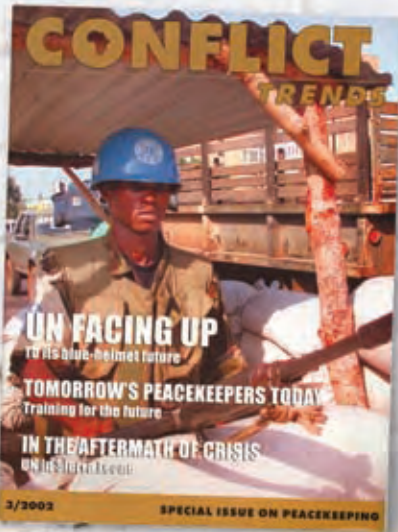


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EDITORIAL

BY **VASU GOUNDEN**

August 2008 marks a turning point in our evolving world order. On 8 August, China introduced itself as the new power to be reckoned with on the world stage at the opening of the Beijing Olympics. At the same time, Georgia staged an attack on the small separatist state of South Ossetia, prompting a military response from Russia. These two events – the opening of the Beijing Olympics and Russia’s military response directed at Georgia – have once again indicated the shifting global power balance from a unipolar world order, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, to an emerging multipolar world order. At the centre of these developments is the issue of energy. The United States, China and Russia, as consumers and producers of energy, have all had their power shaped in one way or the other by energy security.

What does this shifting global power balance, shaped by energy security, mean for Africa?

The uncertainty in global oil security, because of instability in the Middle East, has placed the spotlight for assurance of supply on Africa. However, most African oil-producing countries continue to experience political instability. The main fault line in Africa is the arc of conflict that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea, passing through three major areas of Africa, namely Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan. Both Angola and Sudan are major energy producers, and the Inga hydroelectric project in the DRC has the potential to supply all of Africa’s energy needs and still have excess capacity to export to Europe.

The DRC and Angola have only recently emerged from protracted and very violent conflicts. They are still considered fragile post-conflict environments, with the DRC still experiencing conflict in its mineral-rich eastern areas. Sudan is currently experiencing a major conflict in Darfur, and within the oil rich province of Abyei. In addition to these countries, other major oil-producing countries in Africa are also experiencing conflict. Nigeria is battling a major insurgency in

the Niger Delta, Chad is fighting a rebel group it alleges is supported by neighbouring Sudan, and Equatorial Guinea has just jailed several mercenaries who attempted to overthrow the government to take control of its vast oil resources.

It is not a coincidence that the majority of African oil-producing countries are experiencing instability, ranging from low-level conflict to armed insurgencies. While Africa must accept its share of responsibility for this condition, foreign oil companies and their governments must also take significant responsibility for colluding in the creation of this condition. Efforts by some responsible nations – like Norway – to assist African countries to manage oil revenues responsibly must be commended. However, such initiatives must go further than just ensuring revenue accountability. They must also ensure that these resources are equitably utilised for the benefit of all citizens of the oil-producing countries.

While Africa is a very viable oil-producing continent, the recent rise in oil prices coupled with the increasing food prices will place great socio-economic pressure on a number of fragile and stable countries in Africa, including oil-exporting countries that are susceptible to market fluctuations. This is likely to lead to civil strife, ranging from low-level community conflicts to violent civil wars. Africa will, therefore, need to have the necessary conflict resolution capacity to respond to peacemaking and peacekeeping demands with a level of efficiency that leads to the immediate mitigation of conflicts. The continent can ill-afford more protracted conflicts at this stage in its development.

This issue of *Conflict Trends* highlights the developments in African peacekeeping, and the challenges that Africa faces in implementing robust, responsive and efficient peacekeeping missions. ▲

Vasu Gounden is the Founder and Executive Director of ACCORD.



GETTY IMAGES

REGIONAL CHILD WARRIORS IN WEST AFRICA

WRITTEN BY **BY ALLAN QUEE**

A widespread and deplorable development in recent years is an increase in the practice of using young children as soldiers. There are as many as 300 000 children under the age of 18 presently serving as combatants around the globe; representing 10% of all global combatants.¹ They are recruited by national armies, terrorist organisations and rebel groups.

In West Africa, thousands of children have been involved in conflicts in the last 15 years. The wanton acts of violence that characterised these conflicts include summary executions of innocent civilians, forceful amputations of the limbs of ordinary citizens, rape of women and children, destruction of property with reckless abandon, cutting open the bellies of pregnant women just to see what sex the child is, and other atrocities that are too horrific to mention. Sadly, the perpetrators of these violent acts included

child combatants, who have acquired a reputation among commanders for unquestionable obedience – and a reputation among civilians for extreme cruelty. Empowered by Kalashnikov (AK-47) rifles and often high on marijuana or crack cocaine, they were enabled to serve as combatants both in their own countries and neighbouring countries.

Since the late 1980s, the armed conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire have reverberated across each country's porous borders. Roving back and forth from one conflict to another across these borders is a migrant population of young fighters – regional warriors – who view war mainly as

Above: Child combatants have a reputation for unquestionable obedience and extreme cruelty.

THERE ARE AS MANY AS 300 000 CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 PRESENTLY SERVING AS COMBATANTS AROUND THE GLOBE; REPRESENTING 10% OF ALL GLOBAL COMBATANTS

an economic opportunity.² Drifting in and out of wars and operating as they wish, it is rightly agreed that they are the most dangerous tool that any government or rebel army can have.

In West Africa, the military ‘careers’ of these regional warriors often began as children, when they are abducted and forcibly recruited to fight with an armed group in their own country. Once recruited, these children undergo varying degrees of indoctrination, and are shoved into a world of brutality, physical hardship, forced labour and drug abuse – ‘socialising’ them into violence. Subsequently, they emerge as perpetrators, willing to commit heinous atrocities on the civilian population.

Later, after the conflict ends, as veteran fighters struggling for support and a means of livelihood within the war-shattered economy at home, and unable to cope with the shortcomings of post-conflict programmes, they are lured by recruiters back to the frontlines – this time to a neighbour’s war – and subsequently drawn into regional conflicts.

The following is a story of a child combatant, who was recruited when he was about 18 years old.³

“I was living with my mother, a petty trader in Kailahun, the eastern part of Sierra Leone. One morning, after my mother had gone to the market to sell her wares and most of the other grown-ups

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Regional child warriors are a migrant population of young fighters who rove back and forth from one conflict to another in order to improve their economic circumstances and life situations.



Child soldiers are empowered by weapons, which they are able to operate with terrifying skill, particularly when under the influence of narcotics.

had gone to the farm or to the market, I was in our compound playing with other children, when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels attacked their village and came to our compound. Dragged by my feet from under the bed, I was thrown in the middle of the compound, joining a group of six other boys about the same age. We were eventually taken to the rebels' base camp, where initially I served as a house help to my commanders' wives. Later, I was trained and drafted into the Small Boys Unit (SBU), where I rose to the rank of a deputy commander.

"Our unit mainly comprises of child combatants between the ages of eight and 15, who were similarly abducted during raids in villages, towns and different communities. One of our main areas of assignment was to lay ambush, as traders ply the route with their wares. This was crucial to armed groups, as it provided us with food, medicines and sometimes manpower. Our orders were to collect the foodstuff and medicines, get just enough

manpower to tote the goods to the base, kill and burn the rest. We also carried such raids in villages and towns, carrying out the same order.

"After four years as a combatant, the peace agreement was signed in my country, and after disarmament I started going through the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process. I never met my mother again. I was sent to school, but it was difficult to cope. Later, a former SBU mate told me that his commander has a 'mission' in Liberia. He seems to have a lot of money, and had recently bought a bicycle. After, about 11 of us crossed with him over to Liberia. Once in Liberia, we were given guns and another commander came to tell us about the operation."

When fighting in neighbouring countries, the regional warriors are generally referred to as 'Special Forces'. With training from outside and previous war experience, the 'Special Forces' are expected to play an essential role in the conflict. In West Africa, most



Disarmament and demobilisation programmes that offered cash handouts provided an economic incentive for regional child soldiers to move from one conflict in the region to the next.

of these regional warriors have fought with at least two armed groups in as many countries, and many have fought with three or more groups. Many RUF ex-combatants in Sierra Leone crossed over and joined the National Patriot Front of Liberia (NPFL). As members of the NPFL armed group, they were involved in cross-border attacks in neighbouring Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

Recruitment

Recruiters of regional warriors are mostly former commanders from the original group of fighters or, rather interestingly, other commanders or fighters who were previously enemies. Fighters from different groups get to know each other as they assemble in disarmament sites. As in many cases, association to a particular group is not based on political or ideological commitment. Thus, there is hardly any future commitment after disarmament.

Also, recruitments have taken place from within displaced and refugee camps. There are reports of recruitments in camps in Guinea, Sierra Leone and

Liberia. Confirmed reports state that the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) faction started from a refugee camp in Ghana. A 15-year-old narrates⁴:

“There were several meetings held by elders from our tribe (kran) in the camp. One day, around midnight, about 40 of us were briefed about the situation back home. We were told that our people have been held captive and slaughtered by the Charles Taylor government. And that we must fight to remove Charles Taylor from power. We were told that the Ivory Coast government would supply arms and necessary training. A week or two later, around 5:00am, few hundreds of us left the refugee camp in Ghana for Ivory Coast in three buses.”

Factors Leading to the Regional Child Warriors Phenomenon

It is quite difficult to understand how a child can join and fight for an army without necessarily even understanding or believing in the particular cause.

ALONE, ORPHANED, FRIGHTENED, AND WITH FRAGMENTED FAMILIES, THERE ARE FEW INFLUENCES THAT CAN COMPETE WITH A WARRIOR'S LIFE

The presence of children in the battlefronts of conflicts in West Africa can be mainly attributed to the following factors.

Economic Factor

In West Africa, the presence of children in the battlefields mainly emerges from intertwined forces. These regional warriors are born in and fight in some of the world's poorest countries. Until recently, Sierra Leone occupied the lowest ranking in the United Nations Development Project's (UNDP) Human Development Index. The poverty statistics and

development indicators in the neighbouring countries are among the 20 least-developed countries in the world, which demonstrates the extreme poverty in this region. Dispossessed and disconnected, living a precarious economic existence in a shattered post-conflict economy, obsessed with the struggle for daily survival – and then being motivated by the promise of financial compensation, and possibly the opportunity to loot – offers an invaluable opportunity for re-recruitment into subsequent wars.

In examining the desperation of Liberian youth drawn into war, Swedish anthropologist Mat Utas⁵

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A child soldier, wearing a teddy-bear backpack, points his gun at a photographer in Monrovia, Liberia in 2003.

writes: "For these young people, the daily prospect of poverty, joblessness and marginalization effectively blocked the paths to a normal adulthood; drawing them instead into a subculture characterized by abjection, resentment and rootlessness. As opportunity came, their voluntary enlistment into one of the several rebel armies of the civil war therefore became an attractive option for many."

An Environment and Culture of Conflict

Vicious cycles of bad governance and the inevitable economic decline in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire allowed this region to be susceptible to repeated waves of insurgencies. The conflicts in this region were long-drawn-out. At some stage, Sierra Leone and Liberia were fighting internal conflicts at the same time. Children growing up in these countries and contexts tend to see this as a permanent way of life. Alone, orphaned, frightened, and with fragmented families, there are few influences that can compete with a warrior's life. Furthermore, after a peace agreement was reached in Sierra Leone, neighbouring Liberia was still at war, and then Côte d'Ivoire. This created an environment for ex-combatants to continue utilising their 'military careers'. In addition, the DDR and Rehabilitation

match for a similarly armed adult. However, a child with an assault rifle is a fearsome match for anyone.

The Life of a Child Regional Warrior

At the age of 17, Lahai⁶ is now a veteran fighter.⁷ He was abducted by the RUF in Sierra Leone at the age of nine. After disarmament in Sierra Leone, he crossed over to neighbouring Liberia with his commander, to fight alongside the NPFL. As there were reports that the Guinean and Ivorian governments were supporting their rivals – the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and MODEL forces respectively – he was involved in several cross-border raids in these countries, and later fought as a member of the NPFL in Côte d'Ivoire for a year. Initially, fighting in French-speaking Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire was difficult for Lahai, coming from Sierra Leone and later Liberia, where English is the official language. He learned the language and can now communicate fluently.

During Lahai's life as a regional warrior, he has fought as a member of a rebel group (RUF) against the government in Sierra Leone, fought on a government side (NPFL) in Liberia, and against the government forces in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. "Life as a foreign fighter can be very risky," he explained. "Sometimes you are ambushed and you can't even remember the

A SOCIETY INHERITING A GENERATION OF CHILD SOLDIERS IS A SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL CRISIS IN THE MAKING, AS IT CAN IGNITE FUTURE CYCLES OF CONFLICTS THAT CAN THREATEN REGIONAL STABILITY

(DDRR) programmes across this porous border region, offering widely varying cash handouts – from US\$300 in Liberia to US\$900 in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire – were a motivating factor to move from one conflict to the next one – if not for anything but to be eligible to access the DDRR programme and incentives.

Vulnerable and Opportune Target Group

Commanders have pointed out that children are loyal and obedient. Due to the fact that their immature minds can be easily manipulated and indoctrinated, unpopular armies and rebel groups are able to field far greater forces by using children as a cheap and easy way to obtain recruits. Experiences in West Africa show that they are effective soldiers and can operate with terrifying audacity, particularly when under the influence of narcotics. Furthermore, the changes in weapons technology and proliferation of light weapons have acted as enablers, allowing this pool of children to be tapped as a new source of military labour. A child might be able to wield a sword or machete, but is no

way to retreat; the enemy seems to be everywhere." In another instance in Guinea, when the national army went on the offensive and were forced to retreat abandoning everything, food became scarce. This resulted in cannibalism, where the captives were killed and some of their body parts eaten, and pregnant women's bellies were cut open, the foetus pounded in mortar and then eaten.

