contents

EDITORIAL   VASU GOUNDEN

The success of the referendum in Burundi has been overshadowed by the killing of the 13 peace-keepers in Ituri region in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). What are we to make of these two events that have occurred within a few kilometers of each other? Is this the African Continent once again being plunged into chaos or are we finally witnessing a change towards democratic governance, peace and stability? What will the media show the rest of the world? The dead bodies of the peacekeepers or the jubilant faces of war wearied Burundians rejoicing at the prospect of finally getting a chance to live in peace?

The answer obviously lies in the perspective you wish to take. To most people, including many from Africa, the events in Ituri present a typical image of Africa, that they can easily identify with. Africa is a Continent characterised by civil war, disease, and corruption. Any story that comes out of Africa about these issues just confirms their paradigm and there is no need to question the authenticity of the facts about numbers of dead or whether the incident actually did happen. A story about 80 per cent of Burundians voting "yes" in a referendum that will give them a new constitution must sound strange to the same observers. Such an image of peaceful referendum cannot be true. The journalist who wrote the story must have crafted an exaggeration and so the authenticity of the article must fall into question.

To those who are watching and working for Africa's recovery from civil war, disease and corruption, the success of the Burundian elections is another building block of democracy and good governance that will eventually provide Africa with peace, stability, economic prosperity and social equity. An overwhelmingly positive response by a people must indicate that this nation is ready for peace.

This does not necessarily mean that the climate for peace exists. We are all too aware of the monumental challenges that face Burundi…but the first and most important step towards peace is that the people themselves must resolve to want peace. The Burundians have shown this by their vote. It is now up to those partners of the Burundian people, who have promised to provide the resources to create the climate for peace, to deliver on their promises.

This is the dilemma of Ituri! The failure of Ituri is a failure not of the Congolese people since they have shown their resolve for peace. It is failure of those of us who promised to deliver resources to create the climate to consolidate their resolve. Ituri region is a small but vitally important part of the DRC with deep historical cleavages. Those of us who have observed, assisted, or constructed the DRC peace process knew that after the national issues were dealt with these regional issues needed special attention. This automatically meant that the resources that were promised for the recovery of the DRC needed to be forthcoming to deal speedily with the numerous cleavages. Such resources have been in short supply. It is therefore no surprise that Ituri has evaded the good intentions of the Congolese people and plunged into chaos.

The intentions of rogue elements among the Congolese people must not be confused with the good intentions of the vast majority of the Congolese people. Ituri should be a lesson for Burundi. Those of us who have pledged in many capitals of the world in front of the full glare of bright lights and sophisticated cameras, that capture images of dead soldiers and hand-shaking partners, must not let the people of Burundi down. If we do, we should not be surprised when dead bodies appear on the hills of Burundi.

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CEDRIC DE CONING   FEATURE

Reforming the

World Trade, Aid & Security System

Few would disagree that terrorism is a major threat to international peace and security in the 21st century, but this consensus disappears when we turn our attention to its causes or how best the threat can be prevented and managed. Whilst some blame cultural backwardness, religion or politics, others argue that terrorism is linked to poverty, chronic under-development and the marginalisation of those on the periphery of the world system.

If nothing else, the terrorism debate has created a common space within which we have started to discuss the health of our global trade, aid and security system. And whilst terrorism is clearly the primary security issue for some, more voices are articulating the fact that terrorism is not necessarily the most important issue on the agenda for the majority of the people on this planet. Whilst G8 citizens may fear terrorism, the majority of the people in the world seem to be more concerned about poverty, education and development.

Terrorism can never be justified on political, philosophical, ideological, racial, religious or ethnic grounds. At the same time, we can not ignore the fact that there is a correlation between conditions of extreme poverty, injustice, hopelessness, marginalisation, political oppression and the likelihood that people may take up terrorism as a means to protest their fate, especially when all peaceful avenues of political opposition is blocked[1].

In fact, this correlation has been widely accepted and as a result the linking of development and security issues has become mainstream policy in the North. Policy statements by the United States, several individual European countries and the European Union (EU) argue that aid is expected to contribute to counter-terrorism and security[2]. Even the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), has indicated that its definition of Official Development Assistance (ODA) will be expanded into the security domain[3].

Thus far, however, the linkages between the war on terror and development has served the former more than the latter, and this has had a detrimental effect on many

A woman prepares food for distribution in Angola.

other, equally if not more deserving, developmental and humanitarian needs. This has been argued in a report by Oxfam that the international community's focus on terrorism has resulted in aid flowing to countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq, while neglecting the plight of civilians caught up in less strategic conflicts such as Liberia and Burundi[4]. In most cases these conflicts had caused much more death and destruction than terrorism. The Oxfam report argues that the focus on terrorism resulted in donor governments diverting humanitarian aid away from the people who most needed their assistance. This has undermined the independence and impartiality of humanitarian aid. Oxfam's core argument is that the international response to humanitarian crisis should be determined by need, not by strategic interests such as the war on terror.

Fighting terrorism by targeting trouble spots with aid is not the answer. It is a symptomatic and reactive response, and as it redirects aid to insecure trouble spots[5] it is in effect potentially adding insecurity by removing aid from other crisis that are not yet threatening to western interests. In its present form it does little more than reward terrorism with aid.

If the North is serious about addressing the correlation between terrorism, poverty and underdevelopment

The South obviously has a major stake in addressing global structural inequalities, but it is also in its interest to address immediate terrorist threats

it should do more than link its development policies to its security concerns. The North needs to address the underlying global inequalities in the world system that, left unchecked, will continue to threaten the long-term stability of the world system. Addressing these global inequalities would not only be morally just, but it would also serve the interests of the North, because failing to do so will continue to cause insecurity.

The South obviously has a major stake in addressing global structural inequalities, but it is also in its interest to address immediate terrorist threats. Kofi Annan points out that a major terrorist attack in the North can devastate the world economy, which in turn will plunge millions of people in the South back into extreme poverty[6]. We have thus arrived at a historic junction where there is a significant confluence of interests between the center and the periphery of the world system. It is in the interest of both the North and the South to enter into a partnership that is aimed at fundamentally altering the inequalities in the present world system.

In many ways the aid agenda has taken the lead in this process in the form of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that was adopted at the Millennium Summit in 2000. The MDGs consist of eight goals that are targeted to be met by 2015:

1 eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2 achieve universal primary education;
3 promote gender equality and empower women;
4 reduce child mortality;
5 improve maternal health;
6 combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7 ensure environmental sustainability; and
8 develop a global partnership for development.

By formulating clear goals and timeframes the MDG campaign has created a strategic initiative around which States, from both the North and South, can rally its socio-development policies and programmes. The North-South partnership is especially critical if the MDGs is going to be achieved and various initiatives are underway to enhance this cooperation. In February 2003, 28 developing countries, including 13 from Africa, and 49 donor organisations, including the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Economic Commission for Africa

(ECA), endorsed the Rome Declaration on Harmonization. The Declaration specifies the four main principles of harmonization: recipient countries coordinate development assistance, donors align their aid with recipient countries' priorities and systems, donors streamline aid delivery and donors adopt policies, procedures and incentives that foster harmonisation[7]. Similarly, a renewed call for increased coherence was made at the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development in Mexico where the Monterrey Consensus was adopted[8]. At the end of the day, however, the success of the MDGs will largely be a factor of the investment the North is willing to make in addressing global inequality. Indications are that unless the international community radically increases its investment in development assistance, by at least $50 billion for Africa alone, the MDGs will not be met by 2015. Professor Jeffrey Sachs of the UN Millennium Project argues that it has been clear for a long time that there has not been enough aid to actually make a difference in Africa. UN Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Mark Malloch-Brown emphasized this point at a forum discussing Africa's development challenges in October 2004 when he said: "We do not need new ideas or new resolutions – we need to make interventions on a sustainable level and deliver aid on a sufficient scale."[9] It has taken some time for the MDG campaign to get out of the starting blocks but it appears to be gaining momentum in the run-up to the Millennium +5 Review Summit scheduled for September 2005.

Closely linked to aid is the issue of debt relief. It is obvious that most countries on the periphery will, under present conditions, never be in a position to repay their foreign debts. It does not make sense to increase aid on the one hand whilst continuing to demand interest payments, that further contribute to the net outflow of capital to the North, on the other. The freezing of the debt of the countries affected by the Tsunami disaster, the work of Tony Blair's Commission on Africa and the preparations for the Millennium +5 Summit have resulted in a renewed focus the debt relief debate. The United Kingdom is spearheading an initiative at the G7 to come up with a debt relief mechanism that will most probably offer the initial freezing, and eventual cancellation, of foreign debt provided that the countries affected demonstrate that the funds released as a result is directed towards the achievement of the MDGs.

However, if the North is serious about addressing global inequalities it would have to go beyond the developmental approach. If we want to create a more equal
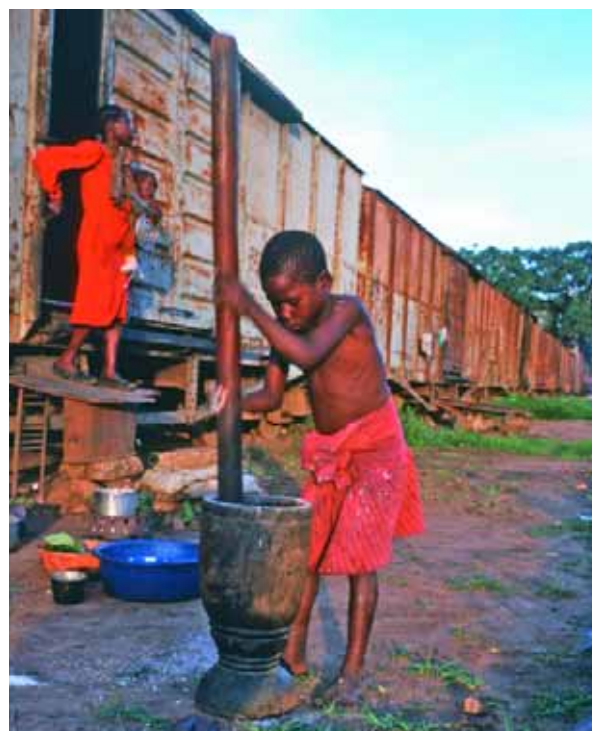
A boy prepares food near a railroad car that serves as his home.

AFP/TOUCHLINE PHOTO

world we will have to address the structural causes of global inequality and that would require a re-ordering of the global political and economic order. It would necessitate the transformation of the world trade system, including removing the structural inequalities that is built into the current trade regime that protect developed economies, expose developing economies and result in the net outflow of capital from the developing to the developed world. We need a rules based multilateral trading system, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO). However, the WTO, in its present form, does not adequately protect developing countries against the abuse of the developed markets. The South needs the WTO to facilitate equitably market access and to stimulate its economic development. In the context of collectively addressing the uneven balance of power in the world trade system, the Doha Round of trade talks, and the emergence of the new role of the G20 after the collapsed Cancun talks holds promise for the WTO and international financial cooperation. However, global institutions like the WTO, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), that are at present in many instances the very instruments of inequality in the global system, will need to be reformed if they are to

become vehicles through which to address the structural inequalities underlying the global trade system.

Lastly, a programme of this nature would require the reform of the United Nations Security Council, not only on the basis of the value of contributions (adding Germany and Japan), as many currently suggest, but on the basis of an equitable representation of both the developed and the developing world in the Council. Ramesh Thakur points out that if the Security Council were to have another five permanent members, four are clear-cut: Germany, Japan, India and Brazil. The fifth would likely be Egypt, Nigeria or South Africa[10]. Some are also arguing for a formula that would ensure Arab and Muslim representation. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the Egyptian foreign minister, argues that Muslims and Arabs have the right "to be represented in the council on an equal basis with the representatives of other cultures and civilizations"[11].

The report commissioned by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan that was tasked to assess the threats facing humanity today and to recommend policy and institutional changes needed to meet that threat, was published in early December. It recommends sweeping reforms at the United Nations, including the expansion of the Security Council from 15 to 24 members[12]. The report suggests some options for how this can be achieved but who the new members would be, if the recommendations are accepted, remains to be negotiated. What is important is that the composition of the new Security Council reflects the realities of the 21st century. Although many aspects of our international system have become truly global, it is still too early to seriously consider a system not based upon the State. At the same time, we have progressed too far in the fields of individual human rights, international humanitarian law and the universal acceptance of democratic principles to continue to accept that in international relations might is right. Universally accepted human rights that are essential for the individual and binding on the State can no longer be overlooked in the world system. People intuitively extend their understanding of democracy, fair treatment and justice to the world system, and are disillusioned when they observe world leaders acting with impunity in ways that would be illegal and unethical at the national level. Increasingly, the relations between international actors will be judged by the same standards of fairness and equity that applies to individuals and legal persona in state systems. The Brazilian president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, articulated this demand for a more democratic international order at the UN General Assembly in 2004

when he said: "There will be neither security nor stability in the world until a more just democratic order is established"[13]. The campaign by the South for a more democratic and equitable international order is going to be another important driving force in the reform of the world system.

The overall trend appears to favour increasing equality and fairness in the world aid, trade and security system. As this process gains momentum, meaningful North-South cooperation, for instance in the G20, should be encouraged. Such cooperation will assist with balancing the push for change and the pull for stability in a delicate dance that should result in steady rate of change that is slow enough to introduce an element of predictability for the markets and yet fast enough to sustain hope for a better future for the world's marginalised millions.   ⚐

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PAUL-HENRI BISCHOFF   FEATURE

A Reflection on Peace Agreements in Africa

For Africa, the advent of globalisation, delivered in the shape of Structural Adjustment Programmes in the period from the early 1980s, ushered in the beginning of the end of the nation-building framework adopted at independence. Government's withdrawal from social, intellectual and economic areas of life brought into sharp relief the vulnerability of both state and society. Accompanied on the foreign policy front by a loss of Big Power protection after the Cold War ended, 'low and intra-state politics' came to the fore. The advent of regionalised, localised and ethnicised political and military conflict in the 1990s tore at the fabric of many African states and their boundaries. Such tension heightened the incidence of war and brought with it intra-state and transnationalised conflict affecting entire regions and sustaining, as in the case of Liberia (as well as other parts of the post-communist world), whole regional economies of war[1].

The idea of an African Renaissance in the latter half of the 1990s, promoted by leaders such as President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, intended to have Africa become an active respondent and its own subject in world affairs. This was to be done by strengthening the state and civil society through initiating and sustaining processes of stabilisation and democratisation. This endeavour, *inter alia*, contributed to a revival in African diplomacy aimed at resolving conflict and overcoming the continent's marginalised status in world affairs. Since then, much has been invested in conflict resolution and in negotiating a number of peace agreements. With the establishment of the African Union (AU) in 2002, intervention and peace-making have been institutionalised in the form of the Peace and Security Council (PSC). In the run-up period, both African and non-African states, however, had already begun to put in place a number of peace agreements that find themselves at different stages of implementation and which the PSC in consultation with the United Nations (UN) Security Council needs to oversee.

What has been driving African diplomacy has been the commitment to African-led solutions, as well as to formalised, all-inclusive peace agreements which give all parties a stake in a democratic restructuring of state power. As such, the current peace agreements intend to

Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria (L), Abdoulaye Wade (R) of Senegal and Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso (C) attend the official opening of the 28th summit of ECOWAS in Accra, Ghana.

international peacekeepers to monitor a ceasefire and peace agreement, but are also the first step in a process of democratisation. This implies exercises in long-term post-conflict resolution and peace building.

All this needs to be accompanied by intensive international monitoring, support and incentives over the medium to long term. As regards parts of West Africa, a year after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and start of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) involving the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and an International Contact Group (ICGL), around 100 000 combatants including those from warring factions have turned in their weapons and there are attempts

heighten African participation in African conflict resolution but also, through the principle of inclusiveness, to bring about a change in a political culture grounded in a "winner-takes-all" approach[2].

This approach has its difficulties where (military) facts have been created on the ground (for instance, an agreement between President Mobutu Sese Seko and Laurent Kabila brokered by South Africa in 1997 was left high and dry as Kabila's forces simply advanced on Kinshasa), but even where peace can be negotiated, agreements tend to be influenced by the relative power positions of combatants at the end of conflict. The challenge is to turn a situation of conflict, where individual parties hold differing positions of power, to one of peace, where all parties present themselves as parties of equal standing to the electorate. Regardless of the power positions at the time of ceasefire, peace agreements must also somehow make the different parties to a peace agreement believe they have a stake in a new political system. This can only be done by forging participatory peace agreements, a situation where the making of a peace agreement is the first step in a process of democratisation and a move towards a new constitutional order. Participatory and inclusive peace agreements, presaging say some degree of interim power-sharing in the prelude to elections, imply not only the use of

to rebuild a national army. But peace remains tenuous amidst international impatience – the United States (US) has threatened sanctions – at disagreement on whether or not a lengthy national census is necessary for the holding of elections scheduled for October 2005, with a view to constituting an elected government by January 2006. Similarly, Sierra Leone, whilst it has held its elections, remains a place of insecurity and has an ongoing need for an international peacekeeping presence, which has consequently been renewed into 2005. With calls for a 15-25 year international commitment to security and civil freedoms[3] in the case of both Liberia and Sierra Leone there is a realisation that stabilisation will be long rather than short term.

Other peace agreements in 2004

Current peace agreements and ceasefires in some cases pre-date or parallel the creation of the AU and its Peace and Security Commission in 2002 and 2003, respectively. The peace agreements find themselves in different states of implementation.

But whilst the PSC has become involved in preventive diplomacy as well as the making and upholding of peace agreements, it is clear outside powers such as US and France retain their instrumental presence in facilitating peace agreements (such as in Sudan, Liberia and Ivory

Coast). Within Africa and as the AU consolidates itself as an institution or regional bodies become more adept at resolving conflict, much reliance in the interim has to be placed on major powers like Nigeria and South Africa for diplomatic and military support.

Thus, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria was mandated to take matters in hand regarding the conflict in Darfur in Sudan that started in February 2003. Talks were held in Abuja in the last months of 2004, to finalise a Draft Declaration of Principles, whilst a small AU monitor force observes the truce. The UN Security Council meeting held in Nairobi reserved the right to consider further action if the Secretary-General could not report progress on a peace agreement within 30 days from the end of December. Similarly, the PSC asked President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to mediate in Côte d'Ivoire and save the peace agreed to at Marcoussis in early December 2004.

