

ISLAM AND ETHNICITY: THE CASE STUDY OF OMBATSE CRISIS 2011-2015 IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the activities of the Ombatse cult group and the violent conflicts that occurred as a result of their activities which took place in some parts of Nasarawa State from 2011 – 2015. The aim of the study is to portray how Islam is against ethnic bigotry. It also intends solutions based on Islamic teachings on how to resolve disputes especially which is ethnically related. It also discussed its effects on Islam and Muslims in the State. The paper found out that peace is one of the basic tools for the development of any society, as Islam encourages peaceful co-existence among/between Muslims and non- Muslims as well as co-existence among other ethnic nationalities as Islam prohibits ethnicity and nationalism. Therefore, the paper further revealed that the major actors who participated in the crises were predominately Muslim youths from the ethnic groups involved in the violent conflict. The research also unveils the context and undertone which precipitated establishment and those who financed activities of Ombatse group in the areas studied. Regarding methodology, this study utilizes a qualitative technique. In-Depth Interviews (IDI) were conducted to obtain data for the study. The study concludes that some Muslim who are ignorant of the basic tenets of Islam were easily brainwashed to show allegiance to their ethnic identity than Islam. The Ombatse mobilized support along ethnic consciousness in order to achieve hidden political motives of those who initiated the cult group.

Keywords: *Islam; Ethnicity; Ombatse; Crises; Nasarawa State*

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1. Introduction

In everyday life, there appear to be a rise in poverty, crimes, war and hatred, both within a community or society, and between societies and cultures. Often, religion and ethnicity has been misused as a vehicle to instigate such events even though the issues at hand have had nothing whatsoever to do with religious and ethnic ideology. Peace is the ultimate goal of every society that must be promoted and sustained. Therefore, there is the need for every surviving individual to play his/her role in peacebuilding and provide a conducive atmosphere in the environment he/she lives. Nasarawa state is a multi-ethnic state, with

people of different diversities. Among the tribes that make the state are Eggon, Rindere, Madan kasa, Gbagie, Alago, Gwandara, Hausa, Fulani etc. and they have been staying in peace with one another until recent times when misunderstanding, like a communal crisis, begin to emanate from them, particularly, political sentiments.

Islam literally means peace and happiness of here and hereafter (M'aluf, 1976). It is the only revealed religion accepted by Allah, the creator of whole universe. By the revelation, the Glorious Qur'an guides all the acts of mankind, even from the personal deeds to the international conducts. Hence, the unavoidable conflict and consequently the notion of peace are also directed in Islam (Mustafa Monjur, 2011).

The Eggon people are one of the major tribes found in Nasarawa state and according to Allu Maga, they claim majority and the most educated people, they are people that have been known of being patient, peaceful and keeping relationship with other tribes (Allu Maga, 2015). Their indigenous belief was "Ashim cult" traditional ancestral beliefs. But unfortunately, the Eggon people started having problems with some others tribes in the state communally and politically. For instance, during the reign Alhaji Abdullahi Idde, paramount Chief of the Eggon there were boundary adjustment disputes between the Eggon people and Madan kasa in Akwanga axis. And the most serious one that almost resulted to taking arms was between the Eggon and Lafia people particularly, in areas like Arugbadun Gona/Arikya communities which are occupied by Eggon people and closer to Nassarawa Eggon Local Government Area in terms of proximity than Lafia, but were merged with Lafia Local Government without taking into consideration the distance, linguistic and cultural differences with the people of Lafia.

It is against this backdrop that this paper placed the activities of the Ombatse within the context of Islam and analyzes it. In doing so, relevant *Qur'anic* verses and prophetic traditions were consulted as a guide. Almighty Allah says in *al-Hujurat* verse 13:

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

Jubair ibn Mut'im reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

He is not one of us who calls to tribalism. He is not one of us who fights for the sake of tribalism. He is not one of us who dies following the way of tribalism (Sunan Abi Dāwūd 5102).

