

# CONFLICT TRENDS

ISSUE 1, 2013



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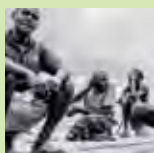
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# EDITORIAL

BY **VASU GOUNDEN**

On 10 February 2013 I travelled to Nairobi, Kenya with my counterparts, the executive directors of the Nairobi Peace Initiative – Africa, the West African Network of Peace and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. Our two-day mission was designed to support civil society's call for a violence-free election and post-election environment. This mission was prompted by the conflict that followed the 2007 elections, which resulted in over 1 000 deaths and marred a country otherwise known for its peace and stability. The violence was ethnically motivated and driven by hate speech from political leaders at all levels of society.

I arrived in Kenya very concerned. On the surface, the six years following the violent events of 2007–2008 seemed to have achieved little towards easing ethnic tensions, and there were whispers of ethno-political mobilisation in the build-up to the 4 March 2013 elections. Further complicating these election dynamics are the pending International Criminal Court cases against two of the politicians vying for the highest offices in the country, as well as the local High Court ruling on the eligibility of such candidates in relation to the Kenyan Constitution's integrity clauses. These matters, among others, created unease and tension throughout Kenyan society. This was evident as we travelled in Nairobi, meeting various organisations and individuals.

When I left Nairobi three days later, I was much more optimistic. Even though the Kenyan nation had endured a traumatic ordeal in the 2007–2008 violence and has yet to transcend the narrow confines of politicised ethnicity, the country is now clearly prepared to avoid the violent route. Several factors explain my optimism. First, our meeting with the National Cohesion and Integration Commission clearly indicated that many efforts had been undertaken successfully to minimise hate speech and ensure politicians act responsibly. Second, in our meeting with the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, we met a robustly independent chairperson, who had been appointed together with the other commissioners

after a rigorous interview process. We were impressed by their level of preparedness to conduct the forthcoming elections.

Third, the event that gave us the most reason for optimism was the first presidential debate, which our delegation attended. The event was widely covered by several media outlets and was very impressively organised. The debate provided a platform for the eight presidential candidates, including the two main contenders, Raila Odinga (the current prime minister) and Uhuru Kenyatta (the current deputy prime minister). Much of the country's concern centred on the acrimonious relationship between these two main rivals and to a lesser extent, the relationship among all the politicians.

Unquestionably, the debate seized the nation. It had one of the largest television and radio audiences in Kenyan media history. The candidates had a captive audience and, with that, the opportunity for political grandstanding and the pursuit of narrow interests. It was, therefore, very encouraging to see the maturity with which the candidates approached the debate. They conducted themselves with dignity, showed respect to each other, and still conveyed their points robustly. There were also moments of shared humour. All this, including a brief interlude at the end of the debate when the candidates were joined by their families and received affectionate well wishes, helped in creating a positive climate for the elections.

A cynic commented the next day that "the candidates are good actors". This may very well be the case, but it is less important. What is more important is that Kenyans had the opportunity to judge their leaders and their views in public, and to realise that debates, elections and democracy are about different ideas, disagreement, compromise, tolerance and respect – and most of all, about responsible leadership and the pursuit of better ways to manage differences non-violently. **A**

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# THE EVOLVING MEDIATION CAPACITY OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

BY HENRIK HARTMANN

- |   |                                     |   |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
|    | 1. Angola                           |   |
|   | 2. Botswana                         |    |
|    | 3. Democratic Republic of the Congo |   |
|   | 4. Lesotho                          |    |
|    | 5. Madagascar*                      |   |
|   | 6. Malawi                           |    |
|   | 7. Mauritius                        |   |
|   | 8. Mozambique                       |  |
|  | 9. Namibia                          |   |
|   | 10. Seychelles                      |  |
|  | 11. South Africa                    |   |
|   | 12. Swaziland                       |  |
|  | 13. Tanzania                        |   |
|   | 14. Zambia                          |  |
|  | 15. Zimbabwe                        |   |



\*Membership suspended.

## Introduction

With a population of more than 230 million people in 15 countries<sup>1</sup> – from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Tanzania to South Africa – the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is one of the largest regional blocs in Africa. This article outlines the progress that SADC has made in its capacity to respond to political conflicts in the southern African region through mediation. SADC has been actively involved in three mediation missions – to Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Lesotho – and is currently

in the process of implementing a new mediation support structure, potentially making it the most advanced African regional actor in terms of mediation. But what is the real potential and impact of SADC in constructively resolving violent conflict through mediation?

After a brief overview of the most common causes for political conflicts in southern Africa, this article addresses this question through an analysis of SADC's potential for mediation based on its political structure and history of policymaking. The article then describes the evolution



**Southern African leaders at the 32<sup>nd</sup> summit of SADC in Maputo, Mozambique (August 2012).**

and key elements of SADC's proposed mediation support structure, followed by some conclusions and suggestions.

#### **Forms of Political Conflict in the SADC Region**

The majority of countries in southern Africa have undergone an impressive transition from colonial rule to democratic governance, and currently enjoy relative peace and stability. This is remarkable, considering the belated and difficult process of decolonisation and the young age of democratic rule in the region. Many SADC countries achieved independence from colonial regimes, or liberation from white minority rule, much later than in other parts of the continent, including Zimbabwe (1980), Namibia (1990) and South Africa (1994). Others, such as Mozambique, Angola, Lesotho, Madagascar and the DRC, plunged into political crises, civil wars or dictatorships at the end of colonial rule. However, almost all SADC countries have undergone a political transition towards multiparty democracy since the 1990s, so that today all SADC member states, except for Swaziland, are formally democratic. The majority of countries in the region are considered either substantial electoral democracies or liberal democracies that provide for full civil and political rights.<sup>2</sup>

Despite this remarkable progress, internal political conflicts remain a common feature in some southern African countries, and negatively affect political stability in the region as a whole. According to the latest Heidelberg Conflict Barometer,<sup>3</sup> non-violent or violent crises and limited wars are affecting six of the 15 SADC member states. They include conflicts over national power as well as subnational and resource conflicts in Angola and the DRC;

conflicts over national power in Madagascar and Zimbabwe; a conflict over national power and ideology in Swaziland; as well as xenophobic attacks and a subnational conflict in South Africa.

The predominance of conflicts over national power can be regarded as a consequence of the belated and often violent transition from colonial rule and authoritarian regimes to a multiparty system. In those SADC countries that experience crises or conflicts today, the transition period had often led to the emergence of dominant ruling parties and weak opposition, a concentration of power and weak independent institutions. The latent conflicts that develop in such a political context are usually expressed violently during elections. Where clear and fair rules, procedures and systems are missing, elections may accentuate existing conflicts. Consequently, the conflicts over national power in Angola, the DRC, Madagascar and Zimbabwe have all become manifest primarily during elections.

Besides the rather obvious electoral dimension to conflicts in the region, it is also important to consider underlying reasons that go beyond governance issues. Southern Africa possesses tremendous natural resources, which sometimes prove to be a curse for peace and stability. In terms of land conflict, Zimbabwe is the most prominently featured example in the media. Also, in Madagascar, forms of land conflict occur, mostly in relation to mining activities. In the DRC, the illegal exploitation of natural resources perpetuates local and regional conflicts. And in South Africa and Namibia, the policy of land redistribution without expropriation continues to cause tensions. In these and other

countries, conflicts about land and natural resources are a driver of social and political instability.

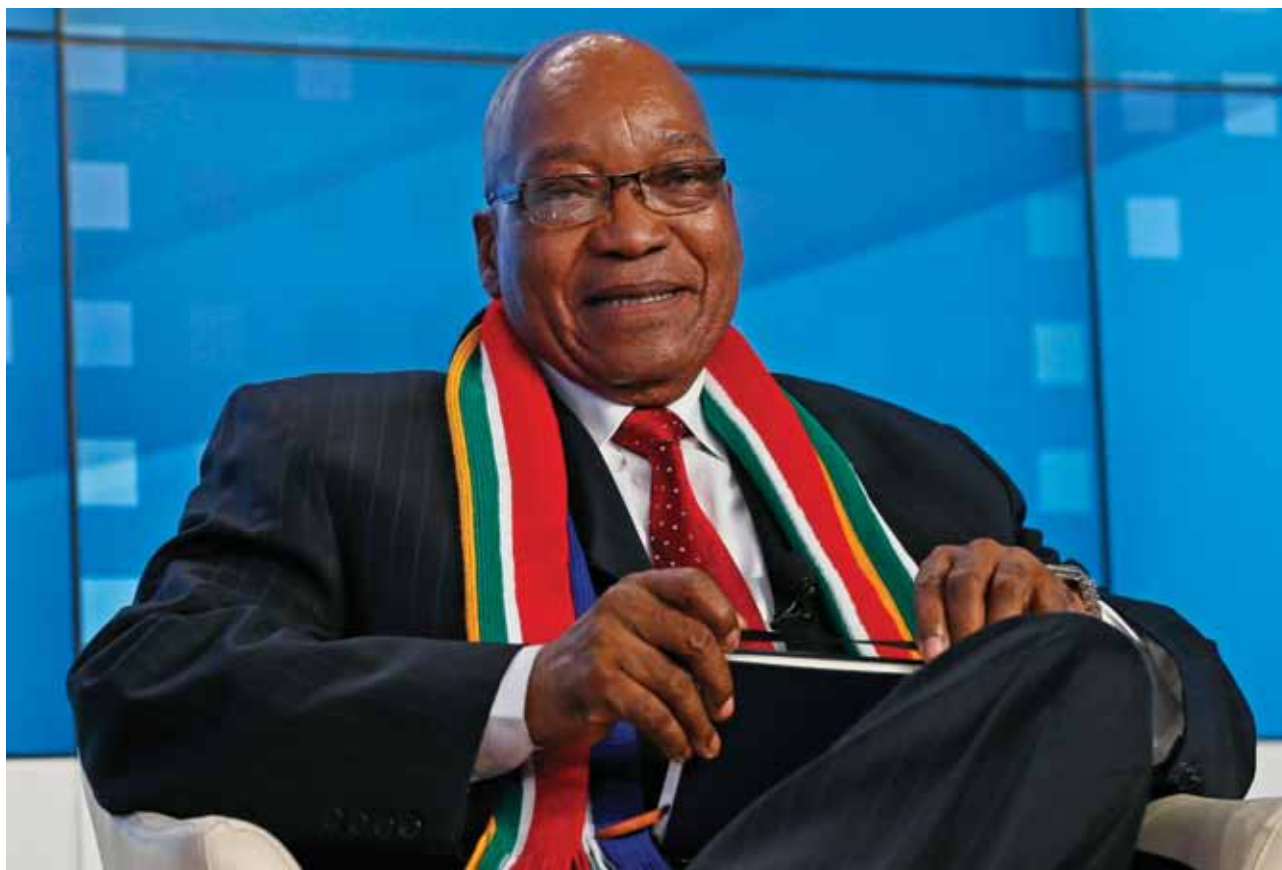
### **SADC's Potential as a Mediator in Southern Africa**

SADC has a clear mandate not only to become active in interstate conflicts but also in domestic crises in the region. The Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation from 2001 instructs SADC to “seek to manage and resolve intra- and interstate conflicts by peaceful means” (Article 11). Furthermore, in its latest five-year strategy for peace and security, SADC makes it its explicit objective to “protect the people [...] against instability arising from the breakdown of law and order, intra and inter state conflict and aggression” (*sic*). It therefore seeks to “[e]stablish appropriate mechanisms to avert all forms of threat against member states through diplomatic initiatives” and to “[e]nhance capacity for conflict prevention, management and resolution”.<sup>4</sup>

Aside from its formal mandate, the SADC region possesses a political culture that favours soft power approaches such as mediation. Understandably from the political history in the SADC region, and particularly the long and difficult path to national independence, national sovereignty is paramount for SADC and is enshrined as the first principle in the SADC Treaty. The organisation inherited

from its formative era a form of policymaking that is based on diplomatic and soft power approaches to collective security risks, rather than military approaches. Consequently, in comparison to other regional communities in Africa, SADC is more hesitant in seeking military solutions to conflicts in its member states. Mediation seems to be a method of conflict resolution that is more acceptable to SADC.

Conversely, some analysts also see challenges to a common peace and security approach of SADC due to the political divergence of their member states today – ranging from liberal to *de jure* democracies and openly authoritarian states – and their conflicting foreign policy values and philosophies.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, close relationships, particularly between those governments that originate from the liberation movements, bear risks to the capacity for SADC to mediate. During the SADC mediation in Zimbabwe, the close relationship between South Africa’s ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), and the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) caused uneasiness among the Zimbabwean opposition, more so since ANC president Jacob Zuma was also the SADC-appointed mediator in Zimbabwe. Such risks can only be mitigated by being principled about mediation and by observing fundamentals such as consent, impartiality, inclusivity and ownership – as outlined, for example, in the recent United



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**South African president, Jacob Zuma, was the SADC-appointed mediator in Zimbabwe.**

Nations (UN) Guidance for Effective Mediation.<sup>6</sup> In the past, SADC has mandated several mediation missions to conflicts in the region. In 2007, Lesotho was the first country in which SADC deployed a mediation mission after a political stalemate that followed national elections. In the same year, SADC mandated mediation in Zimbabwe ahead of the national elections there. A third mediation mission was deployed in 2009 to Madagascar following a *coup d'état* on the island. As unique as each of these conflicts were, they all had in common an escalation of violence in the context of elections. The response of SADC mediators in all cases was a process focusing on constitutional and electoral reform as the basis for new elections.

The conflict in Lesotho was resolved through mediation four years after the crisis had struck. After an official SADC mediation mission had initially failed to gain acceptance by all parties, the mediation process was revived by a coalition of Basotho church and civil society representatives with the endorsement and logistical support of SADC. Through close cooperation with the political parties, they were able to identify and address the loopholes in the electoral system that had caused the crisis, and successfully hold new elections in 2012. The mediation in Zimbabwe was more complex, as mediators were faced with polarised politics and an outbreak of political violence that had isolated the government internationally after the 2008 elections.

Led by South Africa, the mediation succeeded in brokering a power-sharing agreement between the parties, in order to draft a constitutional process jointly. The mediation is still ongoing, as the draft constitution has been finalised and the country is preparing for a referendum and elections. SADC mediation in Madagascar has been equally rocky and is also still ongoing. Both the ousted and the newly installed leaders used the mediation disingenuously to their own advantage, delaying the process and repeatedly breaking agreements. The mediators had to change their approach several times. It now seems as though the mediation could come to a close with new elections in mid-2013.

### **SADC's Evolving Mediation Capacity**

In 2004, the SADC Summit of Heads of State decided to develop a structure for strengthening its mediation capacity, to fulfil the objective of enhancing its capacity for conflict prevention, management and resolution. However, it was in 2008, after SADC's mediation capacities had been tested by the conflicts in Zimbabwe and Lesotho, that the establishment of the structure was put back on SADC's agenda and implementation began.

In a comprehensive drafting process from 2008 to 2010, the SADC Secretariat, together with member state representatives, mediation experts from the region and in consultation with the UN Mediation Standing Unit and the



**SADC Executive Secretary, Tomaz Salomão and Tanzanian President, Jakaya Kikwete, present SADC's revised peace and security strategy in Arusha, Tanzania (November 2012).**



**Joaquim Chissano, SADC mediator, gives a press conference in Pretoria, South Africa at the end of three days of political talks on Madagascar (May 2010).**

UN Department of Political Affairs Africa 1 desk, developed a concept for Mediation, Conflict Prevention and Preventative Diplomacy in SADC. The concept comprised a three-piece structure:

1. a Panel of Elders to provide leadership in mediation missions
2. a Mediation Reference Group to deliver expertise in conflict resolution
3. a Mediation Support Unit for logistical support and technical backstopping

In August 2010, the SADC Ministerial Committee approved the concept paper as the terms of reference for the establishment of the mediation structure. Furthermore, it was decided that the Panel of Elders and the Mediation Reference Group should be made operational. The operationalisation of the Mediation Support Unit was deferred, as was the budget for the mediation structure, which was to be funded through member state contributions.

Members of the Panel of Elders and the Mediation Reference Group are to be appointed through nominations by the SADC member states. By November 2012, the majority of SADC countries had submitted their nominations for the two panels and the first training and sensitisation workshop with the nominees was held in Pretoria, South

Africa. Currently, the nomination process is still ongoing. Once the selection of the nominees is completed, the Panel of Elders and Mediation Reference Group can officially be inaugurated and operationalised.

