

## **Government False Labelling And Lopsided Security Appointments Fuel And Escalate Janjaweed Jihadism In Nigeria**

### **-----INTERSOCIETY**

**(Onitsha Nigeria: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018)**-A combination of false labelling, misrepresentation of facts, propaganda, distractions, unwillingness, inability, aiding, abetting, condoning and lopsided security appointments by the present Federal Government of Muhammadu Buhari has continued to fuel and escalate the Janjaweed (Jihadists under the cover of cattle herders) attacks and destructions carried out on Christian faithful and other non Muslims and their sacred places of worship in Nigeria especially since mid 2015.

Specifically, the central Administration and many, if not most of the mainstream media outfits-majorly owned or controlled by some, if not many serving public office holders and their allies in the country; have intensified their propaganda and facts misrepresentations by labelling the Jihadist slaughtering of defenceless non Muslim populations particularly members of the Christian faith and their sacred places of worship as "Fulani Herdsmen/Farmers clashes". This is totally condemnable and despicable.

It is recalled that the Janjaweed Jihadism or Jihadist violent attacks mostly targeted at Christians and other non Muslim populations in Nigeria have resulted in the violent death or killing of not less than 3,850 since June 2015-a month after Alhaji Muhammadu Buhari; a retired Major Gen and life or grand patron of the Miyatti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria was sworn in as the sixth civilian President of Nigeria. The killings since then by Boko Haram Islamic insurgents; majorly targeted at Christians and other non Muslims have also resulted in the death of not less than 2,100 civilians. Most, if not all the victims of Fulani Janjaweed attacks are members of the Christian faith.

In the months of December 2017 and January 2018 alone, over 350 civilian deaths were recorded in the hands of the duo. Between February and middle of this March 2018, Fulani Janjaweed attacks have accounted for not less than 100 deaths. In one of its most recent attacks in Plateau State, Fulani Janjawees killed 25 Christians and razed 11 houses including churches. More killings and property destructions including churches and dwelling houses have also been carried by the violent group since end of January 2018 in Nasarawa, Plateau, Kaduna, Benue, Adamawa, Taraba and Ebonyi States. The above named States, apart from Ebonyi host the largest Christian and other non Muslim populations in Northern Nigeria where estimated 30 million of them live or were born.

It is also on record that Boko Haram insurgents have killed not less than 40 defenceless civilians in the area particularly in Borno and Adamawa States since end of January 2018. By the recent investigation of the Vanguard Newspaper, over 1,351 defenceless citizens were killed or lost in the past ten weeks of 2018 to traditional criminal deaths such as kidnapping, armed robbery, ritualism and avoidable auto accidents etc; and crimes against humanity such as non war killings perpetrated by the State and State aided attacks by violent ethno religious or Jihadist groups such as Fulani Janjaweed and Boko Haram. It may most likely be correct to say that not less than 40% of the 1,351 killings or 540 as exclusively investigated by the Vanguard Newspaper arose from the killings perpetrated by Fulani Janjaweed and Boko Haram in the past 10 months of this year (2018).

Sadly, the central Government in Nigeria under Muhammadu Buhari has continued to treat the massacres and their perpetrators with kid gloves by responding to them through brazen manifestation of incompetence, incapability, inability, unwillingness, conspiracy, aiding, abetting and fire brigade approach. The feeling of insecurity and unsafe conditions by members of the victim population particularly the endangered northern Christian population is rife and has risen to an apogee.

By false labelling, the Federal Government and many, if not most of the mainstream media; majorly owned illicitly or controlled by members of the present federal and state public office holders and their allies have continued to brazenly label the ethno-religious/Jihadist violence as “Fulani Herdsmen/Farmers clashes”.

Through the propaganda machinery of the Government; efforts have intensified to reduce the clearly State aided and well orchestrated anti Christian massacres in Northern and parts of Southern Nigeria as “Fulani Herdsmen/Farmers clashes”. It is strongly suspected that the intents behind are geared towards shielding the culprits and accomplices particularly those in the corridors of power as well as reducing the legal and social gravity of the massacres and diverting and distracting the attention of the international community. The present central Government of Nigeria is seen by many as complicit in the whole massacre especially since mid 2015; largely owing to its inaction, inability and unwillingness to tame the carnages.