Arusha Accords 2000 and Burundi: No short-term solutions

After a war which left hundreds of thousands dead and hundreds of thousands more displaced, Tutsi and Hutu aligned groups entered into an agreement at Arusha, in part brokered by former South African President Nelson Mandela and current Deputy President Jacob Zuma but also involving neighbouring East African states. By the end of 2004, the process of disarmament from both armed groups and the Burundian National Army, meant to involve an eventual 55 000 former combatants, had started and the UN Mission in Burundi (ONUB) of 5 500 was renewed into 2005 pending a referendum on a new constitution to pave the way for eventual elections. But implementation remains uncertain, with the government's Burundian Armed Forces (FAB) continuing to resist having themselves confined to barracks in the wake of attacks ostensibly carried out by the one party, the *Front National de Liberation* (FNL), which stayed outside the peace agreement. These attacks take place in the north-western parts of the country, and allegations that the FNL played a part in a massacre of Congolese Tutsi or Bayamulenge refugees on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in which 156 people were killed in August of 2004 have contributed to a troubled situation. A recent mission of the Security Council recommends considering the taking of further measures against the FNL. What is also suggested is the UN Security Council take urgent action on the issue of impunity with regard to the feasibility of establishing an international commission of enquiry. To help alleviate

poverty, it is thought at the end of 2004 that the Council should become proactive in urging donor countries to disburse the financial and technical aid needed to sustain the peace process. But whether Burundi can sustain its peace process very much depends on developments in the rest of the Great Lakes region.

Southern Sudan: A peace agreement backed by the promise of aid and the flow of oil

With the US as 'prime facilitator', under the aegis of the UN Security Council at an extraordinary meeting in Nairobi on 19 November 2004, and after talks between the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the Sudanese government, the two parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This ostensibly ended a 21-year conflict with two million casualties. The agreement commits both sides to hammering out a power-sharing arrangement by 31 December 2004. It will give Sudan more than US$500 million in aid, allow both sides to profit from the production of oil, and lead to the deployment of 10 000 peacekeepers[4]. But the agreement ultimately hinges on developments in Northern and Eastern Sudan, particularly around the Darfur region.

Somalia: A government and parliament in search of a secure capital

After deliberations promoted by the regional body, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) which have lasted at least since a ceasefire was put in place in October 2002, a meeting of Somali delegates for a Somali interim parliament constituted in August 2004 was able to constitute a government in Kenya at the start of November of the same year. It is a government without the means to enforce peace on the country. The government-in-exile has asked for international peacekeepers and considerable aid to re-establish a central government in the capital, Mogadishu. Against the background of centrifugal tendencies among clans acting as social and political and military actors in their own right, the existence of a Somaliland government opposing Mogadishu since 1991 – at times indirectly supported by Ethiopia – and of Puntland since 1998[5], general insecurity and the absence of any notable national infrastructure (destroyed since the

The current peace agreements intend to heighten African participation in African conflict resolution but also, through the principle of inclusiveness, to bring about a change in a political culture grounded in a "winner-takes-all" approach

Presidents Paul Kagame (L), Benjamen Mpaka (C) of Tanzania and Laurent Gbagbo (R) of Ivory Coast attend an African Union meeting in Libreville, Gabon.

onset of civil war in 1991), the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction are daunting. All this will need concerted diplomatic and financial efforts by the AU, UN and international donor community.

The Pretoria agreement: Fraying at the edges?

The Pretoria Agreement of December 2002 was a major milestone in maintaining the territorial integrity of the DRC and putting in place by means of a power-sharing agreement a transitional government in April 2003, intended to prepare the ground for elections and the re-establishment of a constitutional order in 2005. But over and above the considerable task of establishing the authority of central state institutions in a country that has seen little in terms of national administrative rule in recent years, mutual challenges in the relationship between DRC and Rwanda at present remain critical to the maintenance of peace. Whilst at the end of 2003, the DRC and Rwanda committed themselves to complete the repatriation of Rwandan *Interahamwe* militia and former soldiers in the DRC within a year[6] by the end of 2004, peace was in jeopardy: the DRC was committing several thousand troops to the border in the wake of threats by Rwanda to militarily intervene in the DRC in order to

If the AU is going to intervene more systematically in areas of conflict, if peacemaking and peace agreements are going to succeed, they need the concerted effort of both regional as well as international players

neutralise Rwandan exile forces operating from within Eastern Congo. Here the need for a greater UN peacekeeping presence and a greater commitment to disarm the Interahamwe is called for. The PSC at the end of the year dissuaded Rwanda from taking unilateral action and under Ethiopia's current chairmanship is intent on defusing tensions between the DRC and Rwanda by calling on the AU and AU Commission's chairpersons to call a meeting of the two respective presidents. But the resources needed to disarm the rebels will have to come from outside Africa. Given the geo-economic importance of a sound and stable DRC, this may be achievable provided the UN and the AU help the international community to maintain their focus on the Great Lakes region.

Marcoussis: A peace agreement restored?

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the Marcoussis peace agreement brokered by France in January 2003 led to a ceasefire and constitution of a broad-based but fragile government of national reconciliation in April of the same year. An airforce attack on rebel strongholds in the North on 4 November 2004 seemingly left the ceasefire and peace agreement in tatters. France, which with its 5 000 peacekeepers, itself became a party to the conflict after the events of 4 November, when French troops destroyed the Ivorian airforce in response to an Ivorian attack on French positions, was no longer a credible broker. The AU mandated President Mbeki of South Africa to help broker a peace deal, something which occurred in November and December 2004 and is set to continue. With UN sanctions against Abidjan as the backdrop, the exercise appears to have succeeded in salvaging crucial parts of the Marcoussis agreement, reaffirming a ceasefire in order to enable elections, originally scheduled for October 2005, to take place.

Algiers in jeopardy? Ethiopia and Eritrea: The need for preventive diplomacy

The Algiers peace agreement of 2002, involving the

border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, was guaranteed by the UN and the AU and its border and demarcation commission ruled on a new border in 2002. Initially accepted by Ethiopia, the decision was subsequently queried by the Ethiopian government in a letter sent to the UN Secretary-General in September 2003. Despite this, the Security Council ruled in favour of the Commission's ruling, only to have Ethiopia postpone the physical demarcation of the border that was meant to have been completed by mid-July 2004. The impasse has fuelled concerns about a renewal of conflict[7]. The situation calls for preventive diplomacy – in all probability assisted by the US which takes a special interest in this dispute in a strategically sensitive Horn of Africa region – from the side of the AU in 2005.

Conclusion

Peace agreements need to be brought about, monitored and supplemented by regional as well as international military and financial support. Much has happened in the last two years on this front but the state of all current peace agreements shows how fragile they are and how much diplomatic and political attention and commitment to intervene militarily and economically is needed. Whilst the AU, aided by Nigerian and South African diplomacy, may eventually develop the capacity to engage in both preventive and remedial diplomacy aimed at bringing about inclusive and participatory peace agreements, the resources needed to do this along a broad front as well as to implement these agreements, to sustain them into a peace-building phase, must also come from the UN and traditional donor countries. Whilst the G8 meeting held in 2004 pledged in the context of its 'Action Plan' to finance, train and equip 75 000 peacekeepers by 2010 and the European Union offered Euros 250 million after 2002, "this amount would only be enough to finance two years of the (present) Burundi (peacekeeping) mission"[8].

Western support in particular remains not very likely as long as Africa's democratic forces do not see to it that the AU systematically raises all serious issue pertaining to the violation of democracy and human rights. This is something that tentatively has begun to happen at the AU Addis Ababa summit of 2004 as regards the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) government's human rights record, for instance[9]. If the AU is going to intervene more systematically in areas of conflict, if peacemaking and peace agreements are going to succeed, they need the concerted effort of both regional as well as international players. In the words of Barbara F. Walter, "Security guarantees

are the best means to induce actors in a civil conflict to sign and abide by agreements" since local actors absolutely depend on these for their own security[10]. With the commitment to security guarantees must come the political will to enforce such agreements. Here the AU needs the back-up of the international community whilst its principal members need to show demonstrable purpose and a strategic sense of mission in order to have peace agreements forged that can transform the continent's political culture. Nigeria and South Africa in particular need to be able to continue to raise the human and material resources needed to augment the AU in its peacemaking efforts. Their resources, however, are not limitless. Especially in the case of South Africa, there are signs that its diplomatic and military resources are stretched. This may mean greater prioritisation about what is most important to address. This will include identifying the worst-case scenarios and concentrating the most intensive pressures. But it should also mean more generally strengthening the capacity of the AU as a whole, not least through strengthening regional bodies engaged in conflict resolution. After all, an African reawakening ought to spell support for pro-democracy forces. These are best and most effectively organised along regional lines. A broad range of civil society actors and political groups in a region can support and promote the momentum of bringing about democratisation and making inclusive peace agreements sustainable.

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Conditions for Peace:

The State, Private Sector and Civil Society

To build and maintain an environment for sustainable peace in Africa you need three sectors, namely the state, the private sector and civil society. There are three elements of the state that ought to exist in order to ensure a strong state that is able to carry out its mandate in a way that is responsive to the needs of the people of a country, namely a separation of powers; professional and accountable security agencies; and strong political parties based on values. A clear segregation of powers is needed between the administrative, legislative and the judicial sectors of government. There has to be a legislature which makes laws which govern the relationship between the state and those that it governs, an administration that implements legislation, and a judiciary that should be independent and provide oversight over the legislative and administrative arms of the state.

Unfortunately, in many countries in Africa the relationship between the legislative, the administrative and judicial arms becomes blurred. The administrative arm tends to encroach on the legislative side of government and influences what the legislature does. It also ensures a non-independent judiciary in many countries. Political appointments to the judiciary are not uncommon and succeed in undermining the kind of independence needed to ensure that it has proper oversight over both the administrative and the legislative sectors of government.

In considering military and security agencies, we ought to emphasise the need for professional security agencies that operate under civilian accountability. Where security agencies wield control and power over a state's apparatus and lack civilian oversight, the abuse of power is greatly increased.

Sustaining peace calls for political parties that are based on values and not on narrow identities. These values may be liberal, conservative, democratic, social democratic and so on, but they are values that cut across narrow ethnic or racial identities. Unfortunately, in Africa this is one area in which states face enormous difficulties.

For example, in Kenya we witnessed elections in 2003

that brought into power a new government. President Daniel Arap Moi stepped down as a result of the elections, bringing to an end almost three decades of rule. Despite this achievement for multi-party democracy, Kenya continues to face the challenge of dealing with the 'politics of identity' which may threaten its stability.

A sustainable, independent and diverse private sector is an important condition for sustainable peace. However, in a number of countries in Africa the private sector exists because of the opportunities presented and made available by government, thus making it difficult to operate a business outside of the provisions of government. For an independent and diverse private sector to emerge or to be sustained, good commercial, financial, and physical infrastructure is required. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) the private sector is not sustainable, independent or diverse. Commercial, financial and physical infrastructure is very weak in the DRC, thus making it difficult for the private sector to operate. In addition, as a result of several years of war, the regulatory environment is weak, making foreign direct investment (FDI) a high-risk business. Unless there are laws that protect those businesses who want to conduct business in a particular country, opportunities to expand and strengthen the economy are greatly minimised.

An independent and strong civil society is a necessary condition for sustainable peace. However, for the most part in Africa, civil society is not independent and it tends to be aligned to political parties and furthering political interest. The reason for this is that civil society does not represent a diverse set of interest groups and they are not well resourced. The lack of resources means that they are open to manipulation and exploitation. The fact that they do not represent a diverse set of interests means that they are very narrowly focused. That narrow focus tends to translate into civil society actors becoming advocates for particular political interests. We find this a problem in the DRC and in Burundi, for example, where civil society organisations orientate themselves towards political parties.

We can look at a variety of examples where progress has been made in building an environment for sustainable peace. In South Africa, the absence of a full-scale civil war, complemented by a negotiated, peaceful, settlement of the conflict that was characterised by compromise and inclusiveness, resulted in an environment conducive to sustainable peace. Segregation of powers is enshrined in the constitution and exists in practice. The security agencies are professional and are under civilian accountability. In terms of political parties being based on values and not

being driven by narrow identities, South Africa is still in transition. Unfortunately, voting patterns in South Africa still mirror racial identity and this is a challenge that South Africans must overcome as the country moves into the future.

In terms of a private sector that is sustainable, independent and diverse, South Africa also presents a good example. The private sector in South Africa will continue despite government. Good commercial, financial and physical infrastructure exists, as well as a regulatory environment which gives confidence to business. However, a serious threat to long-term stability is the continuing concentration of capital in the hands of just a few. Unless the benefits of a strong economy are distributed widely within a society, conflict will arise. While a great deal of progress has been made in this regard with the various black economic empowerment initiatives, this still remains a threat to stability in South Africa because a critical mass of redistribution of economic resources has not yet been reached.

South Africa's civil society is independent and strong. Coming out of apartheid, South Africa had between 40 000 and 60 000 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating in the country. South Africa's history ensured that the country developed a very vibrant and independent civil society. We see this vibrancy coming out of the challenges that the trade unions pose to the government, the vigorous media in the country, and the fact that NGOs will challenge government on any issue, from the environment to HIV/AIDS or policies that the government implements. Many NGOs in South Africa have the benefit of being well resourced and represent a diverse set of interest groups.

For the most part in Africa, civil society is not independent and it tends to be aligned to political parties and furthering political interest

So, in South Africa, the three objective conditions are present. What, therefore, is the threat? The threat exists in the lack of skills and resources to sustain peace and to build a conducive environment. This poses one of the biggest threats to long-term stability in South Africa and stems from the history of the country and the imbalances that resulted from decades of apartheid. A major challenge for South Africa is to build, very quickly, the necessary skills and muster the necessary resources in order to ensure that we can maintain all of these different conditions in society and have a population that can benefit from these conditions and the opportunities that these conditions present.
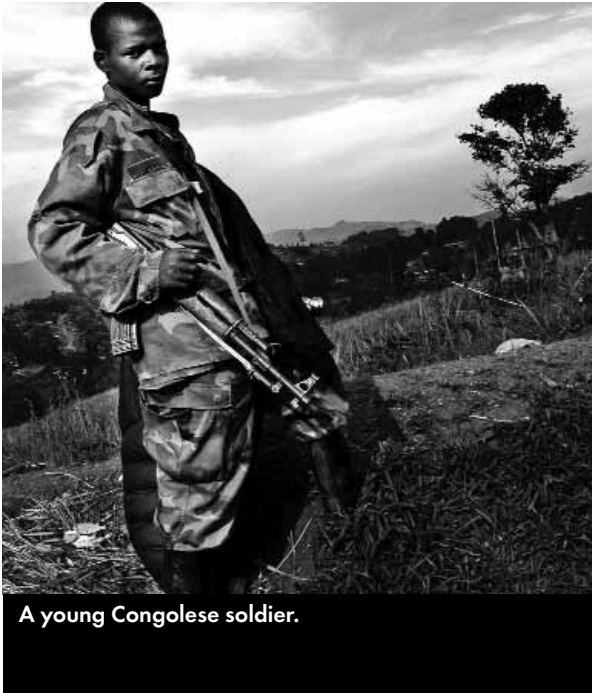
A young Congolese soldier.

What is the importance of having a strong state, private sector and civil society? We need a strong state that is not state-centred in itself, but a strong people-centred state that is responsive to the needs of its people. We want to ensure that we have a government with a sufficiently strong mandate to carry out its political programmes. A government that does not have a sufficiently strong mandate is going to govern by fear and not through confidence.

A strong civil society is important for sustaining democracy. Civil society provides an avenue for society to express itself in a variety of sectors and on a variety of issues. They are able to advocate a diverse set of interests in society. While the state is there to represent the broad interests of society at large, individual civil society groups have a responsibility to advocate interests that they represent. A strong civil society can provide a balance in society and ensure that power exercised by the government is not abused. However, the notion that civil society has to be in opposition to government works against the notion of cooperative governance driven by checks and balances.

A strong private sector that is able to function despite government is a powerful condition for averting corruption in government and the cronyism that has destroyed the social and economic fabric of so many countries. A strong private sector also provides resources to a state that can be used for social upliftment. Jobs and consequently livelihoods depend on a strong economy.

It is therefore important to have a strong state, civil society and private sector. Each sector has an important role to play in contributing to sustainable peace. However, perhaps one of the more important contributions to sustainable peace comes not from the individual contributions that each sector makes but from the opportunities that these sectors present for a diffusion of power and influence in society, the absence of which creates a condition for protracted power struggles.

In any society, even the most stable and developed societies, many people want to exercise power and influence and this phenomenon establishes a very competitive environment. In societies where all three sectors, the state, civil society and the private sector, are strong and provide ample opportunity for the exercise of power and influence, we find that the diffusion of power and influence allows people to move easily into one or the other sector.

However, in societies where only one of these sectors, the state, is present or where the only way to exercise power and influence in the other two sectors is through the state, then such an environment encourages fierce competition for control over the state apparatus. Unfortunately, this is the case in many developing countries.

Many post-conflict situations represent sustained periods when the stability of the society is very fragile. This presents these societies with the challenge of averting a return to war or civil unrest driven by power struggles. In the absence of a strong private sector and civil society the task of establishing sustainable peace becomes extremely difficult.

South Africa, Namibia, Ghana and many other countries in Africa provide important lessons in conflict resolution towards sustainable peace. These lessons will be important in providing us with strategies for dealing with other countries in civil war. The DRC, Mozambique and Angola also offer important lessons for post-conflict reconstruction. But perhaps the most important example for developing future strategies for sustainable peace will come from examining the case of Somalia, a country without any governing authority for over a decade, where the only avenue to exercising power and influence is through the barrel of a gun!

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MICHAEL G. COMERFORD   FEATURE

Building Peace in **Angola**

After decades of military conflict, Angola is now in its third year of peace. Since the death of Jonas Savimbi and the demobilisation of UNITA soldiers, the military threat to the Angolan state is confined to Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC's) low-level military campaign for independence in the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) demobilised in the region of 105 000 soldiers after the signing of the Luena Memorandum of Understanding of 4 April 2002. Given that the consolidation of peace in Angola will in part be a result of a successful demobilisation process, this article will look at some of the means by which demobilisation has been furthered and strengthened in Angola though traditional and cultural mechanisms. These traditional and cultural initiatives tend not to be very visible or public, but the article will argue that they are of vital importance in the process of ensuring the effective demobilisation and social reintegration of former combatants in the country. Given the magnitude of the demobilisation process in Angola, its success is of particular importance to the consolidation of peace.

Before looking at these issues, it is important to point out that much is being done to consolidate peace in Angola, a peace that cost so much in terms of human lives and devastation. Among the more visible and public initiatives and programmes underway are the following:

- efforts to normalise the democratic process through the holding of elections planned for September 2006;
- calls for an effective national disarmament strategy to precede these elections (for many in Angola the lack of such a coherent strategy prior to the 1992 elections was a contributing factor that facilitated the return to war);
- calls for massive state investment in national infrastructure that will encourage greater economic activity and link agricultural production with large urban markets;
- debate over a new constitution that will enshrine and safeguard the rights of all citizens (a draft constitution has been drawn up, but political debate centres on whether the constitution should be approved prior to elections – the government position – or by a newly elected parliament – the position of opposition parties).
- efforts to reduce poverty in a country where government statistics state that 68 per cent of the population are living in poverty.
- attempts at promoting a more pluralist media, in which open political debate can take place. The Angolan media continues to be dominated by state-run institutions, while the private media is largely confined to Luanda.

