

Nigeria: Investigative Report
Intersociety: Monday, June 2, 2025

Title: Research And Investigative Discovery Of 950 Locations In 770-800 (40%) Of 1,940 Igbo Communities Across South-East Presently Under Occupation Or Threats Of Attack By Armed Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen And Allied Others And Conspiratorial Role Of Five South-East Christian Govs Through Religiously Radicalized Land Procurement, Communal Land Ceding And Secretive Issuance Of Certificates-Of-Occupancy To Jihadists' Patrons In An Alleged Or Strongly Suspected "Electoral Victory And Post Election Court Win For Jihadist Fulani Settlements In Igbo Land Swap Deal"-Overlooking Present And Future Faith And Ethnic Identity Safety And Security Grave Dangers

...courage and outspokenness of community leaders and people of Okahia in Obingwa, Abia State and Umuapu-Ohaji and Obitti-Ohaji in Ohaji/Egbema, Imo State commendable

Executive Summary:

950 Locations In 770-800 Igbo Communities Under Jihadist Occupation Or Threat:

A recent detailed research and investigation by **the International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law (Intersociety)**; Nigeria's leading research and investigative advocacy group with a track record of credibility and respectability in the promotion of freedom of religion or worship and respect and preservation of ethnic identity, among other civil liberties in Nigeria or any part thereof, or beyond the shores of Nigeria since 2008; has shown that there are likely to be not less than 950 locations in 770-800 of the existing 1,940 Igbo Trado-Judeo-Christian Communities across South-East of Nigeria that are presently under occupation or threats of attack by armed Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and allied others. The 950 locations in 770-800 South-East Communities also indicates that approximately 40% of the entire 1,940 Communities in the South-East are gravely facing dangers of jihadist occupation or under threats of the same.

These research and investigative discoveries of ours also exposed "three-way direct or vicarious involvement" of the Five South-East Christian Governors including four Catholic-Governors of Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi and Imo (potential recipients of Papal Knighthood) and a Seventh Day Adventist-Governor of Abia State. Their "three-way" involvement was found by our investigative findings to have arisen from conspiratorial communal land procurement or seizing/ceding and secretive issuance of Certificates-Of-Occupancy to the Jihadists' Patrons in an alleged "electoral victory and post election court win for Jihadist Fulani settlements in Igbo Land swap deal". It is also our investigative finding and information that the Abia Governor, previously removed from our list of South-East Govs promoting religious violence and attacks on Christians and Traditional Religionists in our 35-Page Report of April 3, 2025, has been restored to the list following fresh discoveries that detected direct or vicarious involvement of his Government in facilitation of Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and allied others jihadist settlements in the South-East or any part thereof including Abia State; particularly by way of bureaucratic and policy legitimization of such jihadist settlements despite inherent security and safety dangers involved.

Totality of the above is widely believed to have explained why the Five South-East Christian Govs have not only refused to speak out or rise in strong condemnation of the genocidal jihadist activities of the Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and allied others in Igbo Land-Southeast, but have also bluntly refused and failed to act or take action as Chief Security Officers of their respective States. The Five South-East Christian Governors are also found not to be alone in such conspiracy of silence, complicity and inaction as top leaders of Christian Faith especially Episcopal and Pastoral heads of the Catholic, the Anglican and the Pentecostal churches have joined them by being too attached to the Govs; forcing them to lose their assertiveness, independent voicing and Episcopal neutrality; to the extent that some of them are facilitated by gubernatorial or political establishments to publicly speak or engage in false denials, misinformation or misrepresentation of facts whenever such jihadist herders attacks erupt in communities or dioceses where they are episcopally in charge (.i.e. recent Herdsmen attacks in Eha-Amufu, Isi-Uzo, Enugu State). This is even when their Episcopal houses are on fire.

Inherent Grave Dangers Thereto Must Be Averted Before They Are Too Late:

It is not as if the Five South-East Christian Governors are not aware of grave dangers inherent in leasing and motgaging the territorial, personal, collective, faith, ethnic and infrastructural security and safety of the South-East, they are fully aware and also not blind to the goings-on in places like Benue, Plateau, Southern Kaduna, etc. That is to say that the Five South-East Christian Govs are most likely to be aware that the greatest threat facing provision of physical security in the South-East is the gross partisanship and discriminatory law enforcements and operations by the country's security agencies drafted to the Region since August 2015, particularly personnel of the Armed Forces. The above is to the extent that in the South-East where they hold sway as Govs, not less than 20,500-21,000 defenseless "sedentary Southeasterners have been killed or hacked to death by combined forces of Islamic Jihadists and Jihad-enablers within the country's security forces, covering a period of ten years or May 2015 to May 2025.