By research, investigations and other credible information obtained from several international and local research, investigative and victims’ bodies, the killings perpetrated by Fulani Janjaweed are thousands of miles away from mere “herdsmen/farmers’ clashes”. The invocation of the right of self defence by the Christian survivors and other victim population is near absence. The Janjaweed Jihadism atrocities are carefully designed or planned and executed for Jihadist intents using the cover of “cattle herders/herdsmen” in Nigeria or any part thereof.

Like the historical Janjaweed of Sudan and Rwanda and Burundi’s Tutsi cattle herders and their Darfur and Hutu sedentary (farmers) neighbours, the Fulani Herdsmen in Nigeria are also historically noted to engaging in *seasonal clashes* with their host farming communities particularly those located in the Southern Rain Forest and Middle Belt regions. Such seasonal clashes, devoid of modern State involvement; were over grazing grounds and safety of farm crops and farmlands.

The clashes usually occurred during dry and beginning of rainy seasons owing to dearth of grazing grasses and weeds in the far northern parts of Nigeria. In the said clashes, usually ragtag and erratic, Fulani Herdsmen as guest grazers were always the aggressors owing to their ceaseless incursions into farmlands and indiscriminate destruction of farm crops. The host farmers rarely revenged and erratically acted in self defense under compelling circumstances.

However, just like in modern Sudan and Rwanda and Burundi, radical and religious fundamentalists within successive and subsisting central Government in Nigeria have hijacked the Fulani Herdsmen, regimented and militarized them for reasons of politico-religious radicalism or Jihadism and conquest.

In recent times, for purpose of enthronement of Jihadism, the referenced radical or fundamentalist elements in Northern Nigeria infiltrated the Fulani Herdsmen to launch several bloody attacks against non Muslim populations particularly Christians and their holy places of worship across Nigeria and partly make the then central Governments ungovernable. This was the case particularly in 2000s to 2014.

Between 2015 and presently, the cells and frontiers of the Fulani Herdsmen and their anti Christian violent attacks were expanded and fortified particularly towards old Meddle Belt, Southeast, South-south and many parts of Southwest. With Boko Haram anti Christian attacks resulting in destruction of over 13,000 churches and 1,500 Christian Schools as well as killing of over 11,500 Christians and fleeing of 1.3million others particularly in Northeast Nigeria between 2009 and 2014; the option of Boko Haram for Jihadist expansionism especially towards predominant Christian North-central, Southern Kaduna and Christian strongholds of Southern Nigeria; was relaxed and the concept of Janjaweed Jihadism was raised and expanded.

The concept of “Janjaweed Jihadism” became the option of northern religious radicals including some, if not many serving public office holders at Federal and State levels for expansion of Islamism towards Meddle Belt and Southern Nigeria (particularly Southeast and South-south) owing to existing age-long Fulani Cattle rearing in Nigeria. Owing to hospitality of the Peoples of Southern and Meddle Belt regions of Nigeria, Fulani Cattle herders are accepted and permitted to graze in Southern and Meddle Belt lands. These, the northern radical religionists and public office holders cashed in and devised for conquest and expansion of Islamism in Nigeria’s Christian strongholds.

Apart from the above, available statistics also indicate clearly that the ongoing well oiled anti Christian attacks by Janjaweed Jihadists are totally incoherent with Government and its media claims of “Fulani Herdsmen/Farmers clashes”. Seasonally speaking, the attacks have ceased to be seasonal.

As a matter of fact, most of them take place outside dry seasons or without seasons. Patterns and trends of sophisticated weaponry as well as hours of the attacks used or applied by the marauding Janjaweeds and the central Government’s woeful failure to unmask them have also fuelled speculations of involvement and protective covers possibly provided for the killer elements by some fundamentalists in Nigeria’s security establishments.

The role of the present Federal Government in Nigeria is also gravely suspicious. There had never been this level of partiality, aiding, abetting and condoning of the Janjaweed atrocities and their adoption as a national policy by any successive central Government in Nigeria than the present Government of Muhammadu Buhari; to the extent that *Cattletocracy* now dominates national policy of the Administration.

Further, there is no link whatsoever between farming and cattle grazing activities and Christian worship and their sacred places of worship which had come under severe attacks and destruction by Fulani Janjaweeds particularly since mid 2015. By recent statistics, over 13,000 churches and 1,500 Christian schools were destroyed or razed to rubbles between 2009 and 2014 particularly in Northern Nigeria; courtesies of Boko Haram and Janjaweed marauders. By the Open Doors Int’l report of 2015, most of the destructions were carried out by Boko Haram while Janjaweed Fulani Herdsmen accounted for the rest.

