



Tolerance and Dialogue as a Paradigm for Mitigating the Fulani Herders and Farmers Crisis in Nigeria

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Abstract

The incessant and protracted clashes between Farmers and Herders in Nigeria is fuelling the already fragile security situation in the country already bedevilled with humongous security crisis in diverse ramifications. The clashes have led to destruction of lives and property culminating in a serious gap in food supply across the nation. Given the fact that kinetic approach by state actors have overtime proven to be insufficient in nipping the conundrum in the bud, this paper suggested the adoption of non-kinetic paradigm of tolerance and dialogue in mitigating the Fulani herders and farmers crisis in the country. It is the view of this article that tolerance, dialogue and cooperation transcend and also depoliticises conflict that often bifurcate herders and farmers. They offer favourable grounds for the recognition of communities and persons who are cultural neighbours sharing in the same humanity to coexist peacefully together.

Keywords: Conflict, Dialogue, Conversation, Farmers, Herders, Tolerance.

Introduction

Reports of protracted herders and farmers crisis is one of Nigeria's most persistent security problems. The conflict has led to the annihilation of human lives and property threatening the socio-economic, political, cultural and religious fabrics of the country. Several measures have been suggested by authors in mitigating the malady. This essay, one of such articulations in addressing the conundrum will proceeds in four prongs. It will examine the notion of tolerance which is self-restraints which establishes firm control over our variegated impulses or inclinations to act out a series of initial objections. This will be followed by an x-ray of the notion of dialogue which means the readiness to understand the other, to penetrate to the hidden and the non-obvious of the human hearts aimed at unveiling the underpinning idiosyncrasies of humans – which could predispose them to engage in conflict. Further, it will attempt an exposé on the Fulani herders and farmers crises in Nigeria and lastly suggest ways of mitigating the crises using the paradigm of tolerance and dialogue. Thereafter conclusion shall also be drawn.



The Notion of Tolerance

Rogel in Collado (2008) defines tolerance as “the attitude of someone, who is willing not to repress the conviction of others, especially those of a religious or moral kind, even though they seem to him false or deserving to be rejected, neither prevent their expression.” To tolerate generally means to endure, suffer or put up with a person, activity, idea or organisation of which or whom one does not really approve (King, 1976: 21). One can ‘put up with’ an item both when one can and cannot do anything about it. For example, one can ‘put up with’ the excesses of a ruler whose behaviour one has no power to amend. Equally, one can ‘put up with’ the excesses of a child even where one has no need to do so. In the second case, one has control; in the first, one does not. Both cases could be advanced as instances of ‘tolerance’. In this context, an agent will be said to be ‘tolerant’ of an item where the item is objected to whether disliked or disapproved and is yet voluntarily endured. On this score, tolerance requires some form of self-restraint by the tolerator. For most authors, tolerance is a positive concept that refers to the attitude through which ideas, beliefs and behaviour different from one’s own, are allowed. Thus, it is understood that toleration also implies respecting other persons and their ideas. This is aptly captured by Ruiz in Collado (2008) thus:

Evidently, I can only be tolerant toward other humans if I postulate from the beginning, that all of us share the same human essence and therefore I suggest that others deserve the same respect. We must recognise that men are equal in order to admit that at the same time they are different. Tolerance based on equality should not face any limit and in a reciprocal way, any unequal discrimination is condemnable.

According to King (1976) ‘tolerance’ is restricted to cases where an agent is presupposed to wield power and ‘acquiescence’ those cases where an agent is powerless. Tolerance involves some form of “acceptance” of an idea to which we object. It is distinct from acquiescence, as elaborated above, for the reason that it presupposes a power to act out the objection (although declining to utilize it). This is captured succinctly by King when he posits:

In the tolerantial conjecture, therefore, we are not discussing the acceptance of objectionable items as stemming from powerlessness; nor are we discussing such acceptance as stemming from an essential uncertainty or tergiversation regarding the objectionableness of the item implicated in the case of tolerance. We shall assume the tolerator to enjoy a relevant power or liberty and that he shall hold to his initial objection without equivocation (King, 1976: 26).



