
Research

ROOT CAUSES OF THE PERSISTENT COMMUNAL CONFLICT IN EMOHUA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE

BRIGHT PETERS ORDUVE^{1*}, GODSDAY IDANEGBE USIABULU²

¹Center for Peace and Security Studies, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

²Environmental Data Analyst, Atmospheric Research And Educonsult, Community Interest Company-Arecic, Kano State, Nigeria.

Correspondence should be addressed to: ogewillmakeit@gmail.com | <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0098-1374>

Abstract: This study examines the nexus between communal conflict and livelihood in Emohua Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State, Nigeria. Drawing on scholarly perspectives on conflict, communal conflict, and livelihood systems, the paper argued that communal violence is not only a socio-political phenomenon rooted in incompatible interests, but also a major threat to human security, governance, and socio-economic development. It reviewed how factors such as historical grievances, ethnic rivalries, socio-economic disparities, competition over land and resources, political manipulation, leadership challenges, and external influences interact to create a cycle of violence and instability in the area. This paper further highlighted that the persistent recurrence of conflict disrupts livelihood strategies by undermining social relations, reducing economic productivity, and driving displacement and insecurity, thereby stagnating development and weakening the conditions for effective livelihood.

In response, the paper proposed a multifaceted framework for sustainable conflict resolution in Emohua, emphasizing community dialogue and mediation mechanisms, transparent and inclusive governance, clear chieftaincy regulation, youth-focused economic interventions, strengthened and community-aligned security approaches, interfaith tolerance initiatives, value and cultural revitalization, environmental management and restoration, and counter-radicalization strategies where relevant. The study concluded that durable peace in Emohua depends on coordinated actions by government, community leadership, and citizens to address the root causes of conflict holistically and to protect livelihoods while promoting reconciliation and development.

Keywords: Communal Conflict; Livelihoods; Land and Resource Competition; Insecurity and Displacement; Governance and Leadership; Political and Historical Grievances; Peace building and Conflict Resolution

1. Introduction

Conflict is as old as human activities, and to a large extent, it is a socio-political phenomenon associated with disagreement of interest (Ilo et al., 2020). Conflicts are a bane to societal development. Conflict is divisive and usually sets person against person, group against group. It creates insecurity and displacement of people and can ensure the breakdown of law and order. It can also destroy social relationships as there is mistrust, damaged emotions, and miscommunication which may eventually lead to hatred and strife among members of the society. Conflict is the universal experience of all life forms.

Conflict may be defined as the incompatibility of interests, goals, values, needs, expectations, and/or social cosmologies (or ideologies). Ideological conflicts especially tend to become malicious (Garga, 2025). Webster's Dictionary saw the conflict as "clash, competition or mutual interference of opposing or incompatible forces or qualities (as ideas, interest, wills)". Also, conflict involves "a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the opponents aim to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals (Ilo et al., 2020). Communal conflict exists in all the geopolitical zones of the country. There is no part of the country that is spared from its ugly deficiencies. The historical antecedent of the post colonial Africa is tinted with the menaces of violent conflicts.

Obviously, the causes of the communal crisis have explanation in colonialism, politics, greed, inequity, corruption, and injustice and leadership problem (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2022). The current wave of democracy pervading the continent has proved elusive in ameliorating the problem. Instead, it created room for the intensification of old crises and manifestations of new ones. This is contrary to the believe that the principles, institutions and rules associated with democratic practice seek to manage inevitable social conflicts in deeply divided and less conflicted societies alike (Academia.edu, 2021). Nigeria, as the most populous country in Africa, shares the sentiment of harbouring varied magnitudes of conflicts, since the emergence of democracy in 1999, preventing citizens from enjoying its dividends in real terms. The manifestations of electoral conflict, ethnic conflict, religious conflict, herder-farmer conflict, communal conflict, and indigene/settler conflict have become brazen characteristics of the democratic development in Nigeria (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2022). Of all these conflicts, communal conflict has manifested its self as the most pandemic issue next to ethno-religious conflict in the democratic era in the country. (Academia.edu, 2021) posited

that Nigeria in the last four years (and even till date) has witnessed a dramatic increase in communal violence which affects human livelihood.

