

# The Mbororo Problem in North West Cameroon a Historical Investigation

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## Abstract

The Mbororos are predominantly nomadic people located almost exclusively within the savannah zone of West and Central Africa, and whose original home is said to be the Senegambia region. From Senegal, the Mbororos continued their movement alongside their cattle and headed to Northern Nigeria. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Jihad movement and epidemic outbreaks force them to move from Northern Nigeria to Northern Cameroon. From Northern Cameroon, they moved south and started penetrating the North West Region in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The Mbororos were warmly welcomed by their hosts because of their economic input reflected in the cattle they introduced in the region and the heavy taxes paid to the government. The quest for grazing land in an environment of increasing population of farmers puts the Mbororos on daily conflicts with their neighbouring farmers. Henceforth, the Mbororos were regarded as “undesirable aliens” and the local farming population clamoured for their expulsion. This paper critically examines and analyzes the problems faced by the Mbororos in their attempt to gain citizenship in Northwest Cameroon and be accepted by the local population. It also looks at the difficulties of their integration in the region. The paper begins by briefly examining the migration, settlement and ultimate acquisition of the status of nationals by the nomadic cattle Mbororos in the North West region of Cameroon. Beginning from 1970, with President Ahidjo in power, the Mbororos were not more perceived as “aliens”. Nonetheless, farmer-grazier conflict kept on being a recurrent issue in the North West Region. This fact, coupled with others had sustained xenophobic feelings towards the Mbororos. The Cameroonian government of recent together with some stake holders has been looking for lasting solution to the perennial farmer-grazier problem. This is to enable both the Mbororos and local population to live in peace and harmony.

**Key Words:** Mbororos; Nomadic; Jihad; Farmers; Grazier.

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## **1. Introduction**

The Mbororo are people from West Africa, numbering approximately 14 million. They are of mixed sub-Saharan African and Berber origin. First recorded as living in the Senegambia region, the author in [1] note that they are now scattered throughout the area of the Sudan from Senegal to Cameroon. Both as nomadic and sedentary people, they have played an important part in the history of West Africa. The Mbororo constitute part of a major group of people in Africa called Fulbe. The author in [2] state that they were characterized by a common history of civilization, language and culture.

The origin of the Mbororo in the North West Region can be traced to Kano state and Jos plateau in Northern Nigeria and the author in [3], noted that the movement of the Mbororo from the emirate of Kano started in 1875. This was precipitated by a rinderpest pandemic which decimated herds of African cattle in the mid and late 1880s. From then on wards, Fulani clans began migrating to various destinations across West and central-Africa. As a result of this epidemic, jihad and also based on information about the practicability of rearing cattle in the Bamenda Grassfields (North West Region), three Mbororo of the Goshi clan set out on an exploratory mission to the province in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The author in [4] noted that, the grassfielders were hospitable and welcoming to the Mbororo'en. The Mbororos is numbered about 80000 in North West Region of Cameroon.

But the sedentary life style the Mbororos later assumed change the peaceful cohabitation they were having with locals to conflictual. This was principally as a result of the farmer-grazier problem. The grassfielders henceforth, began qualifying the Mbororos as 'aliens' or 'strangers' living in a land that was not theirs. This article is therefore an attempt to analyze the different persecution faced by the Mbororos in North West Cameroon and their attempt to gain full citizenship. The article presents a vivid picture of the Mbororo indigenous pastoralists of the North West of Cameroon and their ability through MBOSCUDA to secure their rights over individual and communal grazing lands in a hostile and domineering environment of farming neighbours. The access of Justice Programme of MBOSCUDA is explored and analyzed in relation to its fight for the respect of the rights of the Mbororos as citizens of Cameroon especially their rights over the ownership and use of grazing lands.

### ***1.1 What is the Mbororo Problem?***

By the Mbororo problem, we are referring to the problem of marginalisation, the problem of under representation or non-representation, the problem of becoming permanently settled, the problem of free movement and free interaction with the early settlers, the problem of stigmatisation by non-Mbororos. The Mbororos (because of their nomadic, pastoralists and sedentary life style) in the Northwest Region were victims of exploitation, oppression, harassment and humiliation by their farming neighbours, administration and some rich and power hungry Mbororo elites. This problem can also be due to Mbororos way of life, illiteracy, ignorance and lack of guidance and cooperation.

