CONFLICT TRENDS

ISSUE 1, 2020

ACCORD
THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES
25 YEARS 1992–2017

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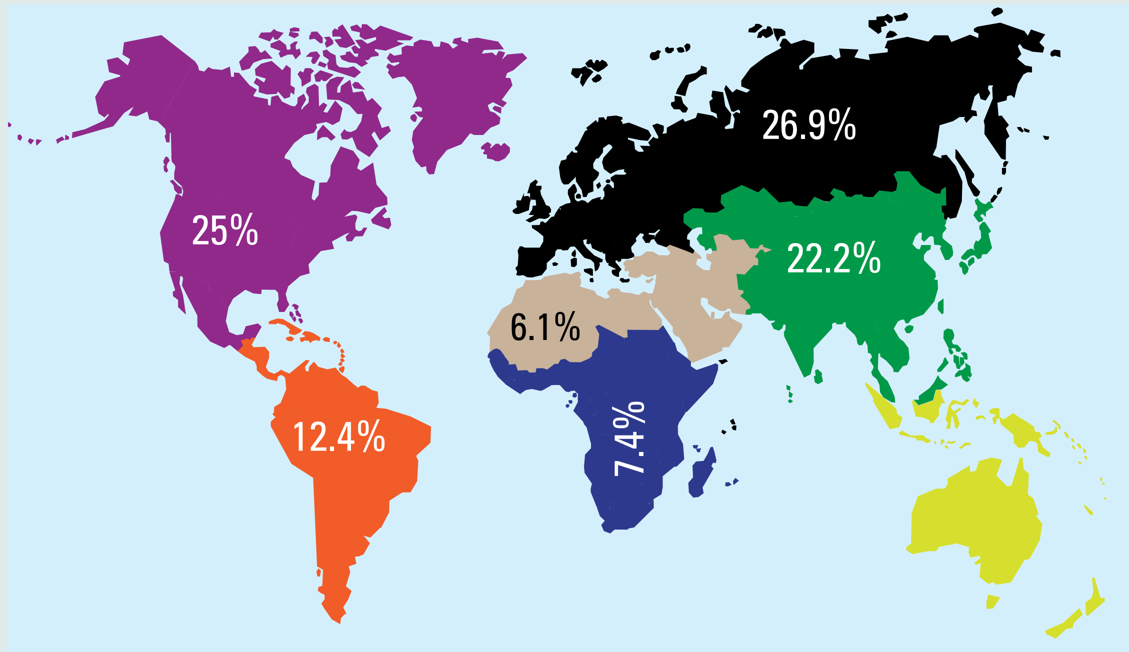

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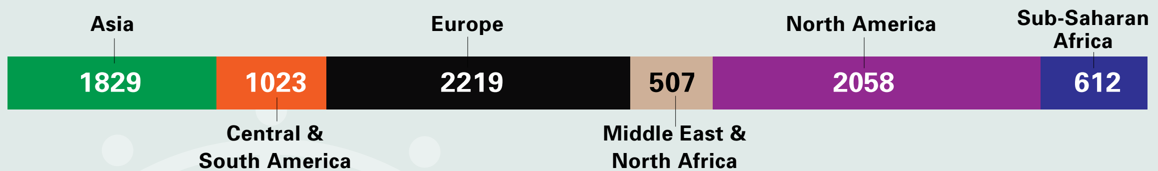

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African solutions for African challenges

ACCORD
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25 YEARS 1992–2017

CT1|2020

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Cover photo: The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (MONUSCO) Commander General meets some local people in North Kivu Province (21 July 2017). (MONUSCO/Alain Wandimoyi).

EDITORIAL

BY **VASU GOUNDEN**

Today, the world stands at a crossroads between a dying liberal democracy paradigm that has dominated the last three decades of global politics, economics and social change and a dangerous emerging paradigm characterised by growing populism, nationalism and authoritarianism that challenges the beliefs of peace intellectuals, advocates and activists. What are the global trends that characterise this current environment, and what are the consequences of these trends for political, economic and social change?

In 1990, just as the Cold War ended and the era of neoliberal democracy commenced, several trends surfaced that would dominate the next quarter of a century. A bipolar world was replaced by a unipolar world. One-party states were replaced by multiparty democracies. State security gave way to a broad concept of human security. Globalisation and technology changed the social compact between the state, private sector and civil society and, finally, conflict between states was replaced by conflict within states. The old paradigm of interstate conflict, with defined actors, defined borders and established rules and norms, was replaced by intrastate conflict – that is, conflict with no rules and norms, and where the protagonists are both known and unknown. These conflicts are situated within countries, yet stretch across borders.

