

CONFLICT TRENDS

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EDITORIAL

BY **VASU GOUNDEN**

Two current macro global developments place Africa at a crossroads today: the global oil crisis and the global food crisis. These two major crises have the potential to accelerate the development of Africa or reverse the continent's development altogether, with catastrophic consequences.

The runaway oil price, coupled with soaring commodity prices, is resulting in huge returns for resource-rich African countries. However, recent statistics indicate that several non-oil producing countries have also shown an increase in gross domestic product, due to sound agricultural policies that lead to greater agricultural output. On average, Africa is recording a five percent economic growth rate. The question is whether Africa can sustain this growth?

There is no doubt that the global oil crisis is negatively affecting most countries in Africa, except a few oil-producing countries. However, all African oil-producing countries do not benefit from the raw product, and most countries are thus victims of the rising oil prices, rather than beneficiaries. In addition, Africa's record of fiscal management of commodity revenues has been dismal, resulting in the paradox of resource-rich countries having some of the poorest populations in Africa. Consequently, the sharp rise in global oil prices places Africa at the significant inflection point of 'boom or bust'.

Most African countries are blessed with fertile soil and weather conditions for food production. However, for several decades now, Africa has not been able to harness this comparative advantage properly. Poor skills, inadequate infrastructure, the rising price of fertiliser and subsidised competition in the north have relegated most African farmers to being producers of subsistence crops for domestic consumption. Africa's agricultural potential, like its resource potential, also places the continent at this important 'boom or bust' point.

In recent years, many African countries have made steady progress in developing and structuring their macro-economic fundamentals. In addition, one-party states of the Cold War era have given way to multiparty

democracies. Investment in infrastructure has been slow, but positive. All these developments are resulting in the steady economic growth that Africa is witnessing. In the last month, I attended the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on Africa's Development (TICAD IV) and the World Economic Forum's Africa Regional Summit. Both forums were attended by several African political, business and civil society leaders. Despite the global oil and food crises, there was clear recognition of the historic juncture at which Africa finds itself, and guarded optimism about the prospects for sustaining and increasing the current economic growth rates.

This cautious optimism emanated largely from concern about the several ongoing African conflicts that continue unabated. The greatest concerns, which cause much doubt about Africa's ability to sustain such positive economic growth rates, are the recent Kenyan crisis and the current crisis in Zimbabwe.

Kenya and Zimbabwe are unlike several other conflict countries in Africa. Their post-colonial independence was characterised by political stability and rapid socio-economic development. Despite some failed economic experiments, they still produced millions of educated and skilled people, and built modern economies underpinned by adequate physical, financial and commercial infrastructures. It is therefore no surprise that Africans and non-Africans alike have been disappointed, shocked and saddened by the political crises in both these countries.

This editorial is being written on the eve of the African Union Summit in Egypt. We at ACCORD therefore take this opportunity to appeal to the African political leadership not to fail the continent and its people at this historic turning point. The collective political leadership in Africa must assist the leaders of Kenya and Zimbabwe to restore African pride, and the hopes of the millions of African people who place their future in the hands of their elected leaders. ▲

Vasu Gounden is the Founder and Executive Director of ACCORD.



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THE STATE, ETHNICITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA

WRITTEN BY **EGHOSA E. OSAGHAE**

Contrary to a popular but misleading view¹, the prevalence of group rights in Africa is not due to any cultural or traditional peculiarity, but derives from the manner in which the state originated and has been reproduced since colonial times. It has more to do with the foundations of the state, the nature of state building, and the manner of citizen construction and definition. It is this largely uninterrogated trajectory of human rights in Africa that is explored in this article.

The central argument is that the state is a terrain of ethnic claims and counter-claims, and has been organised (and reorganised) on this basis since colonial times. This provides the platform for the demands for group rights. These are some of the issues analysed in this paper, with illustrations predominantly from Nigeria.

Ethnicity and Human Rights

Ethnicity has contrasting implications for human rights. On the one hand, it is negative, because it becomes linked to discrimination and unequal differentiation. On the other hand, by providing and legitimising a basis on which people can identify themselves, aggregate and defend their interests, and make valid claims on the state and society on behalf of individual members of the group, ethnicity is positive for human rights.²

Above: El-molo warriors from Kenya participate in a traditional ceremony. Ethnic identification provides a platform for group rights and related demands in Africa.

The seemingly contradictory effects are, however, connected in an interesting way: discrimination and unequal differentiation generally provide the basis for demanding redress or justice in the form of rights – claims, liberties, powers and immunities. At the same time, though, dominant and oppressor groups also seek to perpetuate their positions, using the same means.

At the heart of the relationship between ethnicity and human rights are group rights, which may be defined as rights that belong to a group, and can only be enjoyed by individuals as members of that group. Like individuals, groups need preservation, survival and development, for which certain rights such as the right to non-discrimination, language, culture, religion, socio-economic development and – depending on the nature of the group – some measure of relative autonomy or self-government, are required. People suffer deprivation, exclusion, oppression, persecution and discrimination or, conversely, enjoy preferential treatment and inclusion as members of groups. In Rwanda, Hutus were victims of genocide, just as the Igbos were in northern Nigeria in the 1960s, whether or not they individually cherished the identity of being Hutu or Igbo.³ African-Americans are discriminated against in schools, employment, workplace

as a basis for group rights is evident in its potential to be an emancipatory and liberating force. The actualisation of this potential depends on the extent to which ethnicity is successfully politicised, where politicised ethnicity refers to the articulation of interests in the name of the ethnic group and the struggle to redress or defend those interests. Invariably, politicised ethnicity involves the claim to a 'right' or 'entitlement'. It is in these terms that the African elite and ethno-nationalists have developed ethnicity "into a liberating force against colonialism and, after independence, against authoritarian states".⁶

Three points arise from the conception of ethnicity as a liberating force. The first, which has already been highlighted, is that ethnic mobilisation inherently involves the assertion of claims, rights, entitlements to self-determination, development and advancement, protection, autonomy, inclusion and just, fair and equitable treatment. Second is the agency role of the elite. The literature on ethnicity in Africa mostly explains this role in terms of the instrumental uses to which ethnicity is put, the prevalence of neo-patrimonial structures of legitimisation, the cost-effectiveness and overall efficacy of ethnic mobilisation compared to – say – monetary pay-offs, class mobilisation and other strategies, and the fact

MEMBERS OF THE GROUP, BEING BOUND BY PUTATIVE KINSHIP TIES, HAD TO MOBILISE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AND TO FURTHER THEIR COLLECTIVE INTERESTS

and business, just as black South Africans (as well as indigenous Liberians) were oppressed by apartheid laws, as members of groups. In all these instances, members of the group, being bound by putative kinship ties, had to mobilise to defend themselves and to further their collective interests.

It is unnecessary to enter into the long-standing debate provoked by liberalists over the realness or validity of group rights since, as it is claimed, rights belong to individuals.⁴ It suffices to make the point that there are rights, such as the right to self-determination, and entitlements, like affirmative action, that can only belong to groups.⁵ Some individual rights are derivatives of group rights, in the sense that they can only be enjoyed when empowering, protection and survival claims made by the group have been accorded legitimacy. For example, without balancing the redressive and redistributive policies of affirmative action, the quota system and ethnic arithmetic, individual members of disadvantaged groups cannot enjoy 'equal' rights in the economic, social and political spheres.

The case for group rights in Africa is strengthened by the fact that the state has deep ethnic foundations, a point that is discussed further in the next section. Ethnicity

that the state is more likely to respond to ethnic, religious and regional threats, which involve territorial claims, than those based for example on class.⁷ While these explanations offer more insight into the nature of ethnic politics in Africa, they do not tell us why ethnic politics is so deeply embedded in state politics. Why, for example, have political parties tended to be ethnic machines, why do ethnic considerations shape constitution-making, and why are ethnic matters so fundamental to state power holders? These questions can only be answered in terms of the fundamentality of ethnicity to the state, which leads to the third point about the central role of ethnic nationalism in the reconstruction of the post-colonial state (and the colonial state before it), which is one of the levers of democratisation in Africa.⁸ In the section that follows, the ethnic foundations of the state are further discussed to place these three points in clearer perspective.

Ethnic Foundations of the State and Ethnic Claims: The Nigerian Example

The ethnic foundations of the contemporary Nigerian state and, indeed, other post-colonial states in Africa were laid during the acquisition of colonial possessions that were later grouped into states. The process involved the



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Nigeria's traditional rulers and leaders represent the ethnic organisation of the state since colonial times.

signing of treaties with chiefs and kings of pre-colonial kingdoms and states, and the conquest of recalcitrant groups. Although these groups were not consulted in the eventual partition of territories, and the states that subsequently emerged were authoritarian, militarist and disconnected from indigenous civil society and social formations, colonial acts of creation – especially in British territories – were mostly hinged on the ‘ownership’ of the new state by ethnic leaders who, in this instance, were the traditional authorities. The privileging of primordial structures by the British is often attributed to the imperatives of indirect rule, as well as the initial efforts to counteract the growing influence of the emergent Western educated elite, who demanded self-government and greater participation in the management of the affairs of the colonies.

A close reading of certain colonial policies and practices, however, suggests that the privileging was more grounded than these attributions lead us to believe. The concept of national self-government was only applicable to “self-contained and mutually independent native states”.⁹ In relation to human rights, this meant that only native authorities and ethnic groups had rights. There was no room for individual rights since individuals, as subjects rather than citizens, could only relate to the state

as members of ethnic groups and Native Authorities.¹⁰ This notion of collective rights was carried through to independence, where the emphasis was on the right of “colonised peoples” to self-determination. It was not until the assault on home-grown authoritarianism in the second liberation that the struggle for individual rights actually began.¹¹

The major consequence of the key roles accorded to traditional structures in the process of state building was the legitimisation of ethnicity as the foundation of the state. This began with traditional authorities themselves which, as leaders of their groups and symbols of cultural distinctiveness, had the legitimate right to function as ethnic entrepreneurs. By shutting out the emergent Westernised elite – in the initial stages at least – the colonisers made it clear that only constitutive ethnic interests mattered, and thereby “encouraged or reinforced a natural parochialism”.¹² The importance of this was not lost on the emergent nationalists and political elites, who proceeded to form cultural organisations and ethnic-based political parties, and retribalise themselves by, amongst others, acquiring chieftaincy titles and aligning with traditional authorities.¹³ Thus, political parties that have operated in the country since the



The Ijaw people of the Niger Delta participate in a ceremony with their traditional war boats.

nationalist era have been mostly ethnic, in spite of constitutional attempts by 'corrective' military governments to ensure the emergence of national parties.

The truism of the ethnic foundation of the state manifests in three other ways – namely, the emergence of ethnic organisations other than political parties to champion ethnic interests during periods of transition and crisis; the perception that ethnic nationalities rather than (the 'artificial') states and local government units are the constituent units of the federation; and various actions of state power holders that underscore its ethnic reproduction. With regard to the emergence of ethnic organisations, the experience of the transition to the Fourth Republic, which was inaugurated in 1999, and afterwards, is very instructive. The manufacturing of 'test-tube' parties and so-called 'new-breed politicians' as transition vehicles by various military heads of state – notably generals Babangida, Abacha and Abubakar – which began with an imposed two-party system in 1990, produced fragile and artificial parties that functioned merely as electoral platforms.

This necessitated a (temporary) shift from political parties as the fulcrum of ethnic politics to powerful ethno-regional organisations¹⁴, ethnic militias¹⁵, radical

youth groups¹⁶, and cultural and political diaspora organisations. These emerged after the military had successfully repressed ethnic and pro-democracy agitations at home, forcing the locale of democratisation to move abroad. These various groups have made strong claims on the state on behalf of their ethnic constituents. The demands range from a power shift from the north (where it has mostly been since independence) to the south, made by Afenifere and Ohaneze Ndigbo (Yoruba and Igbo organisations), and compensation for the losses suffered by the Igbo during the civil war, to demands for resource control and adequate compensation for the hazards of oil exploration and production by the minorities of the Niger Delta. These issues formed the core of what has come to be known in Nigeria as the National Question¹⁷, which leaders of the ethnic organisations, as well as pro-democracy and human rights groups, insist can only be resolved through the convocation of a Sovereign National Conference of ethnic nationalities.

The clamour for a conference of ethnic nationalities is borne out of the perception that the country's over 300 ethnic groups – rather than the 36 states and 774 local government units – are the 'original' constituents of the federation. This perception derives from the

THE MAJOR CONSEQUENCE OF THE KEY ROLES ACCORDED TO TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES IN THE PROCESS OF STATE BUILDING WAS THE LEGITIMISATION OF ETHNICITY AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE STATE

disaggregative nature of Nigerian federalism, which has seen the open-ended creation of what are sometimes artificial states and localities, and the fact, therefore, that these units are not constituted or designed to protect discrete ethnic interests. Even those states that have relative ethnic homogeneity – such as the Igbo states of the south-east, the Yoruba states of the south-west, the Hausa/Fulani states of the north-west, and the Ijaw state of Bayelsa in the south – lack the viability and autonomy required to enable them to function as agents of self-determination and development.

It is the failure of the state (and local) tiers of government to respond adequately to complex ethnic demands that underlie the transition from “accommodation-seeking nationalism”, which sought space within a centralised federation, to “self-determination nationalism”, which seeks a non-centralised system with viable states.¹⁸

The imperatives of self-determination nationalism cannot be satisfied without political restructuring, which explains the agitation for “true federalism”. What is significant, however, is that with a few notable exceptions¹⁹, the most ardent advocates of genuine federalism and a Sovereign National Conference have been leaders of ethnic organisations, rather than the state or local governments. This underscores the fact that the state – from the point of view of the leaders of the various ethnic groups, in this instance – has strong ethnic foundations.

The final and historically most consistent manifestation of the ethnic foundation of the state, which has also been the major propellant of group rights, is the action of state power holders. The colonial state, as was pointed out earlier, made ethnic rights the fulcrum of the evolving state. In the process, it created a ranked ethnic system that differentiated major from minority groups, positioned

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Politicised ethnicity refers to the articulation of interests in the name of the ethnic group and the struggle to defend those interests.



Niger Delta's minority groups remain in poverty while the oil rich lands on which they live support the country's economy.

groups like the Fulani and Hausa as 'superior' to others, allowed the oppression of minorities in the regions into which the country was divided, and promoted uneven development among the groups, especially between southern and northern groups. The ethnic minorities bore the brunt of these stratifications and structural inequalities, and historically have been at the forefront of the struggles for collective rights to protect them from majority oppression.²⁰

The problem of the Niger Delta minorities – from whose lands oil on which the country's economy depends is derived, but they still remain in abject poverty – presents perhaps the most serious aspect of the minority groups' problems today. The response of the federal government to attempts made by the groups to assert their political and economic rights in the face of such grave injustice, has been a mix of repression²¹ and appeasements²², rather than the fundamental restructuring of the federal system – especially in the areas of local political autonomy and control of local resources by state and local governments. Also, the culpability of the various multinational oil companies in the perpetuation of injustice in the Niger Delta has yet to be addressed in a systematic or holistic way. Right now, individual companies are left to apply their standards to deal with the communities.

The oppression of non-Muslim minorities in core Muslim parts of the north, especially following the introduction of sharia law, and perennial conflicts among minorities in the various states arising from new forms of oppression by emergent majorities in the new states, present other levels of the problem. The major reason that the creation of more states (and local governments) has failed to 'solve' the problem of minorities is the over-centralisation of power and resources in the federation, and the corresponding loss of fiscal and political autonomy and capacity by the states. This, as we have seen, is the major ground for the agitation to restructure the federal system – possibly through the convocation of a Sovereign National Congress – to, amongst others, give the constituent units greater control over resources and restore state rights.