*The partisanship and discriminatory law enforcements and operations of the drafted security forces are so noticeable and manifestly biased that there are little or zero operational statistics showing the number of Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and allied others gone after or apprehended and prosecuted or "neutralized" in the line of crossfire since August 2015. Roadway and captivity killings or abductions and allied ransom payments and disappearances in the South-East have been critically studied by the Intersociety and estimated 40% traced to the doorsteps of the assembled Jihadists in the Region, yet such have never been traced or located in the official operational records of the deployed personnel of the Nigerian Armed Forces and Police Crack Squads anywhere in the Region; who regularly turn around and blame them on "IPOB/ESN/UGM terrorism". There are therefore grave dangers ahead on personal, physical, territorial, faith and ethnic identity safety and security in the South-East; bearing in mind the intractable jihadist tragedies befalling the Christian-held Northern Nigeria's Benue, Plateau and Southern Kaduna; with a typical case in point being in Benue State (largest Christian State in Northern Nigeria) where Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen have ceaselessly continued wrecking havoc in many parts of defenseless Benue Christian communities. The most shocking of it was disclosure by the Nigerian Catholic Diocesan Priests Association in Makurdi Diocese, led by Rev. Father Joseph Beba, who in a press briefing on Sunday, June 1, 2025, disclosed that "15 Catholic Parishes under Makurdi Diocese have been closed down or sacked and over 50 Christians hacked to death by armed herders in the past two weeks (of May 2025), in addition to sacking of several communities including Tse Orbiam, Abume, Jimba, Nagi-Camp, Aondoana, Yelewata, and Abegana". **End Of Executive Summary***

Statistical Findings:

Affected Occupation Or Threats Of Attack And Occupation Locations In The Past:

*By our research and investigative findings, South-East is presently dotted with 1,940 Igbo trade-judeo-christian communities involving Abia State 771, Imo 700, Enugu 190, Anambra State 183 and Ebonyi State 96; all compressed in 29, 525 square kilometers of landmass, approximately three times lower than the landmass of Niger State, a North-Central or old Middle-Belt agro-fertile land State, measuring 76,363 square kilometers of landmass. From our previous research records, the South-East was home to about ten jihadist settlement locations as of Jan 2015, and increased to 139 by August 2019 including: **Enugu** State 56 locations, **Anambra** State 23, Imo State 17, Ebonyi State 12 and Abia State 7. The number of Jihadist Herdsmen locations increased to 350 by first quarter of 2020 and doubled, alarmingly, to 700 by April 2021 including locations found in Igbo parts of Delta, Edo, Kogi, Benue, Nasarawa, Rivers and Cross River States.*

Affected Present Occupation Or Threats Of Attack Or Occupation Locations:

No fewer than 950 jihadist locations across the South-East Region of Nigeria are presently under occupation or threats of attack or occupation by Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and assembled others waivered into Nigeria in 2017 from different parts of Black, Sahel and Maghreb Africa by Nigeria's former Central Government of Retired Major Gen Muhammad Buhari (as he then was). It must also be clarified that "locations of Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and allied others in the South-East" are found not to be restricted to "one jihadist location per community or village-community". In other words, several communities or village-communities are found to have more than one Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen location in each of such communities or village-communities depending on number of forests or bushes or communal farmlands in each of them. The more than 950 Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and allied others' occupation or threats of attack or occupation locations are hereby broken down in State by State category as follows:

Enugu: estimated 250 locations spreading across about 90 communities in at least 13 Local Government Areas; out of the State's existing 190 autonomous communities and 17 Local Government Areas. The affected 13 Local Government Areas involved include: Oji River, Awgu, Aninri, Enugu West, Enugu East, Nsukka (Ugwuogo-Nike/Opi-Nsukka axis), Uzo-Uwani, Isi-Uzo, Ezeagu, Nkanu East, Nkanu West, Igbo-Eze North and Igbo-Eze South; representing about 45% of the communities in the State under Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen occupation or threats of attack or occupation. Enugu State is by this, **a State with largest number of Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen occupation or threats of attack or occupation locations in the South-East.**