This scenario has shaped the current global peace and security architecture at the United Nations (UN) and among various regional organisations. Over the last three decades, the UN deepened its involvement in internal conflicts with the establishment of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Mediation Support Unit, the Peace Building Support Office and other mechanisms to respond to the growing threat of urban violence and internal conflict. The Organization of African Unity and its successor, the African Union, started with a fledgling Conflict Management Centre that has today grown into the African Peace and Security Architecture, complemented by the African Governance Architecture.

However, three decades later, there are no sustained solutions to the current crises of violent political and community conflicts the world over. Identity conflicts are on the rise, driven mainly by exploitation of fear. The democratisation of technology has led to new forms of asymmetrical warfare challenging the monopoly that states had over violence. This new complex conflict environment requires creative solutions that transcend traditional peace and conflict resolution ideas. We need to include architects, artificial intelligence specialists, town and urban planners, neuroscientists and experts from many other disciplines to advance creative solutions for our global challenges.

Neoliberal democracy – and all the hopes we had for a more equitable, peaceful and prosperous world – is under threat and on the retreat. Fear of the unknown drives people towards building walls and not bridges. Fear drives mistrust, entrenches stereotypes and breathes new life into populism, nationalism and authoritarianism.

The challenge for peace intellectuals, advocates and activists is to advance alternatives to the narrative of fear. In a world influenced by social media, where perception and emotion drive the actions of individuals, more needs to be done to ensure that the public are given facts and are presented with rational, objective evidence. Facts and evidence, coupled with actions that build unity and social cohesion, will ensure that we sustain a vision of an equitable, peaceful and prosperous future.

Vasu Gounden is the Founder and Executive Director of ACCORD.

THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF ADAPTIVE PEACEBUILDING

BY **CEDRIC DE CONING**

REUTERS/CHRISTOPHE VAN DER PERRE

Peacebuilding is about influencing the behaviour of social systems that have been, or are at risk of, being affected by violent conflict. A society sustains peace when its social institutions are able to ensure that political competition is managed peacefully, and that no significant social or political groups use violence to pursue their interests. Peacebuilding attempts to assist societies to prevent and mitigate the risk of violent conflict. For peace to be self-sustainable, a society needs to have sufficiently strong social institutions to identify, channel and manage disputes peacefully.

If a society is fragile, it means that the social institutions that govern its politics, security, justice and economy lack resilience. Resilience refers to the capacity of social institutions to adapt in order to sustain an acceptable level of function, structure and identity under stress. The fragility or vulnerability is gradually reduced as social institutions

Above: A society sustains peace when its institutions are able to ensure that political competition is managed peacefully.

REUTERS/SIEGFRIED MODOLA

The resilience of civil society in South Africa, for example, church groups, played an important role in helping communities to manage the tensions that arose from Apartheid divisions.

develop the resilience – the internal complexity that enables them to self-organise – necessary to cope with the shocks and challenges to which they are exposed. Resilience to withstand shocks and challenges, and the ability to adapt, grows as social institutions develop increasingly complex forms of self-organisation. For example, in 1991 in South Africa, some churches and a private sector group managed to facilitate a national peace accord, which significantly reduced political violence. The National Peace Accord was an important adaptation that moved the country from relying on the state security apparatus, which was no longer credible or effective, and instead empowered social institutions to self-manage the tensions that arose between communities divided by apartheid. This is one example of how the resilience of civil society in South Africa played an important role in helping the country navigate the very sensitive transfer of power relatively peacefully.

Peacebuilding is thus a project with a very specific objective: to influence complex social systems to safeguard, stimulate, facilitate and create the space for societies to develop resilient self-organised social institutions that can prevent violent conflict and sustain the peace. Conflict resolution and peacebuilding is about stimulating processes in a society that enable self-organisation and lead to resilient social institutions which adequately manage internal and external stressors and shocks. It is not possible to direct or control self-organisation from the outside; it has to emerge from within a society. However, conflict resolution and peacebuilding agents can assist society by facilitating and stimulating the processes that enable self-organisation to emerge.

