

The Impact of Escalating Insecurity on Socio-Economic Dynamics in Eha-Amufu Communities, Isi-Uzo Local Government of Enugu State

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of rising insecurity on socioeconomic activities in Eha-Amufu communities, Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu state. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys, and interviews to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Statistical analysis and thematic coding were used to interpret the findings, providing a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between rising insecurity and socio-economic activities in Eha-Amufu communities. The findings revealed that farmers-herders clashes, land and boundary disputes, and politically motivated killings by politicians are some of the causes of insecurity in the Eha-Amufu communities of Enugu State. The rising insecurity has led to untold hardship, displacement of people, reduction in food production, loss of means of livelihood, and loss of lives and properties. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the Federal Government should quickly mandate the National Boundary Commission and other relevant authorities to visit Eha-Amufu and resolve all the subsisting land issues between Eha-Amufu and the Benue communities, the Federal and State Governments should initiate a mechanism of peaceful settlement of dispute between the herdsmen and the people of Eha-Amufu communities, the government should resettle the displaced persons and deploy more security personnel to the Eha-Amufu rural communities for prompt and adequate security of the people and their properties.

Keywords: Inter-Communal Violence, Herders' Attacks, Farmers-Herders Clashes, Socioeconomic Activities, Eha-Amufu, Nigeria.

Introduction

The first duty of government is the security of its people as stipulated in Section 14 (2) (b) of the constitution which provides that the primary purpose of government is the security and welfare of the people. However, in recent times, the residents of Enugu State have been witnessing a consistent breakdown in law and order, and therefore living in fear and constant apprehension (Ofoma, 2022). According to Njoku (2019), Enugu state is fast losing the reputation of being one of the most peaceful and safest states in Nigeria as crimes of various proportions are now common, thus compromising the security of lives and properties. The security situation in Enugu state has been in deplorable state since 2016 even though Enugu hosts the headquarters of the 82 Division Nigerian Army which covers South East, South-South, and Benue.

Inter-communal violence in Enugu State primarily stems from disputes over land use and water rights between agricultural-based communities and nomadic pastoral herders. Such violence is a frequent occurrence in the state, with related clashes having resulted in numerous fatalities in recent years. People have lost count of the attacks and killings in different communities across the state. For instance, over 40 persons were massacred by herders at Ukpabi Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani local government area of the state in April 2016. Since then, the killings have spread to other communities and local government areas in the state. Aside from the herders' attacks, the state still had to contend with assassination cases, kidnapping, burning, and destruction of facilities belonging to the government such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and killings by unknown gunmen (Ofoma, 2022).

At the moment, the security situation has worsened to the extent that several key and heavily motorized interstate and federal roads and communal bypasses have become no-go areas and death traps. For instance, the 'Four-Corner' part of the Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway, Ugwuogo-Nike-Opi Nsukka part of Enugu, Nsude part of Old Enugu-Onitsha Road and Eke-Ezeagu axis, among others have come under severe invasions and attacks by herdsmen (Ofoma, 2022). Non-state actors seem to have overrun the cities and communities, while the government keeps mum as residents are kidnapped, killed, or sacked from their homes in Eha-Amufu, Ibagwa-Aka, Adani, Achi, and many others in the various local government areas across the State (Ofoma, 2022).

Apart from the security issues in the various parts of the state, there have been incessant killings by herdsmen in Eha-Amufu communities, Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of the Enugu State. In recent times, there has been an upsurge of attacks and killings in Eha-Amufu communities (Sahara Reporters, 2022). Eha-Amufu is a town with nine autonomous communities headed by Nine Igwes. Of these communities, Agu-Amede, Mgbuji, Ebor, and Umujiovu share boundaries with Benue State. These communities have many farm villages and settlements. Herders roam from Benue into these villages destroying farms, the people's only means of livelihood. No amount of pleading makes them turn their cattle away; instead, they will pose a fight. And when the villagers out of frustration fight the herders, later they would invite their killer squads to besiege the villages, killing and maiming. Consequently, there have been constant killings of Eha-Amufu people by herdsmen. Due to these incessant attacks, thousands of indigenes of Eha-Amufu and other communities in the area have been displaced as they fled their ancestral homes for their safety during the gruesome attack that occurred in December 2022. Many of them ran to Nkalaha and other neighboring communities in Ebonyi State, and some to the Enugu capital; while others have been forced into Internally Displaced Persons' abodes (Ofoma, 2022).

