



INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATED TRANSITIONS

# Ending Violence in Nigeria's Middle Belt



A Strategic Report on Nasarawa State

JUNE 2022



Nigeria  
Middle Belt  
Brain Trust

This publication is the result of a two-year research project of the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT). The report was principally drafted by IFIT staff: Thomas Jr Bimba, IFIT's Local Coordinator in Nigeria, who managed the project and collected the information presented; Seth Kaplan, who organised the structure and lay-out of the report; and Marina Adán Marcos, who supported the overall process. IFIT would like to thank members of its Middle Belt Brain Trust (MBBT), Chom Bagu Deme and Dr. Zuwaqhu Kalli Abungwon Bonat, for conducting the research, in addition to General (rtd) Martin Luther Agwai, Abigail Nabasu Waya, Prof. Michael Kwanashie, Dr. Saleh Bashayi Momale, and Dr. Samuel Wodi Jimba for reviewing the report.

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## Executive Summary

This original report, developed by the Middle Belt Brain Trust (MBBT) and supported by the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT), presents an in-depth analysis of the drivers of violence in Nasarawa State to understand broader dynamics of conflict across the Middle Belt of Nigeria. Based on two years of extensive exploration of documentary evidence and on-the-ground interviews with community members affected by the state's most important conflicts, it offers a comprehensive picture of the intricate forces affecting one state in order to gain a better understanding of what is occurring across the larger region. What emerges is the complexity of the challenge – the rise in violent conflict stems from the nexus of a wide range of issues related to security, governance, the economy, livelihoods, demographics, and resource management – highlighting the importance of action in multiple areas simultaneously. Added to this, the specific sources of violence differ from place to place, with each Senatorial District and Local Government Area having different conflict drivers, actors, and dynamics. The report thus analyses cross-cutting issues, examining the role of structural factors; federal, state, and local governments; federal and state policies; social institutions; and various stakeholders in the conflict, before concluding with a series of practicable recommendations for Nasarawa's leaders to consider.

While disputes between “indigenes” and “settlers,” Muslims and Christians, farming communities and pastoralists, and different ethnic groups have long existed in Nasarawa State, they have become increasingly violent since 2001. This rising violence, produced by the nexus of a broad range of issues related to security, governance, the economy, livelihoods, demographics, and resource management, is mostly triggered by disagreements concerning land ownership, land boundaries, and resources; the creation of chieftaincies; the quest for political power; religion; and growing criminality. Worsening structural conditions – including rapid population growth, ad hoc urbanisation, the weakening of public institutions, erosion of traditional authority, and elite fractionalisation – also play an important role.

Federal, state, and local institutions have not succeeded in addressing the challenges presented to date. Security forces are too centralised and overstretched to play an effective role. By contrast, state and local authorities such as the State Ministry of Justice, State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, State Ministry of Land Survey and Town Planning, Local Government Councils, and traditional institutions, are much better placed. However, they are hindered by limited capacity, problematic policies, corruption, bias towards powerful interests, poor implementation of existing mandates, and



limited reach into rural areas. The result is a growing number of under-governed spaces, spreading banditry and social malaise, especially among youth.

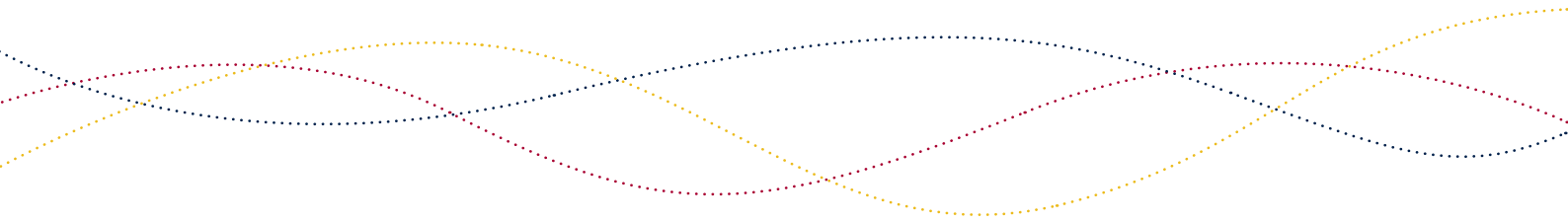
Conditions vary tremendously from place to place, with each of Nasarawa's senatorial districts and Local Government Areas (LGAs) having different conflict drivers, actors, and dynamics. For instance, in the Northern Senatorial District, grievances are primarily related to identity/ liberation struggles. The Western Senatorial District is marked by the long-term conflict between the Bassa and the Egbura over land ownership, chiefdoms, and political power. In the Southern Senatorial district, conflicts mainly revolve around land ownership and its use, and result from population growth, perceived expansionism, land grabbing, political appointments to high-level positions in government, and the establishment of chiefdoms. State politics and elections are also a major source of tension across Nasarawa.

Immediate and constructive steps that political and social leaders should consider include:

- Strengthening the capacity of traditional institutions/rulers and LGAs to keep proper records of land ownership and boundaries and establish stronger cooperation with the Nasarawa Geographic Information Service (NAGIS) to accelerate the LGAs' work.
- Increasing coordination and cooperation between customary courts and traditional rulers, especially regarding conflict resolution and land adjudication issues at the community level.
- Strengthening the judiciary by fully implementing the laws that advance financial autonomy, increasing training, and expanding human resources.
- Enhancing the rural [entrepreneurial ecosystem](#) to boost economic opportunity by building synergy between community development associations, youth groups, the private sector, and the government.
- Codifying the system for creating chiefdoms and jurisdictions as well as the processes of appointing village and ward heads with the support of the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs.
- Using technology to improve the delineation and record keeping of land boundaries.
- Encouraging the timely release of judicial inquiry reports and white papers and the implementation of their key recommendations, especially when they cover issues related to conflict and the promotion of peaceful coexistence.
- Involving traditional rulers, especially those at the community level (ward heads, village heads, and district heads) in alternative dispute resolution processes and security architecture development at the community level.
- Establishing mechanisms that regularly bring together key leaders across ethnic and religious groups to build trust, and ensuring the involvement of community development associations and traditional institutions in doing so.

- Encouraging cooperation between the Nasarawa State Traditional Council and Nigeria's most important alternative dispute resolution institutions, and providing technical capacity and support to the Council such that it can play a larger role in adjudicating disputes in the state.

Building consensus on key reforms amongst the state's most important stakeholders – possibly as part of a [social covenant](#) – is essential to ensuring that gradual and systemic change occurs on the ground.



# Introduction

## Background

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious country with over 525 languages<sup>1</sup> and over 370 distinct ethnic groups.<sup>2</sup> Despite the severe challenges that its complex socio-political dynamics pose, the country has been mostly peaceful since its independence in 1960. While Nigeria fought one of Africa's bloodiest civil wars in the late 1960s, there was little violence across most of the country in the subsequent decades except for sporadic incidents starting in the mid-1980s and the conflict in the Delta region starting in the 1990s. The general rise in violent conflict across many parts of the country since the return to democratic rule in 1999, and particularly under the last two administrations, represents a different set of challenges than those experienced in the past.

The lack of success by successive national governments in adequately responding to growing threats to stability across much of its territory is increasingly challenging the legitimacy of the state itself. Insecurity caused by factors such as ethnic and religious conflict, banditry, secessionism, and insurgency in an ever-growing number of locales suggests that the Nigerian state may be gradually collapsing. Worsening economic conditions for most of the population – despite ample oil reserves – and a lacking response by various arms of the government appear to support such a conclusion. However, this view is more warranted in some states than others. The Northeast, for example, has been under persistent attack by a terrorist group (Boko Haram) for over a decade, with millions displaced. The Northwest is experiencing rising banditry, kidnapping, and lawlessness. The Southeast is contending with a secessionist movement towards a republic of Biafra.

This study focuses on violent conflict in one Middle Belt state – Nasarawa – as part of an initiative to reduce violence across the eastern part of the region (defined here to include Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba, Benue, and southern Kaduna states). While disputes between “indigenes” and “settlers,” Muslims and Christians, farming communities and nomadic herders, and different ethnic groups have long existed across the Middle Belt, they became increasingly violent starting around 2001. In some cases, this led to large-scale killings, causing the displacement of whole communities. The growing breakdown of public authority in many places has led to widespread kidnapping for ransom and lawlessness, often resulting in the violent deaths of innocent citizens.

The federal government has responded to the growing violence by deploying special units of the mobile police force, military, and intelligence agencies. While these special units have mitigated the spread and intensity of the conflicts in some cases, their deployment has exacerbated them in others. Meanwhile, civil society groups and NGOs have established projects with the aim of helping the different communities live together harmoniously and resolve disputes without resorting to violence, but they have also

recorded limited success. As a result, affected communities have tried to use the courts, appealed to government officials, worked with religious leaders, cooperated with public inquiries, and negotiated with their counterparts from other groups. In some of the affected communities (eg, the Fulani, Egbura, Bassa, Tiv, Afo, Migili, and Alago), ethnic-based militias have formed to protect their communities. These local arrangements, however, can also escalate violence.

Conflicts in the Middle Belt, the most ethnically and religiously diverse region of the country, generate significant interest among Nigeria's predominantly Muslim North and predominantly Christian South. Politicians and important social organisations and leaders often court key groups in the region to advance their interests – including a quest for political power and control of economic resources. These interventions shape the dynamics of the region, and, in turn, affect broader dynamics in the country. Electorally, the Middle Belt states are often the swing states. Longer term, the ability of the country to tackle its many challenges arguably depends very much on what happens in the Middle Belt region. It will either be the bridge between the North and South – or the cause of the country's dissolution.

This report examines the medium and long-term drivers of violent conflict in Nasarawa, one of the Middle Belt states, to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the situation than previously undertaken and to develop practical peacebuilding strategies for the state and broader region. Many of its conclusions will also have relevance elsewhere in the country.

**FIGURE 1: MAP OF NIGERIA'S MIDDLE BELT REGION**





## The Middle Belt Brain Trust (MBBT)

The Middle Belt Brain Trust (MBBT), established in 2018 and supported by the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT), seeks to address the region's challenges, focusing on the Middle Belt's eastern half – Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue, Taraba, and the southern part of Kaduna State. Composed of 16 recognised leaders and experts from these five states, it works to suggest ways of reducing violence, resolving conflicts, and building peace in the region. This report, based on extensive research and outreach to local stakeholders, is premised on the idea that change requires a joint, collaborative effort of all – or at least the great majority – of key actors in a region. Meetings with the leaders of Nasarawa State throughout this research enabled the MBBT to collect information that is crucial to understanding the issues, refine recommendations, and lay the groundwork for collaboration that will be necessary going forward. It appreciates the consistent support received from the Governor, His Excellency, Engr. Abdullahi A. Sule, and many other key leaders of Nasarawa State.

## Research Methodology

Five methods were used to collect information for this report:

1. *Documentary research* relied mostly on government white papers and reports of investigative panels into individual crises in Nasarawa. In addition, executive orders, edicts, gazettes, official maps, legal notices on government policies and decisions, committee reports and official Local Government Area (LGA) correspondence were consulted.

Communiqués and minutes from meetings related to government efforts to mediate and facilitate negotiations between conflicting groups were made available by the State Governor himself. Similarly, out-of-court settlements mediated by the police and village heads were provided by the courts working in synergy with traditional councils and socio-cultural group leaders.

Some of the ethnic groups and professional associations made written submissions to the researchers, including the Bassa, Tiv, Eggon, Fulani, Afo, Massenge, Gwandara, and Mama (Ka'ah). Others brought memoranda they had previously submitted to government committees and correspondence with the state and local governments. Among these were memoranda by the Forum of Community Development Associations of the Mama Chieftdom (Arum Association, Kantana, and Kulere of Wamba LGA), the Marhai of Wamba LGA, the United Farmers Association of Awe LGA, the Alago Development Association, the Omadege Development Association, and the Nigerian Association of Small-Scale Industrialists (NASSI).

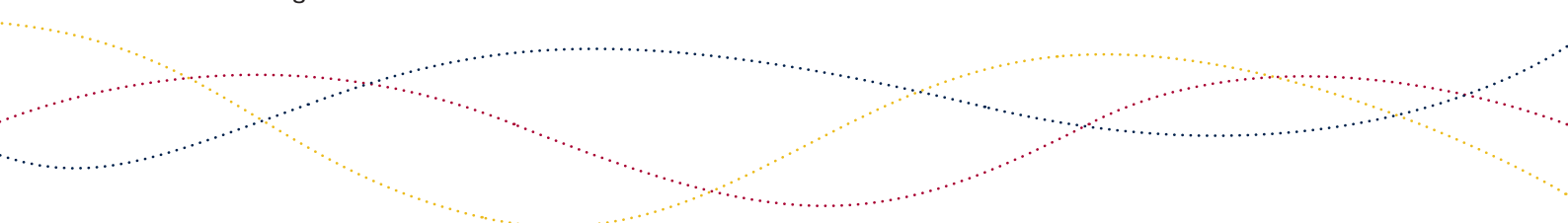
Researchers also used secondary sources for this report, such as academic articles, think tank reports, and NGO analyses. These were especially useful for analysing issues such as the Ombatse phenomenon, which was not covered in primary sources.

**2.** *Key informant interviews* were conducted in each of the three senatorial districts. In each district, seven key leaders were strategically selected to ensure the group was well represented based on locations and ethnicities.

**3.** *Focus group discussions* were conducted with seven sets of farmers, youth, women, Fulani pastoralists and community leaders, small scale industrialists, other business leaders, NGOs, and victims of violence. Participants were drawn from across different LGAs and communities; the groups were mixed. There were six focus group discussions in all.

**4.** *Group interviews* were held with representatives of specific ethnic groups, communities, towns, and villages identified as having conflicts with their neighbours. The groups were not mixed, and each had a maximum of five participants. Researchers met each group separately and made them aware of interviews with other groups. In the Northern Senatorial District, eight group interviews were conducted; in the Western and Southern Districts, four group interviews were conducted in each.

**5.** *Meetings with state leaders* were undertaken throughout the research process to determine the areas that were most important, and thus most likely to gain wide support after the report was completed. Members of the MBBT met several times with key stakeholders, including the Governor, His Excellency, Engr. Abdullahi A. Sule, traditional rulers, as well as the leaders of different ethnic and religious groups, civil society organisations, and community-based associations. Scholars researching conflict in the region were also consulted.



# Analysis of Context and Conflicts

## Overview of Nasarawa State

Nasarawa State is strategically located in the centre of both Nigeria and the Middle Belt, on the eastern border of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja. Its location, rich agricultural land, and mineral deposits give the state economic potential, but also make it a likely target for migrants, investors, and powerbrokers that may outcompete the state's population. While it is predominantly agrarian, there is increasing urbanisation and industrialisation in the capital and areas that border the FCT. Historically, the state is considered more stable and has experienced less ethno-religious conflicts than its neighbours.

## Senatorial Districts

Nasarawa State is made up of three Senatorial Districts, which are subdivided into 13 Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- **Northern Senatorial District** has three LGAs: Akwanga, Wamba, and Nasarawa Eggon.
- **Southern Senatorial District** has five LGAs: Doma, Lafia, Obi, Keana, and Awe.
- **Western Senatorial District** has five LGAs: Karu, Keffi, Kokona, Nasarawa, and Toto.

Each of these districts and LGAs has a unique set of conflicts and conflict dynamics.

### 1. Northern Senatorial District

The Northern Senatorial District has the largest number of ethnic groups, most of which are very small in size. The groups include the Ayu, Eggon, Hausa, Alumu-Tesu, Bu, Hasha, Marhai, Massenge, Kulere, Rindre, Toro, Duhwa, Fulani, Gwandara, Mada, Mama,<sup>3</sup> Ninzo, and Numana peoples. For ease of administration, and due to their small numbers, the British colonial government merged them under one chiefdom. This has led to long-term competition and identity/liberation struggles amongst the various groups. There is also conflict over the ownership of land for farming, access to grazing land, rights to economic trees,<sup>4</sup> and developmental activities such as road construction and the location of communication masts and power lines/transformers (their location raises questions as to whom the compensation for the lease of land should be paid). There are also clashes between farmers and herders.

