

MEDIA GUIDE AND TOOLKIT ON PASTORALISM IN NIGERIA

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About this guide

Journalists and media organisations hold incredible power. They help shape and communicate ideas, share information and bring about important social, political and cultural change. With this, comes responsibility.

To inform this guide, the Fulbe Development and Cultural Organization ([FUDECO](#)) interviewed over 1,200 pastoralists, many of them women and girls, in six states in Nigeria, with funding from the International Development Research Centre ([IDRC](#)) and Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises ([SPARC](#)). One of the emerging findings is that pastoralists feel they are misunderstood and mischaracterised by mainstream society, particularly the media. Their voices are hardly valued or heard. Many of the participants are survivors of conflicts and violence and feel isolated by negative and misleading narratives about their lives. Many of them are forcefully displaced but do not live in formal camps for displaced people.

We have developed this toolkit for every journalist who wants to find humane, nuanced and accurate ways of reporting on pastoralism. We developed it because we have deep respect for the social values of journalists and media, their role in shaping culture, and our belief that collaboration and research can bring about transformative change, including building trust and understanding rather than sensationalism, through high-quality media reporting.

FUDECO

[FUDECO](#) is an award-winning grassroots pastoralists' humanitarian non-governmental organisation and participatory action research network. It operates in more than a dozen states in Nigeria.

Acknowledgements

This media guide has been written by Sarli Sardou Nana, Founder and Chairman of FUDECO Nigeria.

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You can read this guide from start to finish, or dip into each section. We understand that some journalists will have a good understanding of frameworks around pastoralism, while others may be new to the topic. We have included some context and background information that we hope will be useful.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FUDECO	Fulbe Development and Cultural Organization
herder	a person who looks after a herd of livestock or makes a living from keeping livestock, especially in open fields
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
LGA	local government area
pastoralism	a way of livelihood based on domesticated livestock-raising as the primary subsistence activity. A pastoralist is a person who practises pastoralism
SPARC	Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises

INTRODUCTION

Pastoralism in Nigeria today: critical challenges

While pastoralism has been described by some as ‘[a barely visible, often forgotten, herding culture](#)’, it occupies a large section of Nigeria’s population. It is estimated that over 20 million pastoralists live in Nigeria and own millions of cattle. In Africa as a whole, this figure is much larger: in 2010, the African Union estimated that there were 268 million pastoralists on the continent – a quarter of the total population. Solving pastoralist issues, then, is critical to more sustainable development in Nigeria and in Africa overall.

Pastoralists contribute significantly to the Nigerian economy and food system. They ‘... contribute 90% of the meat and 30% of the milk consumed in Nigeria’, according to the [International Land Coalition](#).

The country benefits from this daily supply of locally produced meat and milk products. But the system requires movement of cattle to survive. There are two types of movements – one is nomadism, and the other is transhumance (taking livestock to lower areas in the dry season and returning home in the rainy season). Only those herding the cattle move, not entire families. This movement has caused historic tension with farmers over land use and rights, which threatens Nigeria’s political stability and food security.

Based on FUDECO’s research and lived experiences, we also know that pastoralists in Nigeria face numerous problems including: demonisation, marginalisation, attacks, extortion, dispossession of their land (only a few of the about 420 cattle reserves allocated to pastoralists actually exist today), cattle rustling, blocking of cattle routes, refusal of issuance of citizenship documents, insecure land tenure, issues with vigilantes, mining, collective punishment by some security personnel and vigilantes, as well as escalating climate change threats such as drought. In addition, limited market literacy and access are important factors that constrain pastoralists’ ability to improve their livestock’s productivity and livelihoods.

Pastoralists are frequently marginalised in policy development and engagement can be piecemeal. According to FUDECO research, in eight states of Nigeria there was no evidence of any genuine engagement with pastoralists in Nigeria’s National Livestock Development Plan, for example.