### ***1.2. Geographical Location of the North West Region of Cameroon***

Our study area is the North West Region of Cameroon. North West Region of Cameroon constitutes parts of the

territory of Southern Cameroons. The North West Region is found in the Western highlands of Cameroon. It lies between latitudes 5° 40' and 7° to the North of the equator, and between Longitudes 9° 45 and 11° 10' to the East of the Meridian. Ndele in [5] noted that the North West region is bordered to the South West Region by the Southwest Region, to the South by the West region, to the east by Adamawa Region, and to the North by the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The North West Region is one of the most populated Regions in Cameroon. It has one major metropolitan city: Bamenda. The Region saw an increase in population from about 1.2 million in 1987, to an estimated 1.8 million people in 2001. The population density, at 99.12 people per square Kilometres is higher than the national average of 22.6 people per square kilometre. The region urban growth rate is 7.95%, while the rural growth rate at 1.16%. The North West Region is made up of administrative divisions. The region formally known as province was created in 1972 with five divisions. These were Mezam, Momo, Bui, Menchum and Donga and Mantung Divisions. Today it has seven divisions, Boyo carved out of Donga-Mantung and Menchum and Ngo ketunjia carved out of Mezam. The author in [6] noted that, there are thirty-one Sub-divisions in the North West Region.

## **2. Body**

### ***2.2. Migration and Settlement of the Mbororos in Northwest Cameroon***

The Mbororos were the last to settle in North West Cameroon, a region also known as the BamendaGrassfields. The point of departure is the early 19th Century when the Mbororo who later became known as Jaafun dwelled in Northern Nigeria. When, in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Fulani Jihad was launched, it had far-reaching consequences for Muslims and non-Muslim peoples in Northern Nigeria and the Adamawa. The Mbororo like most pastoral Fulbe did not actively participated in the Jihad movement, but the combined effects of political destabilisation, famine and bovine disease provoked their departure from the Kano area. They left for the Borno region where they were badly received, and continued to Bauchi. The majority moved on to Yola, attracted by the prospects of fertile pastures and political security under Fulbe hegemony. As most families had lost large parts of their herds on the long and hazardous journey, they engaged in agricultural and trading activities in order to reconstitute their herds.

Due to an outbreak of rinderpest in northern Nigeria and across Africa by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, many Mbororo continued their migration from Bauchi and Yola to the Adamawa Highlands. They settled around Banyo, Tibati and Tignere where they benefited from fertile pastures. Yet, they also faced the hostility of the local population who denied them access to the salt springs and frequently attacked people and animals. The author in [7] noted that it was only with the installation of the German colonial power and their forceful pacification of the region that the Mbororo were able to settle confidently at Lompta which was set up as an autonomous Mbororo district.

While the 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw the South wards migration of Mbororo from the Kano region to the Adamawa highlands and the Jos plateau, and the emergence of Jaafun and Aku as distinct cultural units, the 20<sup>th</sup> Century witnessed the establishment of Mbororo graziers of both categories in the BamendaGrassfields of Cameroon.

The first Mbororos to enter the Bamenda Grassfields were about thirty families under the Leadership of Ardo Sabga of the Gosi clan. They arrived the Bamenda Grassfields in 1916 and established themselves in BabankiTungo. The settlement was later named Sabga. As semi-Nomadic groups, their pastoralist livelihood, dispersed and fragmented socio-political structures, and belonging to Islam distinguish them from the local population. Arriving immediately prior to the establishment of British colonial administration in the 1920s, the Mbororo have typically been viewed as “Strangers” by both their neighbours and successive state regimes, despite the high levels of in-migration that characterised this area during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The authors in [8] noted that this view has raised a lot of contemporary debates over Mbororo citizenship in the Bamenda Grassfields in particular and Cameroon at large.

As a matter of fact, some grassfielders went to the extent of saying that the Mbororo will never be looked on as natives in the Northwest. Even though the Mbororo pay taxes, are permanent settlers, own identity cards and have the right to vote in elections. The informant in [9] note that, this only go to show to what extent the Mbororo were marginalised and denied citizenship right in Northwest Cameroon.

During the 1940s, individual Mbororo began to settle permanently. Mbororo settlement could be found in grassfields areas such as Sabga, Santa, Wum, Nkambe, Bansa, Fundong, Ndop, Bali, Bafut, Bali among others. Their main motive was to secure their pasture grounds, since vacating an area, if only for seasonal displacement, gave way to occupation by other pastoralists. It is worth while noting here that Mbororo establishment in Northwest Cameroon would probably not have been successful without facilitation by the British colonial administration.