## 2. Southern Senatorial District

The Southern Senatorial District's major ethnic groups are the Alago, Eggon, Migili, Tiv, Jukun, Hausa, Goemai, and Kanuri peoples. The major conflicts revolve around land ownership and use, and principally result from population growth, perceived expansionism of the Tiv and Fulani people by other groups, land grabbing, political appointments to high-level positions in government, and the establishment of chiefdoms. The system of land ownership and acquisition exacerbates disputes because there is poor documentation of land use agreements. Also, the delineation of land, especially in rural communities, is often unclear.

## 3. Western Senatorial District

The Western Senatorial District's major ethnic groups include the Bassa, Egbura, Fulani, Nyamkpa (Yeskwa), Gwandara, Gbagyi, Gede, Ganagana, and the Hausa peoples. There is a large mix of people from different parts of Nigeria in the Western Senatorial District due to its proximity to Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, where many migrants live near the border.

The long-term conflict between the Bassa and the Egbura over land ownership, chiefdoms, and political power is the district's major dispute. In recent years, conflict from land grabbing around Karu LGA (due to its proximity to the FCT) has also become a problem. Likewise, a rise in kidnappings and an influx of radical Islamic sects and bandit camps in the Nasarawa and Toto LGAs, at least partly due to an emerging crime-terror network in the area, pose an aggravated threat to security and stability, even to the neighbouring FCT.

## State Politics

Elections are highly competitive in Nasarawa State, with politicians often seeking to leverage their ethnic and religious identities and identity-based alliances to garner votes, making these a major trigger of conflict or polarisation during campaigns and after elections. The offices subject to competition include Local Government Councillors, Local Government Chairpersons, House of Assembly Members, House of Representatives, Senatorial seats, and the highly sought-after Governorship. Winners gain access to economic benefits and patronage from developmental projects, natural resource exploitation, and appointments into government. Election results often produce grievances that affect other issues – most Christian communities in Nasarawa State believe they are marginalised because they have yet to secure a State Governor.

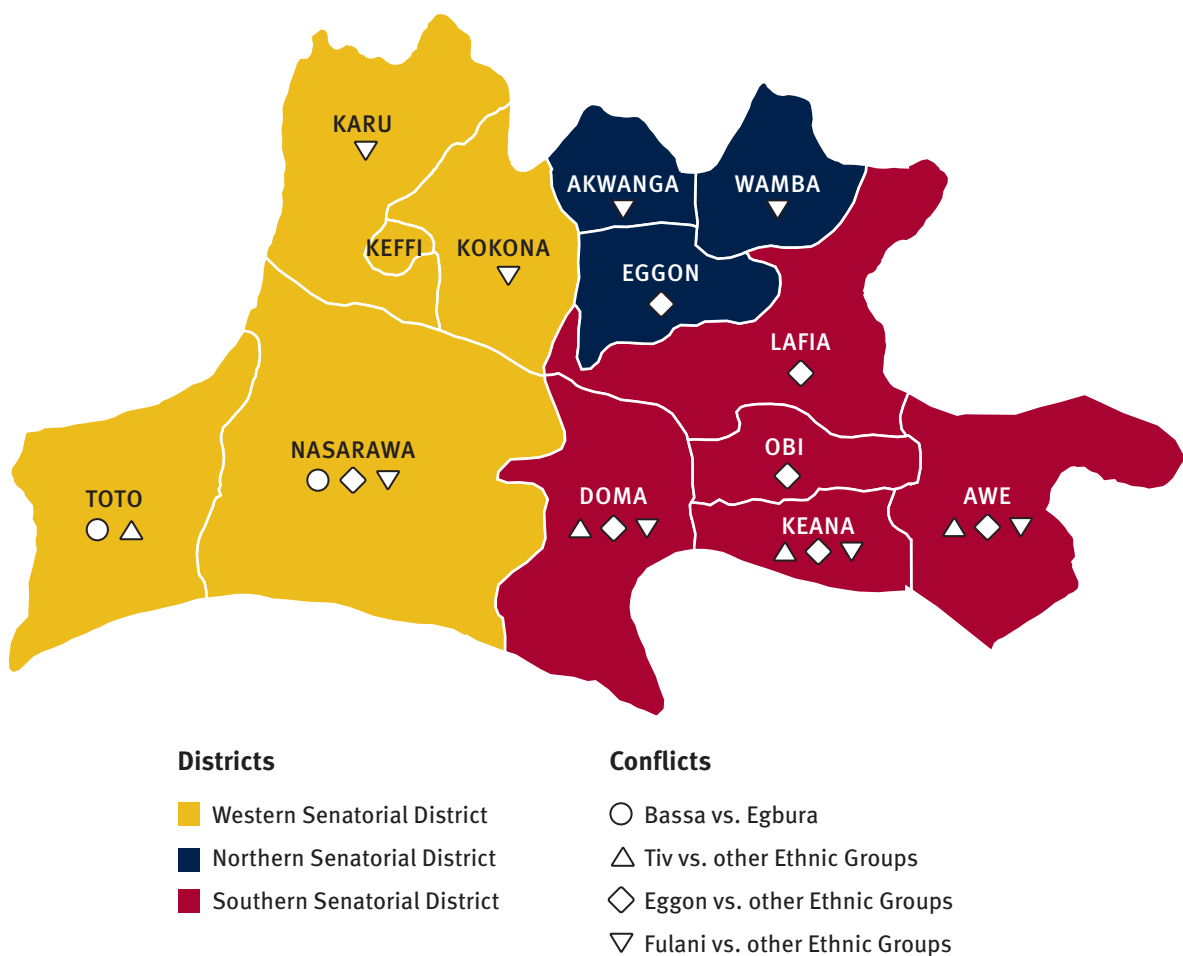
Politicians vying for office often incentivise unemployed youth with money, weapons, and drugs to intimidate voters, sometimes with violent acts, which can threaten the integrity of elections in places where the state is weakest. When these young people are inevitably left unemployed again after the election, they blame politicians for failing to keep their promises, which leads to a feeling of alienation that affects their subsequent decisions. With weapons, skills, networks, and confidence gained, these young people

acquire the means to impose their will on vulnerable groups and turn to crime to earn money, especially in areas that lack both a robust government presence and any strong traditional or community authority.

## Main Ethnic Conflicts in Nasarawa State

For the purposes of this research, the state's many conflicts were researched (see [Annexes 1, 2, and 3](#) for a complete list). Of these, four inter-ethnic conflicts emerged as especially important and were explored in depth. They highlight the main cross-cutting issues and underlying forces driving rising violence in the state (and broader region).

**FIGURE 2: MAIN CONFLICTS AFFECTING NASARAWA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS (LGAS)**



### 1. Bassa vs. Egbura

The Bassa vs. Egbura conflict dates to the precolonial era but was intensified due to the British and post-independence governments' administrations. Based on how the British (as punishment for the killing of a colonial officer) and post-colonial government (because of their religious beliefs) have treated the Bassa people, they believe that they are being marginalised and subjected to the Egbura people. The Egbura people dispute this claim.

The current round of violent conflict started in 1986, when the Military Administrator upgraded the Egbura chief to third class status, without consulting the Bassa people, who are the majority group in Toto LGA. This changed the dynamic and balance of power that existed. Since then, there have been disputes over grave sites, leadership of the Market Union (which plays an outsized role in rural commerce), ownership of land (including that beneath some towns/villages), chieftaincy/traditional chiefdoms (such as boundaries of the paramount chief of the Bassa people, the Turunku Chiefdom headed by the Aguma of Bassa),<sup>5</sup> and Local Government Council elections.

The conflict that began in 1986 led to the loss of lives, destruction of property, and large-scale displacement of the Bassa people out of the Toto Local Government Council and into Nasarawa LGA and the FCT. The conflict abated between 2003 and 2017, when the State Government facilitated the return of the Bassa people, but resumed in 2018 when disputes over the boundaries of the Turunku Chiefdom led to the displacement of the Bassa people once again (the trigger being the kidnapping and murder of two young Bassa men in Kogi State). The displacements have weakened traditional and public authority in some of these communities, allowing the radical Islamic sect Darussalam to set up camps and recruit members. Kidnapping and rural banditry, which is connected to factional disputes, have also become common.

According to the respondents and leaders from the displaced Bassa communities, Fulani pastoralists and Tiv farmers have started to move into areas within Toto LGA, disregarding the Bassa's claim over the land. Furthermore, two large agro-conglomerates, "Flour Mills" and "AZMA", have leased from the Ohimege Opanda of Umashia (the most senior Egbura chief) over 40,800 hectares of land that was previously inhabited by Bassa communities but that became vacant due to displacements from the conflict. The Bassa communities have written to the State Government and private companies to stop the process of buying disputed land.

Key institutions including Traditional Councils/Chiefdoms, Local Government Councils, the State Government, state electoral commissions, State Ministries of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, the police, and the military have tried to resolve these disputes. The Nasarawa State Government has issued executive orders and set up commissions of inquiry to examine the causes of this conflict and provide recommendations for solutions. It has also launched several dialogues between traditional rulers and high-level members of each group at Government House in Lafia. The Federal Government has established military and police camps in areas that the Bassa were forced to abandon, with the aim of bringing back governance to what can currently be regarded as under-governed space – areas where criminals groups undertake kidnappings and armed robberies and radical groups operate freely. However, none of the existing approaches has proven effective in resolving the conflict, partly because the rules have not been enforced by government and there are ethnic groups who feel they are winning.<sup>6</sup>



## 2. Tiv vs. other Ethnic Groups

The Tiv people, probably the single biggest Middle Belt ethnic group, are a classic “segmentary lineage” society, meaning they are highly decentralised. They are very mobile, with households and lineages often establishing new farmsteads autonomously. Nasarawa Tiv have close ties to other Tiv communities in neighbouring Benue State, where the ethnic group is by far the largest and dominates the State Government. The conflicts between the Tiv and other ethnic nationalities are concentrated in the Southern Senatorial District and revolve primarily around land ownership, chiefdoms, and political power. These conflicts involve the Tiv and ethnic groups such as the Alago, Jukun, Agatu, and Fulani. They are exacerbated by Tiv ties across state borders (and perceptions by groups such as the Agatu that they will be used to gain a dominant position). These ties may play a role in the Tiv communities of Nasarawa’s ability to acquire land for farming and influence politics in their favour. The anti-open grazing bill in Benue has forced Fulani pastoralists from the state to migrate into Nasarawa. As the boundary between the two states is not clearly marked, pastoralists grazing on the Nasarawa side have accused livestock rangers and security forces from Benue of entering into Nasarawa and confiscating or killing their livestock.<sup>7</sup>

While most conflicts in the state originate over competition for land access or ownership, they can end up with ethnicity or religion being the main fault line and basis of organisation and alliance-building. The conflicts in the Southern District involving the Tiv people, who are both the dominant group in neighbouring Benue and predominantly Christian, have in some instances taken this trajectory. If such conflicts remain unresolved for an extended period of time, ethnicity or religion often becomes the organising factor and violence increases.

## 3. Eggon vs. other Ethnic Groups

The Eggon, another historically “decentralised group,” is the largest ethnic group in Nasarawa. Unlike some of its neighbours, the group does not have centralised chiefs (at least until colonialism introduced a paramount chief). It is a farming community, located in almost every state LGA, but concentrated in the LGAs of Lafia, Akwanga, and Nasarawa Eggon, where their paramount chief is headquartered. They have conflicts with the Migili, Alago, Tiv, and Gwandara that revolve around land ownership, chiefdoms and political power. These other ethnic groups believe that the Eggon leverage their size and have an expansionist mentality, and that they seek to claim land that they previously leased for farming activities as their own. Violence near Assakio in Lafia LGA came about due to this perception, as the Alago believed that the Eggon were trying to dominate them and therefore decided to expel them from Assakio.<sup>8</sup>

The Migili are also often suspicious of the “Eggon agenda” over Agyaragu in Obi LGA, which they think they seek to claim. Tension has increased due to the formation of the Ombatse,<sup>9</sup> a traditional religious movement that has emerged among the Eggon and embarked on a violent campaign of moral and spiritual reform that draws on currents of political frustration and is implemented through forced conversions.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, the Eggon frequently believe that other groups are discriminating against them because of their large numbers. Their villages have sometimes been burnt down, with those living there displaced. And the Ombatse, originally a spiritual movement oriented towards promoting purity, has been distorted by the conflicts that have erupted, becoming more political and criminal, with “infiltrators” bringing violence into a formerly peaceful religious movement.

#### 4. Fulani Pastoralists vs. other Ethnic Groups

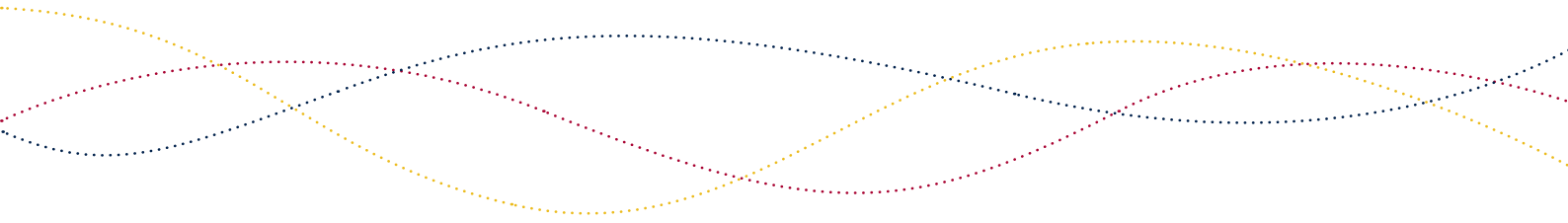
The conflict between the Fulani pastoralists and other ethnic groups cuts across the state. In the Southern Senatorial District, it is an extension of (and exacerbated by) the influx of Fulani pastoralists from Benue State, which has led to widespread displacement of Eggon and Tiv peoples – and several rounds of killings have taken place between the Tiv and Fulani. In the Western Senatorial District, the displaced Bassa people accuse the Fulani of occupying their villages (Kanyefu, Uttu, Bakete, and Rudu) and turning their farmlands into grazing areas. Around Panda village, local communities accuse Fulani pastoralists of carrying out armed attacks against them. In the Northern Senatorial District, the other groups accuse the Fulani pastoralists of destruction of farmland, rape, and violence against members of their communities.<sup>11</sup>

Fulani pastoralist groups express frustration over inadequate grazing land. This stems from 1) the encroachment on designated grazing areas and stock routes due to the expansion of populations and developed areas and the local administration’s failure to protect these areas, and 2) the influx of pastoralists from elsewhere. This influx comes from Benue and some southern states due to bans on open grazing, and from the North due to the decline in available pasture land, “bush” that was used by pastoralists being converted into farms in most areas, or desertification. Insecurity is also a factor, as pastoralists unaligned with bandit groups are leaving the Northwest. This has resulted in increased clashes with farmers over land use and led to the destruction of some farmlands, further dividing communities along ethnic and sometimes religious lines. Cattle rustling, which is run by a criminal group spanning the Agatu, Tiv, Jukun, Kabawa, and Fulani, is another key issue, especially along the borders with Taraba and Benue States. Lastly, extortion, alienation, and criminality among sections of Fulani youth are prevalent and, in addition to drug abuse, constitute a serious problem.

The Fulani also speak of inadequate social infrastructure, such as schools, in their communities. This has created a large pool of unskilled and frustrated youth with no work prospects beyond grazing, and who thus are at risk of being recruited by criminal actors, especially in areas with little or no government presence. The Fulani also report being regularly abused by security forces sent in to maintain the peace – community members are arbitrarily arrested and extorted, with young people as the primary targets, which contributes to the flow of youth into criminal groups.