Stoking these tensions and a major problem for resolving the conflict is the divisive nature of media reporting on the issue. Media reports often focus on conflicts, promoting statements that turn out later to be false, or amplifying divisive ethnic or religious framing rather than promoting informed understanding. Journalists themselves have remarked on failures in the wider news industry to report accurately the issues facing pastoralists.

Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria are often referred to as ‘farmer–herder conflicts’ that have caused the deaths of thousands of farmers and pastoralists over the years. There are no accurate figures for the number of casualties but [some estimates](#) suggest thousands of lives have been lost in recent years. The violence has escalated due to several factors, including climate change (droughts and desertification), competition over resources

and the proliferation of weapons, leading to increased deaths and forced mass displacements. Major factors driving the conflict are failure in governance at all levels, poor resource management and inadequate and ineffective responses from authorities which contribute to violent reprisal attacks. The conflicts have significant economic and political repercussions for Nigeria's stability.



Fulani man with his herd of cattle, Jos, Nigeria © Oni Abimbola/Shutterstock

“

When I polled 22 Nigerian journalists about whether they felt we were doing a good job reporting this story [the farmer–herder crises], more than half admitted we were not. Specifically, 54% of the journalists felt that our coverage was failing to address key issues, while 18% said it was biased and sensational. Only 28% thought it was comprehensive. This self-assessment is a wake-up call for all of us in the field.”

Samuel Thomas, Journalist and Editor,
Taraba State Broadcasting Service, Jalingo,
July 23, 2024

1. PROBLEMS WITH REPORTING ON PASTORALISM IN NIGERIA

In this section we summarise what we see as the issues with the current reportage of farmer–herder conflicts in Nigeria. We provide brief suggestions on how to remedy these.

1.1 Inaccurate and superficial media coverage

The dominant discourse in Nigeria portrays pastoralism as something undesirable, [archaic](#), [negative and the cause of conflict](#). This way of reporting tends to focus on moments of ‘crisis’ and reduces the complexity of the pastoralist experience to easy-to-understand frames and labels.

Journalists and media organisations play a crucial role in mediating public conversation around conflicts. Insensitive or inaccurate coverage may prompt attacks, harassment and social tension. Media coverage contributes to the stigmatisation and dehumanisation of pastoralists and legitimises violence and exclusion.

A [Reuters](#) study polled 22 Nigerian journalists on reporting farmer–herder conflicts and asked them whether they felt they ‘were doing a good job reporting this story’. Over half (54%) of the journalists said their coverage was failing to address key issues, while 18% said their reporting was biased and sensational. Only 28% said it was comprehensive. This self-assessment by journalists themselves points to the scale of the problem.

When planning and shaping your coverage of pastoralism, take accuracy very seriously.

1.2 Inflammatory language

Phrases such ‘killer Fulani herdsmen’, ‘armed Muslim Fulani jihadist militias’ or ‘marauding herdsmen’ spark hostility and racism – and dehumanise people. Using stock images of pastoralists in other environments to portray Nigerian pastoralists is misleading. Often, images of herders with guns are used in stories instead of actual or Nigerian herder images. This gives the impression of savagery and violence.

Photography should avoid misleading representations that might stoke further conflict.

1.3 Using interested parties in the conflict as the only sources

A large body of evidence shows that when journalists rely on political elites as their sources, the views of the political elites cascade down and shape public opinion. In politics, pastoralists are rarely presented as full and complex humans and rarely given a meaningful voice in the story.

A [study](#) in 2020 analysed 159 stories about farmer–herder conflicts by six Nigerian newspapers. The researchers found that journalists often relied heavily on third-party sources ‘whose views are likely to be biased’. The study identified five themes in conflict coverage: (1) reports of attacks; (2) reports of reprisal attacks; (3) public condemnation of attacks; (4) conciliatory efforts;

and (5) investigative work. The great majority (97.5%) of the reports focused only on public condemnation of attacks. Just 2.5% of all coverage was investigative reporting.