It could be deduced from the above, the activities of the Ombatse cult is against the tenets of Islam which is regarded as shirk, and Islam strongly warn Muslim from engaging in any activity under whatsoever circumstance that amount to *shirk*.

2. Emergence of Islam to the Eggon People

According to the views of some Eggon elders, Islam infiltrated into the Eggon land through late Bashayi Yamusa, a son to the former Emir of Keffi through the influence of his mother who was an Eggon woman married to late Emir of Keffi Yamusa. Bashayi was appointed by the colonial administrator to rule the Eggon people in 1920 and his palace was built at Akwanga, and he came along with some Hausa traders, miners and *Mallams*, the Eggon people could not accept Islam until much later around 1945, and the first Mosque was established in a place called *Burgi* in Alogani in 1945 (Envuladu, 2014).

According to Muhammad Affoya (2015) who said, among the early people who accepted Islam was the wife of late Bashayi Yamusa of Keffi and Alhaji Abdullahi Idde who was also taken to Keffi to acquire Islamic and western education between the years 1922-1928. And he was the first indigenous traditional paramount chief who was selected as the chief of Eggon chiefdom at a village called Gako in 1953 (Affoya, 2015).

2.1 The Meaning of Ombatse in Eggon Dialect

According to Haruna Musa (Ziko) (2015) who said; *Ombatse* means “it is time for the Eggon people to come together as one entity,” while to Baba Alakio *Ombatse* means “it is time” for the Eggon people to gain their freedom from bondage of ill-treatments and their political powers in the state, because the Eggon ancestor has called through the shrine of *Azhili* that “it is time”.

According to Baba Alakio, the thought of *Ombatse* was initiated by some few Eggon people like Shuibu Gwamnati Kantsakuwa, Muhammadu Akwala Lafia and Amos Agbu otsa. *Ombatse* started with a small group of Eggon people who stands to create awareness for the Eggon people to wake up from their slumber to come together and fight for their right so as to actualize their high expectations in the state (Baba Alakio, 2014). The *Ombatse* group was united at its formation in 2007 with one Haruna Musa (Ziko Kigbu) as the chairman which Bukan Sidi, Lafia was the headquarters. The leaders of the *Ombatse* cult group bought a piece of land at a village called Alogani North, Nasarawa Eggon in 2012 and decided to relocate their activities to the new site (Baba Alakio, 2014).

2.2. The Activities of Ombatse Group

Ombatse is a group that has it laid down rules and conditions just as other groups. Except it is not a registered organization with the government and its activities may also differ from that of others in one way or the other. According to Haruna Musa Kigbu (Ziko) (2015) the chairman of *Ombatse* group, the activities of *Ombatse* is based on the Eggon tradition and culture, such as:

- Creating awareness for the Eggon people to uphold their cultural heritage
- They organize meetings where major issues concerning Eggon ethnic group discussed.
- Converting and initiating interested Eggon people into the cult
- Administering of oath to any interested person who wants to become a member.
- Visiting the shrine of *Azhili* (god) at the hill-top of the *Akun Eggon* (Eggon Hill) on the fixed dates.
- Attending weekly meetings in the shrine at Alogani North, a village located in the outskirts of Nassarawa Eggon town.
- Buying and selling of traditional herbal medicines to sick people and charms for protections like (charms, Amulet, Rings, wave caps, smokes “*Ozho*”, charmed vest, powders “*Ommuh*” etc.) and also providing favors for their members of *Ombatse* group as well.
- The brave members of the group to sacrifice their lives during war expedition in defence of Eggon tribes whenever there is an attack on Eggon villages and settlements anywhere in the State.
- They fixed some dates for celebration to thank the ancestor of *Azhili* (the custodians of the shrine) in appreciation of favour and success recorded and achieved especially after war with another ethnic group.

- They punish or detain any Eggon person allegedly accused of committing a grievous offence that contravenes the oath of the cult.