Peacebuilding and Self-organisation

There is an inherent tension in the act of promoting a process of self-organisation from outside the society or community in question. Too much external interference – for instance, by an international organisation such as the United Nations (UN) – will undermine self-organisation. Every time an external peacebuilder intervenes to solve a perceived problem, they interrupt the internal feedback process and thus deny the society from responding to its own stimuli. The result is a missed opportunity to contribute to the development of self-organisation and resilience, and in its place, such interruptions build dependency. Each external intervention thus comes at the cost of depriving a society from an opportunity to learn how to respond to

UN PHOTO/CLARA PADOVAN

Too much external interference by international organisations can undermine a country's self-organisation and build dependency.

a problem or challenge itself. State and social institutions develop resilience through trial and error over generations. Too much filtering and cushioning slows down and inhibits these processes. Understanding this tension – and the constraints it poses – helps us to realise why many international conflict resolution and peacebuilding interventions have made the mistake of interfering so much that they have ended up undermining the ability of societies to self-organise.

The adaptive peacebuilding approach provides a methodology for navigating this dilemma. It stands in contrast to externally driven, top-down, blueprint or predetermined design approaches to peacebuilding planning and assessment. Adaptive peacebuilding is a process where peacebuilders, together with the communities and people affected by the conflict, actively engage in a structured process to sustain peace and resolve conflicts by employing an iterative process of learning and adaptation[1].

Adaptive Peacebuilding Principles

The adaptive approach for coping with complexity in conflict resolution and peacebuilding can be summarised in the following six principles:

1. The actions taken to influence the sustainability of a specific peace process have to be context and time specific, and they have to be emergent from a process that engages the societies themselves.
2. Adaptive peacebuilding is a goal-orientated or problem-solving approach, so it is important to identify, together with the society in question, what the peacebuilding project should aim to achieve.
3. Adaptive peacebuilding is agnostic about how best to pursue its goals, but it does follow a specific methodology – the adaptive approach – that is, a participatory process that facilitates the emergence of a goal-orientated outcome.
4. A key part of the adaptive approach methodology is variety; as the outcome is uncertain, one must experiment with a variety of options across a spectrum of probabilities.
5. Another key part of the adaptive approach is selection – one has to pay close attention to feedback to determine which actions have a better effect. Adaptive peacebuilding requires an active participatory decision-making process that abandons those actions which perform poorly or have negative side-effects, whilst those that show more promise can be further adapted

to introduce more variety or can be scaled up to have greater impact. At a more strategic level, this implies reviewing assumptions and adapting strategic planning.

6. Adaptive peacebuilding is an iterative process. It is repeated continuously because in highly complex contexts, assessments are only relevant for a relatively short period before new dynamics come into play.

SUFFICIENCY HERE IMPLIES THAT THE COMMUNITY SHOULD BE REPRESENTED IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE DIVERSITY AND VARIETY OF THEIR INTERESTS, NEEDS AND CONCERNS INFORM EVERY STEP OF THE ADAPTATION CYCLE

In the adaptive peacebuilding approach, the core activity of a conflict resolution or peacebuilding intervention is one of process facilitation. It is thus crucial – as captured in the first principle of the adaptive peacebuilding approach – that the societies and communities which are intended to benefit from a conflict resolution or peacebuilding intervention are fully involved in all aspects of the initiative. The specific arrangements will differ depending on the context, but the principle should be that no decisions are taken about a particular conflict resolution or peacebuilding intervention without sufficient participation of the affected community or society, depending on the level and scope of the intervention. Sufficiency here implies that the community should be represented in such a way that the diversity and variety of their interests, needs and concerns inform every step of the adaptation cycle. In other words – as highlighted in the second principle of the adaptive peacebuilding approach – the affected community should be sufficiently represented in the processes that determine the aims and objectives of the initiative, as well as in all choices related to the analysis, assessment, planning, monitoring of effects, evaluation and selection processes.

While international or external peacebuilders can influence complex social systems by enabling and stimulating the processes that enable resilience and inclusiveness to emerge, the prominent role of self-organisation in complex system dynamics suggests that it is important that the affected societies and communities have

UN PHOTO/ARPAN MUNIER

In Adaptive Peacebuilding, the societies and communities that are intended to benefit from a conflict resolution or peacebuilding intervention should be fully involved in all aspects of the initiative.

UN PHOTO/SYLVAIN LIECHTI

The United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights inaugurates a newly built police station in Mambassa, in the Ituri district of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The station houses a special unit for the protection of women and children (August 2013).

the space and agency to drive their own process. This is why local adaptation processes are ultimately the critical element for inclusive political settlements to become self-sustainable.

