol of social status.

The first and immediate question arising from the federal government's RUGA/Fulani Cattle Colony program is why, by what justification, and on the basis of which law of Nigeria would such massive immigration and resettlement of foreigners (West and Central African Fulanis) be promulgated in Nigeria and on indigenous Nigerian lands? Certainly, neither Nigerian Immigration law nor ECOWAS laws permit non-citizens to enter Nigeria without passports. Why would the present administration pursue such a most expensive massive immigration programme to import and resettle more than fifty nine (59) million foreigners on Nigerian lands at a time Nigeria is already over-populated and searching for effective means of population control?

When the World's most powerful country, USA is building a wall on its Mexican border to stop a flow of only a few hundred thousand refugees, Nigeria federal government does the opposite by throwing Nigerian Northern borders open and using Nigerian tax payers funds to invite and fund millions of foreign Fulanis for resettlement on indigenous lands at a time Nigerians are in penury and hunger. There is no refugee problem or war in West and Central Africa that could be said to instigate such massive immigration of African Fulanis to Nigeria. Even so, refugees are usually provided temporary shelter in camps, not permanent settlement and such refugee programs are at the cost of the United Nations. This federal government foreign Fulanis are not refugees. These foreign Fulanis are in Nigeria in contravention of Nigerian Immigration Laws. So why is the federal government seeking to forcefully legitimise and resettle illegal immigrants on indigenous lands of Nigerians? Why do this federal government foreign Fulanis carry AK47 and other military-grade weapons freely and openly across the borders of Nigeria and all over the States of Nigeria?

Furthermore, why have Nigerian Army, Police and Security Services failed and or refused to enforce Nigerian gun laws against these Fulanis? The Fulani herdsmen terrorists, bandits/kidnappers are known to have been engaged in terrorist activity all over Nigeria and continue to do so. Why is the federal government rewarding terrorists and criminals with resettlement on Nigerian indigenous lands? Why would government reward terrorists rather than prosecute them? Why is the federal government bent on introducing whole six 6 new Local Government Areas full of terrorists in States of other indigenous nations of Nigeria? Why would any state or nation accept such terrorist communities of foreign hostile citizens?

In addition, Nigerian nations have boiling unresolved nationality questions. It is not only provocation of the most insensitive and inhumane nature for the government of the day to introduce exclusive Fulani LGAs into native lands of other indigenous nations of Nigeria. By implication,

indigenous Nigerian Nations are compelled by Federal Presidential power to have the Fulanis who are alien to their lands to inherit and permanently retain part of their indigenous land as Fulani homeland. The questions on the lips of most non Fulanis are, would the present government create exclusive Igbo or Yoruba or Ijaw or Idoma or Efik or Ibibio or Urhobo or Tiv LGAs in Sokoto, Kano, Zamfara etcetera? If not why would this present administration pursue RUGA/Fulani Cattle Colonies program against the objections of States of the Middle-belt and Southern Nigeria?

The Fulani Exclusiveness of RUGA and the use of Federal Funds to build whole new ultra-modern LGAs with facilities not available to the other LGAs of the natives or indigenous Nigerians is nothing short of apartheid, and this is impermissible and unacceptable in Nigeria. RUGA/Cattle Colony is an LGA. With the herdsmen come their families and the full facilities of human settlements. Being exclusively Fulani, therefore the LGA becomes exclusively Muslim. The LGA must come with Mosques for worship. With the LGA being exclusively Islamic, comes Sharia Courts and Sharia Law, along with Sharia police within the LGA in order to meet the religious and way of life needs of the settlers.

With it comes the need for Emirs or District heads. In one fell swoop suddenly each State in Southern Nigeria and the Middle Belt and other Christian and animist nations, must necessarily legitimise Sharia Law given 6 Sharia LGAs in their States. Inevitably, Sharia Law must then be declared and recognised in all States of Nigeria. Along with Sharia law becoming operational in all States of Nigeria follows Emirates being declared in those States and then demands for more Sharia LGAs and more land and then claims of right to govern the States and so on and so forth. Automatically, Nigeria is Fulanised, Islamised and becomes a Sharia country. Legitimate Fulani rights inevitably arise to demand that each State of Nigeria make provisions to accommodate their language whether Fulfulde or Hausa in the State Schools and public media broadcasts. The demand for both Sharia Law and dual language in each State of Nigeria would be perfectly legitimate.

A new ethnic group in Ondo State for instance that has 6 LGAs as its homeland plus the original 18 LGAs, would certainly be entitled to have their own language accommodated in Ondo Schools and public broadcasts. They will be entitled to vote and be voted for. They will be entitled to have their Sharia Courts and facilities must be dualized to accommodate them and their different way of life. Are they not also Ondolites? After all they have 6 LGA homelands in Ondo State. The same must unavoidably happen in all other Southern States of Nigeria where RUGA is implemented.

Their Emirs must seat in the Ondo House of Chiefs or traditional rulers and when it becomes one of their turns, an Emir will become the Head of the Ondo Council of Ezes. Same must inevitably happen in all relevant States in Nigeria. In effect, every State in Nigeria suddenly must as a legitimate necessity double up language, culture, judiciary, governance, traditional leadership and all aspects of their lives with the Fulani. This must be what former President Obasanjo foresaw and accurately described as Fulanisation and Islamisation of Nigeria earlier 2019. Then one would ask, will the federal government creates Igbo and Yoruba Customary Law Courts in Sokoto, Kano, Katsina and in all Northern Muslim States of Nigeria? Will the present government also set up a RUGA for the Igbo, Yoruba, Ijaw, Idoma and all other tribes of Nigeria so that Nigeria can be “Igbonised”, “Yorubanised”, “Ijawnised”, “Idomanised”, “Tivinised”, “Ibibionised”, “Edonised”, “Igbiranised”, “Efikinised”, “Urhobonised” and “all kind of nised” with all ethnic groups in Nigeria and Christianised and ”animistnised”? Hence, one can say that RUGA/Fulani herdsmen cattle colony is outright declaration of Jihad.

Conclusion

RUGA/Fulani herdsmen cattle colony program is the largest illegal migration in human history in terms of its size. It is unprecedented. It is also the greatest Jihad by stealth being executed through abuse and misuse of Presidential power and privilege to not only attempt to permanently enforce Fulani Caliphate colonisation of Nigeria, but also carry out eventual fulanisation and islamisation of Nigeria without open declaration of war against the indigenous nations of Nigeria. RUGA would not bring back the lost land or prevent further desertification of fertile land. It is not a solution to the issues of desertification and desert encroachment; it is an avoidance of the problem. Besides, if the present fields become desert tomorrow, where will they go? RUGA in itself is not a solution to the land degradation problem facing the north. There is no quick fix when it comes to desertification.

Therefore, from the analysis above, it could be concluded that the proposed rural grazing

area (RUGA) by the federal government of Nigeria is a challenge to national sustainability and not a solution to national unity. In conclusion, every indigenous Nigerian has a duty to resist this federal government Jihad. Any indigenous nation that accepts RUGA is already on their way to extinction from the face of the earth before they realise it.

Recommendations

? People should be encouraged to practice ranching as a business and avoid the act of moving around causing problems and mayhems .

? Since cattle rearing are personal business ,those who want to practice it should seek the best way out in doing it without asking for free land from respective state governments.

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