Imo: the State is home to second largest number of Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen occupation or threats of attack or occupation locations in the South-East; with estimated 230 locations spreading across about 300 communities in at least 17 Local Government Areas, out of the State's existing 700 autonomous communities and 27 Local Government Areas. The affected Local Government Areas involved include: Onuimo, Owerri West, Owerri North, Okigwe, Ehime Mbano, Ohaji/Egbema, Oguta, Ideato South, Ideato North, Ngor-Okpala, Njaba, Orlu, Ezinifite-Mbaise, Nkwere, Nwangele, Isiala-Mbano and Mbaitoli; representing about 40% of the affected communities in Imo State under Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen occupation or threats of attack or occupation. Our research and investigative findings also showed that as of March 2021, Anambra State was ahead of Imo State as "a State with second largest number of Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen occupation or threats of attack or occupation locations in the South-East".

Abia: The State is home to third largest number of Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen occupation or threats of attack or occupation locations in the South-East; with estimated 180 locations spreading across about 260 communities across at least 14 Local Government Areas in the State, out of its existing 771 autonomous communities and 17 Local Government Areas. The affected 14 Local Government Areas include: Aba North, Aba South, Arochukwu, Bende, Isiala-Ngwa South, Isiala-Ngwa North, Obingwa, Isiukwuato, Ohafia, Ukwu East, Ukwu West, Umuahia South, Umuahia North and Umunneochi; representing about 35% of the communities in Abia State under Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen occupation or threats of attack or occupation. Our investigation also found that one of the affected 14 Local Government Areas of Abia State devastated by genocidal activities of the armed Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and allied others is Umunneochi Local Government with headquarters at Isuochi. The Local Government has the following 13 Communities: Isuochi, Umuelem, Ndiawa, Amuda, Umuaku, Achara, Lomara, Ngodo-Ukwu, Lokpa-Ukwu, Leru, Lokpa-Nta, Lekwesi and Mbala; out of which about 90% have become a den of the Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen genocidal attacks since 2020; yet, the area hosts the highest number of security roadblocks/checkpoints mounted by soldiers of the Nigerian Army and other military and police crack squad formations. The above is in addition to brutal abduction and captivity killing of estimated 1,500-2000 defenseless Christian travelers or more, other road users and farmers in the area between 2020 and 2023; and continuation of the genocidal activities in the area till date. The worst routes in the area have been identified to include Enugu-Umuahia-Port Harcourt Road (Umunneochi axis), Leru-Lomara Road, Leru-Ndiawa Road, Leru-Isuochi-Nneato Road, Amuda-Umuaku Road, Lokpanta-Leru-Uturu axis, among others.

Anambra: The State is home to fourth largest number of Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen occupation or threats of attack or occupation locations in the South-East; with about 160 locations spreading across about 70 communities in at least 12 Local Government Areas, out of the State's existing 183 autonomous communities and 21 Local Government Areas. The affected 12 Local Government Areas include Awka North, Awka South, Orumba North, Orumba South, Idemmili South, Oyi, Ayamelum, Anambra East, Anambra West, Ogbaru, Njikoka and Dunukofia-where they have a big terror camp behind Zone 13 Headquarters of the Nigeria Police Force and Ukwulu Forest and environs; representing about 34% of the communities in Anambra State under Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen occupation or threats of attack or occupation.

Ebonyi: The State is home to fifth largest number of Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen occupation or threats of attack or occupation locations in the South-East; with about 130 locations spreading across about 50 communities in at least 6 Local Government Areas, out of the State's existing 96 autonomous communities and 13 Local Government Areas. The affected 6 Local Government Areas include: Ishielu, Ohaukwu, Ishiagu (Ivo LGA), Izzi, Ikwo and Onicha; representing about 54% of the communities especially the State's boundary-communities bordering Benue and Cross River States; affected by Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen occupation or threats of attack or occupation. See the link below for more details on communal locations of Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and allied others in South-East, compiled and released by **the Intersociety** on May 25, 2021 and slightly updated on May 29, 2025: <https://intersociety-ng.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Locations-in-Igbo-Land-Presently-Or-Previously-Occupied-By-Jihadist-Fulani-Herdsmen.pdf>