Furthermore, it may be interesting to state that Ombatse group was initially established as one Eggon spiritual group headed by Mr. Haruna Musa Kigbu, with their headquarters at Bukan Sidi in Lafia local government area. Later the shrine was relocated to Alogani in Nasarawa Eggon in 2012 and it was conditioned that all active and interesting members should attend its meeting every Saturday. Some few months later, the joint security forces invaded the Ombatse shrine at Alogani on 17th September, 2012 which the Ombatse members claimed that the unholy mission of the security men was intercepted by their gods (*Azhili*) after indiscriminate gunshots (Yusuf, 2012).

In fact, after the incidence of Alogani, Ombatse activities gained more popularity where it attracts large number of Eggon people who convincingly believe that initiation into Ombatse spiritual cult gives protections from bullet and other harmful things. Which the spiritual group uses to generate about one million naira (₦1, 000, 000) cash every Saturday of their meetings. As Ombatse group was generating more revenue, the group splits into two due to economic and political struggle (the Bukan Sidi group who are holding their spiritual meetings at the shrine of Alogani, while the other group moved their meetings to Alakio village. The Bukan Sidi group was headed by Mr. Haruna Musa Kigbu while the Alakio group was headed by Shuaibu Gwamnati with Baba Alakioas the chief priest. Attempts were made to reconcile the two groups but proved abortive, to a stage when leaders of two groups were invited to the palace of the *Aren Eggon* (the paramount chief) to reconcile them, but the misunderstanding could not end because they still operate separately (Yusuf Ido, 2015).

According Shuaibu Gwamnati (2014), the Alakio group was more populous than the Bukan Sidi group, and the operations of Alakio group was more functional and dangerous because they detained and even forced Eggon who are not Ombatse members take oath of initiation against their will else face persecution. It is as a result of the forceful initiation, a report was brought to the palace of the *Aren Eggon* (The Chief of the Eggon People) on 9th March, 2013 where Mr. Haruna Musa Kigbu and Baba Alakio were invited and cautioned, unfortunately, both leaders denied the allegations.

Later the State Government received series of complaint from the state Christian Association of Nigeria and Jama'atu Nasrul Islam, that two of their Reverend Fathers (Evangelists) and *Ulamahs* were forcefully taken to Alakio village and took the oath of initiation against their will. In that connection, His Excellency the Governor Umaru Tanko Al-Makura directed the Emir of Lafia, Alhaji (Dr) Mustafa Agwai I immediately summoned Baba Alakio for cautioning. Unfortunately, the governor received a replied that Baba Alakio dishonored the invitation. Therefore, the State Government was left with no option than to direct the security operatives to forcefully bring Baba Alakio which led to the botched operation that resulted in killing of security personnel in Alakioon 7th May, 2013. The tragic operation in attempt to bring the Chief Priest of Ombatse from Alakio village sent 74 security personnel to their early graves.

3. Muslims Participation in Ombatse Cult

The Eggon people who have been known for their traditional beliefs before the coming of Islam and Christianity in their midst, but some still adhere to their traditional beliefs, despite being converted to Islam or Christianity. On the participation of Muslims in Ombatse activities is something that is quite disheartening, because when Ombatse cultermerged in Eggon land, it was practised by only a few Eggon people who were the pioneers but later being practised by many.

At the initial stage, only a few Muslims and Christians were initiated into the *Ombatse* cult because its conditions contravene the teachings of Islam, specifically giving allegiance to another god beside Allah. But when the shrine of *Ombatse* was relocated from Bukan Sidi Lafia to a place called Alogani in Nassarawa Eggon, it gained more members, particularly, when joint security team invaded the shrine at Alogani in 2012 and members of cult claimed that there were indiscriminate gunshots by the security men and no bullet penetrated or injured any member of the cult due to the effectiveness of their charms. (Yusufu Ido, 2015).

Similarly, another factor that attracted Eggon Muslims and Christians into the *Ombatse* cult was the killing of about 74 security personnel at Alakio Village of Lafia East, on 7th May 2013. This event repositioned the *Ombatse* group strategically because it raised the interest of the majority of unfaithful Eggon people in general and Muslims in particular, to be initiated into the *Ombatse* cult, for fears that the government could take action. And some Muslims were ignorantly initiated into the cult so that they can be protected by the charms.

