CONFLICT TRENDS

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ACCORD
THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

29 Years of Working Towards Peace

CONTENTS

Cover photo by European Union: South Sudanese women celebrating the independence of South Sudan at the John Garang Mausoleum in the city of Juba (9 July 2011).

EDITORIAL

BY **VASU GOUNDEN**

The 15th of February 2021 will be marked in history as the day on which an African woman, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, was elected for the first time as the Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It was a proud day for women around the world and for us in Africa.

In addressing the WTO, Okonjo-Iweala said, "Our organization faces a great many challenges but working together we can collectively make the WTO stronger, more agile and better adapted to the realities of today." Today, the WTO faces two of the most challenging crises.

First, the current economic crisis threatens to have devastating consequences for the entire trading system that was painstakingly developed over decades. In a globalised world, an export-driven China, as the super-factory of the world, amassed huge trade surpluses, some of which were bartered for with commodity concessions exchanged for infrastructure development in developing countries. The Trump administration in the United States responded to this economic dominance threat with "Make America Great Again", an inward looking policy, coupled with a tariff war with China. Consequently, over the last five years, we have seen an increasingly divided world characterised by competitive geo-economic and geo-political alliances.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic, which started in China, disrupted supply chains across the world, mainly to countries dependent on goods from China. This set off a debate around the "on-shoring" or "near-shoring" of supply chains. These developments challenge the global trading system in a world that is increasingly linked through technology, tourism and trade. Growing nationalism threatens the entire economic and political foundations of our world, precisely at a time when we need more global cooperation and collaboration.

The WTO will have to intervene and likely change how it conducts business from an adversarial litigious bias to a mediation approach to bridge the divide between the two emerging power blocs. In the WTO's *World Trade Report 2007*, the former Director-General, Pascal Lamy, said, "As an institution we legislate and litigate, and I believe we do this reasonably well. But is there something of a 'missing middle' where we should be engaged more in fostering dialogue that can bolster cooperation?"

The second major challenge is a moral one and relates to Okonjo-Iweala's membership on the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations board. Its mission includes, "saving children's lives and protecting people's health by increasing equitable use of vaccines in lower-income countries". The website for the Alliance states that it is co-leading COVAX, the global coalition for "pooled procurement and equitable distribution of eventual COVID-19 vaccines". The vaccines have now arrived in Africa, produced by a number of private and public manufacturers. The only problem is that these vaccines are not pooled, and neither are they being distributed equitably!

At the heart of this moral conundrum is the WTO. It controls and regulates global intellectual property (IP) rights through the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. In the case of the COVID-19 vaccine, IP rights are vested with multi-nationals, many of whom had their COVID-19 vaccine research subsidised through public funds. Only an IP waiver from the WTO will allow developing countries, such as India, South Africa and Brazil, with the capacity to manufacture vaccines to mass-produce them and ensure equitable distribution. Currently, 16% of the global population in mainly richer countries hold 45% of the vaccine supply,[1] either because they paid for it or produced it. Many of these countries have an over-supply of vaccines.

The current global reality is a world divided economically and politically and driven by (vaccine) nationalism. Will the WTO rise to the occasion and conduct business differently? Will it create a new reality where national interest does not take precedence over global responsibility?

Vasu Gounden is the Founder and Executive Director of ACCORD.

1 Mirza, Atthar and Rauhala, Emily (2021) 'Here's Just How Unequal the Global Coronavirus Vaccine Rollout has Been', *The Washington Post*, 6 May 2021. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2021/coronavirus-vaccine-inequality-global> [Accessed 11 May 2021].

RETHINKING SOUTH SUDAN'S PATH TO DEMOCRACY

BY **ANDREW E. YAW TCHIE**

UNITED NATIONS PHOTO

Orchestrating Peace

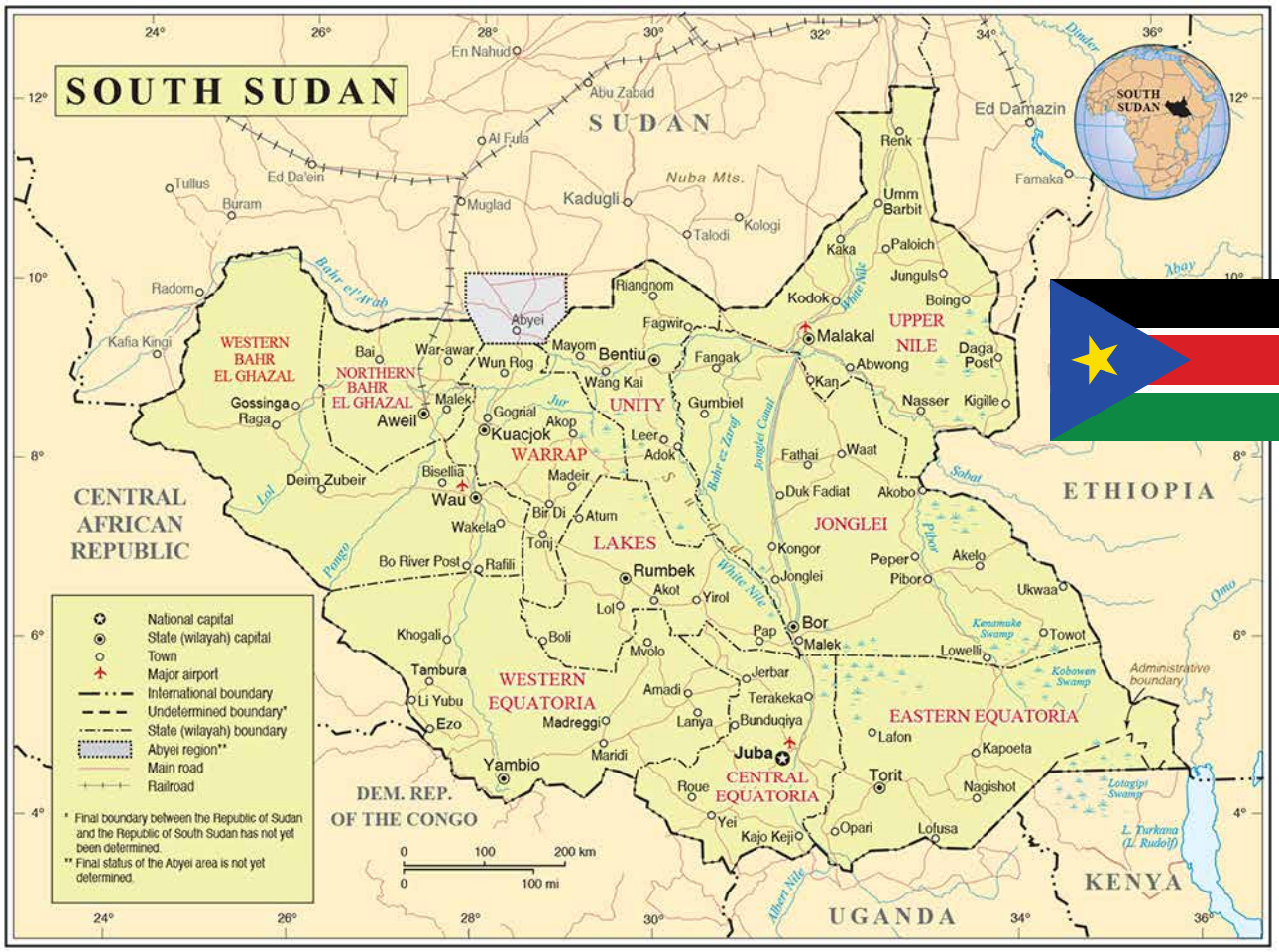
One of the world's youngest nations, South Sudan, broke out into civil war in December 2013. The civil war was marked by persistent disregard for the sanctity of civilians, especially women and children. At the time of the conflict, both the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in Government (SPLM-iG) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in Opposition (SPLM-iO) carried out massacres, which spread like wildfire across the country. Troops from both sides raped and slaughtered civilians, while government troops in Juba went door-to-door, seeking out opposition ethnic groups.

After several failed regional mediation attempts, neighbouring states and international partners pressured President Salva Kiir, SPLM-iO leader, Riek Machar, and former detainees to sign the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS)[1] in August 2015 in Addis Ababa.

The Agreement aimed to end the violent civil war and support comprehensive political reform during a three-year inclusive Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU). Additionally, the ARCSS provided a pathway to demilitarise many well-equipped militias and mechanisms for transitional justice and reparation, immediate measures to facilitate humanitarian access, and a programme to redress the economy. Nevertheless, just after the ARCSS

Above: President Salva Kirr of South Sudan, signs the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) at a ceremony held in Juba (August 2015).

SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION



was signed, Kiir, by presidential decree, ordered an increase in the number of states from 10 to 28.[2]

Before the country could mark its fifth anniversary of independence, in July 2016, fighting broke out in Juba between the SPLA-iG and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in Opposition (SPLM/A-iO), killing over 300 civilians[3] and two United Nations (UN) peacekeepers.[4] Machar escaped Juba, fleeing to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)[5], only to end up under house arrest in South Africa. Weeks later, Kiir went on to form a government of unity without Machar, naming Taban Deng as Vice President. Kiir then issued another presidential decree to increase the number of federal states from 28 to 32 in January 2017, which further divided South Sudan's states along ethnic lines, fuelling instability between the communities and the influx of local self-defence militias.

In September 2018, Kiir and Machar eventually agreed on a Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) which salvaged the 2015 peace agreement,[6] without accountability mechanisms and no penalties – and with Sudan and Uganda as guarantors. Both Sudan and Uganda have supported different groups during the country's fight for independence. Twice, the signatories missed vital deadlines and delayed the formation of a TGoNU until its construction in February 2020. Following Machar's agreement to return to Juba under the protection of the government without his forces and Kiir's compromise with reverting the number of states to 10 (with three administrative areas), troops that were to be integrated into a unified national army were left abandoned for months in cantonment sites. In addition, Kiir refused to integrate his forces[7] and only allowed Machar to visit his troops in February 2021.[8]

The situation in South Sudan has not been helped by the government's gender-blind policies that included the appointment of mainly male governors, deputies, and government officials[9] linked with the military.[10] While politics continues to be captured by the military and elites, many appointees lack technical expertise in the areas necessary to rebuild South Sudan and tackle existing challenges. Locally, institutions are either weak, non-existent or have been eroded due to prolonged conflict. The government's response to communal violence has been to use threats of coercion against civilians as a strategy instead of

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS JESSE B. AWALT/RELEASED

Omar al-Bashir led a revolt that overthrew the elected government of Sudan in 1989. He served as president of Sudan from 1993 until 2019, when he was ousted in a military coup.

comprehending the trauma experienced by civilians, building local capacity, and reconciling communities. Kiir even affirmed that he would stop sending troops to intervene in intercommunal fighting and let communities fight "until one section runs from the other".[11] While much of the violence on display has been brought about by the government's monopolisation and sanctioning of violence, its inability to protect civilians has led South Sudan down a dark path.

Dealing with the Past

To understand South Sudan's weak governance, the SPLM/A's monopoly over the state, and the way the SPLA and its elites exert authority, one needs to look to Sudan. Sudan's colonial regime maintained its power through a combination of brutal military repression and strategies of division, identity politics, co-option and rulership.[12]

The post-colonial period encouraged the exploitation of resources, which had become the source of warfare, financing, and the very existence of the regime(s) in Sudan. Ultimately, resource exploitation became a warfare objective in itself.[13] The colonial system was later mastered by post-colonial regimes that mirrored these tactics and techniques through divide-and-rule campaigns and exploitation of peripheral territorial control, which later shaped the modern Sudanese state. Inevitably, this laid the groundwork for the post-colonial class formation and the rise of the northern bourgeoisie, who dominate Sudanese politics and added a class dimension to the developmental state.[14]

This led to Sudan's history of being dominated by military rule, overthrown by a popular uprising, a short period of democratic governance, quickly followed by another military coup, and so forth. Over 32 years, the two regimes, Nimeiri (1969–1985), overthrown by a popular uprising or Intifada, and the National Islamic Front (NIF) (1989–2004), revived old colonial policies and arrangements that would help Omar al-Bashir structure state power and transform modern Sudan into a state where northern elites abused resources outside of Khartoum for their benefit.[15]

Bashir and his regime dominated four critical components after the split of the NIF. The first was the National Congress Party (NCP), which had strong links to the Sudanese Islamic Movement. The Sudanese Islamic Movement's religious ideology, which was made up of competing power centres, was an essential tool for Bashir's regime stability. The movement imposed its ideological stance on the Sudanese population through coercion, purges, and strategic placement of leaders in unique civil servant positions across Sudan's state institutions. The second was the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), which played a significant role in Bashir's overthrow in April 2019. The NISS was later refashioned as the General Intelligence Services (GIS) in July 2019. The third was the Sudanese Armed Force (SAF), headed by Bashir and utilised to initiate most of his state power programme.

SUNANEDITORS

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF), composed of elements of the Janjaweed, was created in 2013 under the leadership of Brigadier General Mohammed Hamdan Dagolo, referred to as 'Hemedti'.

The fourth was the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), composed of elements of the Janjaweed,[16] under the leadership of Brigadier General Mohammed Hamdan Dagolo, referred to as 'Hemedti'.

Competition between security personnel and elites created affiliated business groups that feed off state resources, crushing Sudan's democratisation process, threatening transitional civilian rule, and curbing any future chances of a civilian government being formed. Under Bashir, paramilitary forces were used as a critical instrument of political power that supported the NCP's motives. The discovery of oil and subsequent oil revenues enabled the regime to dramatically increase military expenditure, expand and upgrade military hardware, and use oil infrastructure to prosecute the war.[17]

Bashir allowed security segments to use these resources to finance their costs, expand their assets, and control state resources. The NISS, SAF, and RSF owned vast amounts of state resources. Both the NISS and RSF controlled companies that produced weapons, oil, gold, gum Arabic, wheat, telecommunications, banking services, water, banknotes,[18] and more. Military forces managed hospitals, trading companies, and financial commercial assets, which would be under the state's control under normal circumstances. Under Bashir's regime, Sudan's economy was amplified by a system of external exploitation, using paramilitaries to remove populations from oilfields, gold mines, and neighbouring areas that were deemed rich in resources. Private elements were able to drain significant profits.[19] Bashir's unique mix of authoritarianism with Islam and self-serving black-market economics shaped Sudan's framework for restructuring state power and economic management.[20]

As a consequence of years of oppression across Sudan and Southern Sudan under Nimeiri, who served as president from 1969 to 1985, the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) got underway, led by John Garang. The proposition of "two countries, one system" in Khartoum started to gain ground among elites. Still, Machar defected from the SPLA to form the SPLM/A-Nasir and demanded a vote for self-determination and independence. Machar later returned to the SPLA in 2005. This left the SPLA/M with a monopoly over safeguarding the interests of South Sudan. By controlling traditional and tribal leaders, the SPLA contributed to diminishing local governance but combined existing armies with competing allegiances as one. Just as a traumatised child can reproduce the behaviour of an abusive parent, the SPLA created a system of governance based on

THE PROPOSITION OF "TWO COUNTRIES, ONE SYSTEM" IN KHARTOUM STARTED TO GAIN GROUND AMONG ELITES

REUTERS/MOHAMED NURELDIN ABDALLAH

The Sudanese Islamic Movement's religious ideology was an essential part of Omar al-Bashir's regime stability.

REUTERS/SAMIR BOL

South Sudan needs a professional, inclusive security apparatus organised without any loyalty to political elites, regional groupings, or ethnic communities.

the oppressive practices of previous Sudanese regimes. This led to elite infighting, a lack of respect for diversity, and all-out civil war, where the actors competed for a monopoly over security and resources using identity politics.

South Sudan Today

The emergence of a new nation through military means was bound to fail peace in South Sudan. It is evident that while the peace agreements have always focused on the idea of civilian transition, these types of agreements often also maintain some form of military government. For peace in South Sudan to emerge, the state needs a professional, inclusive security apparatus organised without any loyalty to political elites, regional groupings, or ethnic communities. Most importantly, South Sudan's security needs to be trusted, which means that the SPLA must be separated from the SPLM. Political parties should be allowed to emerge free from intimidation and not be dependent on militia groups.

A professional security apparatus should respect human rights, enforce the law, stop revenge attacks, diffuse communal disputes, and help build infrastructure across the country instead of killing the very civilians it was created to protect. However, given the SPLM/A's history of questionable rule, it has always been clear that implementing the ARCSS and R-ARCSS under the SPLA/M would be difficult and likely never to be fully achieved.

Consequently, expecting that State debt, unemployment, underdevelopment, the inclusion of women and girls in society, and the impact of climate change and Covid-19 could be tackled by a military government is nothing short of a fantasy, given Africa's experience with such military regimes. South Sudan's military government lacks the competency and capacity to build the state. As a result, South Sudanese people will continue to experience undemocratic norms as long as its leadership focuses on individuals and elites only.

Towards Cohesive Governance

From 1972 to 1983, the South Sudanese managed the autonomous region's affairs when other states were grappling with dictatorships and military coups. South Sudan has now undergone four experimental transitions (2005–2011, 2011–2013, 2015–2016, and 2018–present), each with mismanaged and unsuccessful transitional agreements, leading to further violence and insecurity. The South Sudanese are yet to forgive and reconcile among themselves, and hopes of a successful African Union Hybrid Court for South Sudan is nothing but a mirage, primarily when those who peddle violence will not be entirely held accountable. The world's newest state has barely experienced good governance, constitutionalism, the rule of law, human rights, and gender equity, and asking a military

government to achieve this with a weak and unchecked R-ARCSS is impractical and naive.

South Sudan needs a new civilian technocratic government that is people-centred and prepared to tackle, prevent and mitigate the root causes of conflict through long-term sustainable micro, meso and macro peacebuilding efforts. A new civilian technocratic government needs to rethink the state's shared vision and shift the state's responses away from just a security lens. To achieve this, the governing forces need to be reformed into an organism that institutionalises civilian oversight and legislative control. Civilian oversight can only be implemented when South Sudan strengthens its oversight mechanisms and executive authority over all security services.

International support is essential, but it is not sufficient to preserve peace in South Sudan. To an extent, the failed agreements have all shown that international pressure and the lop-sided focus on an incompetent government has undermined the autonomy and local ownership, which has a profound impact on the country's peace-making practices. If international partners continue to recycle the same approach and templates that led us on the road to nowhere – that is, ceasefires that do not hold, weak transitional agreements, and flawed elections – then we can never expect South Sudan to emerge from conflict into a post-conflict state.

South Sudan's peace process is still largely up for negotiation. A new South Sudan must emerge through a civilian technocratic government; however, this will require such a government to dismantle the SPLA/M and transform how security forces control the state. It also means effectively addressing the root causes of conflict and a people-centred approach to a transitional parliament, drafting a new constitution, deciding what type of federalism best suits the country, and strengthening the electoral commission in the short-to-medium term.

