

CONFLICT TRENDS

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

2 by Vasu Gounden

FEATURES



3 **A New Peace in Africa?**

by Andrew Mack with Tara Cooper

12 **Space for Peace? The Use of Space Technology to Monitor Conflict Trends and Human Security in Africa**

by Jo-Ansie van Wyk



18 **The Internet and Democracy in Africa**

by Ian Henderson

25 **The Environment and Conflict in Africa: Toward an Analytical Framework**

by Jean-Bosco Butera and Marcel Leroy



32 **Electoral Conflicts in Africa: Is Power-sharing the New Democracy?**

by Kingsley Moghalu

38 **The African Diaspora as Agents of Peace on the Continent**

by Awil Mohamoud and Sarah Osman



45 **Understanding Peacebuilding: Consolidating the Peace Process**

by Cedric de Coning

ACCORD UPDATE

52 **The Africa Peace Centre**

by Sean Callaghan



EDITORIAL

BY **VASU GOUNDEN**

This Issue of *Conflict Trends* is the last of the tenth anniversary series in 2008. It is being published at a notable time when there are several watershed events taking place globally and in Africa that will have a significant impact on Africa's fortunes. Internationally, the global financial crisis, which started in the United States (US), and the election of the first African-American into the office of President of the US have shaped, and will continue to shape, the developments around the world for several decades.

The global financial crisis is as significant as the collapse of the Berlin Wall as it signifies a crisis of ideology that has defined the world for centuries. Capitalism and the market economy as we know it today will, of necessity, be reshaped by its proponents and opponents. This structural change will in the long term affect Africa's economic choices and consequently Africa's long term development, which has not been served well by either communism or capitalism. Therefore paradoxically, it is possible that the world's crisis may turn out to be a new beginning for Africa!

In the short term however, much needed aid for development, crisis management, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance will be threatened by cutbacks in spending by the major donor nations. This will likely prolong the resolution of several serious crises in Africa, most notably, the conflicts in Somalia, Darfur, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The election of Barack Obama as President of the United States in 2009 is a significant development in the definition of identity politics, which is a major driver of most conflicts around the world. His election signifies a marked shift in voting along narrow identity lines, to a values-based voting pattern, and is an indication of the possibilities for moving beyond narrow identity definitions and categorisations in social relations and politics. However, what occurred in the US must still be contextualised bearing in mind the long development of the American democratic order, the socio-economic

status of its people, and the specific dynamics of this particular US election.

The differences in the societal nature of the US and Africa is most starkly demonstrated in the recent events in the DRC. In the last ten years, in fact over the life of this magazine, we have come full circle in the DRC. In 1999, renegade members of the late President Kabila's party, defected to the eastern DRC and started a rebellion on the issue of the Tutsi ethnic group's security. This rebellion lasted several years and disrupted several countries in the region. The matter was settled through armed conflict and protracted negotiations.

Today, almost ten years later, the renegade General, Laurent Nkunda, is leading a similar rebellion in the east on the same issue of the Tutsi ethnic group's security. The months of conflict have left several hundred people dead and several hundred thousand others displaced. There is no immediate end in sight. Rwanda is accused of assisting the rebels and Angola has indicated that it may send troops to assist the DRC Government, a similar development that took place in 1999, eventually engulfing almost thirteen countries into the conflict.

The DRC is not in any way close to achieving even a small fraction of the socio-political and economic conditions that exist in the US. It is therefore important that we temper our euphoria and optimism based on the recent positive election events in the US, with this reality of what is occurring in Africa. African countries are in transition to societies that will eventually be more responsive to the developmental needs of its people. In the meanwhile, our journey towards change requires that we must realise the realities of the challenges confronting Africa and continue to strive to effect positive change in building a better Africa. We are proud that over the past decade *Conflict Trends* has been an effective instrument in voicing this message and serving this ultimate goal. ▲

Vasu Gounden is the Founder and Executive Director of ACCORD.

A NEW PEACE IN AFRICA?¹

WRITTEN BY **ANDREW MACK WITH TARA COOPER**

Following the end of the Cold War, the number of armed conflicts being waged around the world declined sharply.² By 2005, there were 40% fewer conflicts of all types than in 1991, while high-intensity conflicts declined by some 80%. The one region in the world in which there was no sustained decline was sub-Saharan Africa, where there were 25% more conflicts in the 1990s than in the 1980s. Towards the end of the 1990s, while most of the rest of the world was becoming less violent, Africa's conflict numbers and associated death tolls increased considerably.

Then came a remarkable change. Between 1999 and 2006, most of the major conflicts in West Africa (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire) and Central Africa (notably Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo), as well as the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, either came to an end, or the violence de-escalated dramatically, leading to significant reductions in

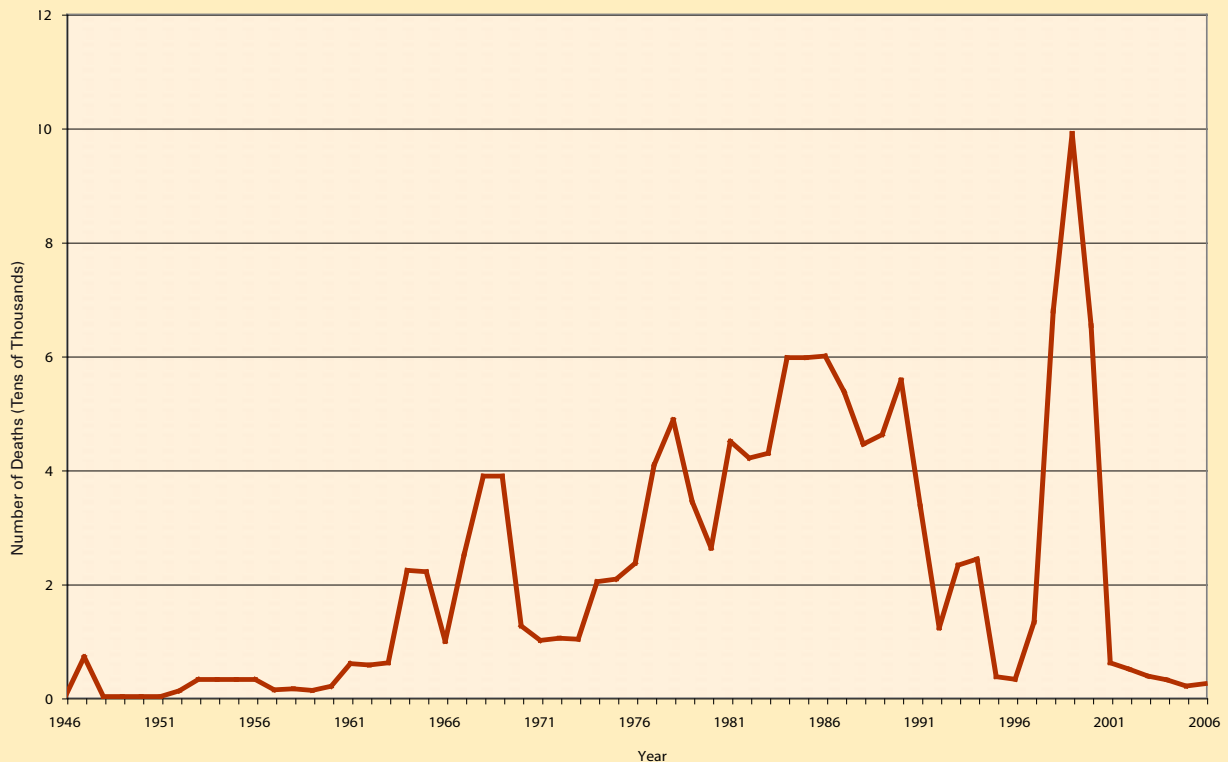
fatality tolls.

As Figure 1 shows, the estimated fatality toll in 1999 was almost 100 000, the highest in the region since the end of World War II.³ But, by 2002, the fatality count for the region as a whole had shrunk to less than 5 000. The level of violence continued to drop and, by 2005, the fatality estimate for sub-Saharan Africa was less than 2 000 – the lowest in 45 years and less than 2% of the 1999 fatality count.

Non-state Conflicts: A Long-ignored Category of Political Violence

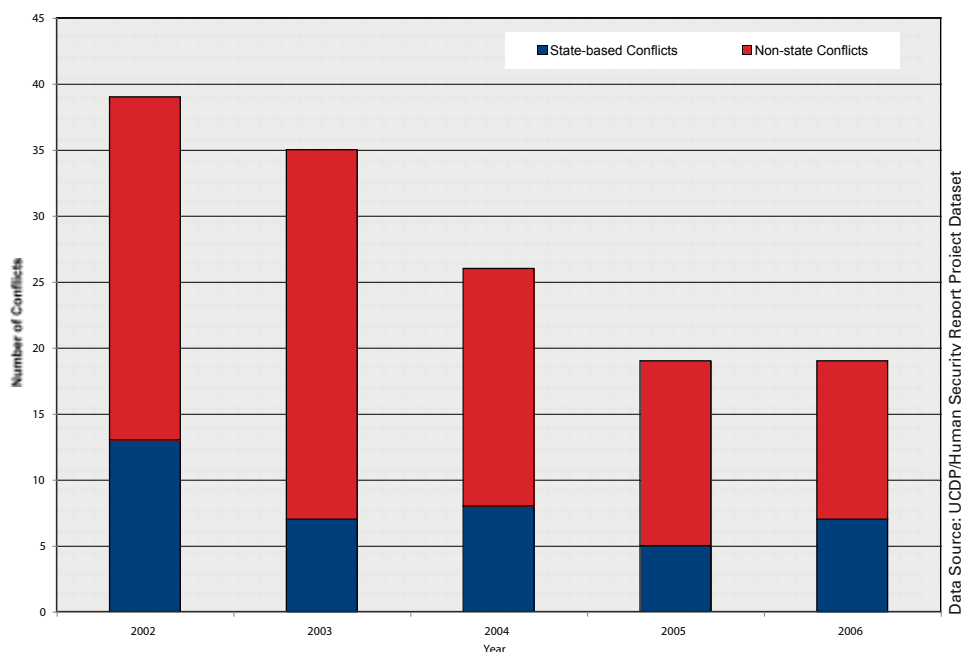
Most quantitative analyses of Africa's wars focus on state-based conflicts. They do not include 'non-state' conflicts – that is, those conflicts that are fought between various armed groups – rebels fighting rebels, warlords fighting warlords, and between different ethnic and religious communities. The distinguishing feature of

Figure 1: Reported Battle-deaths from State-based Armed Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1946-2006



Data Sources: Lacina/Gleditsch Dataset; Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP)/Human Security Report Project

Figure 2: State-based and Non-state Armed Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2002-2006



non-state conflicts is that none of the warring parties is a government.⁴

Until recently, there was no comprehensive, annually updated dataset on these largely ignored conflicts. However, in 2004, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) created a new dataset for the Vancouver-based Human Security Report Project. The trend data on sub-Saharan Africa’s non-state conflicts shown in the bar graphs in Figure 2, which also include state-based conflicts, are instructive.

Two things are apparent from Figure 2. First, there

fatality toll from state-based and non-state conflicts dropped by almost two-thirds from 2002 to 2006.

Organised Violence Against Civilians

A third category of political violence focuses on deadly assaults on civilians – by both governments and armed non-state actors. The UCDP calls this phenomenon “one-sided violence”. The rationale for having this separate category is that killing defenseless civilians is fundamentally different from armed conflict and should, therefore, be treated separately. For a campaign of

THE VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS IN KENYA IN EARLY 2008, WHILE GARNERING A HUGE AMOUNT OF MEDIA ATTENTION, ACCOUNTED FOR LITTLE MORE THAN A FRACTION OF ONE PERCENT OF THE RWANDAN DEATH TOLL

were a lot more of the rarely reported non-state conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa than state-based conflicts in every year from 2002 to 2006. (The year 2002 is the first year for which non-state conflict data is available.)

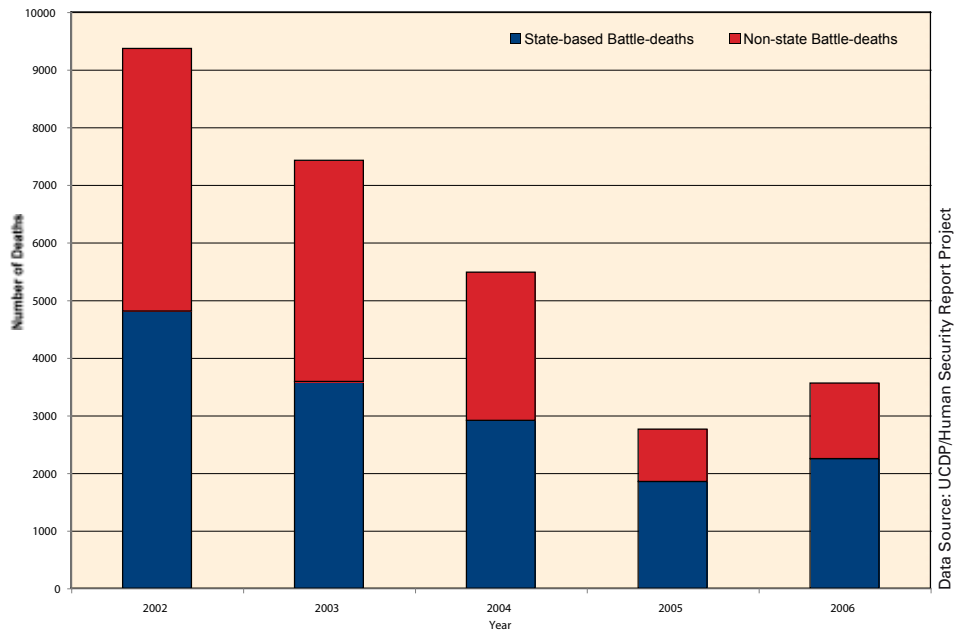
Second, the combined total of both non-state and state-based conflicts declined throughout the period: the former by 54%, the latter by 46%.

Non-state conflict battle-death tolls show a similar pattern of decline. As Figure 3 indicates, there were some 4 600 non-state battle-deaths in 2002; in 2006, there were just over 1 300 – a decline of some 70%. The combined

one-sided violence to be recorded, 25 or more civilians must be killed by a government or organised non-state group within a calendar year.

Most, but not all, campaigns of violence against civilians take place in the context of civil wars. This was certainly the case with respect to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, when an estimated 500 000 to 800 000 civilians – Tutsis and moderate Hutus – were slaughtered in the space of a little more than three months. If the higher estimate for Rwanda is correct, then the toll is greater than the total number of people killed in all

Figure 3: Reported Battle-deaths from State-based and Non-state Armed Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2002-2006



the wars being waged around the world in 1950 – the deadliest year for battle-deaths since the end of World War II.

Since 1994, there has been nothing remotely as horrific as the Rwandan genocide in sub-Saharan Africa – or indeed anywhere else in the world. The violence against civilians in Kenya in early 2008, while garnering a huge amount of media attention, accounted for little

more than a fraction of one percent of the Rwandan death toll. However, campaigns of one-sided violence, by governments as well as rebels, continue to kill the innocent across the region.

After fluctuating in the 1990s, the number of campaigns of one-sided violence peaked in 2002. But, as Figure 4 indicates, this was followed by a sharp – though uneven – decline. Between 2002 and 2006,

Figure 4: Campaigns of One-sided Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2002-2006

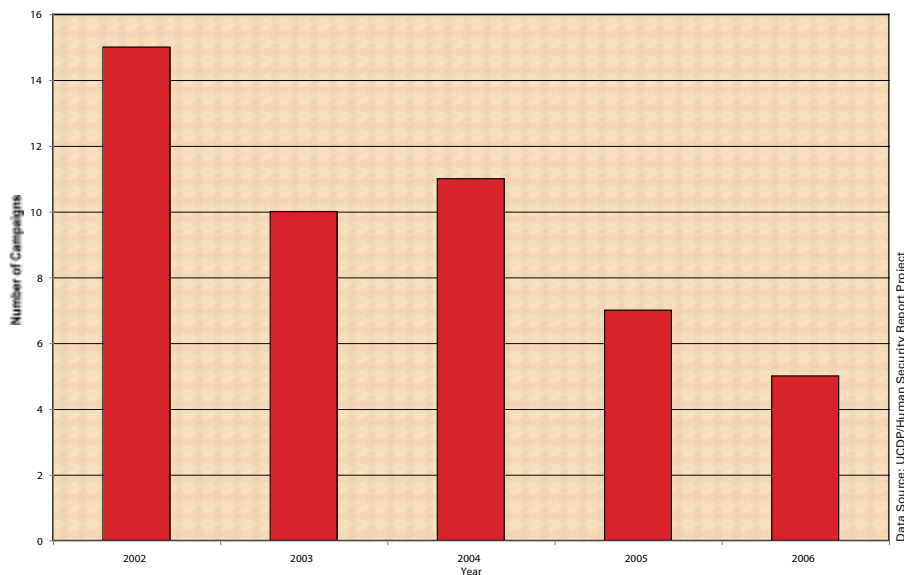
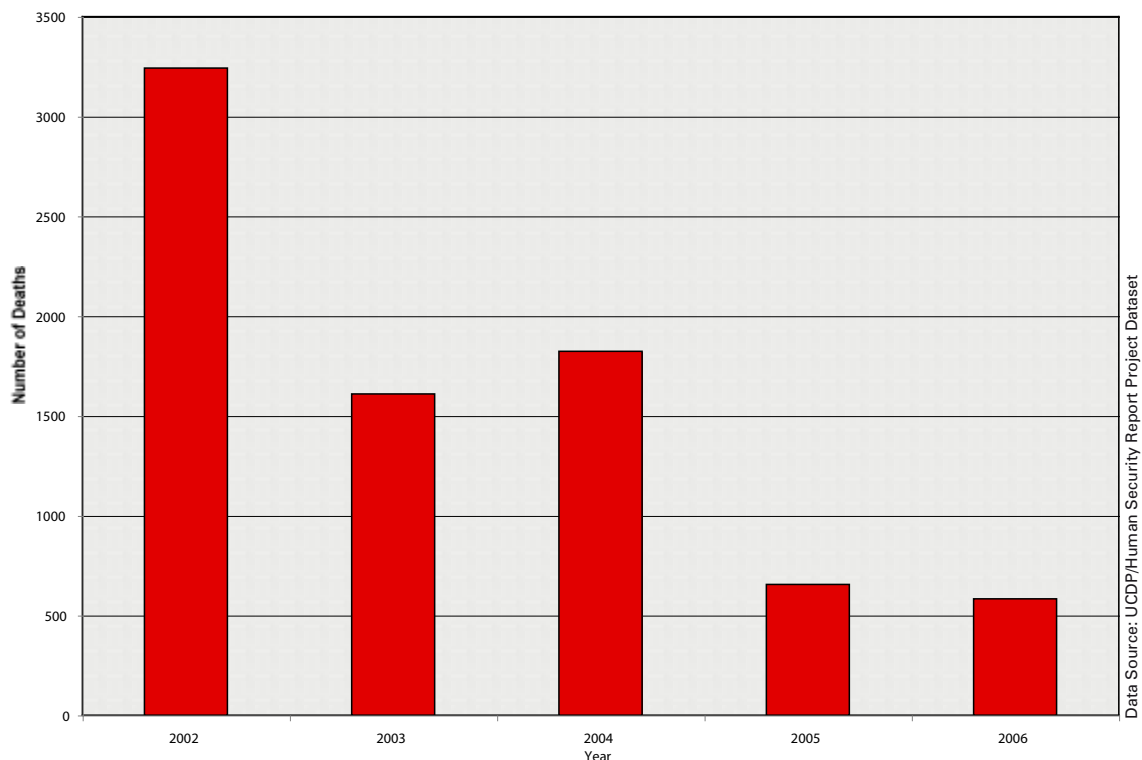


Figure 5: Reported Deaths from One-sided Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2002-2006



the number of campaigns of one-sided violence dropped by 67%. This steep decrease parallels the similar declines in both state-based and non-state conflicts over the same period.