1.4 Lack of media balance and editorial focus on the issues affecting pastoralists

Stories that feature pastoralist voices are often anecdotal and not balanced with necessary analysis of the policies that shape pastoralists' lives, well-being and the right and ability to live with dignity. Pastoralists on the move within and across borders are affected by sweeping harsh policies such as being refused national identity numbers. This means that they cannot register a SIM card, open a bank account, access loans and grants or access health services.

Be specific about which of these discriminatory structural problems affect your story.

1.5 Lack of public trust in the coverage of pastoralism

Lack of objective, well-sourced reporting of farmer–herder conflicts has further diminished public trust in the media. Coverage is seen as overwhelmingly negative, and pastoralists are turning away from sources they consider biased.

Balance your reporting by taking pastoralists into account to diversify the audience base, thereby promoting community cohesion and peaceful co-existence.

1.6 Biased statements from public authorities

Statements from some local, state and federal authorities on issues to do with pastoralism are not balanced and neutral. Rather, they reinforce hostile public opinion against pastoralism and pastoralists. Media outlets relay these statements without scrutiny thereby further complicating and promoting potential violence.

Report statements as political viewpoints alongside appropriate expert counter-narratives and the voices of pastoralists themselves.

1.7 Lack of consideration of gender, age and disabilities in reporting on pastoralism

In our experience and research, women, girls, youths, people with disabilities and elderly people are very often ignored in reporting on pastoralism. Women and children bear the brunt of the conflicts and are more vulnerable to attacks.

For example, in 2017, 74 people were murdered in a community in Numan by Bachama tribal attackers. Their homes were burnt down. Nearly all of them were women and children – the men had gone away to the markets when the attack happened. One of the infants killed alongside its mother was only a few weeks old.

The survivors of the attacks were some of the people we interviewed for our research, and we have been supporting them since the attack happened.

Consider the wider community in your reporting.

2. CASES OF MISLEADING REPORTAGE AND THE CONSEQUENCES

In this section we highlight two major incidents: one in Ondo State and the other in Nasarawa State. There are hundreds of cases but we want to be concise and use these two for illustration of how inaccurate reporting can worsen problems.

CASE STUDY 1: OWO CHURCH ATTACK: FULANI WERE WRONGLY BLAMED

Owo massacre: Report accuses FG of shielding herdsmen by blaming terrorists

July 1, 2022 Reading time: 2 mins

Featured News



On 5 June 2022 a horrific attack took place in St. Francis Catholic Church, Owo, Ondo State, in which 40 worshippers were shot dead and many injured.

The then State Governor Rotimi Akeredolu, a senior lawyer before becoming governor, immediately, without any investigations, spoke to the press accusing '[Fulani herdsmen](#)' of the attack and also mixing

the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram with pastoralists. This led to a national and international outrage against Fulani pastoralists.

The Nigerian Army five days later announced the arrest of the presumed attackers of worshippers at the Church. They were NOT Fulani and NOT herdsmen. They were from Kogi State and had a local host, a Yoruba man from Owo, who was also arrested. The statement from the military said:

'The Nigerian Army yesterday announced the arrest of those who attacked churchgoers at the St. Francis Catholic Church, Owo, on Sunday, 5th June 2022. The attack resulted in the death of 40 worshippers.'

None of [those arrested](#) were Fulani or herdsmen of any type. In fact, the area is well known for cultists and drug gangs warfare.

The Minister of Interior at the time, briefed the media alongside the Inspector-General of Police and said: 'We have directed all the agencies concerned to go after them and bring them to justice.', the [Nigerian Tribune reported](#).

The minister said the group was out to pitch Nigerians against one another and make it appear as an ethno-religious war. He, however, said there was no ethnic agenda in the attack, urging Nigerians to unite and defeat the terrorists.

Meanwhile national and international media carried the false claims by Governor Rotimi Akeredolu.



US institute accuses Nigerian government of shielding herdsmen and blaming ISWAP for Owo attack



[The US Institute, Knoxville News Sentinel](#), without investigating, relayed Akeredolu's bait by accusing the Nigerian government of shielding 'herdsmen' involved in the attack on worshippers in Owo church.