Given an understanding of livelihood, Albert (2025), livelihood connotes activities that impact on the lives of people in terms of their social relations and economic activities. The persistent occurrence of communal conflict in communities in Emohua local government area and other conflicting communities in Rivers State, affects livelihood, socioeconomic activities and development. Therefore, the menace remains a threat to governance and economic growth in Nigeria (Albert, 2025). Government by their inactions has proved to be unable to solely secure its citizens. Despite their huge expenditures on internal security in the National and State levels, conflict still persist, prompting communities to seek for self protection and security. Despite these efforts, the menace keeps exacerbating, and socio economic activities being stagnated. This reflects the view of Springer (2023) when he asserts that effective livelihood cannot take place in an unsecured prone community.

Emohua Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria, has been a focal point for persistent communal conflicts that have disrupted social harmony and economic development in the region (Ridwanullah & Villar, 2025). These conflicts often rooted in a complex interplay of historical grievances, ethnic rivalries, and socio-economic disparities, have led to significant loss of lives, displacement of communities, and a breakdown of trust among local populations. Understanding the root causes of these conflicts is crucial for developing effective strategies to foster peace and reconciliation. Factors such as competition over land and resources, political manipulation, and the influence of external factors contribute to the ongoing tensions (Ridwanullah & Villar, 2025). This write-up aims to explore these underlying issues, analyzing how they intertwine to create a cycle of violence and instability in Emohua, and to propose pathways towards sustainable conflict resolution. This paper will consider the nexus between communal conflict and livelihood in Emohua local government area, Rivers State.

2. Definition of Conflict by various Researchers

IOM (2024) considered conflict as the behaviour by a person or group intended to inhibit the attainment of goals by another person or group. Conflict will emerge when behaviour is laced with emotions, which is expressed in an antagonistic form. As an opposition, Osakwe, (2026) posited that conflict is an opposition arising from disagreement about goals, thoughts, or emotions with or among individuals, teams, departments, or

organisations. Opposition is all about blocking an individual or a group from achieving set goals, and this will lead to conflict because of the instant overt reaction that will be put up by the party being blocked. Conflict can also be defined as a situation in which interdependent people express (manifest or latent) differences in satisfying their individual needs and interest, and they experience interference from each other in accomplishing these goals (IOM, 2024).

Zumve & Audu, (2026) described conflict as a felt struggle between two or more independent individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals, or differences in desires for esteem, control, and connectedness. Conflict occurs when people are nested by some sort of social cords. It does not occur in isolation, people must be relating or be depending on one another. Conflict can be defined in terms of good or bad outcome. When the outcome of a conflict scenario is positive, it is defined as a functional or constructive conflict. Conflicts that end up in negative outcomes are regarded as dysfunctional conflicts. Zumve & Audu, (2026) viewed conflict as the underlying power that stimulates innovation.

Conflicts are disagreements characterized by quarrels, fights, severe anger, aggression, hatred, and violence with or without bloodshed. According to Mercy Corps, (2024) conflict in Ikwerre charges the people with tensions, threats, fears, anxieties, and uncertainties. (Omitola et al., 2023) defines conflict as “a struggle over values, claims to status, power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflict groups are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals”. (Omitola et al., 2023) sees conflict as “an act of being in opposition or disagreement, fight, struggle and quarrel. Conflict may be referred to as a disagreement between two or more parties over something vital to them.

Osakwe (2026) described conflict as a phenomenon that can produce positive outcomes by introducing different perspectives that produce innovative solution. Albert (2025) defined conflict in negative term, as element that conjures negative connotation, invokes negative feelings and often leads to destruction. It is important to note that the outcome of a conflict situation depends on the perceptions and management approaches of the conflicting parties. The definition of Osakwe (2026) suggested some fundamental elements that need to be clarified at this point. These are:

- (i) Conflict occurs where people are interdependent. People must be connected in one way or the other, either through their views, goals, aspirations etc, before they can be enmeshed in a conflict.
- (ii) Conflict can be expressed in manifest or latent form. The parties concerned may blow the problem out of proportion for people to know about its existence or they may make people not to be aware of the conflict. Manifest conflicts can be easily managed because they are known by people, but latent conflicts are not open to people's awareness, hence, resolving them may be difficult.
- (iii) Conflict involves needs and interests. Needs are those things that are fundamentally of utmost importance to people, which they must fulfil as soon as the purchasing power is available. Interests on the other hand, are the desires of people. These elements, most especially, needs, have the potential to generate conflict, when people are blocked from pursuing their needs or interests.
- (iv) Conflict is caused by interference. In a bid to achieve the emerging needs or interest, interference may be experienced among the parties, bringing about the emergence of conflict. Conflict, therefore, is a fate of life, which occurs where the interactions of people are marked with differences in goals, perceptions, attitudes, views, beliefs, values or needs