Like the fatality count from state-based and non-state conflicts, the death toll from organised violence against civilians also declined sharply from 2002 to 2006. Given the big decline in the number of campaigns of one-sided violence in this period, this is not surprising. As Figure 5 indicates, the death toll in 2006 was just over one-sixth of that in 2002.

What about 'Indirect' Deaths?

Battle-deaths and deaths from one-sided violence are only a relatively small part of the human cost of Africa's wars. The number of 'indirect' deaths – fatalities caused by war-exacerbated disease and malnutrition – is many times greater than the number of deaths from violence in most poor-country wars.

There is very little in the way of reliable statistics on indirect deaths for sub-Saharan Africa – or anywhere else in the world, for that matter. Indeed, there is only one country – the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – for which there are nationwide estimates of indirect deaths over time. These estimates derive from a series of mortality surveys undertaken by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) since 1999.

The most recent IRC survey, released in January 2008, estimates that there have been about 5.4 million "excess" or indirect deaths in the DRC since 1998.⁵ The overwhelming majority of these deaths were from war-exacerbated disease and malnutrition. This extraordinary figure raises an obvious question: since we do not have comparable data for any other sub-Saharan African country, how do we know that indirect deaths have not been rising elsewhere in the region?

The short answer is that we cannot be absolutely sure, but that it is unlikely for a number of reasons. The key drivers of indirect deaths are the intensity and scope of the violence, the number of displaced people, the state of local health services before and after the conflict, and access to humanitarian assistance.

We know that, since 1999:

- there has been a major decline in the scope and intensity of conflicts;
- refugee numbers have shrunk substantially; and
- the share of global humanitarian assistance going to Africa doubled between 1999 and 2006 – from 23% to 46%.⁶

The combined effect of these factors suggests that indirect deaths in the region have very likely declined, along with declines in the number and deadliness of

armed conflicts and campaigns of one-sided violence, since 1999.

Stops and Starts: Explaining Sub-Saharan Africa's Conflict Trends

The security situation in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s was extraordinarily volatile. As Figure 6 shows, the average number of conflicts that started each year in the 1990s was twice that of the previous decade. This unprecedented increase suggests that any conflict prevention efforts that were attempted in this period were having a negligible impact. However, the average number of terminations per year was more than twice that of the 1980s, and a growing percentage of these terminations were negotiated settlements. This suggests that efforts to stop wars – ‘peacemaking’, in United Nations (UN) terminology – were meeting with increasing success.

While this latter development is encouraging, the fact that the average number of conflict onsets per year in the new millennium remains higher than in every decade since World War II, save the 1990s, is a source of continuing concern. It reflects the ongoing political instability in the region. Sub-Saharan Africa appears to

be much better at stopping wars than preventing them from starting in the first place.

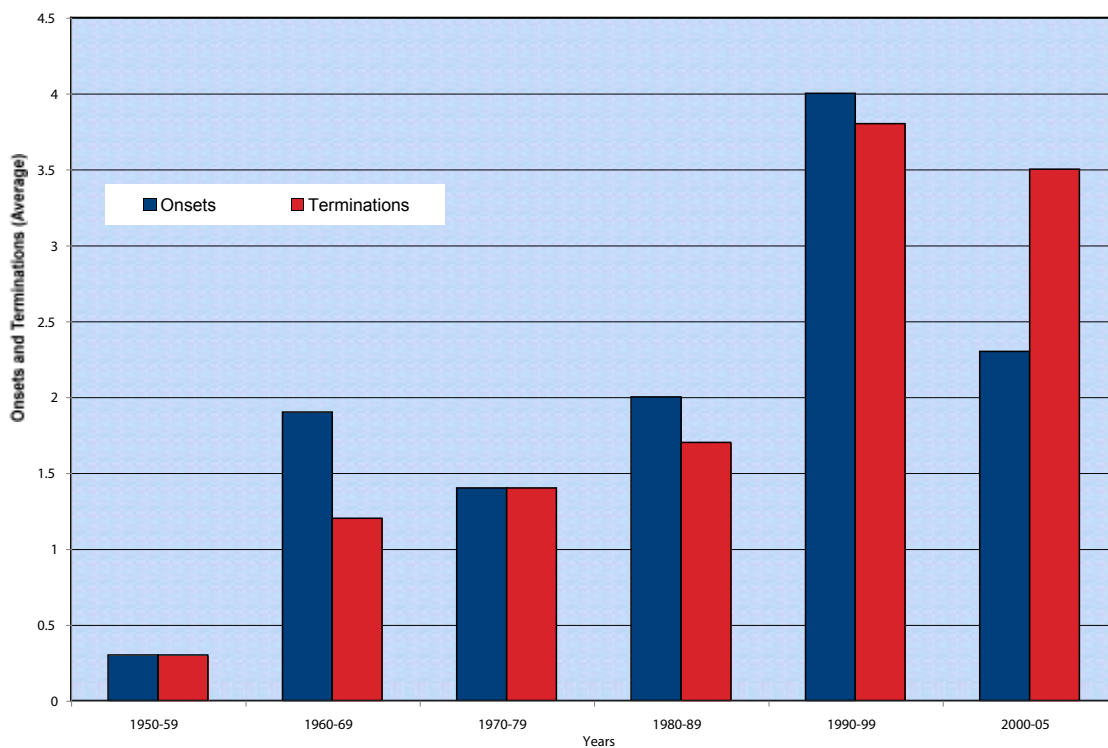
Why the Sharp Increase in State-based Conflict Numbers in the 1990s?

The sharp increase in onsets of state-based conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s was clearly related to the end of the Cold War. Regimes and rebel groups that had long been propped up by the assistance given by one or the other of the two superpowers suddenly found that this support – political as well as economic – had disappeared. The result, in many cases (not just in sub-Saharan Africa), was regime change and ongoing political instability.

However, in sub-Saharan Africa something else was happening. The countries of the region, to a much greater degree than in other parts of the world, were undergoing profound and wrenching political change. In 1988, nearly 90% of sub-Saharan African states had autocratic governments. By 2006, there were just two autocracies in the region, while the number of democracies had increased sixfold, from three to 18.⁷

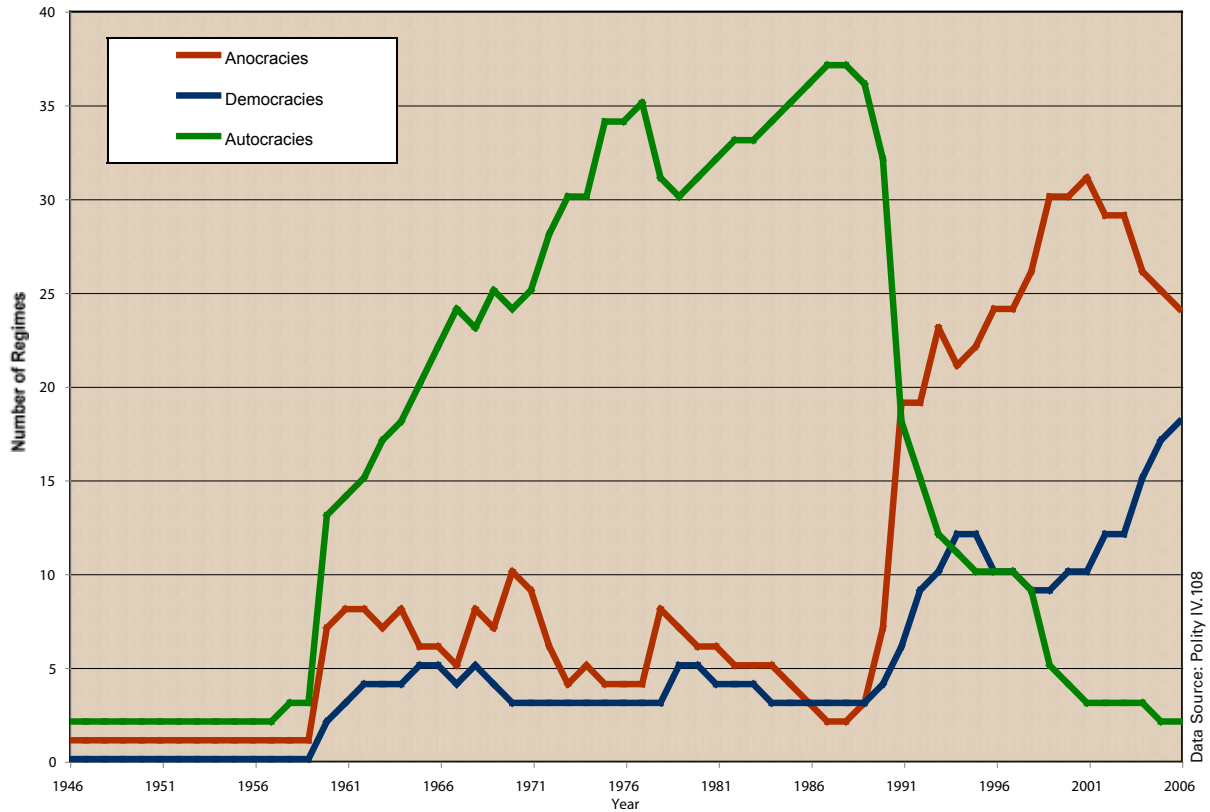
Had the only change been a decrease in autocracies and an increase in inclusive democracies, it would likely

Figure 6: State-based Conflict Onsets and Terminations per Year in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1950-2005



Data Source: UCDP/Human Security Report Project

Figure 7: Regime Type in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1946-2006



Data Source: Polity IV:108

have enhanced regional security, since the latter tends to experience fewer armed conflicts than do autocracies. But these were not the only changes.

Figure 7 uses data from the Polity IV Project at the Center for Systemic Peace in Virginia, United States (US). This dataset tracks not only trends in the number

important part of the explanation for the sharp increase in conflict numbers in the 1990s. As Monty Marshall and Benjamin Cole have pointed out:

“Anocracies have been much more vulnerable to new outbreaks of armed societal conflict; they have been about six times more likely than democracies

THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE CONTINUED TO DROP AND, BY 2005, THE FATALITY ESTIMATE FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA WAS LESS THAN 2 000 – THE LOWEST IN 45 YEARS AND LESS THAN 2% OF THE 1999 FATALITY COUNT

of autocracies and democracies but also trends in ‘anocracies’ – a third regime type, one that is neither fully democratic nor fully autocratic, but a mix of both systems.

The increase in the number of anocracies in sub-Saharan Africa between 1988 and 2000 is startling – far greater than in any other region of the world. In 1988, there were two anocracies and 37 autocracies in sub-Saharan Africa. By 2000, there were just four autocracies, but 30 anocracies. This change is an

and two and one-half times as likely as autocracies to experience new outbreaks of societal wars.”⁸

Given this, and given that the number of anocracies in sub-Saharan Africa increased fifteenfold between 1988 and 2000, it is not surprising that there were twice as many new state-based armed conflicts in the 1990s as in the 1980s.

Other explanations for the sharp increase in war onsets in the 1990s are much less compelling.

The quantitative literature on the causes of armed conflict stresses the importance of 'structural' variables like income per capita, infant mortality rates, numbers of young unemployed males, or dependence on primary commodities. What all these factors have in common is that, unlike political regimes, they change very slowly.

The association between income per capita and conflict is the most robust finding in the quantitative literature. Yet, average incomes have to change a great deal to bring about a significant change in the risk of new conflict onsets. A number of sub-Saharan African countries saw per capita income decline in the 1990s, but the declines were too small to explain the doubling of conflict onsets in that decade credibly. Indeed, in the second half of the decade, average incomes across the region were rising – a change that econometric research on the causes of war suggests would tend to reduce the risk of new wars starting.

How Conflicts End

Understanding why more conflicts have been ending – and not restarting – since the end of the Cold War requires a more detailed examination of the different ways in which wars were terminating in this period.

The pattern of war terminations in sub-Saharan Africa has changed substantially over the past two decades – as it has in the rest of the world. The number of state-based conflicts terminating in victories has decreased sharply, while the number ending in negotiated settlements has risen.

These changes, as Figure 8 indicates, are striking. From 1950 to 1989, 28 state-based conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa ended in victories, six in negotiated settlements. Then, from 1990 to 1999, there were six victories and 12 negotiated settlements. The third type of termination recorded in Figure 8 is labelled 'other'. This is the category that includes conflicts that peter out without either a victory or a peace agreement – or where the death toll falls below the threshold of 25 for a full calendar year. As was the case with negotiated settlements, there was an explosion of 'other' terminations in the 1990s.

As Figure 8 makes clear, the number of conflicts ending in victories continued to shrink in the new millennium, while the number ending in negotiated settlements continued to grow. Between 2000 and 2005, just one state-based conflict ended in victory, and 10 ended in negotiated settlements, while the remaining 10 were characterised as 'other'.

The fact that negotiated settlements constituted almost 50% of all terminations of state-based conflicts between 2000 and 2005, while victories accounted for just five percent, represents a major change from the past. From 1950 to 1999, negotiated settlements made up just 21% of all conflict terminations in the region, while victories constituted 40%.

Ironically, the increased number of conflicts ending in negotiated settlements is a source of potential concern, because negotiated settlements have historically been more prone to restart than those that end in victories. From 1950 to 1999, for example, just

Figure 8: State-based Armed Conflict Terminations in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1950-2005

Years	VICTORIES			NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENTS			OTHER			TOTAL TERMINATIONS		
	Total Number	Number Restarted in Under Five Years	% Restarted in Under Five Years	Total Number	Number Restarted in Under Five Years	% Restarted in Under Five Years	Total Number	Number Restarted in Under Five Years	% Restarted in Under Five Years	Total Number	Number Restarted in Under Five Years	% Restarted in Under Five Years
1950-59	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	2	0	0.0	3	0	0.0
1960-69	9	0	0.0	1	0	0.0	2	2	100.0	12	2	16.7
1970-79	9	4	44.4	1	0	0.0	4	0	0.0	14	4	28.6
1980-89	9	1	11.1	4	0	0.0	4	1	25.0	17	2	11.8
1990-99	6	1	16.7	12	8	66.7	20	14	70.0	38	23	60.5
Total 1950-1999	34	6	17.6	18	8	44.4	32	17	53.1	84	31	36.9
2000-2005	1	0*	0.0	10	0*	0.0	10	6*	60.0	21	6*	28.6
Total 1950-2005	35	6	17.1	28	8	28.6	42	23	54.8	105	37	35.2

Data Source: UCDP/Human Security Report Project Dataset

*Includes terminations for which it is too early to determine a failure rate over the five-year period.

18% of state-based conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa that ended in victories restarted within five years, while 44% of conflicts that ended in negotiated settlements started again.

In the new millennium, however, things look quite different. Negotiated settlements now appear to be far more stable – probably because their implementation is much more likely to receive international support than previously.

The period 2000 to 2005 is too short, and the numbers of conflicts too few, for us to be confident that these positive trends will be sustained in the long term. They are encouraging, nevertheless.

What has Driven the Decline in Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa?

The extraordinary upsurge in international activism in the region, directed towards stopping ongoing wars and seeking to prevent them from starting again, has been a key factor in driving conflict numbers down.

During the ‘proxy’ conflicts in the Cold War years, the superpowers wanted their proxies to win, and there was little interest in mediation. But in the post-Cold War world, a new norm emerged – one that stressed negotiation rather than victory as the way to end wars. From the early 1990s, the international community – including African regional organisations – started to bring real pressure to bear on warring parties in the region’s many wars to stop fighting and start talking.

