

DEATH AND THE HERDSMEN





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Disclaimer

The data contained in this report is only up-to-date as at Thursday, 28 April, 2016. Some of it is subject to change during the natural course of events. SB Morgen cannot accept liability in respect of any errors or omissions that may follow such events that may invalidate data contained herein.

Our researchers employed methods such as one-on-one interviews and desk research to collate the available data. Our editors sifted through the data and prepared the report, using various proprietary tools to fact-check and copy edit the information gathered.

A baseline of accurate and comprehensive historic data is collected from respondents and publicly-available information.



Introduction

In the early hours of Monday, April 25th, 2016, destruction was unleashed upon Ukpabi-Nimbo, a sleepy village in Uzo-Uwani LGA of Enugu State. Scores of heavily armed Fulani herdsmen executed a ferocious attack on the community, killing dozens and seriously injuring a large number of others.

According to eye-witnesses, at least fifty people were killed, and about thirty seriously injured by the time the attack was over. Some witnesses who spoke to SBM Intelligence said that up to twenty corpses were taken to the morgue at Bishop Shanahan Hospital, Nsukka, while up to thirty wounded people, are currently receiving treatment.

What many do not know, however, is that the bloody incident could have been averted, if prompt and decisive action had been taken, according to reports from civil rights groups. We learnt that the villagers became apprehensive a week before, when they observed the movement of large numbers of armed-to-the-teeth Fulani herdsmen around the area. According to a statement issued by the Civil Rights Realisation and Advancement Network, CRRAN, “The villagers therefore informed Mr. Cornel Onwubuya, the Chairman of the Transition Committee, Uzo-Uwani LGA, and also informed the state government and the leadership of the State Police Command.”

“We were informed that the Chairman of the Transition Committee of the Local Government informed the State Governor, Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi and the Police Commissioner, Nwodibo Ekechukwu, of the development. The Chairman of the Transition Committee summoned an emergency stakeholders meeting at the Uzo Uwani Local Government where the leaders of the Hausa-Fulani in the community assured the natives that no such attack will take place. All these transpired to over the weekend last week and by Monday morning the rampaging Fulani herdsmen attacked the community with sophisticated weapons like AK 47, killing and maiming the natives.”

The statement continues, “The spate of insecurity and human rights abuses which reached climax in the last three months gives concern for worry as the hitherto peaceful state of Enugu is now under siege.

“Since the departure of the administration of Barr. Sullivan Chime in May, 2015, the spate of insecurity is alarming, and the governor seems not to know what to do.”