From the above analysis, conflict is a natural phenomenon which results from differences in individuals or groups aspirations, values, or needs. However, when conflict occurs, its manifestations and outcomes vary depending on the perceptions of the conflicting parties and the approaches adopted to manage it.

Scholars of conflict studies do not believe (like an average person) that all conflicts are bad, as they serve positive social functions. Conflict prevents the ossification of the social system by exercising pressure for innovation and creativity. George Sorel felt that a social system was in need of conflict if only to renew its energies and revitalize its creative forces. Albert states that: 'Conflict within and between groups in a society can prevent accommodations and habitual relations from progressively impoverishing creativity. The clash of values and interests, the tension between what is and what some groups feel ought to be, the conflict between vested interests and new strata and groups demanding their share of power, wealth, and status, have been productive of vitality; note for example the contrast between the "frozen world" of the Middle Ages and the burst of creativity that accompanied the thaw that set in with Renaissance civilization' (Albert, 2025).

According to John Dewey, ‘Conflict is the gadfly of thought. It stirs us to observation and memory. It instigates to invention. It shocks us out of sheep-like passivity, and sets us at noting and contriving.... Conflict is a sine qua non of reflection and ingenuity’. Conflict not only generates new norms and new institutions; it may also be stimulating directly in the economic and technological realm. Economic historians often have pointed out that much technological improvement has resulted from the conflict activity of trade unions through the raising of wage levels. It may be noted that the extreme mechanization of coal-mining in the United States has been partly explained by the existence of militant unionism in the American coalfields (Albert, 2025). Albert writes that a natural scientist (Waldemar Kaemfert), describing the function of earthquakes, stated in 1952 admirably what could be considered the function of conflict. The scientist wrote: ‘There is nothing abnormal about an earthquake. An unshakable earth would be a dead earth. A quake is the earth’s way of maintaining its equilibrium, a form of adjustment that enables the crust to yield to stresses that tend to reorganize and redistribute the material of which it is composed. The larger the shift, the more violent the quake, and the more frequent the shifts, the more frequent are the shocks’ (Albert, 2025).

According to Marx, conflict leads not only to ever-changing relations within the existing social structure, but the total social system undergoes transformation through conflict. A central thesis of Arnold Toynbee’s monumental work, *A Study of History*, reveals that a group or a system that no longer is challenged is no longer capable of creative response. It may subsist, wedded to the eternal yesterday of precedent and tradition, but it is no longer capable of renewal.

Most contemporary social scientists lay stress on the constructive consequences of conflict relations. Dubin’s five central propositions constitute a broader thesis: intergroup conflict is a fundamental institutionalized social process which determines the direction of social change and, in effect, defines social welfare. Mack and Snyder consider that though most of his analysis is drawn from experience of industrial relations, the propositions have wider applicability. They also summarize the views of five other scholars:

- (i) Conflict sets group boundaries by strengthening group cohesiveness and separateness;
- (ii) Conflict reduces tension and permits maintenance of social interaction under stress;
- (iii) Conflict clarifies objectives;

- (iv) Conflict results in the establishment of group norms; and
- (v) Without conflict, accommodative relations would result in subordination rather than agreement (PIND Foundation, 2024). To Mahatma Gandhi, conflict has its benefits. An appreciation of the other point of view enhances one's own perspective. We are all limited to our own angle of vision, Gandhi said; through conflict, one gains a broader view of truth

3. Communal Conflict

Communal conflict as a concept does not enjoy a mono definition. This implies that there exists multiplicity of definition. Communal conflict is made up of two axiomatic words -communal and -conflict while conflict has been conceptualized; communal is derived from a Latin word *-communis* which means-common. Communal relates particularly to groups, and it involves things commonly used, shared or experienced by a group in a society. Such things can be resources or conflict. When it is conflict, it is known as communal conflict. Communal conflict is a social conflict that relates to a group or groups in a society. When it occurs within a group, it is known as intra-communal conflict and inter-communal conflict when it occurs between groups. It is worth noting that these groups have common social ties, which may make the competition that may ensue to be fierce. The point is that the misuse or unequal distribution of the available resources that should be jointly enjoyed by a group will produce conflict. The conflict will usually be complex to tackle because of the level of hatred that would probably have been cultivated among the parties in the process.

