

ISSN: 0018-2540

# JOURNAL OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NIGERIA

VOLUME 25

2016



A JOURNAL OF AFRICAN HISTORY  
PUBLISHED BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NIGERIA



## EDITORIAL BOARD

### Editor-in-Chief

Professor Christopher B. N. Ogbogbo, University of Ibadan

### Editor

Professor Egodi Uchendu, University of Nigeria

### Associate Editors

Prof. Okpeh O. Okpeh, Federal University Lafia

Professor Sati Fwatshak, University of Jos

Professor Ehimika Ifidon, University of Benin

Professor Talla Ngarka, Taraba State University, Jalingo

Professor Samuel Zalanga, Bethel University, St. Paul Minnesota, USA

### Review Editor

Professor Cyril Emordi, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma

## EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Professor Toyin Falola, University of Texas at Austin, Texas, USA

Professor Abednego E. Ekoko, Delta State University, Nigeria

Professor Ukachukwu D. Anyanwu, Evan Enwerem University, Nigeria

Professor Monday Mangwat, University of Jos, Nigeria

Professor M. S. Abdulkadir, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

Professor Abayomi Akinyeye, University of Lagos, Nigeria

Professor Akanmu Adebayo, Kennesaw State University, USA

Professor Gloria Emeagwali, Central Connecticut University, USA

Professor Mohammed Kyari, Modio Adama University of Technology,  
Yola, Nigeria

Professor Uchenna Anyanwu, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Professor Ademola Ajayi, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Dr. Kimani Nehusi, University of East London, United Kingdom

Dr. Winifred Akoda, University of Calabar, Nigeria

---

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Individuals N2000.00

Institutions N3000.00

International \$15

Postage charge \$10

---

A Journal of African History

Published for the Historical Society of Nigeria

By Aboki Publishers, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

© Historical Society of Nigeria

ISSN: 0018-2540



## MEMBERS OF COUNCIL OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NIGERIA

Professor C. B. N. Ogbogbo, University of Ibadan, **National President**  
 Dr Odigwe Nwaokocha, University of Benin, **National Secretary**  
 Professor Okpeh O. Okpeh, Federal University Lafia, **Vice-President, North Central**  
 Dr J. H. Pongri, Gombe State University, **Vice-President North East**  
 Professor A. Ashafa, Kaduna State University, **Vice-President North West**  
 Professor Egodi Uchendu, University of Nigeria, **Vice-President South East**  
 Professor Tijani Hakeem, Adeleke University, Osun State, **Vice-President South West**  
 Dr Akachi Odoemena, Federal University, Otuoke, **Vice-President South South**  
 Dr Mfon Ekpootu, University of Port Harcourt, **Treasurer**  
 Dr Lemuel Odeh, University of Ilorin, **Public Relations Officer**  
 Dr Bashir Animashaun, Lagos State University, **Business Manager**  
 Elijah Ikpanor, Benue State University, Makurdi, **Assistant National Secretary**  
 Professor Samuel Aghalino, University of Ilorin, **Council Member North Central**  
 Dr Muhammad Kyari, University of Maiduguri, **Council Member North East**  
 Professor Dan Chukwu, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, **Council Member South East**  
 Samuel Ojo, Olabisi Onabanjo University, **Council Member South West**  
 Dr Stephen Olali, Niger Delta University, **Council Member South South**  
 Professor Yakubu Ochefu, Kwararafa State University, Taraba State, **Ex-Officio Member**  
 Professor Olayemi Akinwumi, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, **Ex-Officio Member**

## JOURNAL OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NIGERIA

VOLUME 25	2016
CONTENTS	PAGE
A Society Under Pressure: Thoughts on Leadership, Followership and the Re-Invention of the Nigerian State Sola Akinrinade	1
Population Census and Rural-Urban Migration in Nigeria: The Public Health Implications B.E.B. Nwoke	18
Benin Imperialism and the Transformation of Idejo Chieftaincy Institution in Lagos, 1603-1850 Bashir Olalekan Animashaun	37
The Nationality Question in the Benue-Cross River Region: Any Lessons for the Historian? Sandy Onor	53
Anthropological and Ethnographical Works on Bassa and her Neighbours in the Niger-Benue Valley: A Critical Assessment of Historical Reconstruction Maiyaki M. Mejida	61
Igbomina and the Dilemma of Promoting Good Neighbourliness: A Historical Analysis Justus Adeniyi Aboyeji	80
Lagos Market Women During the Inter-War Years: The Water Rate Agitation, 1932-1941 Abiodun S. Afolabi	102
A History of the Niger Delta Diocese, 1952-2012 John H. Enemugwem	119



# IGBOMINA AND THE DILEMMA OF PROMOTING GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Justus Adeniyi ABOYEJI, PhD<sup>1</sup>

*Department of History and International Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria*

## Abstract

The nexus of this paper bothers on Igbomina's dilemma of promoting good neighbourliness. It contends that both in the past and present, the Igbomina have constantly fallen casualty of their peaceful disposition. They have often received folks and foes they could have successfully repelled at the outset. Findings reveal that Igbomina, today, is a product of three significant factors: geography, history and the character of her people. These made her susceptible to Nupe, Fulani/Ilorin, Ibadan and British imperial onslaughts. This study extrapolates the interplay of history and the esoteric law of "cause and effect". The study, anchored largely on primary sources, personal observations, secondary data and media reports, elucidates Igbomina's traumatic experiences in the hands of her neighbours. It recommends among others, a symbiotic concerted commitment of all communities towards embracing the traditional ethics and universal principles of good neighbourliness enunciated by the United Nations. It concludes that for the Igbomina, with the unabated Bororo-Fulani infiltration and menace, the past is in the present. This portends a serious danger-signal and the thrust of the present dilemma.