A United Nations soldier counts ammunition as part of the disarmament programme in the Ivory Coast.

The signing of peace agreements in itself does not necessarily bring about an end to violence. Different processes are required at national and local levels. It is important that government create the conditions to enable and encourage former combatants to demobilise, such as employment opportunities, professional training, financial and material support in the transition from military to civilian life, perhaps access to housing and land, and some psychological support. However, it is also important for local communities to facilitate the reintegration process, which may be very painful (and nearly impossible) for communities that suffered terribly at the hands of former soldiers. Towards the end of the military conflict with UNITA, approximately one-third of Angola's estimated population of 14 million was displaced. In other words, many of the communities that are expected to facilitate the reintegration of former combatants have themselves only recently returned and are in the process of rebuilding their lives.

In the reintegration of demobilised soldiers, cultural and traditional processes have played an important role. Little has been written about this since the Luena Memorandum but field visits to the province of Huambo, one of the most war-affected provinces of Angola where there are high numbers of former combatants, indicate that traditional rites of demobilisation of former combatants have played a key role in stabilising and furthering the demobilisation process.[1] Frequently this stabilisation has been taking place after the official demobilisation process has ended. The demobilisation processes set in place after the Bicesse and Lusaka peace agreements of 1991 and 2004 respectively, and again after the Luena Memorandum, involved the surrender of personal weapons, the granting of a document to certify that demobilisation had occurred, and the gift of civilian clothing, money, blankets, food, and agricultural equipment. The demobilised were usually given transport to their area of origin, where arrival home generally marked the end of the process. From a traditional or cultural perspective, the demobilisation process is understood to commence upon return to the village or area of origin. The traditional 'demobilisation' process, which I outline below, is conducted through specific rituals, and reinforces and supports the earlier 'demobilisation'; both

should be used to facilitate and strengthen the desired goal of successful demobilisation and harmonious reintegration of former combatants.

Traditional demobilisation methods

Traditional communities expect that soldiers returning from war should receive treatment from the traditional healer, known in Angola as the *kimbanda*. Usually this involves withdrawing with the *kimbanda* for a period of time apart from the village, to talk through war experiences and explain what happened in order to '*tirar a guerra*', to 'remove the war'. This Portuguese phrase is used extensively in naming the therapeutic process engaged in. Alcinda Honwana[2] quotes a chief from the province of Malange who explained:

> if a person goes to fight a war, he becomes another person, because he learns how to kill other people, even his own mother and father ... during that time he only thinks of killing ... when he returns he has to be treated to become his own self again.

Not only are we dealing with a cultural expectation that soldiers undergo some form of treatment upon returning home to 'remove the war', but a cultural belief that it is possible to rehabilitate returned soldiers by enabling them to move beyond their experiences of war, to distance themselves from the past.

The work by Honwanaon traditional rituals for demobilisation, *Local Knowledge in the Post-War Healing and Reintegration of War-Affected Children in Angola*, carried out for the Angolan Christian Children's Fund (CCF) is important in this area of demobilisation. CCF is one of the few organisations in Angola engaged in research at this level. In interviews conducted by CCF personnel after the Lusaka Protocol, it was found that local communities used rituals which involved the use of water, flour, ashes, eggs, chickens and so on, in reintegrating returned soldiers. The research is particularly important because it was carried out in the provinces of Uige, Malange, Huambo, and Bié, thereby covering the ritualistic practices of the Bakongo (Uige), Ambundu (Malange), and Ovimbundu (Huambo and Bié) ethnic groups, from whom the major protagonists of the Angolan conflict drew support. For Honwana the CCF project was:

> grounded on the conviction that there is a body of knowledge rooted in local ancient traditions which informs specific cultural understandings about the causes of ill-health and psychological trauma; about notions of childhood and adulthood; and also about

the effect that traumatic experiences and events might have on individuals and groups[3].

Honwana highlights the importance of cultural anthropology in understanding how individuals interpret the world around them for post-conflict reintegration. As Terence Ranger has commented, "[the] need for healing … depended on participants' understanding of their violence"[4]. At stake here is a belief that effective approaches to issues such as demobilisation, peace-building, security, trauma and distress, must be based on cultural understanding. Honwana argues that the:

> dominant western conceptions of mental distress and trauma cannot continue to be blindly imposed on afflicted populations across the globe since the way in which people embody, give meaning and manage their afflictions is essentially shaped by social and cultural understandings[5].

The key point here, which is also the central point of this article, is that in approaching key issues such as demobilisation, it is essential that a pluralist approach be adopted, where local methods and rituals are viewed as complementary and supplementary to standard approaches and practices. These can reinforce each other in a positive and progressive way, and lead to the overall success of the process in question.

A number of descriptions of rituals illustrate what was usually undertaken. One involves washing in a local river:

Successful demobilisation and indeed the healing of ex-combatants may entirely depend on such cultural and traditional rites being performed

> From the start to the washing in the river, the treatment took a month. During all this time one couldn't wash in the river. Having prepared the medication (purification) one goes to the river to wash. Your clothes are left to one side, and you put on new clothes after coming from the river. You cannot look back. After all this treatment you are not allowed to talk about what went on during the war.[6]

A second treatment concerns the returning home alive of a person thought to have been killed in war, and involves the use of water and fire:

> The person cannot enter the village. A basin (calabash) of water is taken which is broken around the feet of the person, who then walks on the broken basin before entering the village. All the members of the village are told to extinguish their fires, and a new

fire is prepared and lit. It is with this fire that food is prepared, which is eaten by all with the one who has returned. It is only by doing this that the person can live without having problems[7].

Traditional healing methods combine ritual and talking, differentiating them from psychotherapeutic models of healing which emphasise 'analysis' of one's problems. In fact, a key aspect of what individuals receive during these rituals is '*conselho*' or advice[8].

It is not just the *kimbanda* who conducts rituals for demobilised soldiers. On occasions other members of the family have a role in the process, as illustrated in the following account from one former soldier:

> I was demobilised in January 1997. …When I arrived in the *kimbo* (village) my mother called our relatives and acted according to tradition. …My aunt took a live chicken and rubbed it all over my body, as if she was dusting it, then she rubbed palm oil on my hands and some ashes on my forehead. After that she threw *fuba* (maize meal) all over my body[9].

Clearly, the mother and aunt in question were aware of a requirement to perform certain rituals for the returning soldier. The family response fulfils a cultural need and can only be understood with reference to cultural beliefs.

The rituals used for those who killed during war differ from the rituals for individuals who did not kill. The taking of another person's life implies possible contamination or possession by the spirit of the one killed. The belief is that the spirit of that person may seek to exact revenge against the perpetrator by taking possession of him, which then has consequences for the community to which the soldier returns. At issue here is a belief in the 'migration of the spirit', that a spirit can travel from one person to another with the potential to do harm. Communities need protection against this migration and from those who may have taken the life of others in war.

In their efforts to protect themselves and remain safe during wartime, soldiers invariably engaged in tasting the blood of their victims in order to gain extra courage in war and to prevent the spirit of the dead from seeking revenge. Hence the need to have different healing rituals for those who killed in wartime and for those who did not. S. Ellis has done interesting work on the use of "mystical weapons" by soldiers during the Liberian conflict, where fighters disembowelled their victims to eat the flesh or internal organs, particularly the heart:

> Practices of this sort stemmed from a belief, quite well-documented in Liberian history, that the essence

of a person is contained in the heart and the blood, and that by consuming these a warrior acquires some of the power formerly possessed by his victim[10].

This form of 'African science'[11], as Ellis noted, was grounded firmly within indigenous religious belief and African traditional religion. This is the reason for purification, the reason why local communities expected that former soldiers would pass though traditional rites that demobilised them at this 'spirit' level.

From this perspective, it becomes imperative that demobilisation processes incorporate these important dimensions, this worldview, and in effect start from where people are. Successful demobilisation and indeed the healing of ex-combatants may entirely depend on such cultural and traditional rites being performed. Traditional practices are still relevant in Angola, and incorporating the wisdom of Angola's traditional belief systems reveals that these have an important role to play in consolidating and securing peace.　Ⓐ

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Endnotes

1   My work with the Angolan Peacebuilding Programme involves supporting a programme in Huambo. It is clear that in rural areas of the province, purification rituals are being conducted by traditional healers and family members in the reintegration of former soldiers. Recourse to these rituals is much less common in urban areas.

2   Honwana, A. 1998. 'Okusiakala O'Ndalu Yokalye,' Let Us Light a New Fire. Local Knowledge in the Post-War Healing and Reintegration of War-Affected Children in Angola'. Christian Children's Fund consultancy report. Editora Humbi Humbi, Luanda, Angola, p. 7.

3   *Ibid*. p. 14.

4   Ranger, T. 1992. 'Afterword: War, Violence and Healing in Zimbabwe'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 18, p. 703.

5   Honawa, *op cit*. p. 6.

6   Description provided in unpublished CCF field interview notes, 9 March 1998.

7   Description provided in unpublished CCF field interview notes, 9 March 1998.

8   *The Lancet*. 2002. 'Conselho: Psychological Healing in Displaced Communities in Angola', Vol. 360, No. 9336, 14 September 2002.

9   Honwana, *op cit*. p. 70.

10 Ellis, S. 2001. 'Mystical Weapons: Some Evidence from the Liberian War', *Journal of Religion in Africa* Vol. 31, p. 222.

11 *Ibid*.

MADDALENA PEZZOTTI

Women, Peace Processes and Peacekeeping Operations: A Conflict Management Perspective

Three years is a short time for a bureaucracy to implement a resolution that has implications as deep and as broad as United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security does. Nevertheless, there are some questions we should pose if we want to genuinely engage in a systematic practice meant to bring intentions closer to action. Why are we not generating the success we thought we would have by now? What are the missing links? What is encroaching on the efficacy of the legal, conceptual and technical apparatus at our disposal? What are the avenues we should follow? These are the queries I will embark upon and endeavour to answer.

Introducing a gender equality approach into the peace-building dimension and peacekeeping operations is a strategy that must be pulled off both at the political and organisational level. In truth, the management of conflicts from a gender equality perspective correlates to several aspects and layers embraced by the society at large in wartorn contexts, the intricacies of the international support, and the specificities of the demands of the women's movement and the retaliations of its antagonists.

In the aftermath of war, and with the due differences and peculiarities, societies share a basic cluster of challenges related to a low grade of statehood, a frail social fabric, a poor capacity for self-organisation, the interdependence of colonial and post-unitarian economic, cultural and institutional systems, the symbolism of nation-building and the shaping of national identity (see Figure 1, page 20: Main characteristics of post-conflict societies). In this labyrinth, paths are to be found for women's concerns and interests to be voiced in the political and institutional arenas, women's rights to be digested by traditional mores, with their discriminatory customs and gender-biased beliefs, and translated into legislation and practices, which allow women's equal participation in the production and enjoyment of wealth and culture. Yet, how to empower women in a disempowered milieu? Or vice versa, what conditions are to be forged to empower the milieu through equal opportunities between women and men?[1]
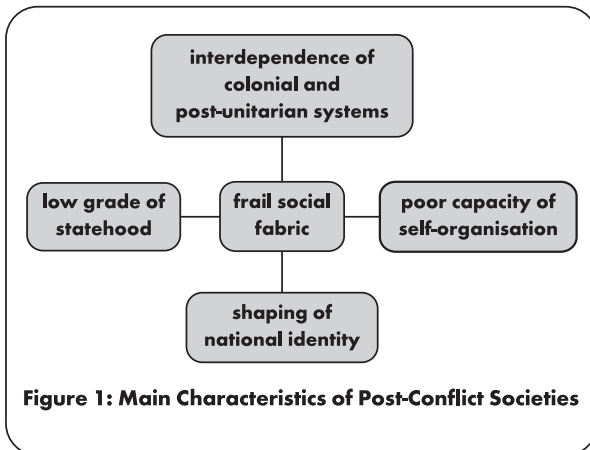
Figure 1: Main Characteristics of Post-Conflict Societies

On the other hand, the historical effort of the women's movement to de-construct patriarchal identities and redefine women's status has been enriched by the growth of grass-roots organisations headed by women from wartorn societies, indigenous groups and the slums of the South of the world. This militant presence in the collective action of social movements frequently occurs in the absence of an articulated ideology for gender equality.[2] The force and dynamism of the women's movement resides in the variety of its components and their adaptability to cultures and junctures. Even so, is it possible to empower women without the premises of the self-transformation of their consciences? Is the participation of women in movements for peace, dignity and survival finally going to contribute to the redefinition of their roles in families and societies?[3]

When dealing with gender issues, peacekeeping missions are thus facing multifaceted phenomena, which require mastering a robust doctrine, managing a realistic mandate and feeding on strategic analyses. The objective of mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in peace-keeping operations can be pursued only by championing a holistic approach, tackling at once human resources, knowledge and tools, values, culture, structure, and trends.[4] This is to say, the salient elements of strategic planning (see Figure 2: Strategic planning for gender mainstreaming). However, when we examine them, we discover that challenges exceed opportunities and consti-tute significant obstructions, embedded as they recur-rently are in the very nature of peacekeeping missions.

As far as human resources[5] are concerned, it should be noted that gender competency and awareness are continuously built and dispersed due to high turn-over of staff determined by the uncertainty of civilian posts and the temporality of civil police and military assignments.

Down-sizing schemes not gender-sensitively planned and affecting trained staff are an additional complication not always taken into proper account.

On the side of knowledge and tools, tasks related to gender issues are sometimes developed in parallel by different individuals and the same problems tackled by dissimilar, and in some cases contrasting, concepts and practices. This is the direct consequence of staff members coming from different professional backgrounds, the clash of diverse professional cultures, such as the national civil service, international civil service, and military and police service, and the still incipient ownership of a human rights approach and the notions and ethics of the "UN culture" by a sizeable number of people for whom serving in a peacekeeping mission is a one-time experience. Impromptu and amateurish attempts cause supplementary drawbacks that are detrimental to laborious and intense endeavours.

Moreover, the notion of gender equality is not assimi-lated as a core value in peacekeeping operations and it is not introduced in those resolutions of the Security Council which deploy the missions and appoint their mandate. UNSCR 1325 is still seen as a sectoral resolu-tion to be applied as an extravagance solely when the 'real' issues have been untangled. Gender concerns are neglected to a large extent in peace agreements, and other forms of peace negotiation, conflict deterrence and preventive diplomacy. They are absent in the terms of reference of the Office of the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Special Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary General. The same concepts of peace and security are shaped and administered as neutral territories where gender gaps have no weight. Consequently, the achievement of gender equality is not perceived as a binding issue and it
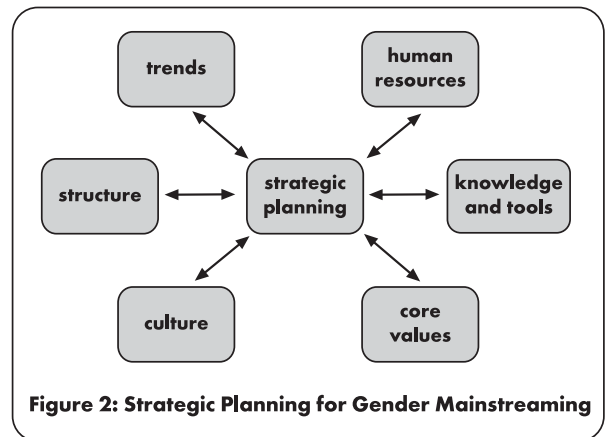

Figure 2: Strategic Planning for Gender Mainstreaming

remains a fringe commitment of peripheral offices.

Culture in peacekeeping missions is a mélange of perceptions and expectations that at times contrast with UN values, or end up preventing, or deviating from, the search for gender equality and the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies. Gender issues are characterised by a high psychological density, which intersects the socio-institutional sphere. The approaches and the results are shaped by the psychological needs of the individuals and the groups. Beliefs, motivations, identity and roles influence the learning and problem-solving processes.

On the other hand, the evolving deployment structure of peacekeeping missions, together with their unpredictable duration, makes it problematical to shape offices for gender affairs ready to adapt to the diverse phases of the missions' life-cycles and capable of imprinting a consistent pattern of shared responsibility. Not only do human resources rotate, even the structure is in continuous motion.

In peacekeeping missions there are trends that inhibit gender-sensitive thinking and action. The prevalence of an emergency approach and the "anxiety" for operational performance prevail upon the learning sphere and a result-based planning. These propensities, which originate from obsolete ways of looking at conflict resolution, also restrain the development of methodologies and tools able to handle cross-cutting issues, such as gender and ethnicity.

Therefore, strategic planning for placing gender issues in the political agenda of peace processes and the structure, composition, culture, and procedures of peace-keeping missions, has to cope with grades of disharmony rooted in the same conception of peace and security and the makeup of the instruments to channel political mediation, humanitarian aid, international cooperation, and military intervention.

These inconsistencies are to be managed by criteria and modalities that articulate mandates, systems and collective and individual identities. Objectives cannot be stipulated as given items. They need to be crafted as psychological and operational contracts through knowl-edge sharing and constant compromise. Individual claims, as securing identity, working groups' wants, as fulfilling objectives, and missions' requirements, as satisfying mandates, must be blended into a course of innovation, where gender difference and gender differentials are

One of the many Angolan women who are displaced.

AFP/TOUCHLINE PHOTO

recognised as an integral part of the management of conflict, the negotiation of peace accords, and the consolidation of democracy. The mainstreaming of gender equality in peace processes and peace-building operations must be understood as the expression of a progressive integration and harmonisation of pluralities, a transit from stands to hypothesis.
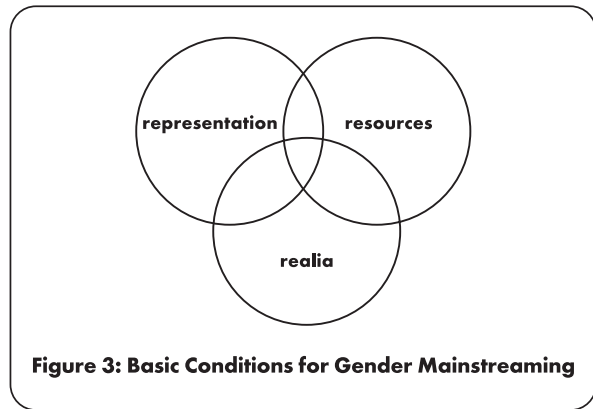
Figure 3: Basic Conditions for Gender Mainstreaming

A vast responsibility to confront the challenges and the dilemmas hitherto analysed rests on the member states of the United Nations. Gender units in peace-keeping missions inherit the consequences of conclusions made in the Security Council, but also through contact groups and donors' bilateral and multilateral agreements. These decisions are taken outside the missions and remain on the whole gender-blind. However, member states can drive the variables of representation, resources and realia,

which are the bedrock of gender mainstreaming.