The International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) picked up a line from the report and used it to run a headline: '[Owo massacre: Report accuses FG of shielding herdsmen by blaming terrorists](#)'. The piece also closely linked herdsmen with terrorist groups, with poor sentence structure and headline use leading to the potential for baseless associations.

Later examples of poor and potentially harmful coverage include reporting on the inflammatory and baseless claims by the Yoruba Alliance, a powerful ethnic association. The article in *Business Hallmark* carried a lengthy press statement noting that they 'blamed President Muhammadu Buhari [and held him] responsible [because he is a Fulani and a Muslim]'. One piece, titled '[He invited Fulani terrorists from across Africa into Nigeria](#)' largely repeated a lengthy statement verbatim and made no attempt to provide context, check for accuracy or consider inflammatory language.

Even after the arrest and naming of the perpetrators by the military, the Nairaland Forum falsely claimed that they were 'Fulani terrorists'. Nairaland, an online media platform with a large following, published a biased report with the sensational false headline after the arrest of the perpetrators, '[Fulani Terrorists Behind Owo Church Attack Arrested](#)'.

Not all reporting about the incident was poor or misleading. A balanced [report](#) appeared in the *Human Angle Magazine*, quoting eye witnesses and avoiding the use of inflammatory, biased or ethno-religious labels. This [report](#) in *Muslim News Nigeria* provided a balanced and sensitive report without religious or ethnic labels.

Consequences of the false accusations of Fulani and Muslims for the Owo Church massacre

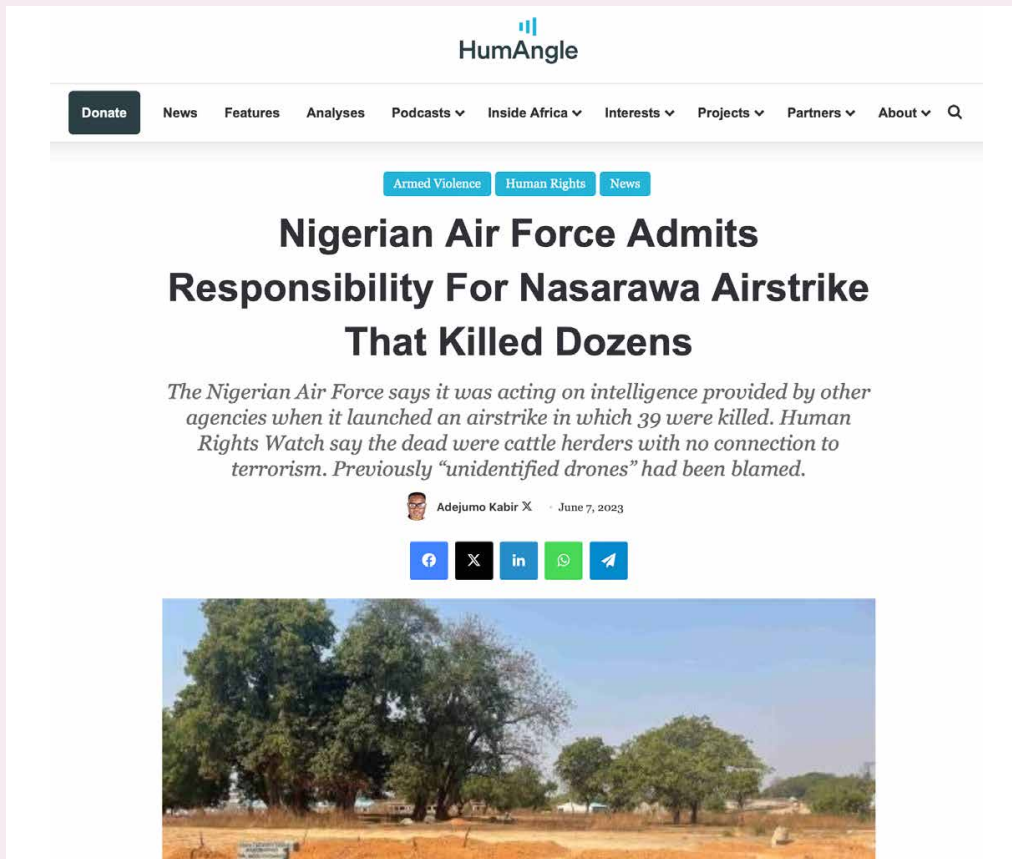
The dire consequences of the false reporting were not only on Fulani in Ondo State. There were [spontaneous deadly attacks](#) on northerners, Muslims in general and their properties immediately after the church massacre, particularly in Ogwatoghose and Ikare areas of Ondo State. Innocent people were attacked and many killed. Many inaccurate reports were never corrected.