One may tolerate an 'objectionable' religion in one's own country in order to set an example for the tolerance of one's own religion elsewhere. One may tolerate conservatives or liberals or socialists or communists because too many fundamental and potentially dangerous, constitutional adjustments might be required to dominate them. One may tolerate different 'race' or 'tribe' or 'class' in the sense of not attempting to destroy or suppress them because one considers that they too are part of God's creation and for that reason, must be endured even if they are not loved. Many examples of this sort could be advanced. In each case, some item disliked or disapproved is acceptable because of some other considerations. The dislike or disapproved of the tolerated object is inferior to the agent's dislike or disapproval of some other item. At the point of tolerance, one may object to a child's bad behaviour less than he objects to the exertion required to stop it. One objects to an alien religion less than he objects to encouraging intolerant behaviour towards his own elsewhere. One may object to the adherent of a rival party less than he objects to upsetting the constitutional structure of his state. Similarly, he may oppose a different group less than he opposes the idea of exterminating or destroying such group. Such group being taken as an equally legitimate part of God's creation. The corollary is that the other is liked, valued or approved more than the first (King 1976).

One prefers the spread of rival religions, above (say) the annihilation of one's own elsewhere, or (perhaps) above the use of violent means to check them. Where the initial objection is not clearly formulated, we are not dealing with tolerance, tolerance only arises as a function of initial and continuing objections to an item, action against which is at least suspended, because of incompatible action that is accorded a higher priority. The key to the situation of tolerance is a clear stipulation of priorities, hence one could say that tolerance implies self-restraints because it is built upon checking negative acts following the recognition of the need to attack problems in sequence. Tolerance viewed under such lens reflects self-restraints, in the sense that it establishes firm control over our variegated impulses or inclinations to act out a series of initial objections; but the more firm this control, then the more clearly established is the system of priorities one would promote within the severe limits that are naturally imposed upon us, our ability to implement those objections which we accord the highest priority. This is why King (1976: 32) further avers that:

tolerance is not merely a matter of suspending action against an item that is objected to. Crucial to it is the rationale for the suspension of such action. In the event, this rationale consists in the introduction of a competitive and incompatible objection, one that is accorded higher status, and one which accordingly prohibits the operationalization of the objection first advanced. If this rationale is absent we have less or case of tolerance than of imprecision, perhaps mere muddle.

Tolerance represent a system of priorities. The priority system involve a group of competing objectives set out in rank order. The type of competition that obtains is between conflicting ends



and means. Also pivotal to the notion of tolerance is what Fohr (2006) refers to as ideal and nideal. Kohr sees an ideal as being an end to be promoted; the nideal as end to be demoted. Gleaning from the above, one can see that no case of tolerance arises where an ideal is initially posited. Tolerance can only obtain if one initially posit the nideal, some form of dislike, disapproval, objection.

In tolerance, there is a disposition to weigh carefully conflicting priorities, to question the merits of projected means as against each ends they may be intended to serve. The merits of eliminating X as against not destroying a sizeable proportion of humanity in order to do so, may be imputed. We may not accept an item because we are indifferent to it, however, but also because other important considerations, set astride our indifference lead us to it.

Categories of Tolerated Items

Items tolerated are always assumed to be human rather than natural. King (1976: 63) categories such items to include:

- i. Acts: This is tolerance of various types of act, whether public petting, divorce, gambling, drinking, late hours, strides, currency speculation, fast driving, buying on credit, noising parties and so on. The tolerance of any such act may be called an activity tolerance. Since there is no end of activities, there is equally no end of potential activity tolerance. In this sense, the study of tolerance could be made as broad as the whole of human activity itself.
- ii. Tolerance of Ideas: This is tolerance of expression of various kinds of ideas, whether religious, scientific, ethical or political. This is also called ideational tolerance. The expression of any of these ideas we might object to and yet allow. Whether people may freely discuss the merits and character of communism and capitalism raises the issue of political tolerance whether they may freely discuss the merits and demerits of Galileo's or Darwin's or Lysenko's theories raises the issue of scientific tolerance. Whether they may freely worship and proselytise as Heuguenots or Anabaptists or Catholics raises a question of religious tolerance. To the extent that ideas are illimitable, so are potential ideational tolerance.
- iii. Tolerance of Proliferation of various kinds of organized groups: This is tolerance of a proliferation of various kinds of organized groups, whether ethical, educational, religious, professional or political (such as parties, pressure groups and demonstrations). This can also be called organizational tolerance. This is potentially as broad as there are organizations to tolerate. One might disapprove of any organization and yet recognised it. Also, to tolerate an idea is not the same as to tolerate a group.
- iv. Tolerance of Identities: Finally, this is tolerance of certain involuntary and natural or semi-natural differences, such as nationality, class, sex, race, tribe, religion and culture. It is not a tolerance which allows the identity to persist but which does not penalize the bearer of an identity as a consequence of his identity. One may dislike or disapprove of a cultural, religious, racial or other identity, and yet accept a person who bears that identity, in the sense of not denying him privileges based on his identity. The essence of tolerance as elaborated above is the suspension of action against an item objected to. This rationale