The big increase in negotiated settlements during this period suggests that this strategy has been effective. Post-conflict peacebuilding missions also expanded rapidly, and have played a positive role in helping to prevent negotiated peace settlements from breaking down. From 1950 to 1999, there were just 18 negotiated settlements – and nearly half broke down within five years. From 2000 to 2005, there were 10 such settlements – and thus far, not one has broken down.

Every indicator of international security activism in the region shows a remarkable increase since the end of the Cold War. For example, a 2007 study of deployments of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs), by Manuel Fröhlich, revealed that the number of SRSGs in sub-Saharan Africa increased from one in 1990, to 16 in 2006.⁹ Since these individuals play a central role in both peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding, their increasing presence is a good proxy measure for the increase in the UN’s overall efforts to enhance security in a region.

The UN’s major contribution to sub-Saharan African security is, of course, peacekeeping, which is an essential component of most peacebuilding missions. There are 65 000 peacekeepers currently stationed in

sub-Saharan Africa – some three-quarters of the UN’s global deployment.¹⁰

It is not only international organisations like the UN, regional organisations like the African Union (AU), and the myriad non-governmental organisations that are involved in peacemaking and peacebuilding. A recent study by Teresa Whitfield traces the evolution of a relatively new security phenomenon – ad hoc groups of states that work together, usually in cooperation with the UN, to help stop wars and prevent them from starting again.¹¹ Sometimes called ‘Friends of the Secretary-General’ or ‘Contact Groups’, these ‘coalitions for change’ have provided diplomatic, political and economic assistance to warring parties seeking to end wars, and to governments in countries emerging from war and embarking on the long and difficult process of post-conflict peacebuilding.

In 1989, there were just two Friends groups but, by 2006, there were 18. Of these, 13 groups were assisting with post-conflict peacebuilding, while five were involved in peacemaking. None were engaged in preventive diplomacy, which is also the case with the work of most of the SRSGs. Conflict prevention, in other words, appears to be more talked about than practised.

Much of this activism has been only modestly successful. Critics correctly note of the UN’s operations, for example, that the major powers have sometimes been obstructive and often disengaged, mission planning has been ad hoc, mandates inappropriate, and resources inadequate.

However, what the critics fail to note is that the net effect of these activities has clearly been positive, despite the failures. A large number of policy initiatives, even if only modestly successful, will have a far greater positive impact overall than a very small number. And, in the Cold War years, the numbers were very small indeed. In sub-Saharan Africa during the Cold War, there was little or no interest in peacemaking or post-conflict peacebuilding.

Conclusion

For policymakers, the fact that more wars are ending in negotiated settlements should be welcome news. Peacemaking initiatives have become both more common and more successful. And – although it is much too early to make any definitive judgments – it appears that negotiated settlements have become more stable in the new millennium. This suggests that post-conflict peacebuilding policies are also having a positive effect.

None of these developments is grounds for complacency. The violence in Somalia and elsewhere, and the huge ongoing toll from indirect deaths in the DRC – and likely other post-conflict countries – point to the gravity of the problems that this region continues to

confront. Moreover, the structural risk factors that helped to make sub-Saharan Africa the world's most violent and war-prone region in the 1990s remains largely unchanged – and may well worsen as a consequence of the current global financial crisis.

But despite the current challenges and past mistakes, the evidence presented here clearly indicates that the international community, working with regional organisations and national governments, can make a major contribution to human security in Africa. **A**

STOP PRESS

New data for 2007 from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) for sub-Saharan Africa became available shortly before this issue of *Conflict Trends* went to press. They reveal a continuing net decline in the overall numbers of conflicts from 2006 to 2007, but an increase in campaigns of violence against civilians.

But, while conflict numbers decreased overall in this period, they did not do so uniformly. Indeed, the new data show an upturn in 'state-based' conflicts (those involving a state as one of the warring parties). There were seven state-based conflicts in 2006; 10 in 2007. The battle-death toll for these conflicts also increased – by just over 10%.

However, the increases in 'state-based' conflicts were more than offset by the sharp decrease in 'non-state' conflicts (those in which a state is not one of the warring parties). There were 12 'non-state' conflicts in 2006; just four in 2007 – a 67% decrease. Non-state battle-deaths also declined sharply, dropping from 1 310 to 226 – a decline of more than 80%.

Looking at the overall conflict numbers and fatality tolls from the time when non-state data first became available, it is apparent that, from 2002 to 2007, the combined total of state-based and non-state conflicts declined from 39 to 14 – a drop of 64% – while death tolls over the same period dropped from 9 368 to 2 727 – that is, just over 70%.

The number of campaigns of 'one-sided violence' against civilians increased sharply from 2006 to 2007 – from five to 10 – but the total number of fatalities rose relatively modestly – from 583 to 693. The 2007 totals, however, while higher than 2006, remain well below the 2002 total of 15 campaigns. With respect to fatality tolls, the decline has been considerably greater – from 3 242 to 693.

In short, the evidence suggests that the overall incidence of organised violence in the region in 2007 is not greatly different from 2006. Total conflict numbers and battle-death tolls are down, while campaigns of 'one-sided violence' against civilians and resultant fatalities are up.

If we take the number of fatalities from all forms of organised violence as being the best single metric

of human security, then there has been a modest improvement since 2006. The combined death toll in 2007 was some 17% lower than in 2006.

Andrew Mack is the Director of the Human Security Report Project at Simon Fraser University in Canada. Between 1998 and 2001 he was Director of the Strategic Planning Unit in the Executive Office of United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan.

Tara Cooper is a Research Officer with the Human Security Report Project. She is also involved with several Africa-focused non-governmental organisations in Vancouver, Canada.

Endnotes

- 1 This article is a condensed and revised version of Chapter 2 of the *Human Security Brief 2007*, which was released in May 2008 by the Human Security Report Project.
- 2 An armed conflict is defined here as an episode of political violence in which a government is one of the warring parties, and where 25 or more people are killed within a calendar year.
- 3 Note that the huge death toll in the Rwandan genocide – an estimated 800 000 – is not counted in the battle-death toll, because the slaughter of defenceless civilians is not the result of armed combat.
- 4 Most datasets only count wars in which a state is one of the warring parties. The 'Major Episodes of Political Violence 1946-2007' dataset, compiled by Monty G. Marshall's Center for Systemic Peace, is an exception. Available at: <www.systemicpeace.org/warlist.htm> Accessed on 29 February 2008.
- 5 Coghlan, Benjamin et al. (2008) *Mortality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: An Ongoing Crisis*, New York: International Rescue Committee.
- 6 Development Initiatives (2008) *Global Humanitarian Assistance 2007/2008*, Somerset, UK: Development Initiatives, p. 15.
- 7 See Polity IV Project at the Center for Systemic Peace, Virginia, Available at: <www.systemicpeace.org> Accessed on: 19 February 2008.
- 8 Marshall, Monty G. and Cole, Benjamin R. (2008) 'Global Report on Conflict, Governance and State Fragility, 2008' in *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 18, no. 1 (January 2008), pp. 3-21.
- 9 The dataset was created by Professor Dr. Manuel Fröhlich of Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, Germany. Only SRSGs who played a security role are counted here.
- 10 See 'Africa's Peacekeeping Challenges in 2008', Jane's Foreign Report in *Jane's International Defence Review* 21, January 2008.
- 11 Whitfield, Teresa (2007) *Friends Indeed?: The United Nations, Groups of Friends, and the Resolution of Conflict*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

SPACE FOR PEACE? THE USE OF SPACE TECHNOLOGY TO MONITOR CONFLICT TRENDS AND HUMAN SECURITY IN AFRICA

WRITTEN BY **JO-ANSIE VAN WYK**

Since the publication of the first issue of *Conflict Trends* in 1998, several African governments – most notably Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria, Egypt and Kenya – have increasingly applied space science and technology (S&T) to improve human development in their countries. This was confirmed by, *inter alia*, the Second African Space Leadership Conference hosted by the South African Department of Science and Technology in Pretoria in 2007.

Space S&T is no longer the domain of a small clique of so-called space-faring nations such as the United States (US), France, India and Brazil. Increasingly, commercial actors are operating in the space industry, which makes satellite images, for example, available to its clients. Google Earth¹, is also freely available, but it is predominantly a US-driven system, and is sometimes barred in countries with poor human rights records. Whereas satellite imagery has traditionally been applied by states for military and strategic purposes (not discussed here), it is increasingly being used by the United Nations (UN) and international humanitarian groups such as Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) to track human security in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The notion that ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’ is particularly significant in cases where governments have either denied human rights abuses, or denied access to international humanitarian groups.

This article discusses how space S&T can be applied to determine conflict trends such as environmental and human insecurity, report on human rights abuses in inaccessible areas, and track criminal activities such as piracy off the Somali coast, and how space S&T can be applied in post-conflict reconstruction.

The Application of Space Science and Technology

The application of space S&T such as Earth Observation (EO), geographic information systems (GIS), global position systems (GPS) and remote sensing can assist the continent’s decision-makers to determine and assess conflict trends, human security and states’ compliance with international agreements.² For decades, illegal logging in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been conducted to support conflicts. Most of these areas have been inaccessible, but recent satellite imagery reveals the extent of these activities. Figure 1 shows deforestation in the Nord-Ubangi and Mongala provinces of Zaire (now the DRC) in 1975. Here, deforestation occurs along roads, as indicated by the loops of light green through the dense rain forest.

Figure 1: The Nord-Ubangi and Mongala Provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 1975³



Figure 2: The Nord-Ubangi and Mongala Provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2003⁴



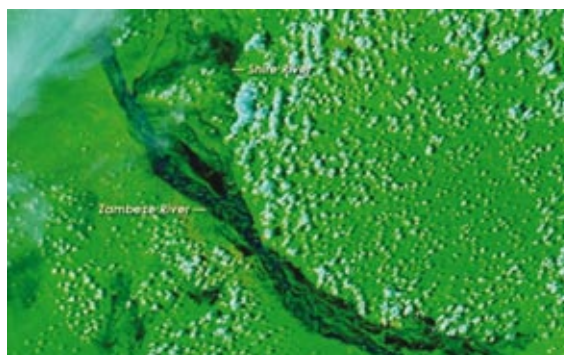
In 2003, after years of conflict in the DRC, the deforested corridors have widened to such an extent that they almost merge, as Figure 2 indicates.

Images such as these can form the basis for international efforts similar to the Kimberley Process Verification Scheme, which aims to prevent and curb the trade in so-called 'blood diamonds'.

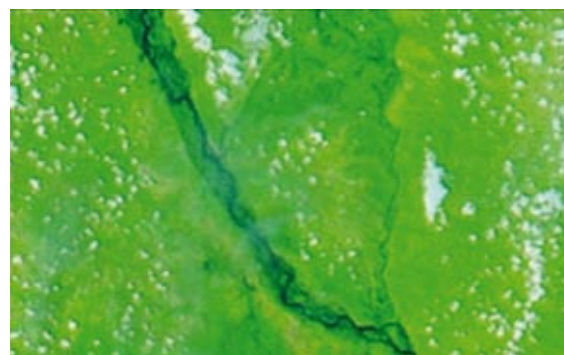
Figure 3 depicts two images of the Zambezi River in Mozambique. The top image was taken on 15 January 2008, and the bottom image on 26 December 2007. These images show the Zambezi River downstream from the Cahora Bassa lake, close to the borders of the Sofala, Tete and Zambézia provinces. Here the water is dark blue or black in the images, and the surrounding plant-covered land is bright green. Scattered clouds are pale blue and white. The flooding that occurred in January 2008 rivalled the flooding that occurred in 2000-2001, which killed almost 700 people and displaced 500 000 people.

Despite regular flooding, the Zambezi floodplain is fertile and mostly inhabited by subsistence farmers. In January 2008, the Mozambican government and humanitarian organisations such as Doctors Without Borders and Save the Children evacuated more than 62 000 people from the floodplain.

Figure 3: The Zambezi River in January 2008 (top) and December 2007 (bottom)⁵



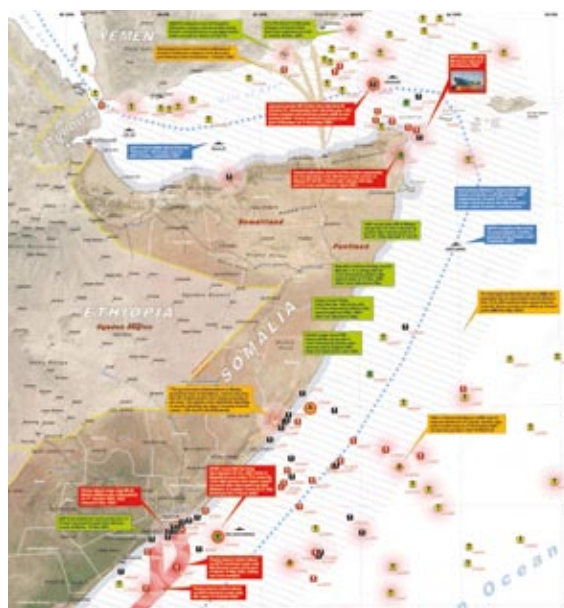
15 January 2008



26 December 2007

More recently, satellite imagery, as Figure 4 indicates, has been used to track the recent activities of pirates off the Somali coast.

Figure 4: Satellite Images of Pirate Activities Off the Somali Coast⁶



Somalia has been described as one of Africa's total collapsed states. For several years, pirates have used its geo-strategic location to hijack ships. By September 2008, Somali pirates held as many as 10 ships, demanding millions of dollars' ransom, and threatening regional stability as well as preventing urgent humanitarian assistance to Somalis.⁷ The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is relying on the Dutch, French, Danish and Canadian navies to escort WFP ships delivering food to almost three million Somalis facing starvation.⁸ If the Djibouti Agreement between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS), which was signed on 19 August 2008, is not properly implemented and proper state structures restored, there is little hope that piracy will end. In this case, satellite images will continue to be used to protect humanitarian and cargo ships.

The Somalia piracy example illustrates the complex threats to human security in Africa. Satellite imagery can be a cost-effective 'force multiplier' (an added resource) for decision-makers to alleviate human and natural disasters.⁹

United Nations' Use of Space Science and Technology in Africa

UNOSAT is the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme, which is implemented in cooperation with the European Organisation of High Energy Physics (CERN). Since 1963, UNOSAT has delivered satellite images to relief and development organisations. These images assist decision-makers to track and resolve humanitarian crises.¹⁰

Since 2004, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been using satellite data to identify underground water resources for almost 200 000 Sudanese refugees in nine UNCHR refugee camps in eastern Chad. Figure 5 is an example of satellite data that identified underground water for these camps.¹

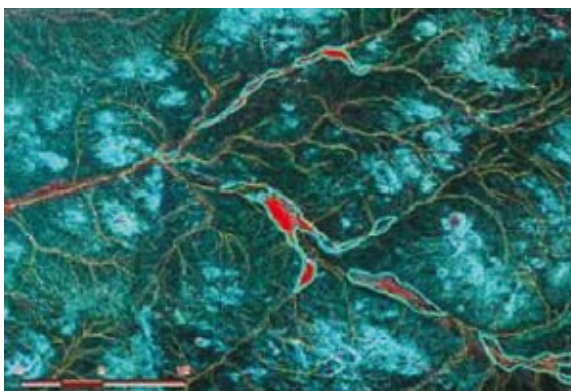


Figure 5: Satellite Image of Underground Water for Refugee Camps in Eastern Chad¹²

More recently, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) released *Africa. Atlas of Our Changing Environment*, which predominantly includes space S&T such as EO and remote sensing to highlight environmental insecurity on the continent, and to help improve decision-making in this regard. Apart from environmental analyses, the Atlas also includes images of the transboundary movement of people and refugees in conflict areas such as the Parrot's Beak region in Guinea and Darfur.¹³

Human Rights Watch in the Ogaden Region of Ethiopia

In the case of the conflict in Ethiopia's Ogaden region, international humanitarian organisations use satellite images to prove incidences of village burnings and destruction by the army, which is usually denied by the Ethiopian government. In this case, HRW applied images collected by the Science and Human Rights Project of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which developed a system to assist human rights groups to access high-resolution satellite images and monitor the activity of military groups. The images obtained for this project indicated the removal and burning of numerous structures and complete villages, as well as the forced relocation of people. It also reported on the destruction of new structures. In its reports on the activities of the Ethiopian government and army through *Collective Punishment*¹⁴, HRW, drawing on this project's satellite images, concludes that these actions amount to 'crimes against humanity'.¹⁵

Darfur, Sudan

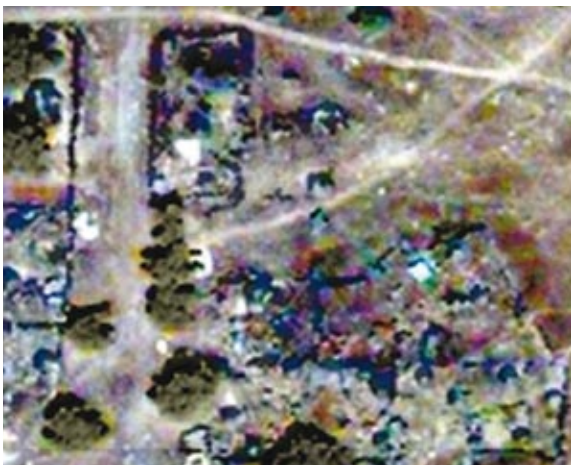
Since 2005, the AAAS has also provided satellite images of 12 villages in Darfur to AI to monitor attacks, and the movement and activities of rebel groups and the Arab militia group, the Janjaweed. AI's 'Eyes on Darfur' project makes specific use of satellite imagery to highlight conflict trends in Darfur and the rest of Sudan. Figures 6 and 7 include satellite images of the destruction of villages in Darfur.¹⁶

These images show the destruction of homes and other structures. It is also possible to determine how, when and where this destruction took place, using the images. This can assist humanitarian organisations in their advocacy and relief work. For organisations such as AI and Save the Children, this type of monitoring has become essential, as the Sudanese government continues to deny entry permits into Darfur.