### ON A POLITICAL LEVEL, THE SLOW PACE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SADC'S MEDIATION STRUCTURE SHOWS THAT MORE COMMITMENT BY THE MEMBER STATES IS NECESSARY TO IMPROVE SADC'S MEDIATION CAPACITY STRUCTURALLY AND TO OPERATIONALISE THE NEW INSTRUMENTS

The current political situation in southern Africa certainly shows the need for SADC to have fully operational mediation capacities and resources. Next to the existing engagement in Zimbabwe and Madagascar, SADC has become increasingly involved in the eastern Congo conflict over the last few months. In December 2012, Malawi and Tanzania officially requested SADC to mediate their border conflict over Lake Malawi. Furthermore, delegates at the official launch of





**SADC Executive Secretary, Tomaz Salomao (left), president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila (centre) and mediator in Madagascar and Mozambique's former president, Joaquim Chissano (right) at the end of the one day SADC extra-ordinary summit in Windhoek, Namibia (May 2011).**

SADC's new peace and security strategy in November 2012 identified mediation as one of SADC's most important tools for politics and diplomacy in the region.

### **Principles and Composition of SADC's Mediation Structure: An Overview**

Each of the three parts of the mediation structure is based on a specific mandate and has its own role to play:

- The **Panel of Elders** will be composed of five senior and high-profile figures from politics, law, military, diplomacy, civil society, religion, academia or business. They will lead or support SADC mediation missions and facilitate confidence building, dialogue, negotiation or mediation with the consent of the parties. Panel members will also liaise closely with the chairperson of the SADC Organ and the executive secretary to ensure that mediation missions are pursued according to the directives of the SADC Summit.
- The **Mediation Reference Group's** key mandate is to provide advice to political decision-makers. With their expertise in conflict resolution, mediation and preventative diplomacy, they will deepen the knowledge and understanding of specific challenges in mediation processes, and build consensus on collaborative interventions among member states. The Mediation Reference Group will be composed of nine individuals, three of whom are to be drawn from civil society.

- The **Mediation Support Unit** is the only standing element of the proposed mediation structure. Located within the SADC Secretariat, it will provide preparatory work and technical support to mediation missions, monitor potential crises and respond to early warning signs, document lessons learnt, and collaborate with other international bodies.

The SADC mediation structure is based on core principles that will guide SADC-led mediation missions. These include the ownership of agreements with the conflict parties, the ultimate goal of a restoration of relationships, flexibility and adaptability of interventions, impartiality in engagement with the parties, inclusiveness of presenting both conflict issues and root causes, and acceptability of the mediator to all parties.

Since SADC considers mediation a strategic activity, the mediation structure limits funding to member states' contributions. However, alternative sources of funding have been proposed for consideration, such as setting up a fund with contributions from the private sector and/or from international donors, which can be managed and activated based on a summit decision.

### **Does SADC have the Capacity for Mediation? Conclusion and Suggestions**

There are several reasons which show that SADC is in a very good position to be an effective and relevant

mediator in southern Africa. Its members have bestowed the organisation with a strong mandate to resolve international as well as domestic conflicts in the region. The culture of policymaking between the member states of SADC is characterised by compromise, negotiation and respect for national sovereignty, which favours soft power approaches to security challenges over military solutions. In its past and present mediation missions, SADC could get access to the conflict parties and make relevant contributions to the solutions of the conflicts. Its proposed mediation structure is relevant, current and in line with the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation.

While significant progress was made to build SADC's mediation capacities, some challenges remain. On a political level, the slow pace in the implementation of SADC's mediation structure shows that more commitment by the member states is necessary to improve SADC's mediation capacity structurally and to operationalise the new instruments. To some extent, this is due to financial reasons, as indicated by the deferment of the Mediation Support Unit and the budget for related mediation initiatives. As much as SADC was able to use its leverage to intervene constructively as mediators in Lesotho, Madagascar and Zimbabwe, the

missions struggled to get the conflict parties to draft and implement agreements. At times, principles such as consent or impartiality could not be upheld in the eyes of the parties. Additional expertise from structures like the Mediation Reference Group could, therefore, strengthen the operational side of mediation processes.

## IF A MEDIATION MISSION LACKS SUFFICIENT FUNDING, IT BECOMES VULNERABLE TO BIASED INTERFERENCE FROM EXTERNAL ACTORS WHO MAY WANT TO IMPOSE THEIR OWN AGENDA ON THE PROCESS

Since SADC is currently putting its mediation structure on track, this article concludes with some suggestions to consider in the process of operationalisation. These suggestions include operational as well as thematic issues:

- Funding is probably the most critical issue in mediation processes. If a mediation mission lacks sufficient funding, it becomes vulnerable to biased interference



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**SADC possesses a range of bodies that support the design and management of election processes in the member states. A coordination of mediation activities with these structures would be beneficial for conflict resolution in the context of elections.**

from external actors who may want to impose their own agenda on the process. Since mediation is such a strategic diplomatic tool, particularly in election-related conflicts, it is plausible that SADC should aim to minimise the influence that private companies or international donors may have on mediation activities through direct funding. A possible solution to this dilemma is to set up a fund for mediation activities. Contributors to the fund would be guaranteed that the funding will be used for mediation activities according to set guidelines and principles, but SADC alone would decide when and how to use the fund. Existing initiatives like the Peace Fund of the African Union can serve as good examples.

- Where institutional safeguards are missing, elections may turn from a peaceful contest for political power into a violent confrontation. Election-related mediation should, therefore, go beyond the immediate expression of violence during elections and address the root causes. Entry points for mediation as conflict prevention start as early as with the design of the electoral framework, to provide a level playing field for all contestants and to minimise the potential for fraud.<sup>7</sup> SADC possesses a range of bodies that support the design and management of election processes in the member states, such as the SADC Electoral Advisory Council or the regional Electoral Commissions Forum. A coordination of mediation activities with these structures would be beneficial for conflict resolution in the context of elections.
- As SADC's previous mediation activities have demonstrated, civil society involvement can be a vital element in political mediation. It can broaden the issues included in a peace agreement and ensure that results are more geared towards human security. In Lesotho, churches and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have shown that, as insider mediators with an intimate knowledge of the conflict, in specific situations they may be more effective than an external, 'official' mediator. In many conflicts in the SADC region, civil society has been engaged in mediation from the community level to national politics. The regional Council of NGOs (SADC-CNGO) has worked for several years to create an exchange between these activists, draw lessons for future mediation initiatives and engage SADC on this matter. A closer cooperation between SADC and civil society could benefit the inclusiveness of mediation activities and the harmonisation of the official Track I and the Track II/III levels.<sup>8</sup>
- The participation of women in mediation generally increases the quality of peace agreements. An analysis of numerous peace negotiations shows that women tend to favour non-competitive negotiation styles over power brokerage. Furthermore, they tend to go beyond

questions of political power and military actions to include issues of human security in the mediation agenda, such as the needs of victims and civilians.<sup>9</sup> With the Protocol on Gender and Development, SADC has fashioned itself with a very progressive gender mainstreaming policy. In terms of conflict resolution, it calls for the full participation of women in peace processes, according to UN Resolution 1325. Its implementation could do a great deal to improve SADC mediation activities.

- SADC's political set-up favours soft power approaches such as mediation. This is due to the region's history and the importance of national sovereignty and non-interference for the organisation. In this context, it is important to be aware of the risk of overstressing mediation as a conflict resolution technique. It would be detrimental for SADC's credibility as a constructive actor in conflicts in the region if mediation was used to appear to 'do something', while in fact letting governments get away with human rights violations and forms of oppression. ▢

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#### Endnotes

- 1 SADC member states include Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Madagascar's membership is currently suspended.
- 2 Matlosa, Kabele (2008) *Consolidating Democratic Governance in the SADC Region: Transitions and Prospects for Consolidation*. Johannesburg: EISA.
- 3 Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (2012) *Conflict Barometer 2011*. Heidelberg: HIIK.
- 4 SADC (2012) *Harmonised Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation*. Revised Edition. Gaborone: SADC, pp. 25–26.
- 5 Nathan, Laurie (2010) *The Peacemaking Effectiveness of Regional Organisations*. London: Crisis States Research Centre, pp. 14–15.
- 6 United Nations (2012) *Guidance for Effective Mediation*. New York: United Nations.
- 7 Fomunyoh, Chris (2009) *Mediating Election-related Conflicts, HD Background Paper*. Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.
- 8 In diplomacy and conflict resolution, Track I usually refers to official activities by governments. Track II and III refer to the peacemaking activities of non-governmental actors such as private citizens, activist organisations, research institutions, businesses, religious groups, the media or others.
- 9 Institute for Inclusive Security (2009) *Bringing Women into Peace Negotiations, Strategies for Policymakers 2*. Washington DC: IIS. supranational institutions that are responsive and can be used to determine and control their representatives.

# POLITICAL DEADLOCK IN LIBYA AND SYRIA

BY ADAN E. SUAZO



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Human beings are designed to interpret and provide meaning to phenomena in our surroundings. When an action is met with a positive reaction, it becomes difficult not to believe that a similar outcome will result with the same input. In the field of conflict resolution, it is sometimes inadvertently believed that an action carried out to stabilise the conflict dynamics in one case should have similar results in another case that appears similar.

Amidst the developments of the Arab Spring, it would be incorrect to say that the measures that brought a multilateral intervention force in Libya would be equally effective in the present-day conflict in Syria. While this argument stresses the urgency for international support to stop violence in Syria, it fails to account for the local, regional and

international dynamics that have thus far thwarted such action. Essential to these dynamics are individual states' national interests, which govern the extent and depth of their international relations. Furthermore, the actions taken by the international community in Libya, as Totten argues, have led the country to a political trajectory that is still unclear, and to a political environment rife with tribal strife.<sup>1</sup> To allocate the international community's resources on a similar intervention in Syria would be counterproductive, given the fractured state of Syria's opposition. For these

**Above: Smoke rises following coalition air strikes around Gaddafi's compound in central Tripoli, Libya (June 2011).**



reasons, it is necessary to draw a distinction between these cases to arrive at a viable peace process that will end Syria's conflict.

The argument presented in this article is that, unlike Libya, Syria suffers from a phenomenon called 'political deadlock'<sup>2</sup> at three different levels: intrastate, interstate and at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Political deadlock in Syria has hindered the international community's ability or willingness to start a veritable peace process, which has severely reduced the likelihood for peace in Syria. To illustrate this argument, this article first provides an explanation of political deadlock, as well as the consequences of its existence at the various levels. Second, the concept of political deadlock is applied comparatively to the Libyan and Syrian cases, with the national, regional and international distinctions between both cases highlighted. Finally, conclusions are drawn and recommendations for international organisations and governments are made.

### What is Political Deadlock?

It is an undeniable fact that the UNSC is the most powerful multilateral forum in the world today. Within its walls, policymakers and peace practitioners make elaborate decisions on behalf of the international community to ensure that peace is both attained and sustained in the world. The UNSC is also a forum prone to the use of the veto by its permanent five (P5) members – the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), France, China and Russia – which often results in a stalled organisation. Voting patterns at the UNSC level are based, to a great extent, on how draft resolutions will affect the national interests of member states. Lack of consensus at this level bears the strong potential to erode

the international community's ability to act expediently in the face of human suffering, hence allowing violence in national jurisdictions to endure. Intrastate conflicts have several actors, which have their own set of relations with outside parties, including governments and organisations. These relations are responsible for moulding the level of consensus related to peaceful resolution. When this consensus is feeble, a situation of political deadlock arises.



**Voting patterns at the United Nations Security Council are based, to a great extent, on how resolutions will affect the national interests of member states.**



**The destroyed city of Deir al-Zor in Syria after months of violent battle (March 2013).**

Political deadlock will henceforth be defined as a scenario in which parties involved in resource deliberations are not able to find enough negotiating space to arrive at mutually beneficial agreements. Political deadlock can occur with three different degrees of gravity: weak, moderate and strong. The relationship between the degree of political deadlock and the likelihood of negotiated peace is inversely proportional, for the chances of negotiated peace are reduced as the degree of deadlock increases.

When political deadlock is weak, there remains a wide bargaining space in which parties can agree to concessions and end disagreements without having to resort to violent behaviour. As deadlock moves to a moderate degree, the bargaining space becomes narrower, and parties will inevitably start considering alternative routes to achieve their goals. Deadlock is at a strong degree when parties favour or support violence over peaceful negotiations. Strong deadlock bears the added characteristic that the likelihood of the warring parties reverting to lesser degrees of deadlock on their own is severely reduced. In such scenarios, the attractiveness of military victory usually undermines any peaceful attempts at resolution.

The aforementioned degrees of deadlock are applicable at three different levels: intrastate, interstate and at the UNSC. Political deadlock at the intrastate level refers to

a disagreement between two or more parties over the distribution of resources at the national level, which oftentimes results in violent confrontations. The dyadic relationship between the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and the Mozambican government, and their strife over political control in Mozambique, is a good example of a situation of deadlock at the intrastate level.

Interstate deadlock is an international incompatibility produced by the network of bilateral relations emanating from actors involved at the intrastate level. Interstate deadlock occurs when outside parties, supporting either side of an intrastate conflict, fail to arrive at a consensus over a peaceful resolution. Similar to how Angola's protracted civil war drew support from the US (in support of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola – UNITA) and the Soviet Republic (in support of the Peoples Movement for the Liberation of Angola – the MPLA-led Angolan government), outside parties to an intrastate conflict may or may not be willing or capable of cooperating in bringing conflict dynamics to a peaceful end.

Finally, a deadlock situation at the UNSC becomes an indirect result of the previous levels, but nonetheless deserves special attention. Given the source of each member state's decision-making power, the verdicts on UNSC resolutions are highly reflective of the deliberants'

national standpoints. To draw a theoretical line between the interstate and UNSC levels is essential because, even though both forums share a common origin in their respective constituencies, their direct outputs are different, hence producing different results.

At the foundation of this argument lies the traditional conception of national interest, which Chalk et al argue based on two premises: national security and economic interests<sup>3</sup>. Foreign policy decisions are conceived based on the guidelines set by national interests, which inadvertently rid national governments from the relative selflessness one expects in theory from the UNSC. At the UNSC level, decisions are taken on behalf of the international community for the sake of international peace. Therefore, any mandate to pursue a strongly equipped peace operation on the grounds of moral and internationally agreed-upon principles will be more likely to come from the UNSC than from individual states. This is why it is imperative to analyse the UNSC level separately, for any deadlock at this level will lead to a complete obstruction of the international community's ability to act effectively in conflict zones.

As a deadlock situation moves to the next level, there is an increase in the number of parties directly and indirectly involved in the conflict. This increase has a direct impact on the manageability of conflict dynamics. The most manageable situation is when political deadlock exists only at the intrastate level, for generally there is a wider margin of consensus by regional and international allies that fighting should stop. Political deadlock at both the intrastate and interstate levels eliminates this consensus, and generally results in a polarisation of support for the fighting parties. As the degree of deadlock increases, the polarisation of regional and international actors' support becomes sharper, oftentimes taking the form of provision of arms, safe havens and trainings for military groups, and so on. When deadlock spills over to the UNSC level, the likelihood of achieving top-bottom support for negotiated peace becomes slim, particularly if those countries involved at the previous level also hold a seat in the UNSC.

### **Political Deadlock in Libya and Syria**

The levels of political deadlock in the cases of Libya and Syria are different, and they help explain why the international community was so fast in its reaction to intervene in Libya, but not in Syria. More importantly, they lead to the conclusion that a different approach is needed in Syria that was perhaps not necessary in Libya. Drawing this distinction will allow space for renewed approaches to the conflict in Syria.

#### ***Intrastate Level***

The intrastate dynamics of the Libyan and Syrian cases are similar in that the resource under dispute in both conflicts was access to political power. In Libya, rebels were aware that Muammar Qaddafi's 'permanent power' represented their inability to become part of the

country's decision-making apparatus. Similarly, Qaddafi was threatened by the rebels, as his hold on the reins of government was compromised by the rebels' demands for more power. In the Libyan case, there was no conceivable scenario in which the warring parties could have arrived at a mutually beneficial agreement that included both sides. Political deadlock was strong when armed conflict started in Libya, removing the possibility for peaceful resolution arising from within.

Likewise, the Syrian case displays a strong degree of political deadlock at the intrastate level. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and the groups that oppose him, like in Libya, also struggle for increased access to political institutions, and their demands can be interpreted as mutually exclusive. This is based on the premise that if any given group obtains and/or maintains political power, it will be achieved at the expense of the opposing side's loss, or inability to obtain power.