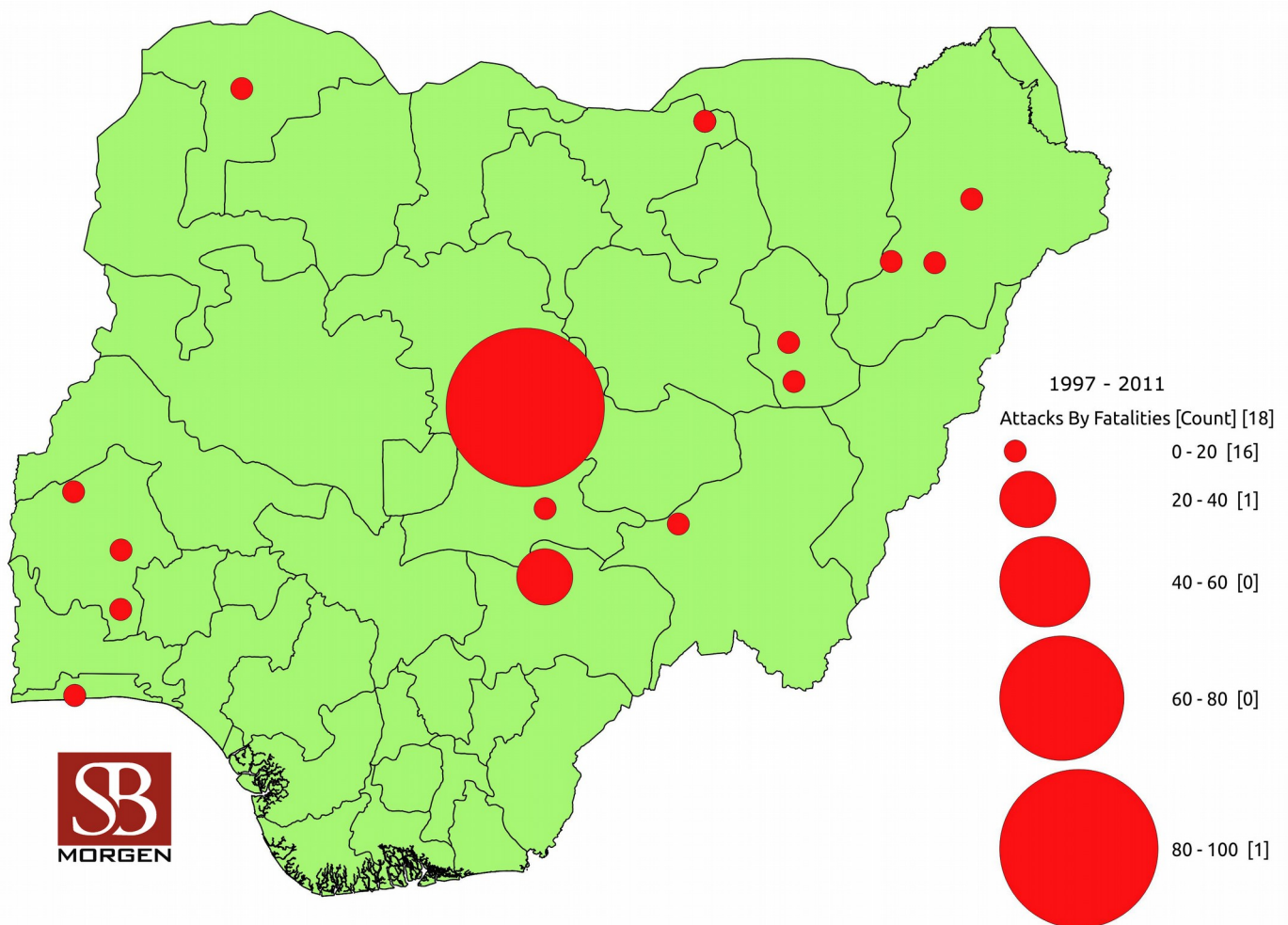
If the foregoing is accurate, then the authorities had prior information regarding the impending holocaust. The question is, what did the authorities do to avert the impending catastrophe? The answer is, next to nothing.

Sources in Ukpabi-Nimbo said the attack may not be unconnected with the vigilante response to destruction of farms in the community by the Fulani Herdsmen in the previous seasons, though they claim that they never killed any Fulani, and only stopped them from grazing on their lands. All this information was passed on to the police with no response.

This brings to the fore the question of how many other incidents have been forewarned about? Just days after the Enugu incident, there was another herdsmen attack on the 27th of April in Obiaruku, Delta State, less than 3 hours from Warri. Eight people have been confirmed missing from the attack and the community is searching for bodies to confirm if they are dead.