Figure 6: Satellite Image of the Destruction of a Village in Darfur¹⁷



Figure 7: A Portion of the Town of Donkey Dereis in Darfur Before its Recent Destruction (Top), and After (Bottom)¹⁸



Rwanda

The case of Rwanda illustrates the role that space S&T can play in post-conflict reconstruction. For example, satellite imagery was used to search for mass graves. Figure 8 contains a Landsat Thematic Mapper (TM) image of Rwanda from 1990. Rwanda's borders are shown in white. The image also includes the dense forest areas surrounding the Parc National des Volcans and the Forêt de Nyungwe, which appears green in the image. These forest areas are situated north and south of Lake Kivu, respectively.¹⁹

Figure 8: Satellite Image of Pre-genocide Rwanda (1990)²⁰

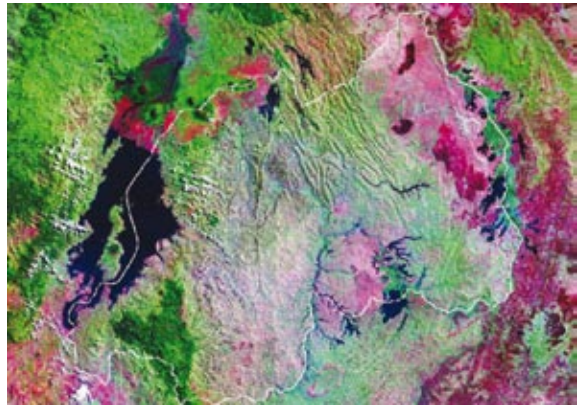
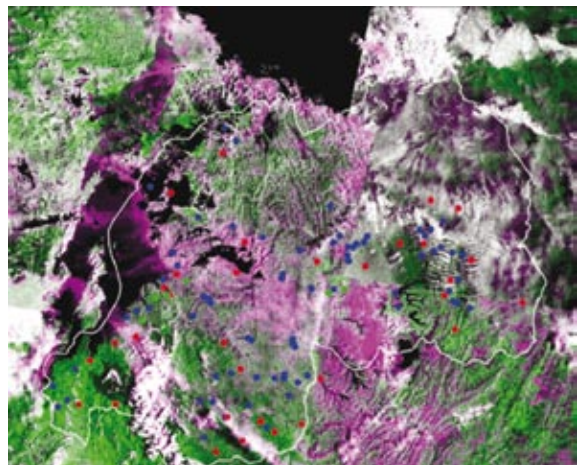


Figure 9 is a Landsat TM mosaic of Rwanda after the genocide (1995). Rwanda's borders are shown in white. The satellite image was used to indicate various genocide sites such as mass graves ('*lieux publics*'), which are shown in blue, memorials ('*lieux de culte*') shown in red, and resistance sites ('*collines de résistance*'), which appear in green.²¹

Figure 9: Post-genocide Rwanda (1995) and Various Genocide Sites²²



SATELLITE IMAGERY CAN BE COSTLY AND THEREFORE INACCESSIBLE TO MOST AFRICAN HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS

Operation Murambatsvina²³ in Zimbabwe in 2005

In 2005, while the government of Zimbabwe was still denying that human rights abuses occurred during its Operation Murambatsvina, AI and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights produced satellite images showing strong evidence of the government's destruction during Operation Murambatsvina as part of the ruling party's political campaign against opponents.²⁴ These satellite images (see Figure 10) showed the complete destruction and forced relocation of a settlement that once housed almost 10 000 people outside Harare.

An official government operation, Operation Murambatsvina was the government's programme of mass forced eviction and the demolition of homes and informal businesses, aimed at forcibly relocating the urban poor to rural areas, and contributing to rising numbers of internally displaced Zimbabweans.

Figure 10: Satellite Images from 2002 (top) and 2006 (bottom) Showing the Destruction of the Porta Farm Settlement, Harare, Zimbabwe²⁵



In Figure 10, the 2002 image (left) shows a large informal settlement with structures and roads. The 2006 image (right) shows empty plots. It is estimated that 850 structures were demolished during Operation Murambatsvina.²⁶

Conclusion

Despite its limited use, this article has illustrated that space S&T can be applied to address conflict trends and human security in Africa. However, there continues to be some limitations to the application of space S&T:

- First, satellite imagery can be costly and therefore inaccessible to organisations – for example, most African humanitarian organisations.
- Second, some tribes, clans and ethnic groups in some areas are nomadic and, if these groups are moving into or out of a conflict-ridden area, it may be difficult to determine whether it is a forced displacement or part of the groups' seasonal movement. It is therefore, necessary, that the images that capture these movements be clearly analysed. A humanitarian group may respond to images that reflect movements, only to find that it is part of a seasonal nomadic movement.
- Third, lacking a scientific support base means that satellite imagery cannot be interpreted. This is particularly the case in underdeveloped states, which may have access to these images but do not have the skilled scientists to interpret the images in order for the government to respond to humanitarian crises appropriately and adequately.
- Fourth, weak African states lack the institutional capacity to implement decisions relating to the interpretation of EO, remote sensing and GIS areas relating to the resolution of conflict, or humanitarian assistance.²⁷

Notwithstanding these limitations, space S&T has and will increasingly continue to contribute to human security and justice in Africa. Space S&T may assist governments and humanitarian organisations achieve this against the approaching deadlines for the Millennium Development Goals.

The use of satellite imagery to support human rights abuses undertaken by national governments remains controversial. However, the UN Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Space (1986) encourages the use of EO and remote sensing to improve human security.²⁸

Access to space S&T is no longer limited only to governments and commercial actors. The 'democratisation' of this type of technology is increasingly assisting humanitarian organisations to 'reach' people in Africa who are severely affected by conflict and violence. It can also assist in bringing individuals to book for crimes against humanity and war crimes, which they may have denied, but are clearly visible and accessible via satellite imagery. **A**

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Endnotes

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THE INTERNET AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

WRITTEN BY **IAN HENDERSON**

In the very first issue of *Conflict Trends*, in 1998, I wrote an article on the impact of technology in general – and the Internet specifically – on Africa’s increasingly marginalised place in the global community at the start of the ‘Internet age’.¹ I said that we had entered a new global paradigm with information as the new currency – a fast-moving, increasingly virtual world where access to and control of information was necessary to participate in the new economy; a world that Africa’s connection with was tenuous at best. I asked whether the ‘information divide’ would fuel conflict in Africa, and whether we could leverage the Internet to have a constructive impact on the direction conflicts would take on the continent?

Things looked bleak for Africa then, at the end of the 20th century, but the Internet is one of the most

democratising forces humankind has ever known, and puts power in the hands of many. There were unprecedented opportunities, and much could be done. So, what has been accomplished, and has anything really changed?

Ten Years... A Lifetime?

Firstly, the problem: we are in a period of massive global flux. Power relations have shifted from the north-

Above: Students in a classroom at a primary school in Soweto, South Africa, engage in a lively internet chat with students in Scotland.

GAINS IN COMMUNICATION ENHANCE DEMOCRACY AND OPENNESS. INFORMATION FLOWS MORE FREELY THAN EVER BEFORE, AND BLOGS, INTERNET NEWS SERVICES, WEBSITES, MAIL SERVICES AND EVEN SIMPLE ELECTRONIC MAELS ARE CREATING MULTITUDES OF FAST-FLOWING RIVERS OF COMMUNICATION THAT DID NOT EXIST PREVIOUSLY

south dynamic of much of the 19th and 20th centuries, to a centre-periphery arrangement where power is wielded from multiple interconnected centres throughout the world (no longer just in the capitals of the West), and disempowered peripheries are defined not by geography, but by access. The United States (US) may still be the prevailing military superpower, but the rise of China and the Asian economies, the role of India in technology and outsourcing, and the growing hegemony of Europe will fundamentally reshape the political landscape in years to come. The poor, the under-educated and non-resourced (often located not only in far-flung rural districts, but in and around the capital cities of poorer nations) are becoming increasingly marginalised, and marginal to, power relations in the world at large. In a time of increasing mechanisation and automation and decreasing reliance on labour, the poor are becoming more and more expendable. This is the new world order.

This problem of access is mirrored in a global map of Internet usage in the world. In 1998, only one million people were online in Africa – 90% of them in South Africa (SA) – the other 699 million in continental Africa left on the sidelines as the world surged forward into a new age. Africa had one Internet subscriber per 7 000 people, against a global average of one in 40. Clearly, most of Africa was being bypassed. Debates about how to harness technology for development were commonplace, and there was much hope that it would help us to leapfrog the divide from skyscraper to village, but there was a paucity of actionable ideas on what to do, and political and fiscal will to do it.

The reality, 10 years ago, was that Africa was still languishing in an agrarian age where up to 80% of the population eked out livings from the soil in increasingly impoverished and overpopulated rural and peri-urban areas. Land remained a strong cultural symbol – of both individual heritage and communal identity. While the rest



Technology has brought an unprecedented measure of information sharing and accessibility, and has diversified the process of getting news out.



The internet is a major democratising force as it is able to place information and power in the hands of many.

of the world was collapsing trade barriers, dreaming of life in space and adopting an international, borderless virtual existence, Africa was facing the devastating consequences of being left behind.

On a positive note, I said at the time that challenges also present opportunities. The conventional limitations and restrictions of traditional forms of commerce and interaction in the physical world are no longer significant. Opportunities for partnerships are unprecedented: Icelandic businessmen could partner African companies, and the emphasis of the Internet on diversity means that 'small is beautiful, and playing fields are level'. Simply put, the Internet has opened up opportunities for small initiatives to compete on a (more) level playing field than in the past. Technology is racing, not creeping, and change is so rapid that those entering the game late are at little disadvantage to those who have been playing since the start. Furthermore, gains in communication enhance democracy and openness. Information flows more freely than ever before, and blogs, Internet news services, websites, mail services and even simple electronic

mails are creating multitudes of fast-flowing rivers of communication that did not exist previously.

So how has that picture changed today? There has been significant movement, and average Internet penetration has increased dramatically. Now, as many as 51 million people are online in some way in Africa³, but Africa still stands at only one user in 20 people, against the rest of the world at one in four (in Europe, almost one in two, and North America, more than seven in 10).⁴ Broadband figures are even more dismal, with only 0.1%⁵ having the access necessary to benefit from now-standard media-rich content to which the rest of the world is party.⁶ In comparison, over 300 million people worldwide now access the web via fast Internet lines⁷. Rampant growth in China projects that this country is about to overtake the US as the nation with the most broadband lines.

In Internet exchange points (IXP) measurements⁸, Africa ranges from 450 megabits per second (Mbps) in Johannesburg (South Africa), 14 Mbps in Nairobi (Kenya) and 12Mbps in Cairo (Egypt), to 400 kilobits per second (Kbps) in Kigali (Rwanda) and 128 Kbps in

Mbabane (Swaziland). Busy IXPs in the Western world, in contrast, may handle 413 gigabits per second (such as in Amsterdam). This is almost 1 000 times as much Internet traffic as Johannesburg, and 3.2 million times as much traffic as Swaziland – a staggering disparity! The conclusion is inescapable... Africa may have made much progress, yet is still *very* far behind.

REUTERS / THE BIGGER PICTURE



A team of engineers lay fibre optic cables, as part of a government project to provide internet and telephone services, at Seredupi, 450 kilometres north of the capital city, Nairobi, in Kenya.

Relative Priorities

In a continent where nearly 300 million people do not have access to clean drinking water⁹; over 40% live on less than US\$1 a day¹⁰; HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis are rampant; and where 34 out of 53 African countries are considered among the world's least developed¹¹, why are we even discussing technology, the Internet and international competitiveness? Are there not more important problems on which we should be focusing our attention?

The unfortunate reality is that cycles of war and violence, political instability, corruption and

mismismanagement create conditions that make it difficult to deal with these problems. What is needed is economic growth and technological advancement, on a large scale. The UN's Millennium Development Goals¹² reflect an increased willingness on the part of developed nations to contribute to the process of development in Africa. But it is Africa and its people who need to take the lead in this process.

In economic and governance terms, there are positive signs: amid looming global financial meltdown, African economies have continued to perform well this year, and foreign investments have poured into Africa – doubling in recent years to US\$39 billion.¹³ The Mo Ibrahim Foundation has found that governance is improving in 31 of 48 sub-Saharan countries.¹⁴ The idea of an African Renaissance, while facing many challenges, has the beginnings of some real basis. "You don't usually hear these stories, but there are signs that Africa is moving on."¹⁵

There is Hope

The Internet age is the realm of the potential. It is levelling the playing field between large and small. It is one of the most democratising forces in history, and it is connecting the world like never before. Here are a few thoughts on key themes, and how they might impact life in Africa.

1. The Internet is, by definition, an anti-hierarchical structure. Rather than information being stored in vertical silos to which only those in control have access, it is the greatest experiment in democratisation that the world has ever known. The world's biggest and most accessed encyclopaedia, Wikipedia¹⁶, is written, edited and managed in 24 languages by the people, for the people. 'The global information cloud' is the term that is increasingly being used to describe humanity's shared knowledge and, as this cloud grows, it becomes more accessible to more people. It is a paradigm of inclusion rather than exclusion.
2. What role should governments be playing in all of this in Africa? Although the rise of the private sector has been a marked trend worldwide – to the extent that some super-companies now have bigger turnovers than small states¹⁷ – government still plays a highly dominant role in African states. Most could do more to facilitate electronic infrastructure – the gains to be had by investing in infrastructure, technology, training and equipment are potentially massive. Which African state is going to be the first to roll out a massive programme for providing free or cheap Internet access at internationally-competitive high speeds, and provide the information-equivalent of



The telecommunications sector (including telephone, mobile phones and internet) in Cote d'Ivoire has recorded a 70% increase in net profit from 2003 to 2008, generated by about eight million service subscribers.

- a free trade zone to attract massive investment and stimulate business in unprecedented ways? Radical steps are needed, and there is much ground to make up.
3. In 'Internet-speak', *cost* and *access* are the two keywords. Cheap, high-speed Internet access is needed to stimulate economies. This needs to be done in a centralised way in African states, because consumers are too poor to drive the process in the same way as it happened in North America and Europe.
 4. We are not witnessing the slow dawn of a new age – we have a tornado on our doorstep; one which is already obliterating old ways of doing things. Is now not the time to rethink education massively – towards a functional approach to getting students (especially marginalised, poor students) reading, writing and operating computers so that they can plug in to the network and gain the same opportunities that children everywhere else in the world are getting? Classical approaches to education may be redundant.
 5. The paradigm of the Internet age is one of partnership. Geographical limitations are no longer relevant. African businesses, communities, individuals and even states should be looking to use the power of the Internet to facilitate partnerships and joint ventures with those in power centres, from New York to Johannesburg to Beijing.
 6. Cheap technology is now extremely powerful, in real terms. A new breed of basic, functional web-ready computers is all that is needed to change the world. The real-world price of technology has been dropping every year, and the cheapest technology available is now able to do amazing things. Government and business in Africa should be looking at ways to get computers into the hands of as many people in Africa as possible.
 7. One of the major inhibitors of communication in Africa has been the paucity of telephone lines. Wireless is the future, and Africa should be looking at wireless solutions. Cellphones have become ubiquitous, and have had a dramatic impact on communication in Africa. It is now much cheaper to connect an office of people wirelessly than it is by laying network cables.

African states should be leading the charge to build comprehensive wireless networks.

8. Diverse technology should be adopted. In the recent Zimbabwean elections, results travelled around the country immediately via short message service (sms) after they were posted on polling station doors, and the entire country was able to participate in assessing the outcome. In recent days in South Africa, the potential launch of a breakaway political formation from the African National Congress (ANC) has been motivated and discussed in hundreds of thousands of smses and emails circulating the airwaves.
9. Bandwidth bottlenecks will become less of a problem in the future. In Africa, we should start envisioning how to leverage the power of the Internet when this is no longer the debilitating restriction it is now.
10. The impact of the Internet on media¹⁸ in Africa has been massive. Technology has brought an unprecedented measure of information-sharing and accessibility, and has diversified the process of getting news out there, to the point where it has become very difficult for hostile governments to control the media. One reporter with a digital camera, a laptop and a satellite phone can cover an entire conflict.
11. The Seacon undersea cable linking the east coast of Africa with European and American Internet hubs goes online in June 2009, and will bring high-speed connections at a price 400 times cheaper than current prices to half the continent.

Encouraging Examples and Scenarios

Despite general negativity about conditions of underdevelopment and conflict in Africa, there is currently unprecedented interest in news from Africa, especially from investors.¹⁹ Africa is seen as having massive unexplored investment potential, and the first Football World Cup in Africa in 2010 will draw massive focus and attention to the continent. A few examples that show the enhancement that the Internet is bringing to life in Africa follow.

Is Kenya set to challenge India for the outsourcing crown? According to Google Insights for Search²⁰ figures (a mark of interest – not actual delivery, but a strong indicator of potential), Kenya showed a threefold growth

to leap to the top of the list table, ahead of India. With reliable, fast Internet soon to arrive – thanks to Seacon – the infrastructure base is there to turn potential into reality. French-speaking employees in West African call centres – trained to speak with Parisian accents – are already supporting French companies, at a fraction of the cost of equivalent services in France. This service generates €85million in Morocco alone.²¹

Afrigadget, a website that reports on African ingenuity and innovation, has made it onto the list of *Time Magazine's* 50 best websites for 2008.²² The founder believes strongly in the potential of change to be brought about by innovation. Aside from covering innovations in sanitation, food, water, health and transportation, it recently featured Cyril Mazibuko, the first black South African athlete to be registered by the SA National Paragliders' Association, who home-built his own glider. They also featured a SA-designed foldaway house that can be erected in minutes in disaster or trouble zones.