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16 The Janjaweed militiamen are primarily nomadic 'Arab' tribes who over the decades were at odds with Darfur's settled 'African' farmers. Under the Bashir regimes, this group was used to murder and slaughter Darfurians as part of the government's strategy to destroy local militia forces.

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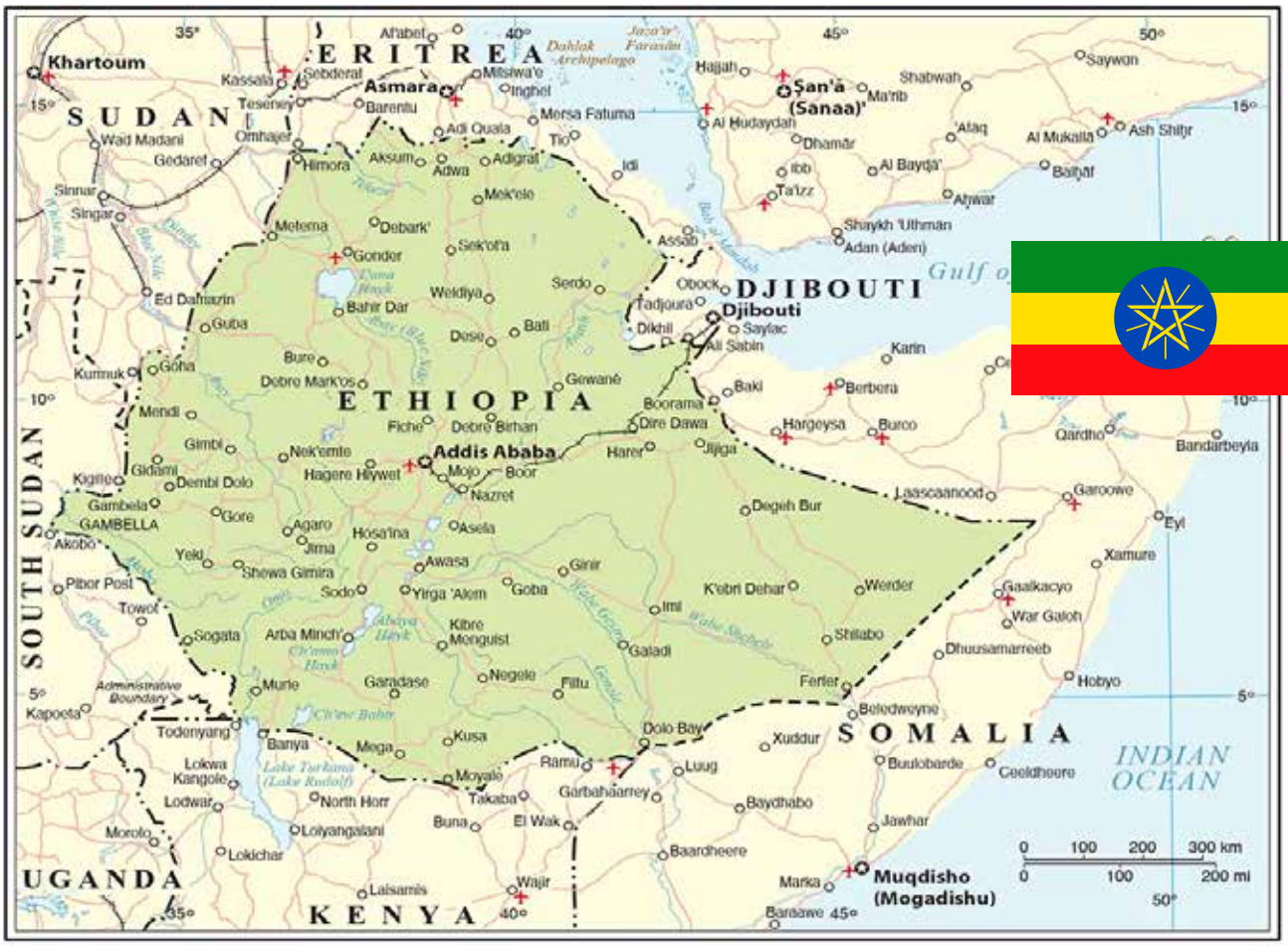
THE CRISIS OF ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN RELATIONS: FROM 'IMPERFECT HEGEMON' TO OCCUPIED STATE

BY **ALY VERJEE**

PHOTO BY FREDRIK VARFJELL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Amid continued domestic upheaval, Ethiopia's foreign relations are also in crisis. This is particularly true of relations with Ethiopia's neighbouring countries. Ethiopia's rapprochement with Eritrea, for which Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed received the Nobel Peace Prize, has morphed into a joint security pact that has now seen Eritrean troops occupy parts of northern Ethiopia for more than six months, in an attempt to defeat the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), whose forces are now rebranded as the Tigray Defence Forces (TDF).[1] The war between Ethiopian and Eritrean allied forces and the TPLF/TDF has led to numerous atrocities, a humanitarian and development disaster, and brought the Tigray region to the brink of widespread famine.[2] Even after sustained military operations and despite the higher number of Ethiopian federal and Eritrean troops, the TPLF/TDF have not been defeated and, as was predicted,

Above: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for his role in Ethiopia's rapprochement with Eritrea.



SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION

they still retain the capacity to mount guerrilla attacks.[3] There is little prospect that the war will be won outright by either side and, to date, the Ethiopian federal government's commitment to withdraw Eritrean forces has yet to be fulfilled.[4] Recent, albeit unconfirmed, reports have suggested that Somali troops may also be involved in the war in Tigray, prompting Somali parliamentarians to demand an investigation into the location of their troops.[5]

To Ethiopia's west, an old dispute with Sudan has flared up over the border area of al-Fashqaa, as an indirect consequence of Ethiopian military redeployments related to the war in Tigray, bringing relations between Khartoum and Addis Ababa to their lowest point in years.[6] The prospect of a Sudan-Ethiopia border war remains. Deteriorating relations between Sudan and Ethiopia have recently led Khartoum to demand the replacement of more than 3 000 Ethiopian peacekeepers deployed to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).[7] UNISFA is the only United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operation whose forces come from a single country. As of April 2021, the UN Mission constitutes more than 54% of Ethiopia's total personnel deployed in UN peacekeeping roles.[8]

MEANWHILE, NEGOTIATIONS WITH SUDAN AND EGYPT OVER THE FILLING AND OPERATION OF THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM (GERD) ON ETHIOPIA'S BLUE NILE RIVER HAVE NOT PROGRESSED

Meanwhile, negotiations with Sudan and Egypt over the filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on Ethiopia's Blue Nile River have not progressed. Downstream, Sudan and Egypt allege Ethiopia has unilaterally commenced the second filling of the GERD reservoir. Ethiopia has denied this, while asserting that the second filling will not, in any event, cause harm to its downstream neighbours.[9]

The 2018 peace agreement with South Sudan – the antecedent of which came about because of Ethiopian mediation – continues to meander towards failure.[10] With Ethiopia having abandoned its leadership role in the South Sudan peace process, no other country has marshalled the rest of the region towards continued collective action to prevent another peace deal from disintegrating.

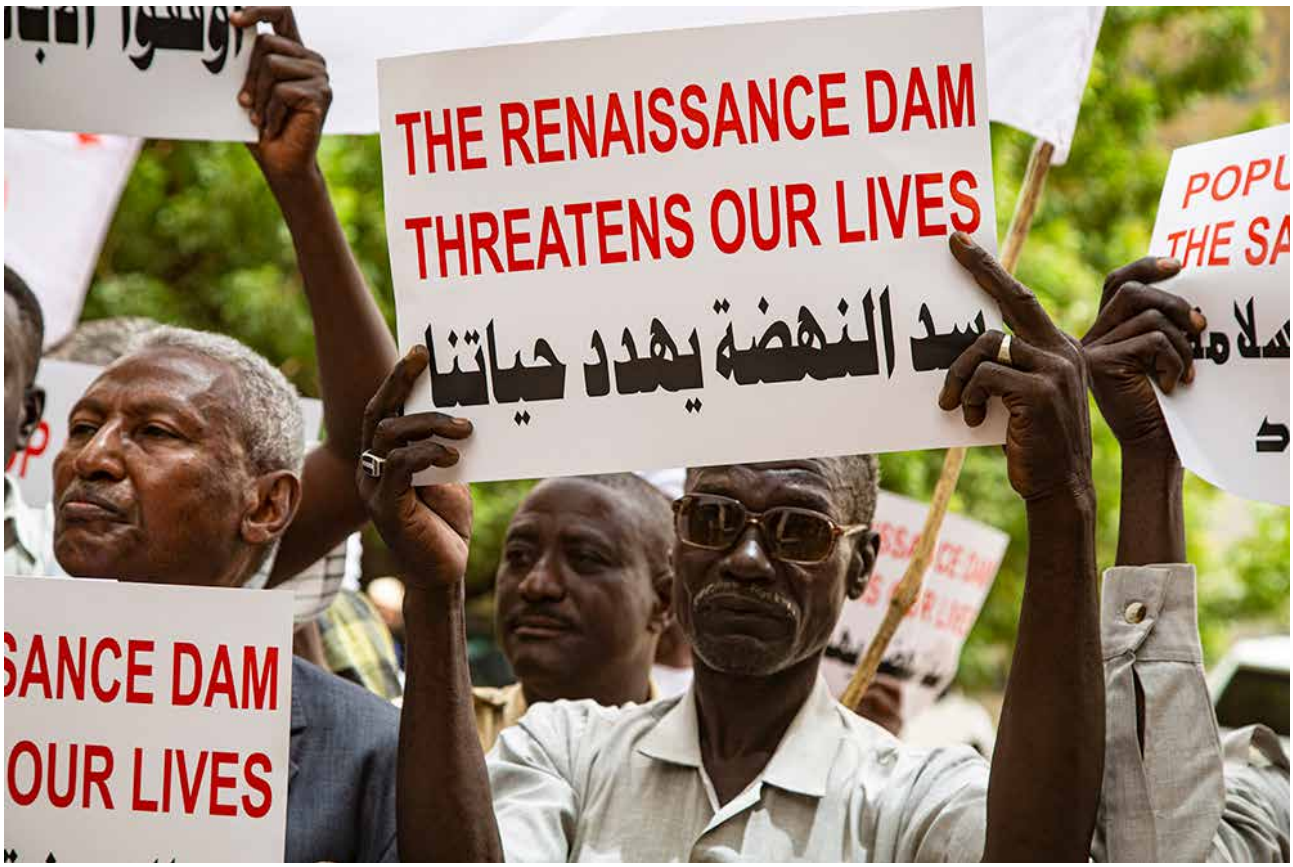


PHOTO BY MAHMOUD HJAJ/ANADOLU AGENCY VIA GETTY IMAGES

Sudanese demonstrators protest the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Nile River in Khartoum, Sudan (14 June 2021).

To the east, relations with the Somali federal government in Mogadishu have improved in recent years, due to Ethiopia's backing of Somalia's president, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (also known as Farmaajo). However, Tigray's fallout has also affected Somali-Ethiopian relations in the context of an already fraught and unstable situation in southern Somalia.[11] Ethiopia has withdrawn some of its troops and disarmed others because they were of Tigrayan ethnicity.[12] This has prompted fears that Ethiopia's substantial troop presence in Somalia, both as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and in a separate, bilateral deployment, are under threat which may weaken counterterrorism efforts against the al-Shabaab terror group.[13] Apart from the disarming of Tigrayan soldiers in August 2019, Ethiopian forces narrowly avoided conflict with Kenyan troops, who back a rival political leader in the subnational Somali state of Jubaland.[14]

UNFORTUNATELY, ETHIOPIA IS SITUATED IN A TROUBLED REGION MARKED BY DISORDER CAUSED, IN PART, BY SOME OF ETHIOPIA'S RECENT ACTIONS AND DECISIONS

Unfortunately, Ethiopia is situated in a troubled region marked by disorder caused, in part, by some of Ethiopia's recent actions and decisions. The change in Ethiopia's role in the region has been as sudden as it was unexpected.

Ethiopia as 'Benign' Regional Hegemon: A Case of Over-optimism?

Just a few years ago, Ethiopia's present foreign policy environment seemed unfathomable. Ethiopia is engaged in a war allied with, rather than against, its old enemy, Eritrea. It is also on the verge of a separate war with its largest neighbour, Sudan, with Ethiopian sovereign territory occupied by these neighbours (depending on how one adjudicates the legitimacy of Sudan's claim to al-Fashqaa). This illustrates the magnitude of the changes. As recently as 2015, Harry Verhoeven wrote, 'Ethiopia's vision of regional integration under emerging Ethiopian hegemony is increasingly becoming a reality', implying that the vision of 'benign regional hegemony: what is good for Ethiopia is good for the Horn of Africa', has effectively come to pass.[15] Others questioned this narrative; for example, Sonia Le Gouriellec observed that Ethiopia is not a true regional hegemon, as it could not enforce adherence to the rules of the international system among its neighbours. However, she concluded that Ethiopia had some features of regional hegemony, and could thus be described as an 'imperfect hegemon'.[16] In retrospect,

TO BE CLEAR, ETHIOPIA'S FOREIGN POLICY PRIOR TO ABIY'S COMING TO POWER WAS ALSO RIDDLED WITH AMBIGUITIES AND CONTRADICTIONS

these analyses seem overly optimistic. Hegemons, even imperfect ones, are usually not so fragile. Furthermore, few Sudanese or Somalis (let alone Egyptians) would today agree that what is good for Ethiopia, as defined by its current foreign policy practitioners, is necessarily good for them or the region, broadly defined. Those South Sudanese who hope for Ethiopian re-engagement in their country's stalled peace process might take a more ambivalent view.

It is important to note that ideas of Ethiopian regional hegemony pre-date the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government of Meles Zenawi and Hailemariam Desalegn, who preceded Abiy.[17] As Ruth Iyob explains:

> Ethiopia emerged from the colonial order with a larger territory, a modernised army, and a host of states vying for its favours, thereby providing for all a demonstration of its power and status. Utilising its new-found identity as a champion of African nationalism and unity, Ethiopia legitimated its anachronistic system of absolute monarchy and neutralised any challenges to its hegemony from newly-incorporated territories. In the Horn, the death knell of self-determination was sounded by the imperial regime's invocation of territorial integrity based on pre-colonial linkages.[18]

Importantly, to critique Ethiopia's contemporary foreign policy reality is not to praise the system and policies instituted by Meles and continued by Hailemariam after Meles's death in 2012, nor to wistfully hark back to the romanticised days of Ethiopia's empire or military dictatorship. To be clear, Ethiopia's foreign policy prior to Abiy's coming to power was also riddled with ambiguities and contradictions. The much-vaunted 2002 Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy, which ostensibly was the basis for the EPRDF's foreign policy, was at times disingenuous. For example, the Policy and Strategy states:

> development and democracy are the basis for national security and for peace… The goal of our foreign and security policies, formulated to ensure our national interest and wellbeing, should also serve to promote democracy and development… The fundamental goals of foreign and national security policy must be democracy and development.[19]

PHOTO BY MAHMOUD HJAJ/ANADOLU AGENCY VIA GETTY IMAGES

Ethiopia's substantial troop presence in Somalia as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) may be under threat and this could weaken counterterrorism efforts in Somalia.

REUTERS/TIKSA NEGERI

Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki receives a key from Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed during an inauguration ceremony marking the reopening of the Eritrean Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (16 July 2018).

For proponents of democracy within Ethiopia and in the wider region, there is little evidence that 'democracy' guided Ethiopia's foreign policy practice prior to 2015. While contested, the debate over the philosophy of development in Ethiopia is one almost entirely in the domestic sphere. The 'development' principle of Ethiopian foreign policy also seems to have been largely rhetorical, at least in terms of dealing with its neighbours.[20]

Earlier, Ethiopian involvement in South Sudan and Somalia was far from problem-free, from the perspective of narrow Ethiopian national interests, and from the purportedly more 'benign' perspective of regional peace and security. Ethiopia was far from a neutral actor in Somalia, backing various camps over the years, culminating in the December 2006 invasion by Ethiopian forces intent on removing the Islamic Courts Union government. Apart from the indiscriminate nature with which the war was conducted by Ethiopian forces and the numerous human rights abuses that occurred, some argued that Ethiopian intelligence was falsified to secure American backing for the invasion.[21] More recently, in South Sudan, some of the Ethiopian missteps in the mediation and monitoring of the conflict may have contributed to the continuation (and renewal) of conflict, albeit as only one of several contributing factors, given the principal responsibility of South Sudanese belligerents themselves.[22] However, in the same context, Ethiopia played an important and enduring role in South Sudan's eventual emergence as an independent state.[23] No matter the theatre, the implementation of Ethiopian foreign policy has been far from 'benign'.

The Pressing Questions for Ethiopia's Future Foreign Policy

Given the deficiencies and mixed record of Ethiopian foreign policy conducted by the EPRDF, the move to reset Ethiopian foreign policy was not necessarily without merit.[24] The initial normalisation of relations with Eritrea signalled a paradigm shift from the EPRDF government. However, it is worth asking two fundamental questions. First, why have Ethiopia's foreign relations deteriorated to this extent? Second, what may the future implications for the region and Ethiopia itself, be?

Some partial insights into Abiy's foreign policy philosophy can be found in his 2019 book, *Medemer*.[25] As one review of the book summarises, '*Medemer* does not agree with the idea of "there are no permanent friends, no permanent enemies" rather it believes in the idea of "there is no such thing as friend and enemy."'[26] Unintentionally, perhaps, this element of Abiy's philosophy echoes part of the 2002 foreign policy framework. The framework observed,

somewhat disapprovingly, 'that the foreign policies of past governments were, in part, founded on a "siege mentality" which considered the country to be surrounded by enemies.'[27] In practice, however, such principles are difficult to translate into the tough world of realpolitik.[28] In Ethiopia's dispute over the GERD, for example, Egypt is implacably opposed to Ethiopia's aspirations. *Medemer* does not override Egypt's self-defined national interests. While Abiy can consider himself somewhat unlucky to have a Khartoum government, which now espouses views on the management of the GERD that are closer to Cairo than to Addis Ababa, the basic absence of a detailed foreign policy strategy over the issue is not helping Ethiopia's cause regionally or internationally.