The British supported the influx of Mbororo Pastoralists as a means of diversifying the regional economy and increasing it tax income through the jangali taxes levied on cattle. Concurrently, local Grassfields chiefs welcomed the pastoralist’s establishment on their areas as long as they paid tributes and allegiance to their hosts. Even though population densities were relatively low and farming and grazing lands abundant, crop damage was a recurrent problem. The Mbororo practice of extensive grazing and seasonal transhumance coincided with the local population system of shifting cultivation. This brought about what later became known as the farmer-grazier problem. As a result, local farmers looked on the Mbororo pastoralist settlements with reservation, and occasionally responded with public protest and violence.

The traditional political leader of an agnatic lineage group of Fulani pastoralists is the Ardo, who either inherits title and position from his father or gains recognition on the merits of his personal abilities and prosperity. The source in [10] noted that, to encourage the settling of pastoralists and supervision of herds, these traditional leaders were incorporated into the colonial administrative structure and given responsibilities, primarily in collecting the cattle tax (Jangali), and in Campaigns against animal disease. The Ardos were encouraged to establish permanent villages in the wet season grazing areas of their followers; each is now responsible for a specific area rather than a specific group of people. The activities of an Ardo included organising Mbororo access to veterinary and agricultural services, identifying diseased cattle and restricting their movement, settling disputes between Mbororo over property inheritance and in conjunction with the village head as representative of the farmers, settling disputes between Mbororo and farmers over land use or crop damage by livestock.

By the late 1930s, the Mbororo were subordinated to Native Authorities, namely the local grassfields chief and palace hierarchy. The position of Ardo (Mbororo group leader), initially a socio-political role, was transformed into the administrative function of tax collector. Consequently, Mbororo Ardo became dependent on the approval of local Grassfields chiefs to qualify for administrative appointment. Cattle taxes were used more to sustain the local administration rather than being invested in the pastoral infrastructure.

In the 1940s the Mbororo made an attempt to evade political subordination by appealing for autonomous representation to the British administration, they largely failed. The British headquarter in Nigeria denied them a politically independent minority status and classified them as “strangers” rather than “natives”. In response, Mbororo leaders formed the Fulani council which, although its existence was never officially acknowledged, effectively acted as an intermediary between the Mbororo population and the British administration.

All of the above differences and controversies started raising a lot of debates over Mbororo citizenship in the Bamenda Grassfields. The Mbororo were excluded from the Native Authority Areas under the pretext that they were late arrivals into the area. Although several Mbororo traditional leaders formed their own “Fulani Natives Authority” in 1942, the administration stressed that this body was “only a convenience” decreeing that “it will not be like the councils of the pagans which are gazetted as Native Authority “Despite the fact that half of the divisional revenues were provided by the Fulani Jangali or cattle taxes. The British colonial adage of no taxation without representation was stretched to the limit with the Mbororo.

In the same decade, grazing rules were introduced to restrict and control pastoral activities. Pastoralists were required to obtain a grazing permit, a document that the Mbororo perceived as validating their claims to pasture land vis-a-vis the administration, neighbouring farmers and rivalry lineages. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the colonial administration issued a series of Natives Land and Right Ordinance that declared all land “native”, with a native defined as “a person whose parents were members of any tribe or tribes indigenous to the Cameroons”. Some District officers even went to the extent of qualifying the Mbororo as essentially hostile immigrant and strangers. Others advised against granting the Mbororo any rights, and mooted the prospect of removing the Mbororo from the province altogether. Veterinary officers and some researchers argued that the Mbororo had settled immediately, and that without land rights they would not undertake obligations relating to maintaining pastures and tax collection. In 1948, the senior District officer largely concurred with the former argument, restricting grazing to specific permits which could be withdrawn at any time by the issuing Native Authority. Grazing permits were valid for two years only, ensuring that the Mbororo was there on sufferance and no other terms. The Mbororo became more marginalized from political powers as the colonial powers viewed them as “the most intractable of the native population” and the most difficult to control under “native administration”.