## **THE SYRIAN CASE WAS MET WITH A STRONGER DEGREE OF POLITICAL DEADLOCK AT THE UNSC LEVEL, SPECIFICALLY DUE TO THE USE OF THE VETO BY CHINA AND RUSSIA**

In both cases, disagreement over the allotment of resources resulted in aggressive behaviour. In Libya, it was hard to envision a situation where peace would have emanated from within the country. Similarly, in Syria, it does not seem that agreement over the disputed resources is an option for the warring parties, which leads one to conclude that in both cases, there was – and is – a strong degree of political deadlock at the intrastate level.

#### ***Interstate Level***

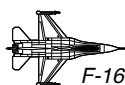
Divergence over degrees of deadlock start at the interstate level. In Libya, there was a moderate degree of political deadlock at this level, which simplified and unified the international community's position vis-à-vis Qaddafi's claims to power. Prior to the Libyan conflict, Qaddafi was already seen by many strong regional and global powers as going against the international principles of democracy and protection of civilians. This spirit was reflected in 2009, when Qaddafi addressed the UN General Assembly and equated the actions of the UNSC P5 members to those of the terrorist group, al-Qaeda.<sup>4</sup> Despite a relatively strong consensus in the international community over the Qaddafi regime's dubious human rights and democratic records, he was still successful in maintaining a fair number of bilateral relations. This was true shortly before the conflict started in 2011, where countries such as the US and Italy refused to break ties with Libya.<sup>5</sup>

It was during the period following Qaddafi's aggressive crackdown on Libyan insurgent groups that consensus

# COALITION AIR CAPABILITY

## United States

42 fighters based Aviano, Italy. U.S. base in Stuttgart is coordinating coalition operations



## Britain

Tornado planes, now based at Gioia del Colle, supported by VC10 and Tristar air-to-air refuelling aircraft. Typhoon aircraft on standby



## France

Some 20 fighter jets and at least one AWACS surveillance aircraft deployed from Solenzara air base



## Spain

One tanker plane, one F-100 frigate, a submarine, a maritime patrol aircraft, and four F-18 jets

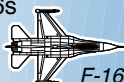


## Qatar

Six fighters and cargo plane expected to land in Crete by Tuesday

## UAE

Decimomannu airbase said it was awaiting the arrival of F-16s



## Italy

Dozens of combat aircraft on standby in Trapani. Eight planes assigned to the coalition command and ready to engage



## Norway

Six F-16 fighter jets sent to Crete will not engage until command is resolved



## Denmark

Six fighter jets deployed to Sigonella, Italy



## Belgium

Four F-16 aircraft in Greece



## Canada

Deployed six planes over the northern Libyan coast on Monday



✈ Coalition airbases   ✈ Libyan airbases   • Other Libyan airfields

**This map (22 March 2011) locates the coalition airbases and indicates the warplane types deployed against pro-Qaddafi forces. The sense of urgency with which the international community addressed the Libyan conflict highlights how international peace took precedence over the defence of bilateral relations.**

within the international community was reached, to the effect of condemning Qaddafi's regime. This ultimately led to an intervention force. As Daalder and Stavridis point out, the "international community reacted swiftly" through the UNSC's imposition of an arms embargo and asset freeze in Libya in late February 2011, which then resulted in a mission, under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, on 17 March 2011.<sup>6</sup> The sense of urgency with which the international community addressed the Libyan conflict highlights how international peace took precedence over the defence of bilateral relations.

Conversely, Syria suffered from a strong degree of political deadlock at this level. Turkey and Saudi Arabia have openly expressed their support for the opposition fighters, while Iran and Russia have shown allegiance to the Assad government.<sup>7</sup> The polarisation of regional supporters is very sharp as opposed to Libya's case, where outside support was far more diluted. Political deadlock has been stressed further by these actors' own bilateral relations. In the case

of Iran and the US, already strained bilateral relations have obstructed their will to collaborate in any initiative to regulate aggressive patterns in Syria.

### UNSC Level

In the Libyan case, the international community was not hindered by strong political deadlock at the UNSC level. Resolution 1973, which ordered that a no-fly zone be applied to Libya, was approved by a vote of 10 in favour, and five abstentions.<sup>8</sup> China and Russia were among those states that abstained. Zifcak notes that China and Russia's decision to abstain was informed by their policy of non-intervention in other sovereign states' domestic affairs,<sup>9</sup> which left enough space for the UNSC to pass a resolution without being hindered by the use of the veto from two of its P5 members. In deliberations over Libya, there is enough evidence to conclude that there was a weak degree of political deadlock at this level.



The Syrian case was met with a stronger degree of political deadlock at the UNSC level, specifically due to the use of the veto by China and Russia.<sup>10</sup> This illustrates the degree to which individual states' foreign policies affect deliberations and the decision-making processes at the UNSC. China and Russia's abstention was still crucial for the passing of a resolution that ultimately led to an intervention mission in Libya. Whether Chinese and Russian diplomats knew in advance the effect of their abstention in the Libyan case is up for debate. Their voting behaviour during UNSC deliberations on Syria, however, suggests they were better informed of the consequences of a second round of abstentions, and the degree to which a prospective UNSC resolution could fail to reflect their individual foreign policies. Given the failure to achieve consensus on a UNSC resolution for Syria, one may conclude that there is a strong degree of political deadlock at the UNSC level with regard to this country.

**Table 1 : Levels and Degree of Political Deadlock**

Case Study	Degree of Political Deadlock		
	<i>Intrastate</i>	<i>Interstate</i>	<i>UNSC</i>
<b>Libya</b>	Strong	Moderate	Weak
<b>Syria</b>	Strong	Strong	Strong

### Conclusion

A summary of political deadlock in Libya and Syria at the different levels is indicated in Table 1. The ability of the international community to act in the Libyan case was not thwarted by the existence or degree of deadlock at any level. Syria, however, has experienced strong deadlock at all levels, which leads to several observations. First, advocating multilateral intervention in Syria based on the Libyan model of 2011 would be both counterproductive and highly unfeasible. The UNSC does not have enough political support to mobilise a top-bottom support mission in Syria, due to the complex nature of Syrian combatants' relations with international actors. Unlike Libya, Syria's conflict features a highly polarised set of international actors that have, thus far, shown little interest in a joint peace initiative.

THE UNSC DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH POLITICAL SUPPORT TO MOBILISE A TOP-BOTTOM SUPPORT MISSION IN SYRIA, DUE TO THE COMPLEX NATURE OF SYRIAN COMBATANTS' RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ACTORS



UN PHOTO/EVAN SCHNEIDER

**United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon (left) and the Syria mediator, Lakhdar Brahimi, met in Mont Pelerin, Switzerland to discuss the failure to end Syria's conflict and the facilitation of peace talks (March 2013).**


Second, if the UN is the source to ignite a peace process in Syria, there must be a stronger focus on developing forums to encourage regional and international actors to cooperate. Given that there remains no space for collaboration between states supporting both sides of the conflict, it is important to develop a convergence of objectives in Syria by adjusting these states' national interests. This line of thought echoes a call by Chalk et al. to expand the traditional conception of national interest to include global security as one of its unalienable tenets. Juxtaposing objectives through the application of an enhanced national interest concept will help disentangle the political deadlock at the interstate level by increasing supporting actors' willingness to cooperate in multilateral forums, including the UNSC.

### **Policy Recommendation: Joint Mediation**

Thus far, the greatest attempt to provide effective mediation in Syria has been the UN through the expertise of former Secretary General Kofi Annan, but his mediation efforts were mostly concentrated on fostering peace from within Syria, while regional and international parties such as Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the US remained outside of the formal peace framework. A joint mediation framework would be highly effective to stop violence and ensure sustainable peace. Specifically, this framework should endeavour to include a state with good bilateral relations with the western P5 states (US, UK and France), and a second state with similarly good bilateral ties with China and Russia.

Mediation under the conditions specified above would seriously curtail the warring parties' options in the conflict zone. This would come as a result of the mediating states' influence on the warring parties' daily operations, where incentives or sanctions are used in the face of peaceful behaviour or aggression, respectively. For this to happen, however, there needs to be a strong convergence of interests between the mediating states. If peace in a conflict zone becomes a joint interest for mediating states, any step that a warring party takes to obstruct the chances of peace will indirectly challenge said interests. In the Syrian case, the mediator aligned with the western states would wield significant influence on Assad's opposition, while the state allied with Russia and China would have a similar effect on the Assad regime. Developing this framework would have a direct impact on the bargaining space in Syria, for any action taken by the warring parties will be limited to peaceful talks. Ultimately, this would lead to an easing of political deadlock at the intrastate level.

This framework does not come without its own degree of complexity. For this policy to be effective, there needs to be a strong willingness by international actors to collaborate in conflict zones such as Syria. This can only be achieved if peace in a specific area becomes a part of these actors' national interest. As mentioned previously, cooperation is severely hampered by the condition of these states' bilateral relations. Governments and international organisations can still play an important role in informing and influencing these

states' national interests through the use of economic and/or political incentives. While this task remains a difficult one, it is no less feasible than other peace mechanisms currently in existence. 

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### **Endnotes**

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- 2 An introduction to the idea of political deadlock was presented in a previous work entitled 'Levels of Political Deadlock in the Syrian Conflict'. *Unrest Magazine* (Georgetown University), Available at: <[www.unrestmag.com/levels-of-political-deadlock-in-the-syrian-conflict/](http://www.unrestmag.com/levels-of-political-deadlock-in-the-syrian-conflict/)>. The concept is further developed in this article.
- 3 Chalk, F., Dallaire, R., Matthews, K., Barqueiro, C. and Doyle, S. (2010) *Mobilizing the Will to Intervene: Leadership to Prevent Mass Atrocities*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, pp. 5–7.
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- 8 United Nations Security Council (2011) 'Security Council Approves "No-fly Zone" over Libya, Authorizing "All Necessary Measures" to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 in Favour with 5 Abstentions', Available at: <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10200.doc.htm>> Accessed on: 18 December 2012.
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- 10 United Nations Security Council (2012) 'Security Council Fails to Adopt Draft Resolution on Syria as Russian Federation, China Veto Text Supporting Arab League's Proposed Peace Plan', Available at: <<https://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/sc10536.doc.htm>> Accessed on: 18 December 2012.
- 11 Chalk, F. et al. (2010) op. cit.



# A RECONSIDERATION OF FORCE THEORY IN NIGERIA'S SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

BY **AGAPTUS NWOZOR**

## Introduction

Nigeria is not at war – at least not in the technical sense – yet the polity is awash with various degrees of violence. The checklist of violence and associated human carnage is intimidating: ethno-religious conflicts, electoral violence, political assassinations, hostage-taking and kidnap-for-ransom, sea piracy and terrorism. Despite the probability that these security threats could have their bases in multitudinous causes and therefore require multifaceted approaches, the response of the Nigerian state has been unidirectional and consists of deploying force to contain them. Nigeria relies on ad hoc mechanisms called Joint Task Forces to tackle insecurity. These Joint Task Forces are usually made up

of the army, navy, air force, state security service and the police. In some cases, like the newly reconstituted Joint Task Force for the Niger Delta, called Operation Pulo Shield, the Nigerian Prisons Service, Nigerian Customs Service, Nigerian Immigration Service and Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency are co-opted into serving. Joint Task Forces exercise wide-ranging powers akin to those wielded under a state of emergency.

**Above: The bodies of victims of religious attacks lie in a mass grave in Dogo Nahawa village, near the capital city of Jos in central Nigeria (March 2010).**



**The high levels of poverty in Nigeria is a significant factor in the current upsurge in the intensity and boldness of insurgent groups. Widespread desperation arising from the state's inability to meet citizens' expectations for a good life, results in greater insecurity.**

Paradoxically, rather than addressing the problem of insecurity, the Joint Task Forces have merely militarised the polity, with the effect that violence has escalated and permeated the entire country. The failure of force to rein in insecurity calls for a strategic rethink that must consider all the components that are conducive to violence.

### **Delineating Nigeria's Security**

As relevant and fundamental as the concept of security is to human societies, it has not only defied any consensus but has created a "battleground of ideological contention".<sup>1</sup> No matter the conception of security, an important point is that it underpins human existence. Thus, states define security within the context of their core values, interests, culture, prestige and socio-economic order. Transformations in the global arena have produced certain mutations in the conceptualisation of national security: the focus has moved from an emphasis on protecting and maintaining the state to a focus on the well-being of the people. Within this context, therefore, national security is equated with, and denotes, physical safety of individuals and groups and freedom from threats, anxiety or danger. This people-centric focus of contemporary national security presupposes that the

state must facilitate unfettered access to, and enjoyment of, fundamental human rights by citizens. In other words, actions that tend to abrogate or abridge fundamental human rights constitute insecurity.

The task of maintaining national security is as much the responsibility of the government as it is of the citizens. For the state to play its role as an impartial restraining force and thus maintain the delicate balance that could trigger insecurity, it ought to be aloof and non-aligned in the resolution of recurrent conflicts of interest within the polity. What has happened in Nigeria is that the state immersed itself in the class struggle instead of rising above it, and thus became a target of aggression arising from feelings of deprivation. The root of this is traceable to Nigeria's statehood, even extending back to the 1914 Lugardian amalgamation of the Northern and Southern regions.

The distinguishing feature of insecurity in Nigeria is the ubiquity of violence unleashed by ethno-religious conflagration, hostage-taking and kidnap-for-ransom, sea piracy, electoral intolerance and violence, political assassinations and terrorism. Although insecurity has been a constant feature in Nigeria's political firmament, the upsurge in, and the frequency of, violence has posed



**Smoke rises from the police headquarters after it was hit by a blast in Nigeria's northern city of Kano (January 2012).**

a serious challenge. In actuality, what may have changed is the configuration of forces perpetrating them and the sophistication of their approach, but the underlying causes have remained basically unchanged. Several factors could explain the current upsurge in the intensity and boldness of insurgent groups: first is the widespread desperation arising from the state's inability to meet citizens' expectations for a good life, and second is the ambivalence of the Nigerian government to ensure the security of Nigerians. A case in point was when some Northern governors introduced sharia law<sup>2</sup> in their states in the early 2000s. The federal government remained indecisive, describing the development as politically motivated and hoping the problem would disappear. Even when the 'sharia problem' resulted in violent riots, the government did not act. The incapacity of the Nigerian state, as demonstrated by its lack of political will to uphold the rule of law, emboldened the rogue groups.<sup>3</sup>

The third factor is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which has been traced to desperate politicians arming rogue groups to enhance their chances of winning elections, especially in the 2003 general elections. The fourth factor is the army of highly educated idle hands. The sophistication of the planning and execution of sectarian violence, especially by Boko Haram insurgents<sup>4</sup> and other faceless groups that specialise in kidnapping, attests to this.

The fifth and final factor is the seeming inexhaustible war resources available to these groups.

### **Deconstructing Insecurity: Does Democracy Fuel Insecurity?**

There is a tendency among scholars to link the upsurge in insecurity in Nigeria to the growth of democracy. This linkage is due to the belief that democracy creates the environment for the exercising of freedom, which enables individuals and groups to give expression to their grievances. Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, there has been a simmering cloud of insecurity in the country, which intermittently escalated and culminated in the 30-month Nigerian civil war. Democracy, per se, has neither led to an upsurge in violence and crimes in Nigeria nor has it provided a conducive environment for their nourishment. The argument attributing insecurity to democracy is not only deficient but analytically unhelpful in understanding the real triggers and drivers of violence in contemporary Nigeria. A more useful attempt in unravelling the underlying causes of insecurity in Nigeria must adopt a holistic and longitudinal approach. Otherwise, very important factors that feed the contemporary manifestations of insecurity in Nigeria will be glossed over, befuddling any meaningful understanding of the phenomenon.

Thus, attributing contemporary insecurity in Nigeria to the advent of democratic rule is a misleading supposition. What this erroneously connotes is that Nigeria enjoyed peace

in the period prior to 1999 when the present democratic dispensation debuted. Nothing could be further from the truth. The current manifestation of insecurity is, more or less, a necessary fallout of state failure occasioned by a skewed federal system, pervasive injustice, mass poverty, ethnic intolerance, political manipulations, corruption, religious bigotry and disjuncture between government policy and implementation.