Chinese investment²³ in fixed wireless networks is powering the extension of wireless Internet offerings in Namibia, Mozambique, Ghana, Chad and elsewhere. An impending onslaught of new generation wireless technology will only expand and broaden the market. The Indian Ocean islands have recently taken a decision to connect themselves to each other and the rest of the world via under-sea fibre optic cable. This will greatly enhance connectivity in these locations. Google and HSBC, Europe's biggest bank, have thrown their weight behind a plan to provide cheap, high-speed Internet access to millions in Africa and other emerging markets via a range of new satellites.²⁴ Clearly, the connectivity picture is changing, and changing fast.


There are a plethora of conflict intervention and mitigation tools continent-wide that are using technology in innovative and effective ways to play a role in managing conflicts on the continent effectively. Conflict reporting has improved dramatically, conflict analysis is happening at numerous levels, and several organisations – including the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) – are seriously looking at mechanisms to get an effective conflict early warning system operational on the continent.

Democratisation and the Internet

The picture that is outlined thus far is a classic case of the dark cloud with a silver lining. It is easy to paint a despairing picture of the future of the African

NOW, AS MANY AS 51 MILLION PEOPLE ARE ONLINE IN SOME WAY IN AFRICA, BUT AFRICA STILL STANDS AT ONLY ONE USER IN 20 PEOPLE, AGAINST THE REST OF THE WORLD AT ONE IN FOUR

continent – many of the problems of the last 50 years remain unresolved and, in some cases, have worsened. Governments remain fragile, and conflict is an enduring symptom of fragmented societies under pressure. The world is changing fast. Gaps between rich and poor people, nations and continents are widening, and the poor – the bulk of the people in Africa – are marginalised and excluded from this ‘new world’. We are playing ‘catch up’, and we are not catching up fast enough.

However, rampant advances in technology are beginning to offer answers to the infrastructural disadvantages faced in Africa. The Internet is democratising the world in a manner never experienced before – with ‘small’ and ‘diverse’ as key themes. An opportunity remains for the advancement and stabilisation of African societies through the use of appropriate technology. Massive commitments by governments to this process would accelerate it tremendously but, in the absence of that, it will still happen as a diverse network of business, academics and civil society contribute to transforming the way society works. As ever, the time is now. 

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THE ENVIRONMENT AND CONFLICT IN AFRICA: TOWARD AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

WRITTEN BY **JEAN-BOSCO BUTERA AND MARCEL LEROY**

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Conflict Theory and Environment

Ever since Thucydides nearly 25 centuries ago – and perhaps even before him – scholars have been seeking to explain why conflicts happen. Writers often point to human factors, expressed at the individual or societal level, based on ideologies, greed or a quest for power. Designs for dominance – and the reflex to resist being dominated – can indeed be pinpointed as being at the basis of a good deal of conflict arising between individuals, groups and states.

Elements that cannot be attributed to the irreconcilable designs of leaders, rebels or regimes are usually seen as resulting from systemic causes: at the international level, states are acting to seek greater

influence or to redress injustices embedded in the global system. Through notions such as *realpolitik* and *raison d'état*¹, the state has been seen as the expression of a strong collective will to leave its mark, and to assert its values and interests on the global scene.

Conflicts in which resource or environmental factors play a role, do not fit neatly into the 'level of analysis' categorisation to which the previous paragraphs refer.

Above: Predictions about the long-term impact of changes in the people-environment equation on conflict and human survival, is fraught with risks.



Many conflicts that have occurred in Africa in recent decades involve environmental, climate and resource factors.

In these cases, the range of options open to decision makers is thought of as having been affected by changes in the environment in which they operate. In some cases, families and communities whose livelihoods have been severely affected, act without reference to the broader ethnic or national level. In all 'environmental' conflicts, external conditions influence the manner in which individuals, families and communities reach decisions.

Many conflicts that have occurred in Africa in recent decades involve environmental, climatological and resource factors. While much has been written recently on the threat these elements pose for the future stability of the continent, there has been little effort to differentiate and categorise these factors, and to identify the mechanisms through which they may affect the likelihood of conflict. All too often, environmental degradation, climate change, resource exploitation, population change and so on are lumped together. Moreover, while most serious analyses regarding the impact of environmental factors on conflict have concluded that there is no direct link, many shorter opinion pieces and some journalistic work keeps positing

a more or less direct causal relationship.

If we are to progress in understanding how environmental factors relate to African conflicts, we need to refine analytical tools and take account of the cultural and political context through which changes in the man-environment relationship leads to security risks.

African Conflicts, Resources and the Environment

In spite of efforts to develop African instruments to deal with conflicts on the continent, the evidence regarding the frequency of intrastate and interstate conflicts in Africa over recent decades does not show a sustained declining trend. While there appears to have been a decrease in conflict since 2003², the period over which it has been found to exist is too short to carry much statistical weight. Moreover, environmental and climate factors are increasingly implicated in the causal process of both intrastate and interstate conflicts on the continent.

Conflicts in which the sale of resources play a central role appear to be closely linked with the greed of those who control the resources, or who are seeking to

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND CLIMATE CHANGE ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AS TRIGGERS OR COMPONENTS OF CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

control them. The war in Sierra Leone was, throughout most of the 1990s, part of a regional conflict driven by the extraction of “lootable natural resources.”³ Diamonds, timber and high-value minerals have played a major role in a host of African conflicts, including in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. While the geographic scope (cross-border) of these conflicts and the weakness of the states affected makes it hard to contain them, the causal chain – headed by greed and the quest for power – offers ready explanations.

In other cases, conflicts are fueled by a desire to deny the proceeds of the possible sale of resources by the group that controls them, or at least by a wish to share in the benefits that may result. This is at least

partly the case with respect to oil extraction in Nigeria’s Niger delta, although the deteriorating environment and difficult living conditions of the local population – whose livelihood has been negatively affected through the pollution of fishing grounds, farmland and drinking water – has also mobilised resistance.

The struggle for controlling products destined for export is another way in which resources can fuel conflict. In West Africa, the role of cocoa and timber has been well documented, notably with regard to Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia.⁴ Again, the causal chain requires little explanation: the parties involved always have options, but they choose to use violent means to control a lucrative trade.



The battle for control of the diamond reserves in Sierra Leone fueled the civil war in the country, which resulted in the deaths of thousands of people.



Oil from a leaking pipeline burns in the Niger Delta region in Nigeria.

Resource scarcity – which affects subsistence, as well as environmental and climatological changes that have a bearing on the ability of families and communities to provide for their survival – are linked to conflicts in ways that differ substantially from the linkages between lootable or exportable natural resources, and conflict. There is a more compelling dimension to the actions of individuals and communities whose livelihoods and very survival are at stake. Nevertheless, they may pursue a variety of options – violent or non-violent – to improve individual and collective prospects.

Science, Environment and Conflict

It behoves any analyst to start out by recognising that the small portion of the global reality that he or she is examining is unlikely to provide *the* key to unlocking the dynamics of war and peace. Even when choices are constrained by environmental issues, using single-factor explanations for conflicts would be problematic. Conflicts emerge from a complex sequence of events, in which cultural and political factors are always present. The physical environment does not impose a set course

of action: cultural and political factors allow a variety of choices to be made. Sprout and Sprout⁵ provide an early but nuanced analysis, which maps out various pathways between the physical environment and human actions.

Moreover, our understanding of the physical phenomena involved in environmental changes, and of their likely evolution, is still limited. Predictions about the long-term impact of changes in the person-environment equation on conflict or human survival, are therefore fraught with risks. Many alarmist writers, who in the past referred to doom and destruction, were able to save their professional reputations only because of the shortness of human memory, rather than because of the accuracy of their predictions. One example from the late 1960s was *The Population Bomb*, which actually became a best-seller.⁶ The author predicted a future in which population growth would lead to scarcity and conflict, ruining the lives of future generations.

Evidence of environmental change is not always seen by different groups of scientists as pointing towards the same outcomes. The United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) major assessment of the post-

conflict environment in Sudan⁷ paints a dire picture of historical climate change in Northern Darfur. It claims that its scale is almost unprecedented, and has turned millions of hectares of semi-desert grazing land into desert, thereby contributing directly to the conflict in the region. However, Kevane and Gray⁸, in a detailed study on rainfall and the conflict in Darfur, have observed that rainfall did not decline significantly in the years prior to the eruption of major conflict in 2003. Rather, the trend was flat in the 30-year period prior to the conflict erupting (1972-2002), while there was a decline noted between 1940 and 1970. While this finding does not negate the link between rainfall, resources and conflict, it inspires caution for identifying the mechanisms (and time frame) that intervene in the causal chain.

The range of states affected by environmental factors in sub-Saharan Africa is substantial. The Sahel, in particular, has been hit by droughts, affecting at least a dozen countries situated between the Sahara and equatorial Africa. Greater multiyear oscillations in rainfall have also been observed. High population increases and low economic growth rates place further burdens on

conflicts are limited. Disruption of the equilibrium between demographic, ecological, economic and political variables has been recognised decades ago as an early warning in the chain leading to conflict.

Changed resource conditions require a response, which is influenced by a society's culture. Shifts in production techniques (such as the intensification of agriculture following an increase in population), altered resource utilisation (including the use of a wider variety of resources) and other forms of innovation, can help a society cope with changes in its resource base. In making these choices, culture forms a screen through which a society interprets its environment and chooses its response. The greater a group's capacity to accept change, the easier it will be to develop coping mechanisms to deal with environmental change. Inability to adapt internally will require that environmental changes be addressed through increases in external flows, which might be achieved in cooperation with neighbouring groups, but might also engender conflict with them.

A group's propensity to sanction collective violence will also influence possible outcomes in the quest

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES TO LEAD TO RESPONSES AT THE STATE LEVEL, DOMESTIC, SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ALSO PLAY A ROLE

these populations, whose coping capacity has also been weakened by the spread of HIV/AIDS.⁹ Climate change may create additional health problems, such as the spread of malaria to higher altitudes.

While there is no denying the magnitude of environmental and climatic changes throughout much of Africa, it is not always clear whether environmental factors are at the basis of a particular conflict, or whether they exacerbate violence that is politically instigated and driven by underlying economic inequities in the access to resources.

Although serious conflicts have emerged in areas subject to climate change, neighbouring regions undergoing similar environmental and climatic effects may escape the ravages of conflict. North Kordofan state in Sudan, located adjacent to Darfur, seems to be one such region. This observation further underlines the need to elaborate the matrix of factors, which intervenes between environmental and climate effects on the one hand and conflict on the other.

Environmental Change and Pathways to Conflict

Communities living in balance with their environment develop subsistence mechanisms and cultural norms that allow a stable social order, in which

to address changes in a population's resource base. Where violence has led to outcomes that are seen as socially desirable (in particular, when they allow existing production patterns to continue rather than requiring potentially painful social adaptations), resorting to aggressive behaviour will be encouraged. Cattle raiding, endemic in some parts of Africa with pastoralist economies, may be one such practice which often leads to outcomes that are seen as rewarding to individuals (marriage, increased family wealth) and to the group as a whole.¹⁰

Inequalities in access to resources will exacerbate risks for conflicts developing. Powerful groups within societies may seek advantages by controlling the distribution of resources. Inequalities in the distribution of resources (land in particular) may lead to other groups becoming marginalised by being forced to migrate to ecologically fragile regions, leading to further environmental degradation and impoverishment.¹¹

For environmental changes to lead to responses at the state level, domestic, social, political and economic conditions also play a role. Different political systems have varying ways of relating internal conditions to external activities and to conflict. Diversionary war is more often used by elite-dominated systems to diffuse



The Sahel region has suffered many droughts, affecting at least a dozen countries in the region.

domestic dissension and demands, whereas pluralistic governments tend to perpetuate their previous foreign conflict levels, regardless of the amount of domestic conflict.¹²

The nature of the broader political system will also affect the likelihood of conflict. Weak, dysfunctional and failed states are less able to manage potential outbreaks of conflict, or to mobilise resources to address emergency needs and grievances by groups within the state. Internationally, the nature of the international system, and the tools available to address international tensions, have a bearing on the likelihood of interstate conflict breaking out. Permissive neighbourhoods, inadequate regional conflict management tools, and a lack of attention by the international community, all increase the chances for interstate violence.

From Understanding to Action

Environmental factors and climate change are becoming increasingly important as triggers or components of conflicts in Africa. Many of these conflicts

are rather fluid in terms of their location: while they are cross-border in nature, they are not overtly interstate conflicts. They involve groups that often have allies on both sides of state borders, and may also receive assistance from one of the governments involved. Ethnic allegiances spanning borders, and refugees fleeing in search of safe havens add to the often confused nature of such conflicts. The Darfur conflict, which straddles the Chad-Sudan border, is a case in point.

Helping to improve the understanding of conflicts on the African continent in which environmental and climatic elements play a role requires some caveats for future research, as well as for efforts to contain the risks posed by these developments.

- First, rigid scientific analysis of physical evidence (rainfall patterns, vegetation, biomass production and so on) needs to be conducted before inferences are drawn about their impact on livelihoods.
- Second, changes induced by human factors (such as population change, size and


ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE FACTORS ARE INCREASINGLY IMPLICATED IN THE CAUSAL PROCESS OF BOTH INTRASTATE AND INTERSTATE CONFLICTS ON THE CONTINENT

composition of livestock herds, migration) may place further burdens on the physical environment and should be assessed, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

- Third, cultural responses to the changes that are observed need to be taken into account.
- Fourth, the response of political systems and regimes to these challenges needs to be studied, as well as the effectiveness of state institutions whose intervention might be needed.

Environmental changes and their conflict potential do, in the vast majority of cases, transcend national boundaries. Tools to address them therefore need to be developed in a regional context. Efforts undertaken through academic institutions should be coordinated with the states involved, and combined with authoritative approaches by the United Nations, the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities, in order to identify early interventions to prevent environmental conflicts from escalating.

Conflict management mechanisms at the regional level need to be operationalised and actively deployed. The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) and others, can become instruments to devise approaches for dealing with cross-border resource issues in such a way that they become positive sum games for all involved. CEWARN has so far limited itself to dealing with areas in the Horn of Africa, where conflicts between pastoralist groups have been frequent. The NBI has endeavoured to promote the efficient use of Nile water, so that all riparian states can benefit more without reducing the ability of other NBI countries to enjoy enhanced benefits as well. Such efforts can only succeed if the member states of these bodies lend their active cooperation to regional initiatives.

Global climate change is real, and Africa is likely to be more severely affected by it than other continents. However, attributing all of Africa's ills – including the high incidence of conflicts – to the physical environment alone would be incorrect and misleading. Measures need to be put in place to address problems induced by climate change in Africa, so as to ensure that these do not exacerbate the already unacceptable burden of conflicts on the continent. 

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ELECTORAL CONFLICTS IN AFRICA: IS POWER-SHARING THE NEW DEMOCRACY?

WRITTEN BY **KINGSLEY MOGHALU**

GETTY IMAGES



The electoral crises that gripped Kenya and Zimbabwe in 2008, fuelled by allegations of rigged elections and marked by ethnic and political violence, are symbols of the problems that confront democracy in Africa. The struggle *for* democracy in Africa at the end of the Cold War has been followed by a struggle *with* the practice of the concept.

Once touted as the solution to Africa's problems, democracy has become a major source of conflict in countries with some of Africa's biggest economies. This does not mean that democracy is bad for Africa – it is far better than the dictatorships of old. But, given the nature of political power in much of the continent, where power remains linked to ethnic agendas and resource control, Africa needs to confront and overcome the extreme tensions that elections have created in several of its most

populous and wealthy countries. The good news is that this process, slow and painful as it has been, is already underway – even if partially. And a newly emerging economic imperative is playing a key role.

The fundamental problem that has turned elections into violent conflicts is Africa's crisis of governance. Africa is undoubtedly modernising its politics and economics. Multiparty systems are increasingly the norm, two-thirds of African countries now have term limits for the

Above: (From left) Arthur Mutambara, Robert Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai and the mediator, Thabo Mbeki, exchange congratulations after signing the power-sharing accord, in Harare, Zimbabwe (September 2008).

ONCE TOUTED AS THE SOLUTION TO AFRICA'S PROBLEMS, DEMOCRACY HAS BECOME A MAJOR SOURCE OF CONFLICT IN COUNTRIES WITH SOME OF AFRICA'S BIGGEST ECONOMIES

presidency, and at least 14 leaders have stepped down from power as a result.¹ But several countries on the continent still remain under the yoke of venal political elites. Massive corruption is common, as is the politics of the 'big man', who doles out patronage to maintain political power. Efforts to introduce accountability of the political leadership as part of governance in several African countries have not fared well. The relatively weak performance and lack of real independence of Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, as a result of political constraints, is a case in point.

In the first decade after the end of the Cold War, Africa's despots were forced to hold elections as a gale of democratic change swept across the continent. Elections were largely a convenient ritual; the practice of democracy frequently a smokescreen. Some military dictators simply threw off their uniforms and transmuted into 'democratically elected' leaders.

Given all this, there is no universal incentive on the part of many African leaders to organise or allow transparent elections and let the process take its course, let alone give up power when the results are unfavourable. The stage is set, then, for a loss of legitimacy and violent

conflicts when opposition groups feel done in by ballot-rigging.