The above-mentioned events among others are the main reason why *Ombatse* gain more supports particularly among the ignorant Muslims. The participation of Muslims in *Ombatse* cult is alarming because the number of Muslims in *Ombatse* is higher above that of the Christians and the traditionalist. In fact, many Eggon Muslims participated in the activities of *Ombatse* either directly or indirectly, because if one is not a full member who took the *Ashim* (swearing with the Horn of cow or Ram). He may believe in its charms and will be buying it for his personal use. Some Muslims polluted the faith of their children by taking them to *Ombatse* shrine for initiation willingly or unwillingly (Zakari Idde, 2015).

Memorandums were presented by different Chiefdoms in Nassarawa State like the Mighili of Jenkwe, Alago of Assakio, Tiv, Gwandara of Giza/Kwandare, Lafia Emirate Council, and the State Government all indicted the *Ombatse* group. The Nasarawa State have Gazetted a document proscribing *Ombatse*'s activities in the state. It stated that - Nasarawa State of Nigeria; Gazette published by Authority. No: 4 Lafia -29th November 2012. Vol.1. 15, Nasarawa State Notice No: 4, of 2012.

4. Islam and Conflict Resolution

From a social science perspective, examining some of the presuppositions inherent in major cultural systems may thus reveal how they might affect the attitude to conflict resolution in their pre-critical state. Thus if we compare Islam and Christianity for example, we find the latter advocating peace as a paramount value, even at the expense of justice. The former, however, advocates the sacrifice of peace to justice (Abdelwahab, 1993).

The Islamic precepts are meant to maintain peaceful, healthy, meaningful relationships with Allah and with all of the humanity. This relationship is disrupted by conflicts, whether interpersonal, communal, national or international. Its restoration is essential for the sake of fairness and justice. Peace-building efforts work towards preventing an escalation of conflict and establishing a durable and self-sustaining peace.

The basic Islamic principles regarding human relations condemned all forms of aggression and recommended fighting back only when attacked. Once hostility had been repelled and its causes eliminated, peace should immediately prevail (Abdelwahab, 1993). Peace is intimately tied with justice in its Islamic understanding. Here are some relevant verses from the Glorious Quran (*al-Ma'idah* verse 8) addressed to the Islamic community:

O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do.

Islam's view of war is that it is a necessary evil to be resorted to only when it is absolutely unavoidable. The purpose of war in Islam is the establishment of peace and freedom, if these can be achieved without resorting to war, then there is no need for war. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said in a Hadith:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " لَا تَمْتَنُوا لِقَاءَ الْعَدُوِّ فَإِذَا لَقَيْتُمُوهُمْ فَاصْبِرُوا "

(Muslim, No. 1741).

It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Harayra that the Messenger of Allah (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Do not desire an encounter with the enemy; but when you encounter them, be firm.

Therefore, Islam makes provisions for avoiding war, minimizing its effects if it unavoidably occurs and ending it as soon as possible. These provisions are based on agreement between Muslims and their enemy to be strictly adhered to by both sides. Islam seriously warns its followers against breaking agreements or acting in a treacherous manner towards their enemy. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

No people would break a treaty except that Allah has made their enemy to prevail over them (Imam Malik, nd.).

One of the said provisions is *aman*, or protection, which is the suspension of the legality to kill an enemy, enslave him or take his property. The purpose of *aman* is to make possible dialogue between warring nations and enhance communication by allowing a free flow of ideas and views (Labdo, 1998). This provision will offer warring sides an opportunity to interact in an atmosphere of mutual trust, talk to each other and, hopefully, reach a peaceful settlement of their dispute.

Sulh, or peace treaty, is another avenue for peace created by Islam in order to give a chance for negotiation and dialogue for peaceful resolution of conflicts. It means an agreement reached between warring factions for peace either permanently or for a very long period. All people under the above three categories of agreements are guaranteed freedom of faith and protection of their lives, honour and property. Even after the start of a war, Islam leaves wide-open channels for negotiation and eventual peace. The provision of *muhadannah*, or truce, is meant to serve this purpose.