Violence and conflicts have never been in short supply in Nigeria since independence. Thus, current insecurity is not an indictment on democracy. On the contrary, the current upsurge in violence is a product of such factors as the reconfiguration of the socio-economic indices, the effects of many years of misrule, and mindless brigandage by military oligarchs. The democratic regime that took over from the military inherited an economy that was characterised by structural rigidities, institutional distortions and infrastructural inadequacies. In a way, the culpability of democracy in the current escalation of violence can be located in its inability to factor such early warning signals as the widespread youth unemployment, the militarisation of the polity through the activities of ethno-religious militias, the desperation of politicians to win electoral victory at all costs and the presence of other forms of socio-economic injustices into its policies. Since 2007, the yearly growth rate of the Nigerian population has been set at 3.2%, with the incidence of poverty increasing from 54% to 69% in 2010. Based on the Harmonised Nigeria Living Standard Survey

by Nigeria's Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with the World Bank, the Department for International Development and the United Nations Children's Fund, 93.9% of Nigerians considered themselves poor in 2010, compared to 75.5% in 2004.<sup>5</sup> What this means is that not only are more people trapped in poverty, even more believe they are really poor, making them potential tools for violence.

### **Violence and Insecurity in Nigeria**

There is no day that numbing violence directed at diverse targets is not unleashed on the Nigerian polity. The disaggregated nature of the violence seems to overwhelm the security apparatuses. There appears not to be any coordinated approach or structured inter-agency cooperative strategies to contain the threats. The bulk of the response strategy is hinged on the Joint Task Force framework.

The Nigerian Constitution confers exclusive powers on the federal government to maintain and secure public safety and public order, and to exercise control over security apparatuses. The Nigerian government constantly reassures that it is on top of the country's security quagmire. For instance, Nigeria's Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuwal, told his Japanese counterparts, on their visit to Nigeria in October 2012, "it is true that terrorism is one of the security challenges facing Nigeria, but I can assure you that our government is doing everything possible to tackle the challenges. In 2012, we devoted a large chunk of our national budget to security."<sup>6</sup>



REUTERS / THE BIGGER PICTURE

**Increased violence in Nigeria has resulted in the displacement of thousands of people fleeing from conflict hotspots.**

But the persistence in insecurity, despite the increased budget allocation to the security sector, shows that it has apparently not achieved its aim. Since the assurances of the Speaker of Nigeria's lower chamber, there have been daring attacks by Boko Haram insurgents as well as some high-profile kidnap-for-ransom incidents. The *Punch* newspaper attributes Nigeria's persistent security challenges to the administration's inability to deploy appropriate strategies and lack of strong political will. These lapses have had the effect of emboldening the criminal masterminds and their followers to continue to perpetrate violence.

Increased violence has resulted in the displacement of thousands of people fleeing from conflict hotspots. This has created further pervasive fear among Nigerians. Often, there is no dividing line between ethnic and religious conflicts because of their reinforcing attributes. Ethnic and religious conflicts have often intertwined to create a complex scenario. This is essentially because of the identifiable ethno-national affinity to specific religions. Certain conflicts that started as ethnic in nature often ended up acquiring religious character. But there have been strict ethnic conflicts, such as the Tiv–Jukun crisis of 1990–92, which led the displacement of 42 000 people; the Zango–Kataf conflict of 1992, in which 1 565 people lost their lives and 22 934 were displaced, and intra-ethnic conflicts like the Ife–Modakeke and Umuleri–Aguleri wars.<sup>7</sup> The current ethno-religious conflict that has dragged on for some time is the Plateau State crisis, which pitches several ethnic groups against each other in the contest for political ascendancy. Since the 2010 Christmas Eve multiple bomb attacks on certain targets, including Christian churches, which claimed between 32 and 80 lives and wounded over 189 people, the crisis has taken a new form of 'hit-and-run' and isolated attacks on selected targets throughout the state.<sup>8</sup>

The Boko Haram insurgency appears to be the most complicated security issue, stretching Nigeria's security apparatuses to the limit. Boko Haram became prominent in 2003 when it attacked police stations and public buildings in Geiam and Kanamma towns in Yobe State. Between 2004 and 2009, it maintained small-scale 'hit-and-run' operations localised in Borno and Yobe states in north-eastern Nigeria. In 2009, the sect organised an anti-government revolt that pitched it against the police. The leader of the sect, Mohammed Yusuf, and between 800 and 1 000 members of the sect, were killed. Hundreds were also arrested. Like the Maitatsine violence that claimed over 4 000 lives in 1980, Boko Haram's campaigns have claimed thousands of lives, too.<sup>9</sup> But unlike the Maitatsine sect, which disintegrated with the death of its leader, Mallam Muhammadu Marwa, Boko Haram survived the death of Yusuf, its leader. The survival of Boko Haram is due to its vast war resources, which are supplied through its members' levies and donations from politicians and businessmen who believe that they can leverage terrorist campaigns to their political advantage.

Boko Haram has carved a niche for itself as a ruthless terrorist organisation. The high-profile victims of its terrorist attacks are many, and include the Nigerian police headquarters, the United Nations building, Eagle Square and police and military barracks across the country, with countless casualties. In 2012, the number of deaths orchestrated by Boko Haram stood at about 750 people.<sup>10</sup>

Electoral violence, political assassinations and kidnap-for-ransom have also featured on Nigeria's security radar. Although electoral violence is, by virtue of the periodic nature of holding elections, seasonal, there are pockets of politically motivated assassinations. According to Human Rights Watch, about 800 people were killed in three days in 12 Northern states following the April 2011 presidential poll. In addition to these deaths, there was the destruction of more than 350 churches and the displacement of about 65 000 people.<sup>11</sup>

## THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY APPEARS TO BE THE MOST COMPLICATED SECURITY ISSUE, STRETCHING NIGERIA'S SECURITY APPARATUSES TO THE LIMIT

There has been no abatement in the spate of political assassinations in Nigeria since Dele Giwa, the founding editor of *Newswatch* magazine, was killed by means of a letter bomb in 1986. Political assassinations peaked during the late General Sani Abacha's regime, when major political opponents of his regime were either killed or driven into exile. The new trend in political assassinations started with the murder of Nigeria's former Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, in December 2001. Since then, political assassinations have become commonplace. According to the International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law based in Nigeria, over 34 000 Nigerians have been killed outside the law since 1999, with 200 political assassinations that were neither investigated nor prosecuted. The difference between military and democratic regimes in terms of political assassinations is basically who masterminds them: under the military, the state tended to engineer it to intimidate the opposition, while under democracy there are multiple and indeterminate sources. What is worrisome about political assassinations in Nigeria is that none of them – not even the high-profile cases – have been solved.

Kidnap-for-ransom appears to be the most serious problem plaguing Nigeria after terrorism. Kidnapping (as a political and financial tool) came into prominence when the Niger Delta militants used it in 2006 as a symbolic strategy to attract both domestic and international attention to the plight of their region. It later metamorphosed into a cash

cow, and its lucrateness appears to be its major attraction. The former Inspector General of Nigeria's police, Mike Okiro, acknowledged that between 2006 and 2008, kidnapers pocketed ransoms totalling over US\$100 million.<sup>12</sup> Kidnapping has been turned into a serious business, netting hundreds of millions yearly. Between 2000 and 2010, it is estimated that no fewer than 4 000 people were kidnapped in Nigeria.<sup>13</sup> The Campaign for Democracy estimated that kidnapping in south-eastern Nigeria fetched N750 million (US\$4.74 million) monthly in 2012. Initially, the targets of kidnapers were foreigners working for multinational oil companies, but the targets have now changed to Nigerian businessmen and politicians.

### **Nigeria's Security Maze: Rethinking Force Theory and the Way Forward**

The mindset of the Nigerian state about how to handle its security challenges is gleaned from its response strategy. Nigeria's security managers deploy force to tackle every form of violence. This strategy is a carry-over from the military, where it is believed that every problem is solvable through the application of superior force. There is hardly an alternative strategy outside the framework of counter-aggression. Under former President Olusegun Obasanjo, the state response to uprising and crime was the routine deployment of paramilitary and military expeditions. In response to the killings of law enforcement agents in Odi,

a town in the Niger Delta town of Bayelsa State, the federal government dispatched a contingent of military personnel who literally levelled the town, killing over 300 people. In the same vein, soldiers massacred more than 300 people in Zaki Biam, Benue State in 2001, in retaliation for the killing of 19 soldiers.<sup>14</sup>

Nigeria's standard response strategy is built around Joint Task Forces, which were used in the Niger Delta to tackle youth and militancy. With the amnesty programme, the mandate of the Joint Task Force shifted to tackling illegal oil bunkering, pipeline vandalism and crude oil theft, to plug the yearly loss of US\$15.8 billion from these activities.<sup>15</sup> Joint Task Forces were also set up to handle the intercommunal, inter-ethnic and inter-religious crises that rocked Plateau State; kidnappings in the south-east and the Boko Haram menace in north-eastern Nigeria.

The setting up of Joint Task Forces is a de facto declaration of a state of emergency. Joint Task Forces have different rules of engagement, which are outside the normal operational boundaries of regular security agencies. Their mandate is a quasi-empowerment to engage in war. The code names often associated with specific Joint Task Force operations underscore its direction and strategy. Generally, the strategies of Joint Task Forces are anchored in their ad hoc composition and non-allegiance to any specific security agency. Their driving philosophy is shaped by the mindset that only superior force can tackle insecurity. Thus, the Joint



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**Joint Task Force soldiers search a passenger boat during a patrol in the creeks of Rivers State in the Niger Delta.**





**The Joint Task Force's driving philosophy is shaped by the view that only superior force can tackle insecurity.**

Task Forces are built around the military; exercise unlimited powers, even to the extent of abridging people's fundamental rights; and extrajudicially dispense with enemies of the state. Sagir Musa, a lieutenant colonel and spokesman of the Joint Task Force in north-eastern Nigeria, appears to underline the last point when he said: "While politicians deal with the issue of dialogue, we carry on with our responsibility."<sup>16</sup>

There are other manifestations of force in Nigeria's escalating insecurity problem. First is the ascendancy of incivility. The security operatives disrobe people of their basic humanity through indiscriminate frisking, the erection of roadblocks and barricades and unreasonable curfews. Paradoxically, the use of force has, in fact, created an insecurity spiral: old threats transform to new threats that further undermine the security situation. Second is the acute abridgement of the rights to habitat. As part of the security strategies, slums and informal settlements have been categorised as hideouts for criminals, and the people who inhabit them have had to be evicted, often without consultation with the people affected, circulation of adequate notice, compensation or provision of alternative accommodation.<sup>17</sup>

The way forward is to rethink Nigeria's security architecture. The level of insecurity in Nigeria shows that the use of force as a countermeasure has not worked,

and is unlikely to work. Therefore, what is required are multidimensional, non-force strategies such as: first, the infusion of democratic ideals into the security process. This involves the establishment of a sustainable framework that could deflate violence, such as the provision of socio-economic facilities, the continuous training and capacity building of security operatives and the demilitarisation of the public space. Second is the incorporation of early warning signals in the security model. Government needs to take early warning signs seriously, rather than ignore or naively interpret them as politically motivated. Third is the inter-agency collaboration that hinges on intelligence-sharing. Fourth is the creation of an institutional framework for the management of grievances. And finally, domestic mediators should be used at all levels of government to reach out to aggrieved parties.

### **Conclusion**

The persistent insecurity in Nigeria has demonstrated that 'greater' force does not necessarily eliminate 'smaller' force, no matter the resources at its disposal. The toll of insecurity on the Nigerian economy is enormous. Scarce resources that could have gone into infrastructural development are channelled into efforts to ensure security. According to the United Nations Integrated Regional

Information Networks, Nigeria's security budget jumped from N100 billion (US\$634 million) in 2010 to N927 billion (US\$5.8 billion) in 2011, with much of it linked to fighting insecurity.<sup>18</sup>

What is needed to address Nigeria's security challenge is the introduction of democratic ideals into the security process. To achieve this, the root causes of violence must be directly addressed. The likely impediment to this is the festering inter-agency competition and rivalry that tends to undermine collaborative efforts, and thus imperil national security. There is already serious contention about who should anchor the anti-terrorism campaign. There are underground schemes among the various security agencies to ambush the coordination of the anti-terrorism operations, which are linked to who should control the huge budgetary allocation anticipated for the sector. The government's closer attention and focus on corruption would also assist in redesigning its security framework. ▽

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# CUSTOMARY INSTITUTIONS AND TRADITIONS IN PASTORALIST SOCIETIES: NEGLECTED POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

BY LUKE GLOWACKI AND KATJA GÖNC

## Introduction

Border regions in the Horn of Africa are rife with pastoralist conflicts that usually include tit-for-tat cattle raids, thefts and revenge killings. These sometimes escalate into widespread violence, resulting in the mass displacement of people, reduced access to pasture and water and decreased livelihoods. Cultural traditions and customary institutions feature significantly in conflict initiation and resolution. As a result, efforts to encourage and employ these institutions in conflict prevention and resolution programmes present an

opportunity to achieve more sustainable peace by utilising internal cultural factors. This article reviews the dynamics of pastoralist conflicts, using case examples of how cultural traditions and customary institutions can contribute to successful conflict resolution.

**Above: Four members of a local peace committee of the Dassanech tribe in Ethiopia.**



**Pastoral groups in the Horn of Africa live in resource-scarce environments with poor infrastructure and minimal access to markets.**

### **Dynamics of Conflict among Pastoralist Societies**

Pastoral groups in the Horn of Africa tend to live in resource-scarce environments with poor infrastructure and minimal access to markets.<sup>1</sup> Most groups share basic subsistence patterns with varying dependency upon agriculture to supplement livestock production. Although some populations are highly transhumant with villages frequently relocating, more commonly only a segment of a society relocates seasonally with herds, while the remaining members live in semi-permanent villages. Livestock usually forms the basis of economic integration with markets and provides the majority of income received, either through selling livestock or by-products such as butter. At the same time, livestock possess enormous cultural value. Not only are they necessary for bride-wealth payments, they also form the basis for important rituals in many societies in the region.

Although pastoralists occupy a broad range of cultural niches, the underlying behavioural dynamics and consequences of conflict are similar across groups. The majority of small-scale conflicts are conducted by young males. These usually involve tit-for-tat cattle raids, thefts or revenge killings. These cycles may escalate into conflicts involving hundreds or thousands of warriors, which result

in the mass displacement of people and the creation of vast depopulated buffer zones between groups. For instance, among the Turkana of northern Kenya, over 40% of the area is estimated to be uninhabited because of conflict between the Turkana and other groups such as the Pokot,<sup>2</sup> while in Ethiopia, the agro-pastoral Mursi traditionally have a buffer zone between 40 and 50 km wide.<sup>3</sup> These buffer zones make conflict less likely by increasing the spatial distances between groups. However, uninhabited buffer zones also

**AMONG PASTORALIST GROUPS, THE TWO MOST SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE INDIVIDUALS TO PARTICIPATE IN CONFLICT ARE STRONG NORMS OF REVENGE IN WHICH GRIEVANCES DEMAND COMPENSATION OR REVENGE AND A DESIRE FOR STATUS THAT MAY ACCOMPANY SUCCESSFUL RAIDS**



**For pastoral groups, livestock usually forms the basis of economic integration with markets and provides the majority of income received, as well as possessing significant cultural value.**

contribute to decreased resource availability through the reduction of accessible pasture and water.

Although the importance of natural resource scarcity as a contributor to conflict is frequently stressed, cultural factors have a significant role in conflict initiation and escalation.<sup>4</sup> Among pastoralist groups, the two most significant cultural factors that motivate individuals to participate in conflict are strong norms of revenge in which grievances demand compensation or revenge and a desire for status that may accompany successful raids. For instance, among the Dassanech of south-west Ethiopia and northern Kenya, men go to war because of 'debt', which includes the desire for revenge, and 'jealousy', in which men seek to emulate others who have received recognition for being brave in warfare.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, a well-known Nyangatom warrior related in an interview: "I never fought until the Kara [neighbouring group] came to take my cattle. Now I will not wait for them."<sup>6</sup>

The social recognition individuals receive for conflict participation can be enormous. Successful warriors may receive honorific chest scars denoting kills, be entitled to a new name indicating their success in war, wear special insignia, have songs sung about them, and gain the respect of their peers. At the same time, females and elders may also encourage raids by teasing or mocking individuals

to participate in conflict, especially if there has been an unavenged raid against their group.

Pastoralist cultures also have customary or traditional institutions that are employed in conflict, though there is a significant diversity between cultures. Some societies have highly structured customary institutions, such as the *Gada* and *Heer* systems in the Oromo and Somali ethnic groups respectively. The *Gada* system among the Oromo organises males into sets based on age, in which each set has certain responsibilities. The *Heer* system among the Somali refers to traditional jurisprudence employed to resolve conflicts within and between clans. Formal institutions such as these can be utilised to incite or resolve conflict. Other pastoralist groups have less formal customary institutions, such as those among the Nyangatom of Ethiopia and South Sudan and the Turkana of northern Kenya, which involve the intervention of significant ritual leaders and elders that perform blessings and engage in discussions to resolve conflict.