Kenya and Zimbabwe: Into the Cauldron

Kenya has been a democracy since its independence in 1963. But the country's stability was shattered after its presidential election at the end of 2007. Ethnicity and attendant feelings of exclusion played a central role. Opposition leader Raila Odinga's Luo ethnic group – Kenya's largest after the Kikuyu and the Luhya – has never held the post of president. The Luo have felt marginalised by President Mwai Kibaki's Kikuyu group, and are quick to note that their rising stars in Kenyan politics were eliminated by assassination – namely Tom Mboya in 1969 and Robert Ouko in 1990.

Oginga Odinga, Raila's father, was reportedly frequently humiliated by the Kikuyu when he was Kenya's vice president under President Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's founding father and a Kikuyu. But Raila was dogged in his pursuit of power. Add to this the politics of land: the Luo have long felt dispossessed of land in Kenya's Rift Valley by the economically and politically dominant Kikuyus, who redistributed government-held land to their own advantage after independence.



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Mwai Kibaki (left) and Raila Odinga (right) sign the power-sharing agreement in Nairobi, Kenya (February 2008).



Kenyans celebrate the signing of the power-sharing agreement (February 2008).

The simmering tensions over resources and power led to an explosion of violence by the Luo against the Kikuyu after the elections in December 2007, in which Raila Odinga was an opposition candidate and believed he was cheated out of victory by President Kibaki. Odinga had helped Kibaki win the 2002 presidential elections, in which political parties led by both men formed an electoral alliance. But Odinga subsequently felt marginalised in Kibaki's government. Against this background, the Luo were primed for violence after Odinga's loss to his erstwhile alliance partner five years later.

Meanwhile, in southern Africa, Zimbabwe has also been locked in the throes of an electoral crisis after the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by Morgan Tsvangarai, won 50% of the vote but not enough to avoid a run-off – and the government of President Robert Mugabe did not announce the results of the election for four weeks after the ballot count. Tsvangarai boycotted a run-off election held in April 2008, creating a crisis of legitimacy for Mugabe, who declared victory in an election in which he was the sole candidate.

The electoral crisis in Zimbabwe is compounded by several factors. There has been a long-standing struggle between Mugabe and the internal political opposition, on the one hand, and between Mugabe and the Western powers that have imposed sanctions against his regime,

on the other. The redistribution of land previously held by white Zimbabwean farmers has been a core issue in this conflict. The political crisis in Zimbabwe has led to the collapse of the country's economy – inflation is at 11 million percent and has created a massive refugee crisis that has seen the exodus of three million Zimbabweans to South Africa and other countries in the region.

Unlike the crisis in Kenya, the current one in Zimbabwe is not primarily of an ethnic nature, although Mugabe has received strong support within his part of the majority Shona ethnic group that make up 80% of Zimbabwe's population. Rather, it is more of a personality-driven conflict, in which President Mugabe clearly seeks to be president for life, has little tolerance for dissenting voices, and appears to have made a Faustian bargain between maintaining absolute power and the economic collapse of his country, even as he steadily lost the support of the majority of his country's population.

Power-sharing: The New Democracy

The response of the mediators and protagonists in these crises in Kenya and Zimbabwe has been to negotiate power-sharing deals – coalition governments in which the previous government and the opposition govern jointly. This approach, which is admittedly not unique to Africa and has been applied in Northern Ireland, has been



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In the absence of genuinely independent electoral commissions to organise and umpire elections, it is difficult to avoid electoral manipulations and corruption.

controversial, and raises the question of whether it is likely to become a convenient route for despots to thwart the will of the people in democratic elections in Africa.

In Kenya, despite widely expressed reservations, the deal negotiated by Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, and signed by Kibaki and Odinga, has held together so far. But it has not been without inherent tensions. The Kenyan agreement, known as the National Accord and Reconciliation Act, created the post of executive prime minister for Odinga, and it was expressly stipulated that it would be written into the Kenyan constitution.

In Zimbabwe, a power-sharing deal was brokered by Thabo Mbeki, former president of South Africa, and signed by President Mugabe, Tsvangarai, and Arthur Mutambara, a second opposition leader, in September 2008.² This agreement, in which Tsvangarai is to become the prime minister of Zimbabwe, was made possible by a combination of factors – notably the pressure on Mugabe by his fellow leaders in southern Africa, Mugabe’s loss of support among African leaders in the African Union, and the dire economic situation of Zimbabwe.

As of this writing, however, Zimbabwe’s power-sharing deal has not yet been fully negotiated, let alone implemented. Unlike Kenya’s, the Zimbabwe deal was only a framework agreement, which left several critical

details unaddressed. Agreement on those details – especially those of which parties would lead which ministries – has been difficult to achieve. Mbeki’s recent domestic political misfortunes – his resignation from office under pressure from the Jacob Zuma-led wing of South Africa’s African National Congress (ANC) party – complicated the prospects of a solid power-sharing agreement in Zimbabwe, since Mbeki lost some of the leverage he enjoyed as a mediator who was head of state of the region’s economic powerhouse.

In situations such as those in Kenya and Zimbabwe, power-sharing agreements appear to be a necessary compromise – the least of all possible evils. Power-sharing reduces the risk of violence, but does not address the underlying factors that create conflict in African democracies.³ But it provides an umbrella under which groups in political conflict may feel adequately (though not optimally) represented to pursue a more long-term solution to the underlying issues. It is a ‘big-tent’ approach that emphasises accommodation and co-existence over the winner-take-all outcome of many elections.

Power-sharing arrangements in post-election contexts are transitional arrangements, but could also become permanent features of governance architecture. There is no one size that fits all situations. While it may be seen as rewarding bad political behaviour by despots



African organisations have a key role to play in preventing or monitoring electoral malpractices that lead to conflicts.

and reluctant democrats, it also provides a face-saving mechanism in political cultures that lack maturity, and in which the alternative scenario could be one of destructive violence. The danger is that power-sharing arrangements could become the end itself, rather than a means to an end.

For power-sharing arrangements to work as conflict resolution mechanisms, certain conditions must be in place:

- The conflict must be ripe for resolution. Attempts to create a power-sharing arrangement are rarely successful as a first resort. At that point, each of the protagonists believes their positions or interests will yet prevail and have no incentive to share power. It is when every other peaceful option has failed, and both sides have reached a dead end, that power-sharing deals can work. We have seen this element at work in the negotiations that ended apartheid, the Kenyan crisis of 2007-2008, and the difficulties of the Zimbabwean negotiations, fed by Mugabe's attempts to maintain total control.
- There must be a certain balance of power between the protagonists that makes a power-sharing arrangement acceptable and possible. This balance of power need not rest in material resources or military-security power, but can include other tangible and intangible factors such as external pressure, the internal economy, and loss of legitimacy.

This is especially relevant in Zimbabwe, where Mugabe has demonstrated tendencies that make it difficult to predict the success of a power-sharing arrangement in that country: Two decades ago, after the massacres in Matabeleland created fundamental political problems for Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) party, he entered into a power-sharing arrangement with his opponent Joshua Nkomo and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) party, but this arrangement quickly became a means to co-opt and decimate the opposition, and ZAPU lost most of its influence.

- Power-sharing deals must be backed by law, and should not rest on good faith alone. Legal backing is also necessary because such arrangements usually involve a change in the constitutional status quo.
- Power-sharing deals need to spell as clearly as possible the allocation of functions, responsibilities and powers between the parties.

An additional complicating element in power-sharing negotiations is the spectre of criminal trials for violations of local laws or international humanitarian law – genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Blanket amnesties are not recommended, but the situation is often more nuanced when it comes to the leadership of groups in political conflict when there is no clear winner.

The conundrum of the tension between peace and justice is a deep one, and there is no straightforward answer to the question of whether violations of international humanitarian law should always be prosecuted – especially when the violators are political leaders, and the prosecution of whom might create further instability. Accountability is important, but the context of the case in question must be taken into account.⁴ It is hard to see a scenario in which South Africa would have a peaceful transition from apartheid if there had been no power-sharing arrangement, and Nelson Mandela's ANC party had insisted on putting the apartheid leaders on trial for their crimes. Similarly, one hesitates to envision a scenario in which Tsvangarai can eventually lead Zimbabwe without guaranteeing Mugabe freedom from prosecution. This is a cardinal factor that has driven Mugabe's resistance to relinquishing power in Zimbabwe. The compromise may be to bring to book the foot soldiers of the oppressive regime, although tensions will surely arise over the freedom of erstwhile leaders believed to have presided over the commission of mass crimes.

Lessons for the Future

The practice of democracy in Africa is experiencing growing pains. The risk facing Africa is one in which a new

generation feels that the promise of democracy has not been realised, and turns away from the concept. Electoral conflicts and power-sharing arrangements, imperfect as they are, offer no reason for Africa to turn its back on democracy. The democratic processes in several African countries, from Ghana to Sierra Leone, from Benin to Botswana, have allowed the will of the people to prevail.

In Nigeria, although the controversial presidential elections of 2007 have created problems of legitimacy for President Umaru Yar'Adua, Nigeria's courts have voided several rigged elections of state governors and federal legislators. And, in South Africa, the very practice of democracy that led to President Mbeki's ousting by his own party has set the stage for increased tension, both within the ANC and the wider electorate, in the 2009 presidential elections.

Conflict is inherent in all political relationships and contests, and so democracy has built-in tensions that are not unique to Africa. Observing the current 2008 presidential election campaigns in the United States, identity politics – ethnic, racial, gender and other – are as clear as the debates on the issues. But much of that contest has been personal and ugly – the 'attack advertisement' is a classic American political invention. The spectacle of 'hanging chads' and allegations of vote-rigging in Florida in the 2000 presidential elections made clear that even the most mature democracies also struggle with the concept and practice of democracy.

There are important lessons in the conflicts created by the elections in Kenya and Zimbabwe. The first is that without truly independent electoral commissions as organisers and umpires, it is difficult to avoid electoral manipulations. Election commissions must be independently funded, include representatives of the main political parties, and their members – like judges in countries with genuinely independent judiciaries – should not be susceptible to removal by the executive branch of government.

Secondly, good governance remains a key challenge for Africa. The presence or absence of good governance standards affects everything else. Elections, then, do not automatically bring real democracy. This is why power-sharing deals will not address the fundamental challenge of democracy in Africa. Entrenching good governance standards is what will enable elections to achieve their promise of political accountability and freedom of choice.

Thirdly, the African Union and the sub-regional economic groups – such as the South African Development Community (SADC), the East Africa Cooperation (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – have a key role to play in preventing or monitoring electoral malpractices that lead to conflicts in Africa. Africa's reluctant democrats may resist attempts by Western countries to criticise or sanction them for

controversial but 'internal' political processes, but will have a harder time discrediting the intervention of their fellow African leaders. African heads of state and government should use this leverage more forcefully. Admittedly, it is not easy to do so, when several of those leaders have themselves come to power through tainted elections. But a critical mass of legitimately elected leaders is emerging in Africa. As their numbers increase, so will their potential influence on the culture of democracy on the continent.

Finally, vested interest in economic growth is an increasingly important factor in checking the escalation of African conflicts. Nearly US\$1 billion worth of damage was done to Kenya's economy by the violence unleashed during the electoral crisis, and its tourist industry and image of stability have suffered serious setbacks. The private sector in Kenya – sub-Saharan Africa's third largest economy – was battered by the post-election violence. Regardless of which protagonist's side they were on, Kenya's business sector pressed the parties for a negotiated settlement.

Again, in Zimbabwe, reviving the country's devastated economy – which is unlikely as long as Mugabe retains the reigns of power and excludes the opposition – has been the single most important source of pressure on Mugabe to negotiate. Overall, in an era in which Africa's economies have witnessed an average growth of five percent annually and aspire to become emerging markets, and in which the average African now owns shares in companies quoted on the continent's stock exchanges, everyone's vested interest in creating and managing wealth has become the strongest reason to think twice about re-enacting the violent conflicts that stunted the continent's growth for far too long. **A**

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THE AFRICAN DIASPORA AS AGENTS OF PEACE ON THE CONTINENT

WRITTEN BY **AWIL MOHAMOUD AND SARAH OSMAN**

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A diaspora is a community of people living outside their country of origin. Since the 1980s, the dynamics of rapid globalisation and the patterns of the labour migration process have considerably increased the diaspora population and transnational communities around the world. This wave of labour migration was largely a voluntary initiative, as people moved abroad in pursuit of economic advantage and a better life. This immigration tendency is fittingly described by the economist J.K. Galbraith as “the oldest action against poverty”.¹ However, since the 1990s, a different wave

of migration has been in motion. In this wave, people have been forced to flee their home countries by protracted wars and violent conflicts. This is a forced migration rather than a voluntary movement of people, as the conditions at home make it impossible for them to remain there. The people in this pattern of migration are

Above: Congolese Africans held a demonstration in Downing Street, London demanding free and fair elections in the Congo in 2005.



Heads of state and government at the second conference of African Intellectuals and the Diaspora in Salvador, in 2006.

generally referred to as “conflict-generated diaspora”.² The total number of the African diaspora who live mainly in Europe and North America is estimated to be around 3.8 million people. Amounting to 2.9 % of the world’s population, the contemporary diaspora – particularly those who are in the rich Western countries such as the Netherlands – have the capacity to mobilise substantial financial resources, extensive transnational networks, powerful international forces and political connections that span the globe. It is this enormous potential on a global scale that enables the diaspora to make a difference to the situations in the homelands in different respects.

The long-distance involvement by the diaspora in the course of events in their respective countries of origin has been facilitated by the current globalisation processes. Thanks to inexpensive transportation and rapid communication, the diaspora are exerting an ever-greater influence on the politics of their homelands. This advantage enables diaspora communities to build up vast transnational networks (criss-crossing countries and continents), linking the process of globalisation to the local conditions of their respective countries of origin. Likewise, it enables the individuals and groups in the diaspora communities to build up intersecting social, economic and political bridges that link their new places of residence with their original homelands. In this

regard, the contemporary diaspora are becoming one of the main global forces shaping the directions and trends of migration and development in the 21st century. This article examines the untapped resource of the African diaspora to contribute to enhancing peace, and their potential to act as agents for the promotion of peace in Africa.

Diasporas as Potential Peace Brokers

Diasporas are critical agents of peace and can – and do – make significant contributions to peacebuilding, conflict transformation and post-conflict reconstruction efforts in their respective homelands. To maximise this immense potential, diasporas should be tapped in a more creative and effective manner. Given that the diaspora are salient emerging actors within migration and development, it is important to partner and join forces with them in the promotion of peace in their respective homelands. Diasporas as potential peace actors have been acknowledged more and more by international bodies such as the United Nations. Yet, the potential of their peacemaking capacity has not at all been harnessed actively to foster the resolution and transformation of conflicts in their countries of origin. Diasporas can be part of the solution, if they are seen as potential strategic actors and valuable bridge-builders to be aligned with efforts to promote peace



Members of the Zimbabwe diaspora forum protest against the Chinese arms shipments to Zimbabwe outside the Chinese embassy in Pretoria, South Africa (April 2008).

in their homelands in Africa. The incorporation of the diasporas as peacemaking actors in the homelands in a more structured and formal manner would widen and greatly strengthen the capacity of peace forces active in their respective countries of origin. More importantly, diasporas can play a role as capacity builders as well as advisors and peace brokers. Furthermore, it should be understood that, in the same way that the diasporas contribute to development, they can also contribute to peacebuilding in their home countries. Importantly, peace is a precondition for development.

In this regard, there is an urgent need to develop knowledge that gives us better insight into how the long-distance peacebuilding activities initiated by diaspora organisations and groups can be structurally integrated into the existing peacemaking frameworks and processes. Thus far, these are exclusively implemented by mainstream donor development agencies, government institutions, international and regional organisations and United Nations (UN) bodies active in their countries of origin.³ The objectives of this are joining forces for peace and widening the civil society peace constituency in the European Union (EU) countries and beyond, with respect to Africa. This can be possible if the diasporas

are recognised as the fourth external peacebuilding group of actors active in the domestic peace process after international organisations, governments and mainstream donor agencies.

Diaspora Contribution to Peacebuilding

Most of the African diasporas in the Netherlands (and probably in other countries in Europe) come from seven countries located in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions and severely affected by protracted civil wars and other violent conflicts. These countries are Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan in the Horn of Africa region; and Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Great Lakes region.⁴ This affirms the direct relation between violent conflicts and the increasing number of Africans migrating to Europe since 1990.

The available data demonstrates that many domestic conflicts in numerous countries in Africa have not only been regionalised but they are also largely internationalised, among other factors through the activities of diaspora groupings. Homeland conflicts also directly affect the lives and well-being of the diaspora, despite the fact that they are far away from the conflict

zones. The bond that the African diaspora has with their countries of origin is that, even though they have left their homelands physically, they remain tied emotionally. The African diaspora have come to realise that they are in a unique strategic position in this ever-globalising world, as they are scattered in different economic and power centres around the globe. The huge presence of African diaspora in powerful political centres such as London, Paris, New York and Washington, DC, where global policy decisions are made, has an especially important strategic significance. Their strategic position enables the African diaspora to facilitate the process of transnational activities and networks, and also allows them to act as bridge-builders between host countries like the Netherlands and their respective countries of origin. This reality, therefore, makes it imperative to address the international dimension of conflicts, particularly the critical role that African diaspora groups play in homeland conflicts. The connection between the African diaspora's activities and the dynamics of conflict in their homelands is a dimension that has been largely overlooked in research and policy analysis, despite its critical significance.

