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2.6. Individuals involved in and affected by conflicts between herders and farmers

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last updated: February 2019

This profile refers to members of armed groups of herders and farmers, as well as to (unarmed) individuals in the herders' and farmers' communities affected by the conflict between those armed groups.

COI summary

[*Targeting,* 3.7; *Security situation,* 3.2]

The conflict between herders and farmers is related to the increasing shortage of land and water, propelled by desertification, insecurity and the loss of grazing land to expanding settlements. The above mentioned factors lead to increased migration of herders from northern and middle Nigeria southwards. These herder communities are mostly Fulani, but other ethnicities are also represented. The conflict has acquired three dimensions: ethnic (Fulani vs other Nigerian ethnicities), religious (Muslim herders vs Christian southerners), and cultural (nomadic vs sedentary). It also has an increasing political dimension as President Buhari, a Fulani himself, is accused of tribalism and of looking away from the conflict. In the background of the herders-farmers conflict there are also the nation-wide legal and social differences between the 'indigenes' or 'natives' (those whose fathers were born in the area and who are granted preferential land rights over settlers) and the 'settlers' (those who settled in the area later).

Several farmer and herder communities in the South and in the Middle Belt have formed self-defence vigilante groups, allegedly in response to the lack of protection from the government. The conflict has escalated in the recent years and leads to killings on both sides, as well as to significant displacement. It has been reported that in the first six months of 2018, approximately 300 000 people have fled their homes and more than 1 300 people have been killed. The conflicts also lead to rape, abduction, robbery, destruction of houses, crops, and cattle, etc. The conflicts have affected more than 20 states across the country, but in particular Adamawa and Taraba (North East zone) and Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue (North Central zone).

Several states have passed anti-grazing law in order to avoid clashes between herders and farmers.

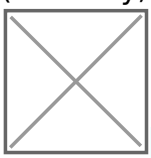
Risk analysis

Individuals under this profile, including armed and unarmed farmers and herders in the regions where the clashes take place, could be exposed to acts of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution (e.g. killing, rape, abduction).

Not all individuals under this profile would face the level of risk required to establish well-founded fear of persecution. The individual assessment of whether or not there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as: area of origin of the applicant, level of involvement with armed groups, ownership of land or cattle, etc.

Nexus to a reason for persecution

Available information indicates that persecution of this profile may be for reasons of race (ethnicity, descent) and/or religion.

 Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile (see the chapter on Exclusion).

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