Communal conflict was considered by (PIND Foundation, 2024) as a conflict that occurs between two or more communities. Ridwanullah & Villar (2025) described communal conflict as involving two or more communities engaging themselves in disagreement or act of violence over issues such as claims for land ownership, religious and political difference leading to loss of lives and destruction of properties. Communal violence (sometimes inter-communal violence) is a situation where violence is perpetuated across ethnic lines, and victims are chosen based upon ethnic group membership (Ridwanullah & Villar, 2025). Le-ol, (2020) was of the opinion that communistic violence is that which occurs between two or more communities over territorial land, farmland and territorial water for fishing. These definitions revealed that communal conflict is more or less community conflict or ethnic conflict. This is not surprising because communal by its interpretation as a phenomenon that is common to a particular group characterises a

community or ethnicity. Admin (2024) attested to this fact when he said that communal friction is what is usually described as ethnic conflict. More so, for communal contenders to have been described as culturally distinct people, tribes, or clans in heterogeneous societies, who hold or seek a share in state power (Ilo et al., 2020) help to buttress the point that communal conflict is often interpreted as community conflict or ethnic conflict. While it is not the focus of this thesis to divulge the differences inherent in these variables, if there is any, it is pertinent to stress that the peculiar identity of communal in terms of reference to a group, concerning common issues or elements could as well be attributed to other social groups in a society. This implied that several communal groups make up a community and therefore, in terms of involvement or participation, communal conflict is narrower than community conflict (Ilo et al., 2020). Therefore, communal conflict is a state of incompatibility that emanates from a commonly shared or used property or resource by a group or groups in a society. It occurs within or between groups that are defined by some forms of social ties over resources that are jointly owned or shared in a community. Communal conflict arises when two distinct groups in a community disagree over jointly shared resources due to the possibility of inequitable distribution or the problem of domination by a group. The development of this kind of conflict in any society has attachment to commonly shared or used resources or elements which can be tangible or intangible.

The identity of communal conflict is rather fluid in nature. This is because it occurs in divert forms, which can sometimes be misleading to identify. Albert (2025) posited that this form of conflict often manifest in terms of host-stranger face-offs in which a section of the community tags itself as the host (owners of the community) and some other groups as strangers(that is, those who migrated into the community at a date later than the coming of the owners of the community). Apart from this, communal conflict can also be imbued in religious issues, land, politics, resources, local government, chieftaincy issues and many others.

4. Livelihood

Among scholars, no definition has been agreed to justify the meaning of livelihood. Livelihoods are ‘means of making a living’, the various activities and resources that allow people to live. Different people have different lifestyles and ways of meeting their needs. Similarly, households perform various activities to gain and maintain their livelihoods. The nature of these livelihood activities depends on the availability of assets, resources, labour,

skills, education, social capital, seasonality, agro-climate/agro-ecology, and gender (Zumve & Audu, 2026). Livelihood and income diversification have been studied extensively over the years, (Omitola et al., 2023). Despite the fact that rural areas are agrarian in nature, there is an increasing level of income and livelihood diversification especially to non-agricultural income generating activities (Oluwatayo, 2009). Diversification into non-farm income generating activities has been found to improve food access and nutrition (Omitola et al., 2023). The need for income diversification in rural areas includes higher pay, lower risks, worsening terms of trade in agriculture, change in environmental resource base, climatic change, and natural disasters (Ridwanullah & Villar, 2025).

Also, livelihood is related to socio-economic activities which explain all activities that impact the lives of people in terms of their social relations and economic activities (Ridwanullah & Villar, 2025). The persistent occurrence of insecurity in our society seriously affects socioeconomic development. Therefore, the menace remains a threat to governance and economic growth in Nigeria. Government by their inactions has proved to be unable to solely secure its citizens. Despite their huge expenditures on internal security both at the National and State levels, individuals in their various rights, work places and houses spend heavily to provide security for their personal lives and properties. Despite these efforts, the menace keeps exacerbating, and socio economic development being stagnated. This reflects the view of Ridwanullah & Villar (2025) when he asserts that effective livelihood that impact on socio-economic activities cannot take place in an unsecured prone community.