The data

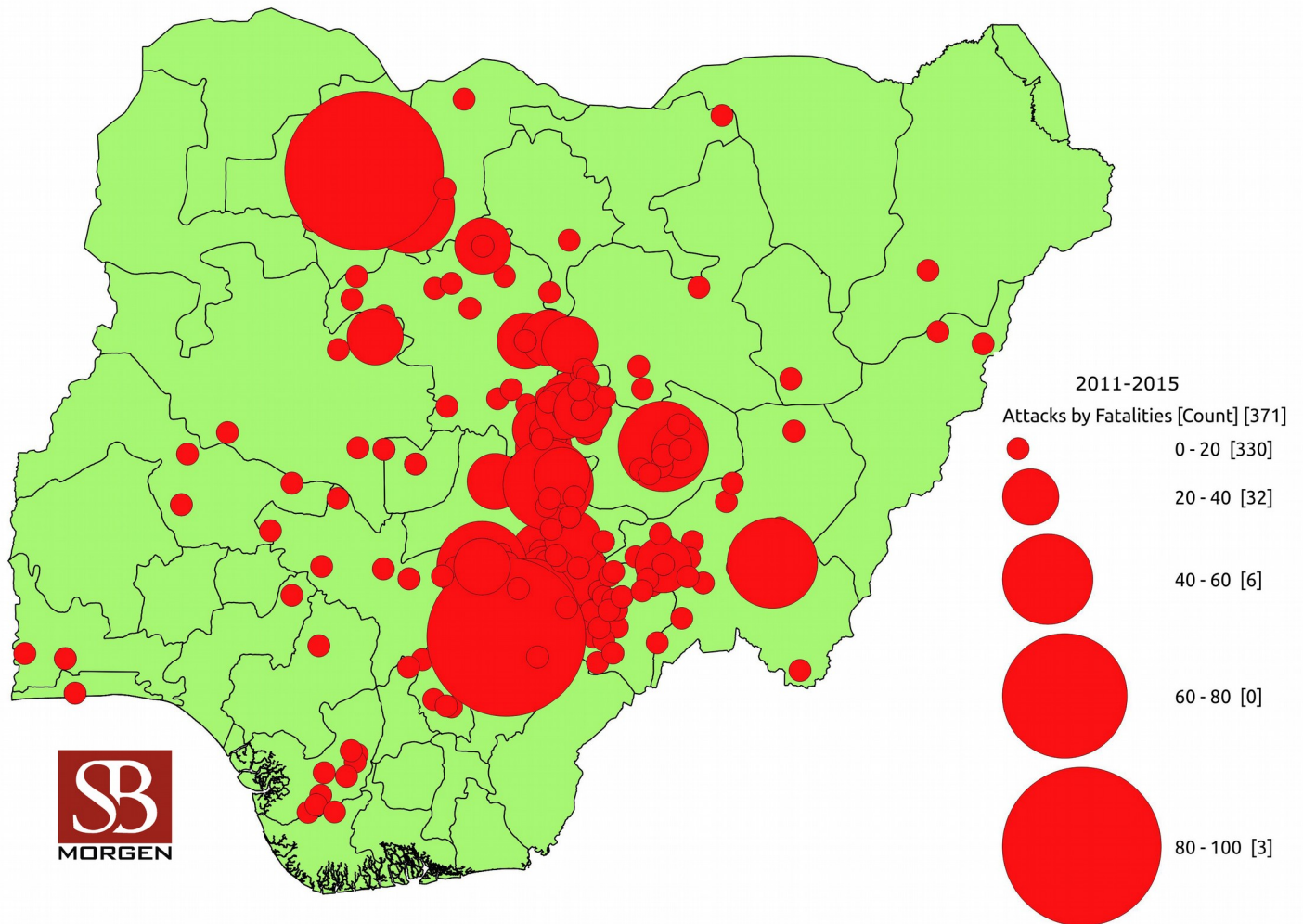
Over the last six years, there have been incidents in various states from Zamfara in the North-West, to Rivers, in the South-South. The bulk of these incidents have been in the Middle-Belt. It is important to look at the data on the attacks to get a sense of the difference in the recent escalations and what has historically occurred as farmer-herdsmen clashes.



Taking care to differentiate attacks that were reported to be by herdsmen, from the sectarian violence that gripped most of Nigeria's Middle Belt following the return to civilian rule in 1999, we found that between 1997 and 2010, there were a total of 18 reported attacks, with most of the attacks being in the North-East.

However, the incident with the highest casualty count was in the Middle-Belt state of Plateau.