Many concerned citizens of the state have not spared the Governor who is the Chief Security Officer of the state for his alleged inability to bring the killings under control (Ofoma, 2022). However, to address the threats to national security and combat the increasing waves of crime, the Federal Government in the 2021 budget made a huge

allocation to security (Ewetan, 2021). Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in Enugu state is still high and a confirmation of this is the low ranking of Enugu in the global peace index (Odeniyi, 2022). Despite the plethora of security measures taken to address the daunting challenges of insecurity in Enugu state, government efforts have not produced the desired positive results.

Eha-Amufu community in Isi Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State has been a peaceful community where the indigenes have lived harmoniously with other settlers for decades, but the peaceful environment has been shattered as killings, kidnappings and destruction of properties become the order of the day in the community (Ogbodo-Iwuagwu, 2022). The Eha-Amufu community was suddenly gutted by sorrow, tears, and pains following incessant killings in the area by Fulani herdsmen (Ogbodo-Iwuagwu, 2022). Sahara Reporters (2022) reported that armed Fulani herdsmen had levied a 'war' of extermination on four communities – Agu-Amede, Mgbuji, Umujiovu, and Ebor, in Eha-Amufu that had boundaries with Benue state since January 2021. No fewer than 120 people had been killed and counting while 40 villages and farm settlements had been sacked by the invading herders with their Benue state collaborators (Sahara Reporters, 2022).

Some of the latest attacks and killings in Eha-Amufu occurred on the 8th, 9th, 18th, and 19th December 2022 after a truck that was claimed to be on transit along the Eha-Amufu-Nkalagu highway, conveying passengers and motorcycles, was flagged down by unknown men on December 7th, 2022 which led to a fracas between the unknown group and the truck driver and passengers that resulted to the killings of some the people and burning of the truck (Obi, 2022). Sadly, these latest attacks took place despite repeated assurances by the Governor of the state Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi and security chiefs that they would stop the massacre. They gave assurances during their visit after a similar massacre of the people on November 22, 2022 (Ofoma, 2022).

Consequently, the community blamed the Governor including the local government chairman, whom they said was playing politics with the lives of Eha-Amufu people because of the 2023 general elections. They accused the chairman of the Isi-Uzo local government area of playing politics with their lives by not supporting the local vigilantes and other local security to the extent that he dissolved all the local vigilantes formed by Eha-Amufu communities yet he hardly visits the affected communities (Ofoma, 2022). They further lamented and claimed that both the State government and the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the 82 Division of the Nigeria Army Enugu had been uncooperative in dealing with the attacks in Eha-Amufu communities (Obi, 2022). Even though Enugu hosts the headquarters of the 82 Division Nigerian Army which covers South East, South-South and Benue, the security situation in Eha-Amufu and the entire Enugu state has been appalling over the years (Ofoma, 2022).

Before the latest killings that occurred on the 8th of December 2022, the Governor had, on several occasions, summoned an emergency meeting involving all the stakeholders from the area. During such meetings, revelations were made and actions taken. Unfortunately, none of the actions have yielded the desired result. As soon as the residents return home,

the marauders Fulani herdsmen will strike again and leave the village bleeding (Sahara Reporters, 2022). It has become the practice that after such attacks, the authorities commiserate with the victims and vow that it will never happen again. Yet, experience has shown that it is only often a matter of time before it happens again (Obiezu, 2022).