In other terms, they have the authority to redefine the sharing of power between men and women in national and international political talks, early warning systems, and peacekeeping missions, allowing space for women's equal representation, voice and agency. At this level, options ought to be found to revert the uncertainty of the availability of resources, in terms of financial assets, expertise, time and space assigned to gender equality, breaking a vicious circle that strengthens the perception that the goals of gender equality are more difficult, or even impossible, to achieve, or that gender mainstreaming is not an efficient strategy. Furthermore, values and norms expressed in a systemic manner would sustain structures and processes and enhance expected behaviour.

The leadership of peacekeeping missions, for its part, has to respond by fostering a broader concept of gender equality,[6] ensuring that gender issues are treated politically and related policies are not diluted or fragmented, as well as establishing accountability systems for the attainment of results and fluxes of shared responsibility. By definition, gender mainstreaming is not a sectoral approach. Quite the reverse, it calls for structural changes, the reorganisation of consultation and decision-making dynamics, and shifts in the organisational culture. Any other expedient is mere cosmetics.

Gender units are supposed to conceive methodological frameworks, design tools and techniques that are suited to the distinctiveness of missions, stakeholders and external circumstances, and adapt them to the emergent events. This assignment is based on a proficient know-how of gender issues, as much as the idiosyncrasy of politics and policy-making, and must be tied in with analytical assessments of scenarios. Communication and problem-solving competences are key to the needed transformations in highly volatile environments. Notwithstanding this, the determination of member states and the collaboration of the leadership of peacekeeping missions are vital for the sustainability of gender units' outcomes.[7]

Lastly, there is a final interrogation to launch. Should member states, peacekeeping missions and gender units assume these responsibilities with meaning and consistency, what would be the added value? Why is a gender equality approach important in peace processes?

Acquiring peace is about trading power, and women have been chronically alienated from it. What is at stake is the perpetuation or disruption of inequitable models. Gender equality produces better governments because the diversity of individuals and the specificity of social

groups are positioned at the centre of policy-making, informed and participatory set-ups are promoted, and unilateral ways of appraising human experience are eventually challenged. First and foremost, it leads to the recognition that the differences in the position of men and women in society are connected to a gender-biased hierarchical ranking and it acknowledges their shared responsibility in removing power imbalances in society.

We could state that gender equality is the foundation of justice and democracy and that there is no peace without these premises. The major risk is to talk about it without ever implementing it. ⌂

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Endnotes

1. These questions will stay partially unanswered, not being the core subject of the present paper. They are presented to introduce some of the intricacies of gender issues in post-conflict societies.

2. Espinosa, M.M. & Useche, H. 2002. *Abriendo caminos: historias de mujeres*. Bogotá: FUNDAC.

3. These queries will remain unexamined, not being the subject matter of the presentation. They are illustrated to give a sense of the multiple facets of gender issues in social development. This topic has been researched in Pezzotti, M. 2002. *Central American Women's Empowerment. Notes for International Development Agencies*, UNIFEM, (Spanish).

4. Further analysis of the process of integration of gender issues into the UN can be found in Pezzotti, M. 2002. Socio-institutional study of the United Nations system in Central America from a gender perspective, UNIFEM, (Spanish).

5. The focus of the presentation is on the challenges and dilemmas attached to the mainstreaming of a gender equality approach into peace building operations. Gender balance in peacekeeping missions is a related, yet separate, subject that will not be dealt with in this paper.

6. Equality is not a synonym for anti-discrimination. It is not equality *de jure* either, meaning that all gender-based obstacles in legislation are removed. Equality must be considered as a positive entitlement, or equality *de facto*, related to women's and men's rights to diversity and difference. It also implies that women and men are free individuals and that the relations between them evolve constantly. For these reasons, the concept cannot be simplified and reduced to the categories of male and female.

7. The author regrets the impossibility of entering into an in-depth examination, and reasoned comparison, of situations observed in her field work in Mexico-Chiapas, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Kosovo and East Timor, due to the length limitations of the article. As far as Kosovo is concerned, see the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Implementation Plan of UNSCR 1325 for 2004-2005, where the gender concerns incorporated in the Standards for Kosovo (2003) and the Standards Implementation Plan (2004) are crossed with the provisions of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security.

NJUNGA MULIKITA

Small Arms Proliferation

A Major Challenge for Post-conflict Peace Building in Africa

P ost-conflict peace building is a commonly used phrase in Africa in the first decade of the 21st century. Post-conflict peace building encompasses actions to identify and support structures that will help to strengthen and solidify peace, in order to avoid a relapse into conflict and create the conditions for sustaining peace in wartorn societies. The objective of peace building is to re-build 'failed states' in the hope of preventing the recurrence of conflict. Of necessity, post-conflict reconstruction incorporates wider concerns beyond re-establishing peace and security. It requires a stronger development perspective linking political reconstruction, social reconciliation and economic development. Much of the debate on conceptualising the links between relief, rehabilitation and development occurred in the hope of placing these discrete stages in a continuum to be matched by a continuum of United Nations (UN) interventions.[1]

In reality, however, there is no simple continuum. Rather, these spheres of activity significantly overlap, requiring coordination of UN agencies and entities. UN involvement in post-conflict peace building has been premised on the integration of three interrelated functions: peacemaking through essentially political mediation and election observation; peacekeeping through monitoring and verification; and peace building through the promotion of institutional reform and state modernisation. UN engagement can be segmented conceptually, although hardly in practice, into two phases: the first one focusing on the *attainment* of peace and the second on the *consolidation* of peace.

The holding of democratic elections often marks the transition from 'first' to 'second generation' UN involvement. Thus, whereas 'first generation' UN involvement

has centred on peacemaking and peacekeeping and primarily involves UN peace and security mechanisms and structures, 'second generation' engagement centres on peace building and post-conflict reconstruction and requires the active involvement of UN development assistance institutions.

Specific elements of post-conflict peace building

For post-conflict peace building to be set on an irrevocable course, the following six components must be seriously considered. They are:

1 'Security first': without security progress on the other components will not be attainable;
2 Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants;
3 Repatriation and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons;
4 Rule of law and respect for human rights;
5 Democratisation; and
6 Socio-economic development.[2]

Post-conflict peace building at UN headquarters

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) always has a central role to play in post-conflict peace building. It is responsible for formulating practicable mandates as well as mobilising international support and resources for peace building missions. Moreover, UNSC debates and resolutions can guide the development of post-conflict peace building doctrine. For instance, in a presidential statement in 1998, the UNSC recognised the value of incorporating peace building elements in mandates of UN peacekeeping deployments as well as the need for close cooperation and dialogue between the various bodes of the UN system; it also drew attention to the importance of improving such cooperation.

> *'First generation' UN involvement has centred on peacemaking and peacekeeping and primarily involves UN peace and security mechanisms and structures, 'second generation' engagement centres on peace building and post-conflict reconstruction*

Post-conflict peace building at field level

The Secretary General often sends a Special Representative (SRSG) to head offices that undertake peace-building activities. Under Secretary General for UN Department of Political Affairs (UNDPA) Kieran Prendergast says:

> each representative faces a unique set of problems and has to find unique solutions to dealing with them.

In some countries all the factions welcome the UN presence while in others, the UN has to tread carefully not to be perceived as being one sided or interfering. The SRSG is often blamed for failures and can rarely take credit for the successes.[3]

The role of the SRSG is essentially to work alongside UN agencies in the field division of labour and ensure effective coordination and coherence among UN entities.

Developmental implications of small arms availability and use

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as adopted by the UN Millennium Summit of September 2000 offer a framework or road map of 'developmental milestones' whose implementation can stabilise countries coming out of conflict and place them on the path to recovery. However, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in a post-conflict country or region can fuel an atmosphere of insecurity and instability which may scare off the very investments into sustainable human development which are so critically necessary to promoting sustainable reconciliation and recovery.

The MDGs as enunciated in 2000 are the following:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- Achieve universal primary education;
- Promote gender equality and empower women;
- Reduce child mortality;
- Improve maternal health;
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- Ensure environmental sustainability; and
- Develop a global partnership for development.

Poverty and Hunger Eradication

- Over 20 of the 34 lowest ranking countries on the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's) Human Development Index are severely affected by recent or current conflicts.

- The poorest countries and those most vulnerable to violence after wars are located in sub-Saharan Africa, where conflict and violence associated with small arms are widespread.

- Countries severely affected by violence and conflict tend to find it particularly hard to attract the external investment that is essential for eradicating poverty in many countries.

Educational Provision

- The availability of small arms makes it feasible for armed groups to use children as soldiers: even a ten-year-old can use an assault rifle to devastating effect.
- At any one time in recent years, it is estimated that some 300 000 child soldiers have been fighting alongside adults in conflicts.
- Recruitment into rebel groups either as fighters or associates impacts negatively on the educational opportunities of such children, a situation that reintegration programmes often fail to address adequately.
- After conflict, investment in schools and educational provision tends to be concentrated in areas where risks of armed violence are relatively low.
- Insecurity reduces the possibility for children walking to and from school. Fears of rape by armed men further endanger girls' education.

Health Provision

- Strain is placed on health services by small arms related injuries.
- Conflict and violent crime exacerbated by SALW (spell out) use in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, have contributed to high HIV infection rates.
- Wars disrupt prevention programmes and blood screening, reduce access to clean water and sanitation, and are associated with large-scale movements of infected combatants and displaced people.
- In Africa, armed rape and prostitution have been major factors in spreading HIV/Aids in conflict and post-conflict countries.

Gender Equality & Empowerment of Women

- Sexual violence at gunpoint is a particular risk for women.
- Violence against women by armed groups is a major problem in refugee camps, as it is in all regions suffering conflict or high levels of societal violence.
- Death of partners and sons tends to have major effects of women's economic and social standing.
- Women are particularly affected in relation to caring responsibilities by injuries and by the loss of wider social and economic provisions associated with conflict and violence.

Environmental Sustainability

- Small arms availability and use directly impacts on environmental sustainability through hunting and poaching.
- SALW facilitate the slaughter of elephant herds by poachers engaged in illicit ivory trading, and of gorillas for meat.
- Access to highly lethal small arms intensifies the problems of enforcement of hunting laws: police are frequently out-gunned.[4]

Modalities to curb the proliferation of small arms in post-conflict countries and regions

International and regional approaches

In situations where borders are porous and states are weak, it is easy for small arms to be trafficked from one conflict to be used in another conflict. The regionalisation of small arms proliferation in the conflicts that have enveloped the Great Lakes region, Mano River Union (MRU) countries and Cote d'Ivoire provide ample evidence of this reality. Disarmament measures can only succeed if they are backed by regional commitments to control cross-border traffic. Single states are usually too vulnerable to go it alone. National programmes should be anchored in regional undertakings.

The political will to promote transparency in fighting the illicit flows of small arms has been expressed through the following instruments:

    i)   An Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) moratorium on the manufacture, import, and export of small arms and light weapons, 1998;

ii) Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) programme of activities for implementation of the UN Plan of Action (UNPoA) in the Central African sub-region in May 2003;

iii) Nairobi Declaration on the proliferation of small arms in the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa and Nairobi Protocol for the prevention, control and reduction of small arms and light weapons in the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa;

iv) The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on fire arms, ammunition and other related materials of 2001; and

v) The Bamako Declaration on an African common position on the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects of December 2000.

The role of the UN

In Mali, the UN Resident Coordinator who is also the UNDP Resident Representative was *de-facto* authorised to coordinate what became a comprehensive strategy for peace building. The case is unique. Resident Coordinators appointed by the Secretary General but working within the UNDP structures formally operate in the context of UNDP's Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) with the host country. The explanation goes back to UN involvement in Nicaragua, where small arms posed a significant threat to national stability. The UN Secretary General became an advocate of the view that programmes of internal conflict prevention should include measures to control illicit flows of arms, and emphasised this point in communications with African leaders. As a result, the President of Mali asked him for advice on how to tackle this problem in Mali and West Africa more generally, upon which UN advisory missions were dispatched.

Since the host country seized the initiative and asked the UN to involve itself in security to effectively facilitate peace building in Mali, in order to be operational, this had to be the responsibility of the UN Resident Coordinator. Building on the success of Mali's peace building paradigm, UNDP's Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) has provided much needed capacity for implementation of the ECOWAS moratorium on the manufacture, import, and export of small arms and light weapons.

The role of development partners and civil society organisations

Implementation of regional regimes to control illicit

flows of small arms and associated measures are critically dependent on donor support. Donors will need to support measures such as the border controls as envisaged in the Mano River Union's 15th Protocol to curb trans-border small arms flows in the MRU basin and Cote d'Ivoire. This is an area in which sub-regional borders such as ECOWAS, SADC, ECCAS, and MRU need to engage the 'Wassenar countries' in a serious and productive dialogue so that restrictive measures are enforced from the supplier end of the equation.

Inspired by the anti-personnel land mines campaign, a great many non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations are now turning their attention to problems posed by small arms. A combination of NGOs, civil society organisations (CSOs) and like-minded governments and regional organisations can score some encouraging successes.

Conclusion

The unrestrained proliferation of small arms in Africa may put into jeopardy post-conflict reconciliation processes and plunge countries and regions coming out of conflict into more violent paroxysms. Shadowy groups can also use arms to deprive innocent citizens of property and life. A post-conflict society that cannot guarantee basic human security and safety for its citizens cannot generate the investor confidence that is absolutely vital to facilitate implementation of the MDGs.

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Endnotes

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THOMAS JAYE   COMMENTARY

Understanding the Conflict in

Côte d'Ivoire

Once again the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has gained international attention and this time round the international community of states are promising tougher actions against the belligerent forces including the government of President Laurent Gbagbo unless they comply with demands for an end to the violence in the West African state. The conflict in Côte d'Ivoire started as an army mutiny on 19 September 2002 but it has since degenerated into an armed conflict engulfing the entire country, dividing it into the so-called Muslim North and Christian South. So far all efforts aimed at bringing the conflict to an end have proved futile and recent events illustrate that the war is far from over and that it may take a long time to resolve.

This short piece of work attempts to achieve three main objectives. First, to provide a sort of nuanced understanding of the complex origins of the conflict; second, to provide a capsule analysis of the weaknesses of generic models of conflict management as they relate to the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire: and finally, to highlight the regional implications of the conflict and suggest a way forward.

Origins

Much has been written about the origins of the conflict and so there is no need to dwell on its history. Though some writers have pointed to *Ivoirité* (Ivorianness or Ivorian persona) as its origin, I suggest this only became politically relevant during time of economic crisis. Like other developing countries, the economy of the country has been highly export-oriented. Like elsewhere, the country's export-oriented agriculture economy always demanded migrant labour and thus as for most Francophone West African countries, this served as a buffer for their weak economies. One country whose people migrated to Côte d'Ivoire in droves was Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), which until 1947 was part of the former. While the agro-economy demanded migrant labourers, President Felix Houphouet-Boigny encouraged and enjoyed its political purpose: to galvanise political loyalty and support in face of crisis. Consequently, Boigny was prepared to put foreigners in high offices for this purpose.

Significantly, there are a number of other factors that attracted migrant labourers to the country. These included desertification in countries such as Mali,

Burkina Faso and Niger, and constant regime change and political instability in other parts of West Africa.

In times of economic prosperity, *Ivoirité* was never an issue but when the country was gripped by economic crisis and an associated high unemployment rate, it became relevant. The economic crisis in the country was largely influenced by its relationship to the global capitalist economy: as a supplier of cheap labour and raw materials. Therefore, the decline in the demand for its agro-products on the world markets and the oil crisis of the 1970s forced the country to borrow heavily, and consequently, it faced mounting debts, which consumed a large part of its gross national product (GNP). The crisis led to increasing youth unemployment and a need for redundancy in the agricultural sector. Moreover, by the late 1990s, there were more migrant labourers in the economy than local people. However, due to the economic crisis the country could no longer employ migrant labourers.

While the country was going through this crisis, there was also a demand for political liberalisation in the form of multi-partyism and democratisation. As is the case, such changes brought to the forefront issues of immigration and political representation. The denial of Alassane Ouattara the right to contest the presidential elections can be understood from this perspective. This is how *Ivoirité* became a major tool for political exclusion, something that most people from the north could not countenance nor condone. The politics of *Ivoirité* can therefore be seen as a product of economic decline.

It took 14 years to bring Liberia to where it is now and it could take Côte d'Ivoire more than this depending on how the conflict dynamics is addressed by the mediators

Before going to the next section of this paper, maybe the point should be made that President Gbagbo did not initiate *Ivoirité*; rather it was Konan Bedie who used it as a political tool, knowing full well that the economic hardship in the country would make *Ivoirité* appealing and attractive to the vast majority of those who see themselves as real Ivorians. If there is any problem with President Gbagbo, then it is the fact that he has poorly managed *Ivoirité* and may have used it for short-term political gain.

Marcoussis and the management of the Ivorian conflict

Immediately after the outbreak of the conflict on 19 September 2002, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) initiated diplomatic efforts and even intervened militarily through a modest peacekeeping force, but these efforts gained no tangible results. In addition, the French interposed their troops between the government and rebel forces. As war intensified, a peace conference in Paris culminated in the Lina Marcoussis Agreement. Like previous efforts, Marcoussis was based on the premise that the conflict was about the struggle for political power and citizenship. Consequently, it put in place a power-sharing government and urged that the issue of citizenship be resolved constitutionally.

So far Marcoussis has not achieved any of these objectives, perhaps because it embodies a typical example of generic conflict management models. Such a model was used in Sierra Leone and Liberia and so was mechanically employed in the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, one of the factors that explains the relative success that has been achieved is the heavy presence of United Nations (UN) troops and personnel; something that is lacking in Côte d'Ivoire. This is something that UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan, has recently called for when he talked about the need to send in more troops to strengthen the 10 000 UN and French troops already in the country.

There is certainly a failure to realise that after the first gun shot, armed conflicts have the tendency to spawn new problems. In Côte d'Ivoire, the conflict has created new problems such as economic dislocation, ethnic and regional hatred, state collapse and a break down in law and order, a new and intensified sense of *them* versus *us* (*Ivoirité*) and associated xenophobia, a crisis of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), the destruction of infrastructure and the massive number of fighters. One of the challenges is the disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and rehabilitation of these fighters, as Sierra Leone and Liberia have taught us.

In light of the above, the signing of an agreement will need to be accompanied by broader security guarantees for the vast majority of the people in the country, including addressing the issue of transitional justice through political (reconciliation) or legal (justice) means or a combination of both.

One of the major problems with generic models of conflict management is that they place the emphasis on appeasement and are highly influenced by the whims, caprices, demands and qualms of the belligerent forces rather than a sober and balanced analysis of the conflict by experts who are well versed in the issues.

One troubling development is the killing of French troops by President Gbagbo supporters and the consequent

Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo (L) welcomes South African President Thabo Mbeki (R) at the Presidential Palace, Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

retaliation by the French, which led to the total destruction of the Ivorian air force. As result of this incident, the French have become a party to the conflict, which hampers their mediation role.