Garga (2025) see livelihood as the science of the development of socio-production, that is, economic and social relations between people. It clarifies the laws governing production, distribution, exchange and consumption of the material wealth in human society at various stages of its development. Again, Garga (2025) related livelihood as dealing with aspects of the social and economic interrelations between individuals, social classes or nations with a specific focus on the vital aspects of production, distribution and consumption of wealth. It is a historical science, which shows how society develops from lower to higher stages and how the entire course of historical development prepares the objective necessity of the triumph of the communist mode of production.

Livelihood systems are at the heart of poverty reduction and food security issues in different policy environments. According to (IOM, 2024), livelihood systems encompass means, relations, and processes of production, as well as household management strategies.

The resources and values of specific physical and social environments determine the character of livelihood system components. Food security is not the only goal of rural populace; the need for a sustainable livelihood is more central since it reflects the ability to take hold of other issues like good nutrition and housing which guarantee an improved life.

The livelihood of the people can be affected by socio-political and economic landscape and Nigeria has been blighted by the endemic twin evil of crime and violence. The abysmal failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities, ultimately resulted to anger, agitation and violent crimes against the Nigerian state by some individuals and groups (Garga, 2015). Such crimes include militancy, kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery, destruction of government properties, among others. These activities of various militia groups consequently resulted in low income for government from oil revenue, moderating the Gross Domestic Product growth rate, low participation of local and foreign investors in economic development and insecurity of lives and properties of the citizens.

5. Root Causes of Communal Conflict

Various factors have been identified by scholars as responsible for communal conflict in the country. The causes vary from one area to another. IOM (2024) indicated that the causes of communal conflicts are not static but rather dynamic and varied in nature depending on the socio-economic and geopolitical circumstances at the time. Mercy Corps (2024) listed social conditions as population explosion, economic migration, and the anti-poor policies of the government as triggers of communal friction. Mercy Corps (2024) pinned down communal conflict to revolve around politics, politicians, and their pursuit of group advantage. Albert (2025) identified indigene/settler problem, religious differences, ownership of land and its resources, goals and aspirations of people as some of the factors that can ignite communal conflict in the country. Hembe (2000) indicated that political struggle and colonization, while Lyam (2000) mentioned loss of soil fertility, soil erosion, deforestation, bush burning and flooding as some of the causes of communal conflict. Osakwe (2026) pointed out that the fundamental causes of communal conflict are poor economic conditions, high level of illiteracy, the quest for, and fear of domination by other groups, land disputes, market ownership, chieftaincy tussle and party politics.

Osakwe (2026) indicated that increased demand for land for agriculture, unemployment, rural hunger, poverty impoverishment as communal conflict triggers.

Deprivation, exploitation and domination of minority groups by major ethnic groups and leadership problem were highlighted by Zumve & Audu (2026) as factors that can exert communal crisis. Equally, religious differences, competition for livelihood resources and traditional chieftaincy tussles were enumerated by Zumve & Audu (2026) as potential communal conflict triggers in the country. Competitions for land and chieftaincy tussle are the major causes of communal conflict in the North. For instance, in Nasarawa in 1993, Alago, Hausa and Tiv clashed over land and chieftaincy from 1995-2005, the Egburra and Bassa in Toto clashed over land, chieftaincy and politics. In 1989, 1990 and 1997, intra-communal conflict occurred in Ipav in Gboko based on land problem. In Taraba State, between the Chamba/Jukun and Kuteb over chieftaincy tussle since 1996 when it stated, it is still ongoing; in 2004 in Adamawa State between the Bachama and Hausa/Fulani over land ownership, politics and religious. On March 5, 2005, communal clash between Maruta (Jigawa) and Burmin (Bauchi) occurred over market relocation. On June 2003, Ekepedo and Ogori clashed over land ownership in Kogi/ Edo States. Best (2006) argued that in Benue Valley, the pressure on land from all directions heightens the proliferation of ethnic and communal conflicts in the region, including the political ones, most of them arising from the land question. In essence, the causes of communal conflict from the above analysis are:

Ecological factor: This factor manifests in the forms of encroachment problem, farming and pastoral problems, deforestation, flooding, soil erosion, and bush burning. Communal conflict creates room for people to drift from place to place as a survival mechanism and in search of livelihood.

