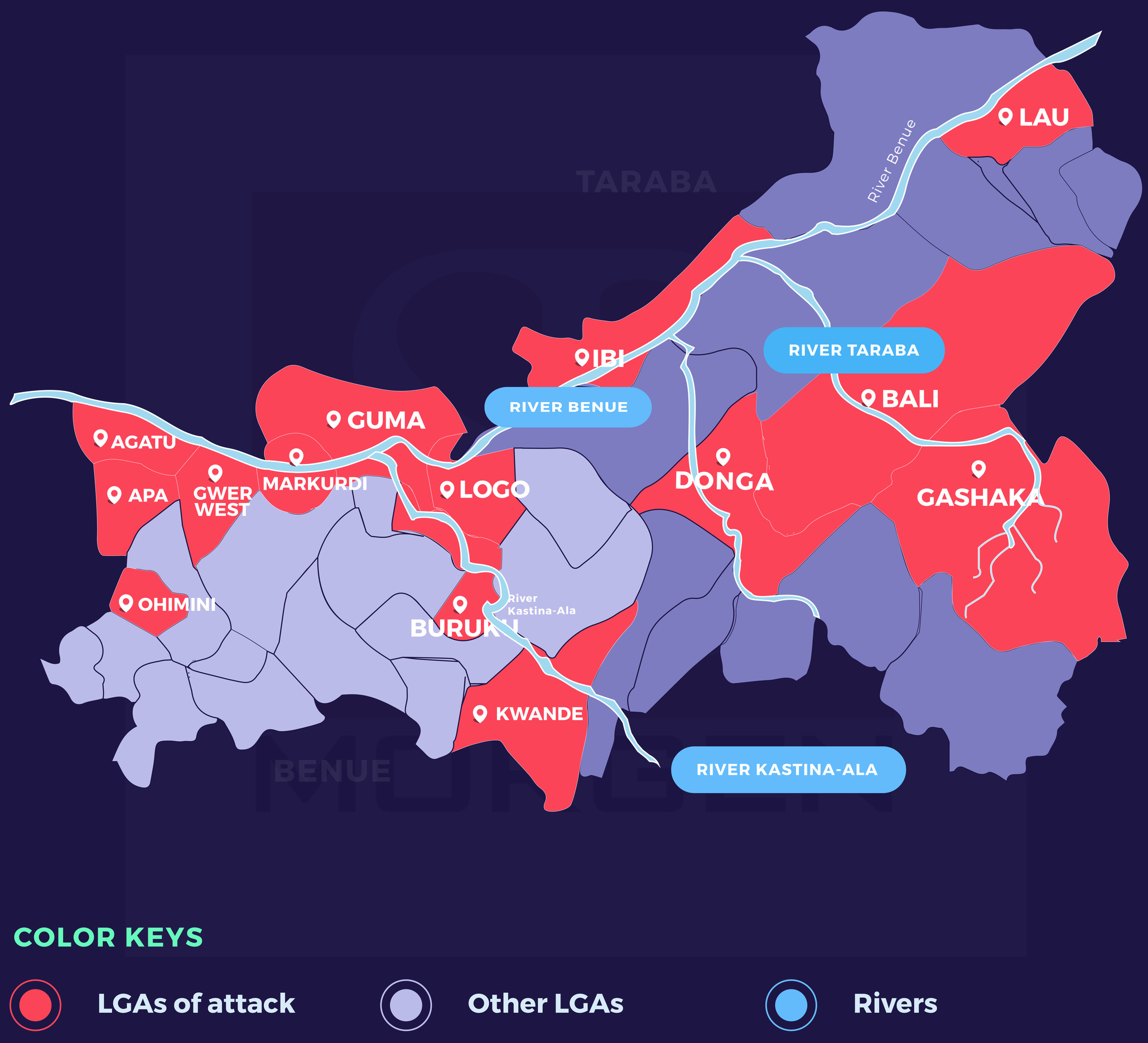
Fulani herdsmen attacks in Benue and Taraba States



Understanding the flow of the Pastoral Conflict

Prior to the recent escalations, herdsmen would graze in public areas and trade with farmers for leftovers to feed their flock. However, security problems, porous borders leading to easy flow of arms, desertification, and an increase in the number of cattle, coupled with a rise in the population of farmers and improper planning by the authorities, the resources along the routes could not sustain both communities and the herdsmen resorted to violence to take what they would have traded for before.

Our data has shown that the initial attacks occurred mainly along the banks of the Katsina-Ala and Benue Rivers as herdsmen entered farms along the fertile river basin close to the banks.

After such attacks, the herdsmen moved on. A lack of response from the authorities, led farmers to seek justice in form of reprisals, which were for the main carried out against settled Fulani and/or herdsmen who arrived after those who carried out initial attacks may have moved out of the area.

The Fulani who were victims of these reprisals would then call on the wider community of Fulani who would arrive to avenge Fulani deaths and occupy the land, widening the area of the conflict.