It is also important to note that the “Fulani pastoralists” are not monolithic – there are different clans, families, etc., which can at times be in competition, with some herding groups being law-abiding and others not. In fact, not all Fulani are “herders.” Moreover,

if pastoral households have moved into an area, they are likely to include women, children, and possibly the elderly, most of whom do not herd but still have a place in the pastoral economy and society. If herders have come to an area for grazing on their own, without their families or supervision by elders, the dynamic is completely different.



## **Main Issues Driving Conflict**

This report finds five prevalent issues driving the conflicts in Nasarawa:

### **Land Claims, Land Boundaries, and Land Resources**

The predominant source of conflict state-wide is land, as it is the main source of wealth for the mostly agrarian population of the state. This is particularly applicable to the Northern Senatorial District where all ethnic nationalities have boundary disputes with their neighbours. In the other two districts, land disputes are the main source of conflict in Doma, Keana, Obi, Agatu, Karu, Panda, and Toto, but the issues are larger in scale and at times encompass the land beneath whole villages (this is especially true in the Southern Senatorial District). Even where conflict has deeper roots in politics and history, as is the case with the Bassa/Egbura conflict, land still plays a predominant role. The herder/farmer disputes can also be categorised as being over land, with pastoralists often blamed for destroying crops and economic trees, as well as stealing harvests. In the Southern and Western districts, the pastoralists are acquiring land in Agatu, Toto, Karu, and Panda.

Beyond these, cross-border conflicts over land amongst communities near the boundaries of Plateau State and especially Benue State have increased in recent years leading to growing tension and violence. The Nasarawa-Benue disputes have become especially violent since the passage of the anti-grazing law in Benue (see above for details). A key part of the problem is the ongoing disputes about where state boundaries lie. They have never been clearly demarcated.

### **Chieftaincies (Traditional Authorities)**

The creation and demarcation of chieftaincies create divisions between the communities along ethnic lines, especially given that most of the chiefdoms in Nasarawa State were created with neither proper delineation of the land nor consultations with the communities. Some chiefdoms have chiefs that preside over people with different ethnic affiliations. Chieftaincy disputes are dominant in Karu, where the Gbagyi claim that former Governor Almakura created first class Gwandara chiefdoms in areas where the Gwandara are a minority, creating tension and frustration among the Gbagyi. The same problem exists in Toto, where the Bassa, who claim to be the majority of the population, only have a second class chief, while the Egbura have both first and second class chiefs. The Afo report a divisive internal competition for traditional stools that is heavily influenced by politicians who want chiefs to manipulate elections for them. Disputes over traditional positions in the Southern and Western District areas that are inhabited by the Tiv mostly revolve around the belief by other ethnic groups that the Tiv are appointing village heads in areas that were leased to them to farm (where they lack the necessary ownership rights to have their own appointed traditional leaders).

## Political Power

In general, violence tends to increase around election seasons, with politicians competing for political power, often exacerbating pre-existing ethnic and religious divisions for their own benefit. However, there are several ongoing conflicts that have a political dimension beyond the election season. Most of the conflicts occurring in Toto have been triggered by disputes over political power. Both the conflict between the Bassa and Eg-bura and the one between the Tiv and Alago have at times related to political power. The Tiv, for example, believe they were targeted for displacement out of Nasarawa State and into Benue State in 2001-2002 because of the political party and candidate they supported. The violence in Assakio is considered to have been triggered by Solomon Ewuga's campaign there. Lastly, the pastoralist/farmer violence is increasingly perceived by some farmer groups as political, claiming the Fulani pastoralists are being used by powerful actors who are allegedly aiming to take over the country, beginning with the Middle Belt.

## Religion

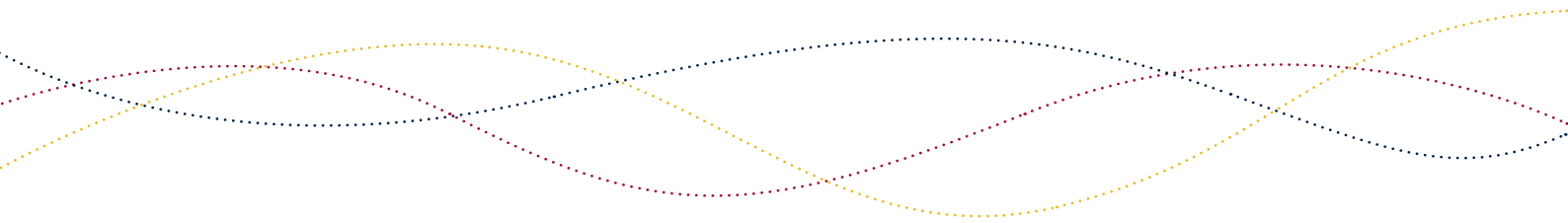
There is a perception among many Christians in Nasarawa that religion plays a major role in the politics of the state, and that the government does not always act objectively as a result. Though discussions of religion are particularly sensitive (due to the role it plays nationally), Christians claim that the fact that no Christian has ever been elected as governor, speaker in the State House of Assembly, or chief judge of the state, and that many Christians instead often end up with deputy or lower-level positions despite the relatively even balance between people of both faiths, indicate that they are being excluded from political power. Muslims, on the other hand, often feel that they were marginalised in the previously much larger Plateau State and therefore had to fight to create Nasarawa (it was split off in 1996) in order to achieve political influence and freedom. The conflict with the Fulani pastoralists also has a religious aspect, as the Fulani pastoralists are seen by some as destroying crops and increasingly engaging in kidnapping as part of a neo-jihadist mission. However, these narratives are a product of the media rather than facts: Fulani pastoralists' disputes are with Muslims as well as Christians, and the kidnapping (and criminality) elements target parts of the Fulani community as well. Though they are media-driven narratives, they may still stir the actions of those who feel victimised.

## Criminality

Growing criminality – including kidnappings and armed robbery, sometimes involving the killing of rural residents – has been increasing for many years due to weakening of governance in many places, as well as the spread of drugs and drug trafficking stemming from the state's ideal location as a logistics hub for the region. This trend is due in part to limited government presence, especially in remote and forested areas, but it is also a product of the displacement of some communities because of violent conflict.

The result is the establishment of criminal enclaves where illicit groups find a safe haven to operate freely (though several notorious and major drug traffickers have been arrested in their hideouts in the state). The high rate of youth unemployment, coupled with rural life becoming less attractive and traditional authority becoming less binding, has provided these groups with a large pool of potential recruits. Once entangled in one criminal activity, male youth typically find it hard to avoid becoming entangled in many: communities report that there is nexus between youth drug use, membership of militia groups, political violence and intimidation, kidnapping, and robbery gangs. Male youth resort to various illicit activities to support their drug habits, making them easy recruits for criminal groups.

When security forces and local vigilantes carry out arbitrary arrests of individuals based on their ethnicity because of suspected ties to criminals of the same group, it encourages increased criminality in particular ethnic groups – members may feel they have no alternative but to turn to their community members even if their activity is illicit. This phenomenon has been reported especially amongst the Fulani, though leaders are actively working to curb it. Some gangs are not specific to ethnicity and cut across numerous groups. One area where weak governance has had an impact is along the Taraba-Nasarawa-Benue border – local communities report a sophisticated criminal network spanning the Agatu, Jukun, Fulani, and Kabawa ethnic groups and involved in cattle rustling and armed robbery. In general, violent conflict tends to be followed by spikes in crime.





## Cross-Cutting Themes and Analysis

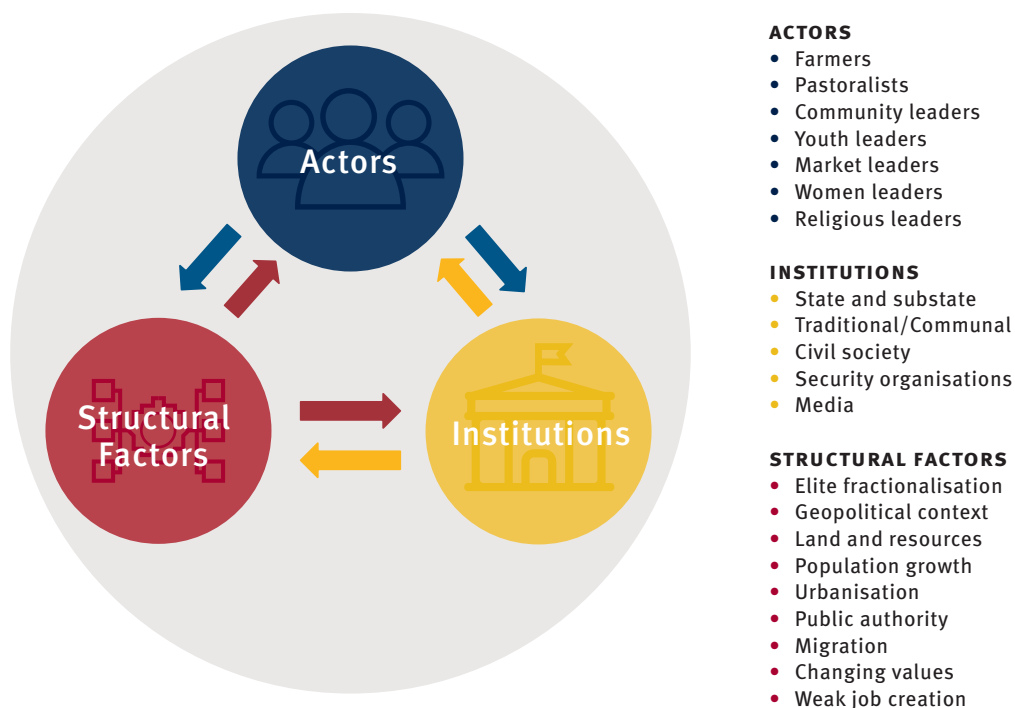
This report applies the framework of the UN-World Bank landmark *Pathways for Peace* report to better understand the underlying dynamics in Nasarawa and develop a conflict prevention plan as part of a comprehensive strategy for sustaining peace. The framework is based on an understanding that societies are “complex systems in which change follows nonlinear trajectories created by the interaction, decisions, and actions of multiple actors,” who “are enabled or constrained by structural factors and influenced by the institutions that help to define the incentives for their behaviour.”<sup>12</sup>

This report thereby focuses its analysis and recommendations on the three core elements of society: actors, institutions, and structural factors.

- **Actors** are the individuals and groups whose decisions ultimately define the pathway a society takes. These can shift behaviour in the short term.
- **Institutions** shape the incentives for peace or violence and therefore influence the society’s overall capacity to mitigate conflict. These can change in the medium term.
- **Structural factors** are foundational elements that define a society’s organisation and constitute the overall environment in which institutions operate and actors make decisions. These can only change in the long term.

This type of analysis facilitates the identification of entry points for action – actors are key change agents; institutions (and policies) must be reformed to sustain any change effort; structural factors may be important but are generally hard to shift.

**FIGURE 3: STRUCTURAL FACTORS, INSTITUTIONS, ACTORS**



## Structural Factors

Structural conditions in the Middle Belt have generally worsened in recent years. The following factors are of particular importance:

- *Elite fractionalisation*: Elites are heavily fractionalised along ethnic and religious lines nationally, regionally, and at the state, senatorial district, and LGA levels.
- *Spatial location at the crossroads*: Nasarawa State is a transit hub located at the cross-road linking the FCT to the South-East and South-South, and the North-East to parts of the North Central. This means that it naturally attracts migrants from a wide range of different places and backgrounds. Its proximity to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, augments this effect and makes it more likely that a variety of actors, some of whom may engage in violent or criminal behaviour, will congregate in the area near the state's border with the FCT.
- *Land and resource richness*: Nasarawa is one of the food baskets of the country and has an abundance of agricultural produce, solid mineral resources, and a relatively large land mass. This could, if well harnessed, support rapid economic development, but it also attracts migrants from elsewhere in the country that disrupt its delicate population geography, as well as speculators seeking easy money at the expense of local inhabitants.
- *Rapid population growth and youth bulge*: Nigeria has annual population growth of around 3%, generating pressure on the frail social, educational, and economic infrastructure. It cannot adequately cope. Over 60% of the people are below the age of 25, yielding large numbers of unemployed, restless male youth and contributing to growing crime rates and drug abuse. With young males unable to locate opportunities to earn money outside the election season, most are unemployed for long periods of time. Some have access to weapons that they use either to turn against their communities or assumed enemies, or commit violence against other groups in the name of protecting their "own."
- *Rapid, unplanned urbanisation*: There has been a sharp increase in rural-urban migration, especially amongst youth searching for better economic and social activities. This has led to growing urban sprawl with little or no urban planning, and to greater insecurity. Policing has become more difficult because neighbourhoods are not clearly labelled or mapped, communities are less cohesive, and relationships between the population and public authorities are less collaborative. This has contributed to growing criminality and anti-social behaviour.
- *Weak public authority*: State institutions (analysed in the next section) have limited capacity to implement major initiatives, transmit authority into rural areas, and enforce laws and policies. These limitations extend into the security apparatus, which is overwhelmed by the country's ever-growing violence and criminality. The public infrastructure is mostly clustered around urban centres and seats of government, and the public generally feels that the government is nearly absent from many areas. There is a growing number of spheres of limited civic authority, where non-state actors unilaterally impose taxes and bandits operate unfettered.

- *Migration into the state:* Inbound migration into the state and region is likely to continue due to instability and greater population growth in the North, climate change, rich land resources, and weak border controls.
- *Growing competition for and overuse of resources:* The competition for resources is rising and becoming unmanageable. In a state that is endowed with a rich mineral base, the illegal mining of minerals such as gold, tin, and columbite by artisanal miners is surging. Additionally, the economic stakes are rising with an influx of Chinese miners, thus exacerbating conflicts over land ownership. Deforestation is also increasing and affecting other resources. Pastoral lands are under pressure. Ecological management is generally neglected everywhere.
- *Changing values:* The forces of modernisation and the weakening of governance at the local level are eroding the traditional values and customs that historically guided social behaviour and norms in Nigeria. In some cases, this means leaders are leveraging traditional loyalties and values in a negative way, exacerbating conflict. Traditional dispute resolution mechanisms are increasingly disregarded, especially by the urban educated elite. Criminals have taken advantage of these dynamics to commit crimes with impunity and pit groups against each other.
- *Weak job creation:* There are few if any factories and limited economic opportunities beyond farming and mining in Nasarawa State. The State Government is the largest employer and cannot offer enough jobs for the rising population, especially in the rural areas. This has left the rapidly expanding youth population with limited prospects and great disillusionment – making it ever harder to prevent young men from becoming recruited to commit violence and use intimidation tactics during elections or by criminal actors. Their restiveness makes them all too willing to use violence to secure a livelihood or an advantage. The State Government has sought to attract large companies to invest in the state, but even if this policy were to be successful, it would not offer nearly enough jobs to close the large gap.

## Key Institutions

A worsening structural context has put extensive pressure on institutions in recent years, aggravating pre-existing weaknesses. The following is an assessment of the most important institutions resolving disputes between groups, addressing grievances, and ensuring security in the state:

### Federal Institutions

Nigeria's security apparatus is highly centralised, with the Federal Government controlling the security and intelligence institutions – most notably, the **Nigerian Police Force, Department for State Security, and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps**. The centralised nature of these institutions has made it challenging for the overall security architecture to be effective. These entities are tasked with safeguarding the country's territorial integrity, but end up bogged down by having to handle social and criminal issues at the community level, significantly overstressing their limited resources and reach.

This contributes to an increase in under-governed spaces across the country, where criminal, extremist, and terrorist groups are able to operate with impunity. Despite the need for reform, the power of these institutions and the fear of secession make it unlikely.