## Introduction

The excruciating tension stemming from the recent indiscriminate abductions of persons of public and non-public personalities

<sup>1</sup> This author can be reached at [aadeniyijustus@gmail.com](mailto:aadeniyijustus@gmail.com) or [aboyejiaj@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:aboyejiaj@unilorin.edu.ng).

constitutes a sombre threat to the already prevalent insecurity all over Nigeria. Typical among many of such was the incarceration of Chief Olu Falae by alleged Fulani herdsmen on his farm in Ilado village, Akure North Local Government Area (L.G.A.) of Ondo State in September 2015. The attendant resonating effects therefrom had generated different reactions and counter-reactions from various circles including the media. Falae is a Yoruba elder-statesman, a former Permanent Secretary in the Federal Civil Service, ex-Minister of Finance, one-time Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) and one of only two presidential aspirants (along with Former President Olusegun Obasanjo) in the wake of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The kidnapping of the elder-statesman only made a national bedlam of the daily reality of the insecurity challenge that countless obscure local farmers have long been susceptible to.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, however, in spite of their loud wailings, their cries seem to have either gone unheard or fallen on deaf ears. It is in the light of this that this paper considers the spate of national insecurity in Nigeria generally, but with particular reference to the insecurity deriving from the *unneighbourly* acts of the Fulani-Bororo among the Igbomina.

Undoubtedly, the greatest challenge to President Goodluck Jonathan's administration was in the area of national insecurity, which manifested in different forms across the different regions of the country. The Movement for Unification and Creation of Igbomina State<sup>3</sup> has argued that the Jonathan-led administration witnessed more violence than any other due to the unresolved issue of Minority Question. Such crises include, though not limited to, the Boko-Haram insurgency in the North, herdsmen menace particularly in the South and the prevalence of abductions and kidnappings all over. Towards the end of 2015,

<sup>2</sup> E. Akinkuotu, 'Buhari Likes Fulani Herdsmen - Fani-Kayode', *The Punch Newspaper*, 30 September 2015.

<sup>3</sup> 'Freedom Charter of Igbomina People, 2014' (a submission to 2014 National Conference by Movement for Unification and Creation of Igbomina State, 2014), 18-9.



while describing the activities of Fulani herdsmen as 'unrestrained, bloodthirsty and answerable to no one', *The Punch Newspaper* reported that

... Fulani nomads perpetrate robbery, rape, looting, killings, kidnapping and destruction of farmlands across the country... Now that the nomads have graduated from carrying bows and arrows to wielding AK-47 assault rifles, we cannot ignore their barbarism any longer... The herdsmen have killed too many people. They are baying for the blood of innocent farmers and villagers. As of August, Fulani herdsmen had killed 621 persons. Benue State, the epicentre of this madness, has suffered the highest number of casualties. In January, 27 people lost their lives; 96 in February, while March recorded 236 deaths. Other flashpoints are in Kogi, Nasarawa, Ekiti, Plateau, Taraba, Kaduna, Delta, Oyo, Ogun, Osun and Kwara States. The impunity of the nomads is insufferable.<sup>4</sup>

The exasperating insecurity experienced by the Igbomina in their own land through the menace of Fulani herdsmen has become a serious danger-signal and siege on both regional and national security. Indeed, nothing happens by chance. Things we are actively conscious of presently can be said to have happened in the past. Hence, each incident should be viewed as a cohesive continuity; as a link in a chain. This is because when history is lost, tradition is lost; and a society without tradition is in deep waters. To know one's past is to know one's root. He who does not know the past will never appreciate the present; and if you cannot grasp the meaning of the present, how can you plausibly prepare for the un-discerned future? As noted by the President of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Professor C. B. N. Ogbogbo, 'without the knowledge of history, we would only be struggling

<sup>4</sup> 'Buhari, Stem the Menace of Fulani Herdsmen', *The Punch*, 18 October 2015.

to re-invent the wheel'.<sup>5</sup> This paper is therefore most apt at this time in our national history as we decide areas of "Change" and "Continuity". It is however, most particularly pertinent for the Igbomina to avert the imminent doom of repeated history.

### Physical and Human Geography of Igbomina

An awareness of certain aspects of the physical and human geography of the Igbomina area is indispensable to a proper understanding of her historic and economic experiences. The geography of eastern Yorubaland has always been conducive to human habitation. Asonibare suggested that prior to the incursion of foreign influences of local and external overlords into the area, Igbominaland might have been a single territory stretching from Share, headquarters of the present Ifelodun L.G.A. of Kwara State, to Ila-Orangun and Ora, presently in Osun State.<sup>6</sup> However, consequent upon external intrusions into Igbominaland and the attendant ripple effects, notably through the instrumentality of the British appointed Boundary Adjustment Commission in the early twentieth century, the people of the northern Igbomina territorial district now found in Kwara State were ceded from their southern counterparts.<sup>7</sup>

The term, Igbomina, refers to the people, the language they speak and the land they occupy.<sup>8</sup> Igbomina falls between Longitude 8° and 9° North and Latitude 4° and 6° East and is located on the south-eastern side of Ilorin with an area of land covering about 66, 709<sup>2</sup>km.<sup>9</sup> Igbominaland is bounded to the west

<sup>5</sup> 'Blame Neglect of History on Nation's Stunted Growth', *The Nation*, 15 September 2015, 27.