Although Lahai received cash incentives from three disarmament programmes in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, his life towards rehabilitation has not been very successful. He is a dropout living in neighbouring Liberia, father of a six-month-old baby and working as an illegal motorcycle driver.

"I can't go home," he said. "There is no home for me to go. My dream is to become a doctor, it's a respectable profession. But it's not working out that way. There are rumours about recruitment for a mission in Guinea, maybe by the government or a rebel group. If approached again, I think I will go.



GETTY IMAGES

Former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) child soldiers wait to be turned over to the United Nations in 2001 in Sierra Leone. The RUF was infamous for its forced recruitment of child soldiers.

I have a six-month-old daughter whose mother has left me. I need money to support her.”

Lahai’s story depicts the situation of thousands of child soldiers fighting in neighbouring countries as regional warriors. The spread of warlordism and failed states have created a new mode of war. Wars are driven less by politics and more for personal profit by local warlords, who see the new possibility of converting vulnerable, disconnected children into low-cost and expendable troops who can be easily manipulated to fight and die for their selfish causes. Later, these children are abandoned in a worse condition than they were in originally.

Recruiting children like Lahai into conflicts as soldiers does generate problems, even after the war is over. The children endure long-term trauma, which affects their psychological and moral development. A society inheriting a generation of child soldiers is a

significant social crisis in the making, as it can ignite future cycles of conflicts that can threaten regional stability. A noted example is Liberia, which had three civil wars in a span of 14 years.

Interventions

In a bid to tackle this crisis, several programmes have been designed by various intervenors. Search for Common Ground in West Africa has developed a youth strategy programme that seeks to identify opportunities where youth can have a positive influence in political and social events as they unfold in the region. The programme targets three main groups: young people who are out of school and seeking livelihoods; youth leaders who are already part of organised efforts to address issues affecting young people; and elders and decision-makers, who have a big influence on young people, including district council members, educators and paramount chiefs.

The overall goal of the youth strategy is to facilitate the inclusion and participation of young women and men in consolidating peace and development in the region.

In Sierra Leone, in consultation with the United Nations (UN) Secretary General's Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, the National Commission for War Affected Children was created, with the mission to develop and facilitate the implementation of programmes for improving the welfare of war-affected children. These included street children, orphans, sexually abused children, returnee unaccompanied minors, and other children in difficult circumstances.

In Liberia, the Landmine Action Programme aims to gain an understanding of the wider issue of armed groups in order to develop a sustainable system of identifying, training and reintegrating ex-combatants into civilian society. This involves training groups of foreign ex-combatants – including child warriors – who previously occupied the Guthrie rubber plantation, in agriculture. This training aims to provide livelihoods, and supports the efforts of ex-combatants to become productive and responsible members of society.

Once armed conflict ends, child combatants often find themselves defeated by socio-economic conditions, which suspends them in a world of boredom and poverty. With the offer to fight another battle, they slip optimistically across borders into the next war. It is therefore crucial that DDRR programmes designed to engage child soldiers should have a long-term mandate, with an approach of getting to know these children's thoughts, motivations and hopes, and developing programmes that have a chance of putting them on the path towards meaningful and sustainable reintegration.

Furthermore, efforts to promote peace and development in the region by the governments concerned require an understanding of the root causes of the civil conflicts. The lack of educational and employment opportunities have been major contributing factors in the causes of armed conflict. Taking up arms to earn a better standard of living can be very convincing. Other solutions must include curbing the spread of illegal small arms, and prosecuting those leaders who abuse children in this way – that is, those responsible for the recruitment and training of child soldiers.

Conclusion

Apart from the raw human tragedy, the effect of this 'child soldier doctrine' for war itself is quite

terrifying. With the involvement of children, generals, warlords, terrorists and rebel leaders alike are finding that conflicts are easier to start and harder to end. Last year, during weeks of internal crisis in neighbouring Guinea, it was confirmed that ex-fighters crossed over from Liberia to Guinea to participate in the ongoing disturbances.⁸ The same was repeated in September 2007, during the elections in Sierra Leone. Even now, as we experience a season of calm in the region, there are reports that some child warriors have since travelled thousands of kilometres to offer their mercenary services in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Such activity suggests that this region is held hostage to a ticking time bomb of regional warriors, ready to join the next leader who whispers a call to arms. ▲

Allan Quee is a DDR practitioner from Sierra Leone. He has served as a trainer and resource person on DDR and ex-combatants issues to various institutions and organisations. He is currently with the UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia, working with the DDRR programme.

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STRATEGIES FOR PEACE EDUCATION INTEGRATION IN ECOWAS MEMBER STATES' TERTIARY SCHOOL CURRICULA

WRITTEN BY **ISAAC OLAWALE ALBERT** AND **OLUREMI ALBERT**

Introduction

Much has been invested by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union (AU), United Nations (UN) and other members of the international community in making, keeping and building peace in the West African subregion since the early 1990s. The outcomes of all these interventions are encouraging. Whilst they may not have been able to stand the test of time, institutions of higher learning in West Africa have started to offer degrees in peace and security studies in an attempt to increase the number of professional peace workers in the subregion. Up until now, more than 90% of the indigenous peace workers were trained in workshops organised by the international agencies doing peace work

in the region. The knowledge provided to the trainees was limited in scope, having been dictated by the fixed mandate of the organisations that provided the training.

The kind of formal peace education advocated in this article is the broad type that schools a student well in power, human rights and needs-based interventions. The Department for International Development (DFID), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations-mandated University for Peace (UPEACE)

Above: Peace education aims to build a culture of peace through learning.

and ECOWAS are already providing some modest support for building this type of capacity in the subregion. This article takes a critical look at the context, contents and implications of this type of international development work.

Peace Education as a Strategy in Preventive Diplomacy

'Peace education' is presented in this article as a form of preventive diplomacy. The expectation is that when citizens are sufficiently literate in non-violence, they will behave in a manner that can enhance positive peace. According to the former Secretary General of the UN, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who popularised the concept in his *An Agenda for Peace*, preventive diplomacy means an "action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur".¹ This could take any form. The least talked-about action in policy and academic discourses is peace education.

Peace education, as a conflict prevention method, describes the contribution of education to peacebuilding. The term refers to all activities that promote the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will allow people of all ages, and at all levels, to develop the behaviour changes that can prevent the occurrence of conflict, resolve conflict peacefully, or create the social conditions conducive to peace.² The goals of this kind of education are to construct a fair and democratic society; to discourage cantankerous hegemonic tendencies and youth militancy; and to seek cooperation, whether local or international, through learning from each other instead of sticking to compromises that ultimately do nobody any good. Peace education has to do with the promotion of cooperation between citizens and states, on a voluntary basis, in a variety of fields linked to education and culture, including human rights. It has to do with showing respect for cultural diversity, eliminating prejudice, and emphasising positive mutual influence between different ethnic and religious groups.³

'Peace education' and a 'culture of peace', as social science terminologies, go hand in hand. Peace education has to do with building a culture of peace through learning. What is a 'culture of peace'? Simply defined, it refers to a cluster of behavioural patterns that enable peacemaking behaviours to become rooted in a society. It refers to the enthronement of a belief and value system that fosters peacebuilding based on the principles of equality, stewardship and equitable sharing of resources, and security of humankind at individual, family, group or national levels, without resorting to violence. Peace culture refers to all that people put into the efforts towards overcoming physical, psychological and structural

violence. The concept has been formally defined by the UN⁴ as:

"...all values, attitudes and forms of behaviour, way of life and of action that reflect, and are inspired by, respect for life and for human beings and their dignity and rights: the rejection of violence... commitment to the principles of freedom, justice, solidarity, tolerance and understanding among people and between groups and individuals."

Resolution 23/243 of the 1999 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) General Assembly defined the culture of peace as a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life based on:

- a. respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation;
- b. full respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- c. commitment to peaceful settlement of conflicts;
- d. respect for and promotion of the right to development;
- e. respect for the promotion of equal rights of and opportunities for women and men;
- f. respect for the promotion of the rights of everyone to freedom of expression, opinion and information; and
- g. adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations; and fostered by an enabling national and international environment conducive to peace.

Peace Education Models

Peace education takes place in formal, non-formal and informal settings. Formal peace education covers the knowledge, skills and training obtained in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions such as schools, colleges and universities. Non-formal education is generally of a short-term duration; it is geared towards the upgrading of skills and introducing new knowledge. Informal peace education relates to any type of learning or training, for anyone in a structured or unstructured setting.

This article focuses on formal peace education (namely, peace education in schools). There are four main approaches for promoting peace education in schools, as proposed by Bodine and Crawford.⁵

- The first approach is the *process curriculum approach*. This has to do with having to design a distinct curriculum on the principles and skills of non-violence, and teaching the contents as a separate course to be taken by students, in addition to their existing courses. In this context, learning takes place by way of structured activities such as simulations, role plays, group discussions and cooperative learning activities.



The process curriculum approach to peace education encourages learning through simulations, group work and cooperative learning activities.

- The second approach is the *mediation programme approach*. In this case, a number of students are trained within a school setting to provide neutral third-party facilitation services to their peers. Some people refer to this as a peer mediation system. The disadvantage of this second approach compared to the first is that it involves just a few people in the school. The advantage, however, is that the knowledge imparted on the selected few is so deep that the beneficiaries can continue to serve as mediators in any society.
- The third approach is known as the *peaceable classroom approach*. In this approach, conflict resolution principles and skills are infused into multiple subject areas, such as social studies, language arts, history, mathematics and science – usually the higher classes in primary and secondary schools.
- The fourth approach is the *peaceable school approach*. This builds on the peaceable classroom approach by allowing the entire school to benefit from the teaching of peace principles and skills.

Peace Education in West Africa

The focus of this article is on the process curriculum approach to peace education. It entails the development

of full peace and conflict studies courses in institutions of higher learning (including diplomas, undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees), as different from the existing related courses in political science and international relations, which many universities in the subregion offer. Interest in mainstream peace and conflict studies in the West African subregion is directly related to the many violent conflicts that have occurred in the region since the late 1980s, when the Liberian crisis broke out. The other parts of the subregion that experienced armed conflicts include Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. Still other countries are not as peaceful as ordinarily assumed. The Niger Delta crisis in Nigeria has continued to take lives, and threatens the global oil market. The Dagbon chieftaincy conflict in Ghana has continued to threaten the peace of the country.⁶ The peace of Senegal, Mali, Chad and Niger also continues to be threatened by different dissident groups.

In addition to the peacekeeping operations launched in different parts of the subregion, members of the international community also responded to some of these crisis situations through the promotion of peace education. However, the emphasis was on non-formal and informal peace education. Most of the projects were executed by



Many trainers who conduct conflict management training workshops in Africa are not well trained in the discipline and practice themselves.

non-governmental organisations: International Alert, Responding to Conflict (RTC, Birmingham), the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), and so on. Vulnerable groups were brought together and trained on how to make and build peace in their respective constituencies. These training programmes helped to build peace at grassroots levels and, in some cases, contributed significantly to finding solutions to major national crises.

A major gap exists in all these trainings. Many people that run conflict management training workshops across the continent are themselves not well trained. Some of them have not acquired any skills in conflict management after obtaining their initial degrees in other disciplines. Other trainers have acquired their conflict management skills on the job, probably after a period of foundational training in a conflict management school in Europe or America. After this initial training, many of these 'experts' hardly care to update their skills, though the nature and dynamics of the problems they work on are constantly changing. They therefore build on their mistakes and, in the process, create more problems than they resolve. There is a flipside to this observation too. There are many

'highly qualified conflict resolvers' out there who intervene from the 'ivory towers' of academia, with very little grasp on the realities of the conflict situations on the ground, and specific to the African context. They, too, create more problems than they resolve. Two issues must be raised from these two observations. The first issue is that the establishment of institutions for providing formal peace education is crucial at this stage of African development. Such academic programmes provide two advantages: helping to train qualified manpower to undertake peace work in the subregion, and helping to create opportunities for refresher courses for peace workers already in the field. The second issue that must be underscored is that ivory tower scholars need to work closely with practitioners, to ensure that what they teach and how they plan interventions reflects the realities on the ground.

The first major push in this direction was made by the British Council (BC) and DFID in 1996 when they supported the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, to start an academic link with the University of Ulster, in Northern Ireland, in peace and conflict studies. As a result of this process curriculum approach, the University of Ibadan's Institute of African Studies developed a Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS) programme in 1998, which began admitting students for

a master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies in 2000. In the same year, the university established a Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CEPACS), which now runs short courses in conflict management and awards a professional master's degree in Humanitarian and Refugee Studies. By 2008, the PCS programme had produced over 500 masters graduates and eight doctoral graduates in peace and conflict studies. CEPACS has already produced over 100 students in the field of humanitarian and refugee studies.

Following the successes recorded at the University of Ibadan, the British Council later started another academic link between the University of Bradford, in the United Kingdom, and the University of Jos, in Nigeria, in peace and conflict studies, as well as a link between the University of Bradford and the University of Sierra Leone in Freetown. The Jos programme led to the commencement of a diploma course in Peace Studies. In addition to a diploma course, the University of Sierra Leone now runs an undergraduate degree course in Peace and Conflict Studies.