consist on the introduction of a competitive action, one that is accorded a higher priority. This paper sees dialogue as a preferred priority.

Dialogue

Dialogue is a noun derived from the verb dialog, which means to become involved in a conversation with another. Socrates transformed the erotic relation between himself and the partners in the dialogues to a love of truth. This is taken to indicate that philosophical knowledge is never possess by one person alone and although 'asymmetric' dialogical relations exists between partners, Socrates famous dictum "I know that I do not know anything (espoused with irony) aimed at equality and used maieutic (midwifery) process to lead to establishing intersubjective nature of knowledge.

In modern culture, people do not seem to be able to talk together about subjects that matter deeply without leading to dispute or conflict, this may have been the reason Bohm, Factor and Garrettes (1991) stipulation that participants must suspend assumptions, view each other as colleagues or peer. They view dialogue as a means of addressing the significant crisis that we face in the world today and see it as "a process of awakening" and a "new kind of mind" built on a kind of impersonal friendship "based on the development of a common meaning that is constantly transforming in the process of the dialogues" The objective of dialogue according to them include:

- i. Promoting and facilitating the peaceful resolution of conflicts and disputes.
- ii. Reconciling tensions between cultures, countries and religions.
- iii. Promoting and facilitating the much needed dialogue between religious societies and other societies around the world.
- iv. Contributing to academic research and enriching the wider debate around peace in the world.

In *Truth and Methods*, Gadamer (1960) sees conversation as the basic model of understanding. According to him:

a conversation involves an exchange between conversational partners that seeks agreement about some matter at issue; consequently, such an exchange is never completely under the control of either conversational partner, but is rather determined by the matter at issue.

Understanding takes place in language, it is interpretative and involves the active translation between the familiar and the strange. Gadamer further describe the dialogue situation as:

a process of two people understanding each other characterized by every true conversation that each opens himself to the other person, truly accepts his point of view as worthy of consideration



and gets inside the other to such an extent that he understands not a particular individual, but what he says. The thing that has to be grasped is the objective righteous or otherwise of his opinion, so that they can agree with each other on a subject (1960: 346).

Corroborating Gadamer's position, Smith (2001) sees dialogic knowledge as an aspect of the conversational process that emerges from act of interaction where we bring to the encounter our own prejudices, understood as prejudgment and put them to test. Dialogue is here construed as a social relation not so much a specific communicative form of question and answer, but at heart a kind of question and answers that engages its participant which entails certain virtues and emotions such as concern, trust, respect, appreciation, affection and hope.

Communication is a powerful regulative ideal where each has an effective equality of chances to take part in dialogue. In conversation, there is always hope and the claim to reason that underlies it with the prospect of resolving issues rationally through dialogue. The key to liberation is therefore to be found in language and communication between people and communicative action serves to transmit and renew cultural knowledge, in a process of achieving mutual understanding. It then coordinates action toward social integration and solidarity, providing the process through which people form their identities.

For Ukpong (2021:40) dialogue is fundamental for appropriation of intentionality. This appropriation according to him, is the foundation of meaningful and peaceful coexistence. To this end, dialogue is the engine of social interaction and cohesion; accessing the intention of others by understanding the meaning of words in particular context. It is the process of demonstrating readiness to understand the other, to penetrate to the hidden and "the non-obvious of the human hearts" which are indispensable for accomplishment of purposive and elevating actions. Dialogue is an acknowledgement that one does not understand and is willing to understand for mutual up-building and respect, as a means of enhancing and reciprocation humanity of the other.