Across groups, customary institutions generally continue to have an important role in both the initiation and resolution of conflict. For instance, young men may seek the permission of elders before raiding, and large conflicts usually require the sanction and blessing of ritual leaders before their initiation. In some instances, elders may incite



**Kenyan police officers patrol during a search mission to find the remains of police officers killed by alleged Turkana cattle rustlers in an ambush, near Baragoi in the north-western Samburu district of northern Kenya (November 2012).**

youth to participate in conflict, recounting tales of their own bravery when they were youth. Elders and ritual leaders are also important for conflict prevention and resolution. Informally they may try to restrain youth from raiding, and formally may be signatories to peace agreements.

#### **Cultural Structures and Mechanisms for Peace**

Many peace initiatives focus on external conflict triggers such as resource scarcity or market integration, while leaving aside the cultural factors that contribute to conflict. Although this may reduce the likelihood of conflict developing, it ignores the important underlying causes of conflict. In this section, case examples are used to show how cultural factors can be employed for conflict resolution.

#### **Revenge, Compensation and Peace Accords**

Many pastoralist societies have strong norms of revenge that are primarily responsible for escalating cycles of violence. In cases of theft, injury or death, there may be significant cultural pressure for youth to engage in revenge attacks. Escalating conflicts are frequently mediated by external actors, and these sometimes result in the establishment of a peace accord between the conflicting parties. However, for accords to be successful, they need

to be binding upon individuals who may otherwise desire revenge. To enable this, the underlying cultural norms for revenge should be addressed. This can be successfully accomplished with compensation for grievances in addition to – or in place of – rule of law sanctions, which frequently do not satisfy underlying cultural norms for revenge. When rule of law sanctions are employed without compensation, they may escalate conflict, because revenge may then be targeted against the offender's family, or the offender may be subject to revenge upon their release from state confinement.

The employment of compensation as the backbone of successful peace accords is demonstrated by the Maikona Declaration between the Borena and Gebra in the Oromo regions of southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya.<sup>7</sup> Elders from both groups were party to the agreement stipulating amounts of compensation to be paid in cases of theft, injury

**LIKEWISE, THE INCLUSION OF TRADITIONALLY EXCLUDED ACTORS, SUCH AS FEMALES, MAY PROVIDE AN IMPORTANT MEANS THROUGH WHICH PEACE CAN BE PROMOTED**



**Nyangatom elders in Ethiopia discuss how to manage conflict with the Turkana.**

or death. For instance, if an individual steals an animal from a member of another group that is party to the declaration, that individual or his family then pays five livestock in compensation. This requirement of compensation reduces internal cultural pressure for revenge by providing a clear alternative that satisfies these norms without violence. At the same time, it creates a disincentive to initiate conflict because of the likelihood of being required to pay compensation. Since this agreement was implemented in 2009 there has been a dramatic decrease in conflict deaths, primarily due to the absence of revenge attacks resulting from the payment of compensation. In a similar way, conflict resolution agreements will be more effective if they can satisfy internal cultural pressures that contribute to violence.

### **Engaging Elders**

Elders have an important role in conflict initiation and resolution, and their support is crucial for any successful conflict resolution intervention. Among many pastoralist societies in the South Omo area of Ethiopia, elders formally give their blessings before youth engage in conflict. As one important elder told youth to encourage them to fight: “When I was young, I was fighting all the time, I even

slept in the river to catch the enemy. You youth only sit here in the village and you do not fight. No one will respect you.”<sup>8</sup>

Conflict resolution can successfully utilise the social power elders wield by incorporating them into peace processes. For this to happen, elders should understand the harm resulting from conflict and be committed to peace. Efforts to incorporate elders have been successful among the Nyangatom in south-west Ethiopia. At a peace meeting in 2007, several Nyangatom elders agreed no longer to bless youth who were going to war. Consequently, raiding participation decreased because youth are no longer socially sanctioned by elders. The neighbouring Kara and Dassanech also provide examples. Among the Dassanech, over 150 youth were preparing to go to war and the elders received notice of their plans. Older age sets, including the elders, joined together in beating the young men with sticks to make them cancel their plans.<sup>9</sup> Among the Kara of the South Omo region of Ethiopia, a group of 40 young men were preparing to raid the neighbouring Nyangatom. Word reached the elders and they were able to convince the youth to abandon their plans.<sup>10</sup>

By engaging elders in the peace process and identifying elders committed to peace, it is possible to create internal



**Dassanech youth and women of Ethiopia discuss the importance of women's blessings for conflict.**

pressure against conflict, especially those initiated by youth without the consent of elders.

#### **Customary Institutions and Flexibility for Conflicts**

Customary institutions have varying degrees of formality and have significant potential to contribute to conflict resolution, especially when they can be adapted to fit the particularities of given conflicts. For example, in the ongoing conflict between the Suri and Dizi of south-west Ethiopia, customary institutions were employed in a novel way to address their conflict. The Dizi identified hunger and lack of resources experienced by the Suri as a principle cause of the conflict. In preparation for a peace meeting between the two groups in 2010, the most significant ritual elder of the Dizi instructed other elders to bring three plants to the upcoming peace meeting including a coffee bush, *ensete* (false banana) and *godere* (taro root). When the Suri arrived, the Dizi greeted them with these plants, with the intention that the Suri would plant and harvest these gifts and enjoy the resulting food security. At a minimum, it was a significant goodwill gesture – but, more importantly, this gesture, based on the customary use of ritual leaders for negotiations, addressed one of the root causes of the conflict.

Customary institutions have been employed with similar flexibility between the Borena and Gebra along the Kenyan/

Ethiopian border. Here, the Gebra generally inhabit the Kenyan side of the border, while the Borena inhabit the Ethiopian side in an administrative area known as Dire. During certain seasons, the primary pasture and water is on the Kenyan side of the border and both groups graze livestock on the Kenyan side. During other times of the year, resources are more abundant north of the Ethiopian border and both Gebra and Borena graze livestock there. Formerly, the Gebra and Borena engaged in bitter conflicts in which they did not share resources. They have now utilised a traditional system of resource sharing called *seera margaafi bishaanii* (rules of grazing lands and water points), which employs concepts of neighbourliness and resource access in periods of scarcity. Under this arrangement, in times of scarcity either group is allowed to utilise grazing and water resources in the area where it is available without hindrance. This appears to reduce the stress that results from resources as a conflict trigger.

#### **Cultural Values and the Power of Rhetoric**

Because much of the impetus to participate in conflict comes from internal cultural values, these provide an important means to dampen conflict potential, particularly through efforts to encourage values that promote peace. This can happen in any of a number of ways, including



educational programmes, decisions by a certain segment of society to promote non-violent values, or through gradually changing social norms.

Rhetoric can be potentially inflammatory to conflicts, especially when it encourages revenge against a certain ethnic group. Borena members of Megado Kebele in Dire Woreda, Ethiopia, explained how they have tried to change their rhetoric so as not to inflame conflict. As one informant stated: "Previously when someone killed someone, we would say 'a Gebra killed a Borena, or a Borena killed a Gebra'. Now we do not talk like that. We try to say 'a bad person killed someone'. In this way, the people that hear this do not think of revenge and it does not encourage ethnic conflict."<sup>11</sup>

Changing cultural values are also important. In the Dillo administrative area of southern Ethiopia, the local women's affairs officer is engaged in a campaign to promote non-violent values among females. One of the traditions in this region is for females to sing songs encouraging men to go to war. Sometimes, these songs are highly inflammatory and contribute to an escalation of conflict. The women's affairs officer visits various villages in the area, conducting workshops with women where they discuss conflict and the ways that women can contribute to peaceful resolution. During these workshops, women are encouraged to create songs praising peaceful values. In this case, cultural traditions are not supplanted but modified towards the promotion of peace.

The Dassanech of southern Ethiopia also provide an example of how females can contribute to the peace process. Among the Dassanech, there is a custom that females provide males going to conflict with beads to honour their participation. Males wear these with pride. However, females who have participated in the peace process and become members of local peace committees feel strongly that they should no longer give these beads to warriors. According to one informant: "But now I can no longer give beads, I cannot bless my sons to go to conflict, because I am on the peace committee."<sup>12</sup>

These examples illustrate how cultural values can be utilised for conflict reduction and resolution. Likewise, the inclusion of traditionally excluded actors, such as females, may provide an important means through which peace can be promoted.

## Conclusion

Even though conflicts may be "...triggered by an individual, peace can only be re-established communally...",<sup>10</sup> requiring the participation of men, women, elders and youth. Engaging individuals from all sections of society makes conflict resolution more likely, even when formal participation in peace processes may be precluded. Focusing on cultural factors that contribute to conflict, such as customary institutions and traditions and ritual aspects, can reduce the internal cultural pressures for conflict.

Conflict resolution programmes that focus on both cultural factors and the inclusion of members from all sections of society can create conditions such that minor conflicts are unlikely to escalate and are quickly and peacefully resolved. **A**

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## Endnotes

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# A CREATIVE APPROACH TO MEASURING RECONCILIATION IN RWANDA

BY IAN S. MCINTOSH



Rwanda is in a state of transition. A modern-day miracle, Rwanda's rebirth from the ruins of a hellish past has few precedents in Africa or elsewhere. After decades of division, oppression and slaughter, an ambitious agenda has been initiated to achieve social cohesion and good governance. But 18 years after the genocide, is the country any closer to being reconciled to its past? Are Rwandans reconciled within themselves? Are they on board with the lofty goal of building state institutions that govern through an 'ethnic-free' lens? These were the questions posed by the Rwandan

government in 2010 when they initiated a state-wide survey based on one developed by South Africa's Institute for Justice and Reconciliation – namely, the Reconciliation Barometer.<sup>1</sup>

The results of the Rwandan survey were more problematic than they were informative. In this article, I argue strongly for the employment of a complementary methodology for surveying the reconciliatory climate – the alternate approach first, analysing the assumptions which underlie the belief that a specific agenda of reconciliation



**The Reconciliation Barometer highlights the extent of a shared Rwandan identity as a key determinant of reconciliation progress in the country.**

will succeed, and second, evaluating the strength of the desire for reconciliation, the strategies of implementation, and the impact of initiatives designed to achieve common goals. The joint application of these two methodologies, longitudinal surveys and reconciliation process analysis provides valuable clues for making critical decisions about how and when scarce resources should be utilised to secure reconciliation's advance.

#### **Rwanda's Reconciliation Barometer**

The goal of Rwanda's Reconciliation Barometer<sup>2</sup> was to highlight, broadly, those areas where reconciliation policies and practices were working and where more attention needed to be focused. Questions were framed in terms of what were deemed to be the key determinants of progress, namely:

- 1 How did people feel about the legitimacy and effectiveness of their political structures and leadership?
- 2 Was there a sense of physical and cultural security in the country?
- 3 To what extent was there a shared Rwandan identity?
- 4 Was there a willingness to confront the root causes of social division that led to the genocide?

- 5 Was there now trust between those on different sides of the ethnic divide?

The administrators of the Rwandan Reconciliation Barometer acknowledged a number of methodological concerns affecting the reliability of the survey, not least being the timing of the interviews – these were conducted in the lead-up to a hotly contested and controversial national election. There was also the question of how free people felt to respond to questions on sensitive topics of a political or personal nature. For example, while 97% of Rwandans indicated a strong preference for a national Rwandan identity<sup>3</sup> and 87% believed that issues relating to the genocide had been frankly discussed and understood,<sup>4</sup> less than 50% were willing to be publicly associated with a dispute or protest.<sup>5</sup> In other words, nearly half of the respondents were not prepared to contest the policies imposed from above, even if those policies affected them adversely.

In South Africa, respondents to that country's Reconciliation Barometer were empowered to speak their minds on the issue of racial reconciliation and its impediments. In Rwanda, however, tensions remain high



The new Rwandan identity cards no longer emphasise ethnic distinctions.

in some quarters,<sup>6</sup> so it is not surprising that the results of the survey were skewed in favour of existing power hierarchies. Freedom of speech is constrained in Rwanda by laws preventing the expression of viewpoints deemed to be divisive or showing ‘evidence of a genocide mentality’. To use the ethnic labels Hutu, Tutsi or Twa outside of the context of genocide commemoration, for example, is considered to be counter to the goals of reconciliation and is a punishable offence.

How do we make meaningful statements then about reconciliation’s trajectory in Rwanda? If the survey alone is problematic, what other strategies need to be put in place to help guide the process? How are decisions to be made about the allocation of scarce resources for greatest effect in promoting reconciliation?

**Rwanda’s Reconciliation Agenda**

Trials and truth commissions are often what spring to mind when we think of reconciliation on the international scene. Perpetrators are put behind bars and encouraged to make amends, and hidden truths about a troubled past are opened to the public gaze. But there are so many other potential avenues of intervention, and Rwanda is at the cutting edge of experimentation in the design of reconciliatory interventions at the individual, societal and national levels. I have counted over 60 significant initiatives, and there are many more. A small sample includes:

- Rwandan identity cards – no longer are Hutus, Tutsis or Twa identified according to their ethnicity
- the ‘Come and See’ project, to attract members of the Hutu and Tutsi diaspora to bring their skills and

resources home

- traditional communal values, which are being promoted on the national stage, like *Agaciro* (dignity), as the hallmark of the new Rwanda where there is trust and hope in the future



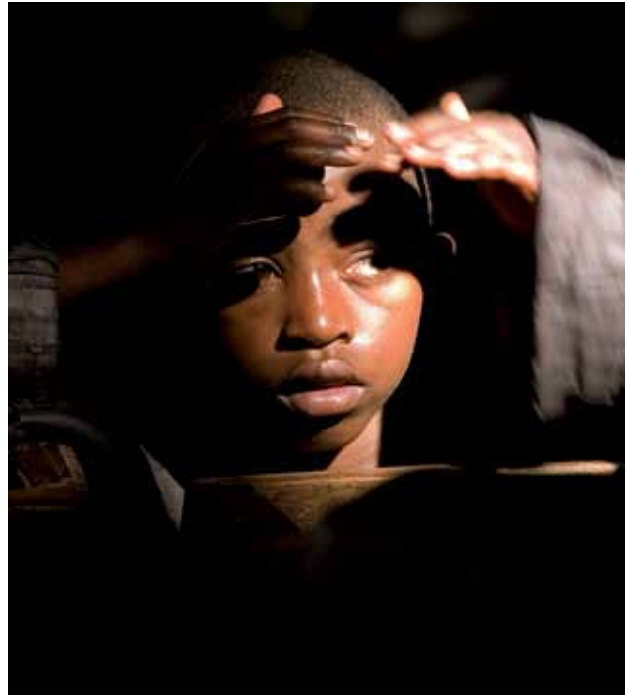
The new flag of Rwanda was adopted on 25 October 2001. The blue stripe represents happiness and peace. The yellow stripe symbolises the country’s mineral wealth and economic development and the green stripe symbolises the country’s natural resources and prosperity. The sun represents unity, transparency and enlightenment from ignorance.

- new national symbols like the flag, coat of arms and anthem
- Villages of Hope, like the Imoya Peace Village, where Tutsi and Hutu victims and perpetrators live side by side
- the 'Send a Cow' programme, which aims to provide a cow to all Rwandan families so children will have access to milk products and grow strong and tall
- the provision of computers by the government to over one million schoolchildren
- creative responses to reconciliation in film, theatre, poetry, and music
- *Itozero*, a school to cultivate good leaders
- *Ingando*, coexistence workshops for students and released prisoners
- community-based reconciliation clubs
- national radio 'soap operas' and other broadcasts emphasising reconciliation
- revised school curricula emphasising a national rather than an ethnic identity
- public apology rallies, where perpetrators apologise for their guilt, complicity or failure to act
- the integration of enemy soldiers into the Rwandan army.

Even this partial list of interventions is impressive, but any analysis of reconciliation's trajectory in Rwanda would need to consider both the effectiveness and the cumulative impact of each and every one of these and other initiatives. To accomplish that task, we need to explore more fully not only what we mean by reconciliation (as in specific goals or visions of the future) but also what we are assuming must take place to reach those objectives. One initiative worthy of deeper analysis is the 'soap opera' on Radio La Benevolencija, which has been very influential in promoting reconciliation in Rwanda.