The peace and conflict studies programmes in

UNDP worked with three institutions on the project: the Legon Centre for International Affairs (LECIA), the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) at the University of Ghana, and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Cape Coast. In the course of the consultations with the three organisations, the strength of the IAE was found to be in training adult learners. LECIA's strength is in the field of international diplomacy, and the IDS, University of Cape Coast's strength was found to be in development studies. Each of these institutions was advised to develop their peace education curriculum in the areas where they have comparative advantage. Thus, LECIA is expected to start masters and doctoral degrees in Peace and Security Studies, in line with its existing track record. The IAE is expected to start a diploma and a masters degree in Peace Education, and the IDS, University of Cape Coast is expected to develop its own postgraduate course in Peace and Development Studies. The Cape Coast course was launched in early 2008. The commencement of the two other courses is still being awaited by the UNDP, which has indicated interest in supporting it financially.

The diploma and masters degree of the IAE is of

PEACE EDUCATION REFERS TO ALL ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES THAT WILL ALLOW PEOPLE TO DEVELOP THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGES THAT CAN PREVENT THE OCCURRENCE OF CONFLICT, RESOLVE CONFLICT PEACEFULLY, OR CREATE THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO PEACE

Ibadan, Jos and Freetown involved the exchange of staff, expertise and resource materials. This helped to structure the programmes according to the standards obtainable in the developed world. The courses attract students from the military, paramilitary, religious organisations, public service sectors and non-governmental institutions. While the lecturers in the programmes serve as resource persons to projects undertaken by governmental and non-governmental organisations across the subregion and far beyond, the graduating students are recruited as programme officers by these agencies. Gradually, peace work is becoming professionalised. To celebrate and consolidate this, the Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP) was established in Nigeria in 2004. The main goal of the society is to professionalise and standardise peace practice in Africa. For now, membership of the society cuts across the West African subregion. It held its second congress in June 2008 in Abuja.

The commencement of formal peace education in Ghana at the tertiary level borrowed from the experience of the University of Ibadan (Nigeria). The financial support for the project was provided by the UNDP, Ghana.⁷ The

urgent importance to Ghana, given the ongoing policy of the country's Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS)/Ghana Education Service (GES) to integrate peace education into the curricula of schools at the pre-tertiary level. A manual has been developed for the programme, and competent manpower is still to be trained for managing the programme.

In February 2008, the Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP) and the University of Ibadan were also invited to provide support for the commencement of masters and doctoral degrees at the University of Ilorin in Kwara State, Nigeria. All the workshops for the commencement of the programme have been completed, during which the curriculum for the course was developed. The curriculum has been approved by the university's senate, and the first batch of students will be starting their courses in September 2008.

Summary and Conclusion

There is much to learn from the rich experience at Ibadan University in peace education development. Within a period of less than 10 years, the course is



Most indigenous peace workers in the region were trained through workshops organised by international organisations doing peace work in the area.

already meaningfully impacting how state officials respond to conflict issues. The most symbolic testimony of the impact of the course was made by Major General Ishaku Pennap at the opening ceremony of the second Annual Conference of the Society for Peace Studies and Practice at the Sheraton Hotel and Towers, in Abuja (16 June 2008). He claimed to be a conflict management expert before coming to the University of Ibadan for the Peace Studies course. After graduating, he claimed to have been transformed into a “peace-maker and builder”. The course has successfully produced an Assistant Inspector General of Police, and several State Commissioners of Police and Directors of State Security Services. One of the graduates of the course is the current Commandant General of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps. Each of these people adopts non-violent approaches to crisis management, and readily testifies to the extent to which their professional knowledge makes their work easier.

In summary, ECOWAS as a regional body and the member states of the organisation have much to benefit from peace education. The West African subregion can rely on this kind of education for preventing recurring wars in the countries just coming out of wars, and can prevent the

other member states experiencing low-intensity conflicts from sliding into the kind of armed conflicts experienced in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d’Ivoire. The lesson of the various ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Groups (ECOMOG) and UN peace support operations in the subregion is that prevention is better than cure. The time has passed when leaders of West African states would rely absolutely on avoidance and confrontation for dealing with the conflicts confronting them. They must now give better attention to joint problem-solving strategies. Peace education thus has a significant role to play in achieving this objective.

ECOWAS needs to begin to commit some of its resources to supporting academic institutions with peace education programmes in the subregion. The regional organisation also needs to collaborate with these institutions in the area of research, and the running of conflict management programmes at grassroots level. ECOWAS member states should also follow suit. In the spirit of promoting accelerated national development and supporting international peace and security objectives, international organisations undertaking development work in the region must also support peace education programmes. There is much for the international



The University of Ibadan in Nigeria has produced many Masters and Doctoral graduates in peace and conflict studies.

community, Africa and the West African subregion to benefit from such linkages, in fostering and promoting peace education development. ♪

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INTELLIGENCE AND PEACEKEEPING – ARE WE WINNING?

WRITTEN BY **ANDRÉ ROUX**¹

For many, the word ‘intelligence’ immediately conjures up images of spies, espionage and spy-masters. Intelligence is a sensitive topic in all multinational operations – particularly so in United Nations (UN) peace support operations (PSOs). The lack of an intelligence-gathering capability within the UN organisation is, however, astounding – this despite the UN’s intelligence failures of the past: from the failed missions in Somalia

and the Balkans to Rwanda. The 1994 Rwandan genocide saw up to a million people die in a hundred days while the

Above: Officers serving with the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) at the funeral ceremony for seven slain peacekeepers who were killed in an ambush by militiamen in Darfur.



The 1994 Rwandan genocide, represented by the mass grave, is an example of past United Nations intelligence failures.

world watched. The four battalions of troops in the UN Mission in Rwanda, crippled by an ‘observe and report’ mandate, watched helplessly as the genocide unfolded around them, knowing that they had foreknowledge of the impending catastrophe that engulfed the region.²

Further intelligence failures that touched closer to home for UN personnel include:

- The 19 August 2003 suicide attack on UN offices in Baghdad, in which 22 people, including UN Special Envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello, were killed.
- The 11 December 2007 suicide blasts in Algiers, which killed at least 41 people, including 18 UN staff members. Responsibility for the blasts was claimed by the Maghreb branch of Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda network, which targeted the Algerian headquarters of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), as well as the National Constitutional Council.
- The 9 July 2008 ambush attack on peacekeepers of the African Union (AU)-UN Hybrid Mission known

as UNAMID in Darfur, Sudan. Seven members were killed and 22 injured in a well-coordinated attack in northern Darfur by unidentified gunmen.

The UN’s position, however, is that it does not gather intelligence on member states, and does not have direct access to intelligence sources. The UN acquires information largely through its information offices, official contacts and presence abroad (agencies). The UN Situation Centre (SitCen) in New York is the main organ that continuously gathers and processes information from the field. The SitCen in New York is part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and also has a small analysis unit, called the Information and Research Unit.³ This is, however, limited in size, and a major concern is its dependence on intelligence from national intelligence agencies. This makes the information very one-sided and susceptible to manipulation, in what is often called ‘perception management’. The problems created by this dependency on nations supplying intelligence



The United Nations Situation Centre (SitCen) in New York is the main organ that continuously gathers and processes information from the field.

to the UN is epitomised in the debacle over Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. When the United States (US) Secretary of State, Colin Powell, presented what he said was US evidence that Iraq had such weapons, no-one in the room had the capacity to evaluate his claims.⁴

UN field missions are reliant largely on the information they can gather themselves, through overt means. The complication, however, is that modern integrated peace missions need a wide spectrum of information. The military and police forces deployed as peacekeepers in these missions are responsible for an increasingly wider range of security-related tasks. A peacekeeping mission Force Commander must assist with stabilisation operations and humanitarian tasks, which could include assisting with food delivery; crisis

situations involving population displacement; security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes; safeguarding election processes and reconstruction projects. The list goes on. What is critical, however, is to utilise the limited forces and resources most effectively. This is especially critical in the new era of robust peacekeeping operations, which was emphasised recently by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, before stepping down as Under-Secretary-General of Peacekeeping Operations. He told reporters in New York that hard lessons had been learned in recent times, and that:

"I, for one, am convinced that force does matter – that we are a long way past the time when peacekeeping started 60 years ago and we would have only unarmed observers: force does matter. To be able to be respected is essential, especially in civil conflicts. I have pushed for robust peacekeeping in the forests of Congo as well as a deterrent instrument in Sierra Leone, or in the slums of Port-au-Prince [the Haitian capital]."⁵

What is clear is that the principals of war remain the basic tenets of military planning and action – whether in a peace support or peace enforcement operation. First, you must have the right force, with the right equipment and training, at the right place and time in order to conduct operations. Then you have to apply those principles, within a doctrinal framework and specific rules of engagement (ROE), to execute those operations.

In order to accomplish all of this in a peacekeeping environment, you need to plan correctly, based on the realities of the situation and allowing for possible escalation in the expected levels of conflict and destabilisation that may be encountered. This planning needs an accurate information base and specific intelligence products. It has, however, been the experience of many Force Commanders that the successful execution of operations and remaining within the decision cycle of belligerent, spoiler forces in a complex multidimensional peacekeeping environment is inevitably problematic, as there is rarely adequate operational- and tactical-level intelligence available.

The UN will also have to develop some forms of secret intelligence. This aspect is even more important in multidimensional peacekeeping operations (PKOs), with their embedded responsibilities: election monitoring, where individual votes must be kept secret; arms control verification, including possible surprise inspections at secret locations; law enforcement agency supervision (to 'watch the watchmen'); mediation, where confidential bargaining

DIFFERENT MANDATES, SPECIAL RULES OF ENGAGEMENT, BELLIGERENT 'RULES OF THE GAME' – ALMOST EVERYTHING IS UNIQUE, AND THIS REQUIRES THAT THE OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT REORIENTS AND ADJUSTS ITSELF ACCORDINGLY

positions that are shared by one party with the UN should not be revealed to the other; and sanctions and border monitoring, where clandestine activities (e.g. arms shipments) must be uncovered or intercepted without allowing smugglers to take evasive action. In very high-risk areas characterised by clandestine arms shipments, secret plans for aggression or genocide, and threats to assassinate indigenous leaders or to assault UN forces, some forms of secret intelligence are inevitably going to be required, and the UN must become reliably competent in this area. Eriksson argues that, in the most dangerous situations, “the

peacekeeping organizations should assume the right to carry out intelligence operations by almost any suitable method”, in the interest of guaranteeing the security of the forces it has placed at risk.⁶

The lessons of Rwanda have been clear – the failures there go back to the absence of a strong mandate. However, we can take this one step back. Had there been a more detailed intelligence assessment considering historical tendencies, intelligence indicators, the political will and military capability of the belligerents, and looking at all escalation scenarios, we could have seen a stronger mandate. This, together

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The peacekeepers deployed with the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) are in a situation where their situational awareness is often negligible, dramatically increasing their vulnerability.

with a broader, multi-source and credible intelligence capability on the ground, could have prevented the genocide and atrocities that followed.

The challenge of intelligence in peacekeeping – or, more specifically, PSOs – is that these operations differ considerably from traditional military combat or ‘kinetic’ operations. Different mandates, special rules of engagement, belligerent ‘rules of the game’ – almost everything is unique, and this requires that the operational intelligence unit reorients and adjusts itself accordingly. It is important, in conducting peacekeeping intelligence analyses, to understand very clearly that traditional military indicators are not the primary signals that must be perceived and integrated. Unconventional combatants do not drive tanks, they drive ‘technicals’ – 4x4 pick-up trucks with machine guns crudely mounted in the back. The complex operational environment is unpredictable and asymmetric, and it is precisely in these situations that operations must be ‘intelligence-driven’ from the perspective of being initiated, guided by and based on

What, then, is peacekeeping intelligence? It is perhaps easier to describe what it is rather than to have a universal definition. Accordingly, peacekeeping intelligence:

- is information that has been systematically collected, processed and disseminated to the right people at the right time;
- enables more effective decision-making;
- supports a better understanding of the mission dynamics;
- answers questions: who, what, why, where, when and how; and
- is a series of activities defined by source and discipline. In other words, it is a process, commonly defined as the intelligence cycle.

The intelligence cycle is relevant at all levels of the mission, and can be used by all organisations – from military and police structures to humanitarian aid workers. It consists of five steps, namely planning, collecting, processing, analysing and distributing

IN VERY HIGH-RISK AREAS CHARACTERISED BY CLANDESTINE ARMS SHIPMENTS, SECRET PLANS FOR AGGRESSION OR GENOCIDE, AND THREATS TO ASSASSINATE INDIGENOUS LEADERS OR TO ASSAULT UN FORCES, SOME FORMS OF SECRET INTELLIGENCE ARE INEVITABLY GOING TO BE REQUIRED, AND THE UN MUST BECOME RELIABLY COMPETENT IN THIS AREA

accurate, relevant, real-time intelligence products.

From force generation down to the utilisation of a section of infantry on the ground in a UN PSO, information is needed – accurate, current information, and specifically the analysed information product that we call ‘intelligence’. This is becoming more critical, due to the change from traditional PKOs to increasingly complex multidimensional PKOs in much more volatile circumstances. Today, the UN deploys 20 peacekeeping operations around the globe, with some 110 000 personnel in the field. This does not include the joint Darfur Mission with the AU (UNAMID), which is slated to have 26 000 peacekeepers at full deployment.

While the need for accurate, current intelligence is apparent, there is even now a reluctance to classify and define intelligence in the UN structures clearly. The term ‘military information’ is still being used in many quarters, despite the fact that a mission needs political, humanitarian, socio-economic, security and other forms of intelligence, rather than the mere dispositions, capabilities and actions of militarised forces.

information. Planning can be considered as the management phase of the whole process – from determining information requirements, to the distribution of the finished intelligence product. Collection consists of the gathering of ‘raw’ information from all available resources. This can include open or closed source information. Open source information is that which is legally available to the general public, and generally accounts for up to 90% of available information.

