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Towards Relative Peace in Africa from 1999 and Beyond: The Prospects

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Abstract

This paper investigates Africa's potential to bring relative peace in the wake of human insecurity from 1999 up to 2017. While empirical studies of causes and effects may have been done case by case, a study for the prospects of relative peace for the entire continent in this period has not been done. This study analyses patterns of conflicts, aggression and terrorism activities in Africa with a view to ascertaining remedies and prospects for the continent that can be embraced by regional economic communities. Results reveal that, while the number of deaths due to conflicts has been progressively dwindling, daily life is still dominated by human insecurity in different forms for most of the people. There has been a noticeable swing away from despotic forms of governance towards democratic governance and respect for basic human rights. This evolution has not been linear with political systems not quite stable. African governments still have problems of effectively administering their States or preventing terrorist groups from spreading their presence and challenging State authority and legitimacy thereof. But the problems are not insurmountable.

Key words: Africa, Conflict, Peace, Regional economic communities.

Introduction

More than 180 million people who died from conflicts and atrocities during the twentieth century in Africa represent a relatively modest figure when compared to those who died in Europe's First and Second World Wars. More so compared to those who died in the civil wars and atrocities during the revolutionary Russia and China. White [1] argues that the worst bloodletting in twentieth-century Africa occurred during the colonial period in King Leopold's Congo Free State. However, this is by no means underestimating the huge impact of violent conflicts in Africa. Rather, it is merely to highlight the need for a more balanced debate and commentary, and to place African conflicts in both historical and global perspectives. While the African conflicts stand inseparable from the conflicts of the twentieth century, the most violent century in world history, its post-colonial conflicts are mostly rooted in colonial conflicts. This means that, there is hardly any region of conflict in contemporary Africa that cannot trace its sordid violence to colonial history.

For that, Kastfelt [2] had this to say, "the region from the Southern Sudan through Northern Uganda to Rwanda, Burundi, and Congo – now the scene of brutal civil wars and genocide – has a long history of colonial violence in the form of slave trading, slave labour, plantation labour, plantation terror and a violent gun culture which all have to be taken into account when explaining the contemporary situation".

This paper seeks to advance the understanding of African conflicts by going beyond the conventional analysis of Africanist scholarship, often contaminated by A fropessimism, conveyed in some Western media that are infused with Afrophobia. In fact, there can be no singular explanation for Africa's conflicts. Suffice to say, the conflicts are rooted in the intricate constructions and conjunctures of the continent's social identities, political economies, and cultural ecologies as configured out of experiences and an ever-changing world system. The causes of the conflicts are multiple in their dynamics ranging from internal to external, local to transnational, economic to political, social to cultural, historical to contemporary, material to ideological, concrete to emotive and real to rhetorical. As such, the strategies for resolving and managing them can only be multidimensional.

The news is good in some respects. Although relatively high, the number of conflicts, appears to be on a downward curve from the 1990s and early 2000s [3,4]. Several African conflicts have been resolved and peace has been restored to societies previously victims of organized violence. This is a result of the creation of African regional organizations with relatively robust mandates in the peace and security field providing institutional backing. Thus, a strong continental and sub-regional organizations' network has developed to address conflict. Some notable regional leaders, including the late Nelson Mandela, former South African president and former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, have played considerable roles in intervention on the continent.

Civil society institutions dedicated to peace and security, public policy, and conflict resolution research have provided direction, policy development and lessons. However, the need for conflict management exceeds demand. World headlines by non-traditional conflicts that include groups like Boko Haram, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Lord's Resistance Army have been made for their violence and extreme hostility toward their societies and governments.

These conflicts involve non-state actors whose means of operating and motivations are vaguely understood by official institutions [5,6]. Ethnic, religious and tribal related conflicts appear to have penetrated deep into society and require conflict management at the national and political levels, yet other elements like migration and health concerns continue to play havoc [7]. Although the network of African conflict management institutions appears to be strong, the capacity may be limited while relations between them hold back cooperation. This is exacerbated by the outside help which apparently has not been quite reliable.

For example, Iyi [8] argues that, the UN Security Council having been polarized over the invasion of Libya in 2011, has not functioned well as a body with mandates for interventions in hot spots for some time. It is not until recently when the drawdown in Afghanistan and Iraq freed up some U.S. military resources for counter-terrorism training in Africa [9].