WITH REGARD TO THE HORN OF AFRICA'S REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE, THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD), PILOTED AND CONDUCTED BY ETHIOPIA, NOW SEEMS ALMOST ENTIRELY HOLLOW AND WITHOUT DIRECTION

More fundamentally, however, Ethiopia's loss of an even imperfect, regional hegemonic position has come about because Addis Ababa prioritised narrow domestic interests over those of the region and abandoned peace and security mechanisms that, though flawed, had their uses. In inviting Eritrea to join in its war in Tigray, Abiy hoped for a decisive and definitive defeat of the TPLF/TDF, and a consolidation of his power within the country. Instead, Abiy has lost the trust of other countries in the region for his handling of the Tigray situation and the second- and third-order consequences of a regionally resurgent Eritrea under Isaias Afwerki. It is striking that despite Ethiopia – and Abiy personally – having helped broker the transitional political settlement in Sudan after the overthrow of former president Omar al-Bashir, relations with Khartoum have deteriorated to the point where a war between Ethiopia and Sudan would not be a surprise.

Ethiopia's partiality in Somalia limits its ability to be a constructive player there, even as the country's simmering political crisis seems to have been averted for now. With regard to the Horn of Africa's regional peace and security architecture, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), piloted and conducted by Ethiopia, now seems almost entirely hollow and without direction.

Abiy is near certain to be elected with a large majority in Ethiopia's June 2021 elections, giving him the full mandate to govern. This may lead to further domestic consolidation of power within the newly reconfigured ruling party that replaced the EPRDF. However, Abiy may not find it as easy to regain Ethiopia's mediating and power-brokering role in the region. Today, the region's central actor in peacemaking roles, as mediator, peacekeeper, and sometimes enforcer, is much diminished, even if, in practice, Ethiopia still plays a leading part in, for example, UN peacekeeping, ranking second only to Bangladesh in terms of peacekeepers deployed worldwide.[29] Ethiopia's diminution is a loss for the region. It is also a danger for Ethiopia, given that several of its neighbours seem likely to face new crises in the years ahead, with the concomitant transboundary risks of displacement, economic damage, proxy warfare, and regional escalation. No country is an island in the Horn of Africa, and landlocked Ethiopia is especially not. Regional crises would once have been assured of Ethiopian leadership. It is now far from certain whether other countries in the Horn would accept, let alone welcome, the future involvement of an Abiy-led Ethiopia in their disputes, even if Addis Ababa was willing to help. Given the region's challenges, the absence of a strong and capable third-party state presence to defuse and manage crises poses many risks.

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PAUL KAGAME

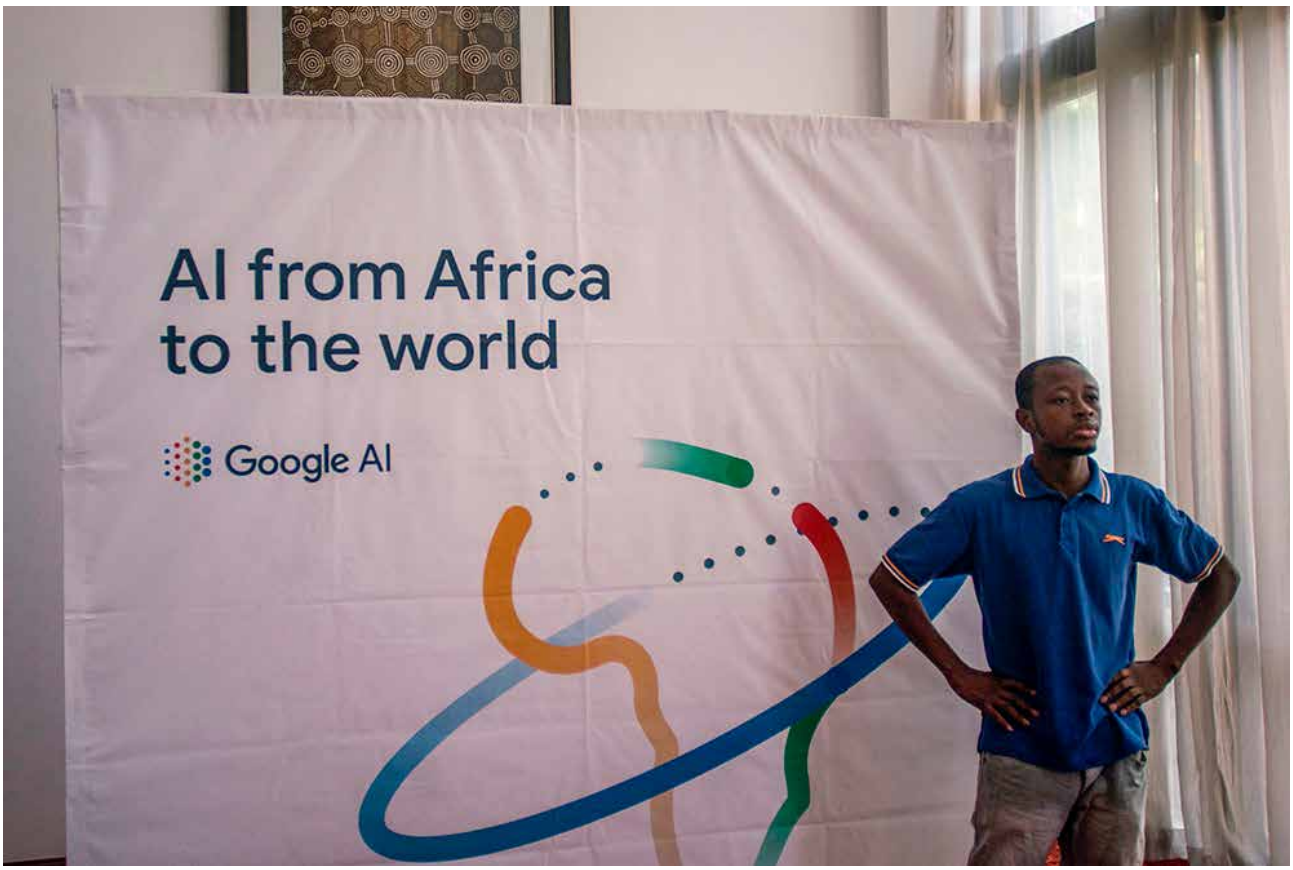
IMPLICATIONS OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

BY **VELOMAHANINA TAHINJANAHARY RAZAKAMAHARAVO**

Africa Embracing the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Like other continents, Africa has embraced the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution. Emerging technologies are defined as those that are radical or novel and may have disruptive effects in the sectors where they are deployed and in society.[1] For example, in Africa, drones have improved the way healthcare is provided in Rwanda as they are being used to deliver blood in remote areas, thus helping to ensure the security of the people. Some of these emerging technologies are being researched and tested. Others have already been deployed, including mixed reality merging the virtual and the real world, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR), 5G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Blockchain, among others. Currently, Africa is also engaged in technological Research and Development and deployment. Some countries on the continent already have thriving AI hubs, such as Nigeria

Above: A drone drops its first blood delivery in the compound of Kabgayi hospital, in Rwanda (13 October 2016).



CRISTINA ALDEHUELA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Google has an Artificial Intelligence (AI) hub in Ghana.

and Ethiopia. Google has its own AI hub in Ghana, and the United Nations (UN) has an AI centre, the UN Global Pulse lab, in Kampala.

Unfortunately, development and success come with challenges. Worldwide, we have seen the various destructive roles such technologies can have and the negative impact on people. For example, technologies powered by AI have been used in persecuting, surveilling, and monitoring minorities (including the Chinese use of AI to target the Uyghur community), targeting specific groups during disinformation operations during elections, or employed in everyday policing. The security literature has started to explore the implications of technologies at the levels of the state and within institutions, but less so among the population at large. Despite the growing but still very scarce body of literature on emerging technologies in relation to peace and security,[2] very little is known about their implications for peace and conflict dynamics, and even less so in the Global South, more specifically in Africa. This article explores significant trends and the implications of emerging technologies for peace and conflict in Africa.

Community Conflicts and Emerging Technologies

As in other parts of the world, social media plays an important role in the election dynamics in Africa. Some countries, such as Nigeria, Kenya, Madagascar and Uganda, experienced disinformation operations instigated by states such as Russia (for example, the campaign led by Russia's Private Military Company (PMC), the Wagner Group),[3] or by non-state and illusive actors.[4] Some of these operations have succeeded in creating trouble, turmoil, and unrest. They raised the level of anxiety and fear among civilians and succeeded in decreasing the level of trust between the population and the authorities. During the 2017 Kenyan elections, people were victims of the micro-targeting campaign launched by Cambridge Analytica. This company targeted Kenyans using their private data (related to ethnicity, gender, religion, age). People were exposed to horrific messages, including the manipulation of past violence in the country and the instigation of fear related to a future in which Raila Odinga (the opposition) would annihilate certain tribes. Such occurrences can have significant psychological effects on the population as they are entrenched in fear and suspicion.

Other cases show the major role of disinformation or misinformation in situations involving killing and community conflict. For example, in cases where it is difficult to trace the individual(s) or group(s) engaged in disinformation or misinformation operations, the distribution of content, such as images, memes, videos, and even voice messages,

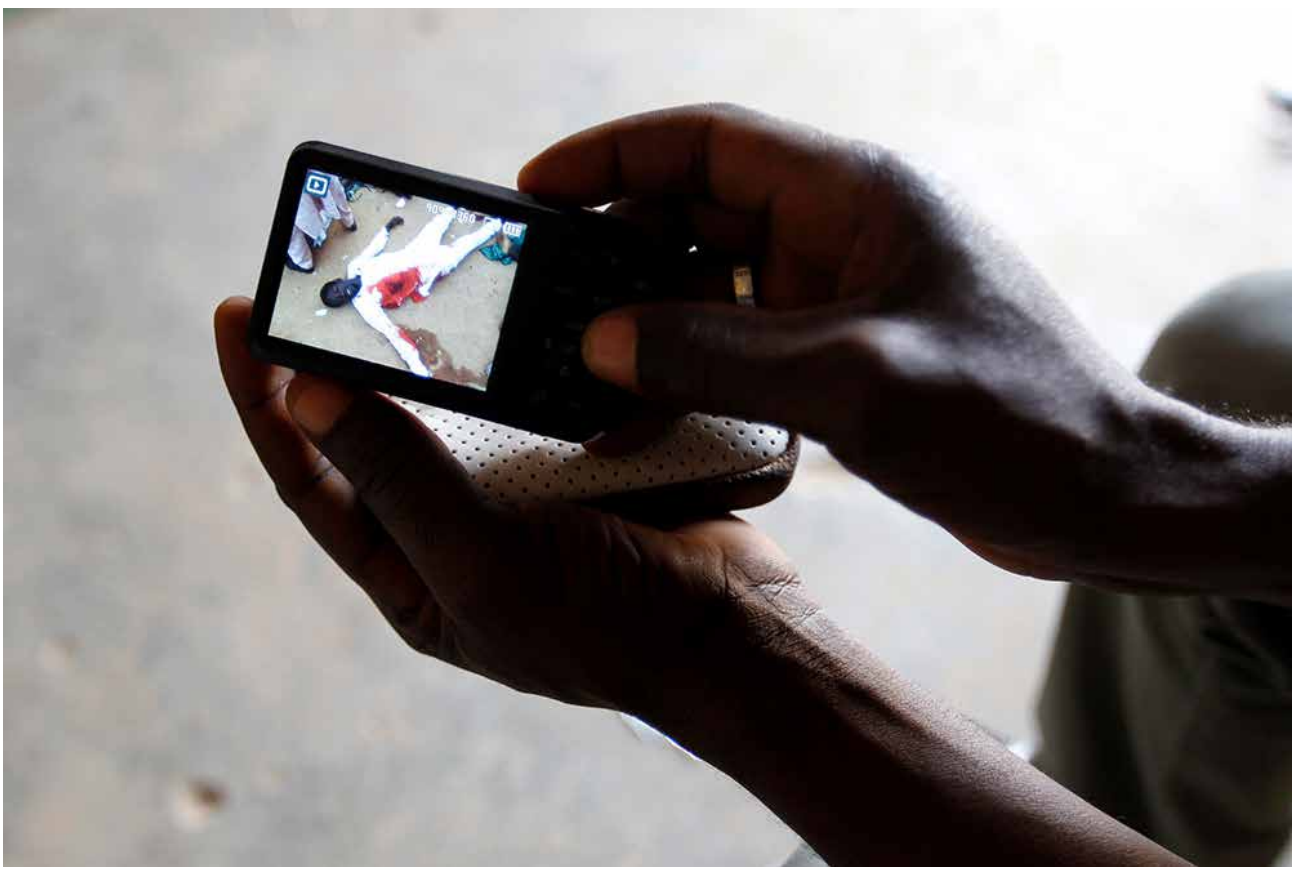
leads to a high level of violence among communities. In Nigeria, images of corpses in mass graves were used to fuel animosity between the Fulani Muslims and Berom Christians, which resulted in violence and killing. Other situations have heightened animosity between communities or among conflicting parties. Recently, in Ethiopia, there was a series of misinformation cases relating to the Tigray conflict in which people shared fabricated content using images and videos from other conflicts (for example, from Nagorno-Karabakh), which could fuel violence among conflicting parties.

In Africa, there has been an increase in the number of users and the roles AI plays in social media. In recent years, there has been an alarming increase in destructive AI technologies using a variety of techniques. For example, deep-fake technologies employing deep learning creates synthetic media, including videos and voices. Other techniques use Generative Adversarial Network to manipulate images, videos, and sounds and then superimpose them onto source files so that the latter is altered in a very subtle manner. Deep learning has also been used in the autoregressive language model of GPT-3, a technology that can generate texts independently. The results are surprising, as many of these texts appear to be written by humans, but they are not.

We are now hearing more and more about selective editing and shallow or cheap fakes: 'A "deepfake" is a video that has been altered through some form of machine learning to "hybridize or generate human bodies and faces," whereas a "cheap fake" is an AV [audiovisual] manipulation created with cheaper, more accessible software (or none at all).'[5] All these fakes are now the real threats in the digital world. Malevolent actors in Africa are increasingly using them to target innocent civilians who are unaware of the possible impacts of their actions when (re)sharing this content. They share these fakes with friends, colleagues and loved ones without checking their veracity and origin. Very often, a person will believe they are true because they received the information from trusted individuals, and they

IN RECENT YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN AN ALARMING INCREASE IN DESTRUCTIVE AI TECHNOLOGIES USING A VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES

REUTERS/AFOLABI SOTUNDE



Fake images are threats in the digital world. Innocent civilians are targeted and are unaware of the impacts of their actions when (re)sharing such content.

PHOTO BY JOHN PAUL VAN WERT/RANK STUDIOS

Biometric technology is used to verify identity at the airport or online in the case of banks.

may thus automatically reshare the content. Some people are not aware that such content was created to achieve particular aims, such as the instigation of collective violence. In 2018 in Gabon, a deepfake video of President Ali Bongo was 'cited as the trigger for an unsuccessful coup by the Gabonese military'.[6]

The power of algorithms can also be seen on social media platforms used by civilians in their daily lives. These platforms all use algorithms that create addictive behaviours, echo chambers, and new dynamics of trust among users. For example, some platforms will suggest videos to watch (such as, autoplay in YouTube) and groups to join (on Facebook), or recommend popular and trending articles which might contain fake news (on Twitter). This amplifies extremist rhetoric, violence, hatred and discrimination among users online and in the real world. The more people view, share and watch repetitively, the more ideas and news become deeply anchored in people's minds.

Symbolic Violence and Biometric Technologies

Biometric technologies have been deployed in various areas, such as border control, predictive policing, the banking and health sector, and identification. Biometric technology is used to verify identity at the airport or online in the case of banks. Authorities all over the world are using biometric data from video surveillance to fight crime. China has somewhat become a hegemon in this area with its biometric technologies spreading all around the world. It has been argued that China is trying to create global AI norms based on its own values. While there have been some solutions built locally, Africa has recently been the beta-testing ground for powerful emerging technologies among civilians who are completely unaware that they are being subjected to the testing or roll-out of these technologies. Beta testing pilots a technology using human participants. For example, through the Belt and Road initiative, China set up partnerships with African countries to roll out its facial recognition technologies in elections, schools, and other situations. Civilians are not aware that their private data (images and videos of their faces) have been collected for AI-enhanced technologies.

Biometric technologies contribute to the creation of situations where civilians are subjected to symbolic violence, which manifests itself, for example, through surveillance capitalism and data colonialism. For a vulnerable population, minorities, or people living in areas where technologies are under-regulated, the collection, gathering, selling, and storing of biometric data can be qualified as symbolic violence. This violence is not direct or physical; it is born out of the asymmetrical

power dynamics at play in which powerful actors (for example, large tech companies, states, the political elite) have control over these activities. Weak and vulnerable populations have no control over the kind of data collected about them (for example, ethnicity, race, gender), the purpose for which it will be used (policing minorities), how long this information will be stored, and who will have access to it.

However, symbolic violence can become direct and physical when in the hands of authoritarian and 'thug' states. Recently, countries like Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe have been at the centre of an alarming deployment of facial recognition technologies for mass surveillance. Among the most well-known Chinese companies deploying these technologies is Huawei, which has frequently been accused of spying on the African Union (AU). Some of Huawei's projects in Africa are implemented within the framework of initiatives such as the safe city programmes. In 2018, as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, the Chinese firm Cloudwalk Technology concluded a deal with the Zimbabwean State to launch a large-scale facial recognition programme.[7] Smaller companies, such as Transsion, also offer cheap technologies (smartphones) to civilians and deploy facial recognition technologies that collect data from African people without oversight of the companies' activities.[8] The gathering and selling of such data is an extremely lucrative business, and marketing companies have had no scruples about using these means to micro-target the local population. These types of technologies threaten people's privacy and liberty. More importantly, they are a significant threat to people's security if deployed in authoritarian and police states. An example is the use of facial recognition in Uganda to identify and track opposition politicians during protest movements.[9] In (post)conflict zones, such occurrences threaten democratic processes and peace.

Colonial Governance Practices and Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)

The concept of the Foucauldian boomerang effect[10] suggests a particular shift in how technologies are produced and deployed. This concept refers to 'colonial' practices (including 'colonial models of pacification, militarization and control')[11] and technologies developed and deployed in the global South or conflict zones to target people in these regions, which are then increasingly deployed in America, Europe, and East Asia. For example, police forces in the North are now routinely using Israeli drones in policing activities among civilians. This technology was originally deployed to police Palestinians.

REUTERS/FEISAL OMAR

Somali police officers receive drone training in Mogadishu (25 May 2017).

PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. JEREMY LABOY/RELEASED

Lethal autonomous weapons can identify, select and engage a target without meaningful human control.