Peacekeeping missions are largely reliant on what is known as ‘human information’ (HUMINT). This comes down to the observations, investigations and assessments of the UN personnel deployed in the mission area. Previously, it was extremely problematic to try and coordinate this information, most of which was open source and neither sensitive nor ‘secret’. Great strides have been made by the UN with the introduction of the Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC) in UN DPKO field missions. A similar intelligence analysis structure now also exists in many UNDP field



Integrated intelligence-sharing is critical for the successful operationalisation of the African Standby Force and its regional brigades.

missions. To an extent, this addresses the challenge of ‘stovepiping’, where information is moved up organisational-specific channels to the highest level. This has traditionally affected the humanitarian, police, military and political affairs, and other organisations, within a field mission. In the process, the information was summarised, condensed and lost relevance due to time lags, often emerging as ‘one liners’ at the highest level of the mission. The new JMAC structure, under the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) in the peacekeeping mission, has representatives from nearly all of the organisations within the structure, and is headed by a professional recruitment-level post to ensure continuity through at least part of the life cycle of a peace mission.

The AU, though, has yet to adopt this integrated intelligence-sharing philosophy by means of a dedicated and mandated structure of intelligence ‘professionals’ and seconded specialists. This is, perhaps, largely due

to funding restrictions, yet it is critical to the successful operationalisation of the African Standby Force and its regional brigades, should they be deployed in peacekeeping or peace enforcement missions on the continent.

As valuable as the JMAC intelligence mission structures are in developing strategic forecasts and operational-level situational awareness, as well as providing support to operational planning processes, the real weakness still lies in the tactical-level intelligence collection and analysis capability. Battalions of troops are deployed as 850-man formed units to peacekeeping missions. They are often from different countries, rarely speak a language understood by the majority of the population and belligerents in a peace mission environment, and invariably do not have enough understanding and sensitivity towards the culture and local customs. They also tend to be fixated on ‘military’-type information, and have

generally failed to adopt the UN's new Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP) as a planning tool. The IMPP introduces new planning factors in an integrated approach, combining humanitarian and political realities with the traditional threat and neutral factor assessments. This process is, once again, dependent on information flow, including from the humanitarian and political affairs environments. To this end, what the UN should do is ensure that there are at least two dedicated Civil Military Coordination (CIMIC) posts in the generic battalion structure. This will enable the operationalisation of a Civil Military Operations Centre (CMOC) type of structure at the Sector and Battalion levels. This will lead to better coordination, liaison and cooperation between the military and police peacekeepers, the international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the local population and civil structures they are assisting.

The critical lack of 'intelligence orientation' – in other words, the effective utilisation of every police and military peacekeeper as an informed, tasked and directed collector of information during the execution of their routine tasks – means that peacekeepers often have very poor situational awareness. This will become

suicide bombings – like those the US and allied forces in Iraq, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces in Afghanistan, are experiencing. The AU-mandated forces in Somalia are also already affected by such attacks from militant radical extremists, and the shadow of transnational terrorism is not far off. The change in status of the UN – from protection afforded by respect for its neutrality to the perception of actor and role player in conflict zones, making it a legitimate target – was recently echoed by Lakhdar Brahimi in a press statement, after being appointed to a panel to investigate the UN security measures in Algeria at the time of the two 2007 suicide attacks:

"Many people believed the world body has become their enemy and is therefore a legitimate target for attacks because of its perceived double standards and lack of impartiality in handling world crises. I think the UN has been on notice that its flag is not anymore a guarantee for protection."⁷

However, the groups that are the most exposed in the conflict environments of many of the UN's mission areas are the humanitarian aid workers from UN agencies and NGOs. The rising death toll of aid

WHILE THE UN HAS IDENTIFIED THE NEED FOR BETTER INTELLIGENCE PROCESSES, AND HAS MADE GREAT STRIDES IN DEVELOPING AND CAPACITATING STRUCTURES SUCH AS THE JMAC ON THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF FIELD MISSIONS, THE FAILURES OF SITUATIONAL AWARENESS AND LACK OF ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE LIE MAINLY AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL

more critical as the scope of information needed widens in the era of the complex, multidimensional and integrated peace missions of today, and as the irregular, asymmetrical nature of threats to peacekeepers increase. The peacekeepers deployed with UNAMID are already in this situation, where their situational awareness is often negligible, dramatically increasing their vulnerability. This increased vulnerability means they will have to focus more on force protection aspects. Invariably, less attention and effort will go towards executing the 'peacekeeping' mission, which seeks to prevent the conflict, thereby alleviating the incredible human suffering presently being endured by over two million people in Darfur.

It can also be regarded as merely a matter of time before UN peacekeeping missions in Africa become affected by deliberate and directed attacks using car bombs, roadside irregular explosive devices (IEDs) and

workers in Darfur, Somalia and other conflict zones is a clear indicator of their vulnerability and the threats they face. Often, these threats vary so rapidly on the tactical level that the collective organisation structures of the peacekeeping mission cannot provide accurate or relevant threat assessments, even if the information was adequately networked. Yet this tendency will continue, as these conflicts become more protracted and the disparate rebel factions splinter further – many becoming 'spoilers', with no political direction other than localised 'warlordism'. This is a danger in many of the extended conflicts. The UN Department of Safety and Security's (DSS) new field security guidelines, as well as its Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS)⁸, attempt to provide a certain basic level of security structure and awareness to all UN personnel and affiliated humanitarian organisations, aid workers and contracted personnel, as well as to

other humanitarian organisations working in UN peace mission areas.

It is critical that the UN continues with efforts in its field missions to establish both a Force Intelligence Plan as well as a Mission Intelligence Plan, and that it simultaneously sets up the operational-level staff able to manage force and mission-wide intelligence collection, processing and analysis. The UN should also provide for the coherent management of tactical intelligence collection, processing and analysis. This process provides situational awareness, which is of paramount importance for the Force Commander, the Police Commander and other members of the senior management team of a UN peacekeeping mission. In particular, a Force Commander must include non-military as well as military factors in the appreciation, collection and analysis plans, and should also include the monitoring and understanding of factors external to the immediate mission area.

The Police Commander and Military Commanders have a critical role in transitioning a mission towards conclusion, and must maintain an intelligence interest in refugees and displaced persons; politics; economic development; social, cultural and religious development; and last but not least, crime and corruption. To do this, there must be systems, structures, specialists, technical means, doctrines and the right attitude, where every peacekeeper is regarded as – and acts as – an effective, informed, managed and directed information collector, while still focusing on their core line function activities within the mission.

One area that the UN has hopelessly failed to exploit adequately in the quest for operational and force security (safety) intelligence, as well as situational awareness and tactical actionable intelligence, is technical intelligence collection. This is an area that the UN has assessed with a policy document in 2007, but has failed to operationalise, by not including the structures for such technical collection in field mission structures. The value of assets such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) with high loiter time – providing real-time video feeds with day-visual and night-infrared and thermal imaging capability – have been recognised as force multipliers, due to the situational awareness they could provide to peacekeepers. This is precisely what is needed in PSO conflict areas, such as the eastern area of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Darfur area of Sudan. Unfortunately, despite a request from the UN to member states to provide UAVs for the MONUC Mission in the DRC, there has been little enthusiasm for this initiative.

While the UN has identified the need for better intelligence processes, and has made great strides in developing and capacitating structures such as the

JMAC on the operational level of field missions, the failures of situational awareness and lack of actionable intelligence lie mainly at the tactical level. It is here where the member states – and particularly the troop and police contributing countries – need to invest more in capacitating their deploying members to change their attitudes, skills and approaches to the concept of intelligence and peacekeeping. Are we getting it right? The answer is a qualified yes – slowly and incrementally, but there are large gaps. It is often the absence of significant threat in certain situations, rather than the proactive planned and intelligence-driven operations of peacekeepers, that lead to successful peacekeeping. ▲

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REINTEGRATION OF FEMALE WAR-AFFECTED AND EX-COMBATANTS IN LIBERIA

WRITTEN BY **ABU SHERIF**



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Introduction

With the exception of two years, from 1997 to 1999, Liberia was in a constant state of conflict from 1989 until the signing of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in August 2003. Poor governance was the underlying and immediate cause of Liberia's civil war. In a nation with a population of approximately three million people, the protracted war claimed 250 000 lives and displaced over one million people, including hundreds of thousands who fled the country as refugees. It is difficult to exaggerate the devastation that this war had on Liberia's physical, social, political,

economic and governance infrastructures. Liberia was the classic 'failed state' in every respect. All national institutions were destroyed, or so neglected that they were completely non-functional. The central and local governments were virtually non-existent and unable to provide essential military or police security, a fundamental justice system, or even basic services like

Above: Young female Liberian soldiers comprised about 30-40 percent of all the fighting forces in the country.



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Poverty and unemployment are significant challenges in Liberia. Here, Liberian women and girls sift through the earth to gather scraps to sell as building material.

water, electricity, road maintenance, and so on.

Liberia's human development indicators reflect the worsened conditions that resulted from the conflict and the collapse of governance institutions. There are no illusions about the challenges that lie ahead. Over 80% of Liberia's population is illiterate and lives below the poverty line; unemployment is estimated at, or above, 70%. Of the population, 35% are malnourished; only 28% are immunised; only 25% have access to safe drinking water; and just 36% have access to sanitation facilities. Almost an entire generation has missed out on formal primary education, learning instead to live by a warlord culture where force is the response to many of life's challenges.¹

The armed conflict that occurred in Liberia can be categorised by two main phases: the first conflict, experienced between 1989 and 1997, and the second, between 1999 and 2003. The armed conflict came to an end in 2003 with the formulation of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1509, which called for the establishment of the United Nations Mission

in Liberia (UNMIL). An interim government was put in place in October 2003, with representations from the various warring factions and civil society groups.

The civil conflict in Liberia, like many other countries ravaged by war on the continent, saw a remarkable abuse of human rights, especially against vulnerable groups such as women and girls. The consequences of the violence and human rights abuses perpetrated against women and girls during the conflict were devastating. Many suffered both physically and mentally from the harsh and inhumane treatment they endured during the war. Often widowed or abandoned, they now remain alone to shoulder overwhelming conditions and responsibilities, with little help to ease their burdens. These women have full responsibility for their children, some having had children as a result of rape.²

Even though many women and girls had no direct participation in physical combat during the war, some of them were associated with the various warring factions for one or more reasons. The reintegration

THE CIVIL CONFLICT IN LIBERIA, LIKE MANY OTHER COUNTRIES RAVAGED BY WAR ON THE CONTINENT, SAW A REMARKABLE ABUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ESPECIALLY AGAINST VULNERABLE GROUPS SUCH AS WOMEN AND GIRLS

needs of such women must be thoroughly considered, as they experience stigmatisation and rejection in their communities.

The Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) programme categorised such vulnerable females as: women associated with the fighting forces (WAFF), and girls associated with the fighting forces (GAFF). Altogether, they comprised about 30-40% of all fighting forces, or approximately 25 000 to 30 000 in number. The majority of women were forced to participate, although it is estimated that significantly more women opted to participate in the second conflict than in the first. They chose to take up arms to protect themselves from sexual violence, to avenge the death of family members,

because of peer pressure, for material gain, and for survival. Women played key roles as commanders, porters, spies, sex slaves, cooks and mothers.³

Considering the calamity suffered by these vulnerable groups during the conflict, several efforts have been made by relevant actors in the peace process since 2003 to cater to their needs, by rehabilitating and reintegrating them into mainstream life. This is a tedious process, especially considering these women's psychological setbacks and needs. In late 2005, Liberia democratically elected the first female president in Africa. When President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf came into power in January 2006, the government made significant efforts to promote gender equity at all levels of society, and placed female reintegration initiatives



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Microfinance credit programmes enable women to set up small businesses or other productive ventures.



Former women fighters in Liberia's civil war, some of them former sex-slaves for the male soldiers, learn to sew at a vocational training centre in Monrovia, as part of a reintegration programme.

high on its agenda. Since then, the government of Liberia has made tremendous strides in promoting gender issues. It is highly committed to the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the UNSC Resolution 1325, thus increasing women's participation in the national recovery process and making them economically self-reliant and independent through reintegration opportunities. In this article, the reintegration of the community of war-affected females is addressed independently from female ex-combatants or females associated with the fighting forces.

Reintegration of War-affected Females

Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and is a national responsibility, which usually necessitates long-term external assistance.⁴ With unemployment rates of above

70%, microcredit opportunities are allowing Liberia's low-income households to set up small businesses or engage in other productive ventures. Many war-affected women, caring for their children and with little or no vocational and educational skills, are involved in the Local Enterprise Assistance Program (LEAP), a microfinance programme supported by the Ministry of Finance. A recent study shows that the demand for microfinance has increased. Mainly implemented by LEAP and the American Refugee Council/Liberty Finance, only 11 000 clients – mostly women from various counties in the country – are benefiting from the credit scheme.⁵

Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Liberia are also involved in providing business skills for Liberian women. In northern Liberia, for example, loans have been provided through the Women's Economic Empowerment project, funded by the Danish government. The project provides business management skills and microcredit support

for women to enhance their livelihood, and to help revitalise the rural economy. Women eligible for loan facilities are trained in business management skills prior to receiving the loan. The project also provides psychosocial counselling for beneficiaries affected by the trauma of 14 years of conflict. More than 1 000 women have already benefited from this opportunity in Lofa County (northern Liberia) since the start of 2008.⁶ This development is a milestone in the Poverty

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Many women associated with the fighting forces face hostilities, stigmatisation and isolation when they return to their families and communities.