Hundreds of social media and other outlets carried the same narrative. In all the above examples and many others, the pastoralists' voices were completely ignored, and the State Governor's inaccurate comments, having been given leading prominence, were not addressed with either subsequent reporting or amendments to the original articles when they were proven to be false.

CASE STUDY 2: NIGERIAN AIRFORCE ARBITRARILY BOMBS PASTORALISTS

[According to Human Rights Watch](#), on 24 January 2023, 41 pastoralists were killed by the Nigerian Airforce through aerial bombing in Nasarawa State as they were unloading cattle retrieved from authorities in Benue State. The cattle were impounded by the Benue State Government under the instructions of the then State Governor Samuel Ortom to enforce a ban on pastoralism.

The pastoralists went and paid the fines and collected their cattle and on reaching their settlements they and their livestock were bombed, killing them and all their animals instantly. The military in claims that were later disproven said they were suspected terrorists.



Some media outlets immediately amplified the versions of the Air Force initially denying involvement then downplaying the number of victims. According to the Human Rights Watch investigation above, the Governor of Nasarawa State said first that the attack was from an unidentified drone, which was not the case. The military accepted that they carried out the attack six months after the incident.

The version of the pastoralist eyewitnesses and survivors of the attack were completely blanked out in some media reports. Human Rights Watch found survivors and eyewitnesses and provided their versions of the incident in their report.

Some media outlets also started [reporting a fake narrative](#) to the effect that Fulani pastoralists were planning a revenge attack on Tiv tribal farmers, quoting Tiv tribal association leaders and other farmers. No attempt was made to consult pastoralists themselves.

Six months after the attack, the Nigerian Air Force was [forced to admit](#) that it carried out the attack, following an investigation by Human Rights Watch. No action was taken against those responsible for the death of over 40 innocent pastoralists and their cattle.

Both cases have been the subject of numerous inaccurate reports. Media reporting has featured lack of investigation and lack of context – the Benue State Government, for example, has banned pastoralism and is persecuting pastoralists. The views of survivors and victims were never sought. The problem here is that the media outlets reporting the story believed the Air Force and the two governors, who misled the journalists.

3. KEY PRINCIPLES OF REPORTING

Many modern newsrooms operate at a hurried pace, and we recognise that journalists and editors navigate demanding deadlines. This section offers commonsense guidelines for quick reference when covering pastoralism, to encourage accurate, dignified reporting.

3.1 Dignity

Pastoralism is about people, who have moved in search of a pasture as a way of life, or for existential reasons. Framing on pastoralism in mainstream media has been shaped by a toxic ethno-religious, political and economic narrative which in turn dehumanises. Powerful official voices have reinforced these narratives, in some cases through fabricated or inaccurate accounts of specific incidents.

In the focus on conflict, many voices involved in the debate are forgotten. Those also involved include children, women, the sick and elderly, babies and infants, and people with disabilities. Legal, political and cultural labels offer a very narrow and misleading understanding of a person's and a group's situation, and have harmful repercussions for wider society.

Journalists can delve deeper into each story by not relying on labels, categories and language designed to cause fear and anxiety. Your story can break this cycle. By focusing on people and their dignity, we can minimise harm.