Most conflict management initiatives in Africa have been involved mainly in peace operations and mediation. These missions aim at stopping the wars and provide for the political processes to develop. For instance, this was the intention behind the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Sudan, as mediated by General Lazaro Sumbeiywo representing the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and with the support of the UK, Norway, the US, Italy and others. The CPA brokered a termination of hostilities between the North and the South. This was a creation of power-sharing government arrangements for a six-year period. However, that period did not strengthen weak governmental structures but served mainly as a waiting period before the country split apart for good. Again, this outcome did not end the fighting. Power struggles continue to divide South Sudan. Border skirmishes keep the enmity levels between Sudan and South Sudan high, with violence in Darfur continuing though much reduced.

According to Yabi [10] Africa and the Middle East are the two regions of the world with the highest conflict burden. However, from the mid-1990s, Africa has improved in all measurements of war and death due to factors such as greater regional cooperation, economic growth, decreased intra-state wars and increased democratic governance. Yabi [10] notes that the conflict types have also changed from; "wars of independence, long term civil wars and intra-state wars, conflicts are now due to weak governance structures which are exacerbated by religious and ethnic differences as well as transnational crime and global governance failures." In the last few years, most episodes of violence in the continent were conflicts over political power at the highest level. These emanate from rivalries between strong political personalities backed by their political supporters who in most cases are defined by ethnic, regional and religious identities. In Burundi, the return of political violence has raised deep concerns about the Great Lakes region's possible relapse into widespread violence. The world's newest country, South Sudan, born out of a decade-long civil war and soon after its independence descended into war.

The renewed war took an ethnic dimension due to an inability to successfully share power between two ex-rebel leaders. After a new peace accord was signed, this brought the power-sharing agreement back to a pre-civil war status. Sadly, the last two years have been caught up with violence against civilians in South Sudan. In the Central African Republic (CAR), the restarting of the civil war in 2013 could be viewed through the lens of a country which has been particularly fragile economically and politically since its founding. The violence started with a new coup d'état, then emergence of one rebel group. This prompted the formation of another group to counter the first group, with both targeting civilians primarily. In North Africa, political change is also motivating trends in peace and security.

The only country that underwent a regime change during the Arab Spring and has managed to keep at bay further violence is Tunisia. Although it has suffered terrorist attacks and appears vulnerable, its leadership is still democratically elected and can govern legitimately. Political reforms in Morocco and Algeria, which involved more accommodation to Islamist parties was a result of the Arab Spring. In Libya, the Arab Spring brought about a civil war and caused the ouster

and killing of Muammar Gaddafi. Peace and security may be difficult to achieve, despite current promising political initiatives and international efforts. However, Adedeji [11] argues that, it is pertinent to note that Africa has no monopoly of conflict. Other regions of the world have been riddled with considerable violence and social conflagration. For example, Serbia, Bosnia, Turkey and Northern Ireland are among the troubled parts of Europe. In Asia, one may point to Cambodia, Iraq and Burma among others as conflict ridden areas. Latin America is also enmeshed in conflicts as evidenced by countries like Peru, Guatemala, Mexico and Columbia.

Background and context

What happened in Sudan has raised the question of whether mediation and peacekeeping are effective means of managing and resolving conflicts in Africa [12,13]. Other problems are due to rulers reluctant to step down. Examples include, Museveni (Uganda) in office since 1986, Biya (Cameroon) since 1975, Mugabe (Zimbabwe) since 1980 up to November 2017, Dos Santos (Angola) since 1979, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo (Equatorial Guinea) since 1979, Bashir (Sudan) since1989, Deby (Chad) since 1990, Afwerki (Eritrea) since 1991, Jammeh (The Gambia) since 1994-2017.

In sub-Saharan Africa over 12 million people are currently displaced by conflict [14]. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace [15] Global Terrorism Index which provides detailed figures on terrorist attacks, reveals that the total number of deaths from terrorism in 2014 reached 32,685 constituting an 80% increase from the previous year. According to the report, 78% of the death toll occurred in just five countries; Iraq, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria. The most populated country in Africa, Nigeria, is the most affected by terrorism being the leading form of violence in recent years. Boko Haram was reported in 2014 to be the most violent terrorist group in the world. It killed more people than the notorious Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL). Half the deaths due to terrorism worldwide are a result of these two groups. Boko Haram even pledged allegiance to ISIL and called itself the Islamic State's West African Province (ISWAP) in March 2015.