### Reconciliation Radio

In 1994, radio was an instrument of genocide. Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines was the main voice of extremist hatred, but today, radio is an important tool for reconciliation.<sup>7</sup> Radio La Benevolencija's soap opera *Musekweya (New Dawn)*, about the relationship between Tutsi and Hutu villages, is an excellent example. Radio La Benevolencija's goal is to educate Rwandans about the roots of violence, so they can resist propaganda and stand up against injustice. Twelve core educational messages on violence and healing are at the heart of the programming. The fundamental truth that people can help their neighbours heal by having them tell their stories in an emotionally safe and constructive way is one such message. The makers of the programme carried out extensive surveys of listeners, and they learned that those who listened were more likely to express empathy, more likely to speak up about controversial issues and more likely to enact restorative justice for victims. In a subsequent survey, respondents



**One of the many children in the audience during the screening of a documentary film on the repatriation of former combatants to Rwanda (18 April 2008).**

said that they were also more likely to participate in reconciliatory activities, more likely to apologise, do acts of goodwill or restitution, or admit to mistrust in their communities.

The information gleaned from these surveys is invaluable in ascertaining reconciliation's trajectory. Media censorship, given the pervasiveness of 'hate radio' in the early 1990s, is a major issue for Rwandans. Some peace programming, most notably the Swiss government-funded Radio Agatashya, disappeared from the airwaves after an attack in 1996. What is allowed to be aired and why, and what is not, is an important indicator of progress along the road to reconciliation. My methodology is designed to complement surveys such as that conducted by Radio La Benevolencija and the Rwandan Reconciliation Barometer.

### An Alternate Approach to Measuring Reconciliation

When conceptualised in terms of evolving or transforming public spaces or 'contact zones', reconciliation

**A MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION MAY DESIRE RECONCILIATION, BUT THESE SAME PEOPLE MIGHT BE TOO HURT OR DAMAGED TO DO THE NECESSARY WORK**



**Wooden statues telling the history of Rwanda are displayed inside the Gisozi memorial in Kigali.**

appears in the mind's eye as a board game with multiple players. Many moves are happening simultaneously, pushing some of the pieces closer to the finish and others further apart and sometimes off the board. The rules are not clear, often being made as the game proceeds. At certain times, one can move freely, but at others, movement is restricted. We know that winning the game is not simply a matter of linear progression from one side of the board to the other; that is, from intractable divisions to blissful coexistence and reconciliation. Agendas change over time (as do the rules of engagement), and priorities are reordered in the light of new experiences. But if we take a snapshot of the game in motion, we can see progress in specific encounters. And by focusing attention, and an analytical eye, on encounters across the full dimension of the playing field, the nature of the trajectory (as well as the ultimate goals of each party) come more clearly into focus.

In my analysis of the many interventions and initiatives currently in play in Rwanda, I begin with the proposition that their success will be determined by three factors. First, there must be a desire or an interest by the various parties. Second, the people involved must have the personal capacity to do the work of reconciliation. Finally, there has to be an opportunity to reconcile. The door must be opened for meaningful interactions to occur, injustices to be addressed, and lives lived to their fullest potential.

A majority of the population may desire reconciliation, but these same people might be too hurt or damaged to do

the necessary work. They lack the personal capacity. Or the opportunity might be there for reconciliation and the people might have the personal capacity, but they do not desire it, for whatever reason. The injustices might be too grave or the pain too deep. All three aspects – desire, capacity and opportunity – need to be in sync for there to be any real progress. This is why we cannot rely solely on surveys as a guide in agenda-setting. Like an image in a distorting mirror, surveys can provide a less-than-perfect reflection of reconciliation's trajectory. Equally important is to examine how reconciliation is played out day by day in public spaces, on the airwaves, in classrooms and coffee shops, and how those public spaces or 'contact zones' are impacted by the many interventions that are being employed.

The raw materials for this analysis, then, are the full range of initiatives enacted as part of an agenda of reconciliation. Drawing inspiration from 'theory of change',<sup>8</sup> this methodology provides an opportunity to review the underlying assumptions regarding expectations of how we move from a current less-than-satisfactory state of minimal coexistence along a continuum to a more reconciled state, as a result of these initiatives. How well enunciated and understood are these stages of progression? What are the preconditions for moving from one stage to another? For example, if the goal of a Rwanda that is free from the politics of identity is a priority, what actual laws, physical



**A photographic exhibition, entitled "Through the Eyes of Children: The Rwanda Project". Using disposable cameras, the children of Rwanda took pictures, exploring their own vision as the country struggled to rebuild (April 2004).**



**Joseph Nsengimana (left), Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations, speaks at the opening ceremony of the exhibition entitled “Lessons from the Rwanda Genocide - The 13th Anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide” (April 2007).**

structures and actions are required, and how will these be evaluated for their effectiveness?

The challenge is to open one’s mind to see the full range of gestures in operation, both large and small, that we often don’t see or acknowledge. This might be in the form of both ‘hardware’ and ‘software’, namely physical developments like housing or schools, or the non-physical, like those gestures relating to the changing of values or beliefs associated with a conflict. There might be a school curriculum that highlights issues of social justice, a sculpture or memorial that brings into focus an historical truth, a landmark handshake between people on different sides of the political spectrum, a television advertisement that promotes a vision of unity and social inclusion, a comedy routine that makes people laugh at themselves and each other, a trial that sends a message that impunity is not to be tolerated, an admission of guilt and a confession by a perpetrator of genocide who bucks the trend of denial, and so on. In a sense, all of these gestures are in themselves ‘tipping points’. They all represent the culmination of a certain series of decisions, actions, compromises and victories. In the case of Radio La Benevolencija, for example, we see the constraints under which it has to operate.

### **Reviewing Assumptions and Evaluating Capacity**

The process that is being advocated for measuring reconciliation is based on:

- reviewing the assumptions that underlie the belief that a specific agenda of reconciliation will succeed
- evaluating the strength of the will or desire for reconciliation by different segments of a society, the comprehensiveness of the plan, and how various interventions are changing the nature of interactions in the public arena and the life outcomes of citizens. Are Rwandans availing themselves of the chance to transform their nation in the manner prescribed by the government? Do they all have equal access to education, employment, essential services and opportunities for advancement?

In an ideal situation, of course, parties to a conflict will have negotiated a pathway towards a well-defined destination, with progress marked by social indicators. In such instances, monitoring progress towards reconciliation is straightforward. But in the vast majority of cases around the globe, there is no such convergence of interests, no roadmap for what lies ahead or how to move the process



**Rwandan President Paul Kagame speaks to members of the press about reconciliation progress in the country (May 2006).**

forward in a manner that keeps with the wishes of the various constituencies.

Widely displayed in Rwandan public spaces, like museums and memorials, are the horrifying '10 Hutu Commandments'<sup>9</sup> developed in the late 1950s, which correspond in large part with the equally well-publicised eight stages of genocide, namely (1) Classification, (2) Symbolisation, (3) Dehumanisation, (4) Organisation, (5) Polarisation, (6) Preparation, (7) Extermination and (8) Denial.

But it is as important for Rwandans to publicise the negotiated and anticipated stages of reconciliation in the public arena. In Sri Lanka, for example, there are the 5Rs: (1) Reconstruction + (2) Resettlement + (3) Rehabilitation + (4) Reintegration = (5) Reconciliation.

The degree to which there is clarity with regard to these stages of reconciliation is in itself an indicator of the extent of a convergence of interests. In Rwanda, however, there is no such clarity.

Rwanda is not regarded as deficient. There is no uncontested formula for reconciliation in any global setting, unless it is between countries – for example, France and Germany, or between Poland and Russia. Within countries like Australia, where there is also a strong focus on reconciliation, there are distinct divisions between what non-Aborigines see as the cornerstone of reconciliation, namely 'closing the gap' on Aboriginal disadvantage, whereas Aborigines consider symbolic measures like treaties, changes to the constitution and apologies as essential stepping stones.

**IMPLICIT IN THIS PLAN IS THE STRONGLY HELD BELIEF THAT THE PEOPLE OF RWANDA HAVE BOTH A CAPACITY AND AN INCLINATION TO FORGIVE**



Consider the 12 steps used by reforming alcoholics in the time-proven methodology developed by Alcoholics Anonymous. The reformer must admit to being powerless – that their lives have become unmanageable. They make a searching and fearless moral inventory of themselves, create a list of all persons they have harmed, and agree to make amends to them all. The pathway to reconciliation, likewise, lies within the people themselves, and it is clear-cut. The pathway to reconciliation at the national level must be similarly well-defined.

In Rwanda, the hopes of reconciliation are pinned on a number of key initiatives, including:

- 1 the elimination of ethnic divisions (between the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa) and governance through an ethnic-free lens
- 2 government-mandated apology and forgiveness by perpetrators and victims of the genocide
- 3 *Gacaca* grassroots courts, which provide limited amnesty for perpetrators of genocide who are prepared to admit their crimes and agree to pay restitution in the form of community service
- 4 the inspirational traditional notion of *Agaciro*, a deeply held hope and trust in a dignified future where there is no repeat of the past
- 5 peace and prosperity for all through economic development and decentralisation.

The formula for reconciliation in Rwanda, then, would read something like this: Nationalism + Forgiveness + Redemption + Hope + Prosperity = Reconciliation.

The current top-down agenda in Rwanda is predicated upon building the capacity of the people to reconcile and then helping them to lead full and complete lives. Some critics of this formula might point to justice and reparations and even democracy as essential preconditions for reconciliation, but these are not prioritised in the current agenda. By stressing the need for a new non-ethnic national identity, understanding the truth about the past, and strongly encouraging confession and compassion, reconciliation's proponents in the government believe that they can lay the past to rest and move forward as one united nation.

Implicit in this plan is the strongly held belief that the people of Rwanda have both a capacity and an inclination to forgive. As with the concept of *ubuntu* championed by Desmond Tutu of South Africa,<sup>10</sup> clemency is understood to be an essential factor contributing to the success or failure of this new paradigm in nationbuilding. But in the list of examples of reconciliatory initiatives, there are very few in which Hutus, Tutsis and Twa are being given the opportunity to forgive each other and themselves for the many generations of mistreatment and the genocide. There are minimal examples where Rwandans are being equipped with the personal capacity to forgive – and to grow strong and whole through that process. The view that there are very real benefits arising from forgiveness

is lauded by Rwandan authorities, but will the Rwandan people unquestioningly accept this prescription? Can it be sustained in the long term? Whatever the outcome, this unique experiment in overcoming the legacy of genocide by prioritising forgiveness and seeking to govern a historically divided nation through an ethnic-free lens is one from which many other countries can learn.

### Conceptualising a Way Forward

The overall goal of any reconciliation process is to facilitate a negotiation process on closure and healing, and to transition a society towards a vision of the future that is entertained by all. A key element in the planning process is to imagine and then implement a sequence of events or tipping points that will lead inexorably to that vision. What are we assuming must occur with each new stage along that continuum? Which strategies build momentum and which stifle progress? With information gleaned from surveys and data from the analysis of reconciliation initiatives, we are better placed to make those critical judgements about where scarce resources should be allocated for greatest impact in building long-term positive peace, or reconciliation. ▲

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### Endnotes

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# AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN GHANA: CHALLENGES TO A GROWING DEMOCRACY

BY **BEATRICE T. TORTO**

## Introduction

In its literal sense, affirmative action warrants that any discrimination which infringes on the fundamental rights of women should be outlawed, whilst women's socio-economic development, influence and impact on society are traditionally and constitutionally entrenched. Global initiatives to legalise the domestic, professional and political roles of women in society gained momentum in the 1960s.<sup>1</sup> Through resilient affirmative action processes, women are now vocal in governance and decision-making processes in many countries. Women constitute 20.3% of parliaments globally, and 20.4% of parliaments in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding persistent efforts at increasing campaigns to bridge the gap between women and men in national

decision-making processes globally, the process has been painstakingly slow. However, critical thinkers and feminist political scientists, such as Drude Dahlerup, are of the view that women can effect different and long-term significant changes in parliaments to improve their lot.<sup>3</sup>

**Above: Parliamentarians from around the world briefed journalists on the Final UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Speakers included (from left): Riitta Resch, Ambassador, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland; Margareta Cederfelt, Member of Parliament, Sweden; and Irene Addo Torshie, Member of Parliament, Ghana (26 March 2013).**



**The Security Council adopts resolution 1325 (2000), urging an enhanced role for women in preventing conflict, promoting peace and assisting in post-conflict reconstruction within United Nations operations (31 October 2000).**

Basing this argument on her 'Critical Mass' theory, Dahlerup asserts that women naturally have a different approach to, or 'style' of, politics, and their election to the highest decision-making body in any country stands the chance of reshaping the nature of the parliament itself, and influencing policy priorities and legislations.<sup>4</sup> To this end, countries and international institutions are advocating for women's empowerment programmes to be included in government agendas as a means of addressing gender stereotypes.

In Ghana, gender equality and the development of women's empowerment have not been consistent for the past 50 years, as a result of the lack of political will by successive governments to adopt constructive policies to that effect. Contrary to media outcry and alleged government interest, gender and related issues have witnessed measured growth despite women's historical, socio-economic and political contributions to the development of the country. Ghana is yet to meet any international standard of enhancing women's participation in governance, leadership and decision-making processes. However, attempts at policy development and implementation steered by civil society organisations and other stakeholders have yielded positive results through the appointment of women to key government leadership positions. These positions include the Chief Justice, former Speaker of parliament, head of the Statistical Service, running mates for two presidential candidates in the December 2012 polls, and appointments to numerous ministerial and other public institutions.

Heralded as one of Africa's thriving democracies, it is imperative to note that Ghana is struggling to recognise and ensure the participation of women decision-makers in

its governance affairs. Successive governments have been paying lip service in addressing the affirmative action of women in the country. Typical examples are the lackadaisical attitude parliament has attached to the proposed Affirmative Action Bill, as well as the country's dismal attitude towards the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and other initiatives of international bodies in streamlining gender-sensitive programmes across the world. It was not until 31 October 2012 – amidst international and internal pressure – that the current government adopted a National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (dubbed GHANAP 1325). The question that remains to be answered is whether this protocol will suffer the same lack of implementation, monitoring and evaluation as other protocols that preceded it.

In the recent national elections, held on 7 and 8 December 2012, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and African Union (AU) observer missions were unequivocal in their call for an affirmative action policy to ensure the participation of women in national decision-making activities. Thus, a critique of Ghana's affirmative action and women's empowerment process to complement the country's growing democratic leadership and practices, especially constitutional and institutional development, is worth considering.

#### **History of Affirmative Action in Ghana**

The development of affirmative action in Ghana officially began in the 1960s, and gained prominence in the 1980s and 1990s under the Fourth Republic. The 1960 Republican

Constitution enacted the Affirmative Action Act (AAA), supporting the participation of women in local, regional and national decision-making processes with 10 mandatory women appointees to the national assembly/legislature. However, subsequent constitutions – such as the 1969, 1979 and present 1992 documents – have failed to apportion any mandatory percentage(s) to women in the national assembly, although there are some clauses in the 1992 Constitution that prohibit gender discrimination in any form.

Notwithstanding these constitutional setbacks, women's organisations during the 1980s and 1990s – such as the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement – played significant roles in empowering women to economic independence in Ghana.<sup>5</sup> These movements mobilised women across the country – particularly rural and unemployed women who were economically, socially, politically and culturally handicapped. They were assisted both individually and in groups to engage in self-financing and self-sustaining activities. This assistance was in the form of monetary capital (micro-credit loans) and periodic workshops for skills training in financial and business management, health, afforestation and entrepreneurship programmes.

In addition to the role played by the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement and other organisations, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) and other related international initiatives were adopted. These instruments drew awareness to the various humanitarian challenges associated with

gender discrimination and the need for global advocacy around women's empowerment.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, governments, civil society and individuals have been involved in and empathetic to gender and its related issues.

Policies, protocols and treaties to streamline women's/girl-child education, women's economic independence, women's social and political security and their professional capacities and capabilities have been initiated and adopted, and some implemented. Currently, Ghana can boast of a large number of women's rights-based non-governmental organisations and gender advocacy groups that are helping to shape policies which ensure respect for women's rights and dignity. Some of these organisations are the Ark Foundation, the Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE), the Gender Studies and Human Rights Centre, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) (Ghana), ABANTU for Development, Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa (LAWA) (Ghana), the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (University of Ghana) and the Gender Development Resource Centre (GIMPA).<sup>7</sup>

#### Treaties and Policy Obligations

Ghana's present lack of an effective and efficient affirmative action policy may be attributed to the failure by successive governments to implement both domestic and international policies, treaties and protocols on gender. Although Ghana is a signatory to a number of United



UN PHOTO/CHEN KAI XING

**Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, then First Lady of Ghana and president of the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement, addresses correspondents in a meeting on Education, Health and Sustainable Development at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China (03 September 1995).**

Nations (UN) and AU charters and conventions on women’s empowerment – such as the 2003 African Women’s Protocol (Article 9) through which the AU has set a target of 50% representation by women in decision-making bodies by 2020 (a target that was increased from 30%) in parliament – the country is yet to rectify and implement most of them.<sup>8</sup> Ghana is currently also a signatory to a number of international instruments, such as the 1986 UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the AU Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and the ECOWAS Gender Development Policy.<sup>9</sup> At a national level, relevant legislation pertaining to women include the Children’s Act of 1998, the Human Trafficking Act of 2005, and the Domestic Violence Act of 2007, among others.<sup>10</sup>

### Gender under the 1992 Constitution<sup>11</sup>

The present 1992 Constitution includes provisions that address gender and some women’s rights issues. For example, articles 17 and 27 prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender and gender rights, and articles 12(1,2), 35(5) and 36(b), among other references, are all attempts made under the Constitution to support women’s rights issues.<sup>12</sup> However, a perfunctory examination of these provisions reveals gaps, as they are scattered across the Constitution instead of being condensed into direct, clear-cut expressions. Thus, they lack the compelling power to ensure their implementation and enforcement.

