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إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين

**Transcending Myths and Mystifications: Challenges of Ethnic
and Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria in the 21st Century**

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Abstract

Overtime, in Northern Nigeria, there has been a link between ethnic and religious identities. Many communities are either predominantly Muslim or Christian. Inter-group conflicts are recurrently expressed in ethnic and religious forms. Conflicts relate to claims and counter-claims over ownership and control of resources such as land, chieftaincy institutions, local government councils, markets and so on. Historically, several regimes have played roles in igniting divisive identity-based conflicts. Partly the federal, state and local governments have been marginalising sections of the population from inclusive-participation in the political, social and economic processes. Dominating these landscapes have been different discriminatory practices in the sharing of resources and abandoning social provisioning. The peak of ethnic and religious violence is raving in the ongoing Jos killings and the insurgency of the Boko Haram Islamic sect respectively. The current situation has now brought to the fore a rejectionist offensive and nihilism as citizens and institutions of the Nigerian state are facing deadly assassinations and attacks. Sectarianism has been growing not only due to complex internal factors, but also the interpretations of external (foreign) conflicts and transplanting the various perceptions on Northern Nigeria along deadly ethnic and religious divides.