These unending attacks forced the indigenes and residents of the Eha-Amufu communities to flee the entire town, leaving it desolate in December 2022. Although normalcy has relatively returned in the Eha-Amufu communities when this research was carried out in February 2023 with the constant unchecked attacks, the entire residents are under threat, including the staff and students of the Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, which has attracted some significant development both from the government, as well as private individuals in the area (Sahara Reporters, 2022). Therefore, this study intends to investigate the cause and effect of the rising insecurity in Eha-Amufu communities to proffer sustainable solutions to the issues.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To find out specifically the causes of rising insecurity in Eha-Amufu communities.
- ii. To examine the effects of insecurity on the socioeconomic activities in Eha-Amufu communities.
- iii. To proffer measures to curb the insecurity challenges in Eha-Amufu communities.

Research Questions

- i. What are the causes of insecurity in Eha-Amufu communities?
- ii. What are the effects of insecurity on socioeconomic activities in Eha-Amufu communities?
- iii. What are the possible solutions to the challenges of insecurity in Eha-Amufu communities?

Concepts of Security and Insecurity

Security has to do with the process connected with assuaging any kind of threat to people and their precious values. This is why Bodunde et al (2018) assert that security is about freedom from threat and the ability of states to maintain independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile while its bottom line is survival. From the foregoing, security is generally agreed to be about the feeling of being safe from harm, fear, anxiety, oppression, danger, poverty, defense, protection, and preservation of core values and threats to those values.

William (2018) equally submits that security is most commonly associated with the alleviation of threats to cherish values, especially those threats that threaten the survival of a particular reference object. In line with the above, it is stated that security has to do with freedom from danger or threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests, and enhance the well-being of its people. Thus internal security could be seen as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies,

that could undermine internal cohesion, the corporate existence of a country, and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people (Ogaba, 2017).

Security as a concept could also be applied in its broader sense to include economic security, social security, environmental security, food security, equality of life security, and technological security (Ochoche, 2017). Thus, Buzan (2019) gives a theoretical insight into the understanding of the concept of security and he identifies three levels of analysis which are the individual level, national level, and international level. He thinks that individual security which other scholars call personal security involves those values people seek to secure which include life, health, status, freedom, and wealth. One of the threats that persons endeavor to secure themselves from is what is referred to as social security. This captures physical threat, economic threat, and human rights abuse. Examples of these are pain, injury, death, seizure and destruction of properties, inaccessibility to work or resources for human sustenance, injustice, unjust imprisonment, and the denial of normal civil liberties as well as threats to human dignity.

Insecurity on the other hand can be seen as reverse of security. It is the state of being subject to danger or harm (Odalonu, 2022). It is the anxiety that is experienced when one feels vulnerable and insecure. Ezemonye (2017) affirms the above definition of insecurity as "a state of being not secure, lack of confidence". To enable us to understand this term, we now turn to the meaning of the word 'insecure' which the Advance English Dictionary defines as 'not confident about yourself or your relationships with other people; not safe or protected'. This definition further expounds the meaning of the term to include not just the general meaning but it touches the person "not being confident about oneself". To Beland (2005) insecurity is seen as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It refers to a lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This implies that insecurity is an absence of peace, order, and security.

Achumba, Ighomenho, & Akpor (2013) define insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threats of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury; Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk to anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. According to Ezemonye (2017) the phenomenon of 'insecurity' has been extended to cover other spheres like economic and political insecurity. However, in the context of this research, insecurity, whether historical, religious, ethnic-regional, civil, social, economic, or political contributes to recurring conflicts, and leads to the destruction of lives and property.

Theoretical Framework

Many theories suit this study. However, this study adopted Human Security Theory as the theoretical framework. Human security as defined by the United Nations, is "the protection

of individuals and communities from critical and pervasive threats to their rights, their safety, or their lives" (United Nations Development Programme, 1994). The concept of human security, which emphasizes the protection and well-being of individuals and communities, was popularized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the 1990s. The term gained prominence in the 1994 Human Development Report, titled "New Dimensions of Human Security," published by the UNDP.