## State Institutions

### *Administering Justice and Legislating*

The State Judiciary and Legislature play a unique cross-cutting role in grievance management in Nasarawa. There are several institutions of particular importance:

- The **State Ministry of Justice** advises the State Government (executive arm of government) on interpreting the law, convenes commissions of inquiries to develop white papers in response to challenges to the legal system in the state, and advises on implementing their recommendations. These commissions and white papers, which are mostly used by the State Government to examine causes of conflicts and outbreaks in public disorder, can be used to bring together conflicting parties, recommend policy or institutional changes, address grievances, and reduce tensions. However, recommendations are too often unenforced and white papers are not publicly released, thereby reducing their potential effectiveness.
- The **State Legislature** is responsible for passing laws to enact new chiefdoms and set their boundaries. The creation of chiefdoms has been a constant source of conflict in Nasarawa State because the legislature has consistently acted without due regard for existing boundaries; failed to consult with the communities and stakeholders involved; and largely ignored the history and customs of the people concerned. The State Legislature also provides oversight of the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs that is responsible for managing Local Governments and the State Council of Chiefs, but often fails to do so adequately.
- The Nasarawa State Judiciary's **High Court of Justice** plays a crucial role in grievance management in both civil and criminal issues, as one of the state's three judicial units alongside the Sharia Courts and the Customary Courts of Appeal. It handles cases on first trial as well as on appeal of decisions of magistrates and district courts. It is supervised by the Judicial Service Commission, headed by the State Chief Judge. It deals with appointments, promotions, and disciplinary issues in the judiciary. Overall, the judiciary's independence is perceived as being compromised – all three judicial units are seen as being susceptible to corruption and political influence. Justice is slow and compromised by financial interests, and court orders are often unenforced by the police or government. There is little trust in the system.
- The **customary courts**, lower courts integrated into the state system, adjudicate many issues in rural areas. Most of the cases that escalate to criminal cases in the rural areas start as minor customary disputes about land boundary issues, sharing of forest resources, marriages, etc. Prompt resolution of cases in these courts could prevent the conflicts from escalating and encouraging criminal behaviour, bringing violence in their wake, but the courts are inefficient and susceptible to corruption. There is also weak enforcement of judgements.

## State and Local Administration

The civil service is the engine room of the government, responsible for designing and implementing government policies. It suffers, however, from a weak human capital base as well as poor management, record keeping, motivation, and corruption. Below are examples of important bodies.

### *Overseeing Local Government Councils and Chieftdoms*

- The **State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs** is responsible for monitoring and coordinating the activities of Local Government Councils, which are the closest level of government to the people. Its mandate includes but is not limited to recommending the appointment of traditional rulers and creation of chieftdoms; assigning roles and responsibilities for traditional rulers; ensuring traditional institutions work in line with State Government policy and laws; funding and disciplining traditional councils in each LGA of the state; managing disputes between traditional and state institutions; and forming and regulating markets and primary healthcare centres. Many of these activities are regular sources of conflict. For example, the markets are major sources of livelihoods in rural areas and therefore susceptible to ethnic group capture and corruption. This is a cross-cutting conflict issue in all Senatorial Districts in Nasarawa. Many conflicts have emerged from the creation and demarcation of chieftdoms – the ministry has often ignored existing jurisdictions and disregarded traditional customs and community norms.
- **Local Government Councils**, which exist in each of Nasarawa's 13 LGAs, are led by a chairman and councillors that are elected for two-year terms. The addition of a clause, section 162(6), in the current constitution mandating that allocations for LGAs be maintained by the state has centralised the financial management of LGAs. This provision of the constitution (which cannot easily be changed) has effectively eroded their financial autonomy and made them less effective. Despite the state's increased power in LGA management, LGA elections are not being held as scheduled, contributing to rural community disillusionment with the government. The weakness of LGAs has contributed to urban migration in search of better government, social infrastructure, and economic opportunities, as well as the development of under-governed spaces.

### *Overseeing Land Ownership*

- The **The State Ministry of Land Survey and Town Planning**, which is responsible for overseeing land use in the state, has the potential to contribute to managing grievances and disputes by shifting its focus toward improving rural land delineation and documentation as a policy for promoting peace and preventing conflict. At the moment, however, its focus is primarily on raising revenue for the government. Through the Nasarawa State Urban Development Board, whose core mandate consists of providing social and economic infrastructure in the state capital, LGA headquarters, and other designated urban areas, the State Ministry of Land also largely concentrates on the development of land in urban centres and other areas designated by the State Government. This excludes large tracks of rural area, leaving them with little or no regulation, mapping or planning.

- The **Nasarawa Geographical Information Service (NAGIS)**, a parastatal under the State Ministry of Land Survey and Town Planning, is the lead government agency for the management of land records. It aims to use GIS data to delineate land holdings, digitise surveyor maps, and make information on land holdings available to the public. But most land in Nigeria is held under customary ownership, owned by individuals, families, or communities with no formal government paperwork – it is not included in the NAGIS. Moreover, NAGIS only has offices in Lafia and Karu, and its fees are beyond what most rural landowners can afford, making it difficult for them to access any of the services.

#### *Promoting Rural Economic Development*

- The **State Ministry of Agriculture** develops and implements the state's policies on which land is set aside for farming and grazing as well as on which crops, animal husbandry, horticulture, and aquaculture are promoted. Nasarawa State has seven grazing reserves, but these are not properly managed and grazing routes are not well marked and publicised, leading to various conflicts over grazing and farming land in the state. The ministry is also responsible for managing forest reserves in the state, but due to inattentive management, these are increasingly becoming a refuge for criminal and armed groups.
- The **State Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment** plays a crucial role in the business and entrepreneurship ecosystem in the state. It leads the government's efforts to bolster livelihoods and accelerate economic development by providing infrastructure, expanding services for businesses, facilitating trade, and working to improve the business climate. However, it lacks the required technological infrastructure and human capacity to meet its goals. Even though most of the state's population is based in rural areas, most government policies cater to or are centred around the urban population. This ministry could play an important role in extending government reach into rural areas if it were better equipped.
- The **State Ministry of Environment and Solid Minerals**, which is responsible for managing the state's forests and natural resources, is important because it manages solid mineral deposits and grants artisanal mining licenses or leases. Illegal mining is a key conflict trigger and driver and makes disputes over land ownership more violent than they would be otherwise. This is especially the case if it involves external parties, prospects of large economic gains, or sophisticated weapons.
- The **Nasarawa Investment and Development Agency (NASIDA)** develops the state government's Economic Development Strategy (NEDS). The NEDS outlines a vision for the state's economy going forward by identifying medium-term goals and priorities (the current plan runs from 2019 to 2023). NASIDA's mission is to leverage the state's competitive advantages to achieve inclusive development, socio-economic transformation, and substantial improvements in the quality of citizen lives. Its scope of activities includes the reform of institutions, the identification of growth opportunities, and the attraction of investment to priority sectors. However, NASIDA's technological infrastructure and human capacity is inadequate to meet its mission. Even though most of the state's population is based in rural areas, its policies cater to or



are centred around the urban population. Excluding rural populations produces resentment and pushback from communities which will scare off investors, stymie economic growth, and in some cases trigger violence and the destruction of property (as has occurred where large agrobusinesses like the Dangote, Azma and Flour mills have leased large tracks of land for agricultural and industrial development in Nasarawa).

## Traditional Institutions and Civil Society

### *Nasarawa State Council of Chiefs*

The Nasarawa State Council of Chiefs is made up of emirs and chiefs in Nasarawa. It is usually structured around ethnic kinship and is based on a system that existed before British colonial rule. The colonial government leveraged it to implement an indirect-rule system of governance, using compliant traditional rulers who were subjugated to oversight by the colonial government. In some cases, colonial authorities enlarged the boundaries of traditional chiefdoms or merged groups that were hitherto in conflict to ease their administration. This created problems that still exist today.

Chiefdoms are important in keeping the peace and managing grievances locally. In most rural communities, residents go to traditional rulers (ward heads, village heads, and district heads – see below) to help them resolve grievances. In some cases, these can impose a fine or punishment for crimes committed. They also play a critical role in land ownership issues: in order to use customary ownership to obtain formal rights of occupancy or a certificate of ownership from the government, these traditional rulers must attest to the rightful claims and sign off on the conversion.

While the establishment of new chiefdoms can be a source of conflict, it also leads to the recognition that some groups are longstanding residents of Nasarawa and not just migrants. The appointments help residents gain access to government jobs and formal control of land.

There are four levels of traditional administration in the state:

1. **Paramount chiefs and emirs** (there are 22 in the 1st class, 30 in the 2nd class, 16 in the 3rd class, and 6 in the 4th class): First-class chiefs and emirs enjoy special state benefits – for example, they receive up to 5% of the revenue allocated to the LGAs under their chiefdoms.
2. **District heads:** District heads usually report to the chiefs or emirs. Each chiefdom or emirate typically has at least three districts.
3. **Village heads:** Village heads are traditional rulers that head villages and report to district heads.
4. **Ward heads:** Ward heads are traditional rulers that have jurisdiction over wards in villages.

**FIGURE 4: LEVELS OF CHIEFS/EMIRS**

Nasarawa State has the highest number of first-class chiefs and emirs in Nigeria (22) and 74 chiefdoms in all. While these can play an important role in resolving conflict and building a peaceful society, their high number contributes to conflict in several ways:

- All graded chiefs, district heads, village heads, and ward heads are paid a stipend by the government, with first class chiefs and emirs receiving substantial sums of money. If there is an excessive number of these roles, it reduces the state's ability to invest in infrastructure and economic development – activities that traditional rulers rarely contribute to.
- Paramount chiefs sometimes compete for a greater role against each other; this is a problem particularly in ethnic groups with many paramount chiefs, which is the case for some groups in Nasarawa.
- There is no clear distinction between some of the chiefdoms because some politicians created new chiefdoms for personal gain. Such actions are more likely during a governor's second term when emotions over identity and grievances that will inevitably erupt have no influence on re-election prospects.
- While traditional rulers may always be susceptible to corruption and misgovernance due to their outsized role in supervising land ownership, their high number and at times conflicting jurisdictions not only significantly increase the risks, but also give them an incentive to abuse the system to advance their interests in a way that would not be the case otherwise.

### Religious Institutions

Religious institutions have significant influence and reach in communities, as they fill a vacuum in providing vital social services in poor communities, such as education, health care, social welfare, and counselling services. Traditional rulers are important because they tend to stay in a particular place longer, establishing deeper relationships with communities, but their reach is limited. Religious leaders, by contrast, have a wider reach and strong influence, but tend to change locations more often, weakening their ties in each community. In Muslim communities, most of the traditional rulers are also religious leaders, magnifying their importance. In Christian communities, the two are separate.

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Jama'atul Nasril Islam (JNI), the umbrella bodies of Christian and Muslim organisations, work hard to resolve disputes and promote peace between communities. They have achieved success in some locales but not others, and the scale of challenges across the country exceed their capacity.

## Media

Nigeria's media is vibrant, but fractionalised along geographic lines, with powerful interests, including the government, often inappropriately influencing its coverage. Major media outlets based out of Lagos are more sympathetic to so-called "southern positions," whereas media outlets based out of Abuja or Kaduna are more sympathetic to the so-called "northern position." These divisions often contribute to different narratives for different groups, which polarise society, promote unhealthy conflict, and increase the risks of violence. For instance, the media has framed farmer-herder conflicts as "Fulanisation" or "Jihadisation." These various biases stifle constructive debate and obscure objective critiques of the government, whose decisions the media often supports.

Social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook are increasingly contributing to conflict. Groups spread information and views that push their positions with little or no verification of facts on the ground. There is little regulation despite wide usage of these inexpensive and widely available tools that have largely replaced other sources of information. The result is greater social division and increased suspicion of "the other," making inclusive dialogue more difficult.

## Policies

### State Policies

- The Nasarawa State Government has marked seven grazing areas located at Awe, Keana, Doma, Assakio, Keana, Gitata, and Kurudu, but these are not properly managed and grazing routes are not properly marked and publicised, leading to various conflicts over grazing and farming land.
- To tackle the weakness of the judiciary, the State Legislature recently passed a bill granting full autonomy to the judiciary in Nasarawa State. Effective implementation is essential to increasing judicial independence and effectiveness and making the judiciary a more legitimate arbitrator of conflict and a more likely mitigator of violence. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of the legislation.
- The state has also passed and signed an act to tackle kidnapping, which strengthens the police and other security agencies and outlines minimum punishments, with the expectation that these steps will deter potential criminals. A clear plan to ensure the prompt and fair resolution of cases will also be needed, so victims have legal recourse – this is essential both as a deterrent and to ensure that victims are provided with a sense of justice, such that they do not feel a need to act on their own. In addition, cases must be tried in a more timely manner according to the law such that the state can reclaim its role as an even-handed arbitrator of disputes and justice. Safeguards will also be needed to avoid abuses by security forces.

- Nasarawa State passed legislation on community volunteer guard security to increase policing in rural areas. The goal is to have the guards help improve intelligence gathering, bring law and order to previously under-governed spaces, and bring governance closer to the people by enabling community participation in policing their own communities. But implementation is likely to be sporadic, with some areas benefiting, and others not.
- The state has recruited 508 special constabulary/community police agents to enhance community participation in the state's security architecture. This may improve the state's ability to quickly resolve conflicts as they arise, but capacity constraints are likely to limit its reach.
- The state has revived a dormant community-based conflict resolution mechanism which brought together leaders at the community level to encourage parties to discuss differences and resolve them amicably. This could work to build trust and reduce suspicion across groups in society while giving communities a sense of ownership in their own security.
- The new Nasarawa State youth empowerment programme designed to train and empower young people across the state aims to reduce youth unemployment and restiveness. It could help equip some youth with employable skills that would allow them to integrate into the economy more easily.

### Federal Policies

- The Federal Government has two main tools at its disposal to address violence and grievances at the local and state level: the deployment of special joint military-police, and intelligence agency task forces. It usually uses these to respond to violent outbreaks of conflict, without addressing the underlying grievances or sources of violence. These entities are notorious for corruption and violations of human rights.
- When it seeks to address grievances, the Federal Government has historically relied on the courts to make judgments. However, increasingly, the Federal Government is encouraging alternative dispute resolution mechanisms such as arbitration.
- The Federal Government has established the pilot National Livestock Transformation Plan project in cooperation with state governments and the Dutch Investment Agency (RVO). The hope is that this will help increase dairy and fodder production in the designated grazing reserves; but in Nasarawa, little has occurred so far and expectations among pastoralists are low.
- The National Boundary Commission has undertaken mappings, assessments and border delineation of the boundaries between Nasarawa and Plateau and Benue states with the goal of resolving these boundary disputes, but has yet to release its report.
- The Federal Government has a longstanding policy of requiring citizens to register but fails to implement it consistently and rarely checks for people's identification. As a result, and given the porous borders, at least some of the perpetrators of violence and kidnapping may come from neighbouring countries.

- The Federal Government's agreements with other ECOWAS members (eg, Protocol on Transhumance, Protocol on Free Movement and Trans-Border Security in West Africa) allow migrants accompanying livestock to move across borders in West Africa without permits if they follow certain regulations. But the regulations are not being enforced. While the Governors of Benue, Taraba, and other southern states have pushed for a different approach, the current Federal Government opposes it.

## Key Local Actors

The number of conflict-related actors is proliferating in Nasarawa, just as the level of mistrust amongst various ethnic and religious groups is increasing. Below are some of the most important actors in the state.