<sup>6</sup> A. T. Asonibare, 'A History of Chieftaincy Institutions in the Pre-colonial Igbominaland', (M. A. Dissertation, University of Ilorin, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> See 'Boundary Commission on Yagba tribe and Ila Orangun Inclusion in Ilorin Emirate', *National Archives Kaduna (NAK)*, Ilor Prof 18/1907.

<sup>8</sup> Aboyeji, 'Foreign Influence', 6.

<sup>9</sup> P.O.A. Dada, *A Brief History of the Igbomina*, (Ilorin Matanmi Press Ltd., 1985), 2; E.O. Ibiloye, 'Igbominaland Under Ilorin Imperialism, 1830-1949', (M.A. Dissertation, University of Ilorin, 1992), 27; F. S. Afolayan, 'War and Change in Nineteenth Century Igbomina' in I. A. Akinjogbin, (ed.) *War and Peace in Yorubaland, 1793-1893*, (Nigeria: H.E.B. Plc. 1998), 77; E.A. Adeyemi, 'Protest and Agitation in Igbomina, 1933-1952' (M.A. Dissertation, University of Ilorin, 1984), 7-8; J. T. Dosunmu, 'Missionary Impact on Igbomina', (Ph.D Thesis, Michigan State University, 1980).



by Ilorin, to the north-east by the Yagba, to the south-east by the Ekiti, to the north by the Nupe, and to the southwest by the Ibolo, while she shares her northern boundary with the Yoruba of present Osun State. The Igbomina people such as Share, Oke-Ode, Oro-Ago, Igbaja and Ajase were close neighbours of the Nupe while the Igbomina people of Ganmo, Ogbondoroko and Afon, for instance, have very close affinity with the Ilorin-Fulani. Before the Fulani invasion, the Igbomina were said to have occupied some 900 square miles between the south-west boundary of the province, to the Yagba District on the East, and a few miles of Ilorin town in the north.<sup>10</sup> Johnson noted that:

Before the advent of the Fulanis, the powerful [northern] Igbomina sub-tribe ... *virtually occupied some of hundred of a square miles* reaching from the southern Nigeria border on the south of the Yagba Districts, on the east, and to within a few miles of Ilorin on the north.<sup>11</sup> (Italics mine)

The former northern Igbomina country under the Nupe constitutes the Ifelodun L.G.A. as we have it today, while the then southern Igbomina under Ilorin constitutes the present Irepodun L.G.A.<sup>12</sup>, from which Isin L.G.A. was carved out in 1996 under the Abacha administration, which brought LGAs in Nigeria to 774. Aboyaji revealed that one major factor that led to the formation of most of the settlements in the region, was the desire for safety.<sup>13</sup> The Igbomina country was extensive, having streams,

<sup>10</sup> See extracts from *The Comet* of 3/6/1943 being Press Reports shown to the Select Committee appointed to deal with the petition presented to the Western House of Assembly at its session in Benin City on 11/10/1949, praying for regrouping of the Igbomina tribes in the Ilorin province of the Northern Region with their brethren in Ila-Orangun area in the Oyo Province of the Western Region, 9. ILOR PROF. 5084, 32 and 324/1917, p. 46, National Archives Kaduna (NAK).

<sup>11</sup> Extract from S. Johnson, *The History of The Yorubas*, NAK ILOR PROF.5083, 35. Enclosure 7, 22.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Justus Adeniyi Aboyaji, 'A Study of Igbomina Economy in the Colonial Era, c. 1897 to 1960' (Master's Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ilorin, August 2004).

forests, rocks and hills, with many curious and beautiful things. Adeyemi particularly noted that hill-settlements were usually resorted to for protection during the pre-colonial era of slave raids and wars.<sup>14</sup> Temple also confirmed that the southeast of Ilorin province was extremely hilly, with precipitous rocks.<sup>15</sup> Obayemi noted that hills exceeding 600 meters (2,000 feet) were found in northeast Yorubaland. The hill country, although difficult, was inhabited. This area was well noted for its many hills, some of which stretch in long range for many kilometres, culminating in the adoption of hill-settlement styles by the people.<sup>16</sup>

The exigency of the era of insecurity dictated the geographical settlement pattern of the Igbomina. For instance, Aiyedun revealed that whereas the towns on the hills relied on the hills enveloping them for defence, with no tradition of wall-building, settlements on the plains such as Igbaja, Adanla, Ofarese and Agunjin, built walls round themselves for defence and also relied on bushes surrounding them.<sup>17</sup> Considering the sites of many Igbomina settlements such as Alabe, Oreke, Oke-Oyan, Afin, Owode Ofaro and Ikosin, one would better understand what prompted Bowen's alarm: 'Nothing but the terror of war could have planted these villages in such places as these.'<sup>18</sup>

Generally speaking, therefore, Igbomina had a relatively strategic and advantageous position to both benefit economically from trade and also suffer from the more belligerent and hostile potentates from the north and south. Igbomina was thus, like the

<sup>14</sup> Adeyemi, 'Protest and Agitation', 9.

<sup>15</sup> O. Temple, *Notes on the Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria*. C. L. Temple, (ed.) 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1965), 444.

<sup>16</sup> Ade Obayemi, 'The Yoruba and Edo-speaking Peoples and their Neighbours before 1600 AD.' in: J.F.A. Ajayi, and Michael Crowther, (eds.), *History of West Africa I*. (Nigeria: Longman, 1976), 196.

<sup>17</sup> K. D. Aiyedun, 'Changes in Settlement and Occupational Patterns in Igbaja District from Earliest Times to the Present' (B. A. Dissertation, A. B. U. Zaria, 1976), 8.