Seven Hidden Operational Bases Of Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen In South-East:

1. *Invaded and Occupied or Procured or Ceded Igbo Communal Forests*
2. *Invaded and Occupied or Procured or Ceded Igbo Communal Bushes*
3. *Invaded and Occupied or Procured or Ceded Igbo Communal Farm Settlements*
4. *Invaded and Occupied or Procured Communal Forests for Ancient Igbo Dieties/Oracles*
5. *Occupied Non-Igbo Forests, Bushes and Farm Settlements at Igbo Boundary Areas*
6. *In-Barracks and Outer-Barracks Vicinities of the Nigerian Military and Police such as Obinze and Ohafia Army Cantonments' forest vicinities or areas in Imo and Abia States.*
7. *Occupied Forests and Bushes outside South-East Neighbors (Edo, Ondo, Ogun, Kaduna, etc., where traveler-Southeasterners are waylaid, abducted and killed or disappeared.*

Alleged Linkage Of Ceded Or Procured Igbo Lands To Northern Sultanate:

By our investigative findings, it is important to state that most of those jihadist hidden places and their movements thereto (usually at late nights) in South-East are known to deployed security forces of Nigeria particularly personnel of the Military; likewise some, if not many traditional rulers and town union leaders of the affected communities plus their troublesome millionaires and billionaires who have been found to have conspired and got compromised monetarily in facilitating such jihadist Fulani Herdsmen settlements in their localities. It was also found that greater number of non-sedentary natives of the affected communities especially those in Diaspora are rarely aware that their ancestral forests or bushes or farm settlements have been compromised, procured or ceded and handed over to the patrons of the Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and allied others for swift establishment of jihdadist settlements in such procured or ceded locations, preceded by alleged secret of Certificates-of-Occupancy by ministries of lands and survey of the State Governments involved or in charge. It was further alleged that once the above is done, secret linking of the affected location to Northern Islamic Sultanate follows and a new Fulani leader (Emir) secretly designated, turbaned and placed in charge.

Three-Way Direct Or Vicarious Involvement Of Five South-East Christian Govs:

Widely and circumstantially alleged was the "three-way" direct or vicarious involvement by the Five South-East Christian Govs in the ongoing anti-Christian and others' programs by Nigeria's federal establishments. As recently announced by federal authorities, there are more than "417 National Livestock (Cattle) Ranches and Settlements" across Nigeria including the South-East. The said "417 National Livestock Ranches and Settlements" are strongly alleged to have been "Fulanized" and "Islamized" and pursued in the South-East through the alleged conspiracy and complicity of the five South-East Christian Govs who allegedly deploy or apply different disguises to misinform and mislead their people. The above is more so when out of Nigeria's total landmass of 923,952km², 78% or 731,085km² are in the North, while the South is compressed in the remaining 192,867km² or 22%; out of which South-East has only 29,525 km²; three times lower than that of Niger State, a highly agro fertile North-Central-with total landmass of 76,363km² (approximately three times larger than the entire South-East). It has also been investigated and found that Niger State alone can contain all the cows and their rearing in Nigeria with ease. Totality of these explain while we boldly held and still hold that the referenced joint Federal-State Government programs are subriquet "Sudanese Janjaweed Jihadism" under the ousted Islamist Government of Gen Omar Hassan el-Bashir (in office from 1989 to 2019).

Other nationalized and disguised pro ethno-religious Fulani programs of the present Federal Government of Nigeria across the country including South-East are: “RUGA” (a Fulani word for “human settlement in host or rival communities Fulani cattle rural cattle grazing networks as a cover”), “National Waterway Control Policy”, “National Livestock Transformation Plan”, “Nigerian Military Livestock or Cattle Ranching”, “FADAMA”, “National Livestock Ranching program (with 417 locations across the country designated so far)” and “Federal Grazing Route and Reserve Mapping and Digitization”, among others.