Nigeria is still reeling under stress from Boko Haram despite a noteworthy improvement from the second half of 2015. The Boko Haram relies almost exclusively on suicide attacks on easy civilian targets in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad after suffering military setbacks. Although the exact levels of interaction between Boko Haram and ISIL remain unknown, Boko Haram's allegiance to ISIL continues to be a source of legitimate concern. In connecting West and Central Africa through its violent activities, Boko Haram has taken advantage of weak state control of the borders between Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad to move fighters and weapons across countries.

According to Yabi [10], in Mali the crises of 2012 has been one of the main drivers of insecurity in the rest of the Sahel and West Africa. Foreign preachers of radical Islam, terrorist groups as well as human, cigarette and drug trafficking networks settled in the Sahara and Sahel taking advantage of weak state governance. Although the military intervention in 2013 by the French- African military and the subsequent deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission was successful in preventing territorial control of Northern Mali by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) affiliated groups, the intervention did not eliminate them. Some of the groups that survived reorganized and mounted new terrorist attacks in the North and in the Malian capital city Bamako, further South in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire in 2016. It is in Mali where the UN mission has also suffered heavy losses, becoming the deadliest UN peacekeeping mission in the world and highlighting the specific challenge of bringing peace to an environment fraught with terrorist activity.

In the Horn of Africa, Somalia remains a hot spot of insecurity and violence having been unstable for three decades. Islamist groups arose and gained ground when they initially appeared to provide a credible political alternative to chaos since a political vacuum had opened the door for various criminal groups. Al-Shabaab emerged as a powerful radical group resorting to terrorism purporting to be a reaction to foreign military interventions. Still in Somalia, jihadist combatants have seen a strong international force comprised of African and Western militaries uniting against them. These so-called jihadist groups extend their fight both locally and globally. They are reportedly expanding their area of operations in response to reinforced security presence in their earlier safe havens. The shift from a localized threat in Northern Mali to a wider West African threat, in the span of a few months, is a telling example of this trend. Even as al-Shabaab suffered major setbacks with the internationally backed Transitional Federal Government (TFG) establishing control of Mogadishu, the group remains undefeated and capable of making deadly terrorist attacks in Somalia and elsewhere in the region [10]. In September 2013, Kenya was brutally hit by al-Shabaab's exportation of violence with severe attacks on a mall. In April 2015, deadly attacks were made on a university campus. In view of global strategic and the transnational objectives of Al-Qaeda or ISIL affiliated groups and recent attacks in West Africa, North Africa and the Horn of Africa, it appears every country is increasing predisposed to terrorist attacks.

ACLED [16] reports that African states experienced high rates of both political violence and protests in 2016 with aggregated totals remarkably similar to those of 2015. The crisis has pointed mainly to South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Libya. However, under reported crises comprise a large percentage of violence across African states. These include areas like Burundi, ongoing wars in Sudan, Ethiopia's protests and conflicts, and violent activities throughout Mozambique. The overall pattern shows that battles and large-scale wars are on the decline. This appears to have been replaced by "local militias, pro-government militias, political militias working at the behest of politicians and political parties, civil society organizations forming protest movements, external groups seeking local partners (e.g. ISIS), and more occasionally, rebel groups seeking to overtake the government [16]".

The conclusion is that politics is causing political

violence, as the strongest tool to enforce their will on others. Predominantly, Somalia remains the most active. What follows is Nigeria, South Sudan and then Libya. ACLED reports that, in effect, Somalia's violence is equal to the combined violence of Libya, South Sudan and Nigeria.

In light of the foregoing and in spite of the declarations, statements of intentions, passing of key instruments and policy standards or even the acknowledgement of human rights, good governance, and democracy as pillars of prosperity, Africa's political environment remains precarious. Africa's leading drivers of conflict manifest as personal rule and attendant political authoritarianism, manipulation of identity politics across ethnicity, race and creed, perceptions of exclusion and marginalization of communities, together with electoral malpractices resulting in contested legitimacies and resultant violence. The response by States to these challenges has sometimes resulted in escalation of public disorder, diminished freedoms, coupled with massive violation of human and peoples' rights. Perhaps, whatever the cause, the greatest challenge remains how to balance needs for justice with the exigencies of holistic long term post-conflict healing, reconciliation and reconstruction effectively.

May be, as the AU's Peace and Security Council has recognized, there is no single internal factor that has contributed more to the present socio-economic (and political) problems in the continent and the suffering of the civilian population than the scourge of conflicts within and between our countries. It could have been in recognition of this reality that, at some point in the transformation of the OAU into the AU, African leaders decided to establish the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Also, in October 2010, the AU Commission's Africa Standby Force (ASF) completed the final phase of the Amani Africa Cycle, which aimed at, among others, to evaluate and increase the ASF's readiness, capability and procedures.