Despite such a shift, unfortunately, many of the technologies that are currently used or beta-tested in wars and conflicts (mostly located in the global South) are still researched, prototyped, and developed in the global North, often without stringent regulations. These colonial practices continue unchallenged. In the postcolonial era, we see such practices transferred, copied, learnt, and diffused in the processes behind the deployment of emerging technologies like AI as a tool to enhance weapon systems. LAWS is a case in point here.

According to the Future of Life Institute, 'Lethal autonomous weapons are weapon systems that can identify, select and engage a target without meaningful human control.'[12] There were allegations that the US strike on the Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh employed an AI-powered weapon,[13] and recently, Israel has recognised that AI was central to its operations against Hamas in the Gaza strip during the latest conflict.[14] However, there has not been a single major situation where AI has been used to target innocent civilians in conflict zones in Africa. Nevertheless, the use of AI during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a sign of the future of warfare. LAWS will be used in conflicts and wars, and civilians will suffer as a result of the violence.

AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO BE PROTECTING AFRICAN PEOPLE ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE SPACES WHERE THE MILITARY GOVERNS AI

It is crucial to delve deeper into the governance of AI. Recently, there has been a rise in colonial governance practices in this area. The United States (US) and its allies dominate the governance of AI in the military and defence sector. Within this framework, they are only willing to invite other actors who they think deserve to be part of endeavours to regulate AI in the military (for example, technological powerhouses from the global South, such as India).[15] This transatlantic governance platform aims at developing standards, norms, and regulations with so-called 'western' and 'democratic' values. Unfortunately, these violent and colonial technologies that will be used in warfare will be accompanied by western values and will be adopted and used in wars in the global South, including Africa. African governments that are supposed to be protecting African

PHOTO BY DARREN STEWART/GALLO IMAGES VIA GETTY IMAGES

South African officials conduct an inspection of damaged telecommunication infrastructure in Durban (15 January 2021). The vandalism of towers belonging to major network companies came in the wake of viral social media posts suggesting a link between 5G and the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

people are excluded from the spaces where the military governs AI. The only platform many of them are part of is the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in Geneva.

Invisible Threats and 5G

Emerging technologies can also be invisible threats that affect the peace of civilians. Disinformation, misinformation, and fake news have been rife in Africa over the last few years. Digital threats are diverse, given the multiplicity of emerging technologies that are being tested and rolled out. Once people feel distrust and fear, they engage in actions such as protests, riots and conflicts. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many virus conspiracies were spread in the African cybersphere and, thereafter, disseminated via offline methods, such as rumour.

In Africa, civilians themselves play important roles in securitising the fifth-generation mobile network (5G). 5G is said to provide high-speed, optimum performance and improved connectivity. Some African people have joined an anti-5G conspiracy. The conspiracy theory surrounding this technology, such as its role in diffusing coronavirus, caused people to view 5G as a threat that must be controlled and destroyed. In the North, this global movement led to arson attacks, and some engineers received physical and verbal threats. An example of this securitisation of technology and the implication of 5G in peace and conflict processes in Africa is the recent influence of a global conspiracy theory online in South Africa. In January 2021, Vodacom and Mobile Telecommunication Company (MTN) towers were burnt because of conspiracy theories linking the spread of COVID-19 to 5G. When civilians engage in actions such as the destruction of public goods, it is a sign of dissatisfaction and fear. This demonstrates the extent to which the population is vulnerable if drastic measures are not put in place to manage and regulate the deployment of emerging technologies.

Looking Forward: The Future of Emerging Technologies in African Peace and Conflict Processes

There has been a push towards the implementation of initiatives around cyber peace and security.[16] This concept is still being discussed and defined by scholars, practitioners and actors from the public and private sectors. These initiatives could revolve around defining the norms of responsible state behaviours; control and governance of the internet based on democratic principles; cyber peacekeeping;

UN PHOTO

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) tests drones in Bangui, Central African Republic, ahead of the Pope's visit to the country (24 November 2015).

arms control, including a ban on offensive cyberweapons and AI-powered drones facilitating signature and personality strikes; and the use of AI in peacebuilding, conflict resolution and mediation. It is also about the fight against cyberwarfare and cyberconflict, mass surveillance and espionage, disinformation operations, and misinformation, among others. The list is long because technologies in the digital world evolve rapidly, while regulation is slow to catch up. Some of these phenomena are already pervasive in certain countries, and malevolent actors are taking advantage of this to sow discord, disturb the peace, and create conflict and war. For example, in the Middle East and more specifically in Syria, AI helped Russians and the Assad regime organise and amplify disinformation campaigns drawing attention away from the abuse they had committed by using anti-imperialist messages and pretending to denounce human rights violations.

The problem with emerging technologies used by malevolent actors to create situations of conflict and insecurity is that, despite their so-called decentralised, emancipatory, and empowering aspects, they allow and facilitate the exploitation of vulnerabilities and very often target what is anchored within people: feelings, identities, the historical past, attachment to loved ones, and anger and frustration. Africa is embracing emerging technologies, but at the same time, people are already paying a high price with community violence and conflicts, an erosion of trust between the people and authorities during elections and the pandemic, online organised crime, and disinformation operations targeting the vulnerable. Extremist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) seem to have found a new home in Africa. They are known to be tech-savvy and use digital tools for recruitment. This is all only just starting on the continent.

EXTREMIST GROUPS SUCH AS THE ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND THE LEVANT (ISIS) SEEM TO HAVE FOUND A NEW HOME IN AFRICA. THEY ARE KNOWN TO BE TECH-SAVVY AND USE DIGITAL TOOLS FOR RECRUITMENT

Societies and individuals that are neither equipped nor ready to face and deal with the threats posed by emerging technologies suffer the most. Little is currently known about the roles emerging technologies play in peace and security in Africa despite its already overwhelming presence in people's everyday lives. There should be more research into how these technologies co-exist and interact with civilians during times of peace and periods of conflict. Recently, organisations deploying peace operations on the continent or involved in peace processes such as mediation (for example, the UN Department of Peace Operations) have been using AI to support their decision-making processes or analyse data and forecast occurrences of conflicts, such as sentiment analyses using data collected from open-source platforms. With sentiment analysis, an AI technique known as Natural Language Processing identifies and classifies opinions and emotions in data collected from various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, websites, and so on. The analysis and models derived from this technique can be helpful in predicting the occurrence of a crisis or conflict. To what extent do such technologies support peace processes? Do they help resolve conflict?

While recognising the positive outcomes of these emerging technologies, it is crucial to identify the threats they pose to peace and security. Very often,

IT IS NO SECRET THAT BIG TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES AND POWERFUL NATIONS RESORT TO COLONIAL PRACTICES WHEN DEPLOYING TECHNOLOGIES, SUCH AS AI, IN AFRICA

local governments are complicit in the deployment of colonial technologies. An example mentioned earlier is the deployment of facial recognition on the continent. Technology is still under-regulated in African countries. This gives leeway and creates loopholes for colonial actors to operate without oversight and very often with significant support from local governments. Africa must be brought to the fore in international governance platforms dealing with emerging technologies in the fields of peace and security, and it is vital to insist on establishing further local regulations to protect civilians against such threats.

Finally, with Africa's colonial past, it is also critical to investigate the roles of these technologies in postcolonial settings. It is no secret that big technology companies and powerful nations resort to colonial practices when deploying technologies, such as AI, in Africa. For example, Africa's youth and technology talents have been drawn into lucrative jobs carrying out misinformation operations at home and abroad. Such operations manipulate various issues, including colonialism and imperialism, and involve physical violence. For instance, Africa continues to be a victim of wars between powerful nations such as the US, France and Russia. The cyber domain has been central to the tactics they have employed. The recent disinformation operations which Russia led against France in the Central African Republic (CAR) is proof of this. These campaigns targeted France's presence in the CAR and led to violent street protests involving the local population. In view of all of this, there are many issues that require further inquiry into the implications of such technologies on peace and security on the continent.

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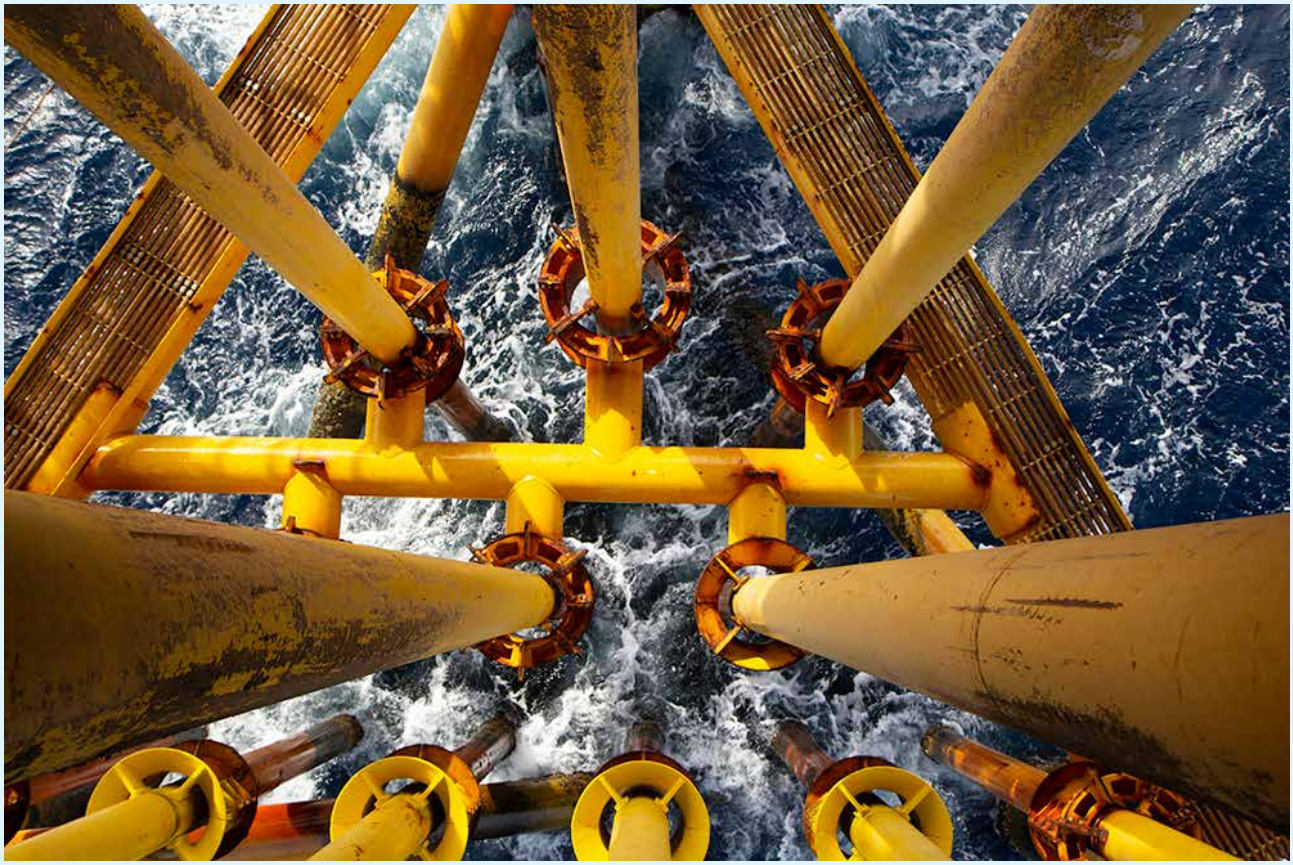

NOOMCPK

IGNORING THE ROOTS OF MOZAMBIQUE'S WAR IN A PUSH FOR MILITARY VICTORY

BY **JOSEPH HANLON**

Introduction

Nearly 2 900 people were killed[1] and most of the population displaced[2] by early June 2021 in a civil war that began in October 2017 in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique's north-eastern province. From a single initial attack involving 30 men, insurgents now control most of four districts and parts of three others in a block roughly 70 km wide and 200 km from north to south. The second-largest natural gas field in Africa is being developed in the far north-east of Mozambique, with more than US$20 billion in investment predicted.

The French company Total is developing the project, but insurgents reached the gates of the development zone in December 2020, and Total pulled out its staff and halted work on 1 January 2021. The Total Chief Executive Officer (CEO) told President Filipe Nyusi personally that Total would only return if Mozambique could guarantee security in a 25 km cordon around the gas project on the Afungi Peninsula. On 22 March 2021, Nyusi staked his personal reputation and that of the nation on a promise of security. Total agreed to resume construction. Two days later, insurgents occupied Palma, which is within the security cordon. Total withdrew its staff again and, on 26 April 2021,

Above: The second-largest natural gas field in Africa is being developed in the far north-east of Mozambique.

SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION

declared 'force majeure'[3] on its Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project. The company stated that it would only return if Mozambique ended the war.

Understanding Civil War

The new civil war is taking place in the same areas where the 1964-1974 independence war began, and there are similarities.[4] Thus a useful starting point is to recognise that all civil wars are different, while displaying many similar patterns, as I set out in my book *Civil War, Civil Peace*.[5] First, every civil war has a grievance, which is so deeply felt that people are prepared to kill their neighbours, often because they come to believe their neighbours want to kill them. There can be peace or a truce, but no civil war is finally ended without resolving the grievance. Second, nearly all civil wars involve foreign actors supporting different sides.

The route to the war is also important. Conflict is normal and natural in any society and is linked to processes of change. Conflicts are often resolved through local processes of negotiations and mediation. If the conflict is not resolved, it can escalate into violent conflict. This may be resolved or sometimes escalates to the level of a full-scale war. Although not always, civil wars often pit an aggrieved group against the state. The grievance often relates to the sharing of resources. The aggrieved group recruits supporters, among whom a shared identity is important; 'we' are discriminated against because of our ethnicity or religion, for example. The grievance is a key factor, but recruiting also requires a 'flag', which symbolises the cause or a shared identity.

Applying this to Cabo Delgado, we see that the 1964–1974 independence war began because local people were oppressed by Portuguese colonial authorities. The colonial authorities were seen to be taking the wealth of the area and leaving nothing behind. Resources were the grievance, and the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) waved the 'flag' of independence as the way to fairer shares. The conflict became violent as the colonial authorities resisted. As the war escalated, both sides gained outside backing. The Frelimo movement gained support from socialist states, including the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and China. Portugal gained backing from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Frelimo is now the government, and people along the coast see themselves as marginalised by a Frelimo elite. The post-2000 resource boom, driven by rubies, graphite and natural gas led to increased poverty and sharply increased inequality. Marginalised groups argued that Frelimo

oligarchs were siphoning off the wealth, as the Portuguese had done before. When the insurgency began, farmers, fishers and artisanal miners joined in the fighting as they had been displaced by mine owners and gas companies.

The grievance was the same in both wars. Independence had been the flag 50 years earlier; this time, the flag is Islam. The Swahili coast extends south 700 km into Mozambique and includes the coastline of Cabo Delgado and Nampula province. People of the Swahili coast have been Muslim for a millennium, and Islam has been adapted to local conditions, including matrilineal family structures in Cabo Delgado. The war thus far continues in areas largely occupied by Muslims and KiMwani speakers.

After 2010, local fundamentalist preachers began to argue that the economic problems in Cabo Delgado were due to a corrupt form of Islam. They argued that the Islamic Council of Mozambique (Cislamo) was based in southern Mozambique, dominated by Frelimo, and that official Islamic leaders were helping Frelimo steal the wealth. The independence war was fought 50 years before to bring about equity. Likewise, the fundamentalists said that sharia law[6] would bring equity and a fairer share of the province's wealth. The conflict escalated into violence, with the fundamentalists fighting both Cislamo and the State. In 2017, it became a war against the State, and the flag was a particular form of Islam.

External Support

Both the new war and the liberation war 50 years ago were initially small, local insurgencies. These attacks allowed insurgents to capture weapons. As they gained ground, they gained outside support. By 2018, the Islamic State (IS)[7] began to publicise insurgent successes in the current Mozambique civil war on social media. By 2019, in captured towns, insurgents sometimes flew the IS black flag and video-recorded IS statements. IS has provided limited practical support since 2020, including training, arms, and financing. Freelance jihadis, who came from other wars, have also played a role, including providing combat and tactical skills training. The insurgents moved from raiding villages to coordinated attacks capturing district towns. In mid-2020, contact between IS and insurgents was reduced. By mid-2021, the extent of IS involvement had become unclear. At the time of writing, Mozambicans still retain political control of the war. In June 2021, the International Crisis Group[8] said that the links between IS and the insurgents were 'tenuous'. The insurgents call themselves,

OSAMA ELFAKI

When the insurgency began, farmers, fishers and artisanal miners joined in the fighting as they had been displaced by mine owners and gas companies.

WIKIPEDIA

In 2019 the Mozambique government used private military groups. The Russian Wagner Private Military Company redeployed soldiers who previously fought in Libya.

and are called by the local people, 'machababos'.[9] They have not been referred to as IS fighters.

The Mozambique government was slow to understand that its weak and corrupt military needed outside help. Only in 2019 did the government look to private military groups. Russia provided two helicopters in September 2019, and the Russian Wagner Private Military Company (PMC) redeployed soldiers who previously fought in Libya. But the Wagner PMC fared poorly in the jungle terrain and withdrew by the end of 2019. By April 2020, the South African PMC Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) was providing air cover in support of Mozambican troops. By late 2020, the South African PMC Paramount was supplying helicopters, armoured cars, and training.[10]

During 2020, the rhetoric changed. From internal criminality, the description of the basis of the war changed to international Islamic terrorism. This attracted the interest of the United States (US) and European Union (EU), who see IS and Islamic fundamentalism as the new global enemy. It also provided a cover for the US and France, who have important economic interests in Cabo Delgado.[11] The US and its allies want to keep Russia and China out of Cabo Delgado. Mozambique's relatively small and local civil war has thus taken a place in global geopolitics.

Internal Roots, Grievances, and a History of Violence

The roots of the Cabo Delgado civil war involve a complex mix of history, ethnicity, and religion, and the war has been fuelled by poverty, growing inequality, and the 'resource curse'.

On the east, Cabo Delgado borders the Mozambique Channel, which is part of the Indian Ocean, and there are a series of islands along the coast. The land is flat for 50 km inland and less than 100 m above sea level. This area has been occupied by the Mwani for centuries. The people are Muslim fishers, traders, and small farmers. There is extensive trade along the coast, with historical links to Zanzibar, which is only 700 km north, rather than the present Mozambican capital, Maputo, which is 2000 km to the south by sea.