Getting informed consent from potentially vulnerable sources is vital

For vulnerable people, media coverage is both a risk and a lifeline. Many people fear retaliation for talking to the media but some are willing to take the risk to share their story or advance a cause. Some are not aware of the repercussions of speaking out. Interviewees may say things that risks their lives without realising. Their dignity, safety and voice are paramount. There are a few things that can help.

- ☒ Always tell them you're a journalist.
- ☒ Always offer to provide a quality translator or interpreter to ensure you're getting the whole story.
- ☒ Make sure they understand the personal or legal consequences of speaking out publicly.
- ☒ Consider risk factors to the storyteller and – when appropriate – offer anonymity.

3.2 Accuracy

Misinformation, myths and inflammatory language are widespread in discussions around pastoralism. Interchangeable labels are weaponised to enforce harmful tropes. News

reporting shared in this guide has taken politicised claims as fact, sometimes leaving those claims unchallenged or using direct quotes of such language in a way that amplifies harmful narratives.

In the case of breaking news, evidence of the claims made by officials or state representatives should be sought. Inaccurate statements by officials should be challenged at the next available follow-up opportunity or in amendments to original reporting.

3.3 Terminology

Language, semantics and phrasing are actively used as political tools. In recent years, harmful discourse around pastoralism has escalated to the point that politicians and policy-makers across the political spectrum have openly called out the risks and potential harms. Journalists should be wary of repeating 'dog-whistle' talking points.

The terms 'pastoralist' and 'herder', and 'Fulani', 'terrorist' and 'bandit' are often interchanged to fuel the idea of groups of people that are 'deserving' or 'undeserving' to be alive.

When crimes or conflict have taken place, often at the time of the reports, there is no investigation to determine who the attackers are. The phrase 'Fulani herdsmen' is often intentionally used to conjure negative associations and stoke tensions in communities. This actively contributes to the deterioration of people's rights and safety. From a policy perspective, it is a contested term. From a social perspective, it is harmful and misleading. Do not use this term. Alternatives that can be used include: 'unidentified attackers' or 'unidentified armed assailants'.

3.4 Sourcing

Seek a range of sources with expertise and credibility to enlighten the audience with nuance, and different points of view and evidence. Examples include experts, academics, NGO advocates, those working directly with pastoralists, and people from communities affected.

The political authorities are not impartial – do not frame them as such. Avoid giving politicians the 'last word'. They are political voices and should be featured as such. Check your silences and blind spots – ask 'Who and what is missing from this report?'

3.5 Context

Pastoralism and displacement are part of a larger, international story. Pastoralism to Nigeria is far from unique – yet stories tend to isolate the issues from the broader picture. Providing a broader context is key. Reporting should highlight the policies, legislation and structures as well as global events that led to, or influence, the story.

For example, cross-border cattle movement is framed by political debate and consequently separated from a broader international or regional picture featuring conflicts, climate change or historical context. Stories are reported in a vacuum, leaving readers without adequate information and background



Often, hostile narratives used against one group, like the pastoralists, are then adopted and used against other vulnerable groups. For example, all northerners are targeted because of these narratives.

Without alternative perspectives, context, nuance or the voices of marginalised people, these frames are the foundation for inflammatory and tribalistic rhetoric. This goes hand in hand with the systems, laws and policies that have very real and harmful consequences for pastoralist and all communities.

3.6 Photojournalism

Consider the ethical use of images and informed consent. Consent must always be agreed before the taking and publication of images.

Exercise extreme care when using images of children. Photographs of children should be taken only after obtaining permission from the parent or other legal guardian. The images should never show children in a state of undress.

Avoid clichés or poorly sourced stock photography that reproduces outdated or discriminatory narratives or sensationalises issues. Ensure instead that the photos used treat communities and locations with respect. Image captions should also be accurate and avoid sensationalism or inaccuracies.

4. A QUICK CHECKLIST FOR REPORTAGE

This section consists of a quick reference checklist, based on the guidelines in Section 3.