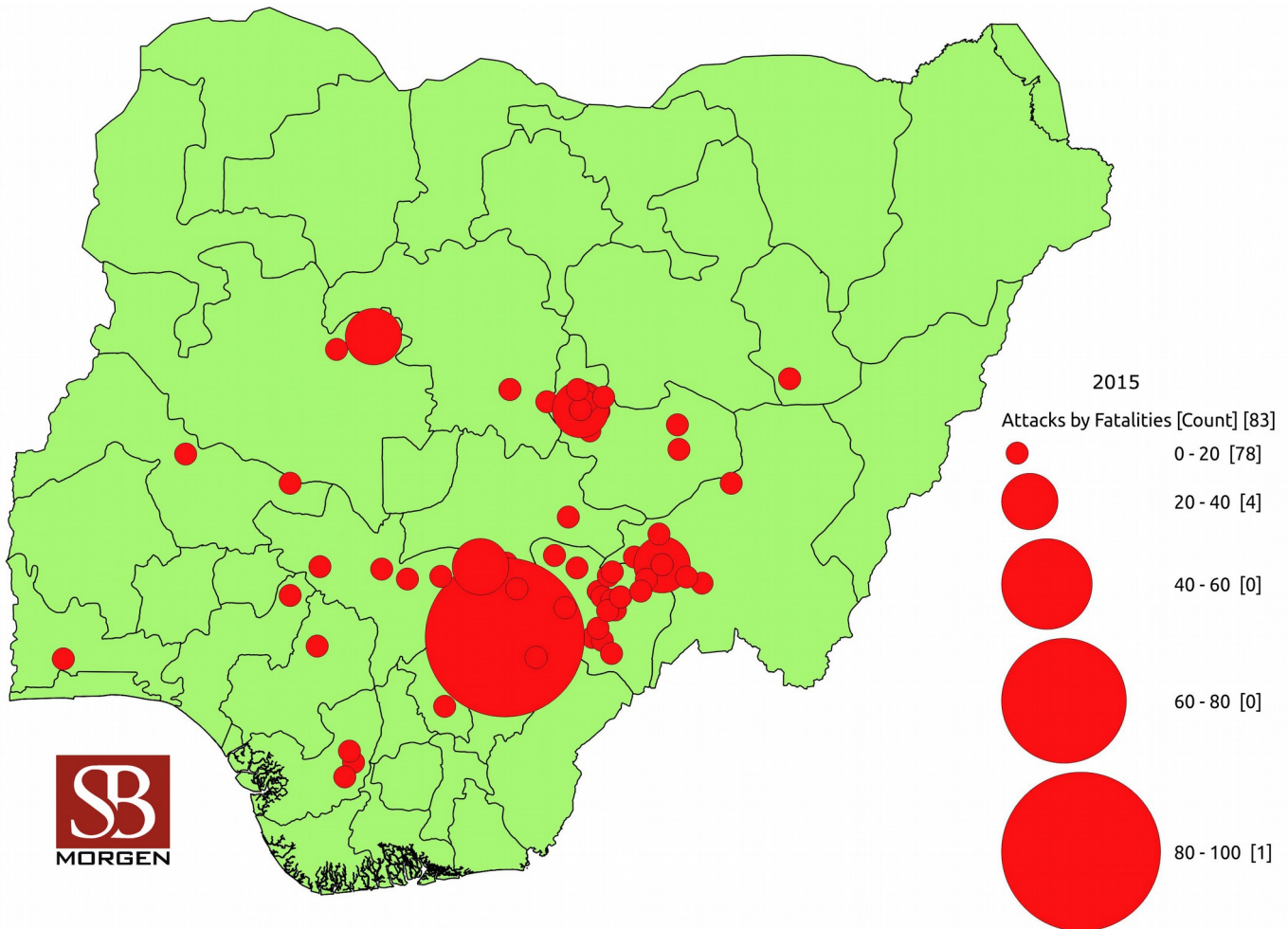
When we compare this with the four-year period between 2011 to 2015, we see a marked difference. In this time period, there were 371 incidents, with the bulk being in the Middle-Belt and North-West. By this time, the attacks had also reached the South-South and the South-East, with a sprinkling in the South-West, particularly in the westernmost parts of Oyo State.



The scale, spread and frequency of the attacks, as well as the near methodical manner in which the communities are wiped out, pacified and the sequence in which it is being carried out speaks to a higher degree of planning and organisation than the government is willing to acknowledge. It is dangerous to refuse to acknowledge this, as our recent experience with Boko Haram has shown. It takes only a little nudge forward for what we see as marauders of civilian targets to begin to take on whole army formations. By then, it will be a lot more difficult to defeat them, at a considerable cost in men, finances and logistics to the Nigerian state.

It also speaks to the value placed on the Nigerian life by the government where a group of people kills other Nigerians with impunity, openly justify the killings as retaliation for grievances of cattle theft and the government does little or nothing to punish the killers or put an end to the killings. The number one thing that legitimises a government is the ability to protect the life of its citizens.

In 2015, there were no attacks in the North East and North West. All the attacks were in the Middle-Belt and South-East, with a single incident in the South-West.