Frank, in Ukpong (2021) affirms that dialogue "consist of meaningful interaction and exchange between people often of different social, cultural, political, religious, or professional groups who come together through various kinds of conversation or activities with a view to increase understanding." Gleaning from the above perspective, dialogue involves the quest to promote understanding among people who are from different social, cultural, political or religious persuasions. Such understanding is considered to be the fulcrum of social interaction and interpersonal relationship. Dialogue is, therefore, a process of societal and interpersonal or intra or extra societal integration founded on a shared parameter of meaningfulness in furtherance of common humanity.

For Swindler in Ukpong (2021) dialogue is a "two-way communication between persons who hold differing views on a situation with the purpose of learning more truth about the subject from one another". Embedded in this notion is the affirmation that no individual has a total grasp of the truth of the subject, or no individual knows everything of anything at a particular time, and



that the future is an open system that will outlive the individual person. Not knowing everything of anything is not a denial or knowledge but an affirmation of the immensity of knowledge as transcending an individual in the past and future. Dialogue is a humble recognition that an individual knows something which the other may not know, and a sense of obligation to transmit to, share with and appropriate from the other. To this end, dialogue indicates that the interlocutors know their own system, appreciate it, committed to it, and above all, know how to communicate same as indispensable value. Nevertheless, be willing to engage with the other as opening for self-enrichment and elimination of the fear of the unknown. Such engagement is a defining moment of cross fertilization and deepening of truth. Consequent upon the above, dialogue is a key for understanding others, dialogue happens when thoughts and minds are loosened in order to seek truth from the world of others. Therefore, dialogue is not reserved only for the high profile, high level, or as a diplomatic initiative, rather it is a process owned by everyone, possible in every community and demanding that every voice has a right, and a need to be heard in order to promote holistic action and social cohesion.

Juuso (2007) opines that genuine encounter and dialogue are more like exceptional events in a man's life, and their value is added to through this exceptionality. According to him, a dialogue encounter with another person means immediate experience of unity. The other person unpredictably makes a deep impression on me, touches me with his difference, and this experience changes me. Such an encounter with an experience of unity is not limited to verbal communication or, learning only. It is not a matter of "factual" consciousness of another person's speech as a goal-oriented exposition of one's own previous knowledge, but of the special experience of a 'touch' that has a broad and deep influence on the development of our entire personality. Such existentially understood dialogical encounters with others who can be our fathers and mothers, friends, dear ones or perhaps also children, among others create our identity, our understanding of ourselves.

Mutual speech and understanding are also one of the most important level of dialogical relationship. Gadamer (1960) is of the view that "genuine understanding is a dialogical process of encountering the other person in which my own meaning horizon is merged with the other horizon, in which an effort is made to find a new understanding of what was spoken or written as text in unity with the other." Dialogue is not about an attempt to understand the other person's mental life, but the issue at hand as seen from the other person's perspective. Arising from the foregoing, dialogue can be seen as a non-kinetic technique of mitigating societal crises. In the next section, this paper considers one of such crises in Nigeria, the Fulani herders and farmers crisis.

Herders and Farmers Crises in Nigeria

Over the years reports of farmers-herders violence has increased exponentially. Violence between Fulani herdsmen and farmers is one of Nigeria's most persistent security problems and has left thousands of people dead, maimed and helpless in decades. The farmer-herder conflict has now become Nigeria's grievous security challenge, claiming far more lives than the Boko Haram insurgency (Madobi, 2021). Beetsch (2018: 100) avers that the farmers-herders crisis in



Nigeria occur as a result of resource scarcity; there exists a growing scarcity of arable land and water sources that are equally essential to sustain crop cultivation and cattle herds. Farmers encroach on grazing routes, and have expropriated land designated to grazing reserves, while herders often destroy crops, pollute water sources and trespass on farms to feed their cattle. This is further exacerbated by the growing population of farmers, herders and their herds, increasing scarcity of arable land due to droughts, desertification, land degradation, and cultural differences among ethnic groups that predominantly farm or graze cattle.

Fulani herdsmen are popular for being cattle rearers which makes it possible for them to navigate their prized cows, from one location to another in search for food and water. As a result of this regular search, it may lead them to the invasion of other people's farm by the herdsmen. Due to the peculiarity of the activities of the herdsmen, they move from one place to another in search of pastures. In this process, the herdsmen have reportedly encountered cattle rustlers and made complaints to the relevant authorities who at times fail to investigate the issue, hence their purported reason for carrying arms about. During their journey, they frequently trespass farmlands owned by locals in their host communities, destroy crops and valuables. Attempts by farmers to prevent them from causing havoc are met with stiff and violent resistance. Most times, the farmers are overpowered, injured and killed, while others are evicted from their homes. Sometimes, the herdsmen are accused of taking these opportunities to steal, rape, raze houses, and killed innocent members of the communities they pass through (Beetsch, 2018: 101).