Human security theory emphasizes the protection and empowerment of individuals and communities from a wide range of threats to their safety, well-being, and dignity. This approach expands the traditional focus on state security to encompass broader concerns such as economic security, health security, food security, and personal security. Human security theory emphasizes that insecurity, whether arising from conflicts, crime, or other sources, has profound implications for the lives of individuals and their communities.

Human security theory emphasizes the protection of individuals and communities from various threats, including violence, poverty, and disease. In the context of Eha-Amufu communities in the Isi-Uzo Local Government Area, this theory highlights the importance of safeguarding the safety, well-being, and dignity of residents, indigenes, and their means of livelihood which is farming. Consequently, human security theory underscores the need to protect and empower individuals and communities, from various threats, including insecurity. The theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of different dimensions of security and how insecurity can affect access to education, psychological well-being, and community resilience. In the context of this study, understanding and applying human security principles can help address the effects of insecurity on socio-economic activities in Eha-Amufu communities and promote a safer and better environment for indigenes and residents.

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Eha-Amufu Communities. Eha-Amufu is a town with nine autonomous communities headed by nine Igwes. Of these communities Agu-Amede, Mgbuji, Ebor, and Umujiovu share boundaries with Benue State. Thus, Eha-Amufu shares boundaries with Benue and Ebonyi States (Sahara Reporters, 2022). Eha-Amufu is comprised of the following villages: Isu, Agu-Amede, Amede, Ihenyi, Umuhu, Eboh, and Mgbiji (Nnaji, 2019).

Eha-Amufu communities houses the prestigious Federal College of Education with a spiraling students population and lecturers from every corner of Nigeria. Apart from the strategic location of the Federal College of Education, one central reason remarkable about Eha-Amufu is her central position and boundary situation. Eha-Amufu stands at the center of many communities; as a result, she has served as the gateway to different communities. She is bounded to Nkalaha, Agala, Ikem, Umuro, and other communities, including Obeagu. Aside from that, Eha-Amufu embodies the route that traces the way to the northern part of Nigeria for travelers traveling from the Ebonyi axis. Eha-Amufu also forms the remarkable boundary community between Enugu State and Ebonyi State (Nnaji, 2019).

Eha-Amufu, an agrarian community, has a population of over 70,000, with a larger portion of the residents' dependent on farming for their survival (Sahara Reporters, 2022). Economically, Eha-Amufu town is predominantly rural and agrarian; with a substantial proportion of its working population engaged in farming, although trading and service are also important. Agriculture plays an important role in the communities' economy; yam, oil palm products, corn, rice, and cassava are the main crops (Ezeh, 2006). The Eha-Amufu 'Eke Market' attracts traders from all over the eastern states and beyond. The cash crops, tubers of yams, cassava, palm oil, and the abundance of grass cutters and other animals made the town the cynosure of all eyes.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. 300 respondents were randomly selected from three communities in Eha-Amufu (Agu-Amede, Ebor, and Mgbuji) that have been constantly attacked by herdsmen. The respondents selected cut across different spectrums of life (farmers, traders, public servants, and students). Interviews and questionnaires were used to elicit information from the respondents. The four-point Likert scale questionnaire was adopted for this study. A total number of three hundred (300) copies of questionnaires were administered to the respondents while 280 of the questionnaires were properly filled and retrieved. Thus, the responses from the retrieved questionnaires were used to analyze the quantitative data for the study. The data collected were analyzed with descriptive statistics tools such as frequency table, simple percentage, and mean score. Nine (9) key informants were purposely selected and interviewed for the study. The data generated through interviews were transcribed and content analyzed.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Responses were graded on a 4-point Likert scale with Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The responses obtained were analyzed to obtain the mean response to each item. The cutoff point was the mean of the cumulative point 1-4, which was calculated as 2.5.