The late colonial period of democratization came with mixed experiences for the Mbororo who lacked the educated, urban elites required to form or participate in the flourishing development associations. Their distrust of ‘Western’ education and its incompatibility with a pastoral lifestyle meant that very few Mbororo attended school, while a more general sense of reserve and “otherness” amongst the Mbororo codified as *Pulaaku* was a further marginalizing influence. The source in [11] noted that some progressive elements amongst the

Grassfields Mbororos attempted to use the political opportunities of the time to forward citizenship claims in the form of a petition to the United Nations. The petition complained that, “we are considered to be strangers... We have no security of tenure”, and demanded that “we may be treated as part of the community, as inhabitants of Bamenda”, few efforts by administrators to indigenize the Mbororo into the area through development projects led to “Widespread “Mbororophobia”, Fulani huts were sets on fire”.

### ***2.3. Mbororos during the Post Colonial Period in North West Cameroon***

After independence, the Mbororo were confronted with a situation of political insecurity to which many responded with flight. In 1961 the population of British Cameroon was given a chance to vote either for reunification with formerly French administered Cameroon, or for incorporation into independent Nigeria. Mbororo did not fully participate in the voting exercise. Majority of them were considered as strangers. Even among them, opinions differed while most of them were in support of reunification, with the hope of attaining full citizenship, many, Mbororo favoured the alternative of joining Nigeria as they were already familiar with political and ecological condition there. With the pendulum swinging toward reunification; Mbororo became the targets of local Grassfielders animosity against perceived foreigners from Nigeria.

Cameroon’s transition to independence and reunification in the early 1960s was accompanied by administrative changes that informed Mbororo economic strategies and altered their legal status. With the introduction of the French administrative and legal system, the Mbororo were released from their subordination to Native Authorities in collecting taxes. In terms of citizenship formation amongst the Mbororo, the first decades of post colonial rule after 1961 were in part characterized by a return to the margins. The Mbororo council collapsed and the traditional leaders (ArDOS) of the Grassfields Mbororo would not gather again for nearly thirty years. The two most prominent Mbororo leaders (Ardo Sabga and Ardo Umaru of Wum) participated in the West Cameroon House of Chiefs until its closure in 1972. The state administration was inaccessible to the generally unschooled Mbororos most of whom continued to see formal education as irrelevant to their mode of livelihood. Largely settled by now as either minorities in ‘native’ communities, or dispersed in peripheral settlements, interaction with the state became limited to local meetings with divisional officers concerning jangali or cattle tax collection, farmer grazier conflicts or as a means of the administration communicating government policy. It is even being alleged that president Ahidjo actively discouraged the grassfields Mbororos from becoming involved in politics. Nonetheless, government representatives, encouraged the Mbororo to settle and to diversity their economic activities.

Eventually, in the context of constitution changes in 1972, they were granted full Cameroonian citizenship. For most Mbororo in the grassfields their migration trajectories ended in the 1970s. Worth mentioning here is the fact that despite the attempt to nationalize land through the 1974 Land ordinances, customary norms continued to prevail, whereby ‘natives’ “have rights to land by virtue of citizenship in the chiefdom. The author in [12] noted that, the effect of this on the Mbororos had been enormous. Some wealthier Mbororos benefited by acquiring land which was previously communal land. Examples of those wealthy Mbororos were Alhaji Baba Dan Pullo, Alhaji Yusuf Dan Pullo, Ardo Mama of Wum, Alhaji Bodjom and Guni of Wum among others.

The dust raised by the Babanki-Mbororo grazier Fiasco has not quite settled. Many will remember this episode not only for the overt disturbance it instilled in the Northwest Region, but as well because it presents a rare show case of a traditional conflict in which the Fon himself was part of the casualties of popular discontent, contrary to popular opinion that North Western Fons are so powerful and backed by enormous traditional aura that they become invulnerable to punitive sanctions. Babanki people, against all odds, dethroned their own Fon Simon Vegah.

Fon Vegah is alleged to have sold some fertile farmlands in 1991 to a certain Mbororo cow Lord-Alhaji Yusufu Danpullo against his late father, fon Vibangsi's will. This greatly enraged Babanki farmers who had by now, savoured enough tragedy from graziers cattle feeding on their farms and destroying their crops forcing them to unsparingly attack the cattle. This provoked Mbororo retaliation resulting to the burning of two hundred farmhouses and barns of foodstuff in Babanki as well as several arrests, detainment and torture of farmers.