It was also in the year 2010 that it was declared the Africa Year of Peace and Security by the Tripoli Declaration on the Elimination of Conflicts in Africa and the Promotion of Sustainable Peace, as adopted by the Special Session of the Assembly of the Union on the Consideration and Resolution of Conflicts in Africa. In August of the same year, in support of the Africa Year of Peace and Security, the African Union held its first High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa, an inaugural retreat that ended with, among others, the Cairo Call for Peace and a proposal to institutionalize and regularize the initiative.

Literature review

Effective responses to African conflict may require agreement on and understanding of its causes [17]. In the past, responses to conflict may have failed to understand the context within which conflict has operated. But, major causes of conflict can be located within, identity divisions, weak institutions and power politics.

Power politics

Both in Africa and elsewhere, the insatiable desire for power appears to be part of many conflicts. In other cases these conflicts have been contests of leadership between more or less equally resourced armed factions. Examples have been seen in the Mozambican conflict between the Front for Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) and Mozambique Resistance Movement (RENAMO), in the Angolan conflict, it has prevailed between the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA).

Power politics has also manifested as a challenge to sitting governments based on deep disagreements over governance and legitimacy as has been witnessed in the Cote d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Mali, South Sudan, Libya and the Democratic Republic of Congo -Kivu conflict. In some cases, incumbent regimes have been dominated by elites whose governance approach is influenced by their desire to protect their self-worth, ill-gotten wealth and the interests of their constituencies (Cote D'Ivoire, Nigeria). Others have the audacity, to take advantage of their incumbency to dominate economic resources and to reach across borders and exploit instability in adjacent territories.

Limiting access to resources that can fund the conflict is one response to conflict as argued by Collier and Hoeffler [18]. They analysed a wide variety of sub-Saharan civil wars and found a linkage between Africa's poor economic performance and the outbreak of conflict. Collier and Hoeffler [18] also linked "the establishment of rebel organizations and the availability of lootable natural resources to fund that establishment." Others have criticised their work for its methodology and its conclusions. But even though, the work has had a significant policy impact. For instance, as seen in the drive for more transparency and accountability by the World Bank, national aid agencies (DFID), and NGO initiatives such as Publish What You Pay [19,20]. It is evident that, limiting access to resources through transparency measures, sanctions or aid suspension certainly changes the equation for rebels and governments pursuing violent methods to promote their causes, irrespective of whether or not Collier and his colleague are right about the causation links. In the absence of resources that can easily be converted to cash, funding the war-related costs may prove unaffordable.

Weak institutions

State capacity is another diagnostic framework for causes of conflict in Africa [17]. In this regard, Aall argues that conflicts occur in fragile, weak and failing states where national institutions have lost authority over their own territories, with limited ability to reach beyond their capital cities or to provide security, representation and services to their people. But what constitutes a fragile state, weak or failing states? Carvalho [21] has argued that, fragile states are often ranked in terms of their national income, with the lowest being most fragile, as for instance the low-income countries under stress (LICUS) typology developed by the World Bank in 2004. Rotberg [22] stresses the wide variety of weak states and notes that, they form "a broad continuum of states that are inherently weak because of geographical, physical, or fundamental economic constraints." Rice and Patrick [23] define weak states as, "countries lacking the

capacity and/or will to foster an environment conducive to sustainable and equitable economic growth; to establish and maintain legitimate, transparent and accountable political institutions; to secure their populations from violent conflict and to control their territory; and to meet the basic human needs of their population."

For Harpviken [24], definition of failed states or failing states often incorporate elements of state predation and armed conflict between the government and its challengers. But in the cases of two of the perceived weakest states that is, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, lack of government rather than its predation appear to be the central problem.

In response to institutional weakness and fragility, the international or donor community usually focuses on building up governmental institutions to enable them to become more representative and more responsive in terms of providing services. For this matter, the European Union [25] has a robust institutional-strengthening program for the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) meant to enhance continental and regional capabilities for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. The specific goals provide for helping the African Standby Force and the African Continental Early Warning System (ACEWS), and in building up policing capability. The US State Department seeks to strengthen peacekeeping competences through its African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program while the US military has established the Africa Command (AFRICOM). Africa Command's core mission is to assist African states and regional organisations to strengthen their defence competences and to better enable Africans to address their security threats while reducing threats to U.S. interests. According to its mission statement, it concentrates its efforts on contributing to the development of capable and professional militaries that respect human rights, adhere to the rule of law, and more effectively contribute to stability in Africa [26].