Dignity

- ☒ How have you afforded dignity and respect to those affected by the story?
- ☒ How have you thought about the impact that your story might have on other pastoralists experiencing similar incidents?
- ☒ Have you considered the wider impact on already existing falsely negative perception and abuse, including violence that might result from it?
- ☒ Could your chosen images identify a vulnerable person and put them at risk?
- ☒ Is your illustration image sending the wrong message?

Accuracy

- ☒ Have you checked that the language, descriptions and terms you're using are accurate and appropriate?
- ☒ Have you clearly identified the organisations with a duty of care in the story?
- ☒ Have you named the policies and institutions that play a role in the story?
- ☒ Are there doubts about the official statements made that require further context, or a right to reply?

Sources

- ☒ How have you placed the affected person or community?
- ☒ Do you have multiple sources other than government authorities?
- ☒ Have you reached out to experts to give more robust analysis?
- ☒ Have you consulted pastoralists (survivors, victims or alleged perpetrators)?
- ☒ Have you reached out to pastoralist organisations or other independent NGOs?

Context

- ☑ Where and when has this happened before?
- ☑ What events or actions led to this story?
- ☑ What national policies or legislation are key to the story?
- ☑ How have you situated this story in a broader international context?
- ☑ Is there a relevant historical precedent or global context to the story?



5. GUIDELINES ON DUTY OF CARE

Reporting should reflect which actors have the power to control and change the material circumstances of people living within the pastoral areas and who they are accountable to. Through decades of oppressive policies, pastoralists are living within a complex web of livestock controls, extortionist multiple taxations, armed militias and lack of access to justice.

✓ DO	✗ DON'T
<p>Do choose language carefully. Respect the humanity in a person's story.</p> <p>Do look beyond one-dimensional labels or statistics.</p>	<p>Don't use language that invokes large homogenous groups. Never rely on dehumanising language.</p> <p>Don't use sensational or metaphorical language, e.g. influx, invasion, massacre (unless it was really a massacre), crisis, war.</p>
<p>Do be clear about whose definitions and labels you are using and cite them.</p>	<p>Don't use the term 'Fulani herdsman'. Alternatives include: 'unidentified attackers' or 'unidentified armed assailants'. Be clear that displacement or movement is not necessarily voluntary and not all about nomadism. People may be forced to move if they are threatened or attacked. Like all Nigerians, pastoralists have the right to stay put or to move.</p>
<p>Do bring diverse, informed voices into the story.</p> <p>Do prioritise pastoralist voices. Give space for pastoralist voices to provide analysis.</p>	<p>Don't run a piece solely based on numbers and statistics. Pastoralism is about people.</p>
<p>Do seek sources that have expertise and credibility to enlighten the audience with nuance, and different points of view and evidence.</p>	<p>Don't rely on a politician's statement to frame your piece. Use other, third-party, verified sources in addition, to provide a balanced and impartial report.</p>
<p>Do provide perspective and context to your story.</p> <p>Do situate the story in a broader international and/or historical context.</p>	<p>Don't ignore the wider structures and context behind your story.</p>

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR SOLUTIONS-BASED REPORTING

Changing the role of media and journalists in the conflict necessitates both providing a platform for diverse voices and exploring positive policy and peace-building efforts as well as conflict-driven events.

This summary of possible solutions is not exhaustive, prescriptive or unanimously accepted. We offer it here as a selection of relevant topical policy areas that could be explored.