In summary, it becomes clear that the post-colonial state has had as much responsibility for ethnicising the state as its colonial predecessor. Indeed, citizenship is based on ethnicity – the 1999 Nigerian constitution stipulates that belonging to a group 'indigenous' to the country is a condition for citizenship. It follows from this that a citizen's status and quality of life are bound by the strengths, weaknesses, superiority or inferiority of the ethnic group of which she or he is a part. The operation of distributive and balancing formulas like the federal character principle and quota system – which appoints people to government positions, admits students to public schools and recruits officers and men into the military and police based on their groups of origin – reinforces this functional or group-mediated (as opposed to direct citizen-state) principle of citizenship. Some actions of state power holders have also had the same effect. In the early 1990s, the then-Nigerian military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, released pro-democracy opponents of his government to the traditional rulers of their ethnic groups (the Ooni of Ife and the Emir of Kano), in a gesture that suggested that political relations – including opposition – were ethnically based, and that traditional rulers were answerable for the actions of their 'subjects'. This is a significant example of the ethnicisation of the public domain.

Conclusion

The Nigerian experience shows that group rights are crucial in Africa, not because of any cultural peculiarity or relativity, but because ethnicity and notions of ethnic rights constitute the foundation of the state. The colonisers determined that rights could only be claimed by ethnic groups, a point that was given institutional anchor in the creation of subjects who related to the state through their groups of origin, rather than citizens. There has been no fundamental change to this foundation in the post-colonial period, in part because independence was

achieved on the basis of negotiated ethnic settlements. It is within the context of the stratified, discriminatory and oppressive ethnic systems that the emancipatory potential of ethnicity as a medium for asserting the rights of weak, vulnerable and oppressed groups has taken root. In Nigeria, this phenomenon explains why political parties have mostly been ethnic, why transitions and crises provoke ethnic claims and counter-claims, and why leaders of ethnic groups perceive of themselves as more 'original' shareholders of the federal state than the (artificial) states and local governments which, from a legal-constitutional perspective, are the constituent units. It also explains why the clamour for true federalism and the reinvention of the state through a national conference have been spearheaded by leaders of ethnic nationalities. **A**

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Endnotes

- 1 Howard, R. (1986) *Human Rights in Commonwealth Africa*, Ottawa: Rowman and Littlefield.
- 2 Cohen's (1993: 16, 17) observation that "On its own, ethnicity has no relation to human rights" is therefore incorrect, although he is quick to recognise that "once the scene shifts to interethnic relations, rights matters change significantly". Cohen, R. (1993) 'Endless Teardrops: Prolegomena to the Study of Human Rights in Africa' in Cohen, R., Hyden, G. & Nagan, W.P. (eds.) *Human Rights and Governance in Africa*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, pp. 5-19.
- 3 This partly answers the criticism by opponents of group rights that because individuals have multiple identities and that ethnicity, for instance, is situational, it is difficult to determine which groups require which rights. The point here is that some groups – call these primary groups – create more fundamental identities, what Clifford Geertz (1963) referred to long ago as the "natural givens of life" that affect the daily lives of individuals more than others. Depending on the extent to which a polity is divided, ethnic, religious and racial groups belong to this category. Geertz, C. (1963) *Old Societies and New States*, Glencoe: The Free Press.
- 4 Berting, J. et al (ed.) (1990) *Human Rights in a Pluralist World: Individuals and Collectivities*, Westport: Meckler.
- 5 Raz, J. (1986) *The Morality of Freedom*, New York: Oxford University Press; Osaghae, E.E. (1996) 'Human Rights and Ethnic Conflict Management: The Case of Nigeria' in *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 33 no. 2, pp. 171-188.
- 6 Mohammed Salih, M.A. (2001) *African Democracies and African Politics*, London: Pluto Press, p. 24.
- 7 Osaghae, E.E. (1991) 'A Re-examination of the Conception of Ethnicity in Africa as an Ideology of Inter-elite Competition' in *African Study Monographs*, Vol. 12 no. 1, pp. 43-61; Yeros, P. (ed.) (1999) *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Africa: Constructivists Reflections and Contemporary Politics*, Houndsmill: Macmillan.
- 8 Osaghae, E.E. (2004) 'Political Transitions and Ethnic Conflict in Africa' in *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. 21 no. 1, pp. 221-240.
- 9 Coleman, J. (1958) *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 194.
- 10 Mamdani, M. (1996) *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, London: James Currey.
- 11 Ekeh, P.P. (1997) 'The Concept of Second Liberation and the Prospects of Democracy in Africa: A Nigerian Context' in Beckett, P. & Young, C. (eds.) *Dilemmas of Democratization in Nigeria*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, pp. 83-110.
- 12 Coleman, J. (1958) *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 53.
- 13 There is hardly a notable politician in the country that does not have one chieftaincy title or the other in the bid to legitimise their claims to political leadership. Typically, the politician has the title of 'leader' or 'war commander' of the ethnic group. It is also difficult for politicians and parties to secure electoral victories without the support of traditional rulers.
- 14 Notable examples were Afenifere and Yoruba Council of Elders for the Yoruba, Ohaneze Ndigbo and Igbo National Assembly for the Igbo, Arewa Consultative Forum and Arewa People's Congress for the Hausa/Fulani-North, Ijaw National Congress, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, United Middle Belt Congress, and Southern Kaduna Progressive Union.
- 15 Militias, which employed what were essentially 'traditional' methods of militancy – rituals and juju – included the O'dua People's Congress and O'dua Liberation Movement for the Yoruba, Bakassi Boys for the Igbo, and Egbesu Boys for the Ijaw.
- 16 The most active youth groups are in the Niger Delta, where they have spearheaded the assault on the state over resource control and adequate compensation for oil exploration and production.
- 17 Osaghae, E.E. & Onwudiwe, E. (eds.) (2007) *The Management of the National Question in Nigeria*, Okada: Igbinedion University Press; Momoh, A. & Adejumbi, S. (eds.) (2002) *The National Question in Nigeria*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
- 18 Osaghae, E.E. (2001) 'From Accommodation to Self-determination: Minority Nationalism and the Restructuring of the Nigerian State' in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 7 no. 1, pp. 1-20.
- 19 The exceptions include the clamour by the Alliance for Democracy, one of the three major political parties, which has firm roots in the Yoruba south-west and has pursued a regionalist agenda, and Governor Ahmed Tinubu of Lagos State, who has been a strong advocate of true federalism, complete with state police and fiscal autonomy.
- 20 Osaghae, E.E. (1998) 'Managing Multiple Minority Problems in a Divided Society: The Nigerian Experience' in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 36 no. 1, pp. 1-24.
- 21 Most notably, the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni rights activists, the deployment of federal forces to repress the youth, which resulted in the destruction of Odi town in 1999, and the periodic detention of leaders of militant groups.
- 22 These have mainly involved the establishment of special federal agencies, of which the most recent is the Niger Delta Development Commission.



A GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE KENYAN CRISIS

WRITTEN BY **SEEMA SHEKHAWAT**

Introduction

Once seen as one of the most stable democracies in Africa, Kenya recently experienced violence of an unprecedented magnitude following the parliamentary and presidential elections of 27 December 2007. According to election results, the majority of the parliamentary seats were won by the opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party, led by Raila Odinga, who also was in the lead during the presidential elections. However, in a sudden turnaround, the Electoral Commission of Kenya announced that incumbent president Mwai Kibaki had won the election. While the dispute between the government and the opposition parties reached some form of resolution through international mediation, the consequences of the turmoil were, unfortunately, far-reaching and severe.

The reported election fraud that reinstated Kibaki into the presidency plunged Kenya into a serious political crisis, with huge economic and humanitarian ramifications. The ethnic-based violence in the aftermath of the disputed polls resulted in a trail of death, destruction and displacement. While the economic consequences were felt domestically, regionally and globally, the humanitarian costs in terms of large-scale killings and internal displacement were unprecedented in Kenya's recent history. This article focuses specifically on the gender

Above: Sexual violence is the most widely documented victimisation that women suffer, particularly rape during armed conflict. Women walk past a poster emphasising this message, in Nairobi, Kenya.



REUTERS / THE BIGGER PICTURE

A woman is attacked and robbed in the Kibera slum during the January 2008 riots in Nairobi, Kenya.

dimension of the humanitarian disaster that followed the December 2007 elections, and the resultant conflict.

Armed Violence and Gender

Women experience conflict in numerous ways – as vulnerable victims, survivors, peace builders and combatants. However, despite the multifaceted experiences of women in conflict situations, it is the experience of victimisation that is most common. Women experience conflict-induced violence in a

more protracted way, as part of the civilian population as well as due to their gender.

Women suffer physical violence in terms of indiscriminate and sometimes discriminate killings. However, the most widely documented victimisation that women suffer is sexual violence. This ghastly form of violence has long been accepted as an inevitable reality of armed conflict. Rape is the most widespread sexual violence, noted during armed conflict all over the globe.

Besides rape, other forms of sexual violence have also been reported during armed violence. These include forced pregnancy, forced abortion, increase in prostitution, women trafficking, and so on. Women in Sudan, Iraq, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina have reported brutal rapes, sexual assaults, sexual slavery and mutilation committed by male combatants. Despite the international recognition of 'rape as an instrument of genocide, a form of torture, and a crime against humanity', there is no apparent decrease in crisis situations, where impunity is the only rule dutifully abided by all the sides involved. The end to armed violence does not necessarily end violations against women. In post-armed conflict situations, many women continue to confront discrimination and sexual violence.¹

The Kenyan Case

The large-scale victimisation of women during a crisis situation was quite evident in the recent violence that occurred in Kenya. The Kenyan women's suffering was doubly significant, as they are both part of the unarmed civilian population and the discriminated-against gender group within a patriarchal society. As part of the civilian population, they were injured and killed, but their suffering transcended beyond the usual forms of violence to include sexual torture and the related adverse socio-cultural implications.

Killings

The post-election violence that started in Nairobi, Mombasa, Eldoret in the Rift Valley, and Kisumu in Nyanza, soon engulfed the country. Odinga supporters targeted and attacked members of Kibaki's ethnic group, the Kikuyus, who were long resented for their



Displaced Kenyan women waiting for handouts at a food distribution centre following ethnic clashes in Naivasha town.



Kenyan women emerged as an important pressure group for peace by means of negotiations.

prominence in Kenya's politics and economy. Human Rights Watch accused the ODM of organising, instigating and facilitating violence against the Kikuyus. It also accused the police of a 'shoot to kill' policy against protesters. Violence continued, regardless of the power-sharing agreement being brokered between Kibaki and Odinga. Reportedly, over 1 000 Kenyans died and uncountable numbers were injured in the post-election violence. Though the gender-based statistics are not yet available, women were part of the collateral damage, and many were killed and injured in the politically-instigated ethnic-based violence. There have been many horrific incidents, including the burning of a church in western Kenya containing dozens of Kikuyu women and children, who had sought refuge there.

Internal Displacement

The uprooting of people is almost inextricably related to all crisis situations where violence becomes the norm. While many people affected by the violence took shelter in safer parts of Kenya, numerous others fled to Uganda. Despite the terminology difference – wherein the former group is referred to as 'internally displaced people' and the latter group referred to as 'refugees' – the displacement situation was similar. The first phase of uprooting took place from the North Rift region and parts of western Kenya and Nyanza, where mainly

Kikuyus were victimised and the perpetrators were the Luos, Luhyas and the Kalenjins. The second phase of displacement started when the Kikuyu militias retaliated by chasing the 'enemy' tribes from the areas where they were a majority. Reportedly, over 800 000 people fled their homes in the post-election crisis situation. Here again, although the gender-based assessments are not available, it can be easily estimated that women would have constituted at least fifty percent of the uprooted population, if not more.

Sexual Violence

Following the disputed 2007 elections, and like in any other crisis situation, women in Kenya were most vulnerable to sexual violence. In January 2008, it was reported that hospital admissions for rape had doubled in Kenya in the post-election scenario.² In fact, the Nairobi Women's Hospital and the Coast General Hospital in Mombasa reported a two- to threefold increase in the number of women and children seeking treatment for sexual assault since early January 2008. The Nairobi Women's Hospital provided the following data: over eighty percent (356) of the treated cases were for sexual violence. Of these cases, ninety-three percent were adult women while the rest were children and men; only nine percent were cases of physical assault, seven percent were domestic violence-related cases, and four percent

were cases of indecent assault.³ Dr. Joseph Osoo, who runs a clinic in Nairobi's Mathare slum, indicated that he was overwhelmed by the number of women and girls who came for treatment, and by the brutality of their attacks. During the days immediately after the election, he was treating up to 45 rape victims a day, unlike earlier, when the number of rape victims was one per week.⁴

Rape, often by many aggressors, was reported by the victims. There were reports that, in many cases, sexual assaults were also accompanied by further brutality, such as inserting objects into genitalia.⁵ On the condition of anonymity, in an email communication, a doctor from Nairobi Women's Hospital informed the author that the "unprecedented increase in the number of cases related to sexual violence is horrifying but what is more appalling is the nature and extent wherein even two-year old girls were not spared". Gang rapes, followed by further brutality, brings into focus the crude reality that gender-based sexual violence is not merely a by-product of the collapsed social order. Rather, as in other crisis situations, it is used as a strategic tool to achieve specific goals, such as terrorising families and

may include psychological disorders, abandonment by families, marital break-ups, and so on. Unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS render the situation worse, due to the unavailability of adequate health services and humanitarian assistance. The United Nations (UN) has also warned that the escalation in sexual violence will eventually emerge in increased HIV statistics in Kenya.

A different kind of tragedy has befallen women in marriages and relationships across ethnic and tribal lines, who have been forced to separate from their spouses and partners. During the armed conflict, men belonging to rival ethnic groups had to flee from their homes and communities. While for some the separations have been temporary, with the couple reuniting after the country's return to some stability, for many others the separation could be permanent, due to family or community pressures. These women, with no information regarding their husbands, face an uncertain future. They have been left to fend for themselves, with the community unwilling to take any responsibility for their 'unappreciated act' of marrying across ethnic and tribal lines. A news report

WOMEN EXPERIENCE CONFLICT-INDUCED VIOLENCE IN A MORE PROTRACTED WAY, AS PART OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION AS WELL AS DUE TO THEIR GENDER

forcing them to flee, humiliating entire communities or taking revenge for the atrocities committed by the men of 'other' outside groups. Thus, while some women became victims of sexual violence because of their ethnic identity, others were assaulted because of their gender. Regardless of the motivation, there can be no denial that perpetrators exploited women by committing sexual violence with impunity.

Women were sexually assaulted whilst fleeing, and even in the camps that they turned to for safe harbour. Opportunistic attacks on women during the night, on their way to the toilets set up outside, were reported from the camps. There were also reports of displaced women being forced to exchange sexual favours for food or clothing.⁶ Many cases of sexual violence have likely remained unreported due to security reasons, fear of stigmatisation or because the immediate concerns of women in conflict crises tend to be related to the survival of their families first, and not necessarily their personal honour.

Socio-cultural Implications

Following the exposure to rape and other forms of sexual abuse, the victims continue to live with social ostracism, stigma, fear and shame. The Kenyan victims of sexual violence are likely to suffer long-term social and personal effects of the post-election violence. These

quotes two women, whose husbands from a different ethnic tribe were forced to flee, saying that people of their own community have shunned them by asking: "Who told you to intermarry?" They state further: "We are now useless to the community; they don't talk to us, anything... I'll just believe that one day, one time, he (husband) will come."⁷

While marriages were a unifying factor between more than 40 tribal communities living in Kenya, the ethnic divisions may now be further emphasised in the aftermath of the violence, thus further rupturing the socio-cultural fabric in Kenya. There are no complete statistics on how many families have been affected by the recent violence, but the impact has been particularly felt in western Kenya, where tribal tensions have been most inflamed following the disputed re-election of President Kibaki.