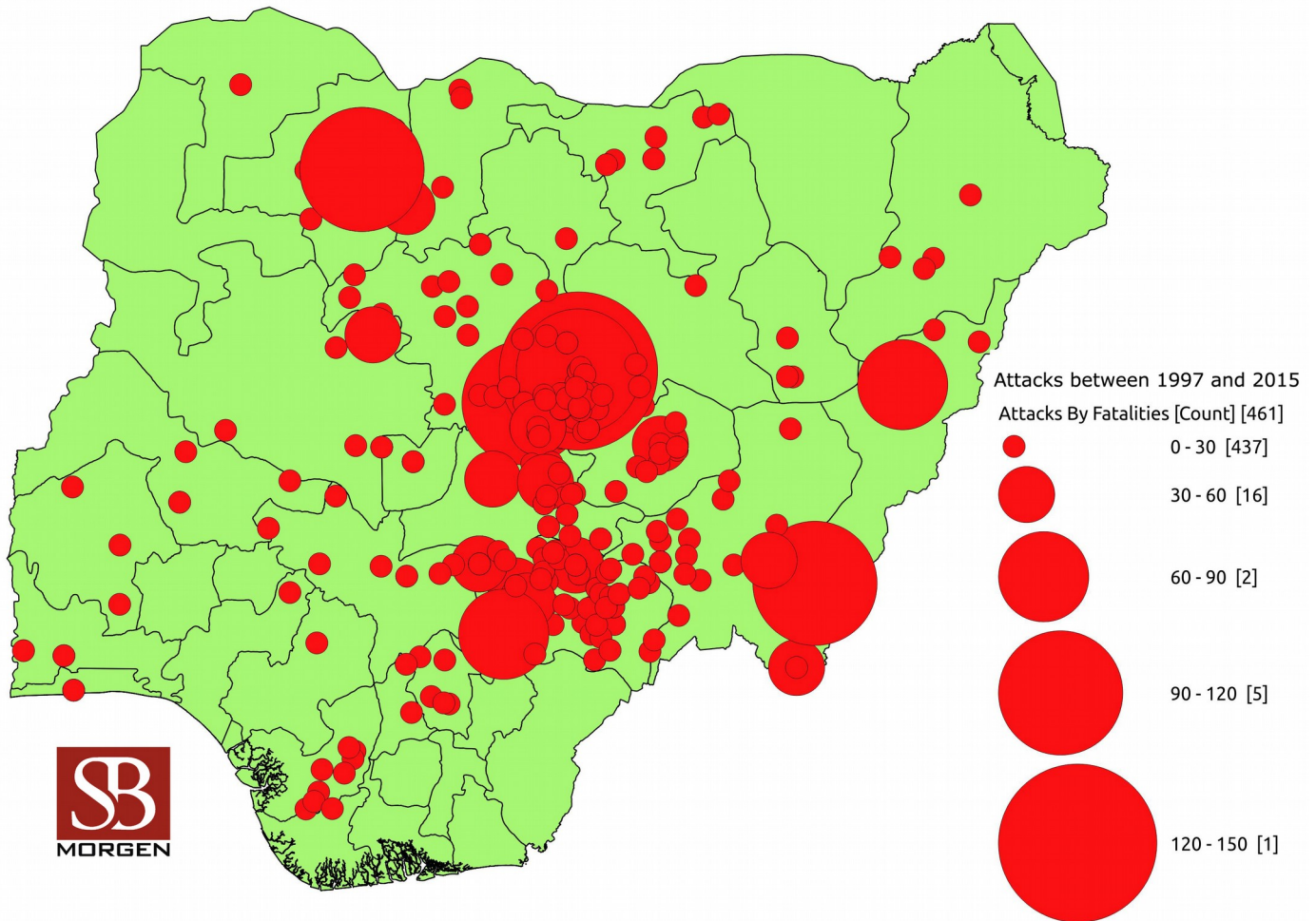


The total number of reported incidents between 1997 and 2015 was 461, with the vast majority occurring between 2011 and 2015, in the Middle-Belt, South-East and South-South. In 2015, it was recorded that there were more casualties from herdsmen violence than from Boko Haram. It clearly shows that the most potent threat to the existential continuity of the Nigerian state has shifted from Boko Haram to the rampaging Fulani herdsmen.

However, the response from the government and the security institutions do not show a clear understanding of this fact. Worse, they show a lack of will to pursue the protection of Nigerians from this threat as has been shown for the Boko Haram insurgency. This has emboldened the herdsmen and has won more and more to their cause. Success in their rampaging endeavours has granted increasing legitimacy to their methods amongst those who might have remained antagonistic to such violence within their ranks.

The image below is a composite of all the attacks that we have been able to verify took place between 1997 and 2015, a total of 461 incidents, which have left thousands of people dead.