Research Question One: What are the causes of insecurity in Eha-Amufu Communities?

Table 1. The Causes of Insecurity in Eha-Amufu Communities

S/N	ITEMS/STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean x	Decision
1	Boundary Disputes	190	30	20	40	280	3.3	Accept
2	Farmers-Herders clashes	120	90	40	30	280	3.1	Accept
3	Unemployment	90	80	50	60	280	2.7	Accept
4	Inadequate deployment of security personnel to the rural communities	150	55	30	45	280	3.1	Accept
5	Politically motivated killings by politicians.	160	75	40	65	280	2.7	Accept

Source: Fieldwork 2023

The table above reveals the causes of insecurity in the Isi-Uzo Local Government Area, and they are as follows: Boundary Disputes ($x = 3.3$), farmers-herders clashes ($x=3.1$), unemployment ($x=2.7$), inadequate deployment of security personnel to the rural communities ($x = 3.1$), politically motivated killings by politicians (2.7). All the statements were accepted as the causes of insecurity in the Isi-Uzo Local Government Area.

These findings are in line with the qualitative information obtained from key informant interviews. In an interview with key informants on the causes of insecurity in Eha-amufu, the following excerpts were obtained:

"The issue of the boundary between the people of Isi-Uzo and Benue can be traced back to Nigeria civil war in 1966-1970, when the federal troops redrawn the map of Nigeria which earlier indicated Ahube river as the boundary to now be Ebor river, thereby resulting to conflict between the people of Urukpa, Igumale, and Igala from Benue axis and the people of Agu-Amede and Ebor/Mgbuji from Isi-Uzo axis, because of Uranium (mineral deposit) which was discovered at Degema where the boundary is situated/located. The people of Urukpa, Igumale, and Igala from the Benue axis said the land belongs to them while the people of Agu-Amede and Ebor/Mgbuji from Isi-Uzo also said the land is theirs. In a quest on who owns the land, the people of Benue invited the Fulanis to help them and make the land theirs, and in a bid to get the land, the Fulanis attacked the people of Agu-Amede and Ebor/Mgbuji living on the farm settlement, to instill fear on the people and scare them away from the land. But the people of Agu-Amede and Ebor/Mgbuji on the other hand, refused to give up on the ground that the land is theirs. Because there is no law or police to stop them from encroaching on people's farmlands, Fulani herdsmen entered through the Benue route to the farm settlement of the people of Ebor/Mgbuji with their cattle, not only that they trespass but they also destroyed and ate the people's farm crops. The people out of anger and frustration launched an attack on them and asked them to depart from their farmland, the herders went and invited their killer squads in collaboration with the youths of Benue to besiege the villages, killings and maiming" (Key informant at Ebor/Mgbuji community, Eha-Amufu, February 2023).

Another key informant had a contrary view as regards the recent attacks and killings in Eha-Amufu communities. According to him:

"It was alleged that the incessant killings in Eha-Amufu communities (precisely Mgbuji community) were politically inclined by politicians from the opposition parties because of Barr. Chijioke Edeoga, who is a native of Mgbuji in Eha-Amufu communities, moved from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to Labour Party (LP) to contest for the 2023 gubernatorial election, so as a result of his political aspiration, some people were paid to threaten and attack his people to bring him down and discourage the electorates from voting him in" (Key informant at Ebor/Mgbuji community, Eha-Amufu, February 2023).

Research Question Two: What are the effects of insecurity on socio-economic activities in Eha-Amufu Communities?