Status of Women

The nature and extent of gender-based violence in any crisis situation is also an indicator of the status of women in the particular society. Since women in Kenya have a comparatively low socio-economic status, their vulnerability substantially increased in the crisis following the disputed re-election.⁸ That women in Kenya have lower status than their male counterparts is indicated across all spheres of life – social, cultural,



Kenyan women attend an AIDS awareness meeting in the town of Isiolo. The recent escalation in sexual violence will emerge in increased HIV/AIDS statistics in Kenya.

economic and political. Relating women's low status to the post-election violence scenario is quite important, as neither the pre-election violence nor its subsequent harsh impact on women received due attention. It is also important to note that, during the election campaign, many women – both candidates and their supporters – reported 255 cases of assaults. The assaults were designed to intimidate and terrorise aspirant women into withdrawing, and ranged from verbal intimidation to physical harm. Hundreds of women received telephonic threats, some women were beaten and many others were publicly humiliated by being called 'prostitute' while they addressed rallies. In a shocking incident, an aspiring parliamentarian was shot dead in Nairobi, while another was dragged from a campaign convoy and gang raped.⁹ Consequently, many women withdrew from the electoral fray.

Although the number of women aspirants was highest in the 2007 elections, slightly more than a dozen women were elected, accounting for less than the number of successful women than in the previous election. Interestingly, there was no apparent bar on women playing a tacit political role as voters. Of

Kenya's 14 million voters, 6.7 million were women. The elections turn-out was unprecedented, indicating that women too participated overwhelmingly in the elections, as voters. It is not surprising that women remain under-represented in Kenya's politics. The specific targeting of women candidates and their supporters in the recent elections substantiates the deep-rooted gender bias that exists. This biased gender perspective, deeply entrenched in Kenyan society, revealed itself in its worst form in the recent post-election situation. Although women suffered even prior to the elections, this continued in a more ghastly form in the post-election scenario. The effects of this will likely continue to be experienced for a long time to come. The Kenyan case shows that women's suffering, generally as part of the civilian population and specifically due to their gender, is not given due and serious attention by those who hold the power, in order to affect the situation positively.

Peace Attempts

Despite being targeted victims, Kenyan women emerged as an important pressure group, favouring peace by means of negotiation. They organised peace

marches to show solidarity with victims. Women's organisations like GROOTS worked towards long-term reconciliation processes. Peace dialogues were organised to bring divided communities together to highlight the common suffering among ethnic groups, so as to enable non-violent advocacy action. Many other organisations, like the Gender Violence Recovery Centre (GVRC), offered free medical services, counselling and referral to legal services for the victims of sexual violence. The GVRC also dispatched mobile units to the slums and camps set up for internally displaced persons, to provide services to needy women.¹⁰ Many international organisations like Global Fund for Women, Urgent Action Fund, African Women's Development Fund, Action Aid International, Vital Voices, Nairobi Peace Initiative, and so on, contributed to the efforts to address the gender-based violence that occurred in Kenya.

A significant number of Kenyan women called for an immediate end to inter-ethnic killings, impunity and gross violations of human rights – especially the increasing cases of sexual crimes and gang rapes – in a communiqué handed over to the mediation team, led by former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan. They also appealed for urgent attention to be paid to the special needs of women and children. Women's groups also called for constitutional reforms, and measures to restore the rule of law and order. Advocating peace and reconciliation, these groups also demanded their due place in the peace process, as reaffirmed in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality; and the protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa. Annan reaffirmed the need to have women at the peacebuilding table though, in the later stages, the mediation process largely remained gender neutral.¹¹

Conclusion

Although the Kenyan crisis has brought into focus diverse issues ranging from democracy to good governance and from corruption to human rights, the gender implications of the crisis needs serious analysis and attention from a broader perspective. In patriarchal systems that remain entrenched, to varying degrees, in every culture, country and continent, women continue to suffer in all spheres of life, be it socio-cultural, economic or political. Violence against women in situations of armed conflict is thus mostly an extension of the gender discrimination that already persists and exists during times of peace. Although it is argued that conflict situations bring empowerment for women, there can be no denying the fact that, generally, the impact

of armed violence on women is hugely negative and, where empowerment does occur, it is either accidental, partial or marked with tragedy. The overwhelming negative impact of violence, as evident in Kenya, needs to be given urgent international, regional and local attention. Amongst other things, the Kenyan crisis has once again brought into focus the 'persistent use of women's bodies as the battlefield for political gain and influence'.¹² While the Annan-led mediation has succeeded in restoring some stability in Kenya, the achievement of positive peace, where women are treated as equals and are free of oppression in all forms, still remains a distant dream. ▽

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Endnotes

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION: THE HEART OF POST-CONFLICT PROCESSES

WRITTEN BY **FRANCES FORTUNE AND OSCAR BLOH**

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Too often, governments and their international partners have not placed strategic communication at the centre of post-conflict reconstruction and reform processes. This can account for the slow pace of implementation and doubtful results that have plagued post-conflict reform processes in many places.

The overriding objective of any strategic communication is to engender change: a shift in citizens' attitudes (their perceptions) and behaviours (their actions) towards

Above: Kenyans salvage a burnt newspaper in Nairobi.



Information dissemination via the media is often confused for ‘communication occurring’ but there is usually little opportunity for feedback.

development and governance processes, and how they own it. At the same time, measuring people’s attitudes and behaviours or their level of participation in influencing policy and ownership of development or governance processes is an emerging discipline. Vladimir Bratic and Lisa Schirch have argued that change takes place either through compulsion, manipulation or persuasion, or a combination of the three.¹ Unlike compulsive and manipulative means of engendering change, persuasion creates the opportunity for an individual or a group to see reason for the need to change, which is what strategic communication seeks to do.

The media, particularly radio and print, can effect change cognitively. It is far more difficult to measure attitudinal and behavioural changes, as they are largely informed and influenced by family and societal values, as well as outside forces. Social relationships are complex, and it would be difficult to affect those relationships in a linear fashion; that is, an increase in knowledge leads to a change of perception, which invariably leads to a change in behaviour. The change process is better understood as cyclical, with one factor influencing the other.

Strategic communication refers to a set of guidelines or a framework by which an entity or a government communicates using various media or related channels in an organised fashion, with an intended result on a particular reform policy or strategy. It requires both vertical and horizontal information dissemination. Vertical channels refer to a two-way flow of information from the government to its citizens on critical policies, and citizens responding to the government. Horizontal communication refers to discussions within and across social groups, and is a practice that connects communities and builds understanding around the issue being discussed.

Both vertical and horizontal channels are essential for the public to understand and trust the policies that are being introduced and implemented. Equally important to the success of a communication strategy is the presence of a feedback loop from the people to the leaders, which enhances active dialogue between the government and the governed. This approach fosters transparency and accountability on important post-conflict reform processes, and can be similarly applied to a range



Residents read the state-controlled Herald newspaper while waiting in a queue in Harare, Zimbabwe.

of topics such as demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration, elections, decentralisation, poverty reduction strategies, governance and security sector reform, among others.

There are four distinct yet inter-related reasons for why strategic communication as a change process is not often leveraged in post-conflict reform processes.

- First, there is the lack of political will for radical internal reform. After a violent conflict and the consequences of it, rhetoric and public discourse by international actors and governments are underpinned by the need for change. But quite often, the place where change starts is not properly defined or articulated. In many instances, even if both national and international policymakers mean well and want to engender change, they are unable to muster the political will to make it happen. Change is often perceived as something that has to happen, but their role in fostering this change as key policymakers is not fully understood.
- Second, there is the fear of being held accountable. Governments, like large multinational institutions

such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), make decisions in very closed environments that are marked by secrecy. If consultations do take place, they are conducted within familiar networks, and little space is created for alternative voices and perspectives to be heard. There is resistance to open the space, because people outside the inner circles are not well positioned to hold the decision-makers accountable for decisions made on behalf of the greater population.

- Third, there is a tendency to use information dissemination and strategic communication interchangeably. For many bureaucrats and politicians, the conventional wisdom is that once they have disseminated information to the public via radio, television, newspapers, press releases or press conferences, communication has taken place. In other instances, when a crisis emerges, they disseminate information to the public as a tool for crisis management. In such circumstances of relating to the public in an ad hoc manner, the solicitation of feedback is not given due importance.

- Fourth, there is limited capacity and/or emphasis to develop a communication strategy. After a violent conflict, human resource capacity is greatly diminished, and the ability for the government to recruit people with the necessary skills to develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy can be a challenge. In some cases, information is often an afterthought, and is not considered integral to the resolution processes.

Reform Processes and Inadequate Communication

Liberia, like many other post-colonial African countries, inherited flawed governance institutions and a system of government based on the theory of unitary sovereignty from its colonial masters.² Within this political framework, power and political authority are heavily centralised and rest in the presidency. With such power comes the privilege of unlimited access to state

resources, which are used to enhance a patron-client political relationship that excludes a greater portion of the population from decision-making processes and access to resources. These factors have been a major source of intrastate conflicts across Africa, including Liberia's 15-year civil war.

Some theories of post-conflict reform have proposed four pillars – security, governance and participation, economic well-being, and justice and reconciliation³ – as necessary for consolidating peace in countries that are emerging from war. While these pillars are crucial for maintaining peace, their success will depend to a large extent on how participatory and transparent the processes are that lead to their conceptualisation, formulation and implementation. These pillars, however, are linked to a larger development and governance framework, referred to as the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). Ownership of this process, however,

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Local language radio programmes are effective formats for reaching people in rural areas.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION BRINGS UNIQUE VALUE TO THE OWNERSHIP OF DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE PROCESSES, BY INITIATING A PARADIGM SHIFT FROM CLOSED DECISION-MAKING TO DIVERSE REPRESENTATION; FROM INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS TO ACTIVE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNED AND GOVERNMENT THAT CUTS ACROSS GENDER, AGE, POLITICS, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL STATUS

depends on the extent to which citizens of different backgrounds can have their issues and interests articulated and their roles defined in its implementation. One of the ways of ensuring that this happens is through strategic communication.

After its violent conflict, Sierra Leone undertook major reform initiatives, including decentralisation and the development of a PRS. The PRS document, while ostensibly developed in a consultative frame, was then extensively publicised and large amounts of money spent to popularise it. However, this communication approach, which focused on one-way, vertical communication, did not enable communities to make the connection between the PRS and how poverty could be reduced.⁴ Instead, the word PRS became slang in the local parlance to mean cheap or inexpensive. In essence, the absence of an effective and two-way communication strategy resulted in a popularised document that lacked the people's understanding and sense of ownership.

Liberia, having ushered in a democratically elected government in 2005, has embarked on a series of reform efforts to enhance better governance. In collaboration with its international partners, it is in the process of finalising its PRS to direct the country's development plans for the next three years. Like its neighbour, the process has been consultative and, for the most part, has remained at the level of participation. The validation was only conducted in Monrovia, the capital city, with little or no participation by those who were consulted in the rural parts of the country. This contravenes the principle of inclusion, wherein the PRS is to be prepared by the government with the active participation of civil society, donors and international institutions.⁵ The PRS itself lacks a communication strategy. If it did have one, the issue of soliciting the views of citizens, whose lives are to be affected by the policy to validate it, would have been possible. Furthermore, the failure to develop a communication strategy from the onset poses a huge challenge to the successful implementation of the PRS, in terms of ensuring that citizens understand what the policy is trying to achieve, who is paying for it, and what their role is in making it happen.

Effective Strategic Communication

Legitimate governments, when re-establishing state authority and instituting key reforms, have to earn the confidence of the population. Communication is one of the most effective tools to build confidence. The government therefore needs to communicate in a way that connects people to the reform plans, and ensures their support in a language that is clear, focused and targeted. When effectively done, strategic communication can provide momentum for reform, driving the change that is identified as necessary by the people, and then implementing this in a people-centred manner. Having a strategic communication strategy in place helps to counter some of the major challenges facing new governments as they move reform agendas forward, as well as facilitating confidence building.

The results of an effective strategic communication framework applied to post-conflict reform processes include:

- **Managed expectations** – When citizens' expectations are well managed, they understand, appreciate and acknowledge what a government can and cannot do, and value the gradual changes that are taking place.
- **Ownership is engendered** – Citizens in most developing countries have not had the experience of participatory governance beyond expression of views and priorities. When they can muster enough power to influence the way decisions are made and hold people accountable for carrying out those decisions, it deepens the democratic process and they feel a sense of ownership for the changes taking place.
- **Inclusivity promoted** – Soliciting the opinion, perspectives and voices of diverse groups and actors presents a clearer picture of the differences in thoughts of women, minorities, opposition parties and the disabled, who normally do not get heard. By including alternative voices, strategic communication broadens the constituency and creates the platform for ownership.
- **Transparency strengthened** – When decisions that affect the lives of millions of people are made behind



Kofi Annan, the chief mediator in the recent Kenya crisis, addresses the media in Nairobi. When a crisis emerges information can be disseminated to the public as a tool for crisis management.

- closed doors by a handful of people (normally experts and consultants), it does not create the opportunity for those whose lives will be affected by the decisions to ask questions, and have clarity on the decisions made.
- Credibility and confidence improved – People’s experience of bad governance makes them reluctant to trust government. Strategic communication is helpful in reducing mistrust, because it allows for the perspectives and voices of different actors from different disciplines to be debated regarding major policy issues. The outcome of such communication is likely to improve trust, compared to having only the opinions of government experts.
 - Improved quality and coordination of information – Having a communication strategy in place improves coordination among the different actors providing

- information in the public sphere. This reduces the listening audience’s confusion, limits the possibility of duplication, and increases the likelihood of better communication, which together can contribute to the improved quality of information disseminated.
- Improved government image – In reform processes and the complex issues that are associated with them, it is easy to scapegoat and blame others. When roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated to the different actors, and the environment created for those responsibilities to be carried out effectively, the chances of blaming the government is reduced. This is likely to engender collective ownership of the outcomes, whether positive or negative.
 - Miscommunication managed – Most developing countries have a high illiteracy rate, and therefore

information is widely spread by word of mouth. One individual with limited literacy reads an article and explains the story to others as he or she understands it. In many instances, it is wrongly explained, and the chain of misinformation passes through a village or community. Effective communication strategies need to recognise the best means to reach people, in formats that they will understand. One example of an appropriate tool in Africa is local language radio programmes, which are generally better understood by rural populations than those programmes only in the country's national language.

Opportunities for Strategic Communication

During transitional periods, when international actors are present and driving intervention processes, it is difficult for the transitional government to control the political process alone. However, the transitional phase is also marked by emerging opportunities that the new government can leverage to integrate strategic communication into reform processes.

winning elections, with Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe as classic examples. In this political space, both partisan and non-partisan groups are working towards critical governance and development issues. Working with political parties and having their voices mainstreamed on major reform processes is vital for the change agenda. Fragile as most of the political parties and civil society may be, their mere presence is an opportunity for diversifying the views and opinions on governance issues, and multiplying the medium of communication used.