1. **Traditional rulers** are fairly strong and engaged in Nasarawa State. They exist in every community and are generally respected by both local residents and state-level public officers. As discussed above, they play prominent roles managing grievances, reconciling different actors, penalising criminal activity, and settling disputes locally. However, their capacity rarely extends beyond their specific jurisdiction. The Nasarawa State Traditional Council (led by the emir of Lafia, a former Supreme Court Justice and the most prominent traditional ruler in the state) brings together all traditional leaders in the state, and has started to show promise in tackling larger challenges by getting different traditional rulers to engage with each other, especially those whose communities are in conflict, and lobbying the government to act more decisively. It supports the State Government in grassroots governance. In the future, it could act as a conduit to bolster the capacity of traditional institutions to resolve the many land and boundary conflicts in the state and work to build cohesion across groups through a new approach. The Council is also a credible body that can act as a partner for international and local NGOs in their peacebuilding and security-provisioning efforts.
2. **Community groups** – most notably Community Development Committees/Associations (CDC/A) – constitute an organising and development platform in most rural communities, where they act as a bridge between communities and urban-based elites. They are active and engaged in community governance across the state, but are usually formed along religious or ethnic lines. Given the fractious nature of the state, they often end up fighting the various battles of their ethnic and religious groups, rather than acting as a mechanism to bring people together and resolve disputes. To overcome this, a coalition of CDC/As has recently been established in order to bring these CDC/As together to work for peace. A coordination between the Traditional Council and the CDC/As could help build a basic consensus that could engineer progress in governance and economic development in the state.
3. **Religious leaders** play a central role in Nasarawa as they do across Nigeria. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Jama'atul Nasril Islam (JNI), the umbrella bodies of Christian and Muslim organisations, have great reach and mobilisation power. They have intervened to resolve disputes and prevent them from escalating,

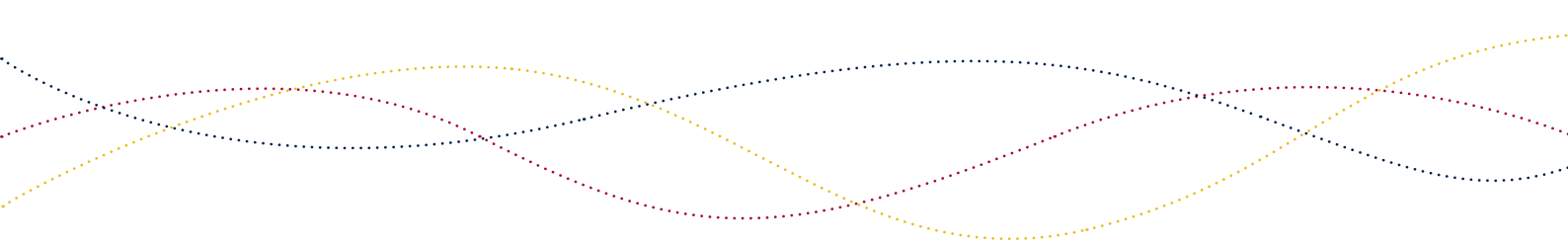
- sometimes successfully, sometimes not. Their narratives of particular disputes or conflicts have significant influence over the way they are perceived in society.
4. With the transition to democracy and increasing insecurity, **youth groups and leaders** are becoming politically more significant. They form the bulk of the voting population and are commonly used by politicians to enforce their will or sway elections legally and illegally. Communities also heavily rely on them to provide protection in the face of increasing insecurity, especially in rural communities.
  5. There are many **civil society organisations** working on peacebuilding in Nasarawa. State and local organisations have limited influence due to their weak management capacity and lack of resources. Regional and national civil society groups have greater resources and capacity but are generally forced to focus their energy on addressing immediate causes of violence – through, for example, mediation – due to the challenges’ scale and their wide geographical coverage. They rarely work on the medium- to long-term challenges facing the region. This means that they may, for instance, promote specific policies at times, but not as part of a larger strategy and rarely in a way that addresses institutional factors – which are ultimately crucial to scaling up and sustaining change.
  6. **Customary court judges and magistrates**, which are part of the state’s court system and function independently from traditional rulers, are responsible for adjudicating disputes under common and customary law. As mentioned above, they are part of a judicial system with limited capacity and perceived as corrupt, with financial interests swaying outcomes at the expense of others. By not promptly resolving cases in what is perceived as an equitable manner, these courts contribute to conflicts escalating and becoming criminal in nature.
  7. **Market unions** regulate daily market activities and set prices for farm produce – which are hugely important for the rural population. Markets are key to the economy in rural areas, and a place of social interaction for all different groups in surrounding communities. Market unions wield a lot of power in the pricing of commodities and taxation of farm produce and have the capacity to act to protect farmers from law enforcement abuses or excesses, but their leaders have often abused their positions. Control of their leadership positions are often hotly contested.
  8. **Politicians** are key players in communities’ dynamics because of their visibility, reach and influence. The number of conflicts in Nasarawa increases during election season, with politicians often accused of arming youths to help them intimidate opponents and rig elections. They divide people along ethno-religious lines to gain votes and be elected to public office. The nature of Nigeria’s political culture is “winner takes all”, hence the fierce competition to get elected. These offices come with substantial privileges and influence over the government’s infrastructural and developmental projects.
  9. **Business leaders** who have economic interest in communities can act to safeguard local populations or take advantage of them for personal gain. They are key players because of their economic capacity and reach across communities. They have been reported as acting to quell or exacerbate conflicts depending on their interests.



## Challenges of Reform

While reform is essential, there are foreseeable challenges that must be considered in any effort to advance it, including:

- High levels of elite fractionalisation and mistrust amongst different ethnic groups and leaders.
- The impacts of patronage, capacity limitations, challenges to the country's democracy, and a lack of transparency in policymaking that have weakened state institutions.
- Limited political will to introduce and implement reform amongst stakeholders and government leaders, especially when reforms are not politically expedient or are attempted around election seasons.
- The struggle and rivalry between modern systems of governance and traditional institutions in terms of appointments of traditional rulers, constitutional responsibilities, and jurisdiction.
- Substandard implementation of the Constitutional Acts on the Independence of the State Judiciary and Legislature by the State Government.
- The influence of powerful actors and organisations beyond the state's borders, and the impact of conflict dynamics in neighbouring states.
- Rising frustration and anger among the communities most affected by violence, displacement, and criminality.
- Inadequate information and poor record keeping of customary land holdings, especially in rural areas, by traditional rulers as well as the local and State Government.
- Ethnic groups' unwillingness to give up the protections offered by their self-defence mechanisms.



## Recommendations: Opportunities for Nasarawa's Leaders to Act

This analysis showcases the complexity of the challenge facing Nasarawa's leaders, as well as the entry points for change. Violence results from the nexus of a broad range of different issues related to security, governance, the economy, livelihoods, demographics, and resource management. There is a great need to both grasp the overall and long-term implications of what is occurring across many dimensions and to simultaneously take practical action in many of these areas.

There are several concrete steps that Nasarawa leaders – from the government as well as political, community, religious, business, youth, and female leaders – can take to improve the state's capacity to respond to systemic grievances, reconcile actors, arbitrate disagreements, and promote the kind of locally-rooted economic opportunity necessary to reduce the pressures contributing to rising violence and disorder.

### Recommendations for Key Local Institutions

#### Improve state administration

- Bolster the capacity of the state apparatus by training and retraining of civil servants in record keeping, administration monitoring, and evaluation.
- Fully implement the laws regarding LGA autonomy to encourage better governance at the community level.
- Create a new agency dedicated to promoting rural development (e.g., Nasarawa State Rural Development Agency) or at least strengthen existing government agencies or parastatals to work in synergy with NASIDA and NAGIS to ensure they reach to the rural areas and populace. For example, NASIDA could play an important role in extending government reach into rural areas if it was better equipped and adopted a broader understanding of its mandate.
- Better balance the government's role as catalyst of economic development with an awareness of its limited capacity. NASIDA (and the government in general) would be more impactful if it stimulated the entrepreneurial sector more, dictated to the market less, avoided distortions and capture by special interests, and limited its interventions to a few key areas rather than responding to every political request. Special attention should be paid to rural development, so that the rural populace is integrated into the modernizing market system and not left out.
- Encourage the timely release of judicial inquiry reports and white papers and the implementation of their recommendations, especially when they cover issues related to conflict and the promotion of peaceful coexistence.

- Establish a state-level transitional justice and reconciliation committee or agency to build bridges between previously warring communities; and ensure it has the capacity to incentivise actors with economic infrastructure that unifies.
- Update the Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy such that it has a much greater emphasis on rural areas and entrepreneurship as well as the reforms necessary to strengthen the state's civil service, land administration, tax and revenue administration, judicial system, and infrastructure necessary to support these.

### Improve rule of law institutions

- Strengthen the judiciary by fully implementing laws that advance financial autonomy, increased training, and expanded human resource support.
- Increase coordination and cooperation between the customary courts and traditional rulers, especially regarding conflict resolution and land adjudication issues at the community level.
- Provide proper training and funding for customary courts.

### Enhance social institutions

- Codify a constitutional role for traditional rulers in governance and conflict resolution at the community level.
- Codify the system of creating chiefdoms and jurisdictions as well as the processes of appointing village and ward heads with the support of the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs.
- Enhance the capacities and reach of traditional rulers such that they can better lead or guide community-based conflict resolution mechanisms; train them in areas such as grievance management and mediation in cooperation with development partners and the Nasarawa State University; and strengthen their ability to work with their counterparts in other states to better manage conflicts that straddle state borders, especially the Nasarawa-Benue one.
- Develop a new community security architecture by building synergy between agencies and increasing the reach of existing institutions. Once established, use this enhanced architecture to address criminality before seeking to address ethno-religious conflicts, the current sense of impunity, and feelings of resentment. Made up of traditional rulers at the community level (ward heads), community development associations, local police, volunteer guards, youth and women leaders, and representatives of different ethnic/religious groups in the community, the enhanced community security architecture should bring together key actors to meet periodically to assess and address key challenges and advise the government and social leaders on community security measures or initiatives, as well as share information with existing security institutions.
- Incorporate youth, women, and other marginalised groups into the community security architecture to maximise their ability to serve the interests of all parts of society.
- Support the establishment of unarmed community volunteer watchmen and a paid constabulary force; raise awareness about their roles; and set systems in place to ensure they do not abuse community members or act in a criminal manner.

- Train influential media agencies and journalists on topics such as conflict-reducing narratives, source verification, and the challenge/ opportunity of new media, in order to reduce the likelihood of their being a source of conflict.

### **Strengthen property rights**

- Strengthen the capacity of traditional institutions/rulers and LGAs to keep proper records of land ownership and boundaries and establish stronger cooperation with NAGIS to accelerate the LGAs' work.
- Use technology to improve the delineation and record keeping of land boundaries by NAGIS. Better land management is not only essential to advancing urbanisation and economic development, but also an integral part of maintaining peace in Nasarawa State. The clearer and more affordable the process, and the more widely and fairly it is accessed, the less likely it is that there will be conflict. As part of this effort, digitise surveyor maps and make them publicly available under the auspices of NAGIS and create an accessible and verifiable land holdings database.
- Launch a state-wide awareness campaign among Nasarawa's many ethnic groups to ensure they understand the importance and rules of delineating and documenting land boundaries, as well as designating land for different purposes (grazing, farming, forest reserves, mining, etc.).

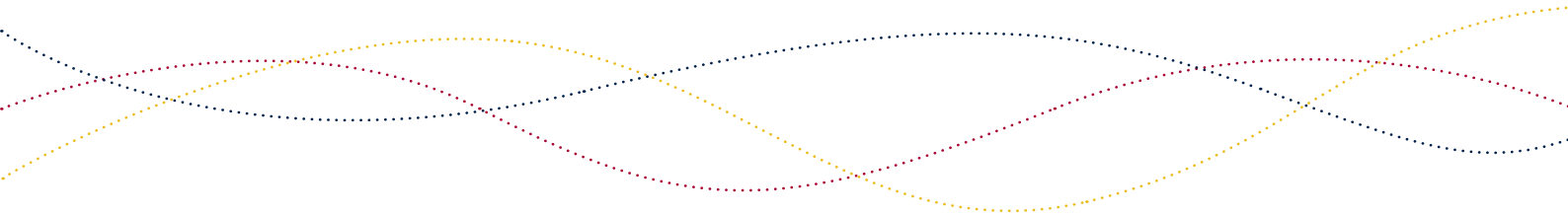
### **Promote rural development**

- Require social impact assessments for all leases of large tracks of land to agro-conglomerates.
- Expand primary education to cover all rural populations that have previously been left behind (especially pastoralists).
- Encourage the private sector to launch youth empowerment programmes.
- Create a rural- and youth-targeted entrepreneurial development system to engage young people through meaningful economic activities and skills acquisition.

## **Recommendations for Key Local Actors**

- Involve traditional rulers, especially those at the community level (ward heads, village heads, and district heads), in alternative dispute resolution processes and security architecture development at the community level.
- Establish mechanisms that regularly bring together key leaders across ethnic and religious groups to build trust. Community development associations and traditional institutions can play a constructive role in these mechanisms.
- Encourage cooperation between the Nasarawa State Traditional Council and Nigeria's most important alternative dispute resolution institutions; and provide technical capacity and support to the Council such that it can play a larger role in adjudicating disputes in the state.

- Encourage social leaders to play a more constructive role in shaping the culture – which influences the behaviour of social groups and youth – to reduce the chance that disagreements will become violent and male youth will turn to criminality.
- Involve community development associations in raising awareness of government policy and the need for peaceful coexistence, as well as in implementing government policy or mandates. This will increase community buy-in and support, and reduce the real or perceived partisan nature of governance in the state.
- Bolster youth groups' capacity to promote entrepreneurship and offer alternative dispute resolution services.



# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: Other Conflicts in the Western Senatorial District

Conflicts Researched	
Bassa vs. Egbura	See <a href="#">Bassa vs. Egbura</a> <sup>13</sup>
Gbagyi vs. Gwandara (Karu LGA)	<p>This conflict mainly revolves around land ownership and chieftaincy issues. The value of land in Karu LGA has skyrocketed because of its proximity to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), with land being sought out for industrial and residential purposes. Communities have resorted to court litigations to settle disputes.</p> <p>The conflict around chieftaincy issues arose when the former State Governor created new chiefdoms, despite the fact that traditional rulers and chiefs are required by law to sign off on land ownership documents in order for land ownership to be converted from customary ownership to Right of Occupancy or Certificates of Occupancy (most rural lands are owned under customary ownership).<sup>14</sup></p>
Nyankpa (Yeskwa) (in Panda Gitata)	<p>The conflict around Panda is due to disputes over land ownership. There is an influx of retired generals who are willing to pay large sums to acquire vast acreage of land for farming purposes. Furthermore, groups of displaced people, such as the Gwoza people displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State, have been settling on this land. Most recently, there has been a rise in attacks from armed Fulani herdsmen, kidnapping, and armed robberies. The former Chief of Defence Staff of the Nigerian Armed Forces, Air Chief Alex Badeh, was killed in this area.</p> <p>The Nyankpa have resorted to litigation in court to solve land ownership disputes.<sup>15</sup></p>
Mada vs. Yeskwa	<p>The Mada people are found predominantly in Akwanga and Kokona LGAs of Nasarawa State. They can also be found in Karu, Keffi, Obi, Lafia, Doma and Toto LGAs of Nasarawa State, as well as in Sanga and Jema'a LGA of Kaduna State.</p> <p>This conflict occurs mainly in Panda, Karu LGA of Nasarawa State. It takes place on land specifically around Panda and Gitata. The Mada people claim they have been in the area for over 100 years in places such as Hayin Mada, Saninge, Kuda and Kumbur. The Mada people have contested and won elections for political office in these areas. In fact, the Mada people have over time held public office positions such as Speaker, Councillor, Directors, etc. in both Keffi and Karu LGAs.</p> <p>A major crisis erupted when an ECWA church was to be named. While the Mada group wanted the existing name of Hayin Mada for the church, the Yeskwa resisted and preferred an old name. The matter was taken to ECWA headquarters for resolution but was unsuccessful. The situation worsened to a point where the paramount chief, the Odyong Nyankpa, refused to sign any documents brought by the Mada people until a peace parley was held between him and the Chu Mada. Until this settlement, the Mada people were criminalised – one example of this was a concerted effort to frame certain Mada people, making it seem like they were arms manufacturers in order to implicate them. This situation has also been resolved.<sup>16</sup></p>