West of this coastal strip is the Mueda plateau, which rises to 884 m just 100 km inland from the sea. The area was occupied by the Makonde in the 1700s and 1800s,

THIS ATTRACTED THE INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPEAN UNION, WHO SEE IS AND ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM AS THE NEW GLOBAL ENEMY

PHOTO: MOHAMED DAHIR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Many young men who fled from Mocimboa da Praia following violence, joined the insurgents in the hope of gaining jobs.

to probably avoid slave traders, malaria, and colonisers. The Makonde also have links to Tanzania, and independence in Tanzania in 1963 had a strong influence on them. Frelimo was founded in 1962 and began its war for independence in 1965, with mainly Makonde leadership but with strong involvement from the Mwani. The first shots were fired in 1964 in Chai, on a boundary and in a mixed Mwani-Makonde zone, which has also been the centre of fighting in the current war. After independence, the Mwani argued that they were marginalised, as the Makonde in Frelimo gained power, and key Makonde liberation fighters then became the oligarchs of Cabo Delgado. Many more Makonde than Mwani received pensions as liberation fighters, and Makonde were accused of grabbing coastal land and businesses.

Outside Makonde areas, Cabo Delgado became a forgotten province, with low levels of literacy and education and high levels of poverty. However, from the 1990s, Cabo Delgado proved to be one of the richest provinces in natural resources. Now, most of the province is allocated for mining exploration and exploitation,[12] which in law takes precedence over farmers and existing occupants. Many of the mining licences were grabbed by the Frelimo elite. Thousands of farmers and fishers were pushed off their land, and artisanal miners, particularly those mining for rubies, were evicted,

HOWEVER, FROM THE 1990S, CABO DELGADO PROVED TO BE ONE OF THE RICHEST PROVINCES IN NATURAL RESOURCES

beaten, and even killed.[13] Young people with basic education could not get jobs, while the gas and mining company crews and the Makonde Frelimo elite became wealthy with relatively luxurious cars and houses. In Mocimboa da Praia, for example, young men with very basic literacy said they were educated and would not do the back-breaking work done by their illiterate parents, including farming with only a hoe, or catching fish standing on the beach with a net. Many migrated to towns and became itinerant traders and street sellers. They watched gas workers drive by in 4x4s, who never stopped to support them by buying their goods. Their anger was aimed at 'foreigners' – mainly people from the south of Mozambique – who were believed to be in league with Frelimo in Maputo and taking the good jobs.

A January 2021 survey of people who fled Mocimboa da Praia showed that many young men joined the insurgents in hope of gaining jobs. 'Historically, the population is not

in favour of the government,' notes the survey report, and the complaint is that young people are excluded from jobs because they are said to support the opposition. Abuse by the police and army also increased local support for the insurgents.[14]

Coastal Cabo Delgado and Nampula have a history of violence against local elites. In 1999, there were angry local demonstrations against cholera prevention and treatment teams, who were accused of spreading the disease rather than treating it. In Cabo Delgado province, in Montepuez, two health workers were killed. In Mecufi, a crowd attacked and burned a cholera treatment and isolation tent. In the neighbouring Nampula province, there were attacks in five mainly coastal districts. More cholera riots followed in 2001 in Nampula. Researchers sent to coastal Nampula were shocked to find that many people believed the local elite wanted them dead.[15] This is linked with common local beliefs in vampirism and in the elites' intention to drink their blood (*shupa-sangue*) or sell it.

Muidumbe district is one of the areas affected by the current civil war. It forms a boundary between Makonde and Mwani areas. In 2002–2003, 24 people were lynched after being accused of magically commanding seven lions that ate 46 local people. The accused were important people – the district administrator, chiefs, members of Frelimo, and a local businessman.[16] What is important here is that many people believe that local elites do not just want to exploit them. They want to drink their blood and steal their organs. The protests are against authority figures, who are often only a little richer and more powerful than those protesting. Thus, in looking at the Cabo Delgado civil war, it is important to take into account this violence, and the genuine belief of many people that elites want them dead and they are acting to defend their lives and those of their families.

Who Are the Insurgents Against?

The cholera riots and even the first raids of the civil war involved killing local people with power over others and links outside the village, such as health workers, local traders, and community leaders. In many cases, the measure of their wealth was that they were the only people in the village with a motorcycle. If anything, this is class-based violence, and not about ethnicity or religion. Indirect links to Frelimo and a wealthier elite mattered.

However, the fundamentalist framework added a new pattern. Attacks have also been on imams and others

TESEUM

In 1999, there were angry local demonstrations against cholera prevention and treatment teams, who were accused of spreading the disease rather than treating it.

PHOTO BY MARCO LONGARI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The Makonde erected large crosses in the predominantly Muslim town of Mocimboa da Praia.

practising a 'false' Islam and, through Cislamo, were linked to the Frelimo elite. The initial violence occurred within Mwani communities.

Class and power came increasingly to the fore. The Frelimo elite was seen as largely Makonde and from the liberation war generation. They were accused of taking Mwani land and resources. Some Makonde men who were too young to receive liberation war pensions also felt marginalised and joined the insurgency. Now, it is increasingly a war against the Frelimo State in a largely Muslim area, and not specifically against Makondes or Christians.[17]

Religion

More than a decade before the start of the current insurgency, in 2005, riots in Mocimboa da Praia for the first time took on a religious tone. After independence, Makonde liberation fighters moved down from the plateau to Mocimboa da Praia. The Makonde are traditionally Catholic, and they made the first religious move when, from 2000, they began erecting large crosses in the predominantly Muslim town. The Mwani responded with loudspeakers on mosques broadcasting the call to prayer. A 2005 by-election for mayor was disputed when the Frelimo candidate was declared the victor. In September 2005, there was a confrontation that reflected the town's division. One side identified itself as Mwani, Muslim and supporters of the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo), and it attacked the other side self-identified as Makonde, Christian and Frelimo. Officially, there were 12 deaths and 18 houses destroyed.[18] Twelve years later, the new civil war also began in Mocimboa da Praia.

The crosses may have reflected a rise in religious fundamentalism. Tanzania saw an increase in both Christian and Islamic fundamentalism in the 1990s and 2000s. Playing on the description 'born-again Christians', Tanzanians began to refer to 'born-against Muslims'. Northern Cabo Delgado still looks over the border to Tanzania, and local Islamic preachers travelled to Tanzania for training. Some returned and set up local fundamentalist mosques, urging supporters not to send their children to state schools, to restrict the space for women, and to wear shoes in mosques.[19] Cislamo has a southern leadership and is close to Frelimo. Radical preachers argued that these purveyors of false Islam were

RADICAL PREACHERS ARGUED THAT THESE PURVEYORS OF FALSE ISLAM WERE SUPPORTING FRELIMO TO STEAL THE LOCAL WEALTH

REUTERS/MIKE HUTCHINGS

The 2019 visit of Pope Francis to Mozambique was seen as support for the Christian candidate in the national elections (6 September 2019).

supporting Frelimo to steal the local wealth. Sharia law would be fairer, they claimed.

The Frelimo oligarchs and President Nyusi himself are Makonde and Christian. The people with grievances are Mwani and Muslim, and they see their traditional Islamic leaders siding with the Frelimo elite. Thus, it seems unsurprising that the insurgents initially chose the flag of fundamentalist Islam to challenge both Frelimo and its perceived local supporters. This was underlined in the 2019 national elections, when the Catholic Nyusi was standing against the Muslim Renamo candidate, Ossufo Momade, and Pope Francis made an unprecedented visit to Mozambique during the election campaign. In the middle of the expanding civil war in Cabo Delgado, this was seen as support for the Christian candidate.

THE RESOURCE CURSE OCCURS WHEN GLOBAL MINING AND GAS COMPANIES SHARE THE SURPLUS FROM RESOURCE EXTRACTION WITH A SMALL LOCAL ELITE, AND LITTLE REACHES THE REST OF THE POPULATION

Confrontations between new fundamentalist mosques and existing mosques had been increasing for some time and were sometimes violent. In 2015, some local preachers began to train militias. One group carried out the initial attack on Mocimboa da Praia. Small groups attacked villages, following a similar pattern. About a dozen young men, mostly armed with machetes, raided villages at night, beheaded people and burnt houses, but left before the police arrived. Wealthier individuals in the village and local leaders known to have opposed fundamentalists were often targeted. Initially, the insurgents had local support. By June 2018, they were more organised and attacked towns and road traffic.

The Resource Curse

The resource curse occurs when global mining and gas companies share the surplus from resource extraction with a small local elite, and little reaches the rest of the population. Economists refer to this as 'rent', income derived from ownership or control over a limited asset or resource. Such income is attained without any expenditure or effort on behalf of the resource holder. Frelimo has developed an elite and patronage network based on growing resource rents. In Cabo Delgado, this is controlled by a small group of Makonde liberation fighters, two of whom sit on the powerful Frelimo political commission.

The problem has expanded in the past two decades, and is also linked to control of illegal trade. Senior Frelimo figures were reported to control the very large heroin transit trade in 2001 and the illegal timber trade in 2005. Major ruby and offshore gas discoveries in 2009 and 2010 set the pattern for the dominance of the extractive industries. Increasing corruption and poverty, the ostentatious display of wealth by elites, and a lack of local trickle-down benefits led to growing local discontent. In a limited way, the Frelimo elite recognised the problem. From 2019, the insurgents began recruiting from outside the immediate war area with promises of jobs. The response from various Frelimo leaders, including Nyusi, was 'don't be fooled – there are no jobs'. Yet they did nothing to create jobs.

INITIALLY, THE GOVERNMENT TRIED TO CONCEAL THE EVENTS IN CABO DELGADO, AND THEN TREATED IT AS MERELY CRIMINAL ACTION TO BE DEALT WITH BY THE POLICE

Giving Control to the Military

As in many countries, fear of a possible military coup leads to keeping the armed forces weak and divided. In Mozambique, power was divided between the army, paramilitary riot police,[20] and the security service, Serviço de Informações e Segurança do Estado (SISE), which answers only to the president.

Although the riot police are better paid and trained and less corrupt than the army, it is widely recognised that neither has the capacity to win the war. Frelimo's guerrilla warfare tactics have been forgotten, and the riot police and army have not had effective counter-guerrilla training.

Initially, the government tried to conceal the events in Cabo Delgado, and then treated it as merely criminal action to be dealt with by the police. As the war escalated, much of the fighting on the government side was done by the paramilitary riot police under the Ministry of the Interior. The dominance of the Ministry was highlighted by press conferences given by the head of police or the Interior Minister. The Interior Ministry contracted the Wagner Group and then the DAG. There have been major conflicts between the Defence Force and the Ministry of the Interior as a result. For example, the army refused to cooperate with the Wagner Group.

There is a critical strategic difference between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence. The Interior Ministry believes the riot police can bring the insurgents under control relatively quickly with more outside support, including more air cover and spotting provided by the DAG, better equipment, and more training. The Defence Ministry has a long-term strategy based on building a much larger modern military force, with substantial increases in equipment and training from outside.

Is a Purely Military Victory Possible?

Studies of civil wars repeatedly point to group inequality and natural resource rents as central to the wars. Any definitive resolution to the war requires responding to the grievances.[21] Thus far, Mozambique has singularly failed even to recognise the grievances. A key problem is that the Cabo Delgado oligarchs partly responsible for the grievances are too powerful within the ruling Frelimo party, and Frelimo depends on its patronage network, which in turn depends on resource rents.

Another issue repeatedly ignored by government is that human rights violations by soldiers and police have pushed local people to side with the insurgents. The police and army have been responsible for serious human rights abuses, ranging from beatings and killings of civilians to setting up roadblocks simply to collect tolls. This has turned local people against the armed forces and increased the number of recruits for the insurgents. Both sides appear to be trying to force people to flee, and virtually the entire population from the war zone is now registered as internally displaced.

Frelimo has increasingly appealed for international military and humanitarian support, but on narrow terms that ensures Frelimo remains in control. It does not want the Southern African Development Community (SADC), EU or UN peacekeeping missions involved as they are inevitably accompanied by political assessments, which will point to the failure to redress grievances and human rights violations. The EU Observer Mission's critical report on the 2019 national elections was a harsh reminder of the power of international groups.[22]

Instead, Frelimo wants to negotiate semi-secret agreements with individual governments and private military contractors to provide support to build Mozambique's own military. The government wants humanitarian agreements with individual UN agencies to support the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons. It also wants finances to cover its expenses.

Frelimo and the government hope that by representing themselves as the victim of a global enemy, Islamic terrorists, and a player in the new East-West cold war, they will attract support without being closely scrutinised. They intend to end the war within a few years, while maintaining the rent system. However, the country's history suggests that, without dealing with the many grievances, this will fail.

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4 There was a third civil war in Mozambique from 1982-1992, a Cold War proxy that pitted Renamo built up and backed by apartheid South Africa against Frelimo. It ended at the same time as the Cold War. This war did not reach Cabo Delgado.

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6 Sharia law is a religious law derived from the precepts of Islam, particularly the Koran and the Hadith. The fundamentalists who lead the insurgency are Koranists who do not accept the Hadith and other Islamic precepts. Their version of Sharia law is different from that of other Cabo Delgado Muslims. In general, the Islamic approach has been to foster a society based on generosity and cooperation, values which are antithetical to greed, while accepting a free market economy.

7 Also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and the Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP).

8 International Crisis Group (2021) 'Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado', *Africa Report,* 303, 11 June, Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/southern-africa/mozambique/stemming-insurrection-mozambiques-cabo-delgado> [Accessed 13 June 2021].

9 'Youth' in Arabic is *shabaab*, which is also used in Swahili. The insurgents thus referred to themselves as 'al Shabaab', but with no link to other al Shababs. Local people use the plural Portuguese form to refer to the insurgents as 'al shababs'. All three local languages, Mwani, Makonde and Makua, are Bantu languages which create plurals by adding 'ma' in front of the word. Therefore, al shababs becomes 'machababos'.

10 See Cabo Ligado for detailed reporting of the war, Available at: <https://www.caboligado.com>.See also *Mozambique News Reports and Clippings*, Available at: <http://bit.ly/MozNews2021> and <http://bit.ly/MozNews2020>.

11 The gas field is divided In half. The near-shore consortium is led by Total, which has already started on the first US$20 billion phase. The off-shore consortium is led by the US company ExxonMobil. Both companies are close to their respective governments. In addition, on 14 May 2020, the US Export-Import Bank (Exim) approved a US$4.7 billion loan for the LNG facility. The Exim statement said that the loan would support 16 700 US jobs and keep China out of the gas field. Available at: <https://bit.ly/Total-Exim2020> [Accessed 14 June 2021].

12 See the Mozambique Mining Cadastre Portal, Available at: <https://portals.landfolio.com/mozambique/en> [Accessed 14 June 2021].

13 In 2019, Gemfields agreed to pay US$8.3mn to settle 273 claims of killings, severe beatings, and house burnings related to Mozambique Ruby Mines. See Hanlon, Joseph (2019) 'Ruby Miner Gemfields to Pay $8.3 mn to Settle Montepuez Torture & Murder Claims', *Mozambique New Reports and Clippings*, 436, 29 January, <https://www.open.ac.uk/technology/mozambique/sites/www.open.ac.uk.technology.mozambique/files/files/Mozambique_436-29Jan2019_Gemfields_PolComm_Samito.pdf>; Leigh Day Law Firm (2018) 'Fabergé Owners Face London High Court Battle over Alleged Human Rights Abuses', 16 April, London. Available at: <https://bit.ly/Ruby-LD> [Accessed 30 January 2021].

14 Macalane, Geraldo Luís and Jafar, Jafar Silvestre (2021) *Ataques Terroristas em Cabo Delgado (2017-2020): As causas do fenómeno pela boca da população de Mocímboa da Praia*, Pemba: Universidade Rovuma. Available at: <http://bit.ly/MozAtaquesMocim> [Accessed 30 January 2021].

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17 Macalane, Geraldo Luís and Jafar, Jafar Silvestre (2021) op.cit.

18 Sousa Santos, Ana Margarida (2010) 'History, Memory and Violence: Changing Patterns of Group Relationship in Mocímboa da Praia, Mozambique', PhD thesis, St Antony's College, Oxford University, Available at: <https://bit.ly/Mocimboa-2005> [Accessed 30 January 2021].

19 The prophet prayed in shoes to distinguish himself from Jews and Christians, who prayed barefoot. Wearing shoes in mosques stopped when mosques became carpeted. However, for Cabo Delgado fundamentalists, the return to wearing shoes is symbolically very important.

20 When the armed wing of the main opposition party, Renamo, resumed military action in central Mozambique in 2015–2016, it was the paramilitary riot police who did most of the fighting. The army under the Ministry of Defence participated, but was largely ineffective.

21 Yanacopulos, Helen and Hanlon, Joseph (2006) *Civil War, Civil Peace*. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University.