Table 2. The Effect of Insecurity on Socio-Economic Activities in Eha-Amufu Communities

S/N	ITEMS/STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SA	Total	Mean x	Decision
1	Loss of lives and properties	200	63	10	7	280	3.6	Accept
2	Starvation/hunger	175	65	25	15	280	3.4	Accept
3	Displacement of people	160	70	20	20	280	3.3	Accept
4	Loss of means of livelihood	130	90	30	20	280	3.1	Accept
5	Untold Hardship	180	50	10	30	280	3.3	Accept

Source: Fieldwork 2023

The table above reveals the effects of insecurity on the socio-economic activities in Eha-Amufu Communities, and they are as follows: Loss of lives and properties ($x = 3.6$), starvation/hunger ($x=3.4$), displacement of people ($x=3.3$), loss of means of livelihood ($x=3.1$) and untold Hardship ($x=3.3$). This shows that all the statements in the table were accepted as the effects of insecurity on the socio-economic activities in Eha-Amufu communities.

In an interview with key informants on the effect of incessant attacks in Eha-Amufu communities, the following excerpts were noted:

"The clash between the people and the herders claimed many lives and a lot of property was lost. Many people lose their loved ones such as spouses, parents, children, family friends, and other people that are significant to them. A lot of farmers died in an attempt to prevent the herders from grazing their cattle on their farmlands. The brutal attacks made those living in the farm settlement run and abandon their houses and farms. The people depend a great deal on their farming activities to sustain themselves and their families, they consume part of their agricultural produce and sell the rest to generate income to solve other problems but the crisis, has caused disarray in the people's way of living and thwarted their agricultural output, thereby resulting to hunger and starvation in the land since the people no longer have enough food to eat, let alone sell because the people's farm crops were destroyed and farmlands were also occupied by the herders and their cattle. So, there was no room for the people to cultivate and harvest the cultivated crops. Everybody is afraid of going to their farms due to fear of being attacked or killed by the herders, who habitually stay in bushes around the farms grazing their cattle"(Key informant at Ebor/Mgbuji communities in Eha-Amufu, February 2023).

Another key informant stated thus:

"The feelings of insecurity among our people were heightened as the herders not only attacked at the farm settlement but also at home. The killer herders ransacked the community and set houses and farms on fire. 14 villages in Ebor/Mgbuji and Agu-Amede communities were sacked forcing thousands of people to become internally displaced. People fled their homes, so many of them ran to neighboring communities in Ebonyi state and some to Enugu capital, while so many are been forced into internally displaced person's abodes. Some were displaced at Umualor, Ikem, Ugwuogo, Obollo, Nkalagu and Nsukka. The Federal College of Education was deserted as students and lecturers ran for their lives. The hunger rate was unimaginable as

shops were under lock, markets were shut down, nowhere to purchase foodstuff. The price of things increased, for instance, the price of fuel rose to 700-1000 per litre, transportation from Eha-Amufu to Enugu 4000-5000, to Umualor 1500-2000, to Nsukka 4000, to Obollo 3000"(Key informant at Ebor/Mgbuji communities in Eha-Amufu, February 2023).

Research Question Three: What are the possible solutions to the challenges of insecurity in Eha-Amufu Communities?

Table 3. Possible Solutions to Challenges of Insecurity in Eha-Amufu Communities.

S/N	ITEMS/STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SA	Total	Mean x	Decision
1	Peaceful settlement and demarcation of boundary by National Boundary Commission.	180	80	11	9	280	3.5	Accept
2	Enactment of laws to guide grazing	120	105	30	25	280	3.1	Accept
3	Provision of adequate employment	120	90	33	13	280	2.9	Accept
4	Adequate deployment of security personnel to rural communities	150	90	25	15	280	3.3	Accept
5	Rebuilding of destroyed houses in the locality	90	70	65	55	280	2.6	Accept

Source: Fieldwork 2023

The above table reveals possible solutions to the challenges of insecurity in Eha-Amufu Communities as follows: peaceful settlement and demarcation of boundary by the National Boundary Commission ($x=3.5$), enactment of laws to guide grazing ($x=3.1$), provision of adequate employment ($x = 2.9$), adequate deployment of security personnel to the rural communities ($x=3.3$), rebuilding of destroyed houses in the locality ($x=2.6$). This shows that all the statements in the table were accepted as possible solutions to the challenges of insecurity in the Isi-Uzo Local Government Area. These findings are in line with the qualitative information obtained from key informant interviews below.