The adaptive peacebuilding approach thus requires a commitment by peacebuilders to engage in a structured learning process, together with the society or community that has been affected by conflict. This commitment comes at a cost – in terms of investing in the capabilities necessary to enable and facilitate such a collective learning process, in taking the time to engage with communities and other stakeholders, and in making the effort to develop new innovative systems for learning together with communities as the process unfolds.

Complex systems cope with challenges posed by changes in the environment by co-evolving with the environment in a never-ending process of adaptation. This iterative adaptive process – captured in the third, fourth and fifth principles of the adaptive peacebuilding approach – utilises experimentation and feedback to generate knowledge about the environment. This is essentially the way natural selection works in the evolution of complex systems.

The two key factors are variation (the fourth principle) and selection (the fifth principle). There needs to be variation – that is, multiple parallel interventions – and there needs to be a selection process that replicates and multiplies effective interventions and discontinues those that do not have the desired effect.

THIS IS WHY LOCAL ADAPTATION PROCESSES ARE ULTIMATELY THE CRITICAL ELEMENT FOR INCLUSIVE POLITICAL SETTLEMENTS TO BECOME SELF-SUSTAINABLE

The analysis–planning–implementation–evaluation–selection project cycle is already well established in the development and peacebuilding communities. However, most peacebuilding projects are not good at generating sufficient variation. They are also notoriously bad at selection based on effect, and they are especially poor at identifying and

UN PHOTO/ISAAC BILLY

A team of engineers with the United Nations peacekeeping mission assists the government of South Sudan with road construction activities (February 2012).

abandoning underperforming initiatives. To remedy these shortcomings, the adaptive peacebuilding approach utilises structured and iterative adaptation (the sixth principle) to help generate institutional learning.

The adaptive approach consists of iterative cycles of learning, starting with analysis and assessment. Based on the analysis, multiple possible options for influencing a social system are generated. For example, a peacebuilding campaign – such as the UN stabilisation strategy for the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo – may choose to undertake several interventions that have more or less the same broad aim, such as supporting the extension of state authority. When the selected options are developed into actual campaigns or programmes, their design must be explicit about the theory of change each will employ, so that their effects can be assessed. For example, such a strategy may build police stations and support the training and deployment of new police officers. The idea behind this project may be that these actions will help to ensure that the state is visibly present and active in these regions of the country, and this will then reduce conflict. A theory of change needs to indicate clearly how it intends to achieve a change in the behaviour of the social system it intends to influence – that is, how a series of activities is anticipated to generate a particular outcome. For example, how exactly will the deployment of police officers result in the expected outcome? How many police officers would be needed? What kind of actions are these police officers expected

THE IDEA BEHIND THIS PROJECT MAY BE THAT THESE ACTIONS WILL HELP TO ENSURE THAT THE STATE IS VISIBLY PRESENT AND ACTIVE IN THESE REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY, AND THIS WILL THEN REDUCE CONFLICT

to take? How will they be supported by other parts of the state system; for instance, by the justice system? A selected number of these intervention options are then implemented and closely monitored, with a view to identify the feedback generated by the system in response to each intervention. The feedback is then analysed, after which those responsible for the intervention, together with the affected communities and key stakeholders, decide which initiatives to discontinue, which to continue and, in addition, what adaptations to introduce for those that are continued. For example, by closely monitoring such projects, one may learn that the new police officers start to charge the community for their services or expenses, if they do not receive their salaries on time and if they do not have a budget for transport or other such costs they incur when performing their duties. The project can thus be adapted to add these elements if they were not foreseen at the outset. Those initiatives that perform better may be expanded or replicated. The ineffective ones, or those that have generated negative effects, should be abandoned. Effective initiatives should be continued and expanded in a variety of ways, so that there is a continuous process of experimentation with a range of options, coupled with a continuous process of selection and refinement.

In practice, this method may not always be so explicitly employed, but the basic tenants of the adaptive approach are usually already at work in most conflict resolution and peacebuilding contexts. For example, UN peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, together with local communities, employ a range of strategies to pursue local peace agreements, improve local security, disrupt local conflict dynamics and encourage local economic activity. The people involved are continuously learning from their experiences and are adapting their approaches based on their assessment of which initiatives are more or less effective. Adaptive peacebuilding in these contexts does not necessarily imply following an explicit methodological approach. It is more a pattern of practices

THOSE INITIATIVES THAT PERFORM BETTER MAY BE EXPANDED OR REPLICATED

UN PHOTO/HERVE SEREFIO

As part of Earth Day celebrations, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) organised a tree planting project in Bangui (21 April 2018).

that experiment with an inductive, iterative and adaptive approach. These adaptive approaches differ fundamentally from the determined-design approach that was in vogue in the past, where the logic of the programmatic intervention was predetermined, and the role of the peacebuilders and communities was to implement the programmes as designed.