In addition, the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 484 of 1994, for instance – which also makes female genital mutilation a second-degree felony, punishable by a minimum of three years’ imprisonment – has become dormant, as people guilty under this law still practise the heinous act, albeit clandestinely.<sup>13</sup> A lack of political will in adopting the proposed affirmative action policy – aimed at relinquishing a 40% quota for women’s representation on all government and public service boards, commissions, councils, committees and official bodies, including Cabinet and the Council of State – cannot be excluded. Hence, the glaring evidence of inconsistencies in women’s representation in decision-making bodies from 1960 to date.

Statistical records on parliamentary elections in Ghana show that in 1960, 10 women versus 94 men were elected into parliament; in 1969, one female versus 103 men; in 1979, five women versus 135 men; in 1992, 16 women versus 174 men; and, in 1996, 18 women versus 172 men. For the year 2000, 19 women versus 181 men were elected; in 2004, 25 women versus 205 men; in 2008, 20 women versus 210 men; and, in 2012, 30 women versus 245 men. These statistical inconsistencies clearly show the country measured progress in increasing women’s participation in national decision-making processes. At district level, especially in the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies, there is no existing law ensuring gender parity, except for an Administrative Instrument (AI) that

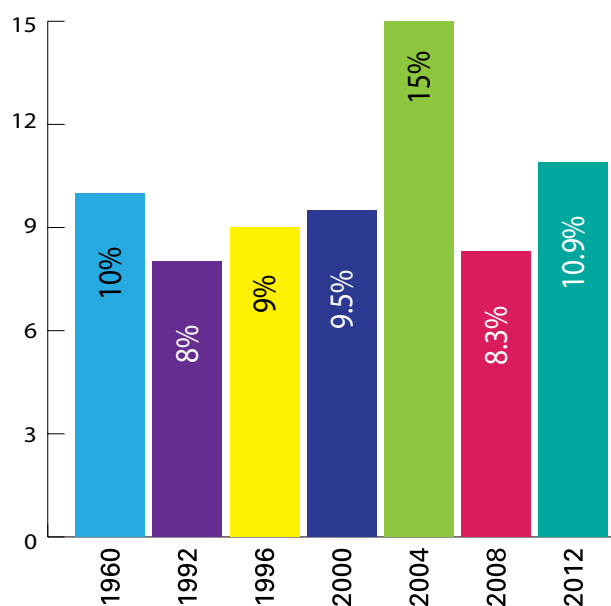
has, over the years, solicited for 30% of district assemblies memberships for women.<sup>14</sup> Statistics at this level further show that, in 1994, a total of 122 women were elected as Assembly women nationwide versus 4082 men; and, in 1998, a total of 196 women versus 4624 men. The number slightly increased in 2002 to 341 women versus 4241 men and 433 women versus 4301 men in 2006.<sup>15</sup>

The initial 10% female representation in the national assembly/parliament in the 1960s dwindled to 8% in 1992, then picked up to 9% in 1996 and 9.5% in 2000, then 15% in 2004.<sup>16</sup> However, it decreased significantly to 8.3% in 2008, causing a public outcry from women’s groups and organisations and the general public – despite the appointment of women to the significant political positions of Chief Justice and Speaker of parliament. The December 2012 polls, however, show promising figures of 10.9% the country needs to improve on in future elections (see Figure 1).<sup>17</sup>

Many factors may be attributed to the dismal representation of women in Ghanaian politics, most conspicuously lack of funds to support women’s campaigns, verbal and psychological threats from male counterparts, harassment and insults from fellow women and men, chieftaincy and political affiliations and cultural stigmatisation. The result is that, despite the country’s steady democratic growth, the participation of women in politics and decision-making at the national level is still a challenge, signifying the need for more work to be done.

To this end, there are various cultural and economic factors that affect the level of representation of minorities and other marginalised groups in parliaments worldwide. To date, gender equality and women’s empowerment

**Figure 1: Female representation in Ghana’s national assembly/parliament, 1960–2012.**



remain sensitive and topical issues in Ghana, mainly due to cultural and structural factors, despite the presence of over-publicised gender awareness programmes, projects, workshops and policies in the country. Limited autonomy, low status poverty, gender-based violence, lack of access to justice and legal information, and lack of access to land and credit facilities, are a few of the discriminatory and sensitive issues hindering the development of women in Ghana. The recent passage of the act on domestic violence is encouraging, as it allows women who are subjected to any form of abuse (physical and/or emotional) to seek legal redress against their abusers. However, the negative media coverage the law has received put a dent in its success, as women still lack the courage to report abusive spouses (who are often the breadwinners) and fear societal stigmatisation, and the eventual possibility of single parenthood.

## GHANA'S PRESENT LACK OF AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY MAY BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE FAILURE BY SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS TO IMPLEMENT BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLICIES, TREATIES AND PROTOCOLS ON GENDER.

### **Constitutional Amendments<sup>18</sup>**

Expectations for the recent proposed constitutional reforms are high, and women's empowerment groups are calling for in-depth institutional and structural changes to address the low participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels. Dialogue between government and other stakeholders has eventually led to the proposal of an affirmative action policy, aimed at establishing a constitutional portfolio mandated to address women's rights and protection issues. In view of claims that the Ghanaian state historically and consistently under-represented women, much consideration has been given to the draft amendments of the 1992 Constitution on gender-related issues.

The draft has made provision for a parliamentary enactment of a comprehensive AAA, within six months of coming into force of the Amendment of the Constitution to address broader gender equality issues.<sup>19</sup> Some of the provisions are revised and restructured to address gender parity more broadly, and to include a guaranteed 30% representation of women in all public institutions and offices as far as possible. The draft amendment explains that this will complement the existing Article 35 and 35(6)(b) to fulfil the constitutional objectives of national integration,

the equal treatment of all Ghanaians and a gender balance in public appointments.<sup>20</sup> The draft Constitution has also restructured Act 27 to read "Gender Rights" instead of "women rights", and section 27(2) to read "facilities shall be provided at the work place for the care of children below school going age to facilitate care by parents".<sup>21</sup>

Addressing women's representation at the grass roots level, the amendment further requires a review of the Political Parties Act, 2000 (Act 574), where political parties must achieve certain levels of representation for marginalised groups – especially women – within specific time-frames as a condition for their continued existence.<sup>22</sup> This has attracted strong resistance from all political parties, with arguments that the proposed reform will not only jeopardise the core concept of Act 574 in preventing policies and activities that inhibit national integration and democracy to progress in Ghana, but will also dictate the ideological orientation and organisational precepts of political parties.<sup>23</sup> The parties further argue that political parties are voluntary associations guided by their own ideologies and constitutions, which make them attract popular electoral votes, and it will be in the best interests of all if political parties are allowed to accommodate the affirmative action legislation reasonably in their policies and actions at their own pace instead of it being imposed on them by law, as proposed by the reform.<sup>24</sup> These arguments clearly buttress the point that the country lacks the political will to ensure effective women's representation, thereby reinforcing patriarchy in the society.

Provisional results by the Ghana Statistical Service on the 2010 Population Census indicate that out of 24,223,431 Ghanaians, there are 11,801,661 men and 12,421,770 women, constituting 48.7% and 51.3% respectively.<sup>25</sup> This clearly puts in dispute the below-average representation by women in decision-making processes.<sup>26</sup> Addressing these shortcomings will require the full implementation of recommendations from the recent constitutional review. The onus is now on the National Assembly to hasten its processes regarding the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill and the incorporation of constitutional reform recommendations made into active national laws, if the country is to make any significant impact on women's empowerment and gender parity.

In addition, legal structures supporting activities of women groups should be adopted. Likewise, it will also be in Ghana's interest to be on track with goal three (3) of the Millennium Development Goals to make an impact in eradicating hunger and poverty; collaborate with the international community to address human capital issues, such as maternal mortality and gender gaps in education, where these persist; reduce earning and productivity gaps between women and men; give women a greater voice within households and society; and limit the perpetuation of gender inequality in the country.



**Jane Amavi Kwawu, Minister for Women and Children's Affairs of Ghana, briefs journalists on the Institutional Mechanisms for Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ghana (March 2010).**

### **The Role of State Institutions, Women's Organisations and Political Parties**

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), established by an Executive Instrument (EI 8) in January 2001, is a government-mandated body that champions the role of women and children in the country. The ministry is spearheading and coordinating gender and child-related development programmes, particularly in improving the status of women in Ghana. The MGCSP is seen as a vigorous national platform to overcome the challenges of gender inequality, where gender issues continue to receive attention at the highest level of decision-making. The ministry releases periodic press statements on women's issues in the country. For example, in May 2012, following a worrying spate of domestic violence against women, the ministry issued a statement that called on security agencies to investigate and bring perpetrators to book, and to follow up on reported cases of abuse of women.

In addition to the MGCSP, a notable number of non-governmental organisations and international partner organisations – such as ABANTU for Development, the Network for Women's Rights (NETRIGHT-Ghana), the Coalition of Women in Governance (COWIG), the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA), the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), among others – have also sponsored various women's sensitisation programmes. Together with local organisations, these groups are currently pushing

for legislation to make quotas for women's representation in parliament a legal requirement in Ghana. According to them, the quota system is not a means of seeking the easy way out, but another way to streamline the major socio-cultural challenges inhibiting women from participating in governance and decision-making in the country.

To a large extent, the impact and influence of these organisations on ordinary Ghanaian women has not been impressive. Most of these groups are based in urban centres, rather than in rural areas where the majority of Ghanaian women are resident. Most importantly, their influence on women in urban centres has been described as sluggish, as many women are still unaware of their existence and availability to improve their lives. In addition, most of these women's groups are often perceived as elitist and only interested in organising conferences in big hotels with popular media air plays, instead of addressing women's issues at the grassroots.

Another point worth noting is the similar mandates of these groups – there is lack of variety in their activities. This lack of diversity has become a major challenge and, to some extent, a setback, as many say the same things when there are other aspects to explore. These groups often focus on women's capacity-building through training and advocacy, and have used their medium to call for the end to domestic violence against women, and the increased participation of women in decision-making at a national level. However, the practicality of what this capacity-building entails has

been questionable as a result of the inability to reach larger beneficiaries. There are also fewer follow-ups to track progress made in the lives of target groups.

To address these seemingly challenging issues, women's groups should endeavour to expand their mandate to include other avenues, such as investing in publications and research, which can attract young women and girls of school-going age, thus making a visible impact on future generations; their target groups should expand beyond urban centres and cities to rural areas and communities where their services are needed most; they should engage in projects lucrative enough to attract the needed people, and appeal even to women residing in big towns and cities who are unaware of their activities; and their focus should be tuned to what is controlling global growth in recent times, namely economic empowerment and information technology, through which proper independence can be attained.

Within the political party context, women's participation in politics is minimal, although almost all the political parties in the country have women organisers and coordinators. Women face strict opposition in their bid to occupy significant party positions. Women are more inclined to less popular party positions of general secretary and vice chairman, than other influential positions – such as the chairmanship of the party – which are often 'reserved' for men. The inference is that within the political party system there are high levels of gender inequality. However, Samia Nkrumah was able to break through to become the first female party chairperson for one of the major political parties in Ghana, the Convention People's Party (CPP).<sup>27</sup>

Recent arguments by political parties against affirmative action plans under the proposed constitutional reforms are another major challenge in the country's efforts to ensure women's inclusion in national decision-making platforms. Women politicians face verbal abuse and threats from their male counterparts in their bid to acquire influential positions within the party and at government level. A typical example is the pressure and political battering Ms Nkrumah endured to become the first female chairperson of the CPP.<sup>28</sup> Attacks on other female party functionaries have also increased, and some are referred to as 'iron ladies' who need to be taught a lesson or two in humility.

### **Ghana on UNSCR 1325**

Since the inception of UNSCR 1325, women's groups in Ghana and the Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs have advocated for the development of a National Plan of Action for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Ghana.<sup>29</sup> The recent proposal for an affirmative action policy to steer the affairs of women in the country can be considered a step towards the realisation of the resolution in Ghana. Thus far, forums are organised – mainly by gender groups and organisations – to raise awareness of UNSCR 1325 in the country's security sector; identify gaps and entry

points for supporting the implementation of UNSCRs 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 in the country's security sector; and document existing best practices and lessons learnt. To achieve this, women within the security sector – working as police, fire fighters, and prison and immigration officers – are participating in peacekeeping missions through military and police deployments. They serve as combatants, participants, leaders, negotiators, peacemakers and activists, and also work as private security personnel and border patrol officers.

Despite these impressive initiatives, Ghana is yet to adopt a gender-sensitive national security policy. Almost all the security institutions in the country have no gender policy or mechanisms to address sexual harassment/violence in the workplace and gender-sensitive issues. Women in the security sector, generally, tend to be excluded from operational and technical duties, as a result of the lack of mechanisms for eliciting women's views on key issues and procedures.

### **Development Partners' Support**

According to the 2012 World Development Report, gender equality is smart economics, due to the improved conditions and better opportunities it gives women and girls to raise productivity, improve the outcomes of their children, make institutions more representative with a rich knowledge base, and advance the development prospects of countries. In Ghana, government and civil society are frantically putting measures in place to address human capital issues on maternal mortality and gender gaps in education; close earning and productivity gaps between women and men; give women a greater voice within households and societies; and limit the perpetuation of gender inequality across the country. This is made possible with support from development partners such as the World Bank, the UNDP, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), CARE International and the African Development Bank (AfDB), through capacity-building and technical assistance. The good news is that women are doing quite well in the agriculture sector, despite the shrinking economic opportunities for women in Africa.<sup>30</sup>

### **Best Practice in Other Developing Countries**

Although considered as the beacon of hope for Africa on democracy and good governance, women's participation in political and socio-economic development in Ghana has been disappointing. Ghana is struggling to keep up with growing global demands for women's inclusion in governance and decision-making, compared to other African countries such as Rwanda, South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and Senegal. These countries can boast of impressive women parliamentarians. In Rwanda, 45 out of 80 parliamentarians are women; in South Africa, there are 172 women out of 400 representatives; and in Senegal, out of 100 representatives, 40 are women.<sup>31</sup>



In a feature article by *The Guardian*, marking the 101<sup>st</sup> International Women's Day celebration, countries' performance on women in politics and their active role in national activities related to governance was assessed. According to a matrix provided, as of 1 January 2012, twelve African countries made up of Cape Verde, South Africa, Lesotho, Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda, Gambia, Benin, Angola, Nigeria, Mozambique and Tanzania falls within fifteen countries in the world that are doing extremely well on women representation in national issues from prime ministers, deputy prime ministers, members of parliament, heads of government and public agencies.<sup>32</sup> Ghana, one of the best democratic countries in Africa and the world, was placed 45<sup>th</sup>, below countries like Madagascar, Central African Republic and Swaziland, clearly showing either the lack of commitment or leakages in championing women issues alongside democratic practices.