Excerpt from a key informant interview:

"Since Uranium is a mineral with international interest and the boundary disputes a national interest, the National Boundary Commission responsible for boundary demarcations should come to the people's aid and peacefully settle the boundary issue between the people of Isi-Uzo and Benue. The State Government should enact laws to guide grazing in the whole of Enugu state in its entirety. The law should help specify what the herders should and should not do and strictly restrict the herders to grazing in bushes and not on farms. If policies already exist in this regard, efforts should be made to ensure they are duly implemented" (Key informant at Ebor Mgbuji community, Eha-Amufu, February 2023)

Excerpt from another key informant:

"The life of the people is of great importance more than any other thing, hence, the government of Enugu state should deploy security personnel to the rural community, to safeguard the lives

of the people. The government should also compensate those families that their members were killed and rebuild the houses that were burnt down in the course of the crisis" (Key informant at Ebor Mgbuji community, Eha-Amufu, February 2023).

In line with key informant interviews on the remedy to incessant attacks and killings in Eha-Amufu communities, Obi (2022) recommended that Federal Government should quickly mandate the National Boundary Commission and other relevant authorities to visit Eha-Amufu and resolve once and for all the subsisting land issues between Eha-Amufu and the Benue communities on one hand, and between the Fulani herdsman and Eha-Amufu people on the other (Obi, 2022).

Discussion of Findings

The data in Table 1 revealed that the causes of insecurity in Eha-Amufu Communities were boundary disputes, farmers-herders clashes, politically motivated killings by politicians, and inadequate deployment of security personnel to the rural area. The data in Table 2 revealed that the insecurity in Eha-Amufu Communities has affected the socio-economic activities of the people in diverse ways, which has resulted in loss of lives and properties, starvation/hunger, displacement of people, loss of means of livelihood, and untold hardship. Findings in this study also collaborated with the work of Tanji & Nwatu (2021) on the effect of farmers-herders clashes on farming communities in the Nkanu East Local Government Area. The study seeks to unravel how the herders/farmers crisis has impacted farming communities in Nkanu East Local Government Area. The study found that the herders/farmers clash has claimed lives and wasted properties and thwarted the agricultural output, which resulted in hunger and starvation in the land.

As reported by the Sahara Reporter (2022), one of the lucky survivors of the December 8, 2022, gruesome and vicious attack on the Ebor community, Eha-Amufu in Isi-Uzu local government area of Enugu State by armed Fulani herdsman with their collaborators from Agala, Benue State, Mrs Nkechi Ebeh, a mother of five children lamented that:

"Her husband, Friday Ebeh, and 24 other people, all males were massacred in their houses during the early morning attacks on December 8, 2022. On the identity of those who attacked them, Nkechi Ebeh said that they were Fulani herders, together with the Agala people of Benue State. The attackers spoke a different language than the people in Ebor, but they could understand the language of the Agala people because they lived nearby" (Sahara Reporters, 2022).

Another resident of the Ebor community Mr. Chukwudi Omeri while giving an insight into the December 8 invasion, revealed that about 10 people were killed in Ama-Obelebe village, including his brother, Mr. Friday Omeri, a father of nine. Lamenting the brutal murder of his people, Chukwudi said that:

"One morning at 6 am, we heard loud noises that sounded like guns being shot. At first, we thought it was the police or army shooting, but then we realized it was a group of people wearing all-black clothes. They came into our community through the fields where we grow crops. I saw some of the people looked like the herders from the Fulani group, and others looked

like people from a neighboring community called Agala in Benue State. I knew they were from Benue State because I recognized their language and some of their faces from when they come to our markets to sell things" (Sahara Reporters, 2022).