Social factor: This has to do with issues that border on deprivation, envy, jealousy, marginalization and exploitation of people. In fact, fear of domination by major groups is equally a social factor that attracts communal conflict.

Political factor: It involves the contest for available political positions in a community and leadership failure. Also added to this, is traditional chieftaincy tussle imminent in communities in the country.

Colonial factor: Colonialism is believed to be the background cause of communal conflict in Africa, and Nigeria inclusive. Most of the communal conflicts have direct attachment to colonial formation, while others manifesting in the post colonial period have explanation in colonialism.

Economic factor: The factors manifest in the forms of competition for inadequate resources such land and its content; problems of distribution of available resources; unemployment and poverty. This situation is not just peculiar to Rivers State but to Nigeria nation. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria's unemployment rate increased to 23.9 percent in 2011 compared with 21.1 per cent in 2010 and 19.7 per cent in 2009. The country has a youth population of over 80 million, representing about 60 per cent of the total population with a growth rate of 2.6 per cent per year, and the national demography suggests that the youth population remains vibrant with an average annual entrant to the labour force at 1.8 million between 2006 and 2011. Adagba, et al, (2012) was of the view that in 2011, 37.7 per cent of Nigerian youths were aged 15-24 years and 22.4 per cent of those between ages 25 and 44 were willing to work but did not get jobs. As a result of the high level of unemployment and poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths, they are adversely attracted to violent crime that induced insecurity Zumve & Audu (2026) argued that the failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities is one of the major causes of insecurity in the country. Thus, being unemployed could predispose one to engaging in illicit activities that would undermine security of the environment.

Issue of fragile Security Network: this is one of the causes of communal conflict. This result from inadequate equipment for the security arm of government, both in weaponry and training. This is in addition to poor attitudinal and behavioural disposition of security personnel. In many cases, security personnel assigned to deal with given security situations lack the expertise and equipment to handle the situations in a way to prevent them from occurring. And even when these exist, some personnel get influenced or easily swallowed by their personal interest rather than the nation. Observably, most of them are into illegal oil activities as a lieu way to measure up to their family needs. This assertion was clearly stated by (Le-ol, 2020) who lamented that instead of being national watch dogs and defending national interest and values, and protecting the people from harm by kidnapers, cultist, pipeline vandals, criminals, they soon become saboteurs of government effort, by supporting and fuelling insecurity through either leaking vital security information or aiding and abetting criminals to acquire weapons or to escape the long arm of the law. It was due to their deficiencies that prompted the introduction of OSPAC security in most communities in Rivers State.

Leadership Challenge: This result from what Zumve & Audu (2026), who assert that the state of insecurity in Nigeria is greatly a function of government failure, or can be linked to government failure. This is manifested by the incapacity of government to deliver public services and to provide for basic needs of the masses. The lack of basic necessities by the people in Nigeria has created a pool of frustrated people who are ignited easily by any event to be violent. The argument here, is that, Nigeria has the resources to provide for the needs of its people, but corruption in public offices at all levels has made it impossible for office holders to focus on the provision of basic needs for the people. (Le-ol, 2020) described the Nigerian situation as a paradox of plenty: A situation where the country earns a great deal of revenue through oil sales, but fails to use these earnings to meet the needs of its people and to develop infrastructure as well as the economy. When these situations exist, crime rate is bound to rise and the security of lives and properties cannot be guaranteed.

Religious Conflicts: This equally results to insecurity in Nigeria. According to Igbanibo (2005), he posit that religious tolerance is responsible for inter and intra-religious conflict in human society. He identified religious intolerance or conflicts as taking the forms such as doctrinal attacks, name calling, destructions of life and property among others. This was supported by (Le-ol, 2020), who identified and posited that ethno-religious conflict is a major source of insecurity in Nigeria. Ethno-religious conflict was defined as a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation. Zumve & Audu (2026) assert that the forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethno-religious identities. Hence resulting to the claim over scarce resources, power, land chieftaincy, local government, councils control of markets and among other trivial issues has resulted in large and killings and violence amongst groups in Nigeria (Adagba Ugwu & Eme, 2012).