<sup>18</sup> M. B. Gleave, 'Hill Settlements and their Abandonment in Western Yoruba' in *Africa*, Vol. 33, No. 4, Oct. 1963, 344; See also Asonibare, 'A History of Chieftaincy', 19 and Aiyedun, 'Changes' 35-6.



Plimsoll Line,<sup>19</sup> which cuts across vegetational belts, economic zones, linguistic borders and ethnic boundaries. Her strategic location among different and often distinct neighbours has thus rendered Igbominaland an area of multiple cultural interactions over the years.<sup>20</sup>

### The Igbomina Culture

The Igbomina are not cowards. They are indeed the direct descendants of valiant personages such as the legendary Orangun of Ila and Eesinkin Olusin, renowned in history for their bravery and heroic gallantry. Colonial accounts often described them as the 'powerful' Igbomina. For instance, Hogben and Kirk-Greene noted how the 'powerful' Igbomina predominated in the area to the south and east of Ilorin town.<sup>21</sup>

One can plausibly say that Igbomina, as it is today, is a product of three significant factors: geography, history and the character (peaceful disposition) of her people.<sup>22</sup> Her geographical location which strategically situates her as a lineal settlement in the middle-belt, as a gateway between the North and South, made her particularly vulnerable to series of foreign impostors, attacks, dominations and influences. The historical antecedents-cum-experiences therefrom, particularly the foreign influences from local Nupe, Fulani/Ilorin, Ibadan and Western European imperial onslaughts only seem to have re-cloned the present generation of Igbomina into a new species of weaklings quite different from the pre-domination era powerful Igbomina. The character—peaceful disposition—of the people as open-armed, hospitable

<sup>19</sup> Aboyeji, 'Foreign Influence', 78.

<sup>20</sup> Afolayan, 'War and Change', 78.

<sup>21</sup> S. J. Hogben, and A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of their Historical Traditions* (London: Gregg Revivals, 1966), 285. See also Extract from Johnson, *The History*, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Adapted from Maitama Sule quoting Sir Ahmadu Bello while presenting a speech at the launching of the Late Ahmadu Bello Foundation: 'Northern Nigeria as it is today is a product of three significant factors: Geography, History and the Character of its people', *NTA Telecast*, Saturday 17 October 2009.

people made them to receive with open arms folks and foes they could have successfully and sternly resisted and repelled in the first instance. But they became victims of the very people upon whom they had showered hospitality and displayed magnanimity. In furtherance, their protracted stay under subservience and servitude apparently culminated in the the character of its people today. As it was in the past, present day Igbomina live among hostile neighbours, contrary to the universal declarations and resolutions to imbibe principles of good neighbourliness and live in tranquillity on our planet as good neighbours.<sup>23</sup>

### Principles of Good Neighbourliness

Intolerance and unneighbourly conducts on our planet had twice plunged humanity into the scourge of war (1914-18 and 1939-45) in total defiance of the maxim "once beaten, twice shy". But having experienced the horror of human barbarity and warrior instinct that culminated into two global conflagrations, the old thinking about warfare seemed to have changed as war became no longer fashionable or desirable. The entire world under the auspices of the United Nations Organisation (U.N.O.) was moved to pledge their commitment to live together in peace and tolerance with one another as good neighbours. 2015 commemorates seventy years of the declaration of the clear and unequivocal determination of the global community where the UNO was established and its present charter adopted. It states, in the preamble of her Charter,<sup>24</sup> *inter alia*:

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
DETERMINED

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind,

<sup>23</sup> Sompong Sucharitkul, 'The Principles of Good-Neighborliness in International Law', *Publications*. Paper 559 (1996), <http://digitalcommons.law.ggu.edu/pubs/559>, accessed 12 September 2015.

<sup>24</sup> *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice* (San Francisco, 1945).



and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

#### AND FOR THESE ENDS

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS.

A decade later, on 24 April 1955, 24 Afro-Asian countries adopted a more global and universal proclamation of ten principles of good neighbourliness at Bandung, Indonesia<sup>25</sup> viz:

Free from mistrust and fear, and with confidence and goodwill towards each other, nations should practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors and develop friendly cooperation on the basis of the following principles:

1. Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations;
2. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations;
3. Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small;

<sup>25</sup> Sucharitkul, 'The Principles.'

4. Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country;
5. Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations;
6. (a) Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers;  
(b) Abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other country;
7. Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country;
8. Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties' own choice, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations;
9. Promotion of mutual interests and cooperation; and
10. Respect for justice and international obligations.

The UN General Assembly Resolution 2625 (XXV) adopted by acclamation, without a vote on 24 October 1970 equally contains seven basic principles of International Law which bothered on friendly relations and cooperation among states under the Charter of the United Nations.<sup>26</sup> Seven decades have elapsed after the UN proclamation, yet it has become more obvious that among the indispensable principles of international law increasingly ripening for codification, the principles of good neighbourliness deserve our utmost and urgent consideration. At the international, national and local levels, the world today has so deteriorated that many now fall victim of intolerance as they succumb rather too conveniently to series of unneighbourly conducts. The United Nations and other bodies have thus

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



developed and adopted principles of international law conducive to good neighbourliness. Lamentably, as decried by Sucharitkul, 'we, the nations of the world, have barely begun the learning process of how to live in peace with one another as good neighbors.'<sup>27</sup> Although very resolute, in practice, the determination still falls far short of its wholesome implementation.