Mada vs. Gwandara	The crisis between the Mada and the Gwandara people also revolves around land ownership and sales, exacerbated by the Mada feeling politically marginalised by the Gwandara people. In 2011, trouble erupted in Kampani Mail-amba (after Gudi along Akwanga-Keffi road) because the Gwandara people were taking Mada land and selling it to their people, e.g., John Mamma and others. A case was brought to court by the Gwandara but they lost – the verdict favoured the Mada. When the case was appealed in the High Court, the verdict still favoured the Mada. The Gwandara people have always tried to politically marginalise the Mada people, even with the large Mada population in Kokona LGA. <sup>17</sup>
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## Annex 2: Other Conflicts in the Southern Senatorial District

Conflicts Researched	
Tiv vs. Alago (in Awe and Obi LGAs)	The clashes between these two ethnic groups have repeatedly taken place in Obi and Awe LGAs. The Alago claim that the conflict is a result of the Tiv's fast growing population and expansionism, in terms of land grabbing, the establishment of chiefdoms, and the demand for political recognition in areas in which they settle without regard for original inhabitants. This led to violent clashes in 1986, 2001, and 2003, with many instances of casualties, displacement, and destruction of property. Unless these issues become resolved, additional clashes between the Alago and the Tiv are bound to occur. <sup>18</sup>
Gwandara vs Gbagyi	<p>This conflict mainly revolves around land ownership and chieftaincy issues. The value of land in Karu LGA has skyrocketed because of its proximity to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), with land being sought out for industrial and residential purposes. The communities have resorted to court litigations to settle disputes.</p> <p>The conflict around chieftaincy issues arose when the former State Governor created new chiefdoms, despite the fact that traditional rulers and chiefs are required by law to sign off land ownership documents in order for land ownership to be converted from customary ownership to Right of Occupancy or Certificates of Occupancy (most rural lands are owned under customary ownership).<sup>19</sup></p>
Alago vs. Eggon (in Lafia and Obi LGAs)	Much like the Tiv, the Alago claim that the Eggon left their Nasarawa Eggon LGA in search of land. Shortly after being loaned land, the Eggon (like the Tiv) start laying claim to the land and the traditional stool of the area. The emergence of the Ombatse group led to violence in Asakio in Lafia LGA and Obi LGA in 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 respectively. The result was massive killings, displacement, and destruction of property on both sides – many are still at IDP camps to date. As a result of the crises, the government constituted a Panel of Inquiry and issued a White Paper that called for punishment for those found to have caused the violence and the return of those displaced, but these decisions have yet to be implemented. <sup>20</sup>
Migili vs. Eggon (in Obi LGA)	This conflict is centred on who owns Agyaragu. There have been clashes between the two ethnic groups, but in 2012, the case of a stolen motorcycle triggered violence that led to the death of an Eggon person, and Eggon youth are accused of having engaged in violence in revenge. The government set up a Commission of Inquiry, as is customary. The inquiry determined that Agyaragu belongs to the Migili, a decision that was upheld by the government. Dissatisfied with the Commission of Inquiry's outcome, the Eggon went to court to challenge the decision but lost, even at the Supreme Court. Peace has since returned to the area. <sup>21</sup>



<b>Tiv vs. Fulani</b>	<p>In 1990, the Fulani entered Rukubi, an island on the River Benue, and killed 25 Tivs over an alleged attack on Fulani cows and women by the Tiv. The Fulani then ran away, and the Tiv attacked communities up to Doma. The Andoma and the Osana of Keana were directed by government to resolve the matter, but despite reaching a settlement, the Tiv continued to rape Fulani women. In 2012, the Tiv attacked Okpata and Akpanaja, and blocked Ondori on Makurdi Road. This conquest enabled the Tiv to expand their claim to land. Gradually, the Fulani acquired arms and started terrorising their neighbours. The Tiv practice of burying their dead on borrowed land and then claiming it and appointing village heads who are answerable to Benue will continue to be a source of tension and violence in the future. The Fulani have also become a major source of conflict because they are accused of being supported by the government.<sup>22</sup></p>
<b>Agatu vs. Tiv/Fulani (Keana and Doma LGA)</b>	<p>The Agatu have cordial relations with their neighbours except with the Tiv, with clashes dating back to 1949 when the Tiv violently raided Agatu in what is called the Ghiri riots. The Tiv would blow a horn and would enter the town and raid and loot, while the Agatu fought back and riots started. In 1951, the Tiv tricked the Agatu people to rob them of their property, but the Agatu youth Vanguard fought back and subdued the Tiv. In 1965, when Tarka campaigned for the elections under the United Middle Belt Congress, the Tiv saw this, according to the Agatu, as an opportunity to claim the Agatu land they were given to survive on as their own. They also stopped paying taxes to the Lafia Native Authority, which led to them being dismissed. The Agatu often accompanied the Fulani during attacks and, as a result, the Tiv started attacking Agatu areas. In 2013, the Tiv again attacked the Fulani, killing 52 people. Subsequently, the Tiv escaped to Benue. Since then, there has been no conflict in the Agatu area.<sup>23</sup></p>
<b>Jukun vs. Kanuri/Hausa Fulani/Azara</b>	<p>This conflict is based on kingship in Awe and Azara. Though the Jukun claim to have established Awe and Azara, the present emir of Awe is a Hausa man allegedly from Katsina. The same is true of Azara, where the emir is of Kanuri descent. The alleged usurping of the two thrones was not by force, but by conspiracy on behalf of the Hausa Emirate of Bauchi, which ruled Awe and Azara during the colonial indirect rule. Correspondence with the Jukun chiefs was in Arabic, and therefore needed to be interpreted by Muslims. It was through this interpretation process that the kingship was usurped from the Jukun. Even though there continues to be tension between the Jukun and the Hausa/Kanuri, it has never erupted into violence. Though the government is aware of the tension, it has taken no steps to mitigate it, even when the Jukun agree to accept chiefdoms side by side with the Hausa/Kanuri.<sup>24</sup></p>
<b>Alago/Hausa/Goemai and Jukun vs. Tiv</b>	<p>The main cause of the conflict between the Tiv and the Jukun, Alago, Hausa, and Goemai revolves around claims to rented land and chiefdom by the Tiv, who are said to have been the last to arrive in the Southern Senatorial District. Clashes between the Tiv and the aforementioned ethnic groups took place between 1963 and 1964, and in 2002 when the Tiv allegedly assassinated the emir of Azara. This led to violence and population displacement. The Tiv have denied this allegation, claiming that there is a war against the Tiv because they were not part of the historical Kwararafa Kingdom.<sup>25</sup> They also claim that they all migrated into Southern Nasarawa with the other groups but are being marginalised, as they have neither a district head nor a chief.</p>

	<p>The Tiv also claim that the land in Doma and Awe belongs to them. In Lafia, the main ethnic groups were Kanuri, Eggon, and the Tiv. The Alago migrated at a later stage and acquired land by conquest.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Tiv claimed that the Alago and Migili are their brothers. They came into the Southern District by conquest and by defeating the Alago, Jukun and Migili to inhabit virgin land. In fact, the Tiv said they had lived with the Alago and the others for more than 300 years, but they now claim the land was of their forefathers because of population explosion. In Assakio, the Alago have accused the Tiv of collaborating with the Eggon. When they returned after the conflict, they were made to sign undertakings to pay tribute to the Alago for using the farmlands. The Eggon have not been allowed to return. As for the Migili, they used to take over their land whenever they were displaced, but they have no conflicts with them otherwise. The Tiv believe that the Fulani are being used by the Alago to take over their lands during conflict. Now that the Fulani are looking for land to settle on permanently, this has intensified their conflict with the Tiv. As for their farming in Bassa land in Toto, they claim they are being encouraged to go there.</p> <p>The Tiv therefore attribute the conflict to three reasons. The first is the arrival of Abakpa or Hausa and the Kanuri people, and the conversion of the Alago and the others to Islam. From then on, there has been “divide and rule” politics. The second is the denial of chiefs for the Tiv. The Tiv used to have chiefs, but whenever they died, they would systematically not be replaced and were gradually forbidden from having any chiefs, including village heads, as all chiefs were Muslims. The third reason is their political support for the former Governor Abdulahi Adamu, whom the Hausa/Kanuri, Alago, and Jukun opposed. The Tiv claim that the attack on them was to force them out of Nasarawa State before the 2003 General Election. After the election, all ethnic groups in Nasarawa South Senatorial District have maintained hostility against the Tiv. The Fulani herdsmen took advantage of this situation to launch persistent attacks on the Tiv, who are also the most effective farmers in the area.<sup>26</sup></p>
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### Annex 3: Other Conflicts in the Northern Senatorial District

#### *Intra-farming Group Conflicts over Farmland/Chieftaincy and Boundaries*

Conflicts Researched	
Marhai vs. Massenge	<p>The Marhai community is situated around the Farin Ruwa Falls in Wamba LGA. Their immediate neighbours include the Mama, Massenge, Arum, Andohor, and Sha in Plateau State, and Mundat communities. They have a cordial relationship with most of their neighbours, except with Massenge and those from Plateau State. Conflicts with communities in Plateau were due to a larger Nasarawa-Plateau States boundary dispute, which has now been resolved.</p> <p>As for the Massenge, the disagreement is due to boundary and farmland issues. The Massenge and the Marhai have a common natural boundary, which is the Farin Ruwa river. In 1955, the Massenge people, lacking sufficient land area to farm, went to the then Sarkin Wamba – chief of the Wamba – to plead with him to appeal to the Marhai so they could cede part of their land to them for farming. The Marhai agreed, but the Massenge started extending beyond the area given to them. Between 1979-1980, they started laying claim to some of the economic trees. The Massenge claim the opposite, as they believe that the Marhai are the ones encroaching on their land.</p> <p>Both groups took the matter to the then Commissioner in charge of land matters in Jos, as Nasarawa State had not yet been created. He invited the chairman of Akwanga LGA, and the paramount chiefs of the Eggon people, the (Bala Angbazo) and of the Mada people, the Chu Mada (Gamau Yare).<sup>27</sup></p> <p>The Chu Mada and the Aren Eggon visited the land and later wrote a report which confirmed that Farin Ruwa River was the natural boundary. However, this did not stop the boundary dispute. The matter has repeatedly been addressed in the courts from Area Court in Wamba to Upper Area Court Keffi and Lafia, then Customary Court Appeal of Jos, without reaching a lasting solution.</p> <p>In 2004, a committee was set up by the Farin Ruwa Development Area administration under the chairmanship of Rev. Luka Kpadji. The committee submitted its report in favour of the Marhai community. The Massenge community rejected the report outright. Since then, confrontations have remained a constant occurrence. The youth are harassed and at times physically assaulted, especially on their farms. They have burnt houses, property, and farm produce. The paramount chief of the Mama people, the Gom Mama, directed the two village heads to amicably settle the matter and report back. The Gom Mama also advised the Marhai to magnanimously cede some portion of their land to the Massenge people. This plea is still being considered.</p> <p>Both groups have problems with the Fulani who they claim continuously destroy their farmlands. For instance, they claim that they no longer have honey because the Fulani have destroyed their honey farms.<sup>28</sup></p>

<b>Mama vs. Rindre</b>	<p>The term Mama is used to cover a constellation of ethnic nationalities which include the Arum/Aso, Kantana, and Kulere. The Mama have been in conflict with each of their neighbours at different times. The conflict with the Rindre revolves around land borders and boundaries around Chessu, Ukollo, and other areas. In Chessu, the Rindre are laying claim to Chessu itself where they still sell land and collect taxes and levies in the local market. They claim that their forefathers founded the village area of Sisin Baki, but when the matter went to court, they were defeated. In Ukollo, the Rindre are said to be claiming two areas around Ukollo and Ukari. Before the crises started in 2005, they lived peacefully without problems and paid taxes to their traditional ruler and treated him with respect. But since a new Hakimi (district head) was installed in Konvah (a Rindre area), conflict arose. There were several crises between the two groups, but a major one occurred in January 2019 when houses, farm produce, and livestock were completely destroyed in Ukollo and Ukari villages by the Rindre youth, supported by some Fulani youth. The case has been to court several times, and judgments have all been in favour of the Kantana (Ukollo) people and against the Rindre.<sup>29</sup></p>
<b>Mama vs. Goemai</b>	<p>With the Goemai, there is a disagreement around the Ambaka Forest Reserve, specifically around Yanga village. The Goemai allegedly always encroach on Mama land to harvest their economic trees, especially timber. Such matters were settled amicably in the past, with the support of elders and at times security agencies.<sup>30</sup></p>
<b>Mama vs. Kulere</b>	<p>As for the Kulere, the major crises are found in Wanze Tuky, Wanze Kamwai, and the Kam Kire communities around the foot of the Farin Ruwa Hills, which is the natural boundary between Plateau and Nasarawa States. The Kulere people from Plateau came down from the hills in search of farmland in the valleys around Kam Kire. They were allowed to settle and farm but they have since gone beyond mere settlers and are currently claiming to be the original inhabitants or landowners. In fact, the Plateau State Government has gone ahead and built a primary school in the area, in defiance of the existing inter-state boundaries. These same communities recently paid taxes to Mama traditional rulers, and some of their sons contested elections in Nasarawa State. They have even gone on and tried to install a village head. The Gom Mama quickly intervened with the Saf Kulere and the process has been put on hold.</p> <p>More recently, Mama youth were arrested and detained by Kulere settlers for legally harvesting palm fruits on their farmlands. This generated high tension between the two communities, which constitutes an ongoing problem with prospects of escalation if nothing is done. Also, a Kantana youth from Ambuga village was physically attacked, and after insisting, the matter was resolved in Bokkos, Plateau State, further laying claim to the territory. It is important to note that most of their children attend the Kam Kire Primary school. Also, there continue to be inter-marriages between the indigenes of these communities.<sup>31</sup></p>
<b>Mama vs. Ninzom</b>	<p>In the case of the Ninzom, the issue stems from an old tradition of controlling the harvesting of palm fruits. The Ninzom have always broken this golden rule because they do not have these economic trees. They harvest palm fruits arbitrarily, thus causing crisis between the two groups. This happens specifically around Chini and Chugbu communities.<sup>32</sup></p>
<b>Mama vs. Ayu</b>	<p>Conflict over land ownership.<sup>33</sup></p>