Even before the dawn of his prophetic mission, Muhammad, peace be upon him, had displayed great diplomatic ability and capacity to resolve disputes peacefully and affect reconciliation between mutually antagonistic people. A notable example is the serious dispute which broke out between Arab chieftains when the Quraish leaders rebuilt the holy sanctuary of Ka'ba. The dispute arose as a result of disagreement on who among the Arab tribal leaders would have the honour of putting the black stone (*Hajar al-Aswad*) in its place. The dispute was so serious that war seemed imminent. The Prophet, who was then a young man of 35, was able to solve this stalemate to the satisfaction of all when he placed the stone on his garment and asked each tribal leader to hold a tip of the garment and they carried it together. On reaching its designated location, he lifted the stone with his own

hands and put it in place. Thus, he cleared a potentially explosive situation which could have degenerated into a bloody war with devastating consequences (Ibn Kathir, nd.).

Another important example is the famous treaty of Hudaibiyyah, in the 6th year after *Hijra*. The Prophet had gone to Mecca with his companions intending to perform *Umrah* (the lesser Hajj). Meccan authorities thought that he had come to conquer the city and they made preparations for war. Tempers flared when the Muslims realized that the pagan Quraish leaders would not allow them to enter the city and observe their rites. There were heated negotiations which resulted in a treaty that was unfair to Muslims because it imposed unfavourable conditions on them. Tensions rose high and danger was imminent but for the great restraint and statesmanship showed by the Prophet who was able to persuade the Muslims to accept the treaty. This treaty later proved to be a great victory for Islam (Ibn Kathir, nd.).

Successive generations of Muslim leaders followed the Prophet's example. This became an established norm and was incorporated into the Shari'ah. Throughout Islamic history, beginning with the time of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, through the middle ages and down to the modern era, Muslims consistently championed the cause of peace and opposed military adventure. They always preferred negotiations and peaceful settlement of disputes (Siraj, 2014). One should exercise compassion and forgive others who have done him harm, and move away from greed, egocentricity, crass materialism, and harming others and work to live peacefully in cooperation with each other (Siraj, 2014).

A settlement could include a financial compensation, b. Service to the family, c. Service to the community, and specific gestures of sympathy, or public demonstration of reconciliation. These procedures and relevant structures need be revived and further developed utilizing all possible modern techniques. Islam presents a complete solution to the problem of compliance with safety and security regulations through ethical and spiritual instructions and concern about the Hereafter. Legal provisions without moral support often fail to make people behave in responsible way all the time (Amir, 2018). According to an Islamic approach every evil and wrong doing cannot be dispelled through the threat of punishment in this world, unless and until man bears the fear of the violation of the commands of Allah Almighty and accountability on the Day of Judgement.

5. Islamic Solution to Ombatse Crisis

To proffer Islamic solution to Ombatse crisis in Nasarawa state, it will be good to briefly review the belief and activities of Ombatse group and as well state the position of Islam respectively.

Ombatse according to Baba Alakio, the Ombatse chief priest, who said the word Ombatse is an Eggon dialect means "it is time" and Ombatse was established based on Eggon traditional belief. This is because it was an idea received from the call of the Eggon shrine of *Azhili*, which the Eggon traditionalist respected it as their consulting shrine, where they seek favor or protection from. Some Eggon Muslims ignorantly believe in Ombatse because, they said it is their ancestral belief which is from *Azhili* and *Ashim*, and many Muslims are initiated into the belief against the teachings of Islam. According to Qur'an and Hadith. The above beliefs of Ombatase group, contradicted the Islamic creed and belief, because Islam is a religion of monotheism. Therefore, the position of Islam on the above-mentioned beliefs which is shirk, Allah enjoin Muslims to believe in Him alone as the Supreme and Everlasting Being (Allah). Allah says in *sura al-Ikhlās* verses 1 to 4;

Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, Nor is there to Him any equivalent."