Citizens' Desire for Participation

Due to their past experience of poor governance, citizens in most countries resolve to engender change through political processes. As compared to 20 years ago, citizens across most African countries are increasingly demanding that their leaders become more transparent and accountable for the decisions they make. In so doing, the rules on governance are gradually shifted, and this creates an opportunity to magnify the people's voices.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION REFERS TO A SET OF GUIDELINES OR A FRAMEWORK BY WHICH AN ENTITY OR A GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATES USING VARIOUS MEDIA OR RELATED CHANNELS IN AN ORGANISED FASHION, WITH AN INTENDED RESULT ON A PARTICULAR REFORM POLICY OR STRATEGY

Diversified Media

The recent diversification in the media landscape across Africa and other parts of the world provides an entry point for shifting to new methods of governance. While, traditionally, governments have been monopolising information dissemination and wielding information as a tool of power, the recent emergence of new media outlets across Africa has allowed for significant changes. Access to information has increased, and communities are finding their voices through their community radios. There is a huge opportunity here for integrating information and its dissemination into a communication framework, which broadens the participation of diverse actors in the decision-making process.

Political Parties

The political space in most African countries is gradually opening with the holding of multiparty elections and, in some instances, opposition parties

Resources and International Actors

To integrate strategic communication into a reform agenda as a tool to enhance participation, ensure inclusivity and generate transparency requires resources – both human and material. Many international agencies – including the Department of Foreign and International Development (DFID) and the World Bank – have realised this and generated strategies focusing on communication as a tool for change. This in itself is an opportunity. Such agencies must be shown in concrete terms how strategic communication can be used to facilitate the work of the governments they fund.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of Strategic Communication

Like all other initiatives, no communication strategy is complete without a built-in-evaluation component, as a way to check accountability and make improvements over time.⁶ There is a huge gap in assessing the


effectiveness of information that is disseminated to the public. Having spent time and resources developing and implementing a communication strategy, it is important to examine whether the strategy is, in fact, working. Are people receiving information about the selected policy? Does the target audience understand the information they receive? Is the information appropriate and targeted to their interests? Are there mechanisms available for them to give feedback to the government on the strategy? Evaluation centred on these points is critical, because communication is both process- and results-oriented. Without measuring the results, it is impossible to verify if the initiative has been effective and efficient.

At the results level, the 'so what' question is important, because it challenges the communicator to measure the extent to which the desired change has been achieved as a result of what has been communicated. This, however, will be difficult to accomplish unless initial research is undertaken to gather data on people's knowledge of the reform, perceptions and level of participation in governance, and levels of confidence and trust in reform policy information received. This initial data establishes a baseline that can be analysed and disaggregated by gender, location, age and level of education. The baseline data with corresponding indicators can become the yardstick for measuring change.

Conclusion

Strategic communication brings unique value to the ownership of development and governance processes, by initiating a paradigm shift from closed decision-making to diverse representation; from information dissemination and public relations to active conversation between the governed and government that cuts across gender, age, politics, education and social status. Strategic communication opens a channel by which citizens' unrealistic expectations – which tend to be great in a post-conflict context – can be managed adequately. The effective management of expectations reduces the likelihood of grievances and frustrations among citizens that can be easily manipulated by political actors, often resulting in violence.

Strategic communication offers a window of opportunity for a shift in the attitudes and behaviours of policymakers and citizens towards development and governance. Social scientists and peace practitioners are faced with the enormous challenge of measuring this change and presenting their findings as empirical evidence. This is an emerging challenge facing many social transformation organisations, such as Search for Common Ground, which has been experimenting with impact assessment tools and regularly modifying them to ensure consistency and relevance, irrespective of the context in which they are applied.

This article is, to some extent, acknowledging this challenge and inviting a wider dialogue on the subject. Through the sharing of experiences, tools that are better suited to measure the impact of change in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours can evolve. When significant progress is made in this direction, and it can be shown that strategic communication contributes to the stabilisation of post-conflict countries, the purpose of the article will be achieved. 

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TRANSNATIONAL ETHNIC GROUPS AND CONFLICT: THE ZAGHAWA IN CHAD AND SUDAN

WRITTEN BY **JOSEPH SANY AND SAMEEKSHA DESAI**



Introduction

A key difference between modern intrastate conflict and interstate war is the relative unimportance of national borders. Modern conflicts are not contained by political boundaries, and even 'local' conflicts are no longer strictly internal.¹ Neighbouring countries may face heightened instability² due to economic, political, population, military and other spill-overs. Parties are organised around identities (religious, cultural, ethnic and tribal), including parties comprising factions of the army or civilians. Although the exact relationship between globalisation and conflict is unclear, at the

very least, globalisation has affected power systems in modern states. The movement of people, resources and ideas strengthens non-state actors within and between countries. Just as technology can diffuse, conflict can spread.

Although the effects of conflict spill-over have been the focus of research³, the underlying process of spill-over has received less attention. The purpose of this article is to address one underlying driver of conflict spill-over: the existence of transnational ethnic groups. While there is a difference between civil wars in general and ethnic conflicts, and not all conflicts will spill over, ethnicity is



Refugees from Sudan's Darfur region who have fled to Chad are largely Zaghawa.

useful in framing spill-over, regardless. The international dimension of transnational ethnic groups, particularly the overlap they create between group membership and citizenship, combined with the centripetal and/or centrifugal dynamics of spill-over, make the resolution of most civil wars complex. Ethnic groups can spread conflict through diffusion or escalation.⁴ Diffusion occurs when ethnic conflict in one state increases the probability of conflict in another state, whereas escalation occurs when conflict in one state attracts parties from other states. Ethnicity connects people in ways that transcend political boundaries and national borders, and members of an ethnic group tend to identify at a regional level as opposed to a national level.

The relevance of this issue goes beyond scholarly debate to open up pathways in regional policies, such as those that affect the role of regional organisations and countries in preventing and mitigating conflicts and promoting peace.

Transnational Ethnic Groups in Africa

Africa is home to several hundred ethnic groups, many spread across artificial post-colonial country borders. Transnational ethnic groups are spread across borders, clustered in various regions of the continent. The dispersed nature of ethnicity in Africa means that groups may hold varying demographic status across

neighbouring countries: majority status in country A and minority status in country B.

In the current African context, the ethnic group is much more than a social construct: it is a key factor in politics. It is commonly perceived as the locus of political legitimacy for political leaders and their parties (both government and opposition parties). The strong identification of political leaders and parties with ethnicity creates conflicts of interests, particularly where distinct demographic status allows for the extreme political marginalisation of one or more groups. In some countries with relatively peaceful social situations, such as Gabon and Senegal, inter-ethnic conflict is more subtle, and overt conflicts or violence happen only sporadically. Often, ethnic rivalries emerge through the formation of ethnically-based political parties. In Kenya, ethnicity has created an enduring base for political mobilisation, rather than specific political ideology. It may be too early to tell if the post-election violence in Kenya was a sporadic flare-up in a fragile but relatively peaceful country, or something more.

Ethnicity provides a basis for strong direct linkages between people, which can facilitate collective mobilisation as one party to the conflict (such as a rebellion). In the case of a civil war involving a transnational ethnic group, neighbours hosting the same ethnic group will be affected by two important factors: demographics

ETHNICITY CONNECTS PEOPLE IN WAYS THAT TRANSCEND POLITICAL BOUNDARIES AND NATIONAL BORDERS, AND MEMBERS OF AN ETHNIC GROUP TEND TO IDENTIFY AT A REGIONAL LEVEL AS OPPOSED TO A NATIONAL LEVEL

(majority or minority) and relative political position (control of power or exclusion from power) in both countries. The case of the Zaghawa in Chad and Sudan is discussed further in the context of these two factors.

The Zaghawa in Sudan and Chad

The Zaghawa is a transnational ethnic group comprising subgroups across eastern and northern Chad and its border with Sudan. Although a minority in both Sudan's Darfur region and in Chad, it is highly mobilised in Darfur and forms the majority of rebel activity – especially in the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). In Chad, even though it constitutes less than two percent of the population of nine million, it controls the presidency and dominates government and high echelons of the army.⁵ The Zaghawa case has gained momentum because of the ongoing conflict in Darfur and the insurgency against Chad. These movements are intricately linked because of the transnational character of the Zaghawa and its support of Zaghawa Chadian president, Idriss Déby.

In 1990, a Zaghawa-based insurgency from Darfur, backed by Libya and led by Déby, toppled dictator Hissene Habré in Chad. Habré belonged to the Gorane ethnic group. After this regime was toppled, the Zaghawa gained political power in Chad – and control of the presidential political party, the Patriotic Salvation Movement (PSM) – through a network of patrons and elites in key government and military positions. Déby has since relied on the support of Zaghawa in Chad and Sudan to maintain power and suppress resistance.

As Déby consolidates his power in Chad with the help of the Zaghawa, the same group has become the victimised group in Darfur. The killings of thousands of Darfurians was overshadowed by peace talks between North and South Sudan, but could not continue unobserved when the Sudanese government recruited Janjaweed⁶ militias to undertake ethnic cleansing. This 'policy' has sent more than 200 000 people across the border to refugee camps in Chad, along with thousands more to the northern region of the Central African Republic (CAR).



GETTY IMAGES

Zaghawa Chadian president, Idriss Déby relies on the support of the Zaghawa people in Chad and Sudan to maintain power.



A refugee girl from Darfur holds up a drawing depicting Janjaweed attacks.

As the conflict in Darfur continues, so does the pressure on Déby across the border in Chad, to act in support of his fellow Zaghawa. According to the leader of the Sudan Liberation Army, Saleh Osman: “We [Zaghawa] helped him before, when he was in Sudan, but he is not helping us now.”⁷⁷ Expectations of reciprocity and solidarity are common among members of the same transnational ethnic group.

While Déby is not indifferent to the circumstances of the Zaghawa in Sudan, he is also aware of the frailty of his regime in Chad and the threat of the Sudanese military. On one hand, there is pressure from the Zaghawa elite in the government, army and in the rebellion in Sudan. Refusing to answer this call jeopardises his group’s credibility and overall stability in Chad. On the other hand, overtly supporting rebels in Sudan will provoke an immediate response from the Sudanese government. For example, there are indications that Chad has helped channel weapons to Darfur⁸, to which the Sudanese government responded by supporting an insurgency that almost deposed Déby in 2006. His regime has survived so far, in large part because of French

military support.⁹ Although ties of kinship are very strong, the balance of power between Chad and Sudan has been in Sudan’s favour. This reality has forced Déby to pursue a less aggressive stance than his backers would like, as illustrated by his multiple efforts to engage the African Union.

The dilemma in which Déby finds himself is symptomatic of the weakness of ethnically-based political regimes (versus ideologically-based parties). In this case, because Déby relies so much on a minority ethnic group, his regime is weak in Chad, and subject to internal and external pressures. The French have been the last firewall of Déby’s regime in Chad. To complicate matters further, strong ethnic loyalty cannot be guaranteed. An instrumentalist approach to ethnicity suggests it is leveraged by élites to achieve individual aims, but this does not equate to loyalty.¹⁰ For example, Sudan has been able to support Zaghawa anti-Déby movements, with the hope “to dilute the minority Zaghawa domination of the upper ranks of the Chadian military...”.¹¹ The main anti-Déby groups in Darfur are led by Tom and Timan Erdimi¹², in the Rassemblement des Forces Démocratiques (RAFD).

The Zaghawa is central to the conflict, both in Sudan and in Chad. It is well-mobilised in Sudan as part of the resistance against Khartoum, and it has succeeded in taking power in Chad despite its minority status, thanks to its support of Déby. This support has gained it the backing of Chad in the fight against the Sudanese government, in covert ways such as through logistical support, financial resources and rear bases, where it can regroup and take refuge (there are more than 200 000 Darfur refugees on Chad’s eastern border with Sudan). The support of the Chadian government comes at a price, as the Sudanese government backs Janjaweed militia and anti-Déby movements. The situation is not just a case of diffusion, where conflict is brought to neighbours, but also one of escalation, as the Chadian regime fights an ever-stronger insurgency and supports the Zaghawa in Sudan. Both countries are entangled in an escalating conflict through the use of proxies, largely from the Zaghawa ethnic group. The situation in Chad and Sudan offers clues to the complex dynamics of transnational ethnic groups in conflict.

Policy Considerations

Transnational ethnic groups are an important but often overlooked consideration for the design of bilateral and multilateral policies to mitigate conflict spill-over. First, it is important to recognise that transnational ethnic groups matter a great deal in regions of conflict. They can provide resources, directly and indirectly, to other members. In some cases, foreign governments will get involved for security reasons, particularly if members of an ethnic group are part of their leadership and/or

important to stability. This has certainly been the case with the Zaghawa in Sudan and Chad. In addition, transnational ethnic groups play an important role in mobilising members in neighbouring countries to reassess their situation as they contribute to the conflict. Conflict also has an in-group effect, as it reinforces identity and solidarity within groups, thus providing an additional incentive for the mobilisation and support of resources.

Second, diffusion and escalation are part of a vicious cycle, as demonstrated by the Zaghawa case. In Chad and Sudan, the centrifugal forces (the country of initial conflict being the centre) of diffusion are unleashed through channels of transnational ethnic groups. These might create instability in neighbouring countries that, in turn, get involved in the conflict – either to resolve or escalate it, thus creating a self-sustaining cycle of conflict.

Third, transnational ethnic groups do not necessarily have ‘sameness’ in terms of ethnic identification. Although members of ethnic groups may have shared identity, this apparent homogeneity can mask the divisions within groups and their competing interests. In other words, factions of ethnic groups can invest loyalty where it pays the highest desired returns. Members of a transnational ethnic group may stand together, but they are also likely to be divided by competing interests, and sometimes a border. The dilemma of Déby in Chad is a clear illustration.

In order to frame policies to contain spill-overs, further analysis and insight is needed into the dynamics of transnational ethnic groups and their specific goals and context. For example, leadership plays a key role in ethnic relations, as is the case of the Zaghawa. This is particularly relevant, as outcomes of conflicts in Chad and Sudan, the civil war in Côte d’Ivoire and, to some extent, stability in Democratic Republic of the Congo, depend greatly on leadership. In addition, little is understood about how to achieve inter-ethnic harmony after conflict. The purpose of promoting inter-ethnic harmony is logical, and a necessary part of promoting overall social harmony. Its goals are also relatively clear in multi-ethnic societies – for example, to promote a broadly inclusive political process, to increase participation of minority and majority ethnic groups, to build confidence to reassure fears of competition, and so on.

However, mechanisms to translate these simple goals into concrete policies and effective implementation remain uncertain. The complex dynamics of conflict spill-over require further research before such mechanisms become clear. To this end, there are two promising areas of inquiry related to transnational ethnic groups: early warning systems and conflict resolution policies based on traditional local institutions. First, states and regional institutions may be better able to anticipate conflict based

on trends in ethnic group movement, relationships and cross-border power dynamics. Second, local institutions are often based on ethnic and religious norms, which may prove ideal for preventing escalation of conflict and reaching a wide base of stakeholders. Structured and well-organised ethnic groups may become powerful tools for conflict resolution, if mobilised accordingly. **A**

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Endnotes

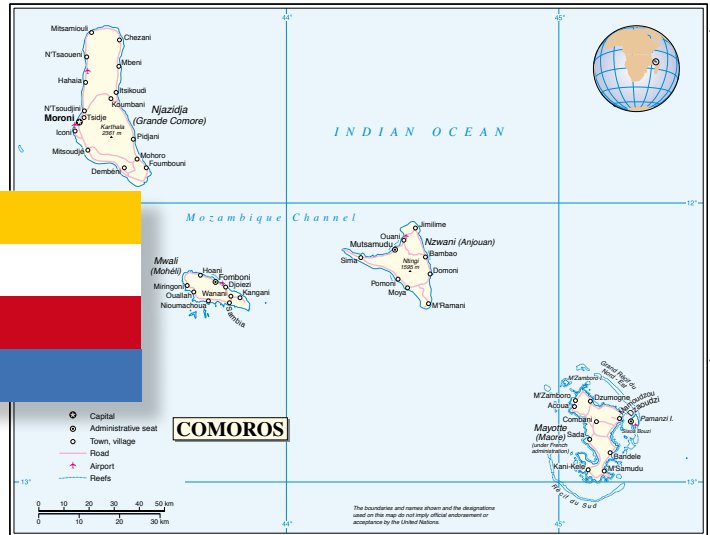
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SITUATION REPORT

BY ZINURINE ALGHALI

THE UNION OF THE COMOROS

The Union of the Comoros consists of a group of four main islands in an archipelago. It is situated off the coast of southern Africa at the northern mouth of the Mozambique Channel, between northern Madagascar and northern Mozambique. Prior to 2002, it was known officially as the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros. The Comoros has no land borders. It is the third smallest country in the world and the sixth smallest African nation by population (although it has one of the highest population densities in Africa). Ngazidja (Grande Comore) is the largest island of the Comoros archipelago, and Mwali (Mohéli) is the smallest of the islands. Mahoré (Mayotte) has the richest soil, good harbours and abundant local fish populations, due to its ring of coral reefs.