Specifically, by the attacks and destructions perpetrated by the Fulani Janjaweed, not less than 500 churches have been destroyed or razed to rubbles across Nigeria since mid June 2015. Some of the churches seized from Christian worshippers are “cleansed” and converted to Fula Islamic use. By the most recent account of the Benue State Branch of CAN, over 500 churches have been destroyed by Fulani Herdsmen in the State since 2011, out of which over 170,000 internally displaced persons were also generated. See the Vanguard Newspaper of today, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018 for more details.

It is also generally estimated that over 500,000 mostly Christian IDPs have been generated in recent years particularly since mid 2015 following Fulani Herdsmen attacks across Nigeria. Over 2.6m were generated by Boko Haram insurgency since 2009. By available statistics, churches and other Christian holy places of worship destroyed or razed by the Janjaweeds are mostly located in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Southern Kaduna, Taraba and Adamawa States. Those in Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe, and Borno States are also not spared. They all fell in the hands of the duo of Boko Haram and Fulani Janjaweed Islamic Jihadists.

*Consequently*, our questions to the present Federal Government in Nigeria and other apologists of “Fulani Herdsmen/Farmers clashes” false assertion are:

- ***What have animal husbandry or cattle grazing got to do with destruction of churches and killing of innocent and defenceless Christian worshippers or forceful conversion to Islam of traumatized Christian faithful or destruction of their schools or conversion of same into Fula Islamic use or annexation, possession and occupation of properties belonging to Christian rural dwellers including their churches?***
- ***What and where are the published and verifiable Government and independent statistics of widespread casualty figures of Fulani Herdsmen killed across Nigeria particularly since mid 2015 by their “rival Farmers” as well as the number of their Mosques and dwelling houses destroyed or razed to rubbles or their lands, villages and Mosques annexed, possessed and occupied by their “rival farmers” indicating clearly the widespread “Fulani Herdsmen/Farmers clashes” across Nigeria?***

The Buhari Administration’s national policy of gross lopsidedness in the appointment of security heads, contrary to Section 14 (3) of Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution has further fuelled and escalated the Fulani Janjaweed attacks against Christians and their sacred places of worship and emboldened their attackers to the point of remorselessness, recklessness and untamed impunity.

Government statistics openly indicate that most or 98% of the country’s security, defence, law and policing headships and oversight agencies are presently in the hands of northern Muslims; contrary to pluralistic and secular composition of Nigeria clearly provided in Section 14 (3) of the country’s 1999 Constitution.

These include DG of SSS, Police IG, National Security Adviser, CG of Custom, CG of Immigration, CG of Prisons, CG of NSCDC, Minister of Defense, Minister of Interior, AGF of the Federation, Chief of Army Staff, Chief of Air Staff and DG of NIA. Others are 15 out of the country’s 22 serving Police AIGs and many, if not most of the 37 State and FCT CPs.

In the Southeast, most of the commanders of Army, Navy and Air Force formations as well as majority of State CPs and Police Area Commands, Divisional Police Offices and commanders of MOPOL Squadrons are also occupied by northern Muslims.

We therefore, not only condemn but also reject in totality the condemnable labelling by the present Federal Government and many, if not most of the country's mainstream media of the Fulani Janjaweed attacks and destructions in Nigeria carried out on Christians and their sacred places of worship as "Fulani Herdsmen/Farmers clashes".

The failure of the Federal Government to tame the massacres and fish out their perpetrators are clearly rooted in the above. Federal Government of Nigeria must desist from decriminalization of these clear acts of crimes against humanity by the killer Janjaweed and wake up from its slumber so as to treat the referenced carnages as *crimes against humanity* or heinous crimes committed under non war circumstances in Nigeria or any part thereof.

The central Government of Alhaji Muhammadu Buhari must also overhaul the present grossly lopsided security headship composition in Nigeria and restructure it along constitutional, secular, multi ethno-religious and pluralistic lines to truly reflective the country's multi ethno-religious pluralism and secularism.

Failure of the Buhari Administration to heed this clarion as it has severally, stubbornly and injuriously done in the past two years will be tantamount to self invited injuries and harms including regional and international opprobrium and criminal indictment under regional and international justice system.

***Signed:***

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