Arum/Aso vs. Mama	<p>This group is located in Farin Ruwa Wamba LGA of Nasarawa State. The Mama are not in conflict with most of their neighbours except with the Arum people, specifically those in Arum Chugbu and Arum Sarki respectively. These are mainly boundary disputes:</p> <p>a) Arum Chugbu:</p> <p>Crises between Arum Chugbu and Mama started around 2011 and 2013. They began when an Airtel mast was built in Chugbu village. One Adamu Haruna (from Mama) brought the company. He initiated the sale of a piece of land to the company, but the Chugbu community protested because the land did not belong to Mama people. They stopped the company (Airtel) from carrying on with the project. Company representatives subsequently met with elders from Mama (including Adamu Haruna) as well as with representatives of Chugbu village. They informed the gathering of a payment made to the same Adamu Haruna of the sum of N500,000, which consisted of the first instalment for 5 years at N100,000 per year. Adamu Haruna was asked to refund the money, but the Chugbu community later agreed to forfeit the money. The second and third payments, however, were made to the Chugbu community. The Mama youth raised an objection to this in 2013. The Mama youths, armed with dangerous weapons, invaded Chugbu destroying economic trees, plants, and food. The matter was taken to the Upper Area Court, Akwanga. But the late Gom Mama, Zubairu Adamu, intervened to settle the matter out of court. A committee was set up under one Mujau Haggai. The committee's report was submitted to the Gom Mama on September 23, 2013. Another sub-committee was set up by the LGC to study the report and a white paper was issued. The report was in favour of the Arum people. Peace was restored to the community. But after 6 years, the Mama community raised an objection to the same report, saying there was no justice. They claimed that the then Gom Mama sided with the Arum people and that the next Gom Mama Audu Nuhu (being an Arum man) would not support them. They believed that the present Gom Mama, Bala Zubairu Adamu (being a Kantana man) would support them. In December of 2020, they trespassed and planted poles through Arum land and fixed a transformer meant for Mama town on the Arum side of the boundary.</p> <p>The Mama people's tension with Arum Chugbu dates back to 1955. Initially, the Arum occupied the hills around Arum Sarki. In search of farmland, they approached Mama elders who agreed to allow them settle for farming purposes where they are now claiming ownership. In fact, they had to go through the Sarkin Wamba, Muhamadu Kore to be allowed to settle in the area. When the Arum started claiming the land, the Sarki Wamba withdrew. And since then, no other Sarkin Wamba has ever intervened on the disputed land. Subsequently, all economic trees were harvested by the Mama landowners, but they allowed the Arums to continue farming on the same land. Up till today, the Mama people continue to harvest all economic trees.</p> <p>During the reign of the late Gom Mama, Alhaji Zubairu Adamu (2011) one John Viko Awa, a High Court Judge in Nasarawa State brought a case to court against the 4 Mama people, alleging they had trespassed and farmed on his land. The late Gom Mama asked the court to allow the matter to be settled out of court and the court agreed. The Gom subsequently ruled in favour of the Mama people. He also told all parties to live peacefully with one another thereafter. In response, the Arum people stopped paying taxes to the village head of Mama.</p>
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	<p>On the local government's part, two separate committees have been set up to address these issues. The first committee was led by the late Gom Mama, Umaru Isa, however only one person, the chairman, wrote a report, which was ultimately rejected by the council. The second committee was set up under the leadership of the DPM of Farim Ruwa Development Area, Mujau Haggai. The report was in favour of the Arum. In 2020, the current Gom Mama called the 2 villages together and asked that they all go back and intently look into the land issue and seek an amicable way forward, and report back to him. Soon after, the Arum people brought a case to court, which is still on going. Presently, there is an issue that arose from an ongoing federal electric project, which passed through Chugbu on disputed land. They objected to the planting of electric poles, especially the place where the transformer was fixed. The LG chairman intervened, saying the project was a Federal Government project and should not be interfered with. However, one John Viko sent tractors to cultivate a portion of the land for him. He was summoned to Wamba for interrogation. In response, John Viko mobilised the entire Arum villages, namely Arum Chugbu, Shuwa, Chini, Tumara, Kado, Tsavo, and Tapha to come and fight the Mama people. The people mobilised were the ones who destroyed the electric poles, cement blocks, houses, etc.</p> <p>b) Arum Sarki</p> <p>The problem here too, like that of Chugbu, borders on land. They too have also taken 5 persons from the Mama community to court, claiming that the land where they are currently farming is theirs. The case is currently ongoing.<sup>34</sup></p>
<b>Arum/Aso vs. Rindre</b>	<p>This conflict is similarly with the Rindre, who have allegedly encroached on Arum lands in Ungwar Kafinta and Sisinbaki (Klogba Mbana). They have even appointed village heads for these villages. Their allegiance is always to the Oriye Rindre, rather than to the Gom Mama as it ought to be. The Wamba people still collect market levies in Sisinbaki.</p>
<b>Arum/Aso vs. Ayu</b>	<p>The Arum/Aso is a group of people found in Farin Ruwa Development Area of Wamba LGA, Nasarawa State. The relations are generally cordial, especially with the Kulere people. With others like the Ayu (Sanga LGA), they have a long-standing land dispute, claiming that the former have encroached on their farmlands around Yashi, Turkwan, and Kanja villages.</p> <p>The persistent land dispute was in the past resolved in the Cabinet Office in Jos (the then Plateau State capital before the creation of Nasarawa State). However, the crisis still persists today. Recently, the Ayu people prevented the Arum from extending a federal electricity project through a stretch of land they claim is theirs. However, Ayu youth often come to the Arum for indigene certificates to enable them work in Nasarawa State. On June 7, 2021, there was a conflict that arose along their common boundary, when the Ayu people destroyed the pillars planted by the colonialists during the land demarcation between the then Akwanga Federation and Jema'a Federation. Luckily, in all these clashes, no deaths were reported.<sup>35</sup></p>

<b>Arum vs. Buh</b>	As for the Buh, they came and settled in Wanga village to farm. They have since overtime tried to claim the area, including by saying that the Arum are the settlers. The matter went to court in 1987. The problem originally arose over compensation to be paid for the construction of a federal road through the community in 1972. A committee was established under the leadership of Mal. Yusufu Manga by His Royal Highness, the Oriye Rindre who was then overseeing the territory. The committee report favoured the Arum people (Chessu people). The compensation was subsequently paid to them. This was not accepted by the Buh people, and subsequently resulted in the matter going to court. The court finally disposed of the case in 2011, still in favour of the Chessu people, who took the matter to the Appeal Court. However, since the appeal was put forward, no one has appeared from the Chessu side to continue with the case. The Rindre people applied to be included as an “interested” party in the case. It is worth noting that the Oriye Rindre still collects tax in Chessu to date, despite several court rulings recognizing the area as belonging to the Chessu people in Mama Chieftdom. <sup>36</sup>
<b>Arum vs. Kantana</b>	Conflict over land ownership.
<b>Mada vs. Eggon</b>	<p>The major conflict between the Mada and Eggon peoples revolves around land, especially the boundary around the western axis of Akwanga. The Eggon claim the entire eastern by-pass in Akwanga belongs to them. The Eggon were found mostly on the hills around Wana in Nasarawa Eggon. Historically, the boundary with the Eggon is known to be at the Endehu Hills stretching along Akwanga-Lafia road (see the colonial map of 1927 and also Rogers report Vol. 1, 11, and 111 of 1988). The Rogers Report of the 1988, which was largely based on the history of Mada people of 1933, says that the Eggons settled near Akwanga and paid their taxes to the Mada King. This continued until 1960 with the then Eggon King, Alumbuğu still paying all taxes to the Mada king. When Abdullahi Idde became the Aren Eggon, he pleaded with the Chu Mada to help his people with farmlands and pledged his people’s allegiance to the Chu Mada.</p> <p>In 1997, a joint meeting was held over June and July to resolve the issue. Agreements were reached and both sides signed. However, the problem has persisted due to a lack of political goodwill from those in authority, because though several committees and panels have been set-up, the government has often not taken or adopted their recommendations.<sup>37</sup></p>

### *Herders and Farmer Conflicts*

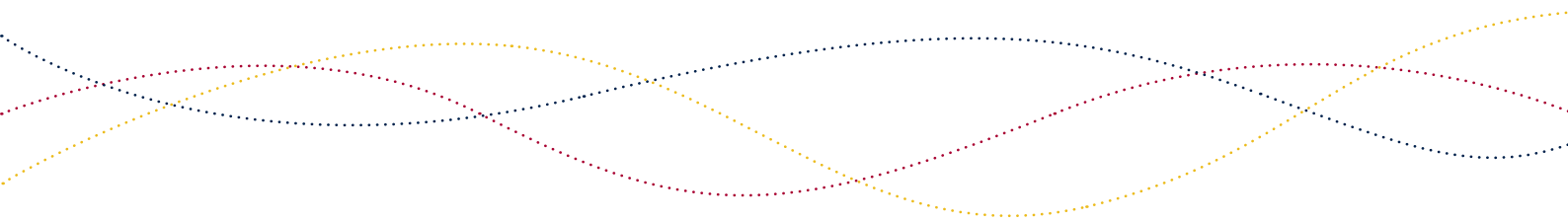
<b>Conflicts Researched</b>	
<b>Mama vs. Fulani</b>	Fulani are both settled and itinerant (nomadic) in communities. Mama people are mostly in conflict with the Fulani, who constantly rob, rape, maim, and destroy farmlands. The Fulani have caused massive damages to Mama people, who are predominantly peasant farmers. Some of the Mama’s men, women and youth have been killed by these marauders. In one instance, they shot and killed two women during a wedding reception in Ambaka village. They have also killed persons in Muttu, Kwarra, Mangar, Yashi, Pa Shabiyar, Kam Lamoon, Jimiya and Kumburu. The availability of large and very fertile lands with many rivers and streams makes the area very attractive to the herders, coupled with the near absence of motorable roads and communication networks. <sup>38</sup>
<b>Mada vs. Hausa</b>	In Akwanga LGA, there is tension between the Mada and the Hausa peoples because of the creation of the Gudi Chieftdom.
<b>Mada vs. Fulani</b>	Most of Mada’s issues with the Fulani revolve around the perennial farmers/herders clashes, because while the Mada own the land, the Hausa/Fulani have no land of their own. In 2020, Fulani youths raped and killed a Mada girl. The girl’s father retaliated and killed a Fulani youth. The Fulani invaded Nida and Nwan villages and killed many in a reprisal attack. <sup>39</sup>



<b>Marhai, Mas-senge, Yeskwa, Eggon, Ninzom, Rindre, Gomei vs. Fulani</b>	<p>The different actors are usually allied based on their ethnic affiliations. They have used court litigations, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms through traditional rulers and state or LGA appointed committees to resolve the disputes. Most have failed because of a lack of execution or implementation of court judgements issued by the police or white papers issued by the State Government and its agencies.<sup>40</sup></p>
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#### Annex 4: Recommendations by Respondents and Stakeholders

1. The State Government should involve Paramount Rulers, district heads, village heads and stakeholders in developmental issues.
2. The State Government should rely on colonial era maps to demarcate community boundaries, because they are the most accurate available.
3. There is a need to clearly mark boundaries based on surveyors' reports.
4. Forest guards and other government agents should be cautioned by the Federal and State Government against issuing land (which is done by the Federal Government) to visitors without approval from the communities represented by their leaders.
5. The Boundary Commission should use the old boundaries that existed before the region's division into Plateau and Nasarawa States in order to settle disputes over the boundary adjustment.
6. The State Government should enforce court judgements and orders.
7. Local governments should have standing land committees to document land ownership and boundaries.
8. All communities should be vigilant and protect their lands.
9. Alienation or sales of land should be controlled by the State Government, with leases promoted instead.
10. CDCs should be involved in the peacebuilding process.



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- Hon. Justice Jibril Idrisu (Rtd), 68 years old, Former Resident, Customary Court of Appeal, Nasarawa State, at Lafia, 18 March, 2021
- Hon. Justice Ahmed Ubangari, OFR, Former Chief Judge of Nasarawa State (1999-2010), at Lafia, 18 March 2021
- Chief Mathew Akweh Doma, Makaman Doma, at Doma Town 19/03/2021; Politician, Community Leader.
- Alhaji Mohammad Adih Ikushinta, over 80 years old, Agatu Community Leader, Farmer, and Ibrahim Umar Osabo, at Doma Town, 19th March, 2021
- Mr. Sani Bala, Permanent Secretary, Nasarawa State Civil Service, at Lafia 19th March, 2021
- Barr. Zachary Zamani Allumaga, Lawyer, Public Servant, Eggon/ Ombatse Legal Adviser, at Lafia 19th March, 2021
- Mr. Jacob Osu (53 years old), Afo (Kokona) from Udege-Kokona Axis, Nationality, President, Odu Elites Development Association, Lafia, 22nd March, 2021
- Alhaji Yakubu Umaru, (65 years old), Santalin Tunga, Chairman of Tunga Chiefdom (King Makers), Retired Civil Servant, 23rd March, 2021
- Mr. James Anatu, Iga Village, Loko District, Nasarawa LGA, Retired Civil Servant
- Elder Mark Ogbole, Alago, Retired Civil Servant, Agwatashi, Obi LGA, 19th March, 2021
- Barr. Mohammed Elegu, State Legal Adviser, APC, Alago, from Assakio, Lafia LGA, at Lafia, 21st March, 2021
- Hon. Elisha Agwadu Jatau, Migili, Former Deputy Speaker, Nasarawa State House of Assembly, at Katsokwa, Lafia LGA
- Alhaji Usman Dubagari, age 86, from Awe LGA, Jukun Nationality, Former Permanent Secretary, Former Head of Civil Service, former Federal Commissioner, Public Complaints Commission, NSS.
- Hon. Saidu Musa Adamu, from Awe, former LGC Chairman of Awe LGA.
- Pa Daniel Tukura, 90-95 years old Historian, Bassa Community, former staff of the University of Jos, former member Plateau State House of Assembly
- Alhaji Ahmed Hamed Yusuf, from Toto LGA, former Chairman, Toto LGA
- Hon. Tanko Kaura, 70 years old, Gbagyi, Yelwa Village, Toto LGA, former Permanent Member, SUBEB Board (Rtd), former Supervisory Councilor, Toto LGA, 1998/1999, Caretaker Chairman, Toto LGA, Toto LGA 2002.
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- John Matthew, lawyer and politician, Akwanga, 23 March, 2021
- Yunana Kpaji, JP, from Wamba, lecturer, College of Education, Akwanga, 24 March, 2021

## GROUP INTERVIEWS

District	Community		Date	Number of participants
<i>Nasarawa Southern Senatorial District</i>	1	Tiv Development Association (TIDA)	07/06/2021	5
	2	Agatu Community Development Association	08/06/2021	6
	3	Alago Development Association	08/06/2021	7
	4	Migili Development Association	07/06/2021	3
	<b>Total</b>			<b>21</b>
<i>Nasarawa Northern Senatorial District</i>	1	Eggon Cultural Development Association	05/06/2021	5
	2	Mama Chieftdom Advancement Forum	25/06/2021	7
	3	Massenge Development Association	10/06/2021	5
	4	Arum/Aso Development Association	11/06/2021	6
	5	Mada Development Association	13/06/2021	7
	6	Mama Town Development Association	10/06/2021	5
	7	Marhai Development Association	10/06/2021	6
	8	Nyankpa Development Association	02/06/2021	5
	<b>Total</b>			<b>46</b>
<i>Nasarawa Wester Senatorial District</i>	1	Gbagyi community of Toto LGA	01/07/2021	4
	2	Egbura National Development Association (ENDA) and Elders	04/06/2021	5
	3	Gbagyi Community Karu Chieftdom	01/07/2021	5
	4	Omadege (Afo/Eloi) Cultural and Development Association	02/07/2021	8
	5	Bassa Cultural and Development Association	02/07/2021	6
	<b>Total</b>			<b>28</b>

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

	Focus Groups	Date	Number of Participants
1	Victims of Violence	08/04/21	12
2	Farmers	08/04/21	9
3	CSOs/NGOs	06/04/21	8
4	Industrialists	06/04/21	6
5	Youth	07/04/21	9
6	Women	07/04/21	10
	<b>Total: 54</b>		

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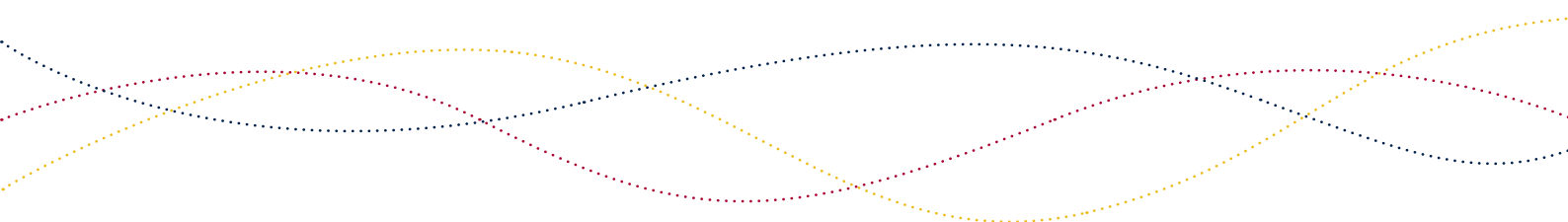
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## Endnotes