The fon's sympathy with the Mbororo, coupled with his deranging moral comportment further enraged and alienated the Babanki people from him. He had made the beating of his late father's wives (now his wives by tradition) a hobby ritual. This got to a climax when he sent palace wives away, beat-up his own mother and sold the palace's priceless artefacts. The people had seen this premonition and immediately knew that the ancestral leadership spirit had departed from him. After the seventh warning of the kwifon, it was evident that his cup of atrocities had filled to the brim. By December 2003, he was dethroned, marking an end to twenty-five years of royal mischief in Babanki, as noted by the source in [13].

Some of the local populations of the grassfields have not been happy with their chiefs for selling their lands out to those they called 'strangers' or outsiders'. Their reactions on the poor Mbororos in the form of retaliation have most of the time being so violent. The advent of nationalism among the locals also meant that some Mbororo lost grazing lands to expanding farm and urban populations, while most remained subordinate as 'tenants' rather than 'citizens' in North West Cameroon.

Another serious problem the Mbororo faced in the Northwest was their inability to establish permanent settlements, which they could call theirs. They argued that even though they had stayed in the region for about a century; they were still treated as intruders or as aliens by the early settlers. The Mbororos were described as landless intruders in search of grazing land, who moved away whenever the pastures were exhausted. The Mbororo on their part remained very sceptical about the attitude of their farming neighbours where ever they settled in the Northwest and even towards the central government this cautious attitude of the Mbororos towards their farming neighbours and central government has made them to be given less attention by the government..

#### ***2.4. Mbororo in the Modern Politics of Cameroon***

In the 1970s; local Grassfielders attempts to integrate the Mbororos into their socio-political community via host guest relations constitute a source of dependency and exploitation. They were subsumed under the category of 'northerners' on account of their Muslim identity and Fulbe ethnicity. As such Mbororos who were born and grew up in the North West Region still counted as 'strangers' to the area with limited rights to the regions

natural and state resources. Not until the 1990s with Cameroon's political liberalization that the Mbororo eventually obtained the opportunity to engage in the political arena and to express their interests and grievances directly to the state. The 1992-1997 presidential elections led to high levels of political tension in the Northwest Region. The Mbororo voted CPDM believing that only the government could protect them. State-led intimidation thus helped place the Mbororo in conflict with their predominantly SDF supporting neighbours. The antagonism worsened when the SDF promised to give farmers more land should they gain power. Violent attacks on Fulani communities rose sharply. Many Mbororo compounds were destroyed around 1992, after the presidential elections. All the harassment and molestations experienced by the Mbororo made their integration into the society very difficult.

Unlike the majority of grassfielders, Mbororo generally distanced themselves from party politics. For instance during the presidential election in 1992, most Mbororos avoided taking sides and voted for the Muslim, northern Cameroonian candidate Bello Bouba Maigari of the NUDP. In the same year, a group of Mbororo youths met in the capital Yaounde and formed MBOSCUDA, the Mbororo social and cultural development Association. Later on, another alternative association SODELCO was also formed with Alhaji Baba Dan Pullo at the head. The two aforementioned associations were supposed to fight, protect and defend the right of the Mbororos in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. But, instead of concentrating themselves with their various objectives, the two because of leadership ambition have constantly been at loggerhead, each claiming to be the rightful representative of the Mbororo people not only in the North West, but in Cameroon at large. This leadership struggle between MBOSCUDA and SODELCO has not only helped in further marginalising the Mbororos, but has helped push them to being citizens at the margin.

### ***2.5. MBOSCUDA's access to justice and promotion of land rights for the Mbororos of the North West of Cameroon***

Mboscuda's access to justice programme is relentlessly advocating for the government to re-allocate rural areas to agriculture and grazing in the entire Northwest Region of Cameroon and that has been done only in Menchum Division out of seven divisions in the region. The re-allocation was done in Menchum Division when sometimes in the year 2005, the farmers of the Wum sub-division carried out a series of public demonstrations requesting the graziers to leave the entire sub-division, claiming that the graziers had occupied most of their farmlands. In the course of the conflict, many houses of the graziers were destroyed, their properties looted with many severely injured.