There is ample evidence that demonstrates the positive influence of the diaspora to peacebuilding

in their homelands. Their influence impacts general attitudes of society, thereby changing perceptions of freedom, tolerance, human rights, governance and political practices. For instance, the diaspora proactively transmit valuable new political ideas to their homelands. Living in spaces of democratic privilege enable the diaspora to transfer or bring back intellectual capacities, new technological skills, and valuable and innovative ideas and practices that can aid the promotion of peace in Africa. More specifically, the African diaspora contribute to peace and political stability in the homeland indirectly, through the construction of civil society groups in the homeland and through business engagement. Civil society construction is promoted through the creation of advanced websites for information sharing⁵, through the promotion of dialogue between rival groups, and through the provision of training in peacemaking tools and techniques. For example, Tynes (2007) shows how the Sierra Leone diaspora has managed to create "... collective discourse and/or actions [that] are aimed towards the building, binding, maintenance, rebuilding or rebinding of the nation."⁶ This was done through the Leonenet discussion forum.

Another example is the Netherlands-based foundation, Burundian Women for Peace and

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The Ethiopian diaspora held a demonstration outside the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem, Israel in December 2007, calling on the Israeli government to grant permission for their relatives living in Ethiopia to immigrate.

Development (BWPD), which has set up 'multipurpose centres' in the province of Kirundo to promote dialogue between Hutus and Tutsis. This has proved highly successful in catalysing the conflict-resolution process, so much so that it has won the support of major international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the Inter-Church Organisation for Development Co-operation (ICCO) and Oxfam Novib.

The creation of civic administrations at district levels in the areas where the local NGOs they support operate is also a major contribution to the capacity-building of civil society networks in the homeland. Diaspora organisations also set up local-level community and welfare projects, which support education and health projects and microcredit schemes for marginalised

political and socio-political aspirations and, as such, the diaspora should be carefully disaggregated. This analysis will increase awareness of the peacebuilding activities of the diaspora. In turn, such awareness will help the diaspora to be seen as potential strategic actors and valuable bridge-builders in their efforts to foster the resolution and transformation of conflicts in their respective countries of origin.

It is also imperative, as Johannsen⁹ notes that:

"...diaspora groups have the facility of utilizing their personal and institutional contacts with their country of origin to support peace constituencies in the conflict region. Furthermore, diaspora groups could offer a strategic opportunity to make contact with violent actors in the conflict zone as they have access

AMOUNTING TO 2.9 % OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION, THE CONTEMPORARY DIASPORA – PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO ARE IN THE RICH WESTERN COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE NETHERLANDS – HAVE THE CAPACITY TO MOBILISE SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES, EXTENSIVE TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS, POWERFUL INTERNATIONAL FORCES AND POLITICAL CONNECTIONS THAT SPAN THE GLOBE

groups. Another form of contribution to peacebuilding is business development in the regions of origin, directly addressing the economic causes of conflict.

Prevailing Myths

The contribution of the African diaspora to the promotion of peace in their respective countries of origin is an aspect that is largely overlooked, and has not received proper attention. This is due to the prevailing myth that the long-distance activities undertaken by the diasporas exacerbate the dynamics of conflicts in the homelands. Unfortunately, this myth dominates the discourse on the topic, which largely influences the policy attitude towards diasporas in a negative way.⁷ In practice, this is one of the chief reasons that prevents the mainstream donor NGOs, international institutions and governments in both home and host countries from working with the diasporas, as they see them to be destructive rather than constructive forces. This is, however, a partial representation of the reality. Existing evidence suggests that the long-distance activities undertaken by the African diaspora have both positive and negative impacts on the conflict dynamics in their homelands. More significantly, most of the African diaspora organisations studied in the Netherlands affirm that their positive contribution to homeland situations outweighs their negative involvement. Furthermore, there are many diaspora groupings with different

to wider circles. Winning over diaspora groups for non-violent modes of conflict can complement local initiatives and strengthen capacities for indigenous constructive conflict management."

Furthermore, having better insight into the peacebuilding potential of the diaspora will lead to two major developments. Firstly, it will lead to the construction of creative policies and mechanisms to transform the negative engagements of the diaspora to positive and constructive gains. Secondly, it will lead to further mobilisation of the largely untapped and under-utilised potential of silent diaspora groups in Europe; groups who can be made aware of their value in contributing to peacebuilding in their respective homelands. Therefore, disaggregation of the diaspora with regards to their peacebuilding activities will have mutual benefit to their mobilisation, as well as benefit for the formulation and adoption of tailored policies for institutions that are involved in engaging the diaspora in development cooperation.

Working with the Diaspora

There is now a growing realisation among the African diaspora in the West that they have a responsibility to do something for the continent that they left physically, but not emotionally. They also feel that they are now in strategic and unique positions to facilitate



Former Sudanese child slave, Simon Deng, speaks at a rally, in Washington DC, calling for the end to the genocide taking place in Darfur, Sudan.

the process of transnational activities and networks, and act as development bridge-builders between the West and Africa. Furthermore, African diaspora organisations, groups and individuals occupy an inimitable space, as they live in two cultures, or between two cultures. This gives them the advantage of intimate knowledge about different social situations, local conditions and networks and cultural experiences in Africa to a far greater degree than people with only a Western background. The diaspora understand local contexts in their respective homelands, allowing them to combine both internal and external knowledge and experiences, and giving them viable comparative advantages and insights. The diaspora peace actors can also bring in new ways of dealing with conflicts in the homelands, and can widen the horizon and world view of local protagonists. Their unique position to mobilise substantial financial resources, extensive transnational networks, powerful international forces and political connections that span the globe is highly underrated. So far, the considerable latent potential of diasporas has not been harnessed for the promotion of peace in their respective homelands. Their strategic position could enable the individuals, groups and organisations of the African diaspora to channel new peacemaking attitudes, ideas, negotiation

skills and conflict transformation techniques, innovative approaches and practices from host countries⁹ in Europe to their countries of origin.

Positive and Inspiring Examples

Narrating examples of peacemaking initiatives that African diaspora individuals, groups and organisations have initiated is important, as they provide unique lessons that can be learned as well as inspiring other diaspora organisations. Three examples of inspiring stories that are making a difference on the ground are briefly noted here.

- The first example is the Hope-Sierra Leone (H-SL) Foundation, established in Denmark by John Bangura, a Sierra Leonean in the diaspora. Bangura has initiated a unique and innovative approach to bring peace to his homeland. The peace efforts of this organisation targeted the forces with weapons, such as the police, military and paramilitary soldiers, in order to reconcile them. The underlying logic behind the project was that reconciling those who possess the means of violence can prevent the rivalry of the political elites, and thereby stem violent conflict. According to Bangura¹⁰, “We brought together warring factions to start working on ways to turn Sierra Leone’s social, political and economic fate around.”
- Another example is the Dutch-based foundation Himilo Relief and Development Association (HIRDA), set up by the Somalis in the diaspora. HIRDA contributes to peacebuilding in Somalia through the creation of sustainable livelihoods. It directly targets the youth, to prevent them from joining the many armed militia groups, by giving them vocational training as a viable option to earn a living without practicing violence.
- Finally, the organisation Concerned Liberian Women (CLW) was established by Liberian women in the Netherlands. They initiated this diaspora organisation with the conviction that, if Liberia is to move forward and away from strife, the diaspora must play a critical role in the peace and development process. The activities of the CLW range from the provision of education on women’s issues and human rights to advocating justice and non-violent means of resolving conflicts.

Conclusion

The fact that the African diaspora can play a significant role in the promotion of peace in their homelands cannot be denied. However, if these

AFRICAN DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS, GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS OCCUPY AN INIMITABLE SPACE, AS THEY LIVE IN TWO CULTURES, OR BETWEEN TWO CULTURES. THIS GIVES THEM THE ADVANTAGE OF INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DIFFERENT SOCIAL SITUATIONS, LOCAL CONDITIONS AND NETWORKS AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN AFRICA TO A FAR GREATER DEGREE THAN PEOPLE WITH ONLY A WESTERN BACKGROUND


activities are to have a more significant effect, a few recommendations should be taken into consideration.

First, the number of peacebuilding actors needs to be widened. This should be done in a more structured and formal manner, by acknowledging the contribution of the diaspora at policy level.

Second, more attention needs to be paid to the fact that the African diaspora in Europe occupies a unique bridge-building position, and that creating a space within policy formulations for these groups will have significant effects on the promotion of peace in Africa.

Third, more knowledge needs to be generated on the contribution of the diaspora to peacebuilding, and specifically the enhancement of our understanding on how the long-distance activities undertaken by the diaspora help to exacerbate or moderate the dynamics of conflicts in the homelands.

Lastly, exploring how the African diaspora uses its accumulated social capital to contribute to the rebuilding of the post-conflict social institutions, political structures and the promotion of viable governance and democratic political life in their countries of origin is vital to the augmentation of their capacity.

It is imperative to design appropriate strategies through which the untapped potential of the diaspora can be effectively harnessed for the benefit of Africa. There is an urgent need to formulate options and ways that government policymakers and donor NGO practitioners can link up with the African diaspora as an added value. Furthermore, it is important to identify mechanisms and channels to enable the African diaspora to connect better with development in Africa. Addressing the long-distance activities undertaken by the African diaspora at the European Union (EU) level is necessary at this particular period in time. It is absolutely vital if we want to mobilise the financial resources, transnational networks and human capital of the sizeable African diaspora residing in the EU countries for the promotion of peace and political stability in their countries of origin. 

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UNDERSTANDING PEACEBUILDING: CONSOLIDATING THE PEACE PROCESS

WRITTEN BY **CEDRIC DE CONING**

Peacebuilding should be understood in the context of an increasingly complex and interdependent international conflict management system. During the Cold War period, the United Nations (UN), regional organisations and independent agencies were called upon to undertake humanitarian relief, peacemaking and peacekeeping actions at a scale usually manageable within the scope of the independent capabilities of these organisations, or at a level that could be managed with limited cooperative arrangements. The scale and complexity of the crises faced by the international community in the post-Cold War era was of a different magnitude and, as a result, it has often been the case that no single agency, government or international organisation could manage evolving crises on their own.

In response, a wide-range of agencies (governmental and non-governmental, regional and international) have started to develop specialised capacities to manage different aspects of what we today recognise as a holistic peacebuilding system, and together they have been able to respond with a broad range of interlinked activities. However, the international peacebuilding system lacked coherence, and this resulted in inter-agency rivalry, working at cross-purposes, competition for funding, duplication of efforts and less

Above: The provision of a safe and secure environment, as undertaken by peacekeepers, is a part of the security and rule of law dimension of peacebuilding.

than optimal economies of scale.¹ The lack of coherence in the international response significantly contributed to the overall poor success rate of peacebuilding to date.

In order to address these shortcomings and to improve the overall success rate of the international conflict management system, various agencies, governments and organisations have started exploring a number of coordination models, sometimes independently from each other and at times collectively. These efforts are aimed at improving the coherence, cooperation and coordination of the overall conflict management system. All these initiatives have broadly similar aims – namely to achieve greater harmonisation and synchronisation among the activities of the different international and local actors, and across the analysis, planning, implementation, management and evaluation aspects of a programme or engagement cycle. In the context of these developments, peacebuilding is increasingly seen as the collective framework under which the political, security, rule of law, governance, human rights and development dimensions of these international interventions can be brought together

*Strategy*³, argues that peacebuilding should be understood as fostering the capacity to resolve future conflicts by:

- (1) consolidating security;
- (2) strengthening political institutions; and
- (3) promoting economic and social reconstruction.

Barnett et al⁴ refer to the same three dimensions as:

- (1) stability creation;
- (2) restoration of state institutions; and
- (3) socio-economic recovery

The President of the World Bank refers to security, governance and development and links it, in the Afghanistan context, to the counter-insurgency principles of clear, hold and build.⁵ These are the same three dimensions reflected in the so-called 3D (diplomacy, development and defence) Canadian whole-of-government approach.⁶ The UN's Integrated Approach opts for a more elaborate list that includes political, development, humanitarian, human rights, rule of law,

POST-CONFLICT PEACEBUILDING IS A LONG-TERM PROCESS, AND A LONGER AND MORE SUSTAINED INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT IS NECESSARY THAN WAS UNDERSTOOD A DECADE AGO

under one common strategic framework.

Whilst there is no single common definition, approach or model for peacebuilding that is widely accepted, there are some common characteristics that have emerged over the last decade and a half of peacebuilding practice. The first is that peacebuilding is primarily concerned with securing or consolidating the peace. It is concerned with preventing a lapse, or relapse, into violent conflict. Peacebuilding is aimed at consolidating the peace by addressing those conflict factors that may, in the short to medium term, threaten a lapse, or relapse into conflict, as well as addressing the root causes of conflicts, which may threaten the peace over the long term. In Liberia, for instance, such short-term conflict factors may be land disputes, youth expectations, political polarisation and weak justice systems, whilst the root causes are related to the structural inequalities inherent in society.²

The second characteristic is that peacebuilding is a multidimensional or system-wide undertaking. There are various models, but most range from differentiating between three core dimensions to the more elaborate models that list six to eight different dimensions. The UN Secretary General's report, *No Exit without*

social and security aspects.⁷ The African Union's Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework⁸ comprises six similar constitutive elements, but it adds gender as a self-standing element. There is thus broad convergence on the core peacebuilding dimensions listed in Table 1.

Humanitarian assistance should be highlighted as one function that is treated differently in the various models. There is widespread recognition that it is independent from the other functions, in that it does not share peacebuilding's essential conflict prevention objective. Some models, including the UN's Integrated Approach, nevertheless include humanitarian assistance within peacebuilding as a function that takes place independently, but parallel to, the other peacebuilding dimensions. The UN approach argues that it needs to be included in the overall framework in order to be factored into planning and coordination mechanisms.

The third characteristic relates to the tension that exists between independence and interdependence. The various peacebuilding actors exist as independent agents with their own mandates, programmes and resources, and yet they are also interdependent in achieving their respective objectives, and that of the

Table 1: The Dimensions of Peacebuilding

SECURITY AND RULE OF LAW	Providing a safe and secure environment
	Protection of civilians
	Security sector reform
	Disarmament and demobilisation
	Police, corrections and judicial reform (rule of law)
POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE	Supporting the peace process and overseeing the political transition
	Political participation, national dialogue and reconciliation
	Government institutions and civil service capacity building (governance)
	Extending state authority throughout the territory
	Building conflict management capacity
SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY	Physical infrastructure: roads, ports, airports; electricity; telecommunications
	Social services: health, education, social welfare, population registration, civil society
	Stimulating and facilitating economic growth
	Strengthening civil society
HUMAN RIGHTS	Human rights education, advocacy and monitoring

overall peacebuilding undertaking. Most peacebuilding-related programmes only make sense as part of a larger system of related programmes. Disarmament and demobilisation programmes, for instance, rely on the assumption that there are other programmes that will provide a series of reintegration programmes. And they all rely on the assumption that there are other programmes in place that will create security, improve opportunities for education and healthcare, and create employment for ex-combatants or alternative opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. Such a network of programmes exist both as independent programmes with their own sources of funding and

separate implementing arrangements, and as a network of interdependent programmes whose combined output produces an outcome that their individual efforts could not have achieved independently.

The fourth characteristic relates to the time perspective. Broad agreement seems to have emerged on two issues.⁹ The first is the recognition that post-conflict peacebuilding is a long-term process, and that a longer and more sustained international commitment is necessary than was understood a decade ago. This longer-term time frame for post-conflict peacebuilding was agreed at the World Summit in 2005 and resulted in the establishment of the UN Peacebuilding



Capacity-building programmes are an example of preventative peacebuilding.

Commission. This commission has the aim of ensuring that the international community in general, and the UN in particular, remains engaged in countries in the post-conflict peacebuilding stage.

This was regarded as necessary, because the UN Security Council's attention tends to be focused on those crises where the UN has a direct stake – usually in the form of a UN peacekeeping operation. When such operations came to an end, the post-conflict countries in question tended to move off the Security Council agenda. The UN Peacebuilding Commission now helps to keep those peace processes where there is no longer a UN peacekeeping presence, or that did not require such an intervention, on the UN agenda.

The second time perspective issue is the recognition that although post-conflict peacebuilding requires a long-term commitment, there is also a need for immediate and short-term gains to solidify the peace, build confidence in the peace process and stimulate a vision for a better future. This has resulted in practises such as the now-standard inclusion of funds for quick-impact projects in UN peacekeeping budgets, and an acceptance that some aspects of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), Rule of Law (RoL) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) should be funded out of the assessed contributions to the UN peacekeeping operations budget.

The four characteristics highlighted above show that we can agree on some defining aspects of peacebuilding. The problematic record of peacebuilding over the last decade and a half reminds us, however, that there still are more questions than answers. We would need to give urgent attention to a number of critical aspects of international peacebuilding if we want to improve the success rate and overall impact of our efforts.

Peacebuilding Defined

The UN Policy Committee, in its May 2007 deliberations, approved a useful working definition of peacebuilding: “Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict, to strengthen national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritised, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives”.¹⁰

Peacebuilding aims to consolidate and institutionalise peace by undertaking a range of actions that go beyond preventing violence (negative peace). It aims to address the underlying root causes of conflict and

THE VARIOUS PEACEBUILDING ACTORS EXIST AS INDEPENDENT AGENTS WITH THEIR OWN MANDATES, PROGRAMMES AND RESOURCES, AND YET THEY ARE ALSO INTERDEPENDENT IN ACHIEVING THEIR RESPECTIVE OBJECTIVES, AND THAT OF THE OVERALL PEACEBUILDING UNDERTAKING

to create the conditions for a just social order (positive peace).¹¹ In this context, it may be useful to revisit the relationship between preventative peacebuilding and post-conflict peacebuilding, as much of the conceptual misunderstanding comes about when these two inter-related perspectives are confused.