Map No. 4088 Rev. 1 UNITED NATIONS January 2004

Geography

Socio-cultural

Population	731 775 (July 2008 est.)
Population Growth Rate	2.8%
Birth Rate	35.78 births/1 000 population
Death Rate	7.76 deaths/1 000 population
Life Expectancy	Male: 63 years, Female: 67 years
Ethnic Groups	Antalote, Cafre, Makoa, Oimatsaha, Sakalava
Religions	Sunni Muslim 98%, Roman Catholic 2%
Languages	Arabic (official), French (official), Shikomoro (a blend of Swahili and Arabic)
Literacy	56.5% (Male: 63.6%, Female: 49.3%) (2003 est.)

Political

Main Parties

Convention for the Renewal of the Comoros (CRC),
Camp of the Autonomous Islands (CdIA),
Front National pour la Justice (FNJ),
Mouvement pour la Démocratie et le Progrès (MDP-NGDC),
Parti Comorien pour la Démocratie et le Progrès (PCDP),
Rassemblement National pour le Développement (RND)

Government Type

Republic

Demographics

Economic

GDP	US\$436 million (2007 est.)
Growth rate	-1%
Budget	US\$27.6 million (2001 est.)
Imports	Rice and other foodstuffs, consumer goods, petroleum products, cement, transport equipment
Exports	Vanilla, cloves, perfume oil, copra
Debt	US\$232 million (2000 est.)

Key Events

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1975 The archipelago gains independence from France. In August, Ahmed Abdallah is deposed in a coup assisted by French mercenary Colonel Bob Denard, and replaced by Prince Said Mohammed Jaffar.</p> <p>1976 Jaffar is replaced by Ali Soilih, who tries to turn the country into a secular, socialist republic.</p> <p>1978 Soilih is toppled and killed by mercenaries led by Denard, who restore Abdallah to power.</p> <p>1989 Abdallah is assassinated by the presidential guard under the command of Denard, who stages a coup. France intervenes and Denard leaves the islands.</p> <p>1990 Said Mohamed Djohar is elected as president.</p> <p>1995 Djohar is removed in a coup attempt led by Denard. French troops intervene and Denard surrenders.</p> | <p>1996 Mohamed Abdulkarim Taki is elected president. He drafts a constitution that extends the authority of the president and establishes Islam as the basis of law.</p> <p>1997 The islands of Anjouan and Mohéli declare unilateral independence in a violent conflict.</p> <p>1999 Military chief Colonel Assowmani Azali seizes power in a bloodless coup, and helps to negotiate the 2000 Fomboni Accords power-sharing agreement, which culminates in the adoption of a new constitution in 2001.</p> <p>The new constitution and institutional reforms allow national Union elections, with a rotating presidency amongst the islands every five years, as well as allowing each island to maintain its own local government.</p> |
|---|--|

THE UNION OF THE COMOROS

2002 Azali wins the presidential election, and each island in the archipelago elects its own president.

2006 Azali steps down and President Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi takes office.

2007

June The presidents of Mohéli and Grande Comore resign, and fresh elections are held. Mohamed Bacar, the president of Anjouan, insists in running for office again and autonomously organises elections, which are declared null and void by the constitutional court, the African Union (AU) and the rest of the international community. This results in hostility between Anjouan and the Union government.

July Bacar unilaterally declares himself president of semi-autonomous Anjouan, and several

attempts by the Union's government to install an interim government are countered by Bacar's forces. Several high-level diplomatic missions – including representatives from the AU, France, USA and the League of Arab States – also fail to convince Bacar either to agree to internationally supervised elections or to go into exile.

2008

February Soldiers from the Comoros islands clash with forces on the island of Anjouan loyal to renegade leader Bacar. After mediation fails to end the stand-off, a special summit of AU ministers agrees to send troops in support of Sambi.

March Comoran and AU troops from Sudan, Tanzania and Senegal, with logistical support from Libya, support the Union government in ousting Bacar.

Key Events

Current Status

Bacar is presently in military custody on the French island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean, and has had his request for political asylum in France rejected. Many Comorans are convinced that the French government may have facilitated the escape of Bacar and about 20 of his supporters to Mayotte, and its refusal to extradite the ousted colonel has sparked outrage in the impoverished Indian Ocean archipelago. Comoros and the AU have asked Paris to extradite him to face justice. The president of Anjouan's court of appeal, Lailizamane Abdou Cheik, is now the island's leader, pending a re-run of Anjouan's presidential poll in mid-June. The island has since received donations from Arab communities and the international community, to cover basic humanitarian needs after the military operation supported (but not sanctioned) by the AU. Administrative structures will also be rebuilt, as government offices were looted during the crisis in Anjouan.

The Union of Comoros Government.

Anjouan Island Government, headed by Colonel Bacar.

National Development Army (AND): Comoran Security Force
Comoran Federal Police.

Anjouan's security forces loyal to Colonel Bacar.

The French government.

The AU.

Parties

Conflict Resolution

The Union government has made several attempts to install an interim government in Anjouan, which were countered by Bacar's forces. Several high-level diplomatic missions, including representatives from the AU, France, the United States (US) and the League of Arab States, also tried to intervene with Bacar. Finally, troops from 'friendly countries' including Tanzania, Senegal and Sudan, under the umbrella of the AU, supported the Union government's military intervention to oust Bacar (despite South Africa's opposition and a plea for more negotiation efforts to be explored).

- Political volatility since the island achieved independence from France in 1975.
- Deep-rooted poverty and social problems.
- Bacar's refusal to step down as president of Anjouan and accept the authority of the federal government, after a disputed election in 2007.
- The stand-off between Anjouan's local authorities and the Comoros Union government.

Main Issues

Comments

The recent operation in Anjouan was not an AU operation but rather a coalition of 'Friends of the Comoros' that responded to a request from the president. Prior to this, there was a protracted diplomatic process, led by South Africa, which did not yield any results. Instead, the separatist Anjouan militias became even more militant, and this further undermined the AU's credibility. Whilst the AU supported the recent mission, it could not formally sanction it as there was no prior UN Security Council mandate in place to authorise the enforcement action. The AU Peace and Security Council is supporting elections for a new president of the autonomous island, and contributing to the creation of the requisite security conditions for the holding of free, fair and transparent union elections.

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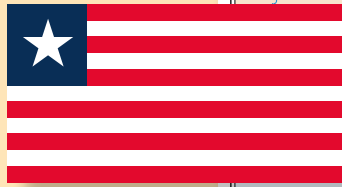
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SITUATION REPORT

BY IVONNE M. VLIEK

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

Liberia is a country in West Africa, with Monrovia as its capital city. Liberia's neighbouring countries are Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. The country's natural resources include iron ore, timber, diamonds, gold and hydropower. The climate is on average tropical, with dry winters and cloudy summers.



Map No. 3775 Rev. 6 UNITED NATIONS January 2004

Geography

Socio-cultural

Population	3.33 million
Population Growth Rate	3.66% (2008 est.)
Birth Rate	42.92 births/1 000 population
Death Rate	21.45 deaths/1 000 population
Life Expectancy	Male: 39.85 years, Female: 42.46 years
Ethnic Groups	Indigenous African 95%, Americo-Liberian 2.5%, Congo People 2.5%
Religions	Christian 40%, Indigenous beliefs 40%, Muslim 20%
Languages	English (official), 20 ethnic group languages
Literacy	52% (Male: 58%, Female: 46%)

Economic

GDP	US\$0.73 billion
Growth rate	9%
Budget	US\$199 383 953
Imports	Fuels, chemicals, machinery, transportation equipment, manufactured goods, foodstuffs
Exports	Rubber, iron, timber, diamonds, cocoa, coffee
Debt	US\$4.8 billion

Political

Main Parties
Alliance for Peace and Democracy (APD), Coalition for the Transformation of Liberia (COTOL), Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), Liberty Party (LP), National Patriotic Party (NPP), Unity Party (UN)
Government Type
Republic
Refugees and IDPs
10 327 (from Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire), 231 151 (Liberian refugees outside the country), 23 000 internally displaced persons

Demographics

Key Events

- 1847** Liberia gains independence from the United States (US), and is politically and economically dominated by the ruling Americo-Liberian elite.
- 1980** Samuel Doe takes power in a coup and former president William Tolbert is deposed and executed. Doe rules in favour of his own ethnic group, the Krahn, by placing members of this group in important functions within military and political structures.
- 1985** Doe wins the elections. Charles Taylor, backed by Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, launches an armed rebellion. This fuels a civil war, resulting in 200 000 deaths and one million displaced persons.
- 1990** The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) responds to the violence by sending a peacekeeping mission, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Doe is killed by Charles Taylor's troops.
- 1991** Taylor supports the invasion of the RUF (Revolutionary United Front) rebels in Sierra Leone.
- 1997** Taylor becomes the new president of Liberia. Ahmad Kabbah, president of Sierra Leone, is overthrown by the RUF.
- 2000** The LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy), an anti-Taylor movement led by Sekou Conneh and supported by Guinea, invades Liberia, resulting in a counter-attack by the RUF in Guinea. By 2001, Taylor's forces are pushed back into Sierra Leone and Liberia.
- 2003** A new wave of fighting erupts. ECOWAS commences with peace talks between the rebel groups and the government. Taylor is indicted for war crimes by the Special Court for Sierra Leone and goes into exile in Nigeria. In August, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is signed in Accra, Ghana and, by September, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) replaces ECOWAS troops.

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

2005	A three-year Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP) is implemented, calling for strict external control on governance as a condition for increased aid to Liberia.	The Nigerian government arrests Charles Taylor in March, and he is handed over to UNMIL.
2006	Following elections, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf becomes the first female head of state in Liberia and Africa.	2007 Taylor's trial commences in June at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague, for crimes against humanity committed in Sierra Leone.

Liberia has been relatively calm since the new government in 2006, but the country still faces many ongoing threats to its stability and its development of sustainable peace. The Liberian Working Group, installed by the United States to support the government, recommended a review of the constitution in 2006, and highlighted that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) lacks the authority to convict those who are accused. It was also highlighted that the reconciliation process may be hampered by the fact that former president Charles Taylor's trial relates only to crimes committed in Sierra Leone, and not to criminal acts perpetrated within Liberia itself.

Despite the progress that has been made to date, several violent incidents occurred in 2007 and early 2008. These were related to demonstrations by students demanding better facilities across campuses, protests by former combatants, protests by workers on rubber plantations against delays in salary payments, attacks on United Nations (UN) personnel and installations, and attacks against police stations. There has been an overall increase in armed robberies and rape. Violations of human rights are still regular occurrences, as correctional facilities do not meet the international standards, and the judicial system still experiences corruption, resulting in Liberians' lack of trust in the judicial system.

Main Issues

- Despite the lack of violent conflict at present, Liberia continues to struggle with an increase in criminal activity, limited capacity of the security sector, a weak justice system, economic insecurity, the continued presence of a large cadre of unemployed ex-combatants, unemployment among the youth, and media that appears ethnically biased.
- Both the police and judiciary remain under-developed, there is a lack of legal and judicial officers, and a lack of infrastructure and communications.
- The reintegration and rehabilitation programme for approximately 90 000 ex-combatants has failed in providing sustainable alternative livelihoods for many ex-combatants.

Conflict Resolution

To aid in the development of sustainable peace in Liberia, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, on 4 October 2007 declared Liberia eligible for funding under the second window of the Peacebuilding Fund. This has led to the development of the Priority Plan for the Peacebuilding Fund in Liberia, for funding of projects in three peacebuilding categories:

1. national reconciliation and conflict management;
2. critical interventions aimed at the promotion of peace; and
3. conflict resolution and strengthening state capacity for the consolidation of peace.

These projects will be crucial in the development and entrenchment of sustainable peace in Liberia.

To create self-sustaining peace within Liberia, UNMIL is implementing multiple programmes in support of Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation (DDRR), Security Sector Reform (SSR), the promotion of human rights and the rule of law, and supporting the governance and economic management programmes of the Liberian government. Other sectors such as HIV/AIDS, gender and the media are also being addressed.

Whilst ensuring the security and stability of Liberia continues to be an ongoing process, UNMIL commenced with its drawdown process in 2007. During UNMIL's tenure, progress has been made concerning security, rule of law and governance, economic revitalisation and basic services, but this progress has been slow. UNMIL will continue to monitor progress in these crucial sectors during its drawdown, and will plan to ensure the sustainability of peace dividends made once the mission is withdrawn.

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PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY, PLURALISTIC GOVERNANCE AND PEACE EDUCATION FOR LEADERS: LESSONS FROM THE KENYAN CASE

WRITTEN BY **GAUDENCE NYIRABIKALI**

REUTERS / THE BIGGER PICTURE



Introduction

This article examines the issues of participatory democracy and pluralistic governance in Africa's post-colonial democracies, using Kenya as an example. Poor leadership capacity and political under-development are found to be the main hindrances to effective political performance and the ability of elected representatives to deliver on their promises. This article proposes the development of peace education programmes for leaders, as an attempt to improve the situation.

A former British colony, Kenya acquired its independence from Britain in 1963, with Jomo Kenyatta as the

first president of the Republic of Kenya from December 1964. The political field was led by the Kenya African National Party (KANU), which started in 1944 as the Kenya African Study Union. Following a merger with the Kenya Independent Movement and the People's Congress Party, KANU was formed in 1960. By being inclusive

Above: Educating policymakers and leaders on how to improve the decision-making system and enhancing their leadership capacities should be a key part of peace education.



Following the allegations of fraud and vote-rigging during the December 2007 elections, Kenya erupted into anarchy and violence.

of most of the country's ethnic groups, the one-party system managed to avoid ethnic politics in the country's self-rule debut. After his death in 1978, Jomo Kenyatta was succeeded by Daniel arap Moi, both as president of the country and of the KANU party. Despite restraint on political activity, which normally thrives through a multiparty system, presidential and parliamentary elections were held at regular intervals. This practice was prevalent in most post-colonial African regimes of the 1970s and 1980s, before the multiparty and democracy ways of the 1990s.

In Kenya, the multiparty system was relaunched in 1991, with multiparty elections taking place in 1992. It was only during the third multiparty election in 2002 that KANU lost power to the National Rainbow Coalition (NaRC), led then by the actual second-term ruling president Mwai Kibaki. In terms of political development, Kenya benefited from a charismatic leadership in the infancy of the republic. The then-new leadership is, for example, credited for encouraging and sustaining the stay of former masters (British settlers) and their reconciliation with the local population¹, a move that not only permitted a smooth diplomatic start but also reinforced the country's economic and political stability. Contrary to the 2002 change of power, which transpired without

any crisis, the December 2007 elections were followed by violence, ensuing from alleged elections rigging in favour of NaRC at the expense of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), led by Raila Odinga. A negotiated power-sharing agreement then became the alternative for managing the crisis, and a way forward for resolving the underlying socio-political problems, including constitutional changes and regional devolution.