Reduction Strategy (PRS) that is being implemented by the government.⁷

Even though some women have been reintegrated back into society easily due to their high academic qualifications, many lack basic education qualifications and livelihood skills as a result of the long, devastating war. However, the government, along with notable partner organisations, is creating opportunities at all levels to accommodate war-affected females. An educational programme was launched in January 2007 to give Liberian women between the ages of 18 and 35 years, who were interested in joining the Liberia National Police (LNP) but did not meet the requisite qualifications, the opportunity now to do so. In early 2008, Liberia's first all-female class of police officers graduated from the Liberia Police Academy in Monrovia. The training of the 105 females, with support from UNMIL, was a significant step in achieving better gender representation in the LNP. The new female officers, prior to recruitment, completed basic police training through the special educational support programme for female candidates last December. The completion of this all-female class brings to 356 the number of females that have been recruited into the Liberian Police Force, representing nearly 10% of the force. The programme is in line with CEDAW's principles and the mandate of UNSC Resolution 1325.⁸

Many people in Liberia consider formal education to be important for reintegration. Even though there are some adult literacy programmes (ALP), the official age for primary and secondary school is from five to 24 years. From the Rapid Assessment of Learning Space (RALS) conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Ministry of Education and implementing NGO partners in 2004, the total student population in Liberia was found to be 1 007 784 students (of which 47% were female).⁹ Consequently, the adult literacy rate in Liberia remains at around 56%, according to UNICEF.

Reintegration of Females Associated with the Fighting Forces

The main local actor for the reintegration of WAFF is the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR), which works collaboratively with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNMIL and other related actors through the Liberia DDR programme. Together, their mandate is to support the socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants, to promote the social acceptance of ex-combatants into their communities and to equip them with marketable skills and formal education training. Considering gender mainstreaming, these activities are intended to reinforce and support the process of social reintegration of the



Gender equity and female reintegration efforts gained more importance in Liberia when President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf came into power.

war-affected communities to which the ex-combatants return.¹⁰

The reintegration and rehabilitation (RR) component of the DDDR programme that started early in 2005 had several options for disarmed and demobilised (DD) ex-combatants. The programme was supported by a trust fund, managed by UNDP. It ended in October 2007. The funding was completely used, reintegrating more than 70% of the total caseload. The available options included:

- formal education;
- agriculture and vocational skills training;
- apprenticeship (on-the-job training); and
- parallel programmes supported by the European Commission (EC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).¹¹

For many WAFF, formal education was seen as taking too long, and some women without any education did not feel comfortable in the classroom, as they thought of themselves as too old or out of place to be going to school. Largely, these women opted for vocational skills training in tailoring. They felt more comfortable with this trade as compared to the other available choices, such as brick-building, carpentry, auto mechanics, hairdressing, soap making, welding, and so on.¹²

In 2007, under the UNDP-managed trust fund, 24% of the 30 106 DDDR beneficiaries that opted for vocational training, skills training, apprenticeships and formal education were female ex-combatants.¹³ In late 2007, Norway donated approximately US\$7 million for the reintegration of a remaining estimated 8 789 ex-combatants. Some 2 658 females have now been validated into reintegration programmes, which are to

commence soon. Norway has placed a strong emphasis on the high participation of female ex-combatants in the programme, and for there to be a stronger psychosocial component in this final phase of the RR component.

Challenges

The government of Liberia, along with local and international actors in the peace process, has made significant progress in promoting female reintegration. But reintegration itself is a process that should be voluntarily accepted by the targeted beneficiaries and, unfortunately, there are still many challenges associated with this process.

The socio-economic landscape of a post-conflict country is characterised by the devastation of the country's infrastructure, economy and social fabric. Essential to integrating former fighters into society is providing a mechanism for them to engage productively in a livelihood-producing activity. Initially, the labour market in a conflict-torn country will have a difficult time absorbing not only the flood of new workers looking for employment – such as ex-combatants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) – but also in determining which markets will be successful.¹⁴

the RR process. They thereby rendered themselves more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence, which remain major problems in Liberia.

Rural to urban migration, due to the protracted civil war and the search for better socio-economic opportunities, is a result of the high level of centralisation within the country. This has significantly slowed down regional or rural reintegration initiatives, which has in turn hampered some vital market demands, such as agricultural and vocational skilled labour, in rural Liberia and the nation as a whole. The recent preliminary results of the national population and housing census, conducted by the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) in March 2008, revealed that of the approximately 3.5 million total population of Liberia, more than a million (or a third of the population) live in Monrovia and its environs (or Montserrado County, home to the nation's capital). This has created significant competition for the limited available resources. More than half a million of Montserrado County's population are females, with a very large youth population. With most of these females unskilled and unprepared for long-term economic

SOCIETAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN AND GIRLS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FIGHTING FORCES POSE A THREAT AS WELL. A KEY DETERMINING FACTOR IN A GIRL OR WOMAN'S SUCCESSFUL REINTEGRATION IS WHETHER SHE WAS ACCEPTED BACK INTO HER COMMUNITY

Many WAFF feared the stigmatisation associated with being labelled as a WAFF, and decided that the risk of being associated with the process was higher than any benefit they might receive from it. They therefore chose not to participate. Others were out of the country, too ill to participate, or simply did not know where and when it was happening. Others still feared that they would not be able to travel abroad in the future.¹⁵

Societal attitudes towards women and girls associated with the fighting forces pose a threat as well. A key determining factor in a girl or woman's successful reintegration is whether she was accepted back into her community. Initially, in communities, there were many hostilities towards female combatants and WAFF. They were considered aggressive, and looked down upon by the community – including their own families – particularly if they came back from the war with children. Their return was sometimes seen as an additional burden for their families, and was not always welcomed.¹⁶ As a result, many WAFF did not go through the DD process, and could therefore not go through

reintegration, teenage prostitution as a means of survival has increased. It has also created more room for sexual exploitation and abuse in the capital city and urban Liberia.

Conclusion

Reintegration is a very broad process, and many factors are involved in preventing the reoccurrence of armed conflict. The second Liberian armed conflict, which began in 1999, was believed to have escalated as a result of not considering all the factors involved in the proper reintegration of affected populations from the first conflict. This then created more room for further recruitment. Even though Liberia is now making headway in promoting gender-sensitive reintegration, there are still some lapses and challenges encountered along the way, and security is still highly dependent on the presence of UNMIL.

Recently, the Liberian government has made progress in ensuring that women participate in policy-making at all levels, particularly in the development of

the PRS and county development agendas. Statistics of women's participation from the Ministry of Gender shows that over 10% of active police officers are women, and they occupy 23 of the top positions in the Liberian National Police – including that of the Inspector General. In total, 14 of the 94 members of parliament are women, as well as five of the 15 county superintendents, and two of the five members of the Supreme Court. There are also five female senators. In addition, women head the ministries of Trade, Commerce and Industry, Foreign Affairs and Gender, as well as the president herself being a woman.¹⁷ However, there is still the need for more female participation in the security sector and other private and public sectors.

Even though the government of Liberia, along with other partners, is making some progress in the reintegration of women and girls into mainstream society, many females remain traumatised and find it difficult to reintegrate into their various communities. This increases their dependency on their male counterparts which, in turn, increases sexual exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence.

Due to the psychosocial and economic setbacks encountered by most females during the conflict in Liberia, and since reintegration is a voluntary process, the programmes implemented by the various actors need to be tailored to the specific needs of this vulnerable group. When reintegration programmes are voluntarily accepted and accessed by female beneficiaries, this group will become economically empowered. This will also help to reduce the incidence of gender-based violence and self-dependency on male partners and spouses. Reintegration is a long-term process, and its goals of gender mainstreaming can only be realised over time with robust implementation and the elimination of gender biases. Other underlying factors such as decentralisation, the rehabilitation of private and public institutions, the restoration of basic social services and creating a peaceful and guaranteed atmosphere for investments, should also be prioritised by the government to achieve the long-term goal of reintegration for all. ▲

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The African Standby Force and Regional Standby Brigades

BY ZINURINE ABIODU ALGHALI AND MAMADOU MBAYE



Introduction

The creation of the African Union (AU) in 2002 was an important achievement towards attaining collective security, as African member states united in their quest to identify and work collectively towards mitigating conflicts on the continent. The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) was established by the July 2002 Durban Protocol, which defines the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and its components, namely:

- the Common African Defence and Security Policy;
- the Military Staff Committee;
- the African Standby Force;
- the Continental Early Warning System;
- the Panel of the Wise; and
- the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

These structures serve as a linked support matrix that aims to assist the AU to secure stability on the continent, anticipate and prevent conflicts, promote and implement peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction activities, and coordinate and

harmonise continental efforts in the prevention of conflicts.¹

The African Standby Force (ASF), which represents Africa's future peacekeeping capacity, is derived from the AU PSC's legal mandate as stipulated in Article 4(d) of the Constitutive Act – which calls for the establishment of 'a common defence and security policy for the African Continent'. Subsequently, the ASF was endorsed by African heads of state at the Maputo Summit in July 2003. Given that mobilising troops for peace operations takes time, the ASF was envisioned to serve as a continental rapid-response capacity for peacekeeping operations. It will be composed of multidisciplinary civilian, police and military components on standby in their countries of origin, and ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice. With standby brigades in each of the five regions, the AU PSC will have the ability to establish peacekeeping operations in crisis zones, to maintain peace and security on the continent.

The Establishment of the ASF

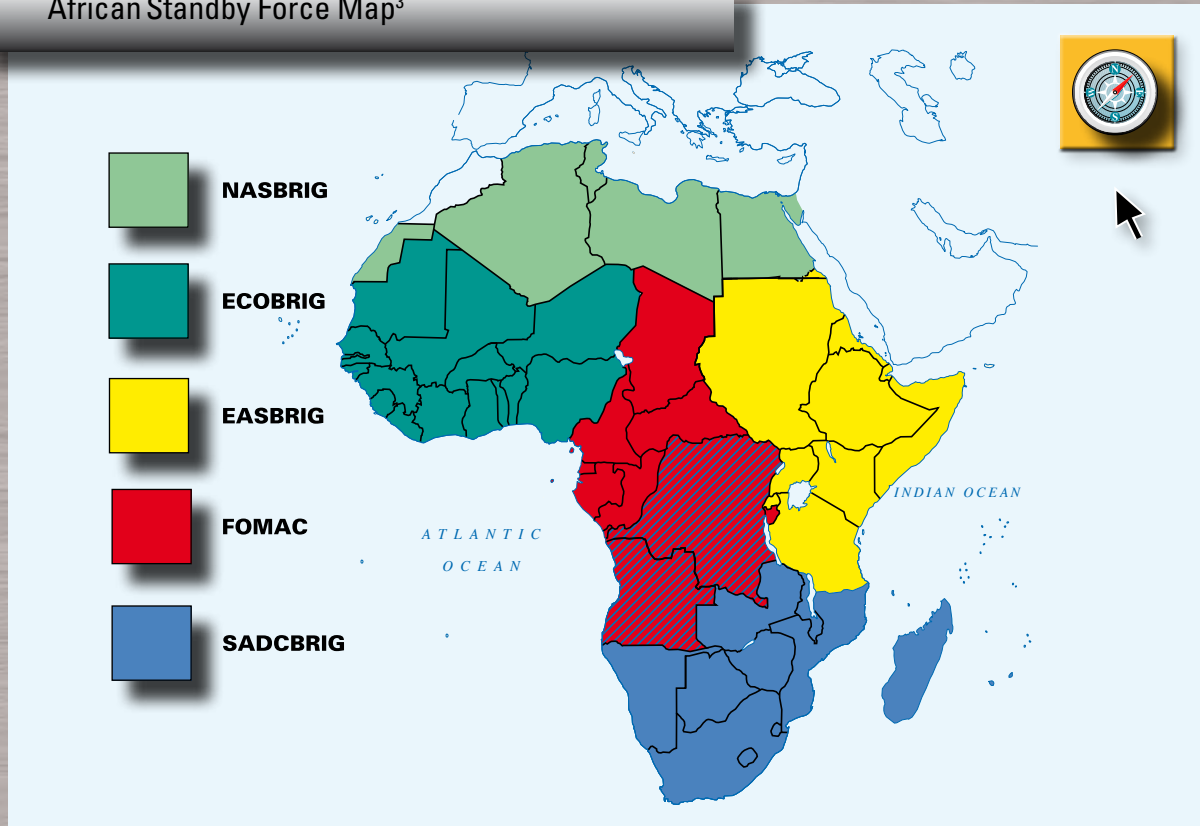
The ASF structure is divided into the five regions of Africa (North, East, Central, West and Southern). The five Regional Economic Communities (RECs) – the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) – serve as the building blocks of the ASF. Each area has a Regional Standby Brigade (RSB) that makes up the ASF. As not all countries in a particular region are part of the same REC, and since some member states belong to more than one economic grouping, the AU had to form Regional Mechanisms (RM) for the ASF. For example, in the north, it was difficult to use the

AMU because Egypt is not a member and Morocco not a part of the AU, so the northern region had to form the Northern Africa Regional Capacity (NARC). The Eastern Africa Standby Brigade Command Mechanism (EASBRICOM) was also formed as the RM for East Africa, since Rwanda is not part of IGAD. A balance needed to be created between the regional location of countries and the REC(s) with which they are affiliated. Since the RECs in West, Central and Southern Africa have most of the countries in their region in one economic grouping (that is ECOWAS, ECCAS and SADC), they only had to upgrade their structures to the requirements for a RM to support the RSB for the ASF. The AU has succeeded in establishing the five RMs/RSBs, indicated in the following table.