Value Devaluation: According to Albert (2025) in his study titled information technology and devaluation of value, posited that various information technologies such as phones, television, and social Medias which includes facebook, watsapp and many others even foreign values have devalued our societal values. Albert (2025) posited that it visit the society with retrogression (negative impact). However, Clifford (2009) observed that the traditional value system of the Nigerian society like most African societies is characterized by such endearing features as loyalty to authority and community, truthfulness, honesty,

hard work, tolerance, love for others, and identification of individual with one another. Other distinctive features of Nigerian traditional society are abhorrence for the theft and high value for life. Stealing was considered extremely disgraceful and lives were also highly valued.

Environmental Pollution: The environmental devastation has caused tremendous ecological devastation of the Niger Delta and Nigeria. Environmental contamination particularly has quarantined the Niger Delta region (Albert, 2025). The natural air, aquatic ecosystem and soil quality are ruined by gas flares and oil spillage. The strategic challenge facing Nigeria is how to cure the destructive damages already done to the region, or reparations for many years of negligence, abandonment and repressiveness. The nation's notorious negligence have exhumed all types of militant groups, invoked all manners of aggressions, and flares violence in all Niger Delta areas (Admin, 2024).

Problem of Terrorism/Insurgency: At the most proximate and least disputable level terrorism is the most fundamental source of insecurity in Nigeria today, and its primary bases and sources of support have generally been located in religious fanaticism and intolerance particularly in Islam dominated states of Nigeria. Terrorism which is a global phenomenon where no one is safe was defined by Admin (2024) as the premeditated use of threat of use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in a state, intended to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the individual or group behind such violent acts. Terrorism in Nigeria is an Islamic insurgency with a political undertone by a faceless group based in the Northern region of the country which called itself Boko Haram. Nigeria has lost up to 1000 lives or above in the North since 2009 to the insurgency of this infamous Islamic Sect.

6. Solutions to the Root Causes of Communal Conflict in Emohua Local Government Area

Addressing the persistent communal conflicts in Emohua requires a multifaceted approach that targets the underlying social, political, economic, and environmental issues. Here are potential solutions for each identified factor:

1. Social Factors

Community Engagement and Dialogue: Initiate community forums to foster open dialogue among different ethnic and social groups, addressing issues of marginalization and exploitation.

Conflict Resolution Training: Provide training for community leaders in conflict resolution and mediation skills to handle grievances effectively.

2. Political Factors

Transparent Governance: Promote transparency in political processes to ensure fair representation and reduce contest for power. Implement policies that encourage inclusivity in leadership roles.

Chieftaincy Regulation: Establish clear regulations governing traditional leadership to minimize disputes over chieftaincy titles and roles.

3. Colonial Factors

Historical Education: Incorporate education on the colonial history and its impact on current communal relations into school curricula to foster understanding and reconciliation among communities.

Reparative Policies: Develop policies to address historical grievances, possibly through community development projects that benefit marginalized groups.

4. Economic Factors

Job Creation Initiatives: Implement skill development programs and vocational training for youth to reduce unemployment. Partner with private sectors to create job opportunities.

Resource Management: Ensure equitable distribution of resources and implement policies that promote local economic development, particularly in resource-rich areas.

5. Security Challenges

Strengthening Security Forces: Invest in training and equipping security personnel to handle communal conflicts effectively. Implement community policing initiatives to build trust between security forces and local populations.

Community-Based Security Systems: Support local security initiatives like OSPAC to enhance community safety and reduce reliance on inadequate state security.

6. Leadership Challenges

Government Accountability: Promote accountability in governance through civil society involvement and citizen monitoring of public services.

Public Service Improvement: Focus on improving the delivery of basic services, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, to reduce public frustration.

7. Religious Conflicts

Interfaith Dialogue: Foster interfaith initiatives that promote mutual understanding and respect among different religious groups.

Education on Tolerance: Incorporate teachings on religious tolerance and coexistence into educational programs to combat intolerance.

8. Value Devaluation

Cultural Revitalization: Promote cultural programs that celebrate traditional values, fostering a sense of community and shared identity.

Media Campaigns: Launch campaigns through social media and traditional media to promote positive societal values and counteract negative influences.