African Union sends in South African President Thabo Mbeki

As a result of the violation of the ceasefire agreement in December 2004, the AU was forced to intervene diplomatically by asking President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to mediate the conflict. At the recently held AU Peace and Security Council meeting in Libreville, Gabon, the AU has gone further to request the UN to postpone a second round of sanctions against Côte d'Ivoire. In their view, this will give President Mbeki time to mediate the conflict. The UN has willingly complied with this request. In addition, the AU supports the idea of a referendum on the issue of citizenship before the scheduled elections of October 2005.

This would decide the fate of Ouattara in the coming elections in terms of whether he is eligible or not.

The AU position seems untenable to the G7, which comprises the armed factions and opposition political parties, who feel strongly that their interests have been betrayed. They do not want any referendum and argue that parliament had already approved a reform bill, which allows anyone with at least one Ivorian parent to contest the elections. One fear among them is that a referendum presupposes that they be disarmed, which they think is suicidal given the fact that they are suspicious that President Gbagbo is using this ceasefire period to arm for attack.

Certainly, there is an impasse that needs to be broken and it is only the intervention of bodies such as the AU that could help restore some sense of commitment to the peace process. However, the demands of President Gbagbo and the rebels and opposition political parties

French soldiers from the 43rd infantry marine battalion patrol the streets in Abidjan.

seem irreconcilable at the moment. The boycott by the rebels of the cabinet in Yamoussoukro at which President Mbeki was guest of honour speaks volumes. Contrary to the agreement to disarm effective as of 15 January 2005, there are indications that the rebels are not prepared to do so because of mistrust between them and President Gbagbo's forces. These are troubling signs indicating that the resolution of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire will not come soon.

Will President Mbeki succeed in his efforts? Yes, it is possible that he will, but he will need to spend a lot of time and energy on this conflict. A lot also depends on cooperation from ECOWAS, as the regional body that took the first initiative to negotiate peace in the country. The regional hegemony, Nigeria, will also need to be brought on board. Perhaps, the classical problems with regional intervention are manifesting themselves in Côte d'Ivoire. The Liberian and Sierra Leonean experiences have taught us that on the one hand, bodies such as ECOWAS have advantages when they intervene because of their proximity to the conflict area they can easily deploy troops; and it feels the negative security effects of

the conflict, including trans-border problems like the flow of arms and refugee. On the other hand, its proximity to the conflict can also be negative in that individual countries have interests in such conflicts and because of historical factors the intervention of certain countries may exacerbate the conflict. In this light, it is best to bring in an outside mediator. This may have been the thinking of the AU when it asked President Mbeki to intervene, but he will certainly need the support of neighbouring states in to succeed. It took 14 years to bring Liberia to where it is now and it could take Côte d'Ivoire more than this depending on how the conflict dynamics is addressed by the mediators.

Regional implications and the way forward

From day one, the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has always had a regional dimension. The accusation that Blaise Compoare and Liberia's former President Charles Taylor have been supporters of the rebels aside, by the time of the outbreak of the war, more than 20 per cent of the population comprised people from Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Niger, Benin, Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana and

others. Burkinabes were in the majority with more than two million people and thus remittances from them helped to sustain the Burkinabe economy. This is the same story for people from other countries with the exception of Liberians who were there as refugees.

As the bread basket of the region, the war in Côte d'Ivoire has had an adverse effect on its neighbouring economies. The flow of refugees into neighbouring states such as Liberia, which is just emerging from conflict itself, has also had a negative effect. The war is attractive to ex-fighters, who will find it more lucrative to fight there than to live idle lives in Liberia. Currently, only 26 000 of the 102 193 ex-fighters reportedly disarmed and demobilised in Liberia can access vocational training and formal educational opportunities.

The recently imposed arms embargo will have an effect on President Gbagbo, but only to an extent. However, by itself, the embargo is not enforceable given the country's porous borders and the flow of arms in the region from the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Guinea and other countries in the region have huge arsenals of arms and, with or without the UN arms embargo, Côte d' Ivoire could still receive arms.

What then is the way forward? It is very difficult to suggest any solution but what is required is to critically assess and analyse the conflict more carefully in order identify the factors that drive it. Thus, as much as power-sharing and citizenship are crucial, it is important to identify the new problems spawned by the conflict. While securing peace and stability is priority, it is also important to hold a conference of the belligerent forces concomitantly with a meeting of Ivorian and non-Ivorian experts to examine the complexities of the conflict to suggest the way forward. Such a meeting of experts would provide the nuanced understanding of the complexities of the conflict needed, and thus help to find a solution to it.

Some would argue that the way forward is to hold elections in October 2005. Clearly, holding elections is an inevitable exercise, but by itself, elections can never bring peace to Côte d'Ivoire. Elections are an institutional pillar of democratic politics, but it cannot be equated with democracy. At least his much we learn from Liberia and elsewhere. Thus what is important is the creation of an enabling environment for democratic politics, which will be inclusive and address the problems of poverty by bringing the state back in, as opposed to rolling it back. What use are elections when people will continue to live in abject poverty; have no access to health care, education and other basic necessities? Elections must be seen as a strategy; as part and parcel of a comprehensive and long-term security programme aimed at resolving the underlying causes of conflict. It must not be seen as an end itself.

One practical move by President Mbeki might be to assess the validity of the accusations against Côte d'Ivoire's neighbours that they were meddling in the conflict by supplying arms and fighters. Let us be mindful of the fact that President Gbagbo accused Liberia's former President, Charles Taylor, and his erstwhile friend Blaise Compoare of aiding and abetting the rebels in flagrant violation of existing ECOWAS regional security norms. These two individuals were also involved in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In retaliation, President Gbagbo is believed to have supported the incursion of the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) into Liberia. Rumours abound that idle Liberian fighters who recently completed the DD phase of the disarmament, demobilise and reintegration (DDR) programme in Liberia are potential recruits of President Gbagbo and the rebel New Forces. Are there other sources of arms and support to the belligerent forces? Pressure must be brought on neighbouring states such as Burkina Faso and others, to keep a distance from the conflict or even prevail upon the rebels to allow peace in the country. Similarly, the friends of President Gbagbo need to also prevail upon him in the same spirit.

What is important is the creation of an enabling environment for democratic politics, which will be inclusive and address the problems of poverty by bringing the state back in, as opposed to rolling it back

Finally, the international community of states will need to increase the pressure on Côte d'Ivoire by increasing the number of troops, addressing the issue of the supply of arms (as difficult as it will be given the porous borders of the country), punishing countries and groups that are fuelling the conflict, and taking other appropriate measures aimed at resolving the conflict. One point is that no matter what efforts the international community make, the onus is on the Ivorian stakeholders to re-commit themselves to the peace process for ordinary Ivorians to live peacefully.

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AFP/TOUCHLINE PHOTO

COMMENTARY   **JAMILA EL ABDELLAOUI**

An Update on
Burundi's
Fragile Peace Process

Hope for peace in Burundi, a country affected by civil war since 1993, returned when the Transitional Government of Burundi (TGoB) signed a ceasefire agreement with the *Conseil National pour la Defense de la Démocratie-Forces pour la Defense de la Démocratie* (CNDD-FDD) of Pierre Nkurunziza, on 16 November 2003. The CNDD-FDD was the third armed movement, after the Arusha Accords, to sign a ceasefire with the government. This left the *Forces Nationales de Liberation* (FNL) of Agathon Rwasa as the only non-signatory to an agreement with the TGoB.

The months following the signing of the agreement with the CNDD-FDD, however, did not display significant progress in implementing the 2000 Arusha Accords as well as the subsequent ceasefire agreements. The challenges with the implementation even resulted, in May 2004, in the withdrawal of members of the CNDD-FDD from the positions they held in government institutions, as they claimed that the TGoB was delaying the implementation of the agreement signed on 16 November 2003.[1]

However, under the auspices of the regional initiative, the facilitation team and the international community, discussions regarding the implementation of the agreements and the issue of power-sharing were accelerated in June 2004. One of the reasons for this push was the fact that Burundi's transitional period was due to come to an end on 31 October 2004. Even though the parties were eventually unable to respect the timetable, considerable progress has nevertheless been made in moving Burundi's fragile peace process forward.

This article provides a brief overview on the major developments towards peace in Burundi by focusing on three important issues, namely preparations for elections, the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process, and the establishment of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Preparations for elections

At the time of writing, the people of Burundi had just been informed that 28 February 2005 was the date on which they will decide whether the current interim

constitution would become the new constitution of Burundi. The constitutional referendum has been postponed several times[2] and the delay is said to have been caused by challenges in preparations for a political event of this nature. For example, there were complaints regarding irregularities in voter lists.[3] These challenges are understandable, however, for a country that has not hold elections since 1993.

The delay in the holding of the constitutional referendum was also attributed to the uncertainties around the interim constitution. For instance, the Burundian President Domitien Ndayizeye initiated some amendments to the interim constitution as adopted by parliament. One of the amendments was intended to allow President Ndayizeye to stand for elections. This proposal was made despite the fact that in terms of the Arusha Accords and the interim constitution the presidents during the country's three-year transitional phase were ineligible to stand for office in the first elections during the post-transitional period.[4] Another proposed amendment was for the population to directly vote for the president. According to the interim constitution, the president was to elected by the National Assembly and the Senate after the first election. For elections held after this post-transitional period, the president would be elected directly by the population.[5]

It was not the first time that the issue of the constitution caused a stalemate resulting in a delay in the holding of the referendum. As stipulated in the Arusha Accords, the constitutional referendum and the elections were scheduled to take place by the end of the transitional period on 31 October 2004. The initial delay can partly be explained by a lack of consensus between the parties involved on the issue of power sharing and the new constitution.

This disagreement on certain issues intensified in August 2004 in Pretoria, where ten predominantly 'Tutsi' political parties[6] refused to sign the Pretoria Protocol, which determined the issue of power sharing and the orientation of the new constitution. The 'Tutsi' parties insisted on revisions to the Arusha Agreement that would ensure *their* minority rights. Amongst other things, the 'Tutsi' parties requested that the positions in the post-transitional government reserved for Tutsis should be allocated to members of the 'Tutsi' parties. However, other parties rejected this proposal, claiming that a position could be occupied by a Tutsi without considering the political party that the person is affiliated to.

Nevertheless, the transitional government submitted a post-transition constitution, based on the Arusha Agreement and the Pretoria Protocol, to Parliament. The draft was adopted by Parliament on 15 September 2004 in the absence of the ten 'Tutsi' parties. On 20 October, Parliament adopted the draft as an interim constitution to be subjected to a referendum, again in the absence of the ten 'Tutsi' parties. Furthermore, on 31 August, Parliament established a National Independent Electoral Commission (known by its French acronym CENI) responsible for organising elections.

Throughout this period, the 'Tutsi' parties continued to boycott the political process. This and the already existing uncertainties regarding elections in the country resulted in a very tense political environment during the months of September, October and November 2004. This was noticed by the population, still recovering from the massacre of 152 Congolese refugees at a transit camp in Gatumba in August 2004. At the beginning of October, it was reported that hundreds of Burundians in the north of the country had fled to Rwanda following rumours of imminent violence should the elections not take place as scheduled.[7]

On 16 October 2004, the CENI published a new timetable, indicating that the referendum on the constitution would take place on 26 November 2004; *colline* elections on 9 February 2005; communal elections on 23 February 2005; legislative elections on 9 March 2005; and elections for the senate on 23 March 2005. Parliament would elect the President on 22 April 2005. The elections thus needed to be postponed, but the new timetable was accepted by the TGoB and region. The region and the international community continued to put pressure on the ten opposing 'Tutsi' parties and made it clear that their proposals would not be considered. This eventually forced nine of the ten 'Tutsi' parties[8] to drop their objections to the interim constitution at the end of October.

Nonetheless, some prominent political leaders continued to call for a popular debate on the interim constitution. Among these leaders was Vice-President Alphonse Kadege, who is a member of the *Union pour le Progrès National* (UPRONA). On 10 November, under a provision in the interim constitution, the president dismissed Kadege due to "his failure to fulfill his primary function of assisting the President".[9] The dismissal did not set off serious opposition by UPRONA since it immediately endorsed the nomination of the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Mr. Ngenzebuhoro,

Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration is one of the key components to ensure Burundi's long-awaited transition from war to peace

Registration by polling officers ahead of the vote for the December 2004 elections.

as Kadege's successor, and this was subsequently approved by Parliament.

The pressure that was put on all parties by the region and the international community ended the discussions on the new constitution and allowed the electoral process to start. The current delay shows the need for continued pressure on the parties involved to keep the crucial process of organising elections moving. Most importantly, however, pressure must be put on the parties to also adopt a new electoral code and a communal law as soon as possible. While the 1993 legislation on elections could be used to hold a referendum in the absence of any updated law, the elections that follow cannot be held without the adoption of a new electoral code.

Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration

A development that is crucial in any peace building process is the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants. It is hard for any peace process to succeed in the presence of armed movements. DDR is therefore one of the key components to ensure Burundi's long-awaited transition from war to peace.

The DDR process in Burundi is managed by the National Commission for Demobilisation, Reinsertion and Reintegration (NCDRR) that was created on 28 August 2003 by a presidential decree. Its executive secretary, created by the presidential decree as well, is charged with the implementation of the National Demobilisation, Reinsertion and Reintegration Programme (NDRRP).

The executive secretary implements the NDRRP in close collaboration with several organizations. Firstly, the United Nations Operation in Burundi (known by its French acronym, ONUB) has assumed responsibility for overseeing disarmament and providing security during the process. It will also coordinate the reform of the security sector. The disarmament and the verification of the status of ex-combatants will be observed by Joint Liaison Teams of the Joint Ceasefire Commission. The World Food Programme will be responsible for providing food assistance to ex-combatants in demobilisation centres. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in collaboration with the National Structure for Child Soldiers of the TGoB, will be concerned with the demobilisation and reintegration of the thousands of child soldiers.

The NDRRP is based on the provisions of the Arusha

Accords and the subsequent ceasefire agreements that were signed between the transitional government of Burundi and several armed political parties and movements. Most notable is the ceasefire agreement of 16 November 2003 that was signed with the CNDD-FDD of Nkurunziza.

These agreements refer to reform of the security sector, consisting of the formation of a new national defence force (NDF) and a new national police (NP) force. Both forces will consist of soldiers from the current Burundian Armed Forces (known by the French acronym, FAB) and soldiers of other armed movements.

The NDRRP is expected to be a five-year process divided into two phases. During the first phase, some of the soldiers of the FAB and the armed movements will be demobilised, while the remaining soldiers of both factions would form the new NDF. It is estimated that the NDF will have the strength of 66 000 members. During the second phase of the NDRRP, which will take place between 2005 and 2008, the strength of the NDF would be brought down progressively to 25 000 soldiers.[10]

Every ex-combatant participating in the NDRRP would undergo through three stages. First, the ex-combatant would be transferred to one of three demobilisation centres, where they would participate in a ten-day programme. This programme consists of an interview on the person's social situation, a medical examination, and a three-day training course on issues such as economic opportunities, health and HIV/AIDS, peace and reconciliation and so forth.

After the ten-day programme, the ex-combatants would be officially demobilised and would receive a demobilised card as proof. The ex-combatants would also receive the first tranche of their cash allowance, to cover their immediate needs upon their arrival in their respective communities. Each ex-combatant is furthermore expected to present him or herself at one of the offices established in each province within 30 days after leaving the demobilisation centre.

The second stage of the NDRRP is reinsertion, which refers to financial support to the ex-combatant. Each demobilised person is to receive their remaining cash allowances in three tranches over nine months following their departure from the demobilisation centre. The amounts for the cash allowances are based on the rank of the ex-combatant.

Thirdly, to assist with the reintegration of the
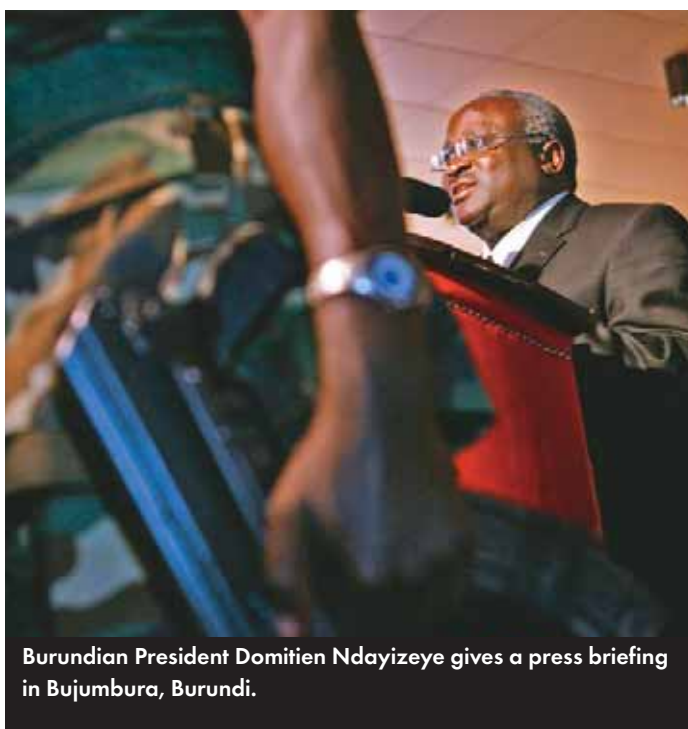
Burundian President Domitien Ndayizeye gives a press briefing in Bujumbura, Burundi.

ex-combatant into civilian life, the NDRRP would organise a range of reintegration projects such as construction work, provision of tools and seeds, and professional education.[11]

The process in Burundi officially started on 2 December 2004. The commencement of this process has made it possible for several former armed parties and movements to be registered officially as political parties.[12] With the postponement of the elections, these newly established political parties have some more time to undertake their election campaigns, which will hopefully result in their continued commitment to the elections and the peace process.

In light of the upcoming elections in the country, it is also crucial that this process is completed as soon as possible to ensure an environment in which every Burundian can freely vote. Moreover, the process allows for the subsequent security sector reform that should ideally be initiated before the elections to prevent this process from being unduly influenced by the result of the elections.

Establishment of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission

On 27 December 2004, President Ndayizeye signed a law allowing for the creation of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission (NTRC). The Commission

will aim at providing justice to those persons whose basic human rights were violated during the violence that occurred in the country since its independence in 1962.

The Commission will have 25 members who are appointed by the president in consultation with the offices of the National Assembly and the Senate. The mandate of the NTRC is for two years, with a possible extension of one year or longer. Amongst others, the Commission is charged with the following:

- establishing the truth as to the acts of violence committed in Burundi since the country's independence on 1 July 1962;
- identifying the perpetrators and victims; proposing political or social measures aiming at promoting national reconciliation; and
- clarifying Burundian history as far back as possible in order to inform the people of Burundi on the history of their country.[13]

The long-awaited establishment of the NTRC is another crucial component in Burundi's peace process. The Commission will assist the people of Burundi to finally define the history of the country and this is crucial for them to decide on its future. Addressing the injustices that have been inflicted on the Burundi people for decades through the NTRC will furthermore allow them to forgive and to reconcile, which is a fundamental aspect of peacebuilding.