Regional Standby Brigades in Africa²

North Africa Regional Standby Brigade (NASBRIG)	East Africa Standby Brigade (EASBRIG)	Force Multinationale de l'Afrique Centrale (FOMAC)	Southern Africa Standby Brigade (SADCBRIG)	ECOWAS Standby Brigade (ECOBIG)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Algeria Egypt Libya Mauritania Tunisia Western Sahara 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Somalia Djibouti Eritrea Ethiopia Sudan Kenya Uganda Rwanda 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> São Tomé and Príncipe Cameroon Gabon Chad Equatorial Guinea Congo (Brazzaville) Angola Burundi Central African Republic Democratic Republic of the Congo 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Tanzania Malawi Zambia Zimbabwe Namibia Swaziland Lesotho Botswana South Africa Madagascar Mauritius Angola Mozambique 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ghana Nigeria Benin Togo Côte d'Ivoire Guinea-Bissau Liberia Sierra Leone Mali Senegal Niger Burkina Faso Gambia Cape Verde Guinea

African Standby Force Map³



Composition of the ASF

The evolution from traditional peacekeeping (where a military force is deployed to interpose between two belligerent forces) to multidimensional peace support operations (PSOs) – with multidisciplinary mandates – necessitates a multidimensional structure (civilian, police and military) to undertake the number of complex tasks at hand. The military is tasked with ensuring stability and security, whilst the police are responsible for assisting in the reinstatement of a reliable law enforcement system. Civilians are tasked with the mission's administration and the political, economic and development aspects of reviving civil society.

For the military and police components of the

ASF, states will have special battalions and units within their forces on standby. With civilians not having the same organised state structure as the military or police, a database of highly-experienced civilian professionals in the different disciplines required for PSOs will be created and maintained. These civilians will receive the requisite training to enhance their existing professional skills and expertise, and to enable them to apply these skills in the peacekeeping and peacebuilding contexts. They will also be provided with the necessary information and skills to operate in – or alongside – multidimensional and integrated PSOs, in a manner that is coherent and mutually supportive.

The Intended ASF Structure

At the AU Commission level, there will be:

- an ASF Headquarters (HQ) with a continental Planning Element (PLANELM), comprising three components (military, police and civilians);
- one continental Military Logistics Depot (MLD);
- a standby roster of 300 to 500 military observers, centrally managed by the AU;
- a standby roster of 240 individual police officers, for up to two complex missions; and
- a roster of mission administration civilian personnel and experts for humanitarian; governance; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and other specialised disciplines – to be established and centrally managed by the AU.

For some capabilities, the AU will also form partnerships with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Bank and other specialised agencies.

For each REC/RM, there will be:

- one permanent PLANELM, with at least one personnel member from each of the three components;
- one Standby Brigade with units (one contingent of military, and at least two companies of police/gendarmerie) on standby in member states, to support two complex missions simultaneously;
- a roster of about 290 civilians for mission support and specialised roles;
- one MLD;
- centres of excellence and training facilities; and
- a permanent Brigade HQ.⁴



Current Status of the ASF

The ASF has been, and will continue to be, developed in a number of phases.

First Phase (2005-2008)

The baseline policy and legal documents on the establishment, purpose and operation of the ASF were successfully provided. Thus, a framework of all processes and procedures that need to be effected for the successful establishment of the ASF – both at the AU and regional levels – has been developed and will be further consolidated. The AU and RECs have also signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with member states and various partners, stakeholders and role players for the establishment of the ASF.

Second Phase (2008-2010)

The ASF policy and legal documents will be consolidated, and concepts of operation will be developed. There will also be the identification of

capacities and the development of capabilities for deployment.⁵

Presently, the AU Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD) is working on the development of the civilian and police dimensions of the ASF, with the overall aim of building the capacity of the AU to undertake multidimensional and multifunctional PSOs. In March 2008, the civilian dimension policy framework was adopted at the AU Chiefs of Defence Staff and Heads of Security meeting. The AU PSOD, with support from the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), also hosted a Staffing, Training and Rostering (STR) workshop from 10 to 12 July 2008, to consider issues relating to the staffing, training and rostering of the civilians that will be serving in AU PSOs. A police workshop is scheduled to take place in Algeria in October 2008, and will also serve to harmonise the AU and the RECs/RMs' approach in guaranteeing a multidimensional ASF for African PSOs.

Readiness of the RMs/RSBs to Achieve the 2010 Goals⁶

PROCESSES	EASBRIG	FOMAC	ECOBRIg	SADCBRIg	NASBRIG
Framework documents	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Memorandum of Understanding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
PLANELM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Brigade HQ	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Pledged units	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Civilian components	Ongoing	✗	Ongoing	Ongoing	✗
Centres of excellence	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Standby roster	✗	✗	✗	Ongoing	✗

With ECOWAS, SADC and ECCAS having most of the countries in their respective regions in one REC, it was easy for them to conform to the requirements of a REC/RM. ECOWAS, for instance, had a security mechanism in place even before the establishment of the ASF. This capacity formed the basis for its establishment of ECOBRIG and the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF). For NASBRIG and FOMAC, there was no prior collaboration among the states in the region at


this level, so they had to create all these structures to meet the requirements of a REC/RM. This requires time, and is the reason why some of these brigades still have more to accomplish in order to meet the requirements for a REC/RM by 2010. These brigades are, however, determined to meet the requirements. In August 2008, the Chiefs of Defence Staff of NASBRIG adopted a Regional Roadmap for the launching of the North Brigade before the end of the year.

Conclusion

Contemporary PSOs are mandated to assist countries with the implementation of a ceasefire and/or comprehensive peace agreement (CPA), aimed at managing the transition from a state of conflict to a future state of sustainable peace. The ASF is expected to be Africa's peacekeeping capacity, and will undertake peace operations with complex mandates that cover the political, security, humanitarian, development and human rights dimensions. Once fully established, the ASF will be equipped to carry out:

- observer and monitoring missions;
- humanitarian assistance;
- classic PSO missions;
- intervention in a member state in response to grave circumstances;
- preventive deployment;

- peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, DDR; and
- any other functions as mandated by the PSC or the Assembly.⁷

The ASF's success will be a fulfilment of the AU's mandate to maintain peace and security, and prevent future conflicts on the continent. It will also serve as part of an African solution to some of Africa's most serious challenges and crises. 

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Lt Col (Rtd) Mamadou Mbaye is the African Standby Force Specialist at the AU Peace Support Operations Division.

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PEACEKEEPING CHALLENGES IN AFRICA: THE DARFUR CONFLICT

WRITTEN BY **ADOYI ONOJA**



REUTERS / THE BIGGER PICTURE

Introduction

Of the international duties that Africa is noted for in the post-Cold War world, participation in peacekeeping is included. Africa is one of the major troop contributors in the numerous efforts to restore peace and order to various conflict areas, particularly those on the African continent. The bulk of African conflicts were either inherited, in the context of the post-colonial crisis¹ that bedevilled the continent, or came during the process of adjustment, consequent to the recession of Cold War politics. The conflict-inducing potential of the simultaneous pursuit of economic reforms, in the form of structural adjustment programmes and democratisation, has also been noted.² In addition, elections have proven to be a contentious issue, as the continent's entrenched

leadership confront the reality of the periodic renewal of their mandate with the electorate.

The proliferation of peacekeeping missions is indicative of the international mandate of the United Nations (UN), in its attempt to provide the enabling environment necessary for the reconstruction of societies. However, while there is a willingness to provide troops by Africa and other Third World states in what appears to be the emerging international division of labour in peacekeeping, the provision of finance and

Above: The peacekeeping force in Darfur was reconstituted in January 2008 into an African Union-United Nations hybrid operation (UNAMID).

THE MANY CONFLICTS IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: THEY ARE CONNECTED AND NOT EXCLUSIVE

logistics to accomplish the task is the role assumed by the developed world, and this is suffering from the donor fatigue apparent in post-Cold War relations. Indeed, while there is a conscious attempt by each continental organisation to learn to manage its own affairs without interference from another power external to the continent, Africa is lagging behind in this regard, in spite of the reformed African Union (AU).

This article examines the Darfur conundrum as a demonstration of the incapacity of the continent to manage its affairs. Darfur is the confluence of all that is wrong in Africa. Conflicts persist because the political will, troops and logistics necessary for their resolution are lacking.

Africa Within the Contemporary World Conflict Profile

What position does Africa occupy on the world's conflict map? How is the continent ranked in terms of its capacity to contain conflicts? Africa is ranked first and last, consecutively. Unfortunately, the continent is known to lead on all indexes used to describe crises. Although it is the most resource-endowed, Africa is also the most poverty-stricken continent.

Conflicts in Sudan, Somalia, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda often make headlines. Reports on conflicts in Somalia and Sudan have remained in the media for years, and their resolution is presenting the AU – and, to a lesser extent, the international community – with a profound problem. In the case of Somalia, most African states are unwilling to send troops to support the peacekeeping efforts underway, because of the country's volatility. In Sudan, the transformation of the AU force to the AU/UN hybrid force (UNAMID), and the expectation to have 26 000 troops on the ground, have not materialised.³ Presently, troops on the ground number less than 10 000, and are overextended.

The reality of the crises in most African countries following the end of the Cold War can be appreciated in the context of failed and failing states⁴, and the interconnectedness of conflicts. The most endemic conflict areas on the continent are part of the states classified in the first category – such as Somalia, the DRC, Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia. The end of the Cold War marked the end of stability for most of these countries. Somalia disintegrated in 1991 when General Siad Barre fled into exile, leaving a country in ruin. The inability of the government to continue holding the fragile state together was also related to the abrupt end

of all aid, after a history of receiving significant aid. The country's strategic position on the continent made it an attractive point for Cold War rivals. Clan and kinship ties became the basis of identity in Somalia, and hundreds of identity groups re-emerged. These clans formed factions and continuously proliferated, making it impossible to comprehend the nature of alliances. Consequently, the character of politics became fluid and unpredictable. The 1993 attempt by the United States (US) to provide relief ended in a fiasco, and this set the precedent for all future international interventions.⁵ Somalia is no longer on the international community's immediate agenda, and there is a noted lack of interest in the country.

The many conflicts in African countries have one thing in common: they are connected and not exclusive. Neighbouring states are not disinterested observers, as noted in Rwanda's support for Laurent Nkunda in eastern Congo; Ethiopia and Kenya's interest in Somalia; Chad's backing of the forces in Darfur; the attempt by the Khartoum government in Sudan to topple the regime in N'djamena, Chad; Uganda and Sudan's involvement over insurgents within their countries; and the interplay of forces in both Liberia and Sierra Leone. These examples of the spill-over and connectedness of conflicts in Africa indicate the difficulties associated with resolving them.

There are also those conflicts associated with democratisation and economic reforms. Almost all the countries in Africa that transitioned from either a single party or military dictatorship to a multiparty political system – largely under pressure from donor communities – have experienced conflict associated with elections. The latest occurrences of this have been in Kenya and Zimbabwe. The purported stability associated with Kenya was shattered following the polls conducted in December 2007. A government of national unity was put in place to pacify the parties involved, while ordinary Kenyans are still picking up the pieces of their shattered lives. The same scenario occurred in Côte d'Ivoire, with similarly devastating results. Attempts at resolving the crisis in Zimbabwe is underway, with the international community divided, following a failed bid to censor Zimbabwe's leadership at the UN Security Council. Election-related conflict is a residual effect of the entrenched leadership problem associated with governance in Africa. Elections – especially the quest for votes and the appeal to primordial divisive sentiments by politicians – have the potential to ignite conflict in Africa, as demonstrated in Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. It is a phenomenon that continues to threaten the fragile stability of most African states.



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Peacekeepers verify vehicles at a checkpoint in Mogadishu, Somalia (June 2008).

Challenges in Darfur

Since the creation of the UN in 1945, peacekeeping has become a dominant feature of conflict resolution. UN peacekeeping history shows a total of 59 missions⁶ from the first mission in 1948 to 2004. Currently, in Africa alone, there are missions in Darfur, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Somalia, Chad and the DRC. There have also been attempts to regionalise peacekeeping efforts, as exemplified by the Economic Community of West Africa Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) initiative.

The emergence of regional peacekeeping was predicated on the US application of the doctrine of burden-sharing and collaboration. Initially, this took place through the African Crisis Response Force (ACRF) – an initiative that followed the US experience in Somalia, and the lack of international action during the genocide in Rwanda and events in Burundi. The ACRF sought to build an African force that would intervene in African conflicts, thus reducing the demand for outside interventions by the members of the UN Security Council.⁷ This approach has also been adopted by a number of other donor countries – notably France and Britain – in recent years. Associated with this is the colonial alignment of effort to resolve conflicts in their former colonies. Thus, Britain can be found in Sierra Leone, France in Chad, there is US support for ECOMOG

in Liberia, and the Belgians are visible in the DRC. Over time, the obvious intent of the ACRF gave way to a more nuanced approach, now termed the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), within which the US trains selected African military elements for participation in peacekeeping operations.

In spite of these efforts, peacekeeping in Africa has been challenged, due to the continent's lack of economic and political resources to drive the process to its logical conclusion. The case of Darfur, and the politics that have dogged the peacekeeping operation since inception, is indicative of the crisis within. Darfur is entirely reliant on the goodwill of the international community for survival. Since the reconstitution of the peacekeeping force into an AU/UN hybrid force in January 2008 – supposedly for maximum efficiency – it has been unable to raise the required manpower necessary for deployment in the troubled region. There was a tacit understanding by those involved that Africa and most Third World states would meet the manpower requirements, while the West would provide the necessary logistical support. On both counts, neither manpower nor logistics have been fully provided for the force.