Preventative Peacebuilding

Preventative peacebuilding refers to activities or programmes aimed at addressing short- to medium-term conflict factors that may result in a lapse, or relapse, into violent conflict. Some donors now have funds specifically

earmarked for peacebuilding, and those funds would most likely be used to fund specific programmes in this category. The time frame for preventative peacebuilding is necessarily short- to medium-term, because it is focused on immediate or imminent threats to the peace process. Examples of preventative peacebuilding programmes include conflict resolution training and capacity-building, such as, the development of institutional capabilities needed for conflict prevention, as with the Peace Commission in southern Sudan or a local capacity, such as the Ituri Pacification Commission. Other examples include programmes that

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Humanitarian assistance needs to be included in the overall peacebuilding framework in order to be factored into planning and coordination mechanisms.



Disarmament and demobilisation programmes have relied on the assumption that there are other programmes that would provide reintegration services.

provide support for civil society or women's groups to participate in peacemaking initiatives, and support for national reconciliation initiatives, including aspects of transitional justice. Some donors would also support specific programme activities that support or form part of DDR, RoL and SSR, out of their peacebuilding funds.

Some donors do not earmark funds specifically for peacebuilding, but prefer to encourage a Conflict Sensitive Development approach when working in conflict-affected countries. Conflict Sensitive Development programmes have a developmental objective, for example, poverty reduction, but are sensitive to the conflict environment within which they operate in that specific steps are taken in the design and management of the programme, either to avoid aggravating the situation or proactively to support conflict prevention efforts.

Post-conflict Peacebuilding

Post-conflict peacebuilding, on the other hand, refers to the total combined effort of the peacebuilding dimensions (see Table 1), and thus exists in the form of an overall process. This overall effort may sometimes be described as a strategy or vision, for example, in an

integrated strategic framework or Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). There may be specific processes and structures that facilitate the development, management and monitoring of such peacebuilding frameworks, and these may be specifically funded. In general, however, support for post-conflict peacebuilding occurs in a highly fragmented manner, in that the various agencies that participate in and contribute to the overall process each independently design, manage, monitor and evaluate and secure funding for their programmes. These activities are not necessarily identified as or funded as peacebuilding at the programme level, although some of the programmes discussed in the preventative peacebuilding section may be. Instead, they would, for instance, be considered and funded as independent development, governance, SSR, human rights or Rule of Law programmes. It is when these activities are considered together, in the context of their combined and cumulative effect, that their collective post-conflict peacebuilding identity emerges.

A strategic or integrated framework that is aimed at an overall strategic vision for the post-conflict peacebuilding process, such as a conflict-sensitive PRS, maps out the overall priorities and objectives

of the post-conflict peacebuilding strategy for a particular country. Recent examples include the Results Focussed Transitional Framework (RFTF), the Reform Support Programme (RSP) in Liberia, and the Integrated Peacebuilding Framework in Burundi. Such individual programmes become part of the post-conflict peacebuilding process when they contribute to, and are considered as part of, the overall effort directed towards achieving the objectives set out in the strategic vision. In some cases, the individual agencies and activities may be conscious of their role in the overall framework, but sometimes this linkage is drawn only at the systemic level – for instance, in strategic evaluations or in annual PRS reports. This does not imply that the connections are artificial, but rather that those at the programme level are not always aware of the degree to which their individual activities contribute to an overall post-conflict peacebuilding framework.

There is debate over the extent to which a development activity such as poverty reduction or infrastructure development, for example, the construction of roads, can be regarded as having a peacebuilding objective, and thus be considered to be part of a peacebuilding framework. The confusion lies in the perspective and context. An individual donor or implementing agent may not think of or categorise the funding of the construction of a road as a peacebuilding programme. However, from a systemic perspective, in the context of an integrated peacebuilding framework, the construction of roads may be regarded as an important element of a larger post-conflict peacebuilding framework. It may create work, including for ex-combatants, it may stimulate local economies and improve livelihoods by providing access to markets, it may stimulate local contractor capacity, it may open up outlying areas previously marginalised because of their inaccessibility, and assist in the extension of the authority of the state into those territories, and it may contribute to overall economic growth – all of which are important aspects of an environment conducive to a successful peace process, and thus preventing a relapse into conflict.

To conclude, this paper has highlighted four characteristics of peacebuilding around which some agreement has emerged: the focus on consolidating peace, interdependence, multidimensionality and time perspectives. The paper has also touched on the inter-relationship between preventative peacebuilding and post-conflict peacebuilding. Preventative peacebuilding is about individual programmes that have a peacebuilding objective, whilst post-conflict peacebuilding is about the overall or systemic effect, and the integrated strategic frameworks that direct the individual programmes towards common goals and objectives. Together, these

various insights form the core of what we know about peacebuilding today. **A**

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THE AFRICA PEACE CENTRE

WRITTEN BY SEAN CALLAGHAN



ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN BY BENJAMIN GARCIA

Africa is emerging from a period that saw over 100 citizens die every hour as a result of conflict¹ and, despite recent progress towards peace, the continent remains one of the most conflict-ridden regions of the world. Consequently, the need for new facilities dedicated solely to finding peaceful resolutions to conflicts is recognised by many. The facilities needed are those that can provide a neutral site for dialogue, education and training in conflict resolution, where the continent’s leaders can forge a passage away from conflict and violence, and

towards peace and economic growth.

Despite ongoing conflicts, Africa has recorded significant growth in both gross domestic product (GDP) and foreign direct investment (FDI). While this growth

Above: The Africa Peace Centre design draws on elements of traditional African architecture, which embodies ideas of ‘community’ and ‘connectedness’.



The site on which the Africa Peace Centre will be developed was previously used by South Africa's Apartheid regime to train its special forces.

has the potential to strike at the roots of conflicts and to lift millions out of poverty, it often does not translate into much-needed development and, at times, even fuels violence. As a result, Africa is struggling to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The inequality that often characterises poverty in fragile, conflict-ridden states remains a key stumbling block for the continent. Without sustained effort and significant investment in conflict resolution, recent gains will be lost and new wars are likely to break out.

It is within this context that the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) – an African non-governmental conflict resolution organisation – has, for the past 16 years, been building the capacity of Africa's leaders to resolve conflict and to address these underlying political barriers to growth and stability. These efforts have resulted in significant progress in numerous countries, including Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and have enabled ACCORD to develop an African model for conflict resolution that now enjoys United Nations recognition. To build on these successes, ACCORD now proposes to develop the Africa Peace Centre.

The establishment of institutions that are dedicated to promoting and strengthening peace adds enormous value to global peace efforts. It is a well-established fact that peace centres the world over have added enormous value to global peace efforts. Likewise, the Africa Peace Centre will foster dialogue and build the capacity in Africa for the prevention of conflicts. Where conflicts do arise, it will provide a facility that can speed up intervention response times, thus stemming the escalation of conflict, and saving lives.

This iconic vision already enjoys the support of global political leadership, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the South African government, which has set aside land for the project. The site was previously used by the apartheid regime to train its special forces to wage war in Africa, and is being redeveloped into a centre for peace and reconciliation. The global corporate sector is funding the establishment of the US\$40 million complex, which will incorporate special mediation and training facilities, as well as a Peace Museum and Gardens of Reconciliation.

The architecture of the project is focused on providing a tangible yet subtle experience of the



The Africa Peace Centre will be situated on Durban's Bluff headland in South Africa, overlooking breath-taking ocean views.

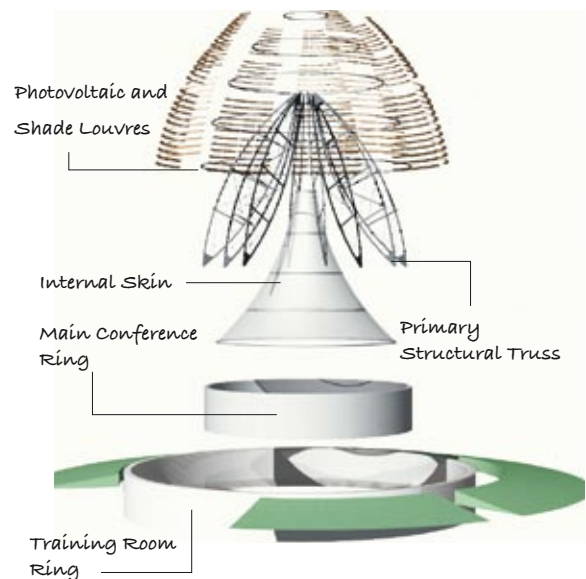
tragedies of Africa's recent history, while still leaving people with a sense of hope. Visitors to the centre will embark on a journey that takes them through an awareness of the atrocities of war, and ends in the hopeful inspiration that the agreements and interventions being crafted at the centre promise a better future for the people of Africa.

The First Green Peace Centre

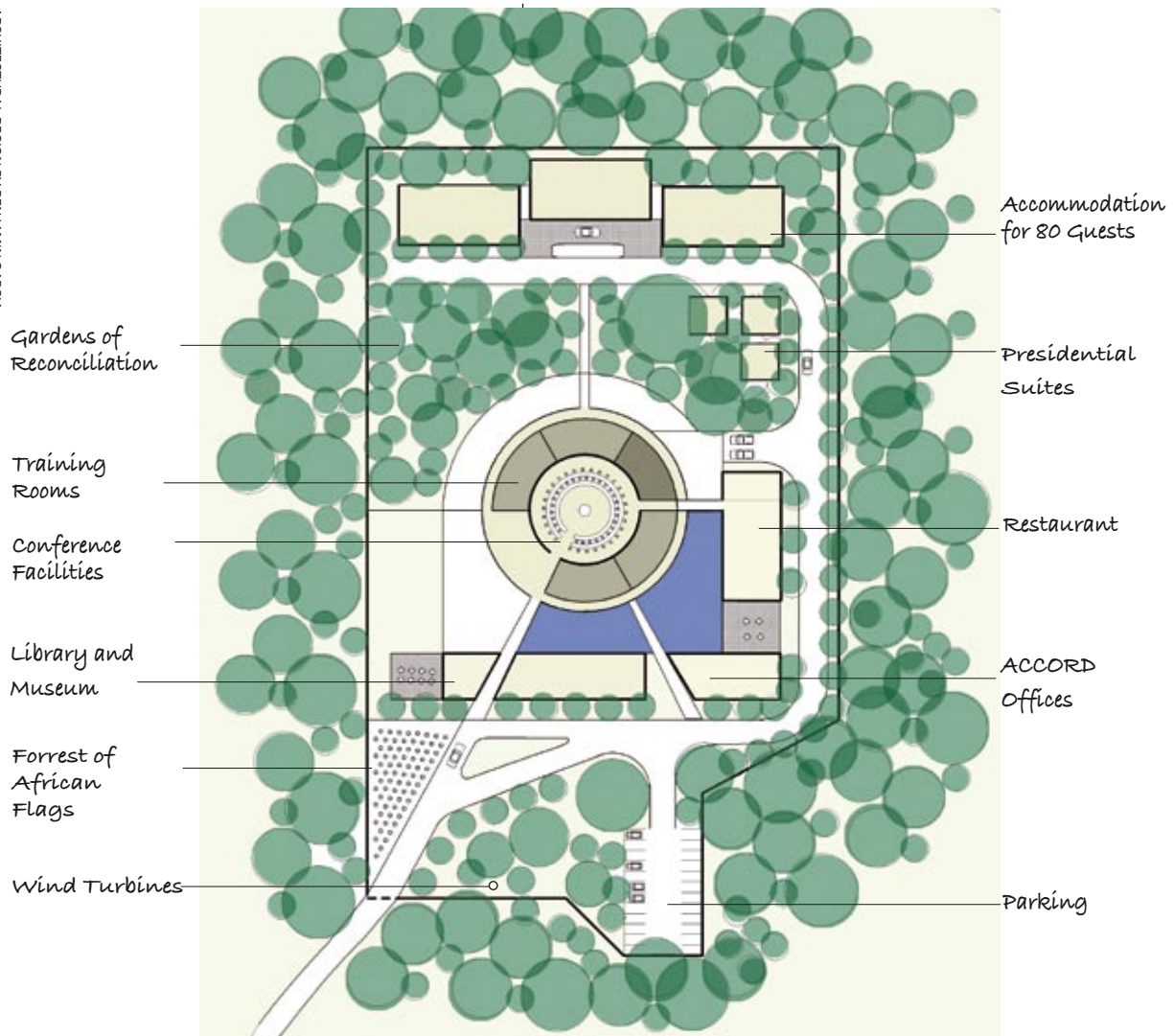
The centre has been designed to maintain a high level of self-sufficiency, relying heavily on the use of 'passive' design strategies of climate control, complemented by 'active' new technologies for energy supply.

Passive strategies are traditionally used to design buildings with low energy costs, reduced maintenance and superior comfort. They take into consideration wind patterns, terrain, vegetation, solar exposure and other factors to create solutions that do not require energy consumption. Active strategies optimise the most advanced technology available to provide vital energy sources, thus creating a self-sufficient architectural complex.

The main building of the Africa Peace Centre is designed as a 'double skin system'. The outer surface will



The main building is designed as a double skin system where the outer surface will act as an intelligent louvrephotovoltaic system that will control the amount of natural light and will serve as the primary power source for the building.



The spatial layout of the Africa Peace Centre.

act as an intelligent louvre system, which will control the amount of natural light needed to greatly reduce electric consumption during daily sessions. A chimney effect will allow hot air to be evacuated at the tip of the building, thus carefully maintaining comfortable temperature control.

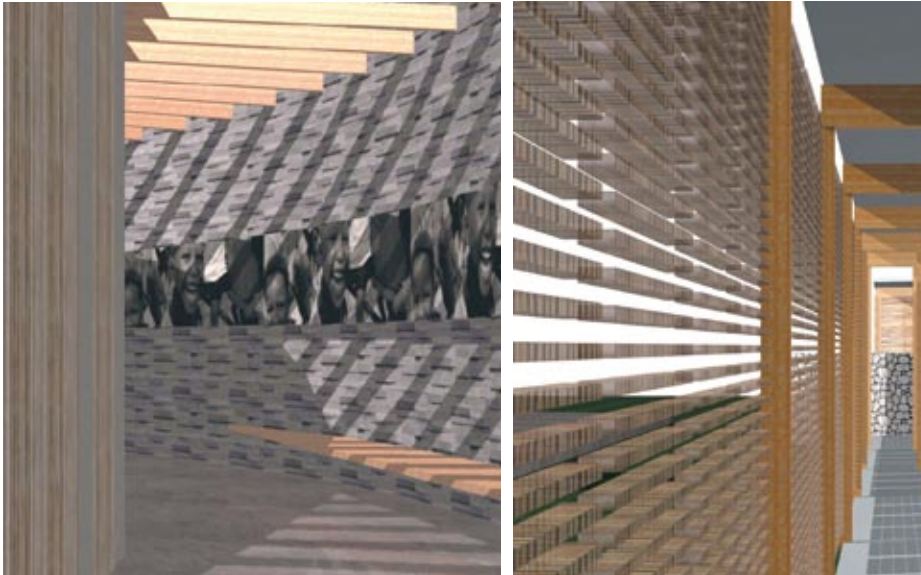
The library and peace museum building, as well as the offices and restaurant, are designed to allow for constant cross-ventilation, taking advantage of the prevailing winds. They will also be fitted with adequate sun louvres to reduce solar gain.

The accommodation buildings will use the terrace and natural vegetation as a cushion to regulate the temperature on the inside of the rooms.

Designed to Facilitate Dialogue

The entire Africa Peace Centre complex has been designed based on ACCORD's extensive experience in hosting both training and mediation efforts on the continent. The general layout intends to create a strong central iconic building, composed of conference facilities and training rooms that together form a series of concentric rings, which can open up to each other to create a large meeting space. This can be integrated to the public piazza facing the city.

This design reflects the architecture of many villages across Africa, which traditionally have been built as a series of dwellings configured in rings. These, in turn, rotate around an open centre, which becomes the focus of the communal life of people.



The library and museum facilities will serve as the primary educational components of the project.

These central meeting and training facilities are the heart of the Africa Peace Centre. The flexibility of design will facilitate up to four training and breakaway rooms for small to mid-sized groups of 15 to 30 participants, and a central dialogue space with circular seating for up to 60 participants. There is also the possibility of opening up the space to accommodate several hundred delegates at bigger events.

The library and peace museum spaces will serve as the primary educational components of the project, thus establishing the first point of contact with the public when entering the complex. The Africa Peace Centre will incorporate the largest collection of resources for the study of peace and reconciliation on the continent. Research facilities will be made available, both to visiting academics and those who come to the centre to negotiate peace.

Facing the predominant ocean views, the accommodation is masked by a reforested garden of reconciliation, which is seamlessly integrated into the adjacent natural context, thus aiding in determining various levels of privacy in the complex. The complex will incorporate delegate accommodation, including special presidential suites for visiting dignitaries and mediation teams.

The peace museum and gardens of reconciliation will facilitate an extensive public awareness and education programme. Visitors to the centre will journey through Africa's struggle for independence and peace, but will leave the complex with a deep sense of hope that is reflective of the progress the continent has made.

The administrative offices will be conveniently located between the public and private areas of the complex – an ideal location to coordinate the entire operation.

The Africa Peace Centre will contribute significantly to peace and conflict resolution efforts on the continent. **A**

Sean Callaghan is the Global Development Manager for ACCORD's Africa Peace Centre. To find out more about the Africa Peace Centre, or to explore how you could be involved, contact Sean Callaghan at sean@strategicimpactuk.com or on +44 7511 288 697

Endnotes

- 1 Between 1994 and 2003, 9.2 million Africans lost their lives due to conflict, according to the United Nations *Millennium Development Goals Report*, 2005.

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