As reported by Sahara Reporters (2022) another eyewitness, Mr. Anthony Onunze, a 60-year-old man, revealed that the crisis started from the farm settlements where the members of the community were killed by Fulani herders. He lamented that:

"The latest crisis started on January 6, 2022, when the Fulani herders started killing their people. Since then, no one has gone to the farm again. And this has brought hunger and hardship to the people. He stated that the attack on 8th December 2022, led to the death of 25 persons in Abor village. The victims were all men as the attackers never killed any woman during the attack. The aged men were not left in the attack as my aged mate's lifeless bodies were discovered and buried on Monday the 12th of December, 2022. He further complained that they have not done anything to warrant these mindless killings and they don't have any issue with the Fulani herdsmen except that they want to chase them away from their ancestral land. He equally alleged the attackers were assisted by the Agala people of Benue State. The Agala people have common boundaries with the Eha-Amufu community, which may be what has necessitated the rift between the two communities" (Sahara Reporters, 2022).

The data in Table 3 shows some of the measures that can be adopted to resolve the security challenges in Eha-Amufu communities which include: peaceful settlement and demarcation of boundary by the National Boundary Commission, enactment of laws to guide grazing, adequate provision of employment, adequate deployment of security personnel to the rural communities and rebuilding of destroyed houses in the locality.

As reported by Ofoma (2022) after the attacks that took place in December 2022, a member of the Eha-Amufu community lamented that:

"Agala people from Benue State have teamed up with armed herdsmen to attack and kill our people almost daily. They have taken over many villages and destroyed everything. Our leaders in Enugu State are not taking this situation seriously and are only concerned about politics. The governor of Enugu State needs to take strong action and stop making the situation political. Since October 2022, we haven't seen any policemen around here. The only time we saw them was when the Commissioner of Police came to see the damage caused by the incessant herdsmen attacks. But when he goes back to Enugu, he tells lies about what happened. We were told that there were special police teams sent to Eha-Amufu, but up till now, we haven't seen them. The governments need to urgently deploy security agencies to protect us here, or else these herdsmen will finish us" (Ofoma, 2022).

The findings have shown that boundary disputes, farmers-herders clashes, inadequate deployment of security personnel to the rural communities, and politically motivated killings by politicians, are the causes of insecurity in Eha-Amufu communities. These have led to the loss of lives and properties, reduction in food production, displacement of people, loss of means of livelihood, and untold hardship which have invariably affected the socio-economic activities in Eha-Amufu communities. The study has also revealed that the following measures can be adopted to mitigate the insecurity situations in Eha-Amufu

communities: peaceful settlement and demarcation of boundaries by the National Boundary Commission, enactment of laws to guide grazing, adequate deployment of security personnel to the rural communities and rebuilding of destroyed houses in the locality.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the effect of rising insecurity in Eha-Amufu communities in the Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State. In recent times, there have been attacks and killings of Eha-Amufu people in their farm settlements and burning of their houses. This has led to tension and panic in the communities. Thus, this study was carried out to decipher the causes, effects, and possible solutions to the issues involved. The findings have shown several causes of the crisis which led to the destruction of lives, properties, and crops in the farm settlements. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. The Federal Government should quickly mandate the National Boundary Commission and other relevant authorities to visit Eha-Amufu and resolve all the subsisting land issues between Eha-Amufu and the Benue communities.
2. The Federal and State Governments should initiate a mechanism of peaceful settlement of disputes between the herdsmen and the people of the Eha-Amufu communities
3. The government should urgently declare a security emergency in Eha-Amufu, especially in Ebor, Mgbuji, and Agu-Amede communities that have been persistently attacked by the armed herdsmen
4. The government should deploy more security personnel to the Eha-Amufu rural communities for prompt and adequate security of the people and their properties.
5. Law enforcement agencies should investigate to unravel the alleged involvement of politicians in the recent killings before the 2023 general elections.
6. The government should rebuild those homes that were destroyed and endeavor to resettle those who were displaced during the invasions.

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