Kenya is among the few African countries where the media is well developed and freedom of speech exercised: "There is a tradition of a relatively independent press, although newspapers often had to practise self-censorship during the era of Presidents Kenyatta and Moi."² Another factor that facilitates information and communication is the high level of literacy: 78% for males and 70% for females.³ While in other countries the development of civil society and an informed electorate may be hampered by limited accessibility to information, the Kenyan electorate has not only sufficient knowledge about their civil rights but also a good grasp on the issues at stake when they choose their leaders. However, problems arise when these entrusted leaders have to deliver on their promises to the electorate. What can be done to improve the leadership's capacity for delivery to the people they represent?



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The poor performance of the Kenyan Electoral Commission (ECK) in ensuring fair electoral processes triggered claims of election rigging and the subsequent violence in Kenya.

It is not the electorate that needs to be educated but the leadership, so that they can deliver on their promises. Whereas aid and support for democratic processes have long been targeting grassroots organisations and people, this article proposes a new focus: educating political elites and strengthening their capacity to meet commitments to their societies. Although evidence may support the popular claim that holding political office is a job without specific qualifications, certain qualities and abilities – such as a disposition to inclusive and participative decision-making, restraint on opportunistic politics, and so on – are keys to success.

Participatory Democracy

While there is no universal definition of democracy, its characteristic elements include the participation of citizens in state governance (rule and management). Since participation in every decision and day-to-day management of the state would be unmanageable, the citizenry elects representatives to act on their behalf. The choice of one candidate over another is motivated by the belief that the entrusted representative will voice the interests and grievances of the electorate – for example, support for more social justice, improvement in

education, health, employment, housing, transport, and so on – in addition to ensuring public security, social cohesion and the rule of law. Poor political performance therefore affects most citizens who, like in any partnership agreement, were relying on their politicians (government authorities) to safeguard their interests, security and well-being. Moreover, unsatisfactory governmental performance destroys trust in the system and weakens citizens' participation and commitment.

The Kenyan political turmoil underlined a low concern for the electorate and more focus on the individual race for political power. A people-oriented concern would have privileged judicial processes, through accredited jurisdictions to settle the alleged vote rigging, instead of instigating popular unrest. In the resultant violence, it was still those who were prejudiced who suffered most, not those who were elected to represent them. Perhaps both the Kenyan and Zimbabwean experiences may provide lessons for the imminent elections in Angola, scheduled for September 2008. Restraint on opportunistic politics – which requires putting people first and personal interests second or, at least, at the same level – constitutes a prerequisite for being a strong and good representative of the people. While it is a natural human reaction to seek



Former United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan (centre) mediated the power-sharing agreement between Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki (left) and the opposition leader Raila Odinga (right).

opportunity in most undertakings, it is also crucial to balance duty, patriotic commitment and personal interests. There is, therefore, an emergent need for political leaders in developing democracies to gain a deeper awareness about their roles, commitments and obligations to the electorate, as well as to enhance their political development.

Whereas some democratic practices – such as reinforcing the rule of law, promoting participation, social justice and inclusion, and so on – are also identified as peacebuilding mechanisms, the recent events in Kenya show that mismanagement and incorrect execution of such mechanisms may actually lead to conflicts instead of resolving them. Despite the existence of all necessary institutions, the poor performance of the Kenyan Electoral Commission in ensuring clear and fair electoral processes eventually led to claims of elections rigging and the subsequent violence. Research and empirical evidence highlight the critical importance of institutional performance, especially those responsible for the handling of electoral processes, as any perceived unfairness in such institutions can spark violence. With regard to political stability and reducing the risk for ethnic conflict, Donald Horowitz suggests that “institutions with

multiethnic constituencies... reduce ethnic conflict by providing politicians with incentives for moderation”.⁴ In this instance, the voting system that is adopted plays an important role. With the proportional representation through single transferable vote (PR-STV) system used in Northern Ireland, for example, candidates have to meet a certain quota in a constituency. To become a member of the local assembly requires not only support from a candidate’s own political party, but also sufficient cross-community votes in order to meet the required quota. The transferability of votes from one candidate to another in a preferential order also provides a clear reflection of opinions in a constituency, and reduces waste of votes.

Political Development and Pluralistic Governance

From Stephen Chilton’s definition of development as “a shift of a culture from one way of relating to another that addresses and overcomes the structural ambiguities of its initial stage”⁵, political development can thus be understood as changes in a political culture that are adopted or acquired to accommodate arising complexities as a result of time and system evolution. The actual African states are relatively young, as the modern



A Kenyan Massai woman casts her vote at a local polling station in Magadi on 27 December 2007.

state based on territorial sovereignty and legitimate recognition in the international society was only adopted at the time of independence in the 1960s. Notwithstanding the dexterity and charisma of African traditional rulers, the political abilities for running a modern state remain relatively under-developed. There is need for a revamped awareness about continued learning to keep pace with changes and benefit from new thinking, especially with regard to political and leadership development. In the Kenyan situation, for example, the ODM leader, Raila Odinga, affirms that despite more than 40 years of independence, “the country was never forged together [as a nation], it remained fragmented because of poor political leadership.”⁶ With the actual government based on a power-sharing framework, there is even increased need for enhanced leadership to ensure a functioning coalition and the delivery of promised changes. If professional development programmes are found necessary and useful in any other sector of employment, surely they should do the same good for political leaders. The magnitude of conflicts and sufferings in African states speaks for itself, and should prompt politicians and political leaders to take every opportunity to enhance their leadership abilities.

The inherent competitive character of democratic elections involves competition for power. A potential

alternative to reducing tensions in this process may be found in the adoption of a pluralistic form of governance, which builds on power-sharing and the inclusion of other major political players in government institutions, instead of majority rule governance in the form of the winner-takes-all. Pluralistic forms of governance also allow for a broader participation and representation of a wider range of interest groups at government level. As exemplified in Anna Jarstad’s paper on power-sharing, the Lebanese “National Assembly now has an equal number of Christian and Muslim members instead of the previous six to five ratio, [and] democratic elections regularly result in inclusion of a wide spectrum of society in central government”.⁷ Although most cases of power-sharing have occurred within the framework of accords settling conflict, the model can also apply “as a means to develop democratic governance whereby joint decision making materialises inclusion and is expected to lead to [political] moderation”.⁸ The power-sharing model from a democratic theory perspective is extensively discussed in Arend Lijphart’s publications, particularly through the development of what he has termed “consociational democracy”. This is characterised by “grand coalition, autonomy for each ethnic segment in all matters that are not of common concern, mutual veto rights, and proportionality in political representation, civil service

appointments, and allocation of public funds".⁹

Whether applied for conflict management purposes or in democracy development, different scholars assert that power-sharing governance increases inclusion, moderation, cooperation and political stability. Furthermore, it accommodates multi-ethnic patterns, which happen to be predominant in African countries. Jarstad further indicates that even proponents of both consociational and integrative approaches agree on the principle of joint rule to be the only viable option for democratic governance in divided societies. Such assertions advocate for power-sharing forms of governance, particularly as a means for political stability and the development of a culture of peace in Africa.

Peace Education

The preceding discussion highlights what seems to be a growing problem of the non-satisfactory performance of political leaders in Africa's developing democracies. A few potential remedies are suggested, including a renewed interest in political and leadership development, as well as the adoption of pluralistic forms of governance.

How can political development and leadership capacity be enhanced in developing democracies? Charles Tilly asserts that "the quality of public politics in one regime or another depends significantly on relations between people's basic trust networks [that is, local communities, civil society, solidarities, and so

welfare of citizens have become worse. Good economic performance should also include equitable returns to the society as a whole, and function to alleviate poverty.

Such strategies would remain insignificant unless made known to political leaders and policymakers. Knowledge about both problem situations and possible ways of dealing with them can be accessed through peace education. Defined as a means of informing "on the problems of violence and teaching about peaceful alternatives for addressing different forms of violence"¹¹, peace education would thus be a useful tool to inform about strategies in rebuilding trust, addressing issues of governance, communication, and so on. Since building more equitable structures constitutes an important element of resolving conflict non-violently, educating policymakers on how to improve the decision-making system is also a part of peace education.

While the general trend has been to circumscribe peace education to the classroom – in schools, colleges and universities – the nature and purpose of peace education commands a wider range for its practice. In the classroom, peace education aims to "constructively deal with the aftermath of war and/or the presence of violence in students' daily life and ... provide them with competencies and values that will help them build and maintain peace" in their future lives¹². Furthermore, peace education was made part of universally shared knowledge, due to its importance in promoting peace. But as the range of obstacles to peace widens, peace education has become

WITH THE ACTUAL GOVERNMENT BASED ON A POWER-SHARING FRAMEWORK, THERE IS EVEN INCREASED NEED FOR ENHANCED LEADERSHIP TO ENSURE A FUNCTIONING COALITION AND THE DELIVERY OF PROMISED CHANGES

on] and rulers' strategies of rule".¹⁰ Again, the number of conflicts on the continent is evidence of the weak relationships between leaders and communities in Africa. The situation therefore calls for a rebuilding of trust and positive relationships between the political leadership and society, on the one hand, and trust and cooperation among political leaders, on the other hand. Some of the building blocks in this endeavour would include enhanced delivery to the people, improved communication and network mechanisms between different levels (government – civil society – citizens), and the participation of all sectors. Repeated betrayal erodes the trust in public institutions and reduces participation, hence destroying democracy. Good political leadership should be able to guarantee physical security and the welfare of its citizenry. Whereas economic performance has generally improved in some countries, public security and the


diversified in an effort to cover different aspects of such obstacles. Many recent peace education programmes around the world have thus been developed in accordance with a range of arising needs including reconciliation, social inclusion, addressing ethnic inequalities, power and economic participation, building and maintaining interdependent systems, resolving conflict constructively, and so on. These latter developments are not necessarily bound to the classroom, but also practised out in communities and civil society. The flexibility acknowledged in the discipline of peace education, with regard to adapting content of programmes to prevailing needs, appeals to the changing nature of issues arising in political development and the leadership crisis.

Based on the advantages of the discipline and on leadership problems that surface from most African democracies, there is a need and potential for peace

education programmes designed for political leaders and other policymakers. Such programmes should give priority to parliamentary and presidential candidates, and would be more effective if delivered as part of the electoral preparatory process. Once the listing of candidates standing for elections is finalised, institutions in charge of electoral processes may make it a requirement for every candidate to attend such a programme. As for providing institutions, the United Nations University for Peace (UPEACE) – Africa Programme, which was launched in January 2002, would be an example of an organisation appropriate to and capable of tailoring a comprehensive and condensed course for both existing and aspiring politicians. In addition, a continued learning and training culture related to governance issues must be encouraged and supported by the United Nations, the African Union and other regional organisations. Where genuine self-evaluation and willingness to change are credible, political and leadership development may be organised internally as part of professional development, with the assistance of acknowledged expertise. During Northern Ireland’s peace process, for example, the country’s politicians benefited from a number of United States universities including Boston College in Massachusetts, which provided seminars aimed at developing parliamentary skills for members of the local assembly. In Angola, the International Republican Institute (IRI) is currently involved in training political parties with the objective of enhancing their political development ahead of the coming elections, while the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is focused on the development of democratic values, institutions and practices through the training of civic and political leaders.

Conclusion

Based on recent events in Kenya, this article discussed political development and leadership capacity as two problematic areas hampering the performance of political leaders in Africa’s developing democracies. While it does not imply shifting the development and support for civil society to the political elite, the article does, however, call for a parallel effort to develop political leaders’ abilities for meeting demands from their societies. Improved leadership capacity would also facilitate the creation of an enabling environment for participatory decision-making, which is needed to accommodate civil society’s involvement in governance. Such developments can be realised through peace education programmes specifically tailored for civic and political leaders. In addition to building capacity in the leadership, such programmes should also promote knowledge about the different forms of pluralistic governance and their potential for political stability, as well as the development

of a new political culture based on a people-oriented concern and restraint on opportunistic politics. Although starting such programmes during the electoral preparatory period presents an added advantage, the need for continued learning so as to benefit from new thinking and improve leaders’ abilities to accommodate change is emphasised. This is particularly relevant for the current situation in Kenya, as improved leadership capacity is required to ensure the functioning of the coalition and the delivery on promises made to the electorate. 

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ASSESSING COUNTER-TERRORISM MEASURES IN AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND NATIONAL SECURITY

WRITTEN BY **J. SHOLA OMOTOLA**



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Introduction

Africa is again at another critical crossroads. Previous crossroads in Africa's chequered history include the historic struggles against colonialism and the high promise and hopes of independence which, disappointingly, were squandered by the post-independence elite class and power holders. Other crossroads in African history include prolonged military absolutism, civil wars, and what has been regarded as the second liberation struggle in the wake of the latest wave of democratisa-

tion underway across the continent, which began in the 1990s.¹ This new crossroads, symbolised essentially by fledgling democratisation, also elicited high expectations – like its predecessors – for a sustainable regime of democracy and development.² These expectations have been largely squandered for a number of reasons, most

Above: Two suicide blasts in Algiers, in December 2007, destroyed buildings and killed approximately 41 people.

notably the complications of human rights and national security on the altar of the war against terrorism.

This article highlights Africa's counter-terrorism measures and their implications for human rights and national security on the continent. The central argument is that the declining faith of Africans in democracy, as the guarantor of human rights and security, is not unconnected with the form and character of the 'global' war on terrorism. The level of pressure exerted on African countries to develop and implement counter-terrorism legislation constitutes new sources of threats to human rights and national security. The enthusiasm with which the counter-terrorism call was received in Africa appears to be linked to the possibilities for adapting counter-terrorism instruments for the survival of state power, and for the advancement of the interests of incumbent African leaders. Under such circumstances, Africans are left with minimal choice between human rights and security in the war against terrorism.

Terrorism: A Threat to Human Rights and National Security

Whatever its motivations³ – whether political, economic, religious, or ideological – terrorism constitutes a serious negation of human rights and national security. The African Union (AU) defines terrorism as “any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a state party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any member or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage”.⁴ The AU's decision to evolve and embrace such a definition stemmed from both internal and external forces. The bombing of cities in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 set the tone of the response. This may have been due to the security implications of such attacks and its wider effects on Western interests, as American embassies were affected in the attacks. The United States (US) declaration of a long war against terrorism in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks,

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The significant emphasis and focus on counter-terrorism in Africa, in recent years, was largely triggered by the September 11th, 2001 attacks in the United States.

where all friends of the US were expected to contribute meaningfully, was another impetus. After all, the Horn of Africa region had been labelled by the US as one of the areas most vulnerable to terrorism, and one of the three axes of evil, together with the Middle East and south-east Asia. These rationalisations were apart from the United Nations (UN) Resolution 1373 of 28 September 2001, through which the Security Council established wide-ranging anti-terrorism measures. This was also a fall-out of the September 11th attacks, and subsequently led to the establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) to monitor the implementation of the resolution by all states, and enforce compliance on all states. The combination of these factors, covertly or overtly, pressured African states to respond to the call for a global war against terrorism.⁵

particularly so when counter-terrorism measures adopt the ongoing excessively militarised direction championed by the US in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks. It would seem that a more productive and progressive approach to combating terrorism is to devise strategies that address the root causes of the problems.