### Igbomina Relations with Her Neighbours: A Historical Analysis

It is a truism that there are unresolved monumental problems in Nigeria, but the siege on national security seems to have gained the centre stage. The harm it has wrecked to the polity is indeed astronomical.<sup>28</sup> Today, the national security question seems to top academic as well as informal discourses in Nigeria in particular and the world over. The resonating effect of insecurity and violence within the shores of Nigeria is becoming increasingly worrisome. The rhythms and rhymes they produce are nothing but nauseating; the prevalence of which has produced gargantuan harmful inter- and intra-ethnic-cum-religio-political impasse to the traditional ethics of good neighbourliness, which had hitherto sustained the diverse cultural groups in Nigeria. This has led to cracks, which have often consequently degenerated into bloody communal conflicts between and among ethnic, political and religious groups. The tones of violence in Nigeria have thus got to the point of diplomatic conflagration.

National security, adopting Maiyaki's concept of it, may be best described here as the safety of the territory and population of a state as well as policies adopted for its preservation; the whole range of measures affecting the economy and social welfare of a population as well as provision of protection against aggression from within and without the state.<sup>29</sup> This section hereby attempts

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> M. M. Maiyaki, 'The Bassa Traditional Administrative System in Nigeria: A Neglected Aspect of National Security', in *Ijagun Journal of History and Diplomatic Studies*, TASUED, Vol 2, (2014), 70.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

an analysis of Igbomina relations with her neighbours in the past and present. Igbomina's relations with her neighbours might have initially been cordial. However, the latter relations which turned sour seemed to have beclouded that initial cordiality to the extent that it is often thought that socio-political relations and interactions with her neighbours hardly was exciting or favourable. This is because her history has been preoccupied with constant military molestations. Even economic inclinations served as prelude to chains of unending raids, conquests and political hegemony on Igbomina.<sup>30</sup>

Afolayan<sup>31</sup> noted that Igbomina's established peaceful order came under considerable stress in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when it became subjected to incessant military pressures from its more belligerent neighbours. Meanwhile, Gege<sup>32</sup> revealed that it appears from traditions prevalent in Igbominaland that military encounters had begun to take place between Igbomina and its neighbours by the seventeenth century. Nupe raids in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for instance, occasioned the movement of some people from Ìbà homeland in Igbomina to Osogbo area where they founded another Ìbà.<sup>33</sup> The recurrent conflicts with the neighbouring Nupe were said to have occasioned series of desertion and reoccupation of the Ìbà motherland<sup>34</sup> for example.

Traditions prevalent in Omupo, Ajase and Omu-Aran claimed that by the seventeenth century, military encounters had begun to take place between Igbomina and its neighbours. Afolayan recorded claims of hostilities, which began probably with the Ijesa who were harassing and enslaving the Igbomina around present day Ajase-Ipo. However, these Ijesa marauders were said to have been repelled by the allied forces led by the *Olomu* of Omu and

<sup>30</sup> Aboyeji, 'Foreign Influence', 2.

<sup>31</sup> Afolayan, 'War and Change', 78.

<sup>32</sup> R. O. Gege, 'The Impact of the Nineteenth Century Yoruba Wars on Isinland' (B.A. project, University of Ilorin, 1987), 52.

<sup>33</sup> Aiyedun, 'Changes in Settlement', 6.

<sup>34</sup> S. Phillips, *The Stone Images of Esie, Nigeria* (New York: Africana Publishers, 1978).



the ruler of Bagidi who eventually became known as the Olupo (Olu [Head] of Ipo) and over the years, his state became known as Ajase-Ipo.<sup>35</sup>

Following the Ijesa, similar attempts were reportedly made by warriors from Benin Kingdom to invade Igbomina, passing through the Akoko and Ekiti countries. They were thwarted by the cooperative efforts of residents in the affected areas. These attempts, from the seventeenth century onwards, proved unsuccessful until later in history when some Edo warriors reportedly got a hold, very briefly though, of the frontiers of Igbomina.<sup>36</sup> Sometimes in their history, presumably during the inglorious epoch of slave raid and slave trade, the people of Lagos reportedly constituted another upheaval to the Igbomina.<sup>37</sup> However, the more successful of the invaders of Igbomina were the Ìyí who were perhaps the first to establish military and political control over the Igbomina. According to Afolayan, by the seventeenth century, Oyo had succeeded in establishing military control over parts of Igbominaland.<sup>38</sup> Johnson also observed how in the eighteenth-century Oyo, under the belligerent Alaafin Ojigi, subjected Igbomina to incessant military pressure.<sup>39</sup>

Evidently, by mid-eighteenth century, Oyo's grip over Igbominaland had waned considerably. This was not unconnected, on the one hand, with the constitutional upheavals within the Oyo Empire itself, and the power-shift occasioned by the rise to power of Nupe as the predominant super power in the north-eastern Yoruba region, on the other hand.<sup>40</sup> Nadel had

portrayed Tseode, the acclaimed prince and progenitor of the Nupe, as a warlike king who waged 'big and victorious wars' against neighbouring peoples,<sup>41</sup> including Igbomina. Johnson also reported traditions of the neighbouring states and kingdoms concerning Nupe militarism prior to 1800.<sup>42</sup> Afolayan provided a synopsis of the invasions the Igbomina suffered under the Nupe (1744-95), Fulani (1823-97) and Ibadan between late 1840s to the 1860s. These constant military pressures from more powerful neighbours brought Igbomina's indigenous traditional system under considerable stress in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>43</sup>