Identity divisions

A third diagnostic approach pivots around identity-based conflicts which produce deeply divided visions for the future of Africa [17]. Aall argues that, these existential, identity-based antagonisms are very difficult to deal with politically in part, because they produce a zero-sum attitude toward shared governance. Tribal and ethnic rivalries have characterized conflict in Africa for decades. Recently, the new wave of violent extremism which has struck Africa has scaled up conflict and sectarian antagonisms within and across borders. This complex brew pits group against group (Darfur, Central African Republic, Nigeria) or in groups forming and breaking temporary alliances for their own ends (Tuaregs & Islamic fighters in Mali). Linkages develop between home-grown and transnational groups (Boko Haram & Al Qaeda). Although conflicts are primarily about elite-based power politics, that is to say, who gets to rule, they may also reflect deep cleavages over identity as has been the case in Cote D'Ivoire.

Dealing with identity-based conflict has been through relationships between the antagonists. This is the approach employed by the conflict management community, which includes the non-governmental organisations. As Saunders and Kelman in USAID [27] put it, this relationship-building may take the form of dialogue processes, people-to people programs, or problem-solving workshops. But, conflicts that are caused by violent extremism resulting from mobilization by radical ideologies present challenges. These challenges go beyond the identity-based conflicts of the 1990s and 2000s. For instance, in France, the attack on the satirical review, Charlie Hebdo, was specific in its immediate goals. It was to kill the editors, writers and cartoonists who produced inflammatory materials, in the lens of the attackers. Yet, the ultimate target was vague. Was it an attack on the French government for its role in Syria and the Sahel? Or was it an attack on Western civilization in general for its relativist and amoral messages? Or was it an attack on the concept and practice of freedom of speech [28]? The vagueness in terms of target is a problem on the analytical side. But there is also a serious problem located on the response side.

Most of the tools of conflict management such as diplomacy, containment, sanctions, military intervention, dialogue and problem-solving workshops – may not be effective against terrorism. Therefore, a number of countries have developed programs of countering violent extremism (CVE) in order to contain this new threat. It is an indirect approach that focuses on changing the conditions, hearts and minds [29-31]. Aall [17] observes that, working on CVE changes the traditional roles of the institutions involved and requires close cooperation between governments and civil society, both in the conflict country and in the outside countries or institutions. This implies a much deeper understanding of the role that social institutions, religion, education and media play in defining the conflict environment. It also implies taking cues from partners within the societies that are experiencing conflict [32]. The implication is a dependence on "insider partials" to help guide the external activities, or in brief a very different modus operandi than has been used to in the past.

Discussion

Every one of the above approaches to diagnosing the problem of conflict results in reasonably distinct policy decisions on how best to resolve the conflicts. Individuals that believe that the desire for political power lie at the root of conflict may attempt to change the behaviour of the antagonists through concrete means such as diplomacy, peace operations, or other ways of changing the cost/benefit equation that govern their actions. Persons who believe that weak institutions are the stress points will focus on institution-building. And those that believe that profound identity-based animosities drive conflict may attempt to resolve these through constructing better relationships or by strengthening social resistance to inflammatory ideas.

Mediation and conciliation can of course, play a critical or supporting role in all these remedies. Conflict management institutions may opt for one technique over another as they have a great deal of expertise in using the technique, for example, the UN and mediation or peace operations, NGOs and dialogue. However, a single approach is likely to have

a limited impact for addressing complex conflict systems in Africa.

Perhaps, organizations need to stretch beyond their own competencies and collaborate with others on national and international levels in diagnosing the problem, designing and delivering the remedy. In cases where the diagnosis does not point to a comprehensive policy as such, the conflict management effort blends all elements of the three approaches as it tries to address all problems. An example is the mandate of the UN mission to the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) which includes the protection of civilians, preservation of the government's ability to control its territory, mediation, rebuilding of the criminal justice system, human rights protection, national dialogue processes, and addressing root causes of violence [33]. The diagnosis and proposed remedies may be appropriate to the situation, but as Aall [17] sees it, the conflict management institution is unable to gain traction as a recognised player. This was the case with the African Union effort to act as an interlocutor in the Libyan conflict in 2011 [34].

Results and Implications

Relative peace prospects that can be realised include globalisation, power sharing, regional integration and democratisation.