Again, Almighty Allah says in *sura al-Baqarah* verse 163:

And your God (Allah) is One God, There is no deity [worth y of worship] except Him, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

Almighty Allah also says in *sura al-Nisa'* verse 36:

Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, Orphans, the needy, the near neighbour, the neighbour farther away, the companion at your side, the traveller, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful.

Again, the *Ombatse* member's belief that one can only be an active member if he is initiated through swearing in with the Eggon traditional decorated animal horn called *Ashim*, and this mode of initiation also contradict the teaching of Islam. Allah says in *sura al-Nahl* verse 36:

And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, (saying), "Worship Allah and avoid Taghut." And among them were those whom Allah guided, and among them were those upon whom error was ([deservedly] decreed. So proceed through the earth and observe how was the end of the deniers.

With the above quoted verses, it is clearly stated that Muslims should believe in Allah alone and there is no deity worth of worship except Allah. Therefore, worshipping anything other than Allah is *shirk*. In regards to associating partner with Allah, some *hadith* were quoted as follows:

On the authority of Jaabir (RA) said; I heard the messenger of Allah said:

Whoever meets Allah (on the Day of Judgment) without having associated anything with Him will enter paradise, and whoever meets Him having associated anything with Him will enter the hellfire. (Muslim, Hadith No. 143).

The *Ombatse* members put on charms, Rings, amulets etc. for protections, which is against Islam. Because there are prophetic injunctions that prohibit that, In a tradition narrated by *Uqbah ibn Amir*, who said, I heard the messenger of Allah said;

If anyone wears an amulet, may Allah not help him in fulfilling his wish. If anyone wears a sea-shell around his neck, may Allah give him no peace (Ahmad, Hadith No.1759).

In fact, Islam through the course of its history has granted the people of other faiths the highest degree of tolerance by allowing them to follow their way, although some of their practices might have been in conflict with the religion. It was this degree of tolerance that the Muslims adopted towards their non-Muslim citizens (Abdullah, 2008). Many Quranic teachings have emphasized dealings with non-Muslims with justice and respect, especially those who live in peace with the Muslims and do not raise enmity against them, Allah says in *sura al-Mumtahanah* verse 8:

Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.

Islam condemns the killing or even the persecution of people merely because they embrace a different religion. The Quran mandates absolute freedom of religion in society. It does not allow Muslims to fight except in self-defence and to enforce peace. It does not allow restrictions on those who disagree on religions matters. It urges the Muslims to treat such people kindly and equitably, Allah says in *sura al-Baqarah* verse 256:

There shall be no compulsion in (acceptance of) the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.

Therefore, Eggon people should be patient and keep on seeking for political powers from Allah rather than relenting on their efforts, because impatience lead to regrets. With the above stated Qur'anic and prophetic injunctions, it is believed that Islam is the religion that call for the worship of one God only and alone. And a Muslim is he who believes in Allah SWT as his or her supreme being, and worships no any other deity except Him (*al-Tawhid*). And they should seek for their right through legal means so as to avoid any inconveniences. Since the belief of Eggon Ombatse is based on the traditional believe, and Islam indeed frowned at the belief of Eggon Ombatse because it is the Opposite.

6. Conclusion

Conclusively, the Eggon Ombatse ethnic crisis in Nasarawa State is so devastating in nature, because it caused so many damages to the Eggon people in particular and other ethnic groups in general. As a result of this crisis many people were killed or missing and many villages were attacked. The most concerned matter which attracted the nation was the killing of about 74 security officers in Alakio village, where the media carried out the news both national and international. It is a well-known fact that, the Ombatse crisis has great negative impacts on the lives of the people of Nasarawa State; for instance, in places where these crises occurred, haven lost so many lives, houses, farm produce and shops were also destroyed. On education, all schools right from Primary to Secondary schools were closed, even with the relatively peace, some schools are yet to re-open for academic programmes.