- Restoring and revamping designated grazing reserves and designating more reserves.
- Opening and freeing cattle routes, to avoid damage to crops by moving livestock.
- Ensuring that pastoralists have access to seek justice (police, military, courts, traditional rulers) – justice should be rendered to them where they are victims of injustice.
- Properly investigating the role of armed non-state actors.
- Investigating the actions of security personnel that have harmed or failed to protect pastoralists, e.g. bombings, collective punishment, extortion, extra-judicial killings and vigilante attacks.
- Facilitating the establishment of ranches with the full, prior and informed consent of pastoralists who wish to set up ranches – the Land Use Act recommends a minimum of 5,000 hectares.
- Facilitating the obtention of citizenship documents for pastoralists such as birth certificates, indigene certificates, national identity numbers, voter's cards.
- Setting up community-based dialogue platforms made up of farmers and pastoralists.
- Undertaking genuine and ongoing community engagement with all communities.
- Investing in the pastoral sector, including education, veterinary services, cattle markets, butcheries, drinking water for cattle and humans, healthcare and security.
- Providing support to the pastoral sector like the support given to crop farmers (such as grants, loans, tools, pasture improvement, veterinary services and veterinary extension services).
- Building resilience to climate change and developing mitigation ideas to help manage the increasing pressures on pastoralism and farming.

7. KEY LAWS AND POLICIES ON PASTORALISM

There are many laws and policies at the international, continental, regional, federal and state levels that regulate pastoralism. Some journalists, as well as mainstream commentators and politicians, may not be aware of them. This is not an exhaustive list but features key laws and policies relating to pastoralism.

International policy and legal frameworks regulating pastoralism in Nigeria

African Union and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

- African Union Commission, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa. *Securing, Protecting and Improving the Lives, Livelihoods and Rights of Pastoralist Communities*. Addis Ababa, 2010.
- African Union Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (2015–2035). Nairobi, 2015. FAO/Committee on World Food Security. *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*. Rome, 2012.

Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS)

ECOWAS has developed the following frameworks, policies and strategies regarding transhumant pastoralism and the livestock sector:

- Decision A/DEC.5/10/98 *Relating to the regulations on transhumance between ECOWAS Member States*. Abuja, 1998.
- ECOWAS Commission, Department of Agriculture, the Environment and Water Resources. *Adopted Guiding Principles for the Development of the Livestock Industry within ECOWAS*. Abuja, 2009.
- ECOWAS Commission. *Strategic Action Plan for the Development and Transformation of the Livestock Sector in the ECOWAS Region (2011–2010)*. Abuja, 2010.
- ECOWAS. *Transhumance Protocol (1998) and Regulation regarding its implementation (2003)*.
- ECOWAS. *Regional Agricultural Investment Plan (RAIP)*. Abuja, 2015.
- ECOWAS. *Regional Agricultural Policy for West Africa: ECOWAP*. Abuja, 2005.
- ECOWAS/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). *Formulation and Implementation of a Regional Agricultural Investment Program (PRIA)*. Component: 'Pastoral Development and Organization of Cross-Border Transhumance. Volume 2 Sub-Program: Improved Management of Other Shared Natural Resources.' Abuja, 2009.

- *N'Djamena Declaration on the contribution of pastoral livestock herding to the security and development of the Saharo-Sahelian areas*. N'Djamena, May 2013.
- *Nouakchott Declaration on Pastoralism. Mobilizing Jointly an Ambitious Effort to Ensure Pastoralism without Borders*. Nouakchott, October 2013.
- *Regulation C/REG.3/01/03 Relating to the implementation of the regulations on transhumance between the ECOWAS Member States*. Dakar, 2003.

National laws

Federal Government of Nigeria

- Grazing Reserve Law (Northern Nigeria), Law No. 4 of 1965.
- Nomadic Education Act, Law No. 41 of 1989.
- Hides and Skin Act, Law No. 14 of 1942.
- Land Use Act, Law No. 6 of 1978.
- Animal Diseases Control Decree, No. 10 of 1988.

USEFUL LINKS

Nigeria Union of Journalists (2019). 'Code of Ethics for Nigerian Journalists'. Online guide. Available at: <https://nuj.org.ng/code-of-ethics-for-nigerian-journalists/> (Last accessed: 15 July 2025).

Reporting and pastoralism

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Thomas, S. (2024). 'What journalists should know about the farmer-herder crisis in Nigeria'. Reuters Institute, 23 July. Available at: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/what-journalists-should-know-about-farmer-herder-crisis-nigeria> (Last accessed: 15 July 2025).

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