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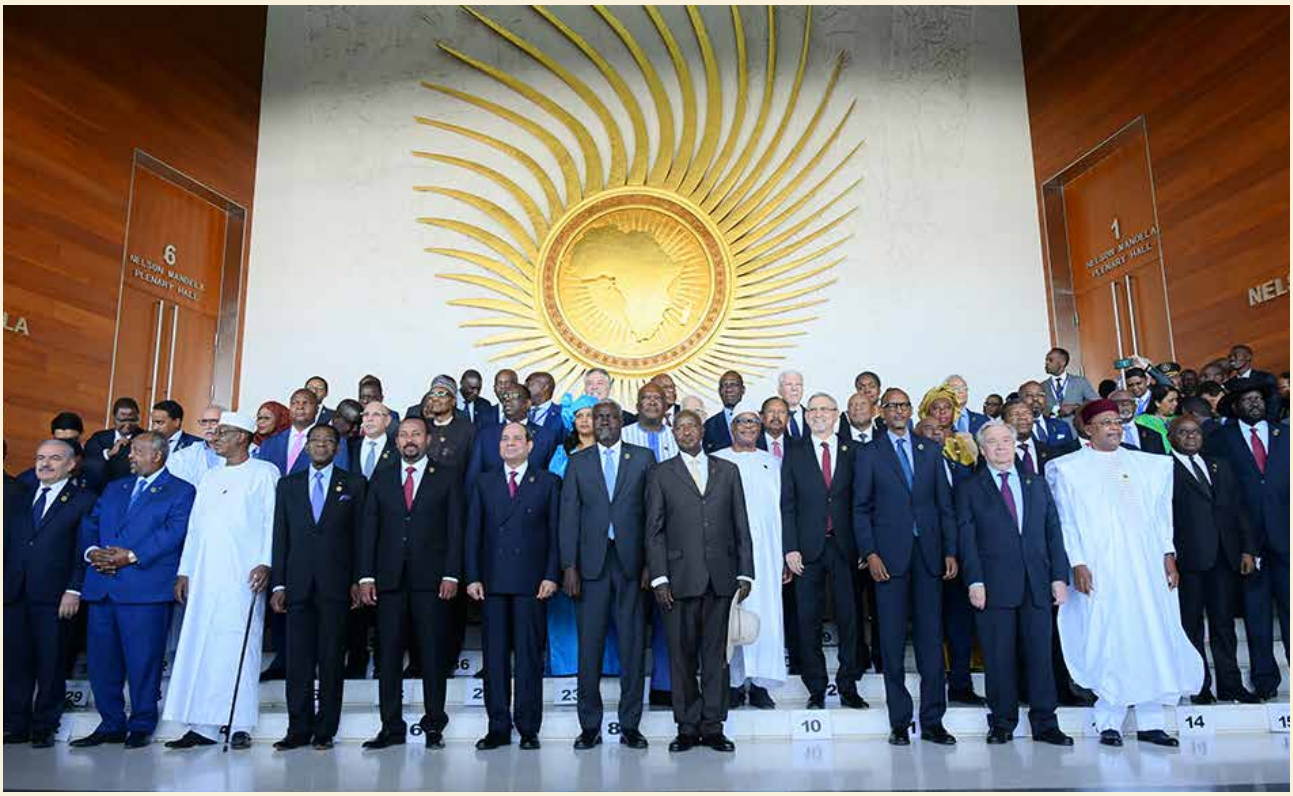
THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL AFRICAN STATES AND CONFLICTS IN THE REGION

BY **HENRY C. OGARAKU** AND **PROMISE E. OGARAKU**



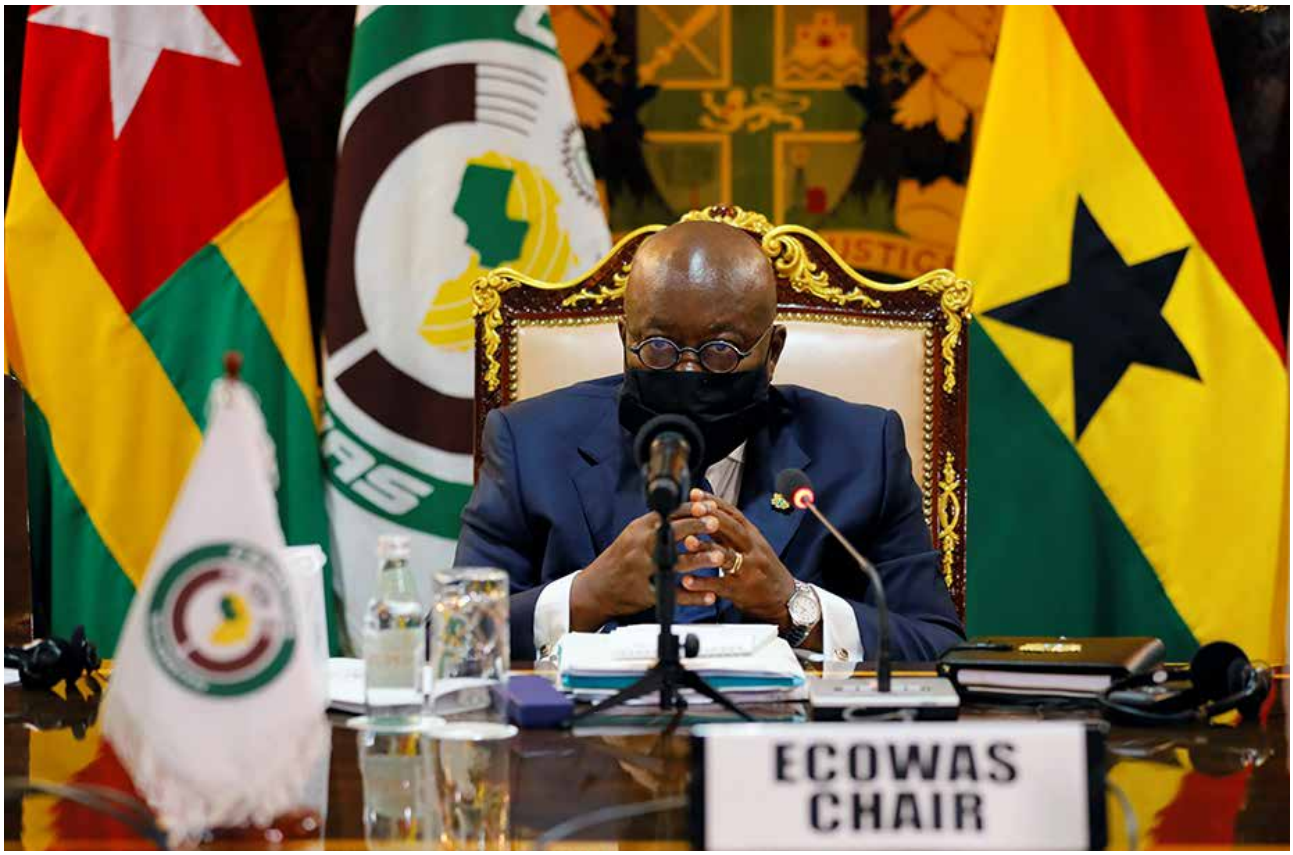
UN PHOTO / DANIEL GETACHEW

Introduction

Conflict is a complex phenomenon that dwells in the domain of human relations. It rears its head when interests clash, opinions differ, needs fail to be met, agreements are breached, and the parties involved fail to find common ground for peace, or to continue relating to one another. Conflict can mutate and develop new dimensions. It can occur at the interpersonal, sectional, racial, ethnoreligious, national, regional, continental and international levels. Wars start as smaller-scale conflicts. Once a certain group in a given population continues to feel aggrieved, marginalised, frustrated or threatened, conflicts will likely arise. But human societies also make efforts to prevent conflicts before they occur, manage them when they do, and resolve them to sustain peace. Conflict handling thus includes the phases of prevention, management, and resolution. Prevention entails early efforts to avoid the occurrence of conflict. Management entails efforts to contain it. Resolution entails the de-escalation of conflict. It involves negotiation on the conditions or materials of dispute, reopening interaction, increasing cooperation, fostering positive attitudes, building trust, and sustaining peace among the parties.

Above: The African Union has defined, concerted and enforceable instruments for preventing, managing and resolving crises and conflicts in Africa.

REUTERS/FRANCIS KOKOROKO



Conflicts have become increasingly regionalised, requiring collective approaches and responses through regional economic communities.

Conflict prevention, management and resolution are well-known practices in international relations and democratic governance. Various bodies have been formed to deal with conflicts at the national, regional, continental, and international levels, especially in Africa, the continent with the most conflicts. This is the main reason why the Organization of African Unity (OAU) gave way to the African Union (AU), which came with more defined, concerted and enforceable instruments for preventing, managing and resolving crises and conflicts in Africa.

In 1990, there were about 20 wars going on simultaneously in Africa, but by 2010, they had reduced to just four conflicts, representing a major success for the AU.[1] The four conflicts in 2010 included those in Darfur-Sudan, Somalia, Côte d'Ivoire, and Western Sahara. For 20 years (1988–2008), Africa recorded a steady increase in the number of peace agreements.[2] Interestingly, these changing narratives owe more to regional economic communities (RECs), most notably the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the East African Community (EAC). Conflicts had become increasingly regionalised, requiring collective approaches and responses.[3] It seems that states within a region share more in common and more willingly commit resources to regional causes. They draw from indigenous intelligence and capabilities, and cultural and political dynamics, while leveraging their common boundaries, interests and shared values in finding mutual solutions to regional problems. RECs are also expected to be more expedient in responding to conflicts. But comparatively:

> ECOWAS, SADC, and EAC have made greater strides in economic integration, the institutionalization of democratic norms, and peace and security than others, such as the Economic Community of Central African States, IGAD [Intergovernmental Authority on Development], the Arab Maghreb Union, and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. In addition to lacking historical ties of integration, the latter regional institutions face civil conflicts, interstate strife, and an absence of anchor nations to lead integration efforts.[4]

RECS ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO BE MORE EXPEDIENT IN RESPONDING TO CONFLICTS

African regional institutions are playing major roles in democratisation and conflict management. However, the case of the Economic Community of Central African States

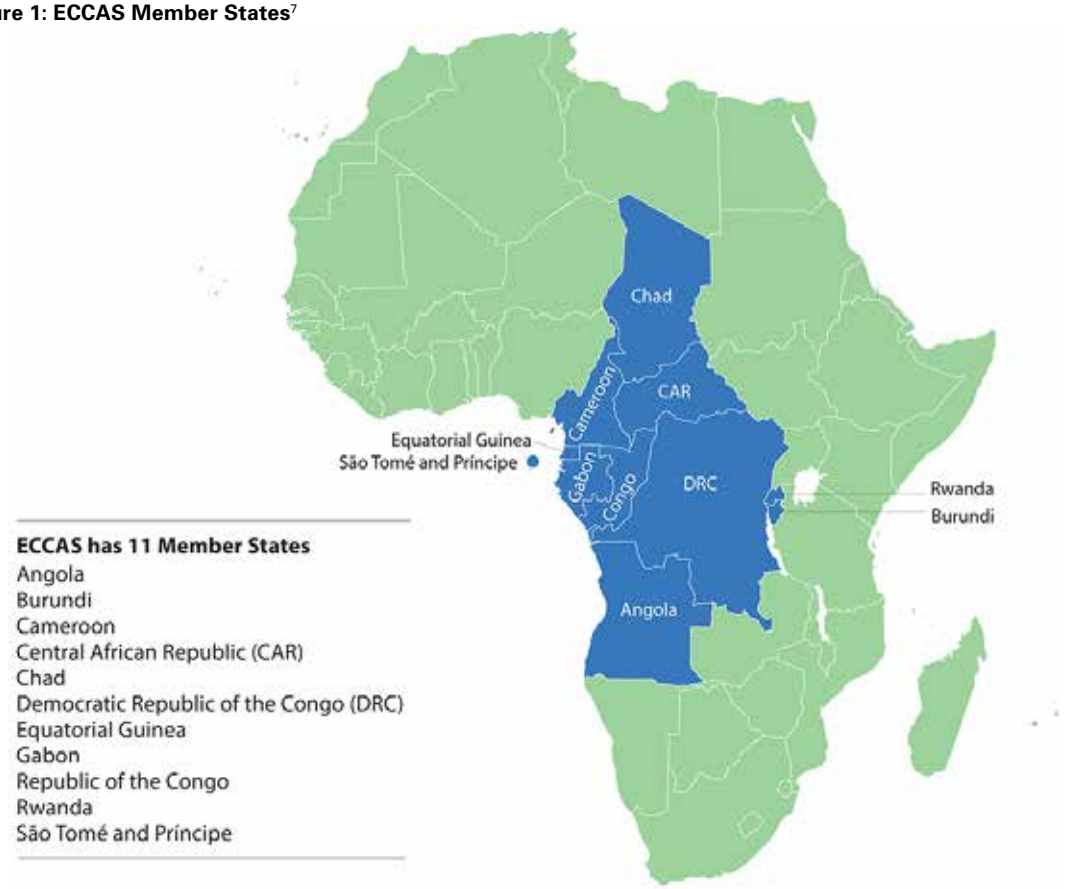
(ECCAS), which is charged with conflict management and democratisation in Central Africa, continues to be worrisome. Central Africa is one of the continent's most fragile and vulnerable regions, having witnessed a large number of coups, crises and conflicts that have taken place since 1990.[5] In Central Africa, states are either in conflict with one another or with criminal groups backed by various other interested parties.[6] These criminal groups are often militarised and trans-nationalised by rival governments and used to commit atrocious crimes, such as drug trafficking, counterfeiting, arms dealing, and armed warfare to destabilise other governments. Eleven states currently make up the region, namely, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, and São Tomé and Príncipe (see the map in Figure 1 below). Apart from Gabon and Cameroon, which experience relative stability, the rest are engulfed in crises and conflicts.

Types of conflicts in the region include ethnoreligious conflicts, border issues, civil strife, civil wars, and genocides. The conflicts in Burundi and Rwanda, for instance, were ethnoreligious in nature. The 1994 Rwandan genocide reportedly claimed about 800 000 lives.[8]

CENTRAL AFRICA IS ONE OF THE CONTINENT'S MOST FRAGILE AND VULNERABLE REGIONS, HAVING WITNESSED A LARGE NUMBER OF COUPS, CRISES AND CONFLICTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE 1990

While Angola was in turmoil following the battle for control of its government by three ethnopolitical factions, Cameroon and Chad experienced border challenges. The neighbouring CAR was embroiled in a series of revolts and attempts at ethnoreligious cleansing involving the government of François Bozizé, the (Muslim) Séléka rebel coalition, and the (Christian) Anti-balaka militias. Following the ousting of Bozizé, the Séléka-led mutiny in the CAR polarised the country's security and impaired its infrastructure and ethnic composition. In turn, this led to an increased risk of mass atrocities amid a deluge of human rights violations, war crimes, ethnoreligious clashes, intra-Séléka fights, and the influx of fighters purportedly coming

Figure 1: ECCAS Member States[7]



SOURCE: <WWW.UNECA.ORG/ORIA/PAGES/ECCAS-ECONOMIC-COMMUNITY-CENTRAL-AFRICAN-STATES>

REUTERS/ALAIN AMONTCHI

Armed fighters from the Séléka rebel alliance patrol the streets in pickup trucks, following the ousting of President François Bozizé (26 March 2013).

from Chad and Sudan.[9] All these conflicts are within the confines of ECCAS's jurisdiction.

This article, therefore, seeks to evaluate the performance of ECCAS against the backdrop of the protocol that established it. Such periodic evaluations help African leaders, political players and other concerned groups, especially within the region, to better understand their challenges and what to modify, strengthen, adopt or expunge to make the regional body more effective.

ECCAS's Protocol, Performance and Challenges

ECCAS is a relatively new regional body compared to ECOWAS, SADC, and EAC. It was conceived under the Lagos Plan of Action in 1983 and rolled out in 1985, with a mandate principally focused on economic cooperation among member states. Interestingly, its formative period witnessed a changing paradigm in international politics and relations. Disinterest or lacklustre approaches to conflict management in Africa by the international community was apparent. In fact, in 1992, through the United Nations (UN) Agenda for Peace, with emphasis on Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the African continent was reminded that the UN must not intervene in every regional conflict, that regional institutions have contributions to make, and that they possess resources, skills, knowledge and capabilities that should be put to use in this regard. This revival was emphasised in the formation of ECCAS because the aforementioned elements are better crystallised under regional cooperation. Incidentally, ECCAS was not empowered to operate fully during the 1990s when conflicts were rife in the region.

The strengthening of ECCAS began with the formation of its peace and security architecture, notably, the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC) and the Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC). Both were created by the Central African Peace and Security Council (COPAX) Protocol which, although adopted in 2000, was endorsed by the required number of Heads of States to enter into force in 2004. MARAC is responsible for conflict and crisis observation, monitoring and prevention. One aspect of the protocol demands a national bureau in each member state to observe security situations at the national level and report using the early warning system at MARAC's headquarters in Libreville. The bureaus' key role is to collect and analyse information or data, and present reports intended to inform the decisions and actions of ECCAS's Secretary-General and other top officials on peace, security developments, risks and threats in the region. Ordinarily, this assignment is straightforward, but the strains on the relationships and mutual mistrust among Heads of States mean that sensitive information may not be shared willingly, completely, or at all.

MINUSCA

Former Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC) soldiers put on the new African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) green berets during a ceremony in Bangui, marking the transfer of authority from FOMAC to MISCA, mandated by the United Nations (December 2013).

And, as is common in Africa, a national bureau appointed by a Head of State is bound by loyalty which can compromise truth, facts, and comprehensiveness. Each government deliberately scrutinises its national bureau against sensitive information. Without factual and comprehensive reports, ECCAS's security monitoring efforts through MARAC have thus been greatly undermined.

FOMAC on the other hand, was conceived as ECCAS's multinational non-permanent standby force intended to accomplish peace, security and humanitarian relief missions. The force's fields of activities include preventative measures, that is, preventive deployment, observation and monitoring missions, as well as, in a wider sense, the enforcement of sanctions and policing activities, such as investigations into fraud and organised crime.[10] However, the FOMAC force of military, police and civilian contingents combined is shamefully small, including only about 4 800 to 5 000 individuals[11] for a region with enormous crises. In discharging its duties through MARAC and FOMAC, ECCAS is seriously hampered by insufficient intelligence, resources, and personnel. In most of its intervention engagements, if not all, the AU and UN usually have to provide support. This does not only reveal the inadequacy of ECCAS, but also ends up pushing the organisation into the background and rendering it irrelevant. For example, instead of ECCAS, it was the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) that mobilised forces and resources to address conflicts in Burundi and CAR. The PSC also took action against the unconstitutional

FOMAC ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS CONCEIVED AS ECCAS'S MULTINATIONAL NON-PERMANENT STANDBY FORCE INTENDED TO ACCOMPLISH PEACE, SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN RELIEF MISSIONS

PAUL KAGAME

The East African Community encouraged leaders in Burundi to resolve internal conflicts democratically and peacefully.

change of government in CAR in 2003. Under the watch of ECCAS, presidents in the region have changed their countries' constitutions to extend their tenures or delay holding elections, including in Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, DRC, and Rwanda. The incapability of ECCAS contributed to the flawed election that kept President Joseph Kabila of the DRC in power in 2011. He held onto power beyond his two-term mandate that was expected to expire in December 2016, with conflict escalating under his regime.

One of the greatest challenges facing ECCAS is COPAX, its highest authority made up of Heads of States and high-level officials, such as ministers, justices, and security chiefs. How can power be centralised in a group that has no visible major leader? Besides being rivals, these Heads of States are sometimes leaders driven by pride, greed, mutual mistrust, vested interests, power, and influence. Many do not want to leave office and are willing to do anything to remain in power. Some even eye the position of regional or ECCAS leader, but none have succeeded in this. The implication of these factors on the performance of ECCAS is significant. ECCAS has been severely deprived of financial, moral and personnel support. Member states do not welcome external control and interference. Consequently, ECCAS's capacity-building depends largely on the European Union (EU). This raises questions about whose objectives and interests ECCAS truly promotes. Some states, like Burundi and Rwanda, share dual regional membership. In Burundi, for instance, instead of ECCAS, it was the EAC that encouraged the country to resolve internal conflicts democratically and peacefully. When the Burundian President at the time, Pierre Nkurunziza, changed the constitution in 2015 to hold onto power, ECCAS did not intervene. In that same year, both Congo's Denis Sassou-Nguesso and Rwanda's Paul Kagame extended their term through constitutional changes to remain in power. Before that, Gabon's Omar Bongo (2003), Chad's Idriss Déby (2005), and Cameroon's Paul Biya (2008) had taken similar actions. This reflects a lack of convergence around the regional democratic norms, which ECCAS was meant to promote and enforce. In addition, many of the leaders have poor records in terms of human rights and the rule-of-law. Thus the moral justification for any leader to accuse or sanction another in the region is absent.