However, the TGoB has to make an effort to convince the Burundi people that this Commission is independent and that it is not in the hands of one of the major political players. The success of the Commission partly depends on the participation of the population, which therefore needs to have faith in it. Appointing the members as soon as possible and commencing their duties before the elections takes place would thus be important.

Conclusion

As the abovementioned developments indicate, Burundi's peace process is taking shape. Now, more than ever, the country has a realistic chance to return to a stable peace. Despite the challenges, the three signatories to a ceasefire agreement with the TGoB have remained within the process. The only remaining rebel movement in the country, the FNL, has reportedly been severely weakened due to operations against the movement undertaken jointly by the FAB and the CNDD-FDD. The presence of the movement can therefore no longer be used as a legitimate reason to stall the peace process.

Furthermore, the region and international community have once more proved their commitment to the peace process in the country. At this moment, the most crucial components to return to peace are present and only require a correct and rapid implementation by the parties involved.

The final steps towards a stable peace in the country can only succeed, however, if the Burundians address the continuing mistrust that exists among the parties, stop spreading fear, and focus on the country's future, rather than on individual interests. As in any other post-conflict situation, challenges remain such as the return of refugees, their reintegration into their respective communities, and the recovery of the country's economy. The international community also has a role to play in this process and this shows the need for its continued involvement in Burundi for some time to come.

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Endnotes

1   IRIN, 2004. Burundi: Government accedes to ex-rebel movement's demands, 4 May. Available at: www.irinnews.org

2   The poll was initially planned for 22 October 2004, postponed to 26 November 2004, then to 22 December 2004 and was then again postponed without the announcement of a new date.

3   Reuters, 2005. Burundi: Reports of flawed voter list leaves transition floundering, 24 January. Available at: www.alertnet.org

4   Interim Constitution of Burundi, article 301.

5   *Ibid.*, article 302.

6   These are UPRONA, PARENA, ALIDE, ANADDE, MRC, PACONA, PRP, PSD, INKINZO and RADDES.

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8   PARENA, led by former Burundian President Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, continued to boycott the political process.

9   Annan, K. 2004. *Second Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Burundi*. New York: UN, p. 3.

10   Commission Nationale chargée de la Démobilisation, de la Réinsertion et de la Réintégration des ex-combattants – Secrétariat Exécutif, *Le Programme National de Démobilisation, Réinsertion et Réintégration*. 20 October 2004, p. 2.

11   *Ibid.*, p. 6.

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     Arib News, 2005. Les agréments des ex-mouvements rebelles se suivent, 12 January. Available at: www.arib.info

13   République du Burundi: Cabinet du Président, 2004. *Loi Nº018 du 27 Décembre 2004 portant Missions, Composition, Organisation et Fonctionnement de la Commission Nationale pour la Vérité et la Réconciliation*. 27 December, p. 2.

Voter Education in **Malawi**

Democracy and elections in Malawi

In 1994, Malawi became one of the later countries in Africa to embrace democracy. Until then the small country in the 'warm heart of Africa' had suffered for nearly 30 years under Kamuzu Banda with one of the most autocratic regimes on the continent. In a predominantly peaceful process, the faith communities brokered between 1992 and 1994 a transition to a multi-party democracy. The first free and democratic elections were won by the newly established United Democratic Front (UDF) of Bakili Muluzi, a former minister of the Banda regime. In 1999 he repeated his victory.

Constitutionally prevented from standing again in 2004, Muluzi nominated Bingu wa Mutharika as his hand-picked successor. Competing against four other presidential candidates, wa Mutharika won the presidential election with a mere 36 per cent of the votes. The parliamentary vote was also split, with the opposition Malawi Congress Party winning the highest number of seats (57 or 30 per cent), a further seven parties gaining representation in Parliament and 38 independents elected.

Despite considerable logistical and organisational problems[1] the 2004 elections stabilised democracy in Malawi. A smooth transition in the presidency and a much more diverse and seemingly competent Parliament are strong indicators that Malawians have embraced democracy and its principles. Malawi thus withstood the crucial

test of third elections. How much of this consolidation of democracy can be attributed to voter (and civic) education?

Voter education (VE) in contrast to civic education (CE) is usually provided only immediately before and during elections. CE is the longer-term process of strengthening democracy, not only focusing on the electoral process and voting. The impact of VE on an election can be observed using indicators such as:

- Election participation rate;
- Number of null and void votes;
- Incidents of election-related violence;
- Choice of candidates.

Set-up and logistics of voter education in Malawi

The task of providing VE should usually not be restricted to electoral commissions but should also assign an important role to political parties and civil society organisations.

In the case of Malawi, the responsibility to organise the delivery of VE rests with the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC). For the 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections, the MEC accredited 21 organisations for the provision of VE. However, out of these organisations only a handful became actually involved in VE as most of them lacked the funds to do so. The MEC tried to act as a financial broker for the accredited organisations but had only limited success due to the reluctance of most donors to provide funds directly to the MEC for VE (the

exception was the German agency, GTZ, through its Malawi-German Programme for Democracy and Decentralisation project) and organisational problems at the UNDP-managed trust fund for the elections.

The electoral commission made an effort to harmonise and standardise the provision of VE by developing a Civic and Voter Education Policy. In a number of high-level stakeholder meetings (including representatives of the major political parties) and with the help of regional experts, the MEC produced a draft policy paper. The policy paper tried to determine the role of all interested parties involved in VE, regulate their conduct, and establish a framework under which VE was to be provided. However, it remained a bit of a mystery why the policy draft paper was in the end never officially adopted and implemented. Despite not being officially recognised, the draft policy paper nevertheless served as a guide, at least for some providers of VE. The political parties were those which cared least about the policy.

The voter education service providers

From civil society, the most active organisations were the Public Affairs Committee (PAC), an inter-denominational organisation, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), the Centre for Human Rights and Reconstruction (CHRR), the Synods of the Anglican Church and the Malawi Centre for Advice, Research and Education on Rights (CARER). As these NGOs had also hoped for funding from the MEC to provide in-depth and on-going VE, their actual budgets were rather limited. Only the faith-based organsiations were able to mobilise funding through their overseas support structures. The other service providers had in many cases to provide VE in one-off approaches organised from their respective head offices.

The only service provider covering the whole country with a permanent programme of VE (and before and parallel to that with civic education) was the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE).[2] Being a joint project of the government of Malawi and the European Union, NICE had the advantage of a country-wide office structure and sufficient funding for continuous programmes. Moreover, it had a basis of approximately 10 000 volunteers through which information was disseminated and activities are facilitated. Even the MEC through its District Election Support Teams (DEST) had to rely on NICE structures when they wanted to reach the grassroots with awareness campaigns and material.

Delivery of voter education

Due to the financial bottlenecks, few organisations actually became involved in VE. Apart from NICE and to some extent the church/faith-based organisations such as PAC, CCJP and the Synods of the Anglican Churches, the other organisations failed to deliver VE on a permanent basis. The political parties failed in general to educate even their own followers as they were mostly busy concentrating on individual campaigns. The MEC tried to reach out to the electorate predominantly through radio and television spots.

Apart from the NICE project, no other organisation published any figures on its involvement in the VE exercise. Between November 2003 and May 2004, NICE conducted more than 1 400 VE activities. They centred mostly around:

- awareness raising about the elections (mobilisation);
- the technical aspects of the electoral act (how to vote);
- the issues of freedom of choice, secrecy and acceptance of the vote.

In its delivery, NICE employed a wide range of instruments ranging from 'traditional' rallies to whistle-stops at rural settlements and house-to-house visits. The project estimates that in the end more than 550 000 potential voters (ca. 10 per cent of the registered voters) were *directly* reached through its activities.

VE had to be all-inclusive and covering the entire country because:

- a large number of new voters were expected to participate in the elections;
- there is a high illiteracy rate (about 34 per cent);
- there is still still insufficient familiarity with voting (after all this was only the third general election since 1994);
- there have been numerous attempts by politicians to manipulate the voting behaviour through false information regarding the voting itself.

The latter was particularly worrisome as there were numerous incidents reported that local politicians and chiefs tried to make people believe that they could check how they voted; in other incidents voters were told the elections were not about choosing new leaders and representatives but endorsing the current government.

Voter education material

VE material was centrally developed, approved and supplied by the MEC. It consisted mainly of samples of ballot paper samples, graphic illustrations of the voting process, and a few guides. The material provided focused

Officials from the Malawi Electoral Commission count the May 2004 ballots at a polling station in Blantyre, Malawi.

to a large extent on the technical aspects of voting (how to make a cross, how many boxes to tick, and so on.) and to a lesser extent on the right to vote and the secrecy of the vote. The latter were mostly delivered by radio and television slogans and due to the limited outreach capacity of the electronic media not received everywhere.

Neither quantities nor coverage of the VE materials provided by MEC were sufficient. For an organisation like NICE, which conducted a large number of activities, it became necessary to copy the material provided by the MEC and to source additional material from other organisations. Others faced similar bottlenecks.

A number of organisations provided guide books and manuals on how to undertake VE. Of the original Malawian material, the *Ngwira Mpini* handbook of the PAC was particularly widely used. The Electoral Institute for Southern Africa (EISA) in collaboration with CHRR made available monitoring handbooks to interested parties.

Dealing with electoral conflicts

To be able to deal with inevitable election related conflicts, the MEC established so-called Multi-Party Liaison Committees (MPLCs) at assembly level. In total, 32 MPLCs were set up. They consisted of representatives

of the political parties, the District Commissioner, the police, the National Intelligence Bureau, civil society organisations (amongst them NICE) and traditional leaders. While the original idea for the MPLCs originated from the MEC, its concrete concept and all the preparatory work was provided by two projects of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The Forum for Dialogue and Peace (FORUM) developed the terms of reference and provided the training for the MPLCs, while the Malawi-German Programme for Democracy and Decentralisation (MGPDD) made available basic operational funding for those MPLCs which applied. In the end nearly all received funding from GTZ.

The major function and mandate of the MPLCs was to investigate and intervene in any conflict situation pertaining to the electoral process. Often that meant explaining to local political leaders that it was unlawful to prevent other parties from holding meetings or rallies, convincing traditional authorities that they were not to expel villagers because they supported another party than the chief himself, and investigating incidents of local political violence.

Not all MPLCs functioned well (some never got off the ground, such as the one for Lilongwe City Assembly) but in general, they contributed to a more peaceful and

AFP/TOUCHLINE PHOTO

The presidential candidate for the ruling United Democratic Front party, Bingu Wa Mutharika cast his vote.

just election than in 1999. Most international observer missions attributed the relatively few incidents of political violence to the MPLCs. As a result, the MEC has decided to keep the MPLCs in place in preparation for the pending local government elections in 2005.

Impact of voter education

In the beginning it was pointed out how to measure the impact of VE: namely, to look at the election participation rate; the number of null and void votes; incidents of election related violence; and/or the choice of candidates.

1. Election participation rate

Good VE should not just inform the electorate about the technical aspects of voting but should also motivate people to participate in the election. As such it may be

argued that VE in Malawi was insufficient and inappropriate as the official participation rate dropped from above 90 per cent in 1999 to just about 56 per cent in 2004. However, the 2004 figure is most probably heavily distorted as voter registration was plagued by substantial faults (including double registrations of people who had lost their registration cards, and hardly any de-registration of the dead) which led to an overestimation of the actual number of eligible voters. While it is difficult to gauge the real participation rate – as there are no reliable population figures available – it can be safely assumed that it was higher than the official rate. However, in absolute figures participation dropped by almost 1.4 million votes.

Given this and the fact that there was certainly a certain degree of disappointment with the economic delivery of democracy, it can be argued that VE contributed to a reasonably high voter turnout in Malawi.

2. Null and void votes

Perhaps the most direct impact of VE can be obtained from looking at the number of null and void votes. While a small percentage of voters might deliberately spoil their papers in protest, the majority of spoilt papers are the result of insufficient knowledge of how to fill them in correctly. In the 2004 election the number of null and void votes was 4 per cent in the parliamentary and 2.9 per cent in the presidential election, as compared to 4 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively in 1999.

In contrast to 1999, the number of competing parties and candidates was considerably higher in the parliamentary elections. Still the ratio of spoilt papers remained nearly the same. This seems to indicate that VE in 2004 was not worse than in 1999. The slightly higher ratio of null and void votes in the presidential election might be attributable to the fact that one of the candidates (H. Ntaba) withdraw his candidature after the ballot papers had already been printed, thus confusing some voters.

The direct impact of VE became evident by chance when one of the district officers of the NICE project in Mulanje was able to conduct VE activities in only seven out of the eight constituencies in her district. In the seven constituencies in which NICE had conducted VE activities the average number of spoilt papers was between 2 and 3 per cent of the votes cast. In the one constituency which was not covered by NICE VE activities, close to 15 per cent of the votes cast were null and void.

3. Election-related violence

Indirectly, VE can also contribute to a peaceful election.

Politicians and their followers and also voters who understand democratic elections as a peaceful competition will not resort to violence to voice their frustrations or intimidate their opponents. Successful VE will thus translate into peaceful elections.

While the 1999 elections were marred by a number of violent incidents, which culminated in anti-Muslim riots in Mzuzu, there were no such grave incidents in 2004 although the campaign period was not entirely peaceful. Even the feared so-called Young Democrats of the ruling party UDF only caused trouble in a few districts (e.g. Kasungu). Violent incidents more often occurred as a result of intra-party strife than inter-party competition.

The relatively peaceful conduct of the election has been attributed by both the EU Observer Mission and the SADC Parliamentary Forum's Observer Mission to the role played by the MPLCs. In addition, several conflict-preventing VE activities were conducted in the run-up to the elections by NICE and the FORUM project.

4. Choice of candidates

It can also be argued that the choice of political candidates is an indicator of the effectiveness of VE. If for example ethnic-regional voting patterns are diffused, imposed candidates are rejected or vote buying is condemned by the electorate, this may have been caused by effective VE.

In the 1994 and 1999 elections Malawi showed a clear ethnic-regional voting pattern. In 2004, at least in the North and partly in the South this pattern seemed to have been broken up. While the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) had previously scooped nearly all seats in North, they were only able to hold on to six (out of 31). In the South, the UDF lost its absolute dominance and won only 39 out of 85 seats compared to 76 in 1999. Only in the centre did the trend swing in the opposite direction: the MCP won 57 out of 71 seats as compared to 54 out of 66 seats in 1999.[3]

Another unique result was the strong showing of independent candidates who won 39 out of the 187 contested parliamentary seats. This and especially the diffusion of the ethnic voting pattern in the North indicates that the electorate was mature enough to make choices against the dominating political interests. Particularly, the UDF suffered due to the imposition of candidates by the party leadership. Rejected candidates stood as independents and often won.

Furthermore, the election of eight parties and a large group of Independents into parliament indicates that vote buying and voter intimidation no longer had much of an impact on voting behaviour. While this may partly be attributable to effective VE, the reasons for more mature and interest-based voting can certainly also be found in the broad and continuous provision of civic education.

Conclusion

VE for the 2004 elections in Malawi might not have been optimally organised, not sufficiently widespread and might not have satisfied the expectations of Malawian NGOs, but it proved to be effective enough to ensure peaceful and informed elections that consolidated democracy further. The impact of VE contributed to a relatively high participation in the elections and a differentiated result with clear indications of overcoming deep-rooted regional-ethnic divergences, and ensured an acceptable low number of null and void ballot papers.

Civic education is the longer-term process of strengthening democracy, not only focusing on the electoral process and voting

As a technical exercise VE had its limitations but in relation to the subsequent political results it achieved its purpose. What can be learned from the problems the 2004 VE exercise faced is that a government and its responsible agencies (in this case the MEC) must ensure that sufficient funding is available to cover the VE activities and the production of material, and that the provision of VE is not restricted to civil society only but also involves government institutions (and projects) as well as the political parties. On the positive side can be noted that standardisation and coordination of VE activities will enhance its effectiveness. And last but not least, conflict prevention measures such as the MPLCs should become standard components of any VE strategy.

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In writing this paper, the author was assisted by his colleague Gray Kalindekafe of the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE).

Endnotes

1   See the reports of various organisations and institutions observing the 2004 Malawi Elections such as the European Union, the Southern Africa Development Community Parliamentary Forum, the Commonwealth and the African Union.

2   See also www.nice-malawi.org

3   All figures for the 1994 and 1999 elections are taken from Ott, Martin, Phiri, Kings M., Patel, Nandini (eds). 2000. Malawi's Second Democratic Elections, Christian Literature Association: Blantyre . The figures for the 2004 election are based on the unofficial results issued by the MEC and calculations by NICE.

Electoral observation

"The principle of democracy is today universally recognised, but one of the greatest challenges to humankind in the new century will be the struggle to make the practice of democracy equally universal."[1]

This article looks at electoral observation as a mechanism for strengthening democratic practice. The importance of having international and domestic observers is reflected in the various instruments that have been developed by African regional institutions and organisations to measure "best" democratic practice. The African Union (AU) has also recognised the role of observers and developed draft guidelines to guide the involvement of AU observers in observing and monitoring elections in member states.

This article paints the broad context in which electoral observation takes place by looking at the role of elections in democracy, conflict and elections, the electoral authority, and the function of observers, including factors that observers need to take into account when observing elections and commenting on the electoral process. The article briefly looks at the various electoral principles and guidelines that have been developed and that provide a yardstick with which observers measure the freeness, fairness and legitimacy of elections.

Two elections are looked at in some detail, namely the 2004 Botswana parliamentary and local government elections and the 2003 presidential elections held in Somaliland. The case studies examine and illustrate the practicalities of electoral observation.

The role of elections in a democracy

While there is no single definition of democracy, there are a number of generally accepted principles that act as indicators of democracy. These include free and fair elections, accountable, open and transparent government, the protection of human rights, the rule of law, separation of powers and citizens' participation. This paper concerns itself with two particular indicators, namely free and fair elections, and citizens' participation. At the same time, a free and fair election does not take place in isolation and cannot take place in an environment that is not transparent

and open or where there are violations of human rights.

We cannot say if one or more of the generally accepted indicators is not present that an election is necessarily flawed. Similarly, this is not a checklist against which a country can tick off and then declare that it is a democracy. Elections put democracy to the test but are not in themselves the only test of democracy. Elections should be seen as a crucial part of an ongoing process of democratisation and as an important element of a sustainable democracy. Elections, as part of the democratic process, are complex and require a commitment on the part of election administrators, politicians and citizens to the fundamental principles of democracy both during and between elections.

Observing elections has become an important role in support of the democratisation process and the maintenance of universal human rights. To observe the electoral process in a country assists in evaluating and assessing the extent of the democratisation process.