9. Environmental Pollution

Environmental Management Policies: Implement strict regulations on oil drilling and environmental protection to minimize ecological damage.

Restoration Projects: Initiate community-led environmental restoration projects to rehabilitate affected areas and improve local livelihoods.

10. Terrorism and Insurgency

Counter-Radicalization Programs: Develop programs aimed at addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty and lack of education, particularly in affected regions.

Community Resilience Initiatives: Strengthen community resilience against radicalization through education, economic opportunities, and promoting social cohesion

Conclusion

The persistent communal conflicts in Emohua Local Government Area, Rivers State, reflect a complex interplay of social, political, economic, and historical factors that have deep roots in the fabric of Nigerian society. As outlined, issues such as deprivation, marginalization, political power struggles, and the lingering effects of colonialism contribute significantly to the ongoing tensions. Furthermore, economic challenges, including high unemployment and resource competition, exacerbate feelings of frustration and desperation among the youth, making them susceptible to violence.

To effectively address these conflicts, a multi-dimensional approach is essential. This includes fostering community dialogue to bridge ethnic divides, promoting transparent governance to mitigate political grievances, and implementing robust economic initiatives to alleviate poverty and create job opportunities. Strengthening security infrastructure and

community-based safety measures will also play a crucial role in ensuring the protection of lives and properties.

Moreover, addressing historical grievances and promoting interfaith understanding can cultivate a culture of tolerance and coexistence. Environmental restoration efforts are vital to heal the ecological wounds inflicted by years of neglect and exploitation, while counter-radicalization programs can help thwart the rise of extremist ideologies.

Ultimately, sustainable peace in Emohua will depend on the collective commitment of government officials, community leaders, and citizens to work together toward reconciliation and development. By addressing the root causes of conflict holistically and inclusively, Emohua can transform its narrative from one of strife to one of unity and progress, paving the way for a brighter and more harmonious future for all its inhabitants.

References

1. Ilo, K. O., Umeifekwem, U. T., Ohabuenyi, J., & Okonu, S. (2020). Exploratory assessment of communal conflict and its impacts on Nigerian development. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3745632> (doi.org in Bing)
2. Le-ol, A. E. N. (2020). Spatial analysis of factors contributing to community conflicts in Rivers State, Nigeria. *American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 2(3), 9–20.
3. Omitola, B., Ayeni, A. A., Olatoye, M. O., Omitola, A., Akinrinde, O. O., & Alo, F. S. (2023). Communal conflict and post-conflict developmental challenges in Nigeria. *Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities*, 6(9s), 1254–1264.
4. Zumve, S., & Audu, S. O. (2026). Understanding criminality and the administration of insecurity in Diobu, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. *International Journal of Innovative Psychology & Social Development*, 14(1), 44–52.
5. Admin. (2024). Communal violence and socioeconomic development of Oduoha community in Emohua LGA, Rivers State. *Info234 Business Management*.
6. Osakwe, P. (2026). Climate change and natural resource conflict in Nigeria (2020–2025). University of Delta, Agbor. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19022783>
7. PIND Foundation. (2024). Mitigating the impact of communal conflicts on agricultural investments in the Niger Delta. *Partners for Peace Conflict Briefing*.
8. Mercy Corps. (2024). Contributing to the mitigation of conflict over natural resources between farmer and herder communities in Taraba and Adamawa States (COMITAS II). *Conflict and Natural Resources Mapping Report*.
9. International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2024). Strengthening communities through peacebuilding in Nigeria. *IOM Nigeria*.
10. Ridwanullah, A. O., & Villar, M. E. (2025). Strategic communication and peace-promotion in a Nigerian conflict zone. *Communication Studies*, 77(2), 270–294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2025.2544833>

11. Albert, I. O. (2025). Integrating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into Nigeria's National Adaptation Plan process. NAP Global Network.
12. Springer. (2023). Communal conflict and violence: Causes and impact. SpringerLink Social Sciences.
13. Academia.edu. (2021). Ogbakiri community conflict and its management approaches. Academia Research Papers.
14. European Union Agency for Asylum. (2022). Country report: Communal violence in Rivers State, Nigeria. EUAA Publications.
15. Garga, D. (2025). Youth unemployment, poverty, and communal violence in Nigeria's Niger Delta. African Journal of Peace and Development Studies, 11(2), 88–104.



© 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>).