Even with the pronouncement of his Excellency, Umaru Tanko Al-Makura, the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, that peace has been restored, therefore all displaced persons by the Ombatse crisis should return back to their respective home in 2015 but there still some Eggon people who are denied going back, places like Assakio and Daddare development areas. Despite the efforts made by the government, traditional rulers, religious leader and leaders of ethnic groups in restoring peace in the crisis areas, lory be to God theirs relatively peace in the conflict affected areas. However, there is perennial problems between herdsmen and farmers threatening the relatively peace that people are experiencing in the conflict affected areas in Nasarawa State. The clashes between Fulani herdsmen and Eggon farmers who returned home after the Ombatse violence is another security threat capable of igniting another violent conflict.

In the cause of this research work, it is found that there is high level of proliferation of arms in possession of people particularly the Fulani herdsmen and some ethnic groups in the state which if care is not taken it will be a threat to peace and development of the state. It is clearly forbidden for a faithful Muslim to live a discriminatory life against his fellow

brother or fight for the cause of tribalism. Even in the case of *Jihad Fi Sabilillah*, majority of Islamic scholars agreed that military action is the last option.

Recommendations:

Having made some findings on the causes and consequences of Ombatse crisis in Nasarawa State, the researcher put forward the following recommendations as to curb the crisis and other ethnic, political or communal crisis in the State.

- i. Eggon people should stop the activities of Ombatse cult and the traditional rulers should call the leaders of Ombatse group to order.
- ii. Fulani herdsmen should caution their children from any act capable of causing trouble.
- iii. Joint Local Peace and Security Committee should be constituted and the committee should involve all ethnic and religious groups in the community.
- iv. Serious sanctions should be given to any person who breaks the peace pact or commit and offence so as to serve as a deterrent to other.
- v. Religious leaders should embark on an aggressive preaching's to re-awaken the faith of their followers, particularly the members of Ombatse group.
- vi. Politicians should be cautioned to stop supplying intoxicants most especially during electioneering campaign.
- vii. Government should address the issue illegal arms possession. There is urgent need for disarmament in the State either through house to house search or an amnesty programme.

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List of Respondents during In-Depth Interview (IDI)

- Allu Maga. 89 Years, Retired School Teacher, interviewed in his Residence at Nassarawa Eggon, on 3rd October, 2015.
- Baba Alakio Aku. 78 Years, Ombatse Chief Priest, interviewed in his Residence at Alakio, Lafia, 20th July, 2013.
- Christ Mamman. 45 Years, Former President, Eggon Cultural Development Association (ECDA), interviewed at Aren Eggon's Palace, Nassarawa Eggon, on 7th June 2014.
- Haruna Musa (Ziko). 38 Years, Chairman Ombatse I., interviewed at Bukan Sidi, Lafia, Nasarawa State, on 18th June, 2014.
- Jibrin Yusuf, 52 Years, Chief Imam, Nassarawa Eggon Central Masjid, interviewed at Nassarawa Eggon, on 17th June 2015.
- Muhammad Affoya. 89 Years, Farmer, interviewed at Nassarawa Eggon, Nasarawa State, on 20th June, 2015.
- Muhammadu Akwala. 71 Years, Chief Imam Ombatse group, interviewed at Ungwan Tiv, Lafia, Nasarawa State, on 19th September, 2015.
- Rabu Musa. 88 Years, Ombatse Leader Agyaragu, interviewed at Agyaragu, Lafia, Nasarawa State, on 14th August, 2015.
- Shuaibu Gwamnati. 54 Years, Chairman Ombatse II, interviewed at Kantsakuwa, Lafia East, Lafia, Nasarawa State on 17th June, 2014.
- Yusufu Ido. 39 Years, Leader of Ombatse, interviewed in Ungwan Moyi, Nassarawa Eggon, Nasarawa State, on 13th July, 2015.
- Zakari A. idde. 54 Years, Chairman, *Jama'atu Nasrul Islam* (J.N.I) Nassarawa Eggon Local Government Area. Interviewed at Ugwan Dangaladima, Nassarawa Eggon, Nasarawa State, on 23rd July, 2015.

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