Some of the graziers whose houses were destroyed took up residence at the local police and gendarmerie stations and a lot of pressure was put on the government, which set up a commission that re-allocated rural areas to agriculture and grazing. MBOSCUDA should be noted is an umbrella association of the Mbororo people that is working towards the de-marginalisation of the Mbororo people in Cameroon especially in the North West Region. The source in [14] noted that MBOSCUDA also aimed at protecting the rights and promoting the culture of all Mbororo people in Cameroon. MBOSCUDA also uses the law courts to secure the rights of Mbororo herders over grazing lands. The achievement of the Access to justice programme of MBOSCUDA also included the recovery of the sum of 3.835 000FCFA extorted by corrupt government officials from 8 families,

over 400 cases of intervention documented on soft ware across three year (2004-2007); 150 Mbororo Youths trained as paralegals/psych-legal counsellors, recovered 46 cattle seized from Mbororo pastoralists by corrupt government officials, a divisional farmer-grazier commission made of only farmers and graziers established for the exploiters of the Ndop wet lands areas, facilitated three workshops for traditional leaders (fons and Ardo'en) and government officials on Democracy, Good governance and farmer-grazier conflicts management and transformation.

In 2001, Alhaji Baba Danpullo forcefully occupied more than five kilometres squared of the Sabga Communal grazing land in Mezam Division and constructed there in Semi permanent structures with wood for his shepherds, thereby extending the Elba Ranch from Ndawara in Boyo Division to Sabga in Mezam Division.

The Sabga Mbororo population through their paramount traditional leader, the Lamido and MBOSCUDA, lodged a series of complaints to the administration of Tubah sub-Division where Sabga is found and the administration of Mezam Division and no immediate action was taken to redress the situation.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2002, some angry Mbororo youths from Sabga went to the encroachment piece of land and burnt down the structures constructed there in by Alhaji Baba Dan Pullo. Before doing that, the youths had informed Alhaji Baba Danpullo and the administration of Tubah Sub Division and Mezam Division of their intention. As a result, during the day of the incidence, Alhaji Baba's agents, the Gendarmerie and the administration, represented by the assistant divisional officer of Tubah sub division were present. The Mbororo youths had a video camera man to film the destruction. A few hours after the incident, the video Camera man in the person of Usman Haman, presented himself to the Gendarmerie officers who were at the site. He was immediately arrested and carried to the Elba Ranch where his video Camera was seized and he was severely tortured by Gendarmerie officers.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2002, the High Court of Mezam Judicial division granted bail to Usman Haman, following an application that the lawyer for MBOSCUDA made in court. YaoubaUmaru, Yunusa Bangoji and Adamu Isa were later arrested in the town of Douala and carried to Bafoussam where they were jointly detained with Usman Haman. Within this same period, one Musa Bure, a very influential member of the Sabga Mbororo family who was accused of having organized the youths in Sabga to carry out the destruction, was shot at in his house in Sabga one early morning by a senior Gendarmerie officer. Also, the then North West provincial President of MBOSCUDA in the person of Musa Ndamba, was arrested in Bamenda by Gendarmerie Captain and Commander of the Gendarmerie Company of Boyo Division and carried to Fundong, the capital of Boyo Division. After two weeks in Gendarmerie detention, MBOSCUDA's lawyer succeeded to release Musa Ndamba on bail through the High Court of Boyo judicial division, as noted by the informant in [15].

While under detention in Bamenda awaiting the determination of their appeal by the North West court of Appeal, Yaouba Umaru escaped from prison custody. The appealed matter continued with the other three convicts. According to Fon and Ndamba, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2004, the North West Provincial court of appeal entered judgement in favour of the three appellants and reversed their conviction and sentence by the Bafoussam military Tribunal. The civil award of the lower court was also set aside. The most interesting part of the court of

appeal judgement was the order it made, restraining Alhaji Baba and his agents and assigns from interfering with the piece of parcel of land in question or engaging in any provocative act in relation thereto, which is likely to lead to a breach of peace until the administration determines the pending land dispute between the parties. The court went further to state that, it reserved the right to sanction by way of contempt any contravener of its order.

Meanwhile Yaouba Umaru was later arrested in the east region and taken back to Bamenda. The Lawyer for MBOSCUDA thereafter caused Yaouba's appeal to be re-listed in suit NO. BCQ/5 C/2004. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2006, the North West Regional Court of appeal also entered judgement in his favour and reverse his conviction and sentence by the Bafoussam Military Tribunal.