Globalisation

Globalization is an international institution which incorporates economic, socio-cultural and political processes and seeks to enhance a country's economic, political, ideological, and military power [35]. Peaceful environments in Africa have attracted investors from developed countries, co-operation among other governments while corporate sectors and civic societies share interests and combine resources for development. The effect of globalisation is foreign investment of money and businesses in various African countries. China has taken a leading role to invest in Africa with UK, USA and France emerging as strong actors. Japan, Israel, and India are also coming on board. According to Mackatian et al. [35], by 2009, China's direct investment stock in Africa was 9.33 billion USD, USA's direct investment in Africa was 44.8 billion USD; and France's direct investment in Africa was 4.04 billion Euros. More could be invested when the continent's peace prospects are relatively high.

Power sharing

Institutions that provide for higher levels of power sharing are often stable and uphold democracy. Power sharing arrangements lead to important reforms. The conflict-prone Africa provides a hard test for ascertaining how effective power sharing can be instituted in various countries. Disputed elections lead to violence and tension between contestants as it has been exemplified by Rwanda, Angola, Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, DRC Congo, and Ivory Coast. However, the international community successfully negotiated power sharing in countries like Kenya, Burundi, and Zimbabwe bringing major stakeholders to table and discuss issues through diplomacy. In the vertical power sharing among various government structures, decentralization is important. This way, decentralized governance generates participation that is more democratic, accountable and representative.

Also, power sharing through devolution and decentralisation reduces corruption by increasing transparency and accountability. Power sharing has been successful in Kenya giving rise to the independence of the judiciary and the electoral commission. Due to the independence of Kenya's judiciary, on the 1st of September 2017, the presidential election results which had allegedly been won by the ruling party were annulled one month after the results were announced. This came about after an election petition by the opposition citing electoral fraud and irregularities. The presidential powers have been limited and tenure of office shortened to a maximum of two terms. The new Constitution of Kenya as promulgated in 2010 provides for these reforms. However, the situation is different in Zimbabwe despite having a new Constitution which is a product of power-sharing between two main political parties. The prospects are not as good as those for Kenya. It took the military's intervention to force the former president of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe to step down after violations of the constitution that was made during a power-sharing arrangement. Reforms have only been limited. Important areas such as devolution of power to the provinces and the limitation of presidential power have never been addressed, hence, these are threats to peace in Zimbabwe. Despite the presidential nominee's pledge for peace the fact that the candidate has been a close ally for Mugabe spells doom for the country.

Regional integration

Regional integration is one of the most important measures in the fight against conflicts, because such integration changes socio- economic status of a country. Through regional integration ethnic tensions disappear while conditions unfavourable to the operations of warlords are created. The regional organisations in Africa, which include ECOWAS, COMESA SADC, EAC, and IGAD organise intergovernmental conferences that focus on cooperation between member States. Regional trade may improve substantially after the formation of trading blocs. This leads to a tremendous rise in both intraregional trade and trade with developed countries. Studies by Diao and Somwaru [36] show that welfare among member countries of Africa is raised due to increased investment, production and consumption, owing to regional trade and peace prevalence in the regions.

Democratisation

The democratization process in Africa is characterised by a number of changes, including the adoption of multi-party politics, multiparty elections, growth, and expansion of the civil society organizations. It is one important aspect in peace building and conflict resolution. Negative aspects associated with conflicts are eradicated by democratisation. The aspects include but not limited to dictatorship, ethnicity to marginalisation and oppression. Democratisation calls for the establishment of new constitutions to ensure democratic functioning of the multiparty systems. Kenya has made

such demonstration almost successfully and paves way for perhaps free, fair and credible elections. It is essential that politics of reconciliation be part of the democratisation process in order to avoid conflicts, together with good political leaders who are visionary and dedicated.

Conclusion

African States have battled with the problem of peace and security for a long time. This has affected Africa's development in a number of ways especially in deaths and alienation of her peoples thereby hindering the process of integration and cohesion. This should not be allowed to continue any longer if Africa is to witness growth and compete favourably with other continents of the world. There is need for concerted efforts to halt this negative development and chart a new course for a relatively peaceful Africa. Although the countries represent a complex stew of differing identities, ethnicities and languages, governments, opposition political parties and civil societies are obliged to find common ground in response to the challenges of managing diversity and ensuring equitable ways of sharing resources. This will enhance adequate security of property and life in Africa while attracting foreign investors for the adequate exploration of numerous natural resources. It is heartening that there is no hope lost to achieve the desired end, but, more still needs to be done by way of research into challenges of implementing blueprints. This should be done jointly by the regional economic communities, peace practitioners and academics.

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