Since 1997, several multinational peace operations have been organised with either poor performance or a lack of participation by ECCAS. For example, when the crisis in the CAR escalated following the Séléka rebellion,

the violent toppling of President François Bozizé, and the emergence of mainly Christian self-defence militia fighting the predominantly Muslim rebels, it was first the AU and then the UN that took over what should have been ECCAS's role. ECCAS only participated in the Peace Consolidation Mission in the CAR (MICOPAX) from 2008 to 2013. The AU operated an international support mission (MISCA) from December 2013 to September 2014. Since then, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) has been deployed in the CAR, parallel with the French Opération Sangaris.[12] Although it is on record that ECCAS operated a multinational force in one of its member states, the relevance and capacity of ECCAS were shown to be weak, and the body was pushed into the background.

MICOPAX was unable to stop the 2012–2013 rebellion in the CAR or prevent the escalating crisis. This failure was linked to the Mission's mandate as a peace support operation (PSO) and its small size of only about 700 troops, who were vastly outnumbered by the Séléka rebel movement.[13] Even though the deployment of troops to support ECCAS missions usually has low compliance among member states, the CAR remains the one country in which ECCAS has seen some success. As the crisis worsened, notwithstanding the presence of 1 600 French and 5 000 AU troops operating with the backing of the UN, which later deployed 10 000 peacekeepers, ECCAS established what is termed the "eighteen-month roadmap" for a peaceful transition to democracy in the CAR, which began in February 2015. This effort shifted the situation, and hope for peace in the CAR increased such that the Anti-balaka rebels promised to put down their arms and seek a political settlement through a proposed inclusive transition. Unfortunately, the change did not materialise as more people continued to be killed, leading to heightened tensions and displacements. It thus appeared that going ahead with the campaigns and election would again intensify the ethnoreligious rivalry and other related issues that were at the heart of the conflict.[14]

Even with the operationalisation of MINUSCA in 2014 and the installation of a transitional government, the CAR is yet to find a stable footing. Elections continued in 2015 and 2016, irrespective of the fighting among armed groups. However, in a February 2019 political agreement between the government and 14 armed groups, the government agreed to integrate some groups' fighters into the national army and their leaders into government. However, implementation was problematic, and some armed groups withdrew from the

UN PHOTO

The Central African Republic held presidential and legislative elections on 30 December 2015, despite the fighting among armed groups.

PHOTO BY ALEXIS HUGUET/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The influx of refugees and asylum-seekers from the Central African Republic to neighbouring countries constitutes a serious challenge with far-reaching implications.

agreement and continued to fight. Many CAR citizens feared fighting would break out again ahead of the December 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections. Despite the February 2019 peace deal being in place, some armed groups still perpetrated violence against civilians. ECCAS needed external forces from the AU or UN to deal with the situation in the CAR.

The strategy of armed intervention in the CAR by the international community prevented the conflict from escalating. More importantly, however, the proposed ECCAS roadmap tested the possibility of political transition in the CAR. It is apparent that some warring groups may be ready to embrace peace in the CAR if certain conditions are met. The Anti-balaka exemplified this. It behoves those at the frontline of restoring peace in CAR to explore this possibility.

Another issue is displacement which results in the influx of people into more peaceful and stable areas. There are hardly enough peacekeepers in conflict zones worldwide, and Africa is no exception. In the CAR, peacekeepers have not been able to adequately protect civilians, maintain law and order, or mitigate displacement. The influx of refugees and asylum-seekers from CAR to Cameroon and other countries constitutes a serious challenge with far-reaching implications. They are part of the complex system of conflict exportation and arms- and drug-dealing. A study found that the DRC heightened its own prospects for civil war from 12% to 20% by accepting 670 000 refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, and the Sudan. Similarly, refugees from Liberia facilitated the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea during the late 20th and 21st centuries.[15]

ECCAS's limited success hinges on a number of factors. One main factor is leadership and Heads of States. Rivalry, mistrust, competition for mineral resources, and ambitious territorial encroachment are rife among leaders. They also engage in conflict exportation. The war of the Great Lakes region started because Rwanda, Burundi and Angola, for

IT IS APPARENT THAT SOME WARRING GROUPS MAY BE READY TO EMBRACE PEACE IN THE CAR IF CERTAIN CONDITIONS ARE MET

UN PHOTO

A joint delegation from the African Union, Economic Community of Central African States, United Nations and European Union arrived in Bangui for a high-level visit to the Central African Republic from 2 to 5 June 2021.

various reasons, violated the territorial integrity of the DRC in the name of fighting their respective rebel groups operating from eastern DRC. Angola targeted some Congolese villages with mineral-rich subsoil. The mutual territorial violations in Chad and CAR by their respective rebel groups fuelled wars in the two states, such that Idriss Déby of Chad refused to help when the Séléka destabilised the CAR and toppled President Bozizé. The border between Chad and Sudan has been a source of conflict between them. Cameroon and Nigeria clashed over the mineral-rich Bakassi peninsula. Gabon's fight with Equatorial Guinea over the Mbanie Island is also notable. Rwanda continues to target vast portions of Congolese territory rich in natural resources in the name of absorbing Congolese citizens of Rwandan extraction. In the DRC, there is a handful of Rwandan asylum-seekers who fled the Rwandan revolution from 1959 to 1962 and the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. Likewise, some 53 000 Congolese refugees have been trapped in Rwanda since 1997.[16] In both countries, these refugees are battling for human rights, identity, belonging, and citizenship. ECCAS is yet to design an effective plan for their respective repatriation and resettlement.

The hostilities between Laurent Kabila of the DRC and Paul Kagame of Rwanda; Bongo of Gabon and Teodoro Nguema of Equatorial Guinea; Pascal Lisouba of Congo and José Eduardo dos Santos of Angola; and Déby of Chad and Ange-Felix Patassé of the CAR at various points assumed dangerous dimensions. Some leaders worked with rebel groups to topple their rival's government. Déby provided munitions to the political and military groups that stood against Patassé and finally ousted him in March 2003. Some leaders accuse others of harbouring or supporting armed groups or insurgents from other countries in their territories or of sending their own armed forces to influence and participate in the infighting in other countries. Déby, for example, accused the CAR government of failing to restrain Chadian anti-Déby rebels operating from CAR's borders. Before falling out with Kagame of Rwanda, Kabila of the DRC rode on the support of Rwanda to topple the government of Mobutu Sese Seko. The Great Lakes War partly stemmed from Rwanda, Burundi and Angola's displeasure that the rebels fighting them operated from eastern DRC. On the other hand, some leaders like the presidents of Chad (Déby), Congo (Sassou-Nguesso), Equatorial Guinea (Obiang

Nguema), and Rwanda (Kagame) have refused to hand over power and sometimes leveraged constitutional amendments and conflicts to remain in their position. All these factors provoke collective chaos and widespread regional disorder, and manifest in deep-seated divisions that make regional progress elusive.

There is also the lingual bloc factor in the region. ECCAS's membership includes Anglophone, Francophone, Arabophone, Lusophone, and Hispanophone countries, but sometimes the majority Francophone countries form a lingual bloc to gain specific advantages over the others. This linguistic heterogeneity fosters disunity and fragmentation among member states.[17]

Conclusion

ECCAS is the regional body assigned with conflict management and democratisation in Central Africa. To achieve these, it functions through the agency of MARAC and FOMAC. However, ECCAS does not appear to have completely met the ideals underlying its formation (aspirations) with performance (reality). The reasons stem from the fragility and heterogeneity of the region, which is prone to conflicts and countless rebellions; its lack of funding, resources and personnel; the absence of a regional head or lead government to rally and steer the region; and rivalry, competition and mutual mistrust among Heads of States and their poor human rights records.

For ECCAS to become more effective, the COPAX (Heads of States) especially must cooperate and accord regional issues greater attention. Each national bureau must be independent, objective, and willing to volunteer accurate, comprehensive and timely security information to enable the MARAC to monitor and respond to regional security challenges more effectively. Heads of States must show commitment by volunteering personnel, resources and funds to the FOMAC. They should rally around an acceptable regional leader; desist from territorial encroachment, conflict exportation, and rebel support; and respect human rights and the rule of law, especially as they relate to elections and their countries' constitutions.

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Promise E. Ogaraku has a Masters in Public Health from the University of Derby, UK and is interested in research on public health, democratisation, and social welfare.

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GADAA AS AN ALTERNATIVE UNDERSTANDING OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

BY **BIRUK SHEWADEG**

REUTERS/TIKSA NEGERI

Introduction

In understanding democracy in Africa, it is crucial to locate the process of democratisation in its historical context. The colonial enterprise is important in the understanding of the postcolonial erosion of democratic institutions. Indeed, colonialism was not a democratic system, and its masters were not the mentors of democracy as they propagated. Rather, they took self-governance away from Africans while destroying indigenous democratic values and institutions without building stable replacements.

Democracy need not be seen as the exclusive property of the West; it can be found in various African cultural contexts. Defining democracy can be difficult as its expression remains controversial in many African countries and other parts of the world. Does democracy necessarily mean Western ideas of democracy? Is there only a distinct model for every country, irrespective of its traditions and culture? These are some notable questions to address in dealing with democracy in its entirety.

Africans must draw on features within their societies to give local relevance to democratic concepts, rather than run the risk of having democracy transplanted without

Above: The *Gadaa* system of the Oromo people highlights that Africans are owners of democratic principles and ideas themselves.

CARSTEN TEN BRINK

The Oromo people are one of the largest ethnic groups in sub-Saharan Africa belonging to the Cushitic-speaking peoples in Northeastern Africa in general and in modern Ethiopia and Kenya in particular.

adaptation, as they have done with technology. Although the idea of Africa's openness to external ideas may not be strange, these external ideas would prove more useful if they were modified to harmonise with African values, ensuring proper understanding by the population at large. If democracy is to exist on the African continent, Africans will have to keep reinventing it. The constant reinvention of democracy based on African initiatives is what is needed in Africa. The *Gadaa* system among the Oromos highlights that Africans are not just students of democracy but actually owners of democratic ingredients themselves.

Conceptualising Democracy

Etymologically, the word democracy is derived from two Greek words – 'demos' meaning the people, and 'kratos' meaning rule. Hence, democracy is basically rule by the people. By implication, the government must belong to the people and not be imposed from outside. Citizens, not outside bodies, are entitled to set the democratic rules. Thus conceived, the cultural aspect is crucial to any democratic aspirations. Democracy as a government of the people implies that it needs to be owned by people and not imposed by outsiders. It ought to be a product of their ideas which reflect their 'culture, values, beliefs, orientations, attitudes, worldviews, history, traditions and customs so that it authoritatively allocates their own values to them'.[1] People must be free to create their own styles of government as a means to achieving their intended goals. These will undeniably vary from place to place. The failure of Western liberal democracy in some parts of the world, therefore, can be impugned fundamentally on the failure to adequately gauge the impact of cultural differences.

Problematising Western Liberal Democracy in Africa

The history of democracy relies on an overtly Eurocentric narrative that emphasises key moments in Western civilisation. Isakhan notes that democracy:

> remained a clear trajectory that can be traced from ancient experiments with participatory government in Greece and to a lesser extent in Rome, through the development of the British parliament, the American Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution, and then finally onto the triumphant march of the liberal model of democracy across the globe over the last 200 years, particularly under Western tutelage.[2]

Histories of democracy which rest exclusively on these events not only privilege the West and its successful colonies, but also miss the broader human story of the struggle for and achievement of democracy.

In recent years, however, a counter-discourse has developed which challenges the academic orthodoxy that underpins this traditional Eurocentric democracy by bringing to the fore some of the neglected histories of democracy. This has opened up debate and discourse on the complex origins and multiple trajectories of this sophisticated form of government.

Western liberal democracy has become a dogma which the West, with the Bretton Woods organisations (with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as their principal agents), is preaching forcefully to the rest of the world, including Africa, as a means to attain good governance. Like 'development', the democracy rhetoric has become a religion. It is a religion in the sense that, though it has consistently failed to work in Africa, unflinching faith in it continues to discourage questions about its cultural compatibility, appropriateness, and affordability. Despite its failure, the imposition continues. However, the imposition is not democracy per se, that is, the rule of the people, but as Osabu-Kle argues, it is rather a '*democrazy*', a demonstration

THIS HAS OPENED UP DEBATE AND DISCOURSE ON THE COMPLEX ORIGINS AND MULTIPLE TRAJECTORIES OF THIS SOPHISTICATED FORM OF GOVERNMENT

of craziness.[3] It is no wonder that such imposition has not led to democracies in Africa, but *democrazies*, as exemplified by the historical experience of Nigeria's Biafran War, Somalia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and recently, the experience of Kenya. Not underestimating the idiosyncrasies of each country, many of these cases in one way or another are linked to a failed transplantation of Western liberal democracy.

The organising principle of democracy as being 'of the people, by the people and for the people' is culturally specific. Since cultural values differ, African democracy cannot be expected to emulate Western democracy. Cultural compatibility that recognises and adapts to cultural dynamics to ensure political stability is crucial. Cultural incompatibility can lead to political chaos and instability.

Democracy by the people means the people, and only the people, must participate in it as per the rules they have set and not according to rules set by various other

PHOTO BY ERIC LAFFORGUE/ART IN ALL OF US/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

The Oromo people gather under trees for prayers and other ceremonies.

REUTERS/TIKSA NEGERI

***Gadaa* is an administration system where powers are distributed among the Oromo people based on age and experience.**

SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS AND PRACTICES OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY FURTHER CONFIRM ITS UNSUITABILITY IN AFRICA

agents. Strangers and outsiders are excluded and should not interfere. Heavy-handed interference by the West in the democratic processes of African countries is a very serious violation of this fundamental principle of democracy. Therefore, it is not surprising that the transplantation of Western democracy in Africa has led to much political turmoil on the continent and has weakened the achievement of the compulsory preconditions for effective development.

Some of the characteristics and practices of liberal democracy further confirm its unsuitability in Africa. Its partisan and competitive nature is a case in point. The partisan nature of liberal democracy divides society. When this partisanship is superimposed upon the multiethnic societies of Africa, the invocation of ethnic symbols during the competitive election campaign sets centrifugal political forces into motion, which tend to tear the very fabric of society apart. This is clearly seen in examples of party formation in Africa. The organising principle is usually the ethno-linguistic divide. It is not uncommon to observe that even in those countries that constitutionally ban party formation along ethnic lines, the political modus operandi is still ethnic identity.

Understanding the *Gadaa* System

Oromos are one of the largest ethnic groups in sub-Saharan Africa belonging to the Cushitic-speaking peoples in Northeastern Africa in general and in modern Ethiopia and Kenya in particular. They are well known, among others, for their advancement of an indigenous democratic process known as *Gadaa*. The *Gadaa* system is a socio-political, ritual, and economic administrative system through which the Oromo people have organised and managed themselves for centuries.[4] It existed as a fully-fledged system at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Currently, its practice continues in traditional Oromo societies of the Borana, among other societies. As the system is purely an indigenous democratic tradition, it can be used, despite its limitations, as a challenge against a discourse that renders democracy a perennial artefact of the West. It also presents Africa as not only a consumer but also a producer of democratic ideals.

The term *Gadaa* has no single and unanimously accepted definition. *Gadaa* is better conceived of lexically than

analytically. Tsegaye presents the etymology of *Gadaa* as *ka'aada*, which is the combination of two antiquated terms: '*ka*' and '*aada*'. He states that *Ka* means God – Uumaa or creator, and *aada* refers to norms. Together this refers to the 'norms of God'.[5] When it comes to its intrinsic nature and function, *Gadaa* is chiefly an administration system where powers are distributed among the Oromo people based on age and experience.

The *Gadaa* system allows the male members of the society to join five *Gadaa* parties and pass through a number of age-grades (about seven to 13 in total) in different Oromo groups. The system is based not on biological age, as in the case of an age-set system, but rather on the maintenance of socially defined generations between parents and children. Parents and children are considered five grades or 40 years apart from each other. Each age-grade lasts for a period of eight years. People change their age-grade as they advance in age. The age-grades before *Gadaa* mainly serve as schools for the young Oromo people. It helps the youth obtain different training that prepares them for hunting, military obligations, and community leadership.[6]

The sixth age-grade is called *Gadaa*. It covers 41- to 48-year-old Oromo men. It is the stage where political, social, military and ritual leadership is exercised. The *Abbaa*, or head of *Gadaa*, is elected democratically from among this *Gadaa* age-grade. The *Abbaa* serves for eight years as a leader and spokesman of the assembly. The other *Gadaa* officials include the *Abba Dula* who commands the army and the *Abba Sera* in charge of the traditional Oromo laws. These and other officials work diligently together for one *Gadaa* period, that is, eight years, and then hand over power to the next *Gadaa* grade at the end of their office. New officials for the eight-year period will then be elected. Thus, the *Gadaa* system embraces the peaceful transfer of power from one *Gadaa* grade to another every eight years. Such power transfer, Berisso argues, is 'conducted in a volitional manner, with full passion and without friction'.[7] Those who have left the office serve as advisors to the new *Gadaa* grade.

The Democratic Dimension of the *Gadaa* System

Gadaa comprises various features that make it a democratic institution. A hierarchy or monarchy is absent from the system. All humans deserve to be treated with

IT HELPS THE YOUTH OBTAIN DIFFERENT TRAINING THAT PREPARES THEM FOR HUNTING, MILITARY OBLIGATIONS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

PHOTO BY ERIC LAFFORGUE/ART IN ALL OF US/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

The *Abbaa,* or head of *Gadaa,* is elected democratically and serves for eight years.

PHOTO BY ERIC LAFFORGUE/ART IN ALL OF US/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

Men read the *Abbaa Gadaa* list during the *Gadaa* system ceremony in the Borana tribe, Oromia, in Ethiopia (6 March 2017).

almost equal respect, without regard to human differences. Political power is shared equitably among the parties and across generations. Similarly, Holcomb asserts that the *Gadaa* system:

> organized the Oromo people in an all-encompassing democratic republic even before the few European pilgrims arrived from England on the shores of North America and only later built a democracy.[8]

This system, Negari states, has the principles of:

> checks and balances through the periodic succession of every eight years, and division of power among executive, legislative, and judicial branches, balanced opposition among the five parties, and power sharing between higher and lower administrative organs to prevent power from falling into the hands of tyrannical ruler.[9]

Thus conceived, the *Gadaa* system is founded on the principle of consensus-based decision-making. In the process of decision-making, perspectives are not discouraged and are interpreted from different points of view. The *Gadaa* system has been considered a democratic and just system compared to other forms of governance in the region. A periodic election every eight years with a clear term limit chiefly reflects the democratic elements. Moreover, the peaceful transfer of political power and impartial distribution of power across generations; rule-of-law and accountability; separation of politics from religion; social integration and peacebuilding roles; a period of testing; and the presence of a checks and balances system are all notable democratic principles of the system. Legesse describes this uniquely democratic system of the Oromo people as:

> One of those remarkable creations of the human mind that evolved into a full-fledged system of government. It contains genuinely African solutions for some of the problems that democracies everywhere have had to face.[10]

IT CONTAINS GENUINELY AFRICAN SOLUTIONS FOR SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT DEMOCRACIES EVERYWHERE HAVE HAD TO FACE

PROMISE TANGEMAN

The *Gadaa* system encourages individuals to be tolerant and to use dialogue to resolve conflicts and traditional institutions to restore and sustain peace.