Although, there were other imposters on pre-colonial Igbomina, that of the Fulani was particularly pervasive and enduring; that more than a century later, the devastating effect was described by Burnet after his tour of parts of Igbominaland. He observed that since the Fulani invasion, the area has remained 'somewhat unsettled', and that the consequent physical dislocation was so enormous that 'by 1900, no Igbomina village was on its pre-eighteenth-century site'.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, Igbomina delegates at the 2014 National Confab, organised by President Goodluck Jonathan, described the Fulani hegemony on Igbomina, Ekiti and Ibolu as 'a misnomer'. It is particularly noteworthy that all Nigeria's imperial overlords, except Lugard, the grand architect of the Nigerian nation, maintained this same position.<sup>45</sup>

### Fulani Infiltration of Igbominaland: The Òrò-Àgò Example

In Smith's opinion, international relations constitute an inevitable element of the duties of any government. The essence of international relations and diplomacy is to enable men to co-habit

<sup>35</sup> F. S. Afolayan, 'Igbomina Under Colonial Rule' (M.A. Dissertation, History Department, University of Ife, 1984), 11; Afolayan, 'War and Change', 78.

<sup>36</sup> S. A. Akintoye, *Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, 1840-1893* (London: Longman, 1971), 28; Afolayan, 'Igbomina Under Colonial Rule', 11.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Professor R. O. Lasisi, b. c. 1945, Ilorin, 15 March 2011.

<sup>38</sup> Afolayan, 'Igbomina Under Colonial Rule', 12.

<sup>39</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 1921), 174.

<sup>40</sup> K. R. Hassan, 'Aspects of Economic History of Igbomina, 1800-1960' (M.A. Dissertation, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, 2004), 80.

<sup>41</sup> S. F. Nadel, *A Black Byzantium, The Nupe in Nigeria* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), 74.

<sup>42</sup> Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba*, 10-11, 149-52.

<sup>43</sup> Afolayan, 'War and Change'.

<sup>44</sup> C. S. Burnet, quoted by Afolayan, in 'War and Change', 79-81; See also Afolayan, 'Igbomina Under Colonial Rule', 11-12; R. C. C. Law, *The Oyo Empire, c. 1600-1836* (London: Oxford, O.U.P., 1977), 91; Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba*, 174.

<sup>45</sup> Movement for Unification and Creation of Igbomina State, 2014, 13.



peacefully with their neighbours and to accommodate the interests of others. But since there will always be clashes of interests within our social milieu, resulting into conflicts, diplomacy then plays the role of mediator and arbiter among the warring parties.<sup>46</sup> Since the 1980s there have been unabated infiltration of, and harassment by, Fulani-Bororo herdsmen of Igbominaland. The sporadic attacks by Fulani herdsmen on Oro-Ago community in Ifelodun L.G.A. of Kwara State are, simply put, abysmal! It is particularly noteworthy that not less than three violent inter-ethnic clashes broke out between the duo between April and September 2015. Not less than two people died and properties worth millions of naira were destroyed in the clash between the Yoruba of Oro-Ago and Fulani-Bororo merchants on Wednesday 15 April 2015.<sup>47</sup> The mayhem allegedly broke up after Fulani-Bororo settlers flouted a standing rule that forbade settlers from bringing in arms, fighting sticks and ammunitions from their settlements to the market on market days. The vigilance team boldly accosted them and seized their weapons for flouting a grand order. However, the Serikin Fulani, leader of the Fulani-Bororo settler community, reportedly stormed the place where the seized weapons were kept, removed them and gave them back to the Fulani traders. The result was the violent and fatal clash that ensued as irate youths, hunters and vigilance team, slighted by this action and embittered by the outright breach of agreement and gross assault on law and order, attempted to retrieve the recaptured weapons from the Fulani group.<sup>48</sup>

Two people—a Fulani and an Oro youth, named Sogo Babarinde, a mobile phone technician—were reportedly killed in the clash while four others sustained different levels of injury.

<sup>46</sup> R. S. Smith, *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial West Africa*, Second Edition. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press; London: James Currey, 1989, 7.

<sup>47</sup> 'Fulani Bororo & Yoruba Traders Clashed in Oro Ago, Ifelodun, Kwara, 2 Killed' *The Punch*, Thursday 16 April 2015.

<sup>48</sup> Success Nwogu, 'Two Die as Fulani, Yoruba Clash in Kwara', *The Punch*, Thursday 16 April 2015.

Although military and police security personnel were deployed to restore tranquillity in the area, the residents lived in fear of resumption of hostilities. Even though the Ifelodun L. G. A. constituted a committee to restore peace comprising indigenes and Fulani settlers, another provocative brutal outburst occurred again barely two months after, on Friday 12 June 2015.<sup>49</sup>

After the April 15 incident, while the Oro women were protesting the arrest of their men, an Oro woman, Mrs Bolatito Balogun, was shot while five other members of the community were arrested by a set of police officers dispatched from the office of the Inspector General of Police at Abuja on 12 May 2015. Oro community, through the Oro-Ago Development Union (ODU), accused the police headquarters in Abuja of taking sides with Fulani herdsmen to attack its members and destroy their farmlands. President of the ODU, Chief Richard Olushola, addressing news reporters in Ilorin, Kwara State, in connection with the atrocities of the Fulani-Bororo in Oro-Ago, following the June 12 fracas, relayed his own side of the story:

Another set of police officers, just like that of April from IGP's office, Abuja, fully armed, stormed the community as early as 7:00 am and started shooting indiscriminately and arrested our people. The action was contrary to what they told our monarch Oba Johnson O. Dada the previous day that they were in the community on a peace mission and to visit places where the incident occurred as well as the place where one Seriki Bamo, who was the complainant to the office of IG on the first incident, was killed about a week ago. The indiscriminate shooting led to our people running helter-skelter and scampering for safety. The police went away with at least five of our men. We say five men because some people are still missing after the incident and their whereabouts still unknown. The names of the five we can identify are Oladele Ponle, Chief Asanlu Salawu, Karimu Aremu, Rasaki Illa and Tunde

<sup>49</sup> 'Fulani Bororo & Yoruba Traders Clashed...'