Africa's Terrorism Landscape

Africa has had its fair share of global terrorism.⁷ Before the September 11th attacks in the US, terrorist-like activities could be located in the colonial state, which was essentially a law and order state based on the use of force to suppress popular movements against unpopular policies.⁸ The sometimes-violent activities of the nationalists in their struggles against colonialism – particularly in settler colonies in the southern African sub-region,

THE ENTHUSIASM WITH WHICH THE COUNTER-TERRORISM CALL WAS RECEIVED IN AFRICA APPEARS TO BE LINKED TO THE POSSIBILITIES FOR ADAPTING COUNTER-TERRORISM INSTRUMENTS FOR THE SURVIVAL OF STATE POWER, AND FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE INTERESTS OF INCUMBENT AFRICAN LEADERS

The AU's definition suggests not only the expanding landscape of terrorism, but also its threats to human rights and national security. The expansion poses dangers to human rights, essentially because they create room for African pseudo-democrats to enact counter-terrorism legislation whose latitude of power may be unlimited. This may include powers of arrest, detention, prosecution, denial of bail, and so on. The need for national security, a cornerstone in a country's national interest, is usually advanced as the reason for heightening the war against terrorism. National security entails freedom from fear and threats in all ramifications.⁶ Without any doubt, terrorism is a major source of fear. Unfortunately, the military-like fashion in which the war against terror has been fought has compromised and complicated the security situation. As people's rights are flagrantly violated in the course of prosecuting the war, new sources of security threats develop. People will respond to the violation of their rights in some way, most likely in a violent manner, especially when they have explored available sources of local remedy without respite.

While terrorism leads to the severe violation of people's civil liberties and state and societal security, the management of terrorism has the potential to degenerate into further human rights and security threats. This is

and especially South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) party – were largely interpreted, though controversially, as terrorism.⁹ In the post-independence era, however, several African countries have witnessed the rise of terrorist groups and incidents. There were several cases of hijacked planes and bombings in the 1970s and 1980s. These included the bombing of the Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi, killing several people in December 1980. In October 1977, a Lufthansa flight to Mogadishu was hijacked. There was also the mid-flight bombing of a French airliner, Union des Transports Aériens (UTA), over Niger in 1989, which killed 171 people.¹⁰ More recently, on 7 August 1998, suicide bombers attacked the US embassy in Nairobi and killed more than 200 people, injuring more than 5 000 others. At about the same time, the US embassy in Dar es Salaam was attacked, with eight people left dead and several others injured. Between 1980 and 1989, Africa recorded 227 terrorist incidents, 409 related deaths and 342 related injuries. Between 1990 and 1999, these numbers increased to 472 terrorist incidents, 1 783 related deaths and 6 910 related injuries. And between 2000 and 2005, there were 191 terrorist incidents, 1 141 related deaths and 1 210 related injuries.¹¹

In comparative ranking, between 1990 and 2003, six percent of international terrorist acts took place on



An injured man is removed from the wreckage following a terrorist explosion near the United States Embassy in Nairobi on August 7, 1998.

African soil, making it the fifth most-targeted region after Latin America, Western Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Between 1990 and 2002, Africa recorded 6 177 casualties from 296 acts of terrorism, making it the continent with the second highest number of casualties, after Asia. This figure excludes the deaths of about 200 000 people in Algeria and the countless deaths in Uganda.

The causes of terrorism in Africa are located in the contradictions of domestic political economy and the asymmetrical nature of the international system. For the former, these include poor governance epitomised by systemic corruption, rising poverty, unemployment, inequality and the near-total collapse of social services and infrastructural facilities. It also includes the transformation of identity politics in the unhealthy competition for power, the struggle for resource control and balanced federalism, especially in natural-resource rich areas such as the Niger Delta of Nigeria.¹² At an international level, the elevation of power over justice has served to escalate the level of 'situational pressure' to respond to perceived deprivations. This is especially the case in the Middle East, with its contagious effects on the wider

Islamic community across the globe. As the momentum heightens, coupled with pressure from the US, Africa has been forced to respond to the war against terrorism.

Africa's Counter-terrorism Measures

The UN Resolution 1373 requires all member states to enact counter-terrorism legislation. Although African states have responded to this call, the response has not been uniform. While some countries – such as Uganda, Tanzania, Mauritius, Gambia and South Africa – enacted such laws, other countries – such as Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria and Morocco – claimed that before Resolution 1373 they already had counter-terrorism measures in place, and there was no need for new legislation in this respect. A third grouping includes countries that have attempted to enact the counter-terrorism legislation unsuccessfully – such as Kenya and Namibia.¹³ The variation in Africa's response to Resolution 1373 may not be unconnected to differences in the level of vulnerability and actual occurrence of terrorist incidents across the continent. The more vulnerable countries in the Horn and east of Africa have responded better to the anti-terrorism

IN COMPARATIVE RANKING, BETWEEN 1990 AND 2003, SIX PERCENT OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ACTS TOOK PLACE ON AFRICAN SOIL, MAKING IT THE FIFTH MOST-TARGETED REGION AFTER LATIN AMERICA, WESTERN EUROPE, ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

challenge, partly because they suffer more occurrences of terrorism and partly because they attracted more attention from the US, especially in terms of funding, policy and logistical support against terrorism. The higher level of commitment from these countries may have also been borne out of the desire to change the negative image that the recurrent acts of terrorism have generated, including the consequences of low economic and developmental aid patronage.

Irrespective of this typology of Africa's response to Resolution 1373, one inevitable fact is that the resolution, in its definition and classification of terrorist groups, offers an open field to African leaders in the war against terrorism. The response has been most profound in East Africa. This is understandable, because the subregion is often identified as the hub of terrorist activities in Africa.

Besides, most of the donor funding for counter-terrorism in Africa goes to this subregion. East Africa therefore seems to occupy a strategic position in the US's fight against terrorism in Africa. It is interesting to note that, despite the failure of Kenya to develop specific counter-terrorism legislation, it has sought to fight terrorism in several other ways. These include the establishment of a specialised anti-terrorism unit within its police force; the establishment of the National Counter-Terrorism Centre under the auspices of the National Security and Intelligence Service, to provide timely and factual intelligence to assist in the fight against terrorism; and security measures strengthened at airports, government installations and foreign embassies in Kenya. In the proposed Anti-terrorism Acts in Tanzania and Uganda, attempts have been made to produce a working definition of terrorism, criminalise



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When counter-terrorism measures adopt an excessively militarised focus people's rights can be flagrantly violated and the security situation can be further compromised.



An Egyptian leaves his damaged shop covered with a banner, following a triple bombing in Dahab in April 2006.

terrorism and prescribe sanctions for terrorism. These include the denial of bail to suspected terrorists, the power to arrest without a warrant and the confiscation of assets and instruments of terrorism.¹⁴

In countries where specific anti-terrorism laws have been passed, their common features are inimical to human rights. These include the denial of bail to suspected terrorists, long detention periods before trials in court, unrestricted investigative power granted

to law enforcement agencies, and the lessening of the onus of proof that is ordinarily required to be discharged by the prosecution in a criminal case. Several African states such as Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Nigeria have relied on such anti-terrorism measures to perpetuate crimes against the people. In East African countries in particular, there is evidence of the labelling and criminalisation of notable opposition groups, vocal civil society organisations



Pursuing counter-terrorism measures from a human rights perspective requires addressing the root causes of terrorism directly, including rising poverty, unemployment, inability to meet basic needs, asymmetrical power relations, inequality and so on.

and democracy and human rights activists as terrorist groups and individuals. Opposition leaders were usually unlawfully arrested and tortured. This was the experience of Kizza Bessigye in November 2005, the leading opponent in the then-forthcoming presidential elections in Uganda. Surprisingly he, along with 22 others arrested with him, were simultaneously arraigned before a civil court and the General Court Martial, a military court, on charges of terrorism and treason. While Bessigye was eventually granted bail, the 22 others were denied bail, despite a court order mandating it.¹⁵ A similar development occurred in Nigeria in April 2007, in the aftermath of the muddled elections. Senator Ken Nnamani, the then-senate president, was threatened with charges of treasonable felony for expressing his disappointment about the flawed elections. Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, the presidential candidate of the Action Congress (AC), a leading opposition party in Nigeria, was also linked to terrorist activities in the Niger Delta. He was alleged to have dealings with militant groups in the region in terms


of funding. For Nigerians, these were mere ploys to divert attention from the deeply flawed elections, and perhaps weaken the opposition's protests.

This is not to suggest, however, that Africa's response to the war against terrorism has only been via legislation. Other proactive steps aimed at addressing the roots of terrorism, such as poverty and bad governance, have been initiated. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) are typical examples. NEPAD seeks to develop sustainable international partnerships to engineer and sustain genuine development processes on the continent. The APRM also aims at entrenching good governance, through periodic monitoring and evaluation of the level of compliance of African governments with established standards. Both NEPAD and APRM are, therefore, indirectly related to combating terrorism in Africa. These mechanisms are likely stronger: although they do not directly respond to terrorism, they address its root

THE COST OF FIGHTING TERRORISM IN AFRICA IS ACTUALLY HEAVIER – IT TENDS TO COMPROMISE BOTH HUMAN RIGHTS AND NATIONAL SECURITY

causes and the conditions that give rise to terrorism in the first place.

Conclusion: Between Human Rights and Security

This article has attempted to explore the links between Africa's counter-terrorism measures, human rights and national security. Conventional wisdom in emerging scholarly thought on the subject is challenged. The general consensus seems to be that the war against terrorism tends to strengthen security, but compromises human rights. The cost of fighting terrorism in Africa is actually heavier – it tends to compromise both human rights and national security. Ideally, human rights and security are mutually reinforcing. Whenever one is compromised, it threatens the other. The African experience in the war against terrorism seems to have followed this trend. As human rights are violated in the war against terrorism, the national security situation is further pushed to the margin. This takes the form of heightened political tensions, human rights activism and the radicalisation of struggles. One inevitable conclusion is that, while the security approach to terrorism is important and indeed indispensable, it should be handled with care to avoid escalated unintended consequences. It therefore seems better to pursue counter-terrorism measures from a human rights perspective. This approach will tackle the root causes of terrorism directly, including asymmetrical power relations, global inequality, rising poverty and so on. These are the issues that touch significantly on the rights of people – particularly the right to development and the right to lead good lives. Such a broad approach, which accommodates people's essential rights, will likely align the state with meeting its developmental obligations to the people. NEPAD, APRM and such related institutions of governance at international, national, regional and local levels should be strengthened to promote sustainable democratic governance throughout the continent. 

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THE COST OF PEACE

WRITTEN BY **SEAN CALLAGHAN**



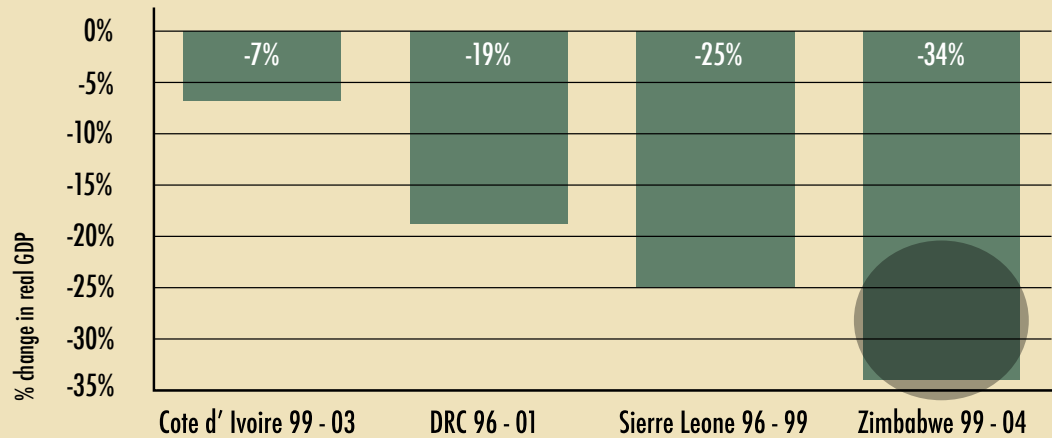
GETTY IMAGES

Much has been researched and written about the cost of conflict in Africa – the financial cost of waging war, the human cost and the loss to economic growth. This focus has likely been driven by the fact that 31 African nations have experienced violent conflict since the early 1990s. These wars have shattered the lives of million of Africans, but have also exacted a heavy economic toll. Moss and Patrick's analysis of World Bank data shows the extent of that loss.¹ Their work tracked the cumulative loss to gross domestic product

(GDP) for various African states during periods of conflict. They reported a loss of seven percent for Côte d'Ivoire (1999-2003) and nineteen percent in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (1996-2001), while Sierra Leone's conflict (1996-1999) shrunk the country's GDP by twenty-five percent. By 2004, the

Above: While there is a profound cost to achieving peace, these costs are significantly less than the cost of protracted conflict itself.

Economic Impact of Conflict



Source: World Bank (quoted in Africa Policy Journal, 2006)

loss to the Zimbabwean economy was already at thirty-four percent, and recent political events are expected to erode the economy even further.

Such losses are not unique to these countries only. Recent research by Oxfam and SaferWorld estimate that, on average, armed conflict shrinks a nation's economy by fifteen percent.

Few would argue that war is an economic benefit in Africa. Most would agree that political stability and peace are the preferred economic growth climate. However, few have considered the cost of that peace – and there is a profound cost to achieving peace, securing peace and sustaining peace. The choice that any nation faces is between which costs it is prepared to bear – the cost of conflict or the cost of peace. Often, the choice is a matter of political will.

The Cost of Achieving a Peace Agreement

Mediation and negotiation processes are usually protracted, often spanning many years, and

the resultant cost in human capital and logistical support is extensive. However, these costs are often significantly less than the cost of the conflict itself, and are thus easily justified. Furthermore, there is often significant political motivation on the part of those who intervene to resolve the conflict, thus making the costs more palatable.

The Burundi peace process lasted for a number of years, and called for significant commitment by the various facilitators including former Tanzanian president, Mwalimu Nyerere, from 1996 and former South African president, Nelson Mandela, from 1999. These mediators did not act alone; they were supported by numerous staff from government structures and various non-governmental organisations.

The high point in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue process brought together 400 delegates at the five-star South African conference facility, Sun City, for 52 days. The cost of this aspect alone was in excess of US\$7 million. But when one considers that the

THE BEST CHANCES OF PREVENTING A CONFLICT FROM ESCALATING INTO VIOLENCE PRESENT THEMSELVES IN ITS EARLY STAGES. THE LONGER IT GOES ON, THE GREATER THE DANGER OF PARTIES BECOMING EVER MORE RIGID IN THEIR POSITIONS AND, AS A CONSEQUENCE, LESS DISPOSED TO ACCEPTING COMPROMISE



Securing peace through necessary peacekeeping operations is costly.