Analogous to the North West Fons Union (NOWEFU) Mbororo leader of the North West formed the North West Lamidos Forum (NWLFF) with its base in Sabga. This body did not function for long. However the demand for a Mbororo leaders' forum continued to exist. MBOSCUDA organized a one-week workshop for Mbororo leaders of the North West province to discuss their contemporary socio-political and administrative role within Mbororo society and in relation to the state. The participants agreed on the need for regular workshops and for a joint forum to pursue their communities' welfare. In 2002 the Mbororo of the Grassfields counted two members of government as ambassadors of their cause, namely Peter Abety, minister for special Duties (designated as Waziri of the Mbororo'en by Lamido Sabga) and Manu Jaji Gidado, Attaché at the Presidency. In the meantime, Abety has been discharged from office but continues to support Mbororo interest in his position as University lecturer in Yaounde.

When in 2000 new computerised identity cards were issued, MBOSCUDA and Ballotirial encouraged the Mbororo population to register. While in the previous system, Mbororo were generally registered as being born in Northern Cameroon, the new identity cards indicate their actual birth place. Mbororo henceforth qualify as regional citizens with claims and rights to natural resources and political representation in their home area. MBOSCUDA went a step further and portrayed the Mbororo as an endangered minority whose cultural survival had to be protected. In December 2004, it was publicly announced that the Cameroonian government recognizes the Mbororo alongside the pygmies as "indigenous minorities". In line with this decision, MBOSCUDA officials were enrolled to participate in Government programme for the development of indigenous minorities and autochthonous peoples.

Notwithstanding the above, the Mbororo community in North West Cameroon had been faced with so many challenges that are sometimes dreadful. A clear example was the incident that happened in Sabga in 2008 with the death of Lamido Sabga. Two of the late Lamidos sons came up claiming to be the rightful successors to the father's throne. They were Ahmadou and Mamuda Sabga. As the story goes before the father passed away, he had already designated Ahmadou Sabga to be his rightful successor.

By then, Mamuda Sabga was in Buea where he has spent most of his life working. When the father died, he hurriedly returned to Sabga and claimed the throne. The Mbororo community in Sabga instead recognized Ahmadou Sabga as the new Lamido of Sabga. Mamuda Sabga then with the help and influence of Alhaji Baba

Dan Pullo forcefully took over the throne. The two seek the support of the Administration and got it. Majority of the Mbororos in Sabga then decided not to recognize Mamuda Sabga as the new Lamido of Sabga. They rallied up, stage a serious up rising to chase Mamuda Sabga from the Lamidate but were suppressed by a heavy gendarme deployment solicited by Alhaji Baba from the administration. Many of the Mbororos sustained serious injuries in that incident while others ended up dying. The Mbororo'en were forced to accept Mamuda Sabga as the New Lamido of Sabga. Up till now they are still agitating, as noted by the source in [16].

The Mbororo community in the Northwest Region have also in one way or another being responsible for their full or non-integration in the area. The author in [17] noted that, the fact that some Mbororos in the Northwest feared that Western Education would lead to assimilation and loss of islamisation greatly contributed to the exclusion of the Mbororo from the socio-political development of their communities. *Pulaaku*, a Mbororo code of conduct also acted as an obstacle to their integration. The farmer-grazier conflict, ethnic differences, lack of communion in the domain of community development put the Mbororo and the indigenes in conflicts, as such hindering the smooth and holistic integration of the Mbororo in the Northwest Region.

### 3. Conclusion

The Mbororos in North West Cameroon can thus be located at the intersection of citizenship, clientelism and marginality in contemporary Cameroon. The Mbororos have not simply been excluded from the local definitions and practices of citizenship. But have been integral to their formation. The role and status of the mbororo as 'resident aliens', is characteristic of the relationship of marginal groups to 'mainstream' notions of citizenship. Mbororo graziers in the North West have tended to use their relative wealth to cultivate patrons in the local state, thus reinforcing their reliance on informal pattern client relationships. This pattern has now been altered, with the new Mbororo social movement advocating for Mbororo rights on the basis of their residence rather than their belonging revealing again the possibilities of progressive politics to emerge from the margins. it is high time that the administration and local population of the North West Region of Cameroon, refrain themselves from 'Mbororophobia' or 'Fulaniphobia', recognized the Mbororos as full Cameroonian citizens coming from the same region. The Mbororos and local grassfielders should forget their differences, accept each other as brothers and sisters for the betterment and development of the North West region in particular and why not Cameroon at large. This will foster the full integration of the Mbororo into the Northwest Region of Cameroon.

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