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2. "Africa: Nigeria," The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency.
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4. Economic trees are those that provide food, timber, animal feed, stakes, firewood, and soil fertility restorers. Source: <https://www.legit.ng/1196701-what-economic-trees-nigeria.html>
5. The dispute is currently over Kanyeju, Shege and Katakpa. In addition, the Bassa want Ugya, Kuwa, Zainaku and Dausu villages as part of their chiefdom.
6. Sources: Group Interview, Egbura National Development Association (ENDA) and Elders, 4th June, 2021; Group Interview, Bassa Cultural and Development Association, 2nd June, 2021; Joint Memorandum From the Egbura and Bassa Communities on the Actualisation of Turunku Chiefdom in Umaisha Development area – Toto Local Government area of Nasarawa State, Submitted to His Excellency Alhaji Umaru Tanko Al-Makura the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, Government House of Nasarawa State, January, 2015; Plateau State of Nigeria, Government White Paper on the Report of the Administrative Panel on the Re-organisation of Village Administration in Umaisha and Toto Districts as Well as the Review of the Issue of the Ohinoye in Toto District, Nasarawa Local Government Area, 1987; Plateau State of Nigeria, The Report of the High Powered Committee on the Communal Clash Between the Bassa and Egbura at Ugya of Toto Local Government Area, Main Report, Volume One, April, 1995; Nasarawa State of Nigeria, Report of the Committee to Investigate Communal Crisis in Toto Local Government Area, Vol. I, Main Report, March, 1998; Government of Nasarawa State, "Joint Meeting of His Excellency, Umaru Tanko Al-Makura, Governor of Nasarawa State and the Commander, Operation Whirl Stroke, Major General MA Yekini With Stakeholders of Bassa and Egbura Ethnic Groups of Toto Local Government Area, on the Lingering communal Conflict Between the two Ethnic groups, held at the Conference Hall of the Government House, Lafia, Tuesday, 26th March, 2019 – Communique"; National Archives, Kaduna, SNP.10/553P/1915; Nasarawa Province, Keffi Division, Umaisha District Assessment Report By Mr. W. Morgan, Assistant District Officer; Pa Daniel Tukura, 90-95 years old Historian, Bassa Community, former staff of the University of Jos, former member Plateau State House of Assembly; Alhaji Ahmed Hamed Yusuf, from Toto LGA, former Chairman, Toto LGA; Hon. Tanko Kaura, 70 years old, Gbagyi, Yelwa Village, Toto LGA, former Permanent Member, SUBEB Board; (Rtd), former Supervisory Councilor, Toto LGA, 1998/1999, Caretaker Chairman, Toto LGA, Toto LGA 2002; Mr. Solomon Azaki, Gadabuke, Toto LGA, Retired Civil Servant, former member, Gadabuke Development Area, 2002-2004.
7. Sources: Group Interview, Tiv Development Association (TIDA), 7th June, 2021; Group Interview, Egbura National Development Association (ENDA) and Elders, 4th June, 2021; Group Interview, Bassa Cultural and Development Association, 2nd June, 2021; Joint Memorandum From the Egbura and Bassa Communities on the Actualisation of Turunku Chiefdom in Umaisha Development area – Toto Local Government area of Nasarawa State, Submitted to His Excellency Alhaji Umaru Tanko Al-Makura the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, Government House of Nasarawa State, January, 2015; Plateau State of Nigeria, Government White Paper on the Report of the Administrative Panel on the Re-organisation of Village Administration in Umaisha and Toto Districts as Well as the Review of the Issue of the Ohinoye in Toto District, Nasarawa Local Government Area, 1987; Plateau State of Nigeria, The Report of the High Powered Committee on the Communal Clash Between the Bassa and Egbura at Ugya of Toto Local Government Area, Main Report, Volume One, April, 1995; Nasarawa State of Nigeria, Report of the Committee to Investigate Communal Crisis in Toto Local Government Area, Vol. I, Main Report, March, 1998; Government of Nasarawa State, "Joint Meeting of His Excellency, Umaru Tanko Al-Makura, Governor of Nasarawa State and the Commander, Operation Whirl Stroke, Major General MA Yekini With Stakeholders of Bassa and Egbura Ethnic Groups of Toto Local Government Area, on the Lingering communal Conflict Between the two Ethnic groups, held at the Conference Hall of the Government House,

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8. Sources: Group Interview, Eggon Cultural Development Association, 5th June, 2021; Government of Nasarawa State, Government Views and Decisions on the Report of the High-Powered Commission of Inquiry on Ethnic Disturbance in Assakio, November 2012, Government Printer, Lafia; Government of Nasarawa State, Government Views and Decisions on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry Into the Recent Killing of the Nigerian Security Forces (Nigeria Police and the Department of State security Services), Destruction and Confiscation of Security Personnel's Operational vehicles and Weapons in Alakio Village of Lafia Local Government Area and Matters Connected Therewith, March, 2014, Government Printer, Lafia.

9. Ombatse: Ethnic-based militia/socio cultural group- meaning “time has come.”

10. Hon. Elisha Agwadu Jatau, Migili, Former Deputy Speaker, Nasarawa State House of Assembly, at Katsokwa, Lafia LGA; Government of Nasarawa State, Government Views and Decisions on the Report of the High-Powered Commission of Inquiry on Ethnic Violence in Agyaragu, Jenkwe Development Area of Obi Local Government Area, March, 2014, Government Printer, Lafia.

11. Sources: Meeting with Fulani community leaders of from Awe, Keana, Doma and Wamba LGAs, October 2021.

12. Source: United Nations/World Bank, [“Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict,”](#) (2018).

13. Group Interview, Bassa Cultural and Development Association, 2nd June, 2021; Group Interview, Egbura National Development

Association (ENDA) and Elders, 4th June, 2021; Joint Memorandum From the Egbura and Bassa Communities on the Actualisation of Turunku Chieftdom in Umaisha Development area – Toto Local Government area of Nasarawa State, Submitted to His Excellency Alhaji Umaru Tanko Al-Makura the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, Government House of Nasarawa State, January, 2015; Plateau State of Nigeria, Government White Paper on the Report of the Administrative Panel on the Re-organisation of Village Administration in Umaisha and Toto Districts as Well as the Review of the Issue of the Ohinoye in Toto District, Nasarawa Local Government Area, 1987; Plateau State of Nigeria, The Report of the High Powered Committee on the Communal Clash Between the Bassa and Egbura at Ugya of Toto Local Government Area, Main Report, Volume One, April, 1995; Nasarawa State of Nigeria, Report of the Committee to Investigate Communal Crisis in Toto Local Government Area, Vol. I, Main Report, March, 1998; Government of Nasarawa State, “Joint Meeting of His Excellency, Umaru Tanko Al-Makura, Governor of Nasarawa State and the Commander, Operation Whirl Stroke, Major General MA Yekini With Stakeholders of Bassa and Egbura Ethnic Groups of Toto Local Government Area, on the Lingering communal Conflict Between the two Ethnic groups, held at the Conference Hall of the Government House, Lafia, Tuesday, 26th March, 2019 – Communique”; National Archives, Kaduna, SNP.10/553P/1915: Nasarawa Province, Keffi Division, Umaisha District Assessment Report By Mr. W. Morgan, Assistant District Officer; Pa Daniel Tukura, 90-95 years old Historian, Bassa Community, former staff of the University of Jos, former member Plateau State House of Assembly.

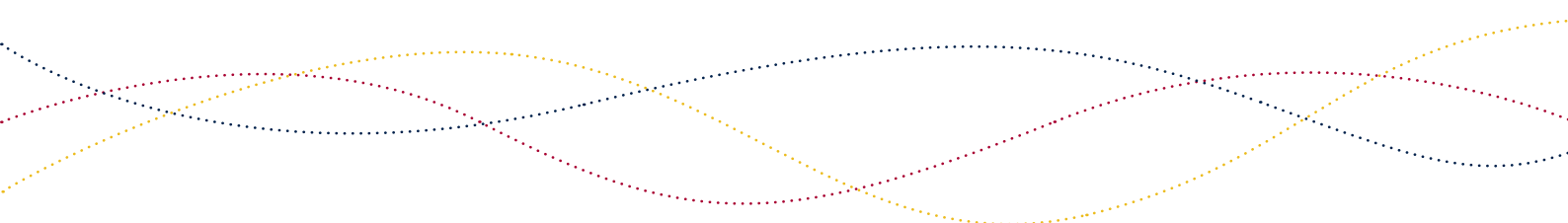
Alhaji Ahmed Hamed Yusuf, from Toto LGA, former Chairman, Toto LGA; Hon. Tanko Kaura, 70 years old, Gbagyi, Yelwa Village, Toto LGA, former Permanent Member, SUBEB Board; (Rtd), former Supervisory Councilor, Toto LGA, 1998/1999, Caretaker Chairman, Toto LGA, Toto LGA 2002; Mr. Solomon Azaki, Gadabuke, Toto LGA, Retired Civil Servant, former member, Gadabuke Development Area, 2002-2004.

14. Group Interview, Gbagyi community of Toto LGA, 1st July, 2021; Group Interview, Gbagyi community Karu Chieftdom, 1st July, 2021.

15. Group Interview, Nyankpa Development Association, 2nd June, 2021.

16. Group Interview, Mada Development Association, 13th June, 2021; Group Interview, Nyankpa Development Association, 2nd June, 2021.
17. Group Interview, Mada Development Association, 13th June, 2021.
18. Elder Mark Ogbale, Alago, Retired Civil Servant, Agwatashi, Obi LGA, 19th March, 2021; Barr. Mohammed Elegu, State Legal Adviser, APC, Alago, from Assakio, Lafia LGA, at Lafia, 21st March, 2021; Group Interview, Tiv Development Association (TIDA), 7th June, 2021; Group Interview, Alago Development Association, 8th June, 2021.
19. Group Interview, Gbagyi community of Toto LGA, 1st July, 2021.
20. Government of Nasarawa State, Government Views and Decisions on the Report of the High-Powered Commission of Inquiry on Ethnic Disturbance in Assakio, November 2012, Government Printer, Lafia; Government of Nasarawa State, Government Views and Decisions on the Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry Into the Recent Killing of the Nigerian Security Forces (Nigeria Police and the Department of State security Services), Destruction and Confiscation of Security Personnel's Operational vehicles and Weapons in Alakio Village of Lafia Local Government Area and Matters Connected Therewith, March, 2014, Government Printer, Lafia; Group Interview, Eggon Cultural Development Association, 5th June, 2021; Group Interview, Alago Development Association, 8th June, 2021.
21. Hon. Elisha Agwadu Jatau, Migili, Former Deputy Speaker, Nasarawa State House of Assembly, at Katsokwa, Lafia LGA; Government of Nasarawa State, Government Views and Decisions on the Report of the High-Powered Commission of Inquiry on Ethnic Violence in Agyaragu, Jenkwe Development Area of Obi Local Government Area, March, 2014, Government Printer, Lafia; Group Interview, Eggon Cultural Development Association, 5th June, 2021; Group Interview, Migili Development Association, 7th June, 2021.
22. Mr. Thomas Ga'ar, Community Leader, 60 years old, from Jangargari Village, Awe Chiefdom, Tiv Nationality, Awe LGA, at Lafia, 17th March, 2021; Group Interview, Tiv Development Association (TIDA), 7th June, 2021; Meeting with Fulani community leaders of from Awe, Keana, Doma and Wamba LGAs, October 2021.
23. Mr. Thomas Ga'ar, Community Leader, 60 years old, from Jangargari Village, Awe Chiefdom, Tiv Nationality, Awe LGA, at Lafia, 17th March, 2021; Chief Mathew Akweh Doma, Makaman Doma, at Doma Town 19/03/2021; Politician, Community Leader; Alhaji Mohammad Adih Ikushinta, over 80 years old, Agatu Community Leader, Farmer, and Ibrahim Umar Osabo, at Doma Town, 19th March, 2021; Mr. Sani Bala, Permanent Secretary, Nasarawa State Civil Service, at Lafia 19th March, 2021.
24. Alhaji Usman Dubagari, age 86, from Awe LGA, Jukun Nationality, Former Permanent Secretary, Former Head of Civil Service, former Federal Commissioner, Public Complaints Commission, NSS.
25. The Kwararafa Kingdom was a multi-ethnic state in the Middle Ages, located along the Benue River valley in what corresponds to today's Nigeria Middle Belt.
26. Mr. Thomas Ga'ar, Community Leader, 60 years old, from Jangargari Village, Awe Chiefdom, Tiv Nationality, Awe LGA, at Lafia, 17th March, 2021; Group Interview, Tiv Development Association (TIDA), 7th June, 2021.
27. The Oriye Rindre stool was at that time vacant.
28. Plateau State of Nigeria, "Minutes of Meeting of Commissioner for Boundary Disputes on Disputes Between Marhai and Massenge With the Traditional Rulers and Chairman/Secretary Akwanga Local government, On Tuesday, July 15, 1987 At 10.00 A.M."; Group Interview, Marhai Development Association, 10th June, 2021; Group Interview, Massenge Development Association, 10th June, 2021.
29. Col. S. G. Salleh Rtd, "Arum Chugbu Vs. Mama Town: Submission By the Mama (Ka'ah) community to the Land/Boundary Crisis Committee Appointed to Look into the Lingering Land Dispute Between Mama, Chugbu and Arum Communities", June, 2013; The Forum of Community Development Associations (Arum-Assoh, Kantana and Kulere of Mama Chiefdom, Farin Ruwa Development Area, Wamba Local Government Area, The Need to Enforce Court Judgements and Respect the Inherited Colonial Boundary of Mama Chiefdom, Memorandum to His Excellency, Engr. Abdullahi Alhaji Sule, Governor of Nasarawa state, Government House, Shendam Road, Lafia, August 29, 2020; Group Interview, Mama Chiefdom Advancement Forum, 25th June, 2021.

30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Col. S. G. Salleh Rtd, "Arum Chugbu Vs. Mama Town: Submission By the Mama (Ka'ah) community to the Land/Boundary Crisis Committee Appointed to Look into the Lingering Land Dispute Between Mama, Chugbu and Arum Communities", June, 2013; The Forum of Community Development Associations (Arum-Assoh, Kantana and Kulere of Mama Chiefdom, Farin Ruwa Development Area, Wamba Local Government Area, The Need to Enforce Court Judgements and Respect the Inherited Colonial Boundary of Mama Chiefdom, Memorandum to His Excellency, Engr. Abdullahi Alhaji Sule, Governor of Nasarawa state, Government House, Shendam Road, Lafia, August 29, 2020; Group Interview, Arum/Aso Development Association, 11th June, 2021; Group Interview, Mama Chiefdom Advancement Forum, 25th June, 2021.
35. Committee on Boundary Dispute, "Report of the Committee to Investigate the Remote Causes of Land Dispute Between Marhai and Massenge Village Areas", Farin Ruwa Local Government Council, Nasarawa State, March, 2004; Group Interview, Arum/Aso Development Association, 11th June, 2021.
36. Group Interview, Arum/Aso Development Association, 11th June, 2021.
37. Group Interview, Eggon Cultural Development Association, 5th June, 2021.
38. Group Interview, Mama Chiefdom Advancement Forum, 25th June, 2021; Meeting with Fulani community leaders of from Awe, Keana, Doma and Wamba LGAs, October 2021.
39. Group Interview, Mada Development Association, 13th June, 2021; Meeting with Fulani community leaders of from Awe, Keana, Doma and Wamba LGAs, October 2021.
40. Group Interview, Eggon Cultural Development Association, 5th June, 2021; Group Interview, Massenge Development Association, 10th June, 2021; Group Interview, Marhai Development Association, 10th June, 2021; Group Interview, Nyankpa Development Association, 2nd June, 2021; Meeting with Fulani community leaders of from Awe, Keana, Doma and Wamba LGAs, October 2021.



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