The available manpower is just over 9 000 of the expected 26 000 soldiers and police officers, who will not fully deploy until the end of the year.



Election related violence, as experienced in Kenya in early 2008, is a residual effect of the leadership and governance challenges in Africa.

The troops already in place – including the old AU force and two new battalions – lack essential equipment, such as sufficient armoured personnel carriers and helicopters, to carry out even the most rudimentary of peacekeeping tasks. So poorly provisioned were they that some personnel even had to buy their own paint to turn their green AU helmets into the UN blue.⁸ A combination of bureaucratic delays, stonewalling by Sudan's government and reluctance from troop- and material-contributing countries to redeem their pledges and send peacekeeping forces into the area rendered the force vulnerable to attacks.⁹

The recent indictment and call to issue a warrant for the arrest of General Omar el-Bashir has added another drawback to the resolution of the Darfur crisis. The development has polarised the international community – in particular, the League of Arab States and the AU. These seeming differences in position play into the intransigence of the regime in Khartoum over the resolution of the Darfur crisis.

The Darfur initiative is representative of the continent in the post-Cold War and post-11 September 2001 world. In the first place, the AU is merely respon-

ding to initiatives emanating from outside its borders and, as such, has little or no say in the way they are managed. Peacekeeping initiatives to date have been at the mandate of the UN or erstwhile colonial powers, as the AU's limitations are manifested in restricted human and material resources and, above all, in the debilitating lack of political will. The manner in which the defunct Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was transformed into the AU did not overcome the weaknesses inherent in the old organisation, and has not provided the kind of leadership envisaged. Somalia, Chad and Sudan are constant reminders of the organisation's challenges in managing its own affairs.

The continent has not been able to fulfil its role as troop provider for peacekeeping endeavours in Africa. There is a seeming willingness to provide troops outside the continent, while pledges made for those on the continent remained unfulfilled. Unlike in Iraq and Afghanistan, the commitment of the developed world does not include sending personnel. Even regional peacekeeping efforts, such as ECOMOG, have had to rely on international support to fulfil their responsibilities. ECOMOG was not only *ad hoc*, but also



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Peacekeepers from the Economic Community of West Africa Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) initiative, which represents attempts to regionalise peacekeeping efforts in Africa.

relied on Nigeria for funds and troops. This caused much suspicion among neighbouring countries about Nigeria's motives and intentions within the subregion.

Conclusion

The Darfur conflict points to the reality of international politics, where each continent looks after its own. It is similar to the reality of deployment of investment, where geography and location remain the key determinants of foreign direct investment. Thus, business enterprises in North America are more likely to rate Mexico and Latin America as markets of critical importance in their investment planning; Europeans expect the United Kingdom, France and the emerging economies of eastern Europe to feature more prominently in their calculations; and Asian firms expect China, India and the rest of Asia to be of greater importance for their investment.¹⁰ A similar rationale applies when it comes to conflict resolution. Africa is conspicuously absent in this calculation, and this explains the problem confronting all peacekeeping efforts on the continent. Somalia is an extremely dangerous proposition for the West and, above all, unlike Iraq and Afghanistan, there

is no strategic importance to warrant direct intervention. The responsibility, therefore, remains a continental one.

The submission by the Darfur Consortium – that the Darfur peacekeeping force is too small in number, inadequately funded, lacks basic equipment and that most Darfurians have lost faith in the peacekeepers¹¹ – summed up the travails of peacekeeping and conflict resolution on the continent. Africa will continue to rely on the occasional goodwill of the developed world and a UN system that is, like Africa, dependent on the West. Neither South Africa nor Nigeria – the supposed resource-endowed states on the continent – are ready to assume a more significant role. Both states have their own internal problems: South Africa is smarting from the recent xenophobic attacks on Africans, which revealed the gap in unfulfilled promises to its citizens since the first democratic election in 1994. Nigeria is not only confronted with the common problem of a lack of economic opportunities but also poor governance, corruption and collapsed infrastructures. South Africa's role (or lack of it) in Zimbabwe did not please the West¹², whose agenda for regime change differs from what the continental and regional organisations



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are advocating. These differences in perspectives, opinions and strategies for intervening will continue to be to Africa's disadvantage as long as it continues to rely overwhelmingly on outside intervention for the management of its affairs. ▲

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- 11 'Darfur Force Failing Civilians', Available at: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7528050.stm>> Accessed on 11 August 2008.
- 12 It was also the case with Darfur and Zimbabwe, where extra-continental rivalry has impeded progress towards resolution. China and Russia, on the one hand, and the US and the rest of the Western world, on the other, have disagreed fundamentally over these conflict areas. Perhaps it provides an explanation for why the West developed cold feet in provisioning the peacekeeping force in Darfur. At the same time, it fails to explain why troop contributors from the continent have not fulfilled their pledges.

ARMS TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA: THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

WRITTEN BY **DORCAS ONIGBINDE**



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Between 1989 and 1996, small arms and light weapons (SALWs) were the most commonly used weapons - and in some cases *the only weapons used* - in conflicts fought worldwide.¹ Small arms, which are built for use by one individual, include revolvers and pistols, rifles and carbines, submachine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns. Light weapons are used by several people and range from heavy machine guns to portable anti-aircraft guns.

With heightened trafficking in small arms in West Africa and with the porous borders between different

countries, it has become increasingly difficult to address the spread of these weapons. Small arms have been recycled in the West African countries of Nigeria, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea and Burkina Faso. Rebel groups and armies supply each other with arms in past

Above: With porous borders and heightened trafficking in small arms, it has become increasingly difficult to address the spread of such weapons in Africa.



As many as one-third of African states factory-produce small arms or small arms ammunitions, or have done so in the recent past.

and present conflict situations in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso and Liberia. In the end, the proliferation of these weapons undermines security sector reform (SSR).

The problem of small arms and light weapons

The proximity of West African countries to international waters and porous borders has created easy access to the supply and demand of SALWs. Security forces do not have adequate equipment to carry out air, land and sea surveillance to track weapons. Further, according to estimates, approximately 80 to 90 percent of the small arms traded on the black market start from state-sanctioned trade.² As many as one-third of African states factory-produce small arms or small arms ammunitions, or have done so in the recent past.³ In some cases,

state governments have supported the proliferation of these arms by providing funds and supplying arms to non-state actors such as vigilante groups and armed gangs. Private security firms have also been known to provide experience in weapon handling to unaccountable local militias in conflict areas in some parts of Africa.⁴

Legal underpinnings

As of 2005, just under half of the 15 member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had signed the United Nations (UN) Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. The ECOWAS Convention on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, remains the principal small arms control instrument in West Africa. The Convention was launched in 1998 as a Moratorium⁵ to clean up SALWs across the region. This effort by West African nations to deal with the challenges of arms trafficking in the region provided a Code of Conduct which outlined among other things the establishment of National Commissions (NatComs); the development of a regional arms register; harmonisation of legislation; training of security personnel; and the declaration of weapons and ammunition used for peacekeeping operations.

It is still difficult to enforce accountability and compliance to these international and regional legal frameworks. For example, member states have to apply to ECOWAS to obtain exemptions to import arms for national security but not every member has adhered to this directive. Between 2002 and 2004, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Liberia took numerous deliveries of military equipment but they did not request an exemption.⁶ In addition, the plan of action devolved from the ECOWAS Convention has not been fully implemented. For example, many of the National Commissions created by member states lack funds and political support and continue to remain weak. The development of a credible regional arms register and database has not been achieved and the coordination of legislation continues to be slow.⁷ Finally, the challenge of compliance not only lies with state actors but with major arms producers and how to ensure that they follow international rules and regulations.

The role of civil society

What role can civil society play in curbing arms trafficking and the wider agenda of security sector reform in Africa? Civil society organisations (CSOs) include community-based organisations, faith groups,



Civil society initiatives in South Africa and Mozambique recovered significant weapons and ammunition caches through 'buy-back' programmes.

private businesses, human rights groups, trade unions, interest groups, policy think-tanks and universities. Their involvement in various partnerships and coalitions is essential to curbing the spread of SALWs and shaping SSR.

In many cases in Africa, where arms production, sale and transfer are a means to sustain economic livelihoods, civil society in partnership with local governments and communities can design social and economic programmes to ensure that arms producers and suppliers can have other viable economic options. Civil society initiatives in South Africa and Mozambique recovered more than 7 000 weapons and almost 500 000 rounds of ammunition through 'Buy-Back' programmes.⁸ Civil society can also focus on locally-owned programmes and initiatives that aim to curb small arms, building local capacity and ensuring that local voices and groups with legitimate interests take ownership of their communities to incite positive change. Additional examples of CSO contributions to SSR and curbing SALW production exist. On

13 May 2003 the Accra-based Africa Security Dialogue and Research (ASDR) – a research and training CSO – brought together local producers of arms, senior police officers, the armed forces, members of parliament, the ministries of the interior and justice, civil society groups, and members of the diplomatic corps. This meeting organised by the ASDR built mutual trust and confidence among the different actors and local producers admitted to having the capacity to employ their skills to manufacture agricultural tools and proposed that the government guarantee them ready markets for their tools.⁹

Finally, partnerships between neighbouring states, facilitated by civil society, can also be used as a medium to address issues of arms smuggling within a country. Through a joint initiative between Mozambique and South Africa, the recovery exercises of weapons and ammunition from caches of material in the wake of the completed disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) efforts in Mozambique netted over



Private security firms have been known to provide weapons handling training to local militias in conflict areas.

45 000 handguns, sub-machine guns, rifles, machine guns, and mortars.¹⁰

Conclusion

Despite these examples of civil society engagement in curbing SALWs, not enough attention has been paid to its role in security sector reform programmes. For the most part, SSR programmes tend to focus on the state while excluding civil society. Yet, there is a wealth of knowledge and human resources that civil society brings to curbing SALWs and to the challenges of SSR. With the right support civil society can enhance future SSR programmes in West Africa. 🐘

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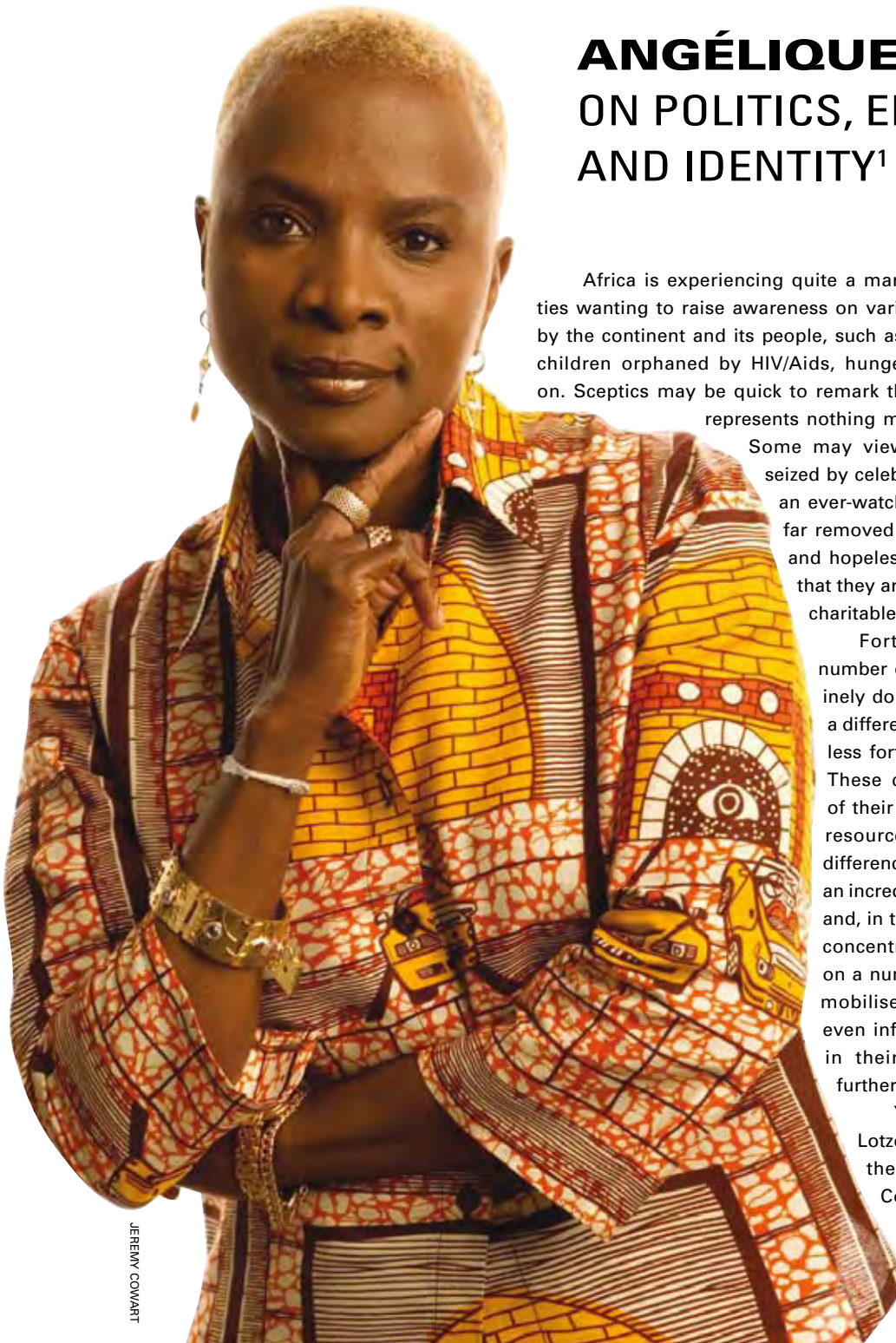
ANGÉLIQUE KIDJO ON POLITICS, EDUCATION AND IDENTITY¹

Africa is experiencing quite a marked interest by celebrities wanting to raise awareness on various issues experienced by the continent and its people, such as the plight of refugees, children orphaned by HIV/Aids, hunger and poverty, and so on. Sceptics may be quick to remark that this type of interest represents nothing more than a passing fad.