The farmers/herders crisis pose a threat to democratic governance as the level of intolerance among the herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria has deteriorated to unimaginable level of arm struggle, resulting in countless deaths among villagers with the attendant reduction in the population of the peasant farmers. These violent crises have direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of those involved and lead to the displacement of economic productive population of the community. In most cases, the clashes led to reduction in output and income of crop farmers as a result of the destruction of crops by cattle. Most farmers have been forced to flee their farms for fear of being killed by well-armed herdsmen and loss of part or the whole of their crops which translated into low income on the part of the farmers who takes farming as major occupation. This tend to negatively affect their savings, credit repayment ability, as well as food security and economic welfare of urban dwellers that depend on these farmers for food supply (Beetsch 2018: 104).

Tolerance and Dialogue as Non-kinetic Measures for Mitigating Fulani Herders Crisis in Nigeria

As earlier discussed, tolerance means endurance and putting up with a person organization, idea or activity, idea of which or whom one disapproves. One may tolerate a certain race of persons in his locality to set stage for the tolerance of his own race in another clime. In this case some items disliked or disapproved is tolerated because of some other considerations which could be more intelligible than retaliation which could lead to chaos and crisis and culminate in the death of warring parties. Violent conflict in Nigeria is as a result of lack of people not being conscious of others. Usoro (2019), talked about confirmation and



inclusion which he explains as the acknowledgement and recognition of the “other”. Farmers need their crops while herders need their cows. The activities of these two groups sustain the economic fabric of a nation as evidence in the symbiotic relationship that exists between them.

Farmers should be tolerated by herders and vice versa cognizance of the fact that they share in the same humanity. Tolerance gives room for dialogue. Herders and farmers are cultural neighbours who have coexisted together for decade. Destruction of crops is one of the main causes of this violence, along with resource scarcity, exacerbated by changing climate, cattle rustling, and the killing of pastoralists cattle which have been escalated by politicization of farmers-herder conflicts, contestation for fertile land and lack of comprehensive ranching laws. Herders and farmers should tolerate each other as cultural neighbours which Bukari *et al.* (2018) describe as:

Two groups that are ethically and culturally different but live in the same community or geographical space and engage in peaceful interaction such as trade, whilst occasionally engaging in competition and conflict.

From the conceptualization of cultural neighbourhood as articulated above, and despite conflicts, the farmers and herders coexist and cooperate in many ways. Farmer pastoralist relations provide example of cultural neighbourhood. As two groups who are ethnically and culturally distinct, farmers and herders have engaged in long-term relations spanning decades. They engage in conflict as well as bond of friendships, trade, co-residence, and adoption, cross-cutting ties and on rare occasions, inter-marriages. Cultural neighbourhood thus involves knowledge of each other developed through years of close contact. Whether friends or foes, the groups under consideration know and respect each other while also cultivating their differences. Farmers and pastoralists have developed spatial and close-knit social contact and knowledge of each other’s history through long years of interactions, which enables them to predict the actions of their neighbours as well as the neighbours reactions to the actions of the other. Annihilation of the life of a Fulani herdsman rather than solve the problem through dialogue seems retrogressive as such action stultifies the economic climate of a particular location and their people because trade relations are well developed between farmers and herders. A trader who sold maize and salt to one of the Fulani respondents remarked thus:

In fact, the herders have always bought things from us the traders (sic) I have befriended many of them and they often come here to buy from me. When the violence broke out last year and Fulani could not come into town center, it really affected me because most of those who buy from me are the herders. A good number of them are very reliable and often joke with me here (Bukari et al., 2018).

The scenario captured here though happened in Ghana, is not quite different from what we have been witnessing in Nigeria. The escalation of the Fulani herders conundrum has a ripple effect on



the availability of meat in our markets as the southern part of the country depends majorly on the herders for meat supply and the herders in turn depend on the south for palm produce, fish and other agricultural product, there is a situation of symbiosis.