There are several international instruments that provide citizens with the opportunity to freely choose their representatives at all levels of government, including national, provincial, regional or local level. These include:

- The African Charter of Human and People's Rights;
- The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (Arusha, 1990);
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A(III), 10 December 1948, Article 21.

With the restructuring of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) in 2001 and the initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the commitment of African states to democratisation and good governance, elections and democratic governance, has taken centre stage. As Matlosa notes, "all these commitments and protocols for strengthening democratic governance in Africa have been concretised by the adoption of a political culture encompassing the holding of regular multiparty elections by African states"[2]. The OAU/AU adopted a Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa during the 2002 Inaugural Summit of the African Union. This declaration states:

- Democratic elections are the basis of authority of any representative government;

- Regular elections constitute a key element of the democratisation process and therefore are essential ingredients for good governance, the rule of law, and the maintenance and promotion of peace, security, stability and development;
- The holding of democratic elections is an important dimension in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

The declaration also spells out how democratic elections should be conducted:

- freely and fairly;
- under democratic constitutions and in compliance with supportive legal instruments;
- under a system of separation of powers that ensures, in particular, the independence of the judiciary;
- at regular intervals, as provided for in national constitutions;
- by impartial, all-inclusive, competent and accountable electoral institutions staffed by well-trained personnel and equipped with adequate logistical support.[3]

An election implies that all citizens of voting age, irrespective of ethnic origin, race, class, creed, religion, status or gender, have the unhindered right to register as a voter, participate freely in the election campaign, and to make a voluntary choice when casting their vote in secrecy.[4] Of course, each country legislates for restrictions to illegibility, such as criminal records or mental status.

Elections and conflict

An important component of a democracy is that it enables a wide range of beliefs and ideas. Democratic representation through the electoral process facilitates an environment in which opposing opinions and grievances can be dealt with in a peaceful way. Karume notes that "elections are currently perceived as the most crucial process for the alternation of power" and that "they are the only process responsible for distributing political power within a society".[5]

An election implies that all citizens of voting age have an unhindered right to register as a voter...and to make a voluntary choice when casting their vote in secrecy

Elections, therefore, create a platform where fears of "political marginalisation; party retaliation or even counter-democratic backlash"[6] can grow. Election-related conflict can be a major threat to political stability:

"In the heat of an election campaign there is a thin dividing line between persuasion and duress."[7] Various mechanisms can be put in place to find agreement on exactly where this line can be drawn. This includes codes of conduct for political parties, observers, the media and other role-players, appropriate sanctions for those who break the codes of conduct, relevant legislation, and recourse to courts of law. In recent years, electoral authorities in some Southern African countries such as South Africa, Lesotho and to a lesser extent Zambia, have put in place conflict management panels to assist them in responding to electoral conflict through mediation rather than relying solely on penalties that involve fines, prison sentences or disqualification of votes, voters or candidates.

Although conflict tends to be regarded in a negative context, it can play a positive role as it serves as a catalyst for change. Within the electoral context, conflict can be positive. When electoral conflict goes beyond the boundaries of the "rules of the game" it becomes a problem. However, if effectively managed, electoral conflict can be constructive and a healthy part of the democratic debate and interaction.

Electoral authorities

The credibility of the electoral management body is essential for legitimate elections to take place. Although there are different models, over the past ten years we have seen a general trend in the Southern African region and beyond, towards the establishment of independent electoral authorities tasked, by means of legislation, with the administration of elections. These bodies should be "perceived by the electorate as being independent of government, non-partisan in their functions and impartial in their treatment of all electoral stakeholders".[8] The quality of electoral administration has a direct impact on the way in which elections and their outcomes are regarded by the voters, contesting political parties, media and domestic and international observers. Ethical electoral behaviour by all role-players and integrity of the monitoring and observer systems contributes towards the legitimacy of the electoral process.

The credibility of the electoral management body is essential for legitimate elections to take place

Observation

If we look at a dictionary definition for the word observer, it is defined as "an interested spectator", and a person who "notes proceedings but does not participate", while the word observation is defined as "accurate watching and noting of behaviour, phenoma". Democratisation can be significantly enhanced through the constructive use of observers as they lend credibility and legitimacy to the process.

Ideally, observers should be available to evaluate the complete electoral process commencing from the pre-election phase, and then during and after the election. This includes the registration process, the environment in which the elections take place and whether it allows for debate and discussion in the media, campaigning and canvassing of parties without fear of intimidation, the role that the media plays, whether there is voter education and to what extent, the role of the electoral authority, the level of training of electoral staff, opening and closing of voting stations, non-partisanship of security forces, performance of electoral officials and party agents, mechanisms for resolving conflict, the speed with which election results are made public, and the acceptance of the results by contesting parties and the electorate. This is often difficult for international observers as it is costly and is a role more effectively played by domestic observers. Domestic observers have the advantage of being familiar with the local culture, language and social conditions, and have the trust and confidence of their communities. Domestic observers are better able to fulfil the role of long-term observers as they are home based.

As Carl Dundas points out, "the presence of observers at the polling and the count have a calming effect on the election atmosphere and is believed to promote the transparency of both the polling and counting of the ballots. Their general role is to pronounce on whether an election is 'free and fair'".[9]

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum developed norms and standards for elections in the SADC region in 2001 and has used these guidelines to observer elections in the region since that time. The guidelines cover elections and human rights, elections and government, and fostering transparency and integrity in the electoral process.

In addition, the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC countries (ECF) adopted the Principles for Election Management, Monitoring and Observation in the SADC Region (PEMMO) in November 2003, with the participation of representatives from various regional electoral management bodies and leading civil society organisations. PEMMO offers a guideline to best electoral practice and is available in French, English and Portuguese. This document covers the institutional

framework, pre-election, during and post election phases, and election observation and monitoring. SADC member states then adopted the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections in 2004. The principles and guidelines have five main components: principles for conducting democratic elections; mandate and constitution of SADC Observer Missions; guidelines for the observation of elections; rights and responsibilities of SADC election observers; and responsibilities of the member states holding elections.

Observation reports by the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) are based on PEMMO and cover all three stages of the election process, namely, before, during and after. Prior to deployment, observers are provided with the necessary information that will assist them in their observation. This includes information on the constitutional and legal framework within which the election takes place, relevant electoral legislation, political party manifestos, and the EISA Election Updates. On arrival in a country, observers are briefed by stakeholders which include the electoral authority, civil society organisations, political parties and the media. Observers hold similar briefings in the areas to which they are deployed. Following the election, a de-briefing session is held, reports collated and a final report compiled.

Since the adoption of the PEMMO document in November 2003, EISA observation missions base their assessment on these principles. PEMMO is used as a benchmark to assess whether an election is credible and legitimate and if the outcome reflects the will of the people. PEMMO also outlines guidelines on the expected behaviour for the enhanced credibility of observer groups. To this end, EISA missions work within specific terms of reference and are bound by the EISA observer mission code of conduct.

Botswana's 2004 parliamentary and local elections

EISA was invited by the government of Botswana to observe its ninth parliamentary and local government elections on 30 October 2004. EISA fielded a mission of 22 people drawn from electoral commissions, civil society organisations, parliaments and political parties, and representing ten countries, namely Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The mission was led by the Honourable Mrs. Nthloi Motsamai, Speaker of the National Assembly of Lesotho. Given the financial and human resource

Botswana's President Festus Mogae casts his vote in the October 2004 elections.

AFP/TOUCHLINE PHOTO

constraints, this was a short-term mission, with members arriving in Botswana on 23 October and departing on 1 November. However, in order to accommodate the need for a holistic approach to election assessment, EISA conducted various activities in all phases including the publication of *Election Updates* and *Elections Talk*, where EISA worked with Botswana-based researchers who gathered on-the-ground information, especially in the pre-election phase.

Political overview

Botswana is sparsely populated, with a total population of 1.77 million people, 80 per cent of whom live in the eastern part of the country. Gaborone is the largest town, with a population of 240 000 people and Francistown is the next biggest town, with 105 000 residents. At independence in 1965 Botswana was regarded as one of the poorest countries in the world. The discovery of diamonds in 1967 provided an opportunity for the country to improve the living standards and conditions of its citizens. Botswana has used its natural resources to develop a

AFP/TOUCHLINE PHOTO

Voters of various political parties attend a pre-election rally in Gaborone.

sound infrastructure, including a good road service and a strong communications technology, so much so that the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have now recognised Botswana as a middle-income country.

Botswana has held regular five yearly elections since independence, with elections being regarded largely as free and fair. It is a multi-party democracy, using the first-past-the-post electoral system. The country is divided into 57 constituencies, with the president elected by the National Assembly. Although Botswana has 12 registered political parties, seven of which contested the election, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has been in power since independence (gaining 54.3 per cent of the votes and 33 seats in the 1999 elections) with the Botswana National Front as the main opposition.

Electoral authority

Section 65A of the Botswana Constitution provides for an Independent Electoral Commmission responsible for the conduct and supervision of elections, and comprising seven members. The chairperson should be a judge of the High Court and at lest one other member a legal practitioner appointed by the Judicial Services Commission. The remaining five commissioners are appointed from a list recommended by the All Party Conference. The secretary of the IEC is appointed by the president.

Election outcome

The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) once again won the elections, with the opposition securing 13 seats. Since independence, the BDP has held office. One can argue that if the outcome of the election reflects the choice of the electorate and if voters choose to retain one-party dominance in an election that is largely regarded as "free and fair", it cannot be said that a country is undemocratic. Political analysts have suggested a range of reasons as to why the BDP continues to remain in power, including voter apathy (although the 2004 elections saw a vast improvement in voter turnout from 42 per cent in 1999 to a reported voter turn-out of 76 per cent of registered voters in 2004),[10] the perception that voters are of the view that their vote will not alter the balance of power in any way, the first-past-the post electoral system, which does not reflect the political preference of voters and works to the disadvantage of smaller parties, factionalism within the opposition, and a de-politicised civil society.

Maundeni suggests that there is "a lack of full participation by civil society in electoral politics" and that civil society organisations in Botswana "vigorously protect their non-political orientation and hardly take part in the electoral process".[11] The role of the media is also critical in the run-up to the election. In Botswana,

Table 1: Elections Outcomes in Botswana, 1965–2004

PARTY	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004
NUMBER OF SEATS									
BDP	28	24	27	29	29	31	27	33	44
BNF	–	3	2	2	4	3	13	6	12
BPP	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	–	0
BIP	0	1	1	0	0	0	–	–	–
BAM	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	0
BCP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
MELS	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	0
NDF	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0
Total Seats	31	31	32	32	34	34	40	40	57
PERCENTANGE OF SEATS									
BDP	90	77	84.4	91	85	91	67.5	82.5	77
BNF	–	10	6.3	6	12	9	32.5	15	21
BPP	10	10	6.3	3	3	0	0	–	–
BIP	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	–	–
BAM	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0
BCP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2.5	2
MELS	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	0
NDF	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0

Source: Adapted and recalculated from Mpabanga, D. 2000. "Declining Voter Participation in Botswana: Trends and Patterns", *Botswana Guardian*, p. 49, 5 November 2004; IEC, 'Elections 2004'. Available at: http://www.iec.gov.bw/

the government media comprising the free daily newspaper, two radio stations and the national television enjoyed a "dominant role as the main sources of news and political information".[12] The *Update* suggests that this is largely due to the fact that the government media reported in the vernacular whilst the private press played a limited role due to various considerations, amongst which was that they reported in English thereby reaching a smaller section of the population. Allegations of the misuse of the media to enhance the incumbent party's campaign are common in most countries as are allegations of the misuse of state resources.

The participation of women in the political sphere is a cause for concern, particularly as SADC leaders have dedicated themselves to achieving a 1:3 ratio of women in parliament by 2005. In the 1999 elections, Botswana had 17 per cent representation of women in Parliament and , but this dropped to only 9 per cent representation after the 2004 elections. Only 47 of the council seats out of 490 in the local government elections are held by women.[13]

Table 1 reflects the outcomes of parliamentary elections since independence.

Observers

Observers play an important role in that they act as the "eyes and ears" of citizens during the electoral process. The findings reported by observers are increasingly being taken into account by successful candidates and political parties, electoral authorities and other institutions in confirming that the election took place in compliance

with the various international instruments and within the framework of democratic principles. International and domestic observers fulfil this role. For the first time civil society organisations in Botswana came together under the umbrella of the Botswana Election Support Network (BESNET) with 300 observers deployed on election day.

The general observation of observers and other stakeholders was that the Botswana elections were 'uneventful' and without violence or incident. This does not discount the fact that there were allegations by contesting parties regarding the independence of the electoral authority, misuse of state resources by the ruling party, bias by the media or inter and intra-party tensions. Elections are by their very nature adversarial as they are a contestation for power. This contest does not necessarily have to manifest itself in violence and intimidation. One may argue that a healthy democracy requires intensive debate, disagreement and discussion. His Excellency, President Festus Mogae, in an interview with the BBC, noted that "We're proud of how dull our elections are. It proves that our democracy is working."[14] It is for this reason too that few international observer groups participate in observation missions to Botswana.

Observers held interviews with a wide range of stakeholders prior to the election including the Electoral Commissions, media representatives, political parties and civil society organisations. On election day seven teams were deployed to Francistown, Gaborone, Jwaneng, Maun and Selebi Phikwe. Generally, observers found that polling stations opened on time with sufficient material, well-trained staff and patient voters. The atmosphere was free of political violence and intimidation. The voting process was particularly transparent, with polling staff calling out the names and registration numbers of voters, and party agents were provided with a list of voters by the Electoral Commission to enable them to keep an ongoing tally of the number of voters. This system, whilst slow, helped to pre-empt any allegations of double or fraudulent voting.

Although conflict tends to be regarded in a negative context, it can play a positive role as it serves as a catalyst for change

The observer mission also analysed the legal framework of elections and noted that it generally provided for the conduct of democratic elections but recommended reforms that included access to and use of public media and other public resources; amendments to the electoral system, given that the first-past-the-post system has been found in a number of countries to lead to under-representation of women and losing or minority parties; consideration of introducing reforms in terms of funding of political parties; strengthening the independence of the Electoral Commission; and counting immediately after voting has taken place rather than transporting ballots to a central counting station.

Somaliland's 2003 elections

EISA was invited to join a ten-person South African Electoral Observation Mission to observer the Somaliland presidential elections on 14 April 2003. EISA was also requested to assist the Academy for Peace and Development in designing a programme for party poll watchers and to train trainers to train their respective party agents.

The experience of the EISA team in Somaliland was unique, and quite different from the other observation missions that EISA has participated in, given the historical background of the country. Somaliland's democratic transition started in May 2001, with a plebiscite on a new constitution that introduced a multi-party electoral system, local government elections in December 2002 and presidential elections in 2003. The final stage of the process, that is the legislative elections, are scheduled to take place early in 2005.

At the same time, the independence of Somaliland has not yet been recognised by of all African states or Western governments. This placed a particular challenge on Somalilanders as they were very keen to ensure that the presidential elections were conducted in a free and fair environment, with nearly half a million voters casting their ballots. The team met with representatives of the political parties and the presidential candidates, the media, civil society organisations and the National Electoral Commission. The team also observed training for domestic observers and party agents in various parts of the country.

Political background

The history of Somaliland and its relationship with Somalia is complicated. Briefly, Somaliland gained its independence on 26 June 1960 and merged with Somalia to form the incipient state of the Somali Republic on 1 July 1960, the date on which Somalia gained its independence. The rationale behind the voluntary union between these two states was an attempt to form a greater Somalia in the Horn of Africa by bringing together all the Somali ethnic people in the region. The Somaliland Forum in a press release issued on 1 February

2003 suggested that this was "an unrealisable dream when the Northern Somali-inhabited territory (the NFD), remained part of Kenya, the former French Somaliland remained a separate state after its independence, … and the Somali inhabited parts of Ethiopia remained part of Ethiopia". In 1961, a draft constitution which was put to a referendum for public endorsement and adoption was rejected by 65 per cent of Somalilanders.[15]

Following the assassination of Somali President Abdirashad Ali Sharmarke on 15 October, the military staged a coup d'etat under the leadership of General Mohamed Siyaad Barre. The years following saw violent conflict between the North (Somaliland) and the South (Somalia) and the formation in 1981 of the Somali National Movement (SNM), an armed movement dedicated to the overthrow of the Barre regime.[16] The collapse of the Barre regime in January 1991 resulted in the self-proclaimed independent republic of Somaliland in May 1991. The devastation to Somaliland as a result of the struggle was extensive, to the extent that large parts of Hargeisa, the capital, were razed to the ground.

Since 1991, many Somalilanders who had left the country have returned and have begun to rebuild the country. Without recognition by the outside world, the rebuilding of the country and in particular the economy has been a slow process as has been the social reconstruction of the country. Politically, the consolidation of the different clans has proved a major challenge. The 1993 Boorama conference which lasted five months and involved hundreds of representatives from the various clans, managed to formulate a new national charter and establish a government. "This new system of government known as the *beel* was a hybrid of Western political institutions and the traditional Somali system of clan representation."[17] In December 1996, a National Conference was convened to resolve Somaliland's divisions and to appoint a new government. Following this appointment a new permanent constitution was drawn up and accepted in a referendum endorsed by 97 per cent of the population.

Somaliland used an electoral model that uses municipal elections to determine which parties may participate in the national elections. According to the constitution, only the three political organisations that receive the most votes and at least 20 per cent of the vote in the municipal elections are able to register as political parties and participate in the presidential elections. The National Democratic Alliance (UDUB), the Justice and Restoration Party (UCID) and KULMIYE (spell out acronym) were the three political organisations with the most votes nationally and therefore eligible to contest the presidential elections.

The presidential elections of 2003 took place within this new dispensation.

Electoral authority

The Commission was set up under the Presidential and Local Councils Election Law (Law no 20/2001) as an independent body comprising seven members, three of whom are nominated by the president, two by the House of Elders and two by the registered opposition parties. The appointments were approved by the House of Representatives on 21 January 2002. The duty of the Commission was to organise and conduct all the election activities relating to local government, Parliament and the office of the president.[18] The duration of tenure is five years. Following the local government elections, the NEC conducted an evaluation and identified adequately trained staff as an area that needed to be improved upon. Technical assistance was provided by two international technical consultants to boost the capacity of the

Refugee women in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland.

Commission. Given the limited resources and the poorly developed communication system, the NEC had to work under extremely difficult conditions. The NEC met regularly with contesting parties and other stakeholders in the run-up to the election.

Election outcome

The presidential elections were confined to three parties who gained the most results in the local elections, as reflected in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Local Government Election Results, December 2002

ASSOCIATION	NO. OF VOTES	% OF TOTAL VOTES
UDUB	179,389	40.76
KULMIYE	83,158	18.90
UCID	49,444	11.24
SAHAN	47,942	10.89
HORMOOD	40,358	9.21
ASAD	39,596	9.00
Spoiled Ballots	13,835	
TOTAL	453,902	

Source: Adan Abokor, Mark Bradbury, Pippa Hoyland, Steve Kibble and Deborah Ossiya. "Very much a Somaliland-run election". A report of the Somaliland local elections of December 2002, CIIR (2003) p. 31.