Abolaji... Unfolding developments show that the police are in cahoots with the Bororos. This is because on that Friday, two of our men were tied down on their farmlands by the Bororos; the Bororos told them that the police were coming from Abuja to arrest them and other members of the community and that they would be killed. Our monarch has written two separate letters to both the State Commissioner of Police and Director of Department of State Service (DSS) for their intervention because we don't want to take laws into our hands. But sadly, there has been no response from the duo.<sup>50</sup>

In his appeal to the IGP to order the immediate release of their men in police custody in Abuja, he described it as 'trite law for our people, acting on self-defence, to be caged while the Bororos, who perpetrated the fracas, are walking freely on the streets'.<sup>51</sup>

On Sunday, 16 August 2015, a retired School Principal and respected elder-statesman in Oro-Ago, Dave Oniyide, with his wife, narrowly escaped being lynched by the Bororo-Fulani on their way to Ilorin from Oro-Ago.<sup>52</sup> Evidently, Fulani harassment in Igbominaland has become a recurrent matter. In the recent past, there were reports of Oro-Ago women raped on their way to streams or farms.<sup>53</sup> The impregnation of Oro women and procreation of 'bastard' children from such relations had not only created untold psychological trauma for the people, but also produced a new breed of Oro-Fulani like the Mestizos and Mullatoes of ancient Latin America. A rather over-bloated account claims that today, there are more of such hybrid Fulani-Oro than the pure-blooded Oro people.<sup>54</sup> In Isanlu-Isin, Esie, Ijan, Agbamu and several other Igbomina communities, tales of Bororo harassment are similar. To compound the situation, Igbominaland, today, is almost completely encircled by the Fulani-

<sup>50</sup> Abiodun Fagbemi, 'Oro-Ago Community Accuses Police of bias in Crisis with Fulani Herdsmen', *The Guardian*, 15 June 2015.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Elder Dave Oniyide, b. 1939, Oro-Ago, 16 August 2015.

<sup>53</sup> Oral Tradition: Omobode Ayanda in a Yoruba Poetry Tape, titled *Iseda Oro*.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Miss Sike Terry, b. 1982, Ilorin, 30 August 2015.

Bororo. This portends a serious danger-signal for the Igbomina and the different levels of Nigeria's government.

### **Igbomina's Dilemma of Promoting Good Neighbourliness**

Ajase-Ipo, an ancient Igbomina-Yoruba town in Irepodun LGA, Kwara State, sometime in her history, had a tradition of purported hostility to strangers. An excavation of the factor responsible for that would, however, be quite revealing. Iya Sawo succinctly relayed two versions of this issue. The first has it that a long time ago, someone in Ajase housed a stranger. At dawn, the stranger was found dead. The second also referenced a stranger who was accommodated by someone in Ajase, who eventually carted away valuable traditional and sacred items. Both cases threw the community head and the entire community into serious pandemonium that resulted into a tradition of hostility towards strangers. Iya Sawo made haste to add that the tradition was an ancient one, being a child of necessity.<sup>55</sup> Ajase-Ipo, today, is as hospitable as any other Igbomina community.

It should be reiterated that although the Igbomina are tolerant and hospitable, they are not cowards. Hitherto, they have demonstrated a high commitment to the traditional ethics and universal pledge and principles of good neighbourliness. Prompt intervention is needed so that the elasticity of their tolerance would not be pushed beyond its limit, as is almost the case in Oroland (Oro-Ago) presently. The ODU President, while calling for prompt intervention, has warned rather tacitly, '...we don't want to put laws into our hands'.<sup>56</sup> Afenifere, the Yoruba socio-cultural group, in reaction to the afore-said incarceration of Chief Olu Falae, has demanded the outright stoppage of nomadic ýcattle rearing in the southwest region (Yorubaland) of the country. Following the alleged Fulani-Bororo saga against one of her respected elder-statesmen, the group seems to have suddenly developed a zero-tolerance to Fulani herdsmen menace in all parts of Yorubaland.<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, a former Minister of Aviation,

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Iya Sawo, b. c. 1955, Ajase, 16 September 2015.

<sup>56</sup> Fagbemi, 'Oro-Ago Community'.

<sup>57</sup> Ojo Oyewamide, 'Afenifere moves against nomadic cattle rearing in Yorubaland', *National Mirror*, 30 September 2015.



Femi Fani-Kayode, in his own reaction to the same incidence, in a social media post titled 'Herdsman from hell' accused President Muhammadu Buhari, a Fulani, of being unfairly sympathetic towards Fulani herdsmen.<sup>58</sup>

It suffices, at this juncture, to recall the words of the Late Gani Fawehinmi, commenting on his commitment to the actualisation of a new Nigeria:

I have been in this struggle all my life, till my heart is attacking me, till my pressure is high, till my eyes are almost blind. I just finished another operation. I've been in and out of detention more times than any other person in my life... just to see a new Nigeria. But I don't know if I want to continue fighting!<sup>59</sup>