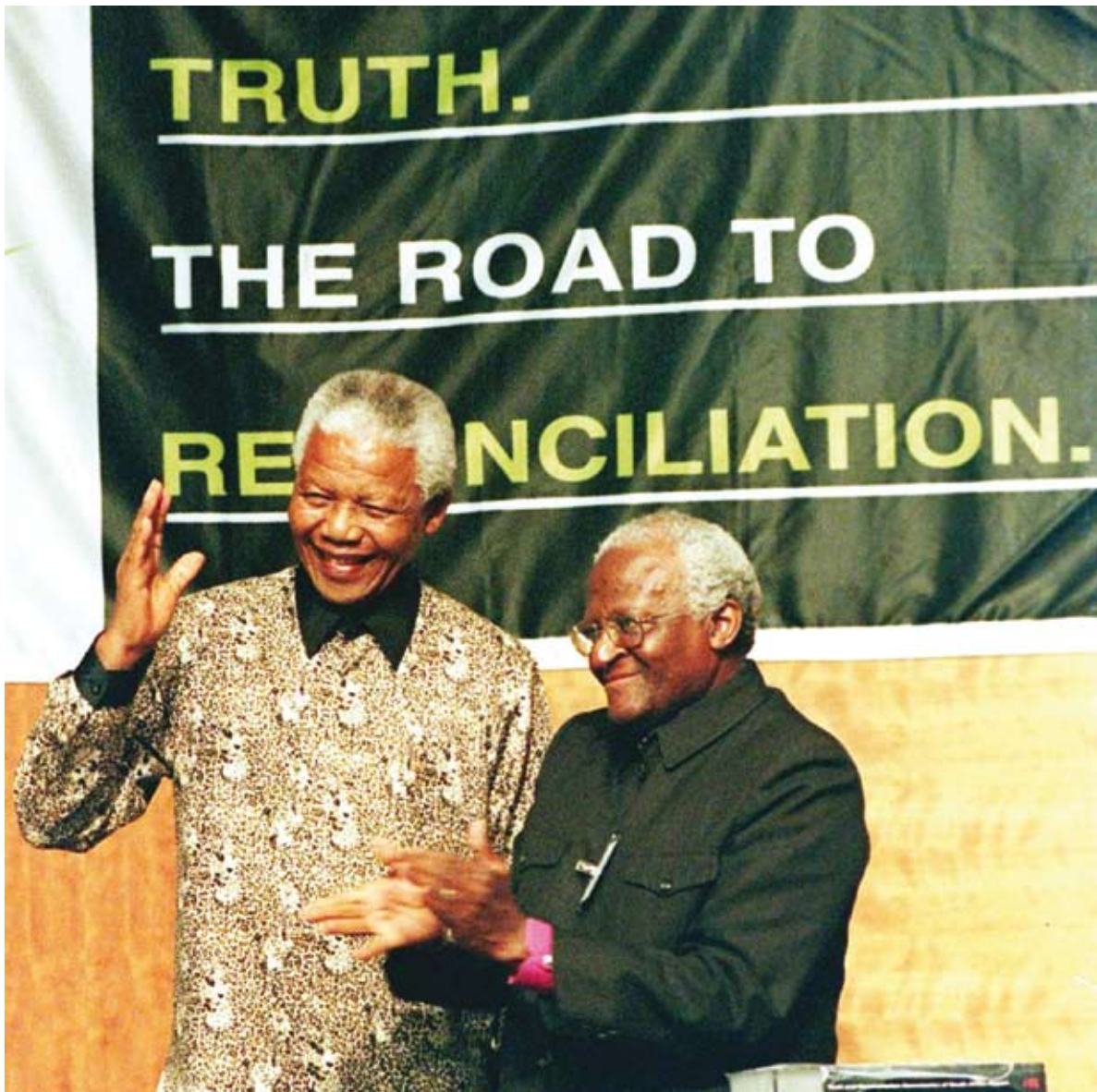
DRC's economy was shrinking at almost four percent per annum, 52 days of ongoing war would have cost the country US\$30 million in GDP losses alone. If the Sun City process was able to arrest the conflict, then it can only be considered a bargain in terms of costs incurred.

Assuming that political will is present, a simple cost-benefit analysis will show that such mediation and negotiation processes are effective investments. This observation has not been bypassed by the corporate sector, which has at times underwritten some peace efforts. Recent examples include Virgin's support of The Elders², and the extensive role that the Consultative Business Movement played in South Africa where "the managerial and organisational capacity of business opened the doors for it

to play a 'secretariat' or organisational role in the 1991 peace process. This was also carried to a formal role for business (and the rest of civil society) in the implementing of the Peace Accord".³

The Cost of Securing Peace

Having achieved a peace settlement, the more costly task of securing the peace begins. This includes the costs involved in peacekeeping operations, transitional justice processes and post-conflict reconstruction. United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions on the African continent exceed a budget of US\$5 billion (2007-2008 fiscal period). With over eighty percent of UN peacekeeping troops currently deployed in Africa, it is likely that these costs will be even higher in the future.



Few African states are able to launch a process on the scale of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

In addition, the African Union (AU) also has peacekeeping missions in Sudan, Somalia and Comoros, which are partly funded by the European Union.

The implementation of effective transitional justice processes poses an economic challenge to most African states. Very few are able to launch a process on the scale of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). "With a staff of up to 350, a budget of some US\$18 million each year for two-and-a-half years (plus an additional, smaller budget for another three years) and four large offices around the country, the TRC dwarfed previous truth

commissions in its size and reach."⁴ Poorer countries are forced to rely on international efforts towards transitional justice, like the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. These international processes are less far-reaching in their impact, and less restorative in their effect.

Political settlements often sacrifice justice and truth in achieving ceasefire agreements, and it is the victims who are then forced to bear the costs of peace. The recent negotiations between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army has



Visitors at the site in Durban, South Africa, where the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) will be developing the Africa Peace Centre at a cost of US\$30 million.

once again raised the question of impunity, and highlighted the heavy cost that millions of ordinary citizens are being asked to bear in the name of peace. While these costs may be unavoidable, they should never be underestimated.

With more than half the continent emerging from conflict, the cost of post-conflict reconstruction is staggering. It is near impossible to estimate what total reconstruction costs would be. To meet very basic needs, as outlined in the Millennium Development Goals, is beyond the economic capacity of most African states. Reconstruction is not simply about rebuilding roads and sanitation systems, it is about rebuilding people's lives and addressing the underlying root causes of conflict. Commenting on recent events in Chad, the General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, Guy Ryder, said: "The international community must do everything possible to deal with the deeper origins of the violence as well as the immediate emergency produced by the events of recent days. ...

If not, it is only a matter of time before the next outbreak of conflict."⁵

The Cost of Sustaining Peace

Addressing the root causes of conflict and sustaining peace requires the most important investment. "The most effective way to tackle conflict – to save both lives and money – is to build the capacity of African states and societies to prevent and manage conflict. That means using aid better to tackle the causes of conflict. It means improving the management of government income from natural resources and international agreements on how to control the 'conflict resources' which fuel or fund hostilities. It means controlling the trade in small arms."⁶ This cannot be achieved by a single institution or initiative, but rather by a diverse partnership of government, civil society and business, each working towards the goals of conflict prevention and economic growth. Institutions like the Pan African Parliament and the

RECONSTRUCTION IS NOT SIMPLY ABOUT REBUILDING ROADS AND SANITATION SYSTEMS, IT IS ABOUT REBUILDING PEOPLE'S LIVES AND ADDRESSING THE UNDERLYING ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT


AU have critical roles to play, as do the corporate sector and civil society institutions.

The Africa Peace Centre, which is being developed by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) at a cost of US\$30 million, will provide a neutral site, in Africa, for the continent's leaders to work on securing peace and security for Africa. Speaking about the Africa Peace Centre, ACCORD's founder and executive director, Vasu Gounden, said: "The key objective will be to foster dialogue and to build the capacity in Africa for the prevention of conflicts and, where conflicts do arise, to have a facility that can speed up our response time, and provide consistent and continuous support to sustain any peace initiatives beyond the agreement phase." The centre already has the support of key political, business and civil society leaders throughout Africa and the world, and has been officially sanctioned by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

It is obvious that there must be investment towards achieving and securing peace. From a cost-benefit analysis, primary investment should be in the prevention of conflict in the first place, as this would be a long-term investment in sustaining peace. Yet business investment in sustaining peace is conspicuously absent. There are a few isolated examples: the World Diamond Council in the Kimberley Process, which seeks to stop the trade in 'conflict diamonds' and ensure that diamond purchases are not funding violence; and General Motors – South Africa in its support of Operation Rachel, which seeks to locate abandoned and hidden arms caches left over from the civil war in Mozambique, and destroy their contents.

According to the former High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoel, of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), "The best chances of preventing a conflict from escalating into violence present themselves in its early stages. The longer it goes on, the greater the danger of parties becoming ever more rigid in their positions and, as a consequence, less disposed to accepting compromise."⁷ However, he notes that "the chances of the international community intervening at an early stage of an emerging conflict are usually small". This is, in part, because intervening could be

perceived as meddling but, to a large extent, it is due to the fact that "acute crises [are] diverting attention from emerging ones".

The argument for investment in conflict prevention and for securing peace comes full circle: to the need for political will. Conflict prevention strategies make business sense since stable political environments are conducive to long-term economic success, while cost-benefit analyses show that early interventions are also more cost-effective. However, these early conflict intervention strategies often come at a political price that those in leadership are unwilling to bear. 

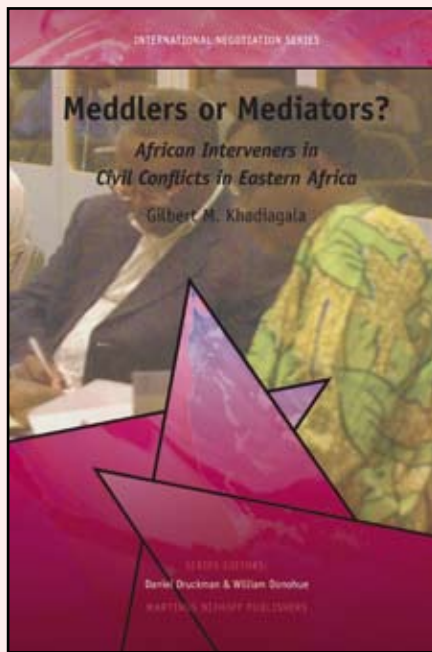
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BOOK REVIEW

REVIEWED BY **GEORGE NGWANE**



MEDDLERS OR MEDIATORS? AFRICAN INTERVENERS IN CIVIL CONFLICTS IN EASTERN AFRICA

Author **Gilbert M. Khadiagala**
Editors **Daniel Druckman and William Donohue**
Year **2007**
Publisher **Martinus Nijhoff Publishers**
ISBN **978 9004 163317**
Pages **274**

Gilbert M. Khadiagala's well-researched book sheds light on the vagary of conflict mediation through citizen-led (elder statesmen), state-centric and regionally-driven initiatives. *Meddlers or Mediators* focuses on five civil war case studies within the eastern region of Africa but, beyond this, is also a profile of those involved or who intend to be involved in the complex and cumbersome search for peace in conflict-prone Africa. After identifying three categories of mediators (state, elder statesmen and regional institutions), Khadiagala provides a cross-cutting description of any mediator in chapter one: "having muscle, clout and leverage", "having both power and stature to reward or to punish the disputants for cooperative or uncooperative behaviour" and "having deeper knowledge of the conflict and proximity to the disputants".

The Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis is appropriate for summarising the major concerns raised in this book. Mediators derive their strength from invitation by the conflicting parties to intervene. This invitation is based on the mediator's organisational capacity, for with "limited tangible and material resources, African interveners have contributed to the widespread perception of being meddlers rather than mediators. They intervene out of necessity but without the means to be effective" (p. 6). Devoid of tangible and organisational power, meddlers are "prone to squander the opportunities of invitation and entry" (p. 10). This organisational power tool is depicted in the difference between the book's first case study ('Moi Mediates Uganda's Civil War, 1985') and the fourth case study ('Mandela Mediates Burundi's Civil War, 1995-1999'). While Daniel arap Moi surrendered his

organisational power by failing to assume control in the conflict and wield his mediation power constructively (p. 47), Nelson Mandela's moral authority, expertise in persuasive debate, authoritative stature and international connections allowed him to place his own distinct mark on the negotiations.

Mediators' prescriptive power – that is, being interested in both process and outcome – is another strength. The book's second case study ('Tanzania Mediates Rwanda's Civil War, 1992-1993') reveals a series of multi-track diplomatic negotiations with a multilateral character (raising the problem of crowdedness in interventions) by President Mobutu and President Mwinyi, as well as the Egypt-Libya and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) involvement, described in chapters six and seven. While Mwinyi's policy provided the belligerents with a detailed blueprint for the resolution of the underlying causes of the Rwandan conflict (p. 95), Mobutu's aloofness designated him as a nominal mediator (p. 68).

Another significant strength is evident in what can be referred to as 'innate personal qualities', such as a track record of successes, creativity, imagination and vision, innovation and power devolution. Most of these sterling qualities have been germane to the relative success in the Rwandan and Burundi peace deals, as illustrated in chapters three, four and five.

The weaknesses or shortcomings of all the mediators (citizen, state or regional bloc) mentioned in the book are common, with a difference only in details and specificity. These range from the lack of a clear agenda, lack of

independent initiative, lack of fall-back positions and lack of understanding of the positions of the conflicting parties (as exemplified by Moi's handling of the Ugandan civil war in chapter two) through the real or perceived partiality, procedural battles, overbearing role, limits of institutional leverage and over-dependence on external resources (as seen in Nyerere's Mwanza Peace Process in chapter four), to the nominal role, error in judgment and futile diplomatic initiatives that Mobutu manifested in Tanzania's mediation process (pp. 58-68).

Even with mediation by regional bodies – such as IGAD's mediation role in Sudan's civil war, which is examined in chapters six and seven – the regional mediator's neutrality, moral exhortation, international leverage, knowledge, proximity and collective pressure are undermined by membership rivalry (Moi and Mobutu, p. 197), competitive and parallel mediation initiatives (Egypt, Libya, IGAD, p. 204), and conflicting strategies of incentives and punishments (pp. 193, 201, 203 and 208). Paradoxically, some of the weaknesses or shortcomings of the mediators are compounded by threats related to the disputants (incremental demands, shifting interests, lack of trust, boycotting of meetings, formation of splinter groups, diametrically opposed agendas, overbearing or dictatorial attitudes, renewed hostilities and lack of willingness and commitment). These weaknesses are compensated for by the opportunities that the mediation process provides (frequent consultations, respect for fractioned engagements, concession-making, external pressure, de-escalation of crises due to war weariness, and the consensual choice of new mediators).

As part of the 'professionalising' package that the author prescribes in chapters seven and eight, it is relevant to add that institutions (like IGAD) and other regional bodies, especially the African Union's Peace and Security Council, need to be exposed to mediation skills and institutional capacity-building techniques to intervene effectively in complex conflicts. These institutions need only to surmount the organisational inadequacies that an early and less professionalised IGAD exhibited in chapter six (time-consuming operations, vested interest, lack of visible authority, cautious or passive observer, and so on), and focus on a later and more professionalised IGAD (chapter seven) that learnt to combine "the punitive and benign hat, and viable and tactical autonomy".

With three of the five civil war case studies mentioned in the book (Uganda, Burundi and Sudan) still active, and a significant number of countries (Zimbabwe, Somalia, Chad, Kenya, Sudan-Darfur, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia) still unstable, the need to restructure or professionalise all mediation stakeholders (individual or institutional) in Africa has become very urgent. Africa needs to combine both an early warning network (during elections and constitutional engineering), especially as "African civil wars are rooted in disputes over power, identities and resources" (p. 254), and an interventions mechanism (when conflict breaks out) to minimise and manage damage. The amount of money that donors spend on settling disputes (more than one million dollars a day on humanitarian assistance in southern Sudan, p. 230) can effectively be employed in the conflict prevention phases.

Overall, this book is about the trials and triumphs of local mediations and home-grown mediators. The failures are indicators of how complex conflict management can be, and the successes highlight how relevant the 'language of ownership' and 'endogenous power' are to the resolution of African disputes. Far from celebrating Africa's successes in mediation only, Khadiagala is consistently frank and modestly pedagogic about the various cases that continue to emphasise the problems in Africa. However, the book does emphasise that, with diplomatic activism and the moral mettle of elder statesmen and other leaders, as well as the organisational capacities of institutions like the IGAD Secretariat, Africa's dispute resolution industry does not need to venture too far to find its own Oscar Ariases and Jimmy Carters – they are right in Africa's backyard, provided that Africans learn to winnow the powerful meddlers from the professional mediators. *Meddlers and Mediators* is not only recommended for scholars of peace, history, politics and African studies, but should also be a must-read for Africa's present and future leaders. 📖

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