Some of their stories were told in our October 2015 report, *Terror In The Food Basket*.



In 2016, there have been twenty-one attacks that SBM Intelligence has been able to independently verify, with the number of victims stand between 526 and 820.

Three of the victims were Fulani herdsmen killed by cattle rustlers, and one a Fulani herdsman killed in a reprisal attack. This shows a clear escalation from the already alarming 2015 numbers. What is increasingly becoming likely is that as government continues to fail to protect the people, as was shown in Borno with the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), people will resort to self-help to protect themselves.

Violence associated with pastoralists in 2016

- 1) January 4, 2016 - between 12 and 38 dead in Udeni Ruwa, Nasarawa State.
- 2) January 10, 2016 - up to 45 dead in Agatu, Benue State.
- 3) January 17, 2016 - 3 herdsmen dead, killed by cattle rustlers in Gareji village, Wukari LGA, Taraba State.
- 4) January 23, 2016 - 30 to 60 people killed, including a police DPO in Demsare, Wunamokoh, Dikajam and Taboungo, in Adamawa State.
- 5) February 2, 2016 - 7 dead in Agatu, Benue State.
- 6) February 7, 2016 - 10 dead in Tom Anyiin, Benue State.
- 7) February 11, 2016 - 2 killed in Abbi, Enugu State.
- 8) February 24, 2016 - between 300 and 500 killed in Agatu, Benue State.
- 9) February 28, 2016 - 9 killed in Agatu, Benue State.
- 10) March 7, 2016 - 8 killed in Logo, Benue State.
- 11) March 8, 2016 - 12 killed in Mbaya-Tombo, Buruku, Benue State.
- 12) March 13, 2016 - 2 killed in Mbaya-Tombo, Buruku, Benue State.
- 13) March 17, 2016 - 15 killed in Tombo, Buruku LGA, Benue State.
- 14) March 29, 2016 - between 7 and 16 killed in Ohali-Elu, Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni LGA, Rivers State.
- 15) April 3 & 4, 2016 - APC chieftain killed in Tarka, Benue State, leading to mass protest.
- 16) April 9, 2016 - former SGF, Olu Falae's farm attacked, security guard killed. Ilado, Ondo State.

Violence associated with pastoralists in 2016 (continued)

17) April 10, 2016 - between 15 and 44 killed in Angai, Dashole, Dori and Mesuma villages, Gashaka LGA, Taraba State.

18) April 13, 2016 - Herdsman killed in reprisal attack in Ilara-Mokin, Ifedore LGA, Ondo State.

19) April 18, 2016 - 18 killed in Moor, Kwande LGA, Benue State

20) April 25, 2016 - at least 20 killed in Ukpabi Nimbo, Uzo-Uwani LGA, Enugu State.

21) April 26, 2016 - 8 people missing in Obiaruku, Ndokwa, Delta State.

The scale, spread and frequency of the attacks, as well as the near methodical manner in which the communities are wiped out, pacified and the sequence in which it is being carried out speaks to a higher degree of planning and organisation than the government is willing to acknowledge. It is dangerous to refuse to acknowledge this, as our recent experience with Boko Haram has shown. It takes only a little nudge forward for what we see as marauders of civilian targets to begin to take on whole army formations. By then, it will be a lot more difficult to defeat them, at a considerable cost in men, finances and logistics to the Nigerian state.

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A video (<https://youtu.be/BLK60UTqSBo>) obtained by SBM Intelligence showed boats of fully armed men crossing the River Benue en-route the Agatu attack. According to analysts consulted by us, the men in the video spoke Fulfude, Hausa, Gurma and Zarma, the last two being languages indigenous to Nigeria's northern neighbour, the Republic of Niger. This lends weight to the belief that a lot of these attacks are being carried out by people foreign to Nigeria, and questions the ability of our security services to police our country, given how far inland this river crossing took place. The distance between the suspected crossing point and the nearest border crossing in Katsina is 802 km!

The video was made on the morning of the Agatu attack, by one of the attackers. The same man took part in the Logo attack two weeks later where he was killed and the video was found on a mobile phone retrieved from his body. That such a large body of armed men can move around within the country is an indictment on the security and intelligence services.

Something, beyond rhetoric, has to be done about these incessant attacks on peaceful natives going about their lawful duties, and it is only the authorities that can grant that succour to the people.