THOSE WHO DO NOT BENEFIT FROM IT ARE LIKELY TO ADAPT AND DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO EITHER UNDERMINE THE INITIATIVE OR TO POSITION THEMSELVES TO BENEFIT FROM IT

An adaptive peacebuilding approach recognises the role of entropy, and cultivates an awareness that those interventions which appear to be effective today will not continue to be so indefinitely. Any intervention will likely benefit some and not others. Those who do not benefit from it are likely to adapt and develop strategies to either undermine the initiative or to position themselves to benefit from it. Even successful programmes need to be monitored for signals that may indicate that an intervention is no longer having the desired effect or is starting to generate negative side-effects. One must thus not only monitor for intended results, but also for unintended consequences, and be ready to take steps to deal with the adverse effects that may come about due to an intervention.

The adaptive peacebuilding approach is scalable at all levels – the same basic method can be applied to individual programmes, to projects, to regional or national-level campaigns, or to multi-year strategic frameworks or compacts. From a complexity theory perspective, the feedback generated by various interventions at different levels should be shared and modulated as widely as possible throughout the system, so that as broad a spectrum of initiatives as possible can self-adjust and co-evolve on the basis of the information generated.

The adaptive peacebuilding approach aims to help societies build the resilience and robustness needed to cope with, and adapt to, change by developing greater levels of complexity in their social institutions. A less complex social system will have only one way to manage intercommunity conflict. A more complex social system will have a variety of mechanisms and processes to manage intercommunity conflict, depending on the type of conflict and the people involved – for example, traders, farmers or youth. The adaptive peacebuilding approach aims to work with the constructive attributes of change by investing in the resilience of social institutions to cope with and channel change positively, and to manage conflict in such a way that it does not become violent. It does so by involving local societies and communities in all decisions related to the peacebuilding process, at a scale not attempted to date.

Conclusion

Complexity theory helps us understand how social systems lapse into violent conflict, how they can prevent or recover from conflict, and what can be done to strengthen their resilience. For a peace process to become self-sustainable, resilient social institutions need to emerge from within – that is, from the local culture, history and socio-economic context. External actors can assist and facilitate this process, but if they interfere too much, they will undermine the self-organising processes necessary to sustain resilient social institutions.

The key to successful conflict resolution and peacebuilding thus lies in finding the appropriate balance between international support and local self-organisation, and this will differ from context to context. Those engaged in conflict resolution and peacebuilding should limit their efforts to safeguarding, stimulating, facilitating and creating the space for societies to develop resilient capacities for self-organisation.

Adaptive peacebuilding is an approach that can help navigate this delicate balance between international support and local self-organisation. Peacebuilders, together with the communities and people affected by the conflict, actively engage in a structured process to sustain peace by employing an iterative process of learning and adaptation. The adaptive peacebuilding approach is aimed at supporting societies to develop the resilience and robustness they need to cope with and adapt to change by developing greater levels of complexity in their social institutions.

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Endnotes

1 For more on Adaptive Peacebuilding see: De Coning, Cedric (2018) Adaptive Peacebuilding, *International Affairs*, 94(2), pp. 301–317, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix251>

REINVIGORATING THE AFRICAN SOLIDARITY INITIATIVE FOR ROBUST IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION'S POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY[1]

BY **BABATUNDE F. OBAMAMOYE**

JBDODANE

Above: The African Union's Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development policy was established in 2006.

Introduction

Some developments in Africa during the first decade of this century ushered in a shared viewpoint within the African Union's (AU) institutional space that one of the ways to propel sustainable peace within the African continent is through the forceful implementation of post-conflict reconstruction and development projects. This was a period when it became evident, both regionally and globally, that Africa would not achieve its desired prosperity and development unless sustainable stability was restored in a number of post-conflict states. In activating a coordinated

PHOTO: GCIS

The African Union is committed to strengthening African regionalism and cooperative engagement for a stable and prosperous Africa.

effort to pursue a conflict-free Africa,[2] AU policymakers placed priority on post-conflict peacebuilding activities.[3] The first prominent action carried out in this regard was the development of the AU's Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) policy in 2006. Six years later, it became apparent to African regional actors that the visionary ideas embedded in the PCRD framework were utopian and unrealistic unless there was a clear demonstration of African self-reliance, leadership and ownership in the area of resource mobilisation for such a complex enterprise. This consensual acknowledgement invariably culminated in the launch of the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) in 2012 as a flagship continental mechanism for mobilising resources within the African continent to build the institutional capacity of African states that were, and are, emerging from conflict.