One major contribution of Oromo democracy is the way power is shared by the generations. Far from being a government of the elders, *Gadaa* ensures that rights are distributed fairly among 'fathers, sons and grandsons: no generation that is mature enough to be able to bear the rights and duties of citizenship is prevented from taking part in political life'.[11] Additonaly, leadership roles are equally divided among the five *Gadaa* parties and the successive *Gadaa* age-grades. There is no inter-party or intergenerational competition over power. Put otherwise, horizontal and vertical competition for the attainment of power is avoided. Describing the limitation of Western liberal democracies in terms of the distribution of power across generations, Legesse states:

> Western liberal democracies failed quite miserably to achieve any semblance of inter-generational equity. The youth movements and the movements of the elderly that swept across the United States and Europe in the 1960s and 1970s were attempts to correct the generational injustices that were, and still are, present in Western political systems.[12]

THE DEMOCRATIC ELECTION, FIXED TERM OF OFFICE, PEACEFUL TRANSFER OF POWER, AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE ELECTED OFFICIALS FOR THEIR ACTIONS HIGHLIGHTS THAT THE SOURCE OF POWER LIES WITH THE SOCIETY

The *Gadaa* system ensures peace through participative democracy where the leaders are elected by members to serve for a single term of eight years in which they are accountable for their actions, and the constituents can recall them whenever necessary. The democratic election, fixed term of office, peaceful transfer of power, and accountability of the elected officials for their actions highlights that the source of power lies with the society. In this society, a leader's prime mission is peace. The *Gadaa* system is also based on values of equality, human rights, and freedom. It allows every member of the society to be treated as equal irrespective of their status, economic fortune, and position.

REUTERS/TIKSA NEGERI

While, the *Siqqee* institution of *Gadaa* offers a separate platform for Oromo women to voice their concerns and address their social justice issues, it does not rectify the gendered exclusion of women from political decision-making processes.

All society members' rights, including the right to property, freedom of speech, elect, and so on, are inviolable.[13]

The social justice and inviolable human rights of each individual member are 'enforced through the legal system and judiciary of the *Gadaa* system'.[14] The Oromo concepts of peace and truth encourage individuals to live in peace with community members and others. It also encourages individuals to be tolerant and to use dialogue to resolve conflicts and traditional institutions to restore and sustain peace. Bulatovich explains: 'the peaceful free way of life, which could have become the ideal for philosophers and writers of the eighteenth century, if they had known it, was completely changed'.[15] Discussing the philosophy of Oromo democracy, Legesse notes:

> What is astonishing about this cultural tradition is how far Oromo have gone to ensure that power does not fall in the hand of war chiefs and despots. They achieve this goal by creating a system of checks and balances that is at least as complex as the systems we find in Western democracies.[16]

The rule of law is fundamental in the *Gadaa* system. Leaders who act against the law of the land or whose families could not uphold the required standard of the system are recalled even before their term ends. Leaders

THE OROMO CONCEPTS OF PEACE AND TRUTH ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUALS TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND OTHERS

selected under *Gadaa* implemented the laws that were made by male representatives of the people.

The *Gadaa* system thus makes use of checks and balances; periodic succession every eight years; division of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches; and power-sharing between higher and lower administrative organs to prevent power from falling into the hands of despots. Other principles of the system included balanced representation of all clans, lineages, regions and confederacies; accountability of leaders; the settlement of disputes through reconciliation; and respect for basic rights and liberties. Despite its democratic nature, the *Gadaa* system is also criticised for some of its limitations and gender insensitivity.

Critique of the *Gadaa* System

The *Gadaa* system is an egalitarian social system; however, women were excluded from passing through age-sets and generation-sets. The system excluded women

from its politico-military-administrative structures, and they were only allowed to be married to men in a *Gadaa* grade.[17] *Gadaa* has thus been criticised for its gender insensitivity. Although women are excluded from the *Gadaa* system, their political and democratic rights, some argue, are represented and respected through a separate institution known as *Siqqee*. *Siqqee* has been used by women as a checks and balances system in countering male-dominated roles in the *Gadaa* system. It offers a political and social platform for Oromo women to voice their concerns and address their social justice issues effectively. This separate institution helps to prevent conflicts and violence through direct intervention. It further allows women to have roles in the social and economic affairs of society and to exercise their rights and contribute to peacebuilding. Women also play a key role in terms of socialising their children according to the values, norms, and beliefs of the society and encouraging tolerance and dialogue to solve problems.

IT FURTHER ALLOWS WOMEN TO HAVE ROLES IN THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS OF SOCIETY AND TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS AND CONTRIBUTE TO PEACEBUILDING

Though the *Siqqee* institutions remain instrumental in addressing the gender insensitivity of the *Gadaa* system, it is difficult to argue that this indigenous institution can absolutely rectify the exclusion of Oromo women from political decision-making processes, especially in the contemporary world.

Conclusion

Africa's place in the history of democracy is often ignored. The conceptualisation of the postcolonial state is intrinsically influenced by the ongoing problems of civil war, famine, and tribalism on the continent. Thus, due consideration for its indigenous egalitarian institutions has little or no space in academic engagements. The relevance of the *Gadaa* system and its democratic principles can be seen from three perspectives. First, it is genuinely an indigenous African system. Second, it existed long before the wave of democratic concepts was conceived in the Western world. Third, it survived against the backdrop of the colonial enterprise, which was characterised by the dismantlement of local civilisations.

However, considering Western democracy as the sole model for nonwestern society misses the broader human story of the struggle for and achievement of democracy. In this regard, the *Gadaa* system of governance is genuinely African and could provide solutions for some of the political challenges African states face today.

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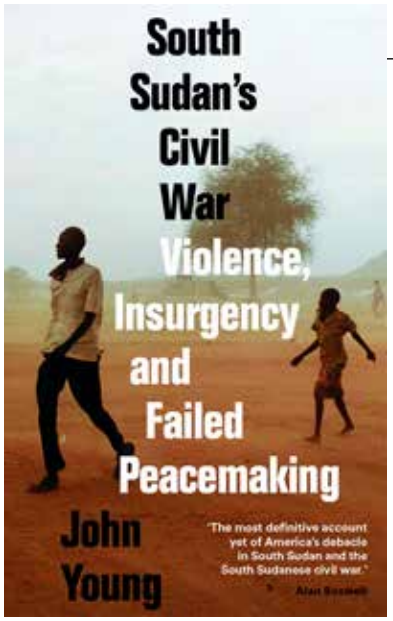


BOOK REVIEW

REVIEWED BY **STEPHEN ARRNO**

SOUTH SUDAN'S CIVIL WAR: VIOLENCE, INSURGENCY AND FAILED PEACEMAKING BY JOHN YOUNG

Year	**2019**
Publisher	**Zed Books**
ISBN	**978-1-78699-375-5**
Pages	**245**

This scholarly contribution by John Young offers an insightful critique and evaluation of liberal peacemaking and internationalism that has shaped post-cold war approaches to Africa. Examining South Sudan's peacemaking process, the book refutes modernist and liberal peace epistemologies that deficiency in governance, underdevelopment, and failed peace are caused by internal factors. The main argument is that failed peacemaking in South Sudan, and previously in Sudan, has been induced by external forces.

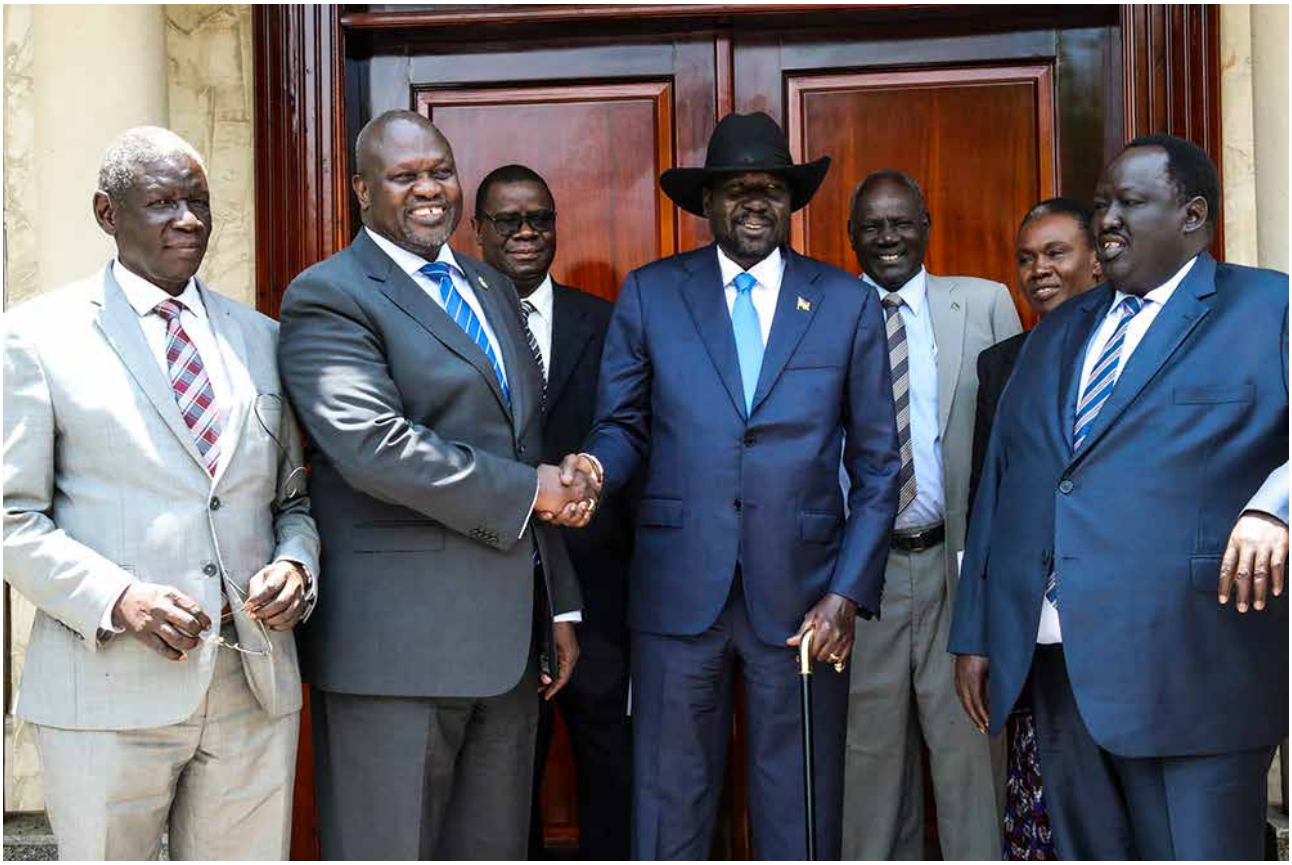
Organised into eight chapters, *South Sudan's Civil War: Violence, Insurgency and Failed Peacemaking* outlines missed opportunities to resolving the Sudan conflict. The author takes the Turco-Egyptian empire that exposed South Sudan to a global economy of slavery as the starting point. The British who came to the Sudan to avenge the death of Gordon Pasha established an administration of 'benign neglect' that ended in the integration of South Sudan into an asymmetrical economy and polity. After two civil wars, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) enabled the birth of an independent South Sudan, with the Agreement providing a trade-off between self-determination and democratic transformation (p. 10). The ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), manufactured shallow political unity to promote the referendum for independence. All promises for an elaborate transformative agenda and successful post-independence transitional period were abandoned and neglected. The book criticises the liberation movement (SPLM) and the United States (US) administration for causing conflict. The central thesis of the book considers the independence of South Sudan as the root cause of conflict by endorsing the SPLM's tyranny (p. 65).

South Sudan's independence would not have been possible without unfettered US support. US officials often proclaim that the creation of an independent South Sudan was a major foreign policy success. The book emphasises the 'midwifery role' of US policies in the Sudan and South Sudan, highlighting the role of an independent lobby group, calling itself the 'council', who worked towards the realisation of an independent South Sudan. The council influenced policies on the Sudan across three administrations (Clinton, Bush and Obama). The SPLM was equated with the US founding fathers. This is based on President Reagan's precedent in defining the "Afghan mujahedeen as equivalent to the founding fathers" (p. 189–190).

THE MAIN ARGUMENT IS THAT FAILED PEACEMAKING IN SOUTH SUDAN, AND PREVIOUSLY IN SUDAN, HAS BEEN INDUCED BY EXTERNAL FORCES

Another pull factor is the US post-Cold War interest in Africa, which strove to integrate African states that were perceived as victims of the Cold War. The Global War on Terror informed US policy on poor, fragile and conflict-affected states in Africa. Underdevelopment, fragility and conflict in Africa are perceived as sources of threats to US security. Peace processes were therefore instrumentalised to prevent fragile states from offering a harbour for terrorist groups.

These approaches, however, are ideologically framed within liberal peace models and liberal internationalism, which prioritise liberal democratic transition and



UN PHOTO: ISAAC BILLY

A face-to-face meeting, to discuss political issues, took place between South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar at the Presidential Palace, in Juba (11 September 2019).

power-sharing as the best means to stem violence. The book critiques this approach, arguing that there is no justification for how power-sharing stems violence (p. 115). It concludes that it is an "illusion... to construct a liberal democratic state on the harsh ground of South Sudan" (p. 187).

Moving to questions of African agency in peace processes, the book problematises such agency. Slogans such as "African Solutions to African Problems" are now instruments serving Western interests in weak states. Regional involvement undermines sovereignty through peace processes and by creating new dependencies to "ensure that other potential powers do not assume a leading position" (p. 37). The Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) that mediated the CPA and the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) are examples of how these new regional and sub-regional roles operate within liberal internationalism. The ARCSS offered opportunities to IGAD states to serve their foreign policy interests more than solving South Sudan's problems. The Agreement offered a platform for the systematic pursuit of foreign interests without the risk of conflict between member states (p. 213).

Young outlines a number of reasons for failed peacemaking. First, the rush by the IGAD member states to start mediation led to a failure in understanding the root causes of conflict and a failure to identify the main actors effectively. A proposed session to identify the root causes was cancelled. The narrative in circulation depicted the conflict as a Dinka-Nuer/Riek Machar-Salva Kiir feud – an ideal elitist conflict resolvable by power-sharing and individual sanctions. This has prevented an understanding of the root causes of the conflict from being taken into account in the peace agenda.

Second, the failure of IGAD to understand the main actors involved led to the endorsement of Machar as the leader of the rebellion despite his "[taking] over a rebellion that was not his own" (p. 87). This posed serious challenges to the process, as the presumed leaders of the rebellion are at odds with their presumed constituencies. The chapter discussing the formation of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in Opposition (SPLM-iO) argues that the rebel group is a loose coalition with incompatible interests.

In terms of external factors that affected the peacekeeping process, the US was was seen to be a negative influence. The US used its influence over the

mediators to push policies favourable to its interest in South Sudan, including halting a United Nations (UN) arms embargo on South Sudan. The US failed to condemn Uganda's intervention on behalf of one party in the conflict. These and other reasons support a conclusion that the US policy towards South Sudan is arguably based on "give war a chance" by "giving [President] Salva a chance" (p. 166).

The US influenced Machar's exile, restricting his movements in the region and putting him under house arrest. Sudan was promised the lifting of sanctions, delistment from the State Sponsors of Terror List, and even a possible moratorium on an International Criminal Court indictment. Sudan's former president Omar al-Bashir was asked to cooperate in a number of ways, including desisting from supplying arms to the SPLM-iO (pp. 173–174).

However, the reasons behind the collapse of South Sudan's peacemaking are not entirely the responsibility of US policies. The provisions of the peace process were problematic for a number of reasons, and the process was not owned by the parties to the conflict. There were several breaches of the Agreement before its implementation, including but not limited to an increase in the number of states contravening what was agreed upon in the final Accord and questions over the cantonment and deployment of belligerent forces in close proximity to one another. President Kiir's refusal to sign the Accord while Machar signed it to embarrass the government are indicators that the Accord is likely to fail (p. 134).

South Sudan's Civil War: Violence, Insurgency and Failed Peacemaking ends with a discussion of the future prospects for peace, considering Sudan's takeover of the mediation and national dialogue processes, and the largely "give war a chance" idea. These efforts remain futile, including prospects for either an African Union (AU) or UN trusteeship. Although these efforts are anchored on liberal peace tenets, a trusteeship under the UN would be more feasible, given its position on safeguarding African sovereignty. The AU is known for opposing Western-led state and nation-building processes.

This book is an excellent contribution that evaluates post-Cold War and post-9/11 peacemaking processes in Africa. It questions the essence of emerging African agency, the inherent intricacies of this, and how African efforts interface with external interests on the continent. When framing such emerging African agency within *Pax Africana*, it only meets the nationality and jurisdiction criteria. Peace processes occur in Africa and appear to be led by Africans. However, the book attempts to gauge how much influence African mediators actually have on the process. It is unfortunate that despite a growing regional agency, they end up serving the vested interests of the region in question, as seen in the South Sudan peace process, or a larger external interest. The author advocates for an endogenous approach to peace processes in South Sudan by providing locally generated solutions that emerge from society. However, this suggestion contradicts other prescriptions by the author, especially when he considers placing South Sudan under UN trusteeship. A UN trusteeship or any other form of trusteeship is at odds with African aspirations for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

One misplaced argument is the consideration of South Sudan's independence as the root cause of the conflict (p. 65). Indeed, despite external forces pushing for an independent South Sudan, this statement undermines 50 years of South Sudanese struggle to realise independence through local agency. It is an irrefutable fact that the SPLM did not win the war in the same way as other movements in the region, such as the National Resistance Movement (NRM) in Uganda, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), and the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). Nevertheless, the demand for independence should not be linked to the SPLM. The demand for independence contradicts the SPLM manifesto, placing it at odds with its constituency. While the SPLM called for a united, democratic secular Sudan, the South Sudanese were demanding independence.

In conclusion, the book opens serious debate on how to safeguard an endogenous approach to peacemaking against external influences. It is highly useful for scholars and policy-makers grappling with questions of why peace fails.

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