Employment of kinetic measures over years by state actors have only resulted in temporary relieves. Consequently, there is need for the herders to be tolerated by farmers and farmers tolerated by the herders as cultural neighbours in view of the fact that despite obvious ethnic, cultural and personal differences, local farmers and herders have been able to forge economic, social and religious relations that transcend these differences.

Tolerance may also lead to evolving ways of cooperative interaction between farmers and herders, one way could be by sharing of water by both farmers and herders. Rivers, streams, lakes, and dams are used both by farmers and herders for domestic chores, dry season farming and also for watering livestock. A situation in Ghana is captured again by a farmer.

Cattles are always at the Bulugu Dam to drink water while community members also come to fetch water for drinking, washing, and domestic chores. Uniquely dug out boreholes are shared by both the community and the ... herders' cattles are allowed to drink from the boreholes. Community members pump out water from the boreholes for the cattles when herders come with them. This practice is approved by the community, since the dry season presents challenges to herders in finding water (Bukari et al. 2018).

In tolerance something dislike or disapproved is accepted because of some other considerations. In the case of farmers and herders, the dislike or disapproval of the tolerated object is inferior to the agent disapproval of some other items. The farmer may tolerate encroachment on his farmland by the herder, and open a window for dialogue and critical engagement with the herders in addressing areas of conflict rather than have the herders exterminated. The reprisal that follows such action could have a disastrous consequences on the mutual coexistence of both farmers and herders. It has to do with a comparative logic of priorities. The priority of eliminating the herders and their cows is relegated below the priority of collaborative, communal coexistence with the herders and resorting to dialogue in resolving any perceived injustice. Tolerance here establishes firm control over our impulses and inclinations. The rationale for allowing the herders be is not only that we share in the same humanity but that of symbiotic benefit. As earlier mentioned, an ideal to be promoted is the recognition of right to life by all human person including the herders and the nideal to be demoted being actions that could harm or endanger the lives of the herders.

Dialogue is another non-kinetic model of conflict resolution. It entails deep conversation between the herders and farmers, conversation and engagements that obliterate distinctions and rankings, conversation that each party has genuine concerns which needs to be interrogated and for amicable resolutions. The herders hold their cows sacrosanct and the farmers guard their



crops jealously. Critical engagements by the herders and farmers on the propriety of non-encroachment on farmlands by the herders and non-rustle of cattles by the farmers may lead to peaceful coexistence between the herders and the farmers.

Through dialogue farmers and herders can create congenial relationships where interdependence makes it plausible, beneficial and necessary for them to cooperate and build peace. The roles of local institutions and traditional rulers are important in ensuring cooperation with regard to compensation payment to appease farmers for crop destruction. One of the means of enhancing cooperative interaction according to Bukari (2007) is compensation payment for crop destruction which is basically cash payments by cattle owners to farmers, following collective bargaining to reach a price for payment. This is always achieved through dialogue, compensation is important in the de-escalation of violence and in helping to encourage dialogue. A cattle owner with good relations with the community and farmers will not have his herds attacked, even when crops have been destroyed. Farmers would negotiate with the cattle owners for compensation payment or simply forgive. This is not impossible. Both farmers and herders used to interact daily, were friends, shared resources (land and water), and trade together. A bottom-up approach to cooperative building according to Bukari (2007) could resolve violent farmers-herders conflict through local forms of dispute resolution and reconciliation, building proper communication among actors in farmers-herders conflict.

Conclusion

The kinetic paradigm employed by government aimed at mitigating Fulani herders and farmers arises seem insufficient in quelling the malady. Sequel to the above, this paper suggest tolerance and dialogue as a veritable template which could reduce the crises. In tolerance, there is a disposition to weigh carefully, conflicting priorities, to question the merit or projected means as against each ends they may be intended to serves. The merit of not resulting to actions geared towards eliminating either herders by the farmers or farmers by the herders is imputed in an ambiance of tolerance. The corollary being a resort to dialogue by the feuding parties aimed at mutual coexistence of herders and farmers since they share in the same humanity.

The future of Nigeria is an open system that will outlived the individual person, hence the need for peaceful resolution of perceived infractions. The farmers and their crops need be protected while the herders and their cows should be accorded the same protection as the two groups are cultural neighbours.

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