## FOR THE COUNTRY TO MOVE FROM MERE RHETORIC TO ACTION, THE ONUS LIES ON POLITICAL LEADERSHIP TO TAKE BOLD STEPS TO ADDRESS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER-RELATED POLICIES

In spite of this impressive show of women's representation in Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Burundi, Senegal, Tanzania, and Mozambique among others, there is little evidence to suggest that increased representation by women has altered policy outcomes.<sup>33</sup> For example in Mozambique, women's increased representation has not yet translated into significant women-centred or feminist policy initiatives.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the good news on the increasing number of women representation on national issues in Africa is that in terms of the policy agenda, women's issues are now raised more easily and more often than before, and there has been a strong advocacy of 'international feminism' by many deputies. In addition, other impacts related to institutional/procedural structures such as hours spent on deliberations and calendar frameworks are streamlined for expeditious assessment of issues/policies. Also, women representation in parliaments is empowering institutions to drive feminist change by introducing gender into debates and legislation discourse thus encouraging public acceptance of women participation in national issues.<sup>35</sup> As a whole this gradual drive of African women in parliaments has caused changes in ways that have not been seen in other Western countries such as France, United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Italy, Australia and Spain.<sup>36</sup> Basing this argument on *The Guardian* press release matrix on women representation in politics worldwide, an impressive 26 African countries fall below the 50 of the 100 mark.<sup>37</sup>

At the global and continental levels, there have been significant changes in the UN benchmark to increase female representation in national legislatures.<sup>38</sup> From 18% in 2007, a total of 26 countries reached the 30% mark (for one or both houses) in 2010.<sup>39</sup> According to the 2012 Inter-Parliamentary Union report countries such as Rwanda, Sweden, Cuba, Finland, Argentina, the Netherlands, Denmark, Costa Rica, Spain, Norway, Belgium, Mozambique, Nepal, Iceland, New Zealand, South Africa, Angola, Germany, Uganda, Burundi, Belarus, Tanzania, Guyana, Andorra, Ecuador and Macedonia are examples.<sup>40</sup> Within the African continent, regional economic communities (RECs) have exceeded the AU's women representation in government quota of 30%, with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) now aiming for a 50% women representation in government quota by 2015 as a means of empowering women in the country. Despite this progress, more needs to be done to make a significant impact on the existing parity between men and women in national legislations.

### Recommendations


As much as policy initiation is key to addressing challenges, the lack of political will to see to the implementation of those policies, as well as the lack of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for policy impact tracking defeats the purpose of its initiation. Although Ghana's democratic governance and vibrant economic development has chalked much success, critical social matters such as gender equality and women's empowerment, and women's inclusion in decision-making, are not making significant inroads. Thus, for the country to move from mere rhetoric to action, the onus lies on political leadership to take bold steps to address the implementation of gender-related policies. The mandate and budget of government institutions such as the MGCSP should be expanded to enable it to play a more assertive role in espousing gender and women's empowerment initiatives. To follow in the footsteps of Rwanda in attaining gender parity in all aspects of development, the president needs to take the mantle as the lead advocate, as was the case of President Paul Kagame. In addition, government must take bold steps not only to balance gender in government ministerial appointments and empower existing government institutions to monitor and evaluate gender-related policy implementations, but also to see to the rapid parliamentary approval and implementation of provisions made by the constitutional review report on gender and the passing of the Affirmative Action Bill into law.

On the part of civil society organisations and women's groups, although their advocacy work in Ghana is commended, it is important to note that most of their activities are concentrated in urban and city centres rather than in rural areas, where discriminative cultural practices against women are rampant. Thus, there is an urgent need for these organisations to expand their network and activities to include women in rural areas, and to reach out to the marginalised and the socially excluded, such as widows and

young adolescent girls, who are forced by traditional beliefs to undergo humiliating widowhood rites and female genital mutilation. Advocacy programmes aimed at encouraging children to understand gender mainstreaming should also target young schoolchildren.

The choice of democracy and good governance in Africa as the best leadership system should ensure women's empowerment. Ad hoc policies and initiatives on gender and women's empowerment agendas that have been propagated across the continent must give way to long-term initiatives. The law must be seen to work to bring about the total eradication of dehumanising cultural practices.

## Conclusion

A democratic system requires meaningful participation and representation of all marginalised groups, including women. This is because women's representation in governance and socio-economic development is essential to growth and development. The intricacies of gender parity in Ghana from independence to date may be seen as abysmal compared to the country's democratic development. To this end, the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill; the parliamentary approval of proposals raised under the constitutional reforms on women's empowerment; the role of political parties in ensuring women's parity within the party system; the need for women's groups to diversify their activities with the aim of reaching out to other women's constituencies; and the need for government to set up a special fund to assist women interested in taking up political positions and other socio-economic activities in the country are likely to lead to a Ghanaian society that reflects gender equality. 

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# SOUTH SUDAN: LIVESTOCK PATROL UNIT GIVES HOPE TO JONGLEI STATE

BY **BRENDA AMMERAAL**



UN PHOTO/TIMI MCKULKA

In Jonglei State in South Sudan, cattle raiding is a common form of violence between communities, and finds its roots in socio-economic traditions around marriage and adulthood. Perpetuated by limited economic opportunities and fragile livelihoods, every year thousands of heads of cattle are stolen and civilian lives are lost in pernicious patterns of attacks and retaliatory attacks in one of the most remote and underdeveloped parts of the world. Based on successful cattle raiding responses in the East African region, Jonglei now has a Livestock Patrol Unit (LPU) to prevent cattle theft and mitigate cattle-related conflict. This article takes a closer look at how the South Sudanese government, with the support of the United Nations (UN),

has developed this specialised police unit in an attempt to end cycles of violence that have existed in South Sudan for generations.

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**Above: Women weep after their goats were stolen in an early morning raid. Livestock raiding is a persistent problem which has heightened tension between the various tribes and led to the loss of many lives, limbs and livelihoods in South Sudan.**



UN PHOTO/ISAAC BILLY



**An aerial view of the areas surrounding Pibor, in Jonglei State, South Sudan, which have been at the centre of ethnic tensions (January 2012).**

adulthood. Perpetuated by limited economic opportunities and fragile livelihoods, every year thousands of heads of cattle are stolen and civilian lives are lost in pernicious patterns of attacks and retaliatory attacks in one of the most remote and underdeveloped parts of the world. Based

on successful cattle raiding responses in the East African region, Jonglei now has a Livestock Patrol Unit (LPU) to prevent cattle theft and mitigate cattle-related conflict. This article takes a closer look at how the South Sudanese government, with the support of the United Nations (UN), has developed this specialised police unit in an attempt to end cycles of violence that have existed in South Sudan for generations.

### Understanding Conflict in Jonglei

Jonglei is the largest state in South Sudan, home to approximately 1.3 million people.<sup>1</sup> With a limited road network, seasonal flooding and widespread food insecurity, it is one of the most underdeveloped regions in the world. Jonglei is also one of the most insecure states in South Sudan, with the highest number of conflict incidents.<sup>2</sup> Different ethnic communities migrate seasonally with large herds of cattle, triggering conflict over access to water and grazing areas. Years of civil war, the influx of large numbers of weapons and the rise of local militia groups exacerbated the scale and intensity of these conflicts, claiming the lives of thousands of people in recent years. Spikes in violence were seen in 2009, during the period of the Comprehensive



**Due to a weak animal health system, livestock mortality rates are above regional averages. With only small margins to absorb shocks, small-scale livestock keepers are less resilient and at a greater risk of falling into destitution.**

Peace Agreement, as well as in post-independent South Sudan, during December 2011 and January 2012. These conflicts not only left hundreds of people dead and injured, but also led to the displacement of communities, the abduction of children and the theft of large quantities of livestock.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Importance of Livestock for the South Sudanese People**

Herding cattle is a common means of livelihood for many South Sudanese. The majority of South Sudan's population is agro-pastoralist, with 950 000 livestock farmers and 350 000 herders.<sup>4</sup> South Sudan's cattle population is roughly estimated at 11.7 million, with an asset value of at least US\$2.4 billion, making it the sixth-largest cattle economy in Africa.<sup>5</sup> In addition to cattle, South Sudan has about 12.4 million goats and 12.1 million sheep, bringing the total livestock population to over 36 million.<sup>6</sup> This is three times as large as the total estimated population for South Sudan.<sup>7</sup> The rate of commercial profit for herds in South Sudan is, however, less than half the rate in the sub-Saharan region. Due to a weak animal health system, livestock mortality rates are above regional averages. With only small margins to absorb shocks, small-scale livestock keepers are less resilient and at a greater risk of falling into destitution.



**In pastoralist communities, cattle are equivalent to a bank account and used to pay dowries, and cattle raiding is a rite of passage into manhood.**



**During the Community Security and Arms Control (CSAC) programme's community consultations to understand the key drivers of conflict, people identified the need to prevent and address cattle raiding as their key issue.**

Seventy-five percent of livestock keepers in South Sudan are smallholders with fewer than 50 head of cattle, while just 5% have herds of more than 200 cattle.<sup>8</sup> Because of the length of time needed to reconstitute a herd, small-scale herders suffer considerably when losing even a few head of cattle. In this context, patterns of cattle rustling and retaliation have severe consequences for people's already fragile livelihoods. The socio-economic significance of livestock for South Sudanese should also not be underestimated. In pastoralist communities, cattle are equivalent to a bank account and used to pay dowries, and cattle raiding is a rite of passage into manhood.

### **Responses to Violence in Jonglei**

In 2009, in response to cycles of violence in Jonglei, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) started to support the Southern Sudan Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control (BCSSAC) and the Southern Sudan Peace Commission in addressing the root causes of armed violence through conflict-sensitive development actions. The UNDP's Community Security and Arms Control (CSAC) programme has initiated a number of successful conflict mitigating and peacebuilding measures at county level, with the aim of supporting the extension of state authority and providing an opportunity to bring government closer

to the people. The CSAC project conducted community consultations in 55 of South Sudan's 79 counties, including 11 counties in Jonglei State, which brought together village elders, local government, state ministers, representatives from the BCSSAC, the Peace Commission, religious leaders and community members to understand the key drivers of conflict. Preventing and addressing cattle raiding was one of the key issues identified by communities. As a result, the UNDP supported the South Sudan National Police Service to establish a Livestock Patrol Unit (LPU).

### **The LPU's Mission**

The LPU is a collaborative effort between the South Sudan National Police Service in Jonglei, the United Nations Police (UNPOL) of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the UNDP, with financial support throughout different phases from the governments of Canada, Luxembourg and the United States. The primary mission of the LPU is to prevent and respond to cattle raiding incidents, through close liaison with local communities. The LPU adopts proactive policing strategies to disrupt cattle raiding groups before they strike; tracks, locates and apprehends people suspected to have participated in raids; recovers stolen animals; and assists victims of crime. While currently in the start-up phase, the total size of the LPU is



UNPHOTO/TIM MCKULKA

**The Livestock Patrol Unit receives specialised training on livestock retention, map reading and navigation, and understanding the specific Jonglei context and environment.**

envisioned to be 150 officers, with three forward operating bases over which the Police Commissioner has full control.

**Different from Regular Police Forces**

To benefit optimally from the successful design of cattle-raiding responses in East Africa, Kenya seconded four of its national police force units with experience in managing similar units to UNPOL. In close collaboration with the South Sudanese police, these officers have developed the concept of the LPU, including a two-month training course and the ‘Concept of Operations’, which outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of the unit. Aspects that make the LPU unique and different from regular police forces include specialised training on retaining cattle and understanding the specific environment of Jonglei; the unit’s highly mobile nature, enabling it to patrol in deep field locations that are only accessible on foot; and a community policing approach. Split between three bases throughout the state, with each base consisting of a platoon of 50 policemen each, the LPU is well equipped to prevent and respond to cattle raiding.

**Training and Recruiting**

The LPU officers are recruited from regular police ranks in Jonglei. Each of Jonglei’s 11 counties were asked to nominate police officers for the training. The first platoon includes officers from the Dinka, Nuer and Murle ethnic groups, all of whom have their roots in Jonglei. Out of 50 policemen who enrolled in the course, 42 graduated

successfully in December 2012. The second platoon started its training in February 2013. During the training period, police officers are taught specialised skills in livestock retention, drilling, map reading and navigation, human rights and treatment of prisoners, law and documentation of information. Tracking of livestock and understanding the terrain to make assumptions on the direction cattle rustlers would move are also essential to the course. “Knowledge of the landscape and the environment is important,” says one of the Kenyan UNPOL trainers, Moses Mutinda Mutisya. “Cattle recovery requires skills in following traces and understanding the routes a cattle thief would take with the herd.”<sup>9</sup>

**High Mobility**

Jonglei State has inhospitable terrain, only a few kilometres of roads and large swamps, and is seasonally affected by floods. The LPU, therefore, has been equipped with flexible radio communication gear, so-called ‘man

**DEVELOPING A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITIES HELPS THE UNIT TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON EXISTING OR MOUNTING CONFLICTS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES, AND PRE-EMPT SUCH ATTACKS**



**Members of the Security Council delegation visiting South Sudan watch a demonstration by the Livestock Protection Unit of the South Sudan Police Service in Malou, Jonglei State (May 2011).**

packs' and other field equipment such as tents, and two pick-up trucks. Most patrols, however, are conducted on foot by squads of eight to 10 police, allowing the LPU to work effectively in remote locations. Through the use of temporary mobile encampments, patrols can last several days and can be conducted in remote cattle-raiding corridors.

### **Community Policing as Early Warning**

An important aspect of the LPU's work is community policing. Developing a trusting relationship with the communities helps the unit to collect information on existing or mounting conflicts between communities, and pre-empt such attacks. Special attention is paid to youth, who are often involved in planning and carrying out cattle raids. Investing in open lines of communication through which communities can share information, supports early warning and helps to coordinate preventive actions. Involving communities in the enforcement of law and order also contributes to an increased level of trust in the state authorities. For a country like South Sudan, where the extension of state authority and the government's capacity to deliver basic services is limited, this is an important confidence-building measure. Commander of the LPU, Colonel Marco Matiop Riak, tells how intelligence collected from communities can also guide strategic decisions on the locations for preventive actions, such as patrols or ambushes. "In November 2012, following information received from locals on a planned attack on a

village in Malou, the LPU prepared an ambush. The action led to a confrontation between the LPU and the armed group, resulting in the injury of one member of the LPU. The attack, however, was averted and had a deterrent effect. Since that time, we have not seen any attacks in the area. It sends a message."<sup>10</sup>

### **Cattle-raiding Corridors**

The Jonglei State Police Commissioner identified the locations for the first three LPU bases in the state. All three bases lie on so-called 'cattle raiding corridors' – places with limited state authority and along roads often used by cattle raiders to attack communities. Anyidi, where the first platoon has been deployed, is one such place. Situated on the main road that leads from Bor, the state capital, to Pibor on the eastern border, and with limited government presence, Anyidi is a passageway for cattle raiders. At the same time, the bases have adequate route access, making it possible for the government to supply troops. While there are other places in Jonglei that are more remote and where cattle raiding is also rampant, the success of the project hinges on the capacity of the authorities to ensure that the LPU is fully supplied and equipped.

### **Feeling Safe**

The establishment of the LPU headquarters and training site in Malou County, just south of Bor, has contributed to more stability and security in the area. "Since the LPU



is here in Malou, we feel safe,” according to one of the women in the adjacent village.<sup>11</sup> The number of cattle raids has gone down, indicating the deterrent effect of the LPU. But more important is the improved perception of security among the villagers. This is a significant gain for a young country like South Sudan that struggles to establish the rule of law, with only limited state authority.

### The Way Forward

The South Sudan National Police Services, in particular the Jonglei Police Commissioner, are committed to making the LPU a success. Throughout a year of financial austerity due to the shutdown of oil production in January 2012, the UN has provided additional support in the start-up phase of the project. To ensure the timely establishment of the LPU, the UNDP has handed over key logistical, communications and transport equipment. At the same time, the UNDP and partners are providing mentoring and training to police mechanics on the repair and maintenance of the equipment. However, for the long-term success of the LPU, it is essential that the government demonstrates its commitment to the force by providing salaries, food rations, fuel and ammunition.

### It Takes More than Policing

Policing efforts alone will never eliminate cattle raids fully, or establish lasting peace and security. In an environment where people’s livelihoods are continuously at risk and where resilience to cope with disasters is low, conflict over scarce resources will need to be addressed through a broader approach. Improving livestock health, access to water points along migration routes, and diversifying livelihoods are some examples of actions the UN and partners have undertaken in support of the government, and which have a mitigating impact on conflict for scarce resources. Similarly, the UN supported the drafting of the legislation on small arms and light weapons, followed by a public information campaign that aims to change attitudes and mindsets around violent conflict and the use of arms. On the other hand, cattle raiding forms part of practices that have existed for hundreds of years, and which have social and cultural value to the people. Here, the LPU will continue to play an important role as part of the government’s security institutions for maintaining law and order. In Malou, this has already yielded the first results. ▲

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## CONFLICT TRENDS

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Conflict Trends is a quarterly publication. Back issues can be downloaded from the ACCORD website at <[www.accord.org.za](http://www.accord.org.za)>

### ISSN 1561-9818

### Printing

Colour Planet, Durban, South Africa.