Table 3: Presidential Election Results, April 2003

PARTY	LEADER	NO. OF VOTES	% OF TOTAL VOTES
UDUB	Dahir Rayale Kahin	205,595	42.08
KULMIYE	Silanyo	205,515	42.07
UCID	Faisal Ali Waraabe	77,433	15.85
TOTAL		488,543	100.00

Source: National Electoral Commission[19]

The problem came with the final tally of the election results by the NEC, with UDUB winning the election by 80 votes. Both KULMIYE and UDUB challenged the outcome. KULMIYE was of the view that it had won the election by 76 votes and took the matter to court. UDUB contested the results on the basis that it had won by a greater margin than 80 votes. The Supreme Court final decision added to the confusion by announcing that UDUB had not won by 80 votes but by 217 and on 16 May 2003 Rayale was sworn in as president. [20]

Following the announcement of the election results by the NEC, Somaliland witnessed a resurgence of tension and political sensitivity and protest by dissatisfied voters and citizens which continued for some weeks after the announcement of results.

Observations

The Somaliland elections were unique given the geographic and historical context in which they took place. Infrastructure is largely undeveloped and staffing and identifying 900 polling stations provided a major challenge, with some stations being set up in the only available standing structure, often one small room. As there was no voter registration, "invisible ink" was used which became rather messy; although the NEC had changed the source of the procurement to a different country, the "new ink turned out to be soluble in kerosene, mild bleach and lemon juice",[21] a deficiency exploited by various party agents. Domestic observers organised under the umbrella of the Consortium for Somaliland Non-Governmental Organizations and NAGAAD (an umbrella women's organisation) who trained and deployed about 400 observers countrywide.

What struck the EISA observers in particular was that although some stations appeared to be 'chaotic' with much discussion and interaction between voters, electoral staff and party agents, there was a strong sense of pride amongst all stakeholders. EISA observers frequently received remarks such as "no election in the world is as well run" or "no election is as free and fair as this election" by all stakeholders. Even more challenging was that despite the lack of resources at the disposal of the NEC, most polling stations opened on time with many voters coming from great distances to cast their vote. The South African Observer Mission made several recommendations in their final report including the need for a coordinated, systematic and effective voter education programme, more staff on the floor in the larger polling stations, and more effective training of electoral staff. The report also stressed the need for communication between the NEC and presiding officers to be improved.

Observers were represented by several international non-governmental organisations and parliamentarians

from countries such as Norway, Canada, and the United Kingdom. All the observation missions reported satisfaction with the conduct of the poll and the count. In turn there was a strong sense of achievement by Somalilanders as to the success of their election.

Conclusion

This article has looked at two elections, both within countries that have experienced colonisation and one emerging from a background of conflict and violence. A number of factors emerge that impact on the degree to which citizens in a country have a say in the government of their respective countries. Adewale Banjo suggests that, "In a democracy, elections offer the freedom of choice, the power to hold elected leaders accountable and provide protection against the perpetuation of arbitrary rule".[22] Factors such as the electoral system, the degree of civil society engagement in the political and electoral process, the commitment of political parties to the democratic process, the levels of corruption, upholding the rule of law, the constitutional and legislative framework, and so on contribute to the environment in which an election takes place and the consequent acceptance of the outcome.

Botswana has been independent since 1965, formerly a British protectorate, under the first-past-the-post electoral system. Although the Botswana Democratic Party has been in power since independence, since the onset of independence other parties have contested the elections. Over the past year there has been a move from various stakeholders to review the electoral system on the basis that disallows votes for smaller parties and to strengthen citizen participation. The Electoral Commission for example commissioned a study on voter apathy in an endeavour to address this problem.

Somaliland paints a very different picture, being a country that is yet to be acknowledged internationally but is still keen to consolidate a democratic environment. Elections took place in a context of great hope, with citizens eager to demonstrate to the wider community the strides Somaliland has taken in putting in place a stable democratic society, only to be marred by the post-election tension arising from the conflicting results issued by the NEC and the High Court.

This paper has shown that the democratic electoral process plays an important role in consolidating democracy and how observers contribute to the legitimacy and credibility of the electoral process.

Item 1.3 of the draft Guidelines for African Union Electoral Observers states:

"the major challenge is the need to improve the integrity of electoral processes. One way of improving the integrity of electoral processes is by involving local and international observers and monitors." ♙

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GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICT
DRAFT OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN ACTION AGENDA

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) was established in response to the challenge of the UN Secretary-General in his report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict to strengthen the role of civil society in preventing violent conflict through active participation and to enhance partnerships between civil society, governments, regional organisations and the UN. In preparation for a GPPAC Global Conference in 2005, a number of regional conferences have taken place around the world to discuss conflict prevention issues and challenges in their specific regions and make recommendations to formulate a Regional Action Agenda that addresses the role of civil society in preventing armed conflict in their region. A Southern African Regional Conference was held in South Africa from 16 to 18 February 2005, resulting in the action agenda which will feed into the all-Africa Agenda and the Global Action Agenda. Conflict Trends decided to publish a draft Action Agenda for the purpose of generating discussion prior to finalising the Action Agenda before the July 2005 meeting.

Preamble

Considering the unique circumstances in Southern Africa, the majority of countries in the region are faced with the challenges of peace building, demilitarisation, post-conflict reconstruction and consolidation of democracy and good governance.

Cognisant of the social, political and economic situation in Southern Africa, the following Action Agenda reflects a number of issues, challenges, recommendations and conclusions reached through consultation and dialogue between a variety of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the region.

Noting that there is a need to effect a paradigm shift from states and military security to human security and from reacting to violent conflict to the prevention of violent conflict.

Recognising that there are differing perspectives regarding the African political condition; however there is

general consensus in the Southern African Region that this political condition is a result of the failure to transform the historically inherited structures of governance, and the unequal international political economy.

Concerned by the limited and under-utilised capacities for the prevention of violent conflict within intergovernmental institutions, civil society organisations, and other actors.

Guided by the knowledge that conflict prevention encompasses the prevention, transformation, management and resolution of conflicts through non-violent means, and that civil society includes non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, women, youth and faith-based organisations, trade unions and the media.

Pursuing partnerships between CSOs, government, regional organisations specifically the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the

African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the UN.

Recognising the need to create solidarity and enhance dialogue between peace-building and conflict prevention actors.

Further noting that the dominant economic relations in the sub-region are informed by extra-regional trade relations with very little meaningful intra-regional economic interaction. The nexus between politics and development finds better expression in the international relations of the sub-region as the economic nature of relations renders the progressive elements of the political agenda impotent.

We hereby commit and recommend various actions targeted towards CSOs, the private sector, governments, inter-governmental organisations and the UN, with the following regional context and challenges in mind.

Challenges

Within the Southern African region there are six broad areas of challenges which have contributed to regional instability and conflict. These areas are:

Governance and Constitutionalism

Protection of and respect for human rights are key elements that should be entrenched in all constitutions and inform the basis of good governance. The challenge to good governance and constitutionalism finds expression in the lack of moral and material conditions to ensure equitable distribution of resources, curbing abuses and corruption, encouraging rule of law, consolidating citizens' participation in decision-making processes and general acceptance of equality, freedom and dignity of peoples.

Socio-economic Instability

The current socio-economic situation in Southern African does not support the necessary responses or mitigate conflict and bring about sustainable peace. This socio-economic situation has been exacerbated by trade barriers that are beyond the control of the member states in the region and are often dictated by international financial institutions. The situation is further compounded by globalisation and by the exploitation of human and natural resources by the most economically and politically powerful states and business corporations in both the sub-region and the world. Principal to the socio-economic challenge is the question of resource distribution with specific emphasis on land and processes of policy reform.

Vulnerable Groups

Despite efforts by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to address issues related to the eradication of all forms of inequality in the region, the reality remains challenging. Vulnerable groups refer to women, elderly persons, youth and the disabled, amongst others, all of whom experience political, economic and social marginalisation. Important elements of this challenge reside in the continued need to broaden participation and representation of these groups in the political, economic and social institutions of governance.

Regional Context

Understanding Southern Africa requires an in-depth study of the region's location in the world of history, politics and economics. Although there are differing perspectives regarding the African political condition, there is general consensus in the Southern African region that this political condition is a result of the failure to transform the historically inherited structures of governance, and the unequal international political economy. The historical perspective is steeped in the uncomfortable slope of colonial relations that bind political, economic and social developments to forces beyond the region's geographic presence.

Contemporary conflicts in the region pose limited yet unacceptable threats of violence. These conflicts are largely characterised by: internal political, social and economic disputes, regional conflict systems, the role of civilians as both perpetrators and principal targets, humanitarian disasters and human rights abuses.

It is in this context that civil society and non-governmental organisations already exist and are co-operating within the region on issues related to peace and security. These valuable CSOs are important to the region as they represent a coalition meaningfully engaging governments in the region and building mutual trust for effective peace building and prevention of violent conflict.

Proliferation of Small Arms

The proliferation of small arms may result in the material realisation of armed conflict on the basis of unresolved grievances. Small arms are recorded as a leading factor in the perpetration of criminal activities that compromise stability, and by extension, peace. A related challenge in the sub-region is how to institutionalise an effective response to the cross-border nature of this proliferation.

HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a serious concern with broader

Draft of the Southern African Action Agenda

socio-economic ramifications at both country and sub-regional levels. What compounds the challenge is the narrow state security focus of interventions that concentrate on responses looking into how the pandemic affects the integrity of government business rather than the ability of individuals to deal with its ramifications.

Recommendations

In working towards preventing violent conflict we seek partnerships with and between all relevant stakeholders, recognising the primary role of Southern African civil society in conflict prevention and peace building in the region. Each of these stakeholders has specific roles to play in this partnership and we therefore recommend that:

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

➜ Strengthen existing networks of youth organisations in order to address issues affecting the youth in the region as well as to co-ordinate efforts aimed at building the capacity of youth structures to contribute to the prevention of violent conflict.

➜ Undertake initiatives that challenge the patriarchal cultures and practices that underpin gender discrimination, especially those that relate to aspects of domestic violence and the victimisation of women in violent conflict.

➜ Work together to ensure the recognition of the role of NGOs and civil society in peace support operations.

➜ Work for the collective implementation of the Southern Africa agenda and seek partnership with CSOs globally in order to ensure that their role in policy-making processes is considered necessary.

Governments

➜ Accelerate the implementation of the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development which set a target of 30% representation of women in political and decision-making structures by the year 2005 to enhance conflict prevention and peace-building processes.

➜ Involve civil society organisations in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (adopted during the Third Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in Ethiopia in 2004) especially on aspects related to peace and security.

➜ Involve and provide opportunities to CSOs to scrutinise defence budget allocations in order to safeguard the ideals of human security.

➜ Make available programmes of economic and social reintegration of ex-combatants to help prevent the recurrence of violent conflict.

Private Sector

➜ Enhance and strengthen platforms and partnerships where the private sector interacts with civil society and other structures in order to facilitate conflict prevention and peace building

NEPAD Secretariat

➜ Institutionalise interactions with CSOs at national and regional levels in its activities, especially those relating to the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and peace missions in the region.

SADC

➜ Monitor and evaluate, through its Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS), the implementation of the existing protocols dealing with human security to make a shift from a militaristic approach to a people-centred approach to security. While doing this, the SADC organ should institutionalise a mechanism to involve CSOs in this monitoring and evaluation.

➜ Develop a protocol on guiding principles for member states with regard to the constitution-making processes in the region.

➜ Move towards full implementation of the Protocol on Control of Firearms, Ammunition and other related material, and in doing so, involve CSOs as stipulated in Article 13 of the protocol.

The African Union (AU)

➜ Make use of existing international legal frameworks to formulate and implement an African protocol to deal with private security companies that perpetuate a culture of violence.

➜ Strengthen formal interactions with CSOs working in the field of conflict prevention in the region for information sharing in order to better manage and prevent conflict situations.

United Nations System

➜ Facilitate the creation of an international legal framework that prevents the exploitation of resources in ways that promote war and violence.

➜ Institutionalise systems, approaches and processes to encourage its regional offices to work with CSOs to establish a holistic approach to the prevention of violent conflict.

For more information on GPPAC, visit the following websites:
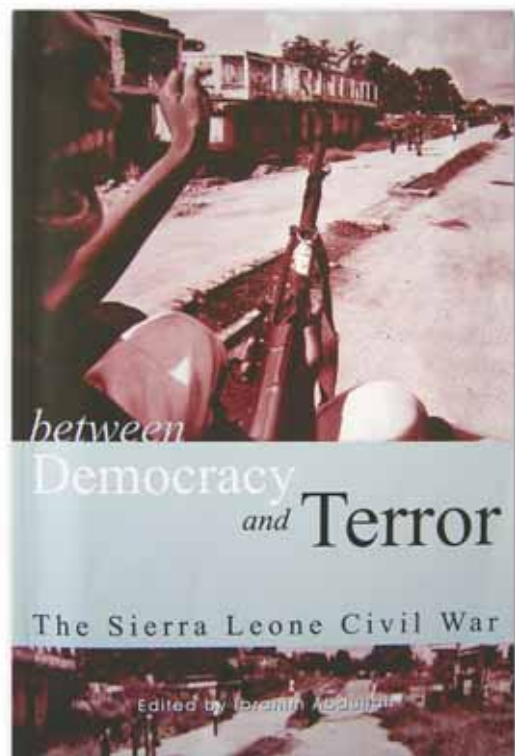Southern Africa: www.accord.org.za/special/gppac.htm • International: www.gppac.net

Between Democracy and Terror: The Sierra Leone Civil War

Edited by Ibrahim Abdullah.
Council for the Development of
Social Science Research in Africa.
Published by UNISA Press, 2004.
263pp, ISBN 2–86978–123–7

The new conflict paradigm has challenged conventional conceptions of modern warfare, characterised by an increase in the number and complexity of violent conflicts. What defines these conflicts is their intra-state nature and the most striking feature of these conflicts has been their impact on civilians, who have been both perpetrators and victims. In the background one is faced with the breakdown of the state with vast human rights abuses, abject poverty and other social ills. This was the classic case scenario in Sierra Leone.

The search for political power through armed conflict left the tiny West African country at war for a decade, with a loss of 50 000 lives and scores of amputees. The armed rebel movement, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), unleashed terror on the populace of Sierra Leone, leaving the international community aghast at such vicious human rights abuses perpetuated against people from the same country. The ideology of revolutionary politics experienced in Ghana under Jerry Rawlings (1977), Yoweri Museveni in Uganda (1989) and Paul Kagame in Rwanda (1995) was undermined by the rebellion of the RUF as it sought power through parliamentary politics and the post-conflict elections of May 2002. The rebel movement failed to win even a single seat through the ballot box, which was a first for Africa.

Interpretations of the chain of events in the Sierra Leone civil war and its linkages with rebel movements on the continent have been offered by an array of authors. This volume is the first to engage a thorough analysis of the Sierra Leone conflict, and it is divided into three parts, comprising 12 chapters authored by nine writers of varied expertise. The volume explores the context of the crisis, the contradictory roles of internal and external players, the complicity of the state in perpetuating the administration of vengeance on the populace of Sierra Leone, regional intervention forces, the role of the media, and numerous peace initiatives led by civil society and the international community to end the war.

A positive feature of the volume is that it critiques previous books written on the Sierra Leone crisis. Yusuf Bangura interrogates Paul Richard's popularly read

book Fighting for the Rain Forest as flawed for portraying the RUF as a highly disciplined organisation with the intellectual capacity to make rational decisions about their war goals and for concentrating on their logic and dynamics for war, without investigating the social origins of the RUF cadre and the manipulation of child soldiers as the driving force of the rebel movement's fighting machinary. Ibrahim Abdullah and Ismail Rashid trace the genealogy of youth rebel culture in Freetown, generally explaining why some of the youth turned to such radical ideas as those found in Muamar Gaddafi's Green Book and Kim II Sung's Juche idea in pursuing an alternative guide to political practice, making the youth a resourceful target for exploitation by the RUF. Ibrahim expounds on the RUF's lack of a concrete programme of action or political agenda and their resort to indiscriminate violence against women, children and communities, thus further alienating the peoples it claimed to be liberating. Moreover, the origin of revolutionary groups vis-à-vis student radicalism was marked by a progressive deterioration of the economy, collapse of public institutions, dwindling revenues from mining, and an intolerant political culture by the Sierra Leone state, all of which contributed to this confrontational stance. Endemic corruption and the complicity of the Sierra Leone military forces with the RUF is revealed in chapters by Sarh Kpundeh and Arthur Abraham. Abraham's provocative chapter exposes the deliberate prolonging of the war due to congruent economic interests in mining diamonds, supported by a neighbouring country.

The chapters by Jimmy Kandeh mirror the return to parliamentary multi-party politics in 1996 and the eventual collapse of the second republic. Both chapters reveal the weak democratic culture in Sierra Leone and the political landscape, which has remained unchanged in spite of the civil war. Kandeh reviews the activities of the Kabbah administration from the pre-coup period from 1996-1997 to the post-invasion era following the signing of the Lomé peace accords, in 1999-2000. He argues that the failure of the government after the Abidjan peace accord to put in place a strategic plan to defend the nation after the premature withdrawal of Executive Outcomes, an alternative security outfit, thus leading to an over-reliance on Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), was in part responsible for the invasion of Freetown in 1999. Lansana Gberie further expounds on the complicity of the state by exposing the impact of Kabbah's policy of downsizing the army, which resulted in 95 per cent of the army joining the rebellion, leading to the bloody coup of 1997. Gberie reveals that the conflict was further compounded by the sensationalist reporting of the independent media. Olu Gordon echoes Gberie in his chapter, by portraying the struggles and challenges faced by the independent media and civil society organisations against a repressed regime. Yet, despite all odds, Kandeh describes the positive contribution of civil society organisations, particularly women's groups, during the transition to the second republic.

The final three chapters deal with the meandering road to peace, the regional intervention force, ECOMOG, and the involvement of juvenile combatants, describing the phenomenon of child soldiers. Abraham depicts the rudimentary internal efforts and external intervention to resolve the conflict of Sierra Leone from the Abidjan to Lomé Peace Accords, consistently overriding popular will. He further exposes the leverage RUF had over the government of Sierra Leone to capture power through violence at a high price to the ordinary lives of Sierra Leoneans. Fumni Olonisakin presents a penetrating analysis of the shortcomings of the Nigerian troops in the ECOMOG, as a reflection of the internal situation in Nigeria and an opportunity to launder the image of the erstwhile military junta of General Sani Abacha, highlighting prospects for regional security in West Africa.

The volume is vivid, poignant and unequivocal, and serves as a critical case study for students, historians, academics and practitioners in the field of conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa. ᴀ

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