However, despite the fact that different relevant organs of the AU considered the ASI as a necessary complementary and self-reliant mechanism for PCRD in 2012, seven years later it became an abandoned project. One of the implications of the atrophy of this African self-reliance programme is the renewed reality of inadequate resources and collectivist synergy that could strengthen the implementation processes of AU PCRD plans in post-conflict African states. In his report to the Peace and Security Council (PSC) on 22 March 2017, the chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) categorically stated that "the absence of financial and human resources remains a major obstacle to the implementation of the [AU] PCRD policy".[4] As informed by this background, this article explores three central questions. Why did the relevant organs of the AU consider the ASI as an indispensable framework for re-engineering PCRD in Africa in 2012, but a few years later it became a moribund initiative? Is it necessary to reactivate the ASI mechanism? What can be done to reinvigorate and institutionalise the mechanism for the implementation of the AU's PCRD ideas? The need to examine these questions for clear policy direction is expedient, as African leaders are still striving for sustainable stabilisation in many post-conflict states.

The article is divided into four sections. The first and second sections unpack the AU's pursuit of peacebuilding in Africa and the emergence and atrophy of the ASI respectively. The last two sections discuss why it is necessary to reactivate the ASI as an instrument for PCRD and how this can be achieved.

The 33rd African Union Heads of State Summit, in Ethiopia, was convened with the theme of 'Silencing the Guns by 2020', which includes economic, social and security issues in Africa (9 February 2020).

The African Union and the Pursuit of Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa

The transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the AU in 2002 was a remarkable development in the journey towards the strengthening and consolidation of African regionalism and cooperative engagement. It patently ushered in a new era of a shared commitment for a stable, strong and prosperous Africa.[5] This happened both in terms of redesigning institutional frameworks and a collectivist commitment to key issues central to African growth and development. Not only did the policy agenda of a number of African regional economic communities (RECs) shift to accommodate peace interventions, but the AU as the central international organisation for pan-African cooperation also embraced a more expansive agenda in the area of security practices. Ensuring a peaceful and stable Africa became a cardinal priority of the AU. This was at the heart of the recognition by African regional actors that Africa as a continent cannot develop beyond the level of stability that is permitted across its vast territorial space. Over the years, this has tremendously reinforced the AU's policybuilding in the area of peace and security. Many of the AU's recent ambitious goals – such as "silencing the guns by 2020",[6] as encapsulated in its Agenda 2063 – are products of shared African thoughts that place security stability as the fulcrum of African development.

A PRIME CONCERN OF THE AU IN THIS CONTEXT IS HOW TO PREVENT POST-CONFLICT STATES FROM RELAPSING INTO VIOLENCE

A prime concern of the AU in this context is how to prevent post-conflict states from relapsing into violence.[7] This focus dates back to 2002, when the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU was adopted. Article 3 of the Protocol expressly states that implementation of "peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction activities" will be a cardinal objective of the AU's PSC.[8] In actualising this objective, the AU decided to design its PCRD policy framework in 2006, following a thorough process of brainstorming and consultations. This marked a new phase of an AU policy-guided journey into the practice of post-conflict peacebuilding in fragile African states. The AU PCRD framework is an expression of African leaders' dogged determination to take post-conflict peacebuilding seriously in their development of the "Africa they want". The framework sets out the objectives,

principles, elements, actors and resource mobilisation strategies of the AU PCRD programme.

The PCRD policy aims to provide clear guidance for preventing conflict relapse, addressing underlying triggers of conflict, executing reconstruction activities and facilitating coordination among different actors in the practice of peacebuilding in Africa. The key principles guiding the AU's approach to PCRD are: "African leadership, national and local ownership, inclusiveness, equity and non-discrimination, cooperation and cohesion, and capacity-building for sustainability."[9] To demonstrate the comprehensiveness of African policymakers' perspectives on what peacebuilding should entail, the AU PCRD framework recognises that post-conflict interventions need focus on different, but interconnected, issues across the security, political, humanitarian, socio-economic, gender, justice and human rights spheres. The framework demonstrates the ambitious vision of African leaders in the peacebuilding