Alleged Involvement By “Office Tenure Deal And C-Of-O To Jihadists Patrons”:

Strong allegations are also made to the effect that the patrons of the Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen in Nigeria’s South-East, who procured lands or received ceded others are swiftly issued with the Certificates of Occupancy by various ministries of lands and survey of Governments of the five South-East Christian Governors, without whose authority that can never happen. Cases involving the above have been reported in Enugu (since 2021), Anambra (since 2021/2022), Imo (since 2020), Ebonyi (since 2020) and Abia (since 2020/2023); to the extent that such issuances with ease have emboldened the Jihadists and their patrons, especially when they are said to have conditionally been tied to “office tenure securement deal”. The Five South-East Christian Gvs are specifically alleged to have an alliance deal on “jihadist Herdsmen settlements in the South-East with Northern Sultanate in return for securing their office tenures of 4-8 years including securement of their respective electoral victories and accompanying electoral court victories.

Who Issues “C-Of-O” To Ceded And Procured Jihadist Lands In South-East?

The Intersociety however challenges the Five South-East Christian Gvs to publicly disclose how the Jihadists’ Patrons go about land procurement or handed over ceded lands in the tiny South-East, including issuance of their “Certificates of Occupancy”. In other words, is it correct or incorrect to say that all the procured or handed over ceded lands presently in possession of the Jihadists’ Patrons in South-East Region of Nigeria are without “Certificates of Occupancy”, exclusively issued by the Governors/Governments of various States of the Federation including those of the Five South-East States outlined in the Concurrent List of the 1999 Constitution as amended? What about public-interest reasons and public security and safety implications of their issuances, if yes?

Thanking Community Leaders Of Okahia (Obingwa) And Umuapu/Obitti-Ohaji:

We, **the International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law (Intersociety)** are deeply thankful to community leaders of Okahia Autonomous Community in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State including their traditional ruler, Eze Okey Ananaba; for their recent public alarm over indiscriminate procurement of their ancestral lands by Jihadists’ Patrons of the Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen. According to their alarm, published at <https://www.purse.ng>, dated May 4, 2025, “...massive land acquisitions by herdsmen in the region are ongoing in their area, to the extent that herders had acquired over 5,000 plots of land in strategic border communities such as Mgboko Umuananu—near the boundary with Akwa Ibom State—and Akpaa Mbato, which lies behind the National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) in Ovom, Aba”. The alarm added that “they had submitted several petitions to the Abia State Government urging intervention, but their concerns have been largely ignored” and that “If the government continues to ignore our reports, the people will suffer. Some residents also accused unnamed traditional rulers of facilitating these land deals”

We are also thankful to the leaders of Umuapu and Obitti Autonomous Communities in Ohaji-Egbema Local Government Area of Imo State, for boldly speaking out on the same issue. Their safety and security concerns were raised on April 30, 2025, as published in the Daily Post of the said date (<https://dailypost.ng>). According to leaders of the two Communities including Hon Luke Chukwu, a former Member of Imo State House of Assembly and former Local Government boss and Chief Chinaza Ajukwara of Obitti-Ohaji Autonomous Community; “their communities are protesting against forced land acquisition for Fulani herdsmen settlement and an alleged move to establish a Fulani herdsmen settlement in the area, a part of Ohaji-Egbema, by the State Government (Government of Imo State)”. The leaders of the affected communities specifically lamented over the invasion of their farmlands by government officials, accompanied by security agencies, forcing them out of their farms”.

The affected communities’ leaders therefore urged the Government of Imo State “to leave their ancestral land alone to enable them to feed their families, as they maintain that farming is their sole source of livelihood”. Also speaking for the people of Obitti-Ohaji Autonomous Community, Chief Chinaza Ajukwara, on behalf of his community, told journalists that “Fulani Herdsmen are currently occupying their farms, eating up their crops that are due for harvesting”. Chief Ajukwara further lamented that “the people of the area are helpless because the herdsmen are well-armed and ready to kill anyone on sight, and that there is perpetual panic in the area”. Sources: (1) <https://dailypost.ng/2025/04/30/imo-communities-protest-alleged-forced-land-acquisition-for-fulani-herdsmen-settlement/>, (2) <https://www.pulse.ng/articles/news/local/tension-in-abia-as-monarch-raises-alarm-over-land-acquisitions-by-suspected-herdsmen-2025050421020532541>

End.

Signed:

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