The dilemma of the Igbomina, like that of Gani Fawehinmi stated above, may perhaps be best encapsulated in these and myriads of questions that are urgently begging for answers: Should the Igbomina continue to uphold and respect the principles of good neighbourliness while some tenant-turned-terrorist neighbours incessantly perpetrate all manners of hostility and cruelty, with impunity, often leading to a total breakdown of peace and order? Should the Igbomina begin to demonstrate that they are not cowards but descendants of valiant legendary personages as they recently demonstrated in the Oro-Fulani fracas, where human lives and properties worth millions of Naira were wasted? (That, of course, is against both traditional ethics and universal declarations and resolutions of good neighbourliness.) Should only a sect respect the principles of good neighbourliness while others flout it without recourse to sanctions? (That, no doubt is a gross demonstration of unfairness.) Should the Igbomina exercise their full right to defend themselves singly or collectively, sequel to Principle 5 and in conformity with the United Nations'

<sup>58</sup> Eniola Akinkuotu, 'Buhari Likes Fulani Herdsmen-Fani-Kayode', *The Punch*, 30 September 2015.

<sup>59</sup> Gani Fawehinmi quoted by Pastor 'Tunde Bakare in an Audio Recorded Tape titled 'Resistance to Tyranny is Obedience to God', c. 2000.

Charter? (This, at least, apparently appeals and conforms to reason and law in pursuit of self-defence.) Or what is the way out of this hideous debacle?

Undoubtedly, Fulani harassment in Igbominaland has become a perennial issue that needs to be laid to rest. Judging from personal observation, the following options may be carefully considered:

The Fulani-Bororo should be compelled to embrace and respect both the traditional ethics and universal principles of good neighbourliness with their host communities. This is in conformity with Principle 4 of the Ten Afro-Asian Proclamations which enunciates the abstention [of the Fulani-Bororo] from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another [Igbomina] country. This is also in consonance with Principle 2, which proclaims respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.<sup>60</sup>

The Igbomina should continue to exercise tolerance. The recent resolution of the Pan-Yoruba Socio-Political Organisation, Afenifere, in relation to the abduction of Chief Olu Falae, that the nomadic system in the rural communities of Yorubaland should be abolished forthwith in order to end the criminality of Fulani herdsmen, may possibly not solve the problem but rather exacerbate the ethno-political tension in the land.<sup>61</sup> The once acclaimed "powerful" Igbomina are enjoined to maintain their peaceful disposition and never ever consider the option of embracing the extreme alternative that could potentially turn their God-given habitation of tranquillity into the den of cruelty. They should never take laws into their hands as the ODU President had contemplated.

There is the urgent need for prompt unbiased and sincere government intervention, if (1) or (2) or both (1) and (2) above

<sup>60</sup> Sucharitkul, 'The Principles'.

<sup>61</sup> Ade Akanbi, 'Falae: Afenifere Seeks Scrapping of Nomadic Cattle Rearing' *The Nigeria Punch Online Newspaper*, 30 September 2015.



fail or are not forthcoming. Mutual respect for the universal declaration as well as a symbiotic concerted commitment of all communities towards promoting and enjoying good neighbourliness are therefore required. A mutual resolve to uphold the above principles would provide the required synergy that is capable of making our planet a haven of warmth rather than an abode of qualm.

The traditional leadership of all Igbomina communities should declare a state of emergency on the menace of Fulani-Bororo herdsmen to forestall a potential Fulani hegemony over their homeland and to avert the imminent doom of repeated history. For the hindsight of history, the Oro-Ago experience should both be regarded and treated as a joint-assault on the once "powerful" Igbomina. The Joint-Igbomina alliance against Fulani-Bororo assaults must, however, begin with a challenge to all Igbomina Oba to withdraw special privileges extended to Fulani-Bororo herdsmen exchange for tributes, but which undermine the welfare of their subjects.

### Conclusion

This study is an extrapolation of the interplay of history and the esoteric law of cause and effect on the Igbomina. It elucidates the traumatic experience of the Igbomina in relation to its hostile neighbours, particularly the Fulani-Bororo. Recollecting reminiscences of that era, Oyedepo wrote:

The [Fulani] Emirs of the pre-colonial Ilorin Emirate were in all senses typified absolutism in governance and administration of punishment. ... and the Emir of then that maintained fearsome army could only be disobeyed at the peril of those that chose to be destroyed.<sup>62</sup>

Meanwhile, the Igbomina experience could, by and large, be

<sup>62</sup> Iyiola Oyedepo, *Letters to the Emir: A Vision for a Heterogeneous Kwara State* (Nigeria: Integrity Productions, 2015), 13.

described as a synecdoche for the entire Kwara State, which Iyiola Oyedepo in his twenty-seven self-acclaimed iconoclastic letters to the Emir of Ilorin, sees as nothing more than an experiment in political engineering. To him, it is the experiment of how a Fulani caste, through Islamic learning and militarism, subjugated its host to establish an enduring political hegemony in a largely Yoruba community.<sup>63</sup> The argument above may then suggest why the Oloro's alleged appeals for intervention from the Kwara State Commissioner of Police and the Director, Department of State Service (DSS) were ignored and why the highly exalted office of the Inspector General of Police equally ignored the appeals of the people against the aggression, barbarity and unneighbourly conduct of Fulani-Bororo herdsmen. It is feared that the unruly behaviour of the herdsmen towards their hosts is not unconnected with their kinship ties with the ruling Fulani caste in Ilorin. The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that the nation is now headed by a Fulani man. However, the menace of the Fulani-Bororo herdsmen could constitute a major litmus test for Nigeria's current administration. It becomes plausible to conclude, at this juncture, that perhaps the worst thing that can happen to a people is the mistake of repeated history. For the Igbomina, it is increasingly becoming a reality of the past in the present.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.