Some may view it as an opportunity seized by celebrities to demonstrate to an ever-watching public that is often far removed from the bitter realities and hopelessness that beset Africa, that they are socially conscious and charitable celebrities.

Fortunately, there are a number of celebrities who genuinely do care, and want to make a difference in the lives of others less fortunate than themselves. These celebrities invest much of their own personal time and resources trying to make that difference. Celebrities do attract an incredible amount of attention and, in this way, are able to help concentrate international focus on a number of key issues, help mobilise support and perhaps even influence national policies in their home countries and further afield.

Yvonne Kasumba, Walter Lotze and Karishma Rajoo of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) were privileged to interview and discuss music, politics, education and iden-



JEREMY COWART

tity with the Grammy Award-winning musician from Benin, Angélique Kidjo. She was once described by Bono, of the Irish rock band U2, as the “galvanizing voice of Sub-Saharan Africa”.² Kidjo is not only a celebrated international musician, but has been a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) since July 2002. Her music, which draws upon a variety of influences and languages, not only entertains, but also carries sociopolitical undertones.

Conflict Trends: *As a starting point, we would like to know what it is that motivates you to go out there every*

day and inspire people through your work, in the way that you have come to be known to do.

Angélique Kidjo: Just a love of life, it’s a love of people because, without each other, there is no humanity and there is no planet. I am pro-humanity and I am pro-justice – and these are the things I deeply believe in that we cannot give up, despite the pressure, despite globalisation, despite conflict, despite everything. If we give up on life, then there is no need to get up from our beds, and that is what drives me to write the music I write. What drives me to wake up and hit the stage is that I know as soon as I hit the stage I’ll be speaking to

GETTY IMAGES



UNICEF’s goodwill ambassador and Grammy Award winner, Angélique Kidjo, visits children living with HIV-AIDS in Nairobi’s Getrudes Hospital.



Angélique Kidjo meets with motorbike taxi drivers wearing jackets promoting the campaign for the schooling of girls to avoid child labour, in Cotonou (September 2007).

people that share some of my views, or might not share my views, but that are human beings, and we share humanity together.

Conflict Trends: *Don't you sometimes get a bit despondent when you consider the state of affairs in Africa today, whether it's endemic conflict or misuse of power by a few that results in suffering for the majority – basically violating the very essence of what you say motivates you – this love for life?*

Angélique Kidjo: No, I cannot give up on that, because it is a work in progress and we all make mistakes and we can improve upon these. We have civil society, to hold accountable our leaders. There has been a lack of accountability for so long, and if we do not do anything we cannot pass judgement and ask them to do what we are not doing. As civil society, what are we doing to hold them accountable? That is what democracy is about, isn't it? We vote for a government, we vote for

a government based on what they tell us that they are going to do and on the promises that they make, hoping that they keep their word. And if they don't keep their word, we cannot let them off the hook, and that's what we have been doing. So this demands a lot of work from civil society. We cannot live in an individualistic way and think only about our individual well-being, as opposed to our collective well-being, in the hope that our leaders will think of our collective well-being for us.

Conflict Trends: *Listening to your responses, is it right to assume that your music is not purely a form of entertainment, but that through your music you also hope to stimulate your listeners to action?*

Angélique Kidjo: It is correct to say, because that is what I've been taught by the traditional musicians in my country. Traditional musicians taught me about the



Angélique Kidjo performs with members of the African Children's Choir at the fundraising launch party for Batonga in New York City (November 2007).

history of my country and my people. For a long time, there was no television in African countries, and radio was not accessible to everyone, so who could one turn to – to hear about what was going on in the world? Who could we turn to – to find a little bit of comfort, or a little bit of pride – if not from traditional musicians? And that is what I have learned from them: if you are a musician, if you are an artist, whatever subject you are talking about, you are engaging other people to change their lives or to empower themselves. It's not just about singing love songs, but about your experience that you share with people. For me that's what being a musician is about.

Conflict Trends: *In recent years, we have come to see an increasing celebrity focus on Africa, which has been both positive and negative. What do you think the genuine role of celebrities should be in promoting*

peace, security, human rights and stability on the continent?

Angélique Kidjo: I think that we have a huge role to play. When you are a celebrity, especially when you are a celebrity from Africa, you know what is at stake on the continent. How come, in the 21st century, we still have such a high level of child mortality, deaths from malaria and HIV/Aids? Through my work, I discovered a different Africa that I did not know existed before – I think it all comes to education, and this is why I personally invest in and promote education – because without it, there is nothing that we can achieve. What is closest to my heart, particularly, is girl-child education. Women in Africa are the ones that find themselves most affected, due to the fact that they are not educated. When there is a conflict in a particular place, women inevitably become victims. So, for me,



Angélique Kidjo (left) meets a newly born baby at Lira Regional Hospital in Uganda on a visit to create awareness of people affected by the conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan Government, as well as malnutrition in young children and issues of HIV/Aids.

I am a celebrity of Africa. I do not want us to be victims, to be seen as victims all the time, as beggars all the time. We have skills, we have capacity. The Africa that I celebrate, that I talk about, that I cannot leave, everywhere that I go, is an Africa of success. In order for us to give that image to the world and to be a successful Africa, it takes education, for us to stand in this world next to anybody to say we negotiate our own future... yet, we are still on a continent where our leaders decide whether you have to live or die, and there is still much corruption that occurs with some at the higher leadership levels.

Conflict Trends: *Angélique, you sound quite passionate and well informed about a number of developmental aspects that afflict the continent. Do you think other African celebrities are doing enough to raise awareness about the plight of the continent and its people - and in this way contributing towards change on the continent?*

Angélique Kidjo: I cannot speak for everybody. All I know is that there are certain people out there doing things that we don't know about. One of the things that I am witnessing today in Africa is that you have

WE CANNOT LIVE IN AN INDIVIDUALISTIC WAY AND THINK ONLY ABOUT OUR INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING, AS OPPOSED TO OUR COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING, IN THE HOPE THAT OUR LEADERS WILL THINK OF OUR COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING FOR US

TRADITIONAL MUSICIANS TAUGHT ME ABOUT THE HISTORY OF MY COUNTRY AND MY PEOPLE. FOR A LONG TIME, THERE WAS NO TELEVISION IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES, AND RADIO WAS NOT ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE, SO WHO COULD ONE TURN TO – TO HEAR ABOUT WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THE WORLD?

people who set up non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that do nothing other than get money, sit on it and misuse it. This undermines the good work done by many. I travel around the world and I speak passionately about my continent, and I can guarantee you that there are people out there that really want to help, but they want to support a genuine cause. Now, if we want to move forward, we have the mind, we have skills. But where is the will to make this all come together? This is where we give all power to our leaders to do whatever they want, because they know that in order for things to change, we have to change our mentality and we have to be in the forefront of the fight. So, where do we stop? I mean, how long are we going to sit around and always point the finger at other people for our problems? I have come to painfully realise that we Africans are sometimes our own enemy.

Conflict Trends: *The issues surrounding the protection of civilians are gaining increasing attention by the international community, as you are probably well aware – particularly by the United Nations. How do you see your work pertaining to children and education contributing to this theme of the protection of civilians?*

Angélique Kidjo: You know, I always said actions speak louder than words. Last year, I started a foundation called Batonga. Why Batonga? If we look at the first and only African woman to win a Nobel prize, Wangari Mathai, you have to ask yourself, how did she come this far? When she was a young girl, she received a scholarship from the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, and do you see how far she has come? So for me what it says is that, if you give a girl of Africa a good education, then we can start to turn things around. I have been campaigning for five years with UNICEF, for primary school education as part of the millennium goals. I have also been to a couple of countries pledging and begging mothers, fathers, families, communities to please put their girls in school. Take me as an example. I was born, raised and educated in Africa before moving to Europe. That doesn't make me less of an African. It gives me more pride in being an African because I was born and raised in Benin, in a poor country, in a poor family. And all the values that I care for, that I carry and share all over the world, that I throw into my work – nobody else gave to

me but Africa. Governments tend to focus on primary education, but primary schooling is only the beginning. There is little being done for secondary education, and this is where Batonga comes in. I started this foundation in May 2007 in order to provide girls with scholarships for secondary school through to university. We support girls from poor families, orphans, girls whose families are afflicted with HIV/Aids, and so on. Through access to education, we provide them with an opportunity to change this world.

Conflict Trends: *And since it was established, how many girl-children are you supporting through Batonga?*

Angélique Kidjo: Last year, we had 430 girls in five countries: Benin, Mali, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. Next year, we are going to add Mozambique and, at the beginning of September 2008, I will travel to Sierra Leone. For the girls that we already support, we provide uniforms, school books and one meal a day. We are also currently discussing the possibility of providing micro-credit loans to poor mothers, as a form of encouragement to keep their girl-children in school.

Conflict Trends: *Do you feel that your work as a Goodwill Ambassador comes naturally to you, or is it a role and responsibility that you feel you grow with on a daily basis?*

Angélique Kidjo: It comes naturally to me because of my parents. I grew up in a house where people that I loved from my family have been coming, and my parents put them to school. I mean, you have to realise that it is a huge stress on my family, because my father was the only one working, and one father with 10 kids. But my parents believed in education. Both of them are educated, and always told us that in order to be free, to be able to empower ourselves and to empower other people, we had to be educated. And that was their main negotiation. At one point, I was focused on my singing, and I was making money, and did not see the need for me to go to school. My father said to me, "I told you from the beginning, if you do not go to school, you don't sing. I don't want any artist in my house that won't be able to speak correct French, correct English, and that won't



Angélique Kidjo speaks at The 4th Annual United Nations' International Youth Assembly at the United Nations in New York (August 2007).

be able to speak about her art." I can understand that now, and it was a good thing that both my parents did not compromise with anyone in the family whatsoever, when it came to education.

Conflict Trends: *Through your extensive travels throughout the continent, you have managed to interact with a cross-section of people. In your conversations with these diverse peoples what, in your opinion, are*

the common threads that unite us? I think we're so used to hearing about only those things that divide us.

Angélique Kidjo: Life. We love our parents and we love our children and we all want what's best for them and for our country, but oftentimes we don't know how to get there, because we have been divided for so long. It started with colonisation, and it continued afterwards. The thing that I realise is that people don't

IF YOU ARE AN ARTIST, WHATEVER SUBJECT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT, YOU ARE ENGAGING OTHER PEOPLE TO CHANGE THEIR LIVES OR TO EMPOWER THEMSELVES. IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT SINGING LOVE SONGS, BUT ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE THAT YOU SHARE WITH PEOPLE. FOR ME THAT'S WHAT BEING A MUSICIAN IS ABOUT

really know each other or each other's countries. Every time you say to somebody on the continent "I'm from Benin", people judge you on where Benin is. We are still a little bit sceptical about each other. And that is why we had that incident in South Africa [the xenophobic attacks in early 2008]. We are the same people, but we have been divided in our mindsets. If we do not change our ways, then we will lose – because the most important thing that we have together is our sense of community, our sense of love for our parents, respect for life. We Africans have to be prouder of who we are, of what we are, and of what we have been giving to the world musically, artistically, historically. But we aren't. There is no pride today in Africans, no sense of nationality. We continue to not embrace our own culture, our own art, our own people, and we still believe that what comes from outside is better than what we create.

Conflict Trends: *What do you feel is the greatest challenge we as Africans need to overcome to realise our full potential?*

Angélique Kidjo: The shame that we have of being African. We are ashamed – not all of us, but a lot of us are. But there is nothing to be ashamed of, nothing at all. If you take the history of the world, there is Africa in there. Yet why do we always want to portray Africa as something 'exotic'? I do not feel ashamed. My music is not exotic. When I was growing up in Benin, I listened to all kinds of music, and my parents never told me that it was politically incorrect to listen to *The Rolling Stones*, *Pink Floyd*, *Ipitombi*, or whatever was out there. And why is it that in Africa, we always feel that the colour of our skin and the language we speak is an issue? It's not an issue! We need to gather our pride and stand tall.

Conflict Trends: *Given everything that we have discussed, do you believe that we, in Africa, have a positive future ahead of us?*

Angélique Kidjo: We do. We do have a positive future ahead of us. But it will take significant work on our part as civil society to make it work. We are the ones that can change the attitudes of our leaders. Not the other way around. We are responsible for our future, we hold our future in our hands. We just have to be proud. I am proud of being African. I never compromise my identity or anything that I do. I can sing any kind of music that is out there, because all of it has its roots back in Africa. That's my pride and I stand for it. 🗣️

Endnotes

- 1 Interview conducted on 21 August 2008 by Yvonne Kasumba, Walter Lotze and Karishma Rajoo of ACCORD.
- 2 Wilson, M. 'Music – The New Diplomatic Tongue' in *The Huffington Post*, Available at: <www.huffingtonpost.com/marie-wilson/music-the-new-diplomatic_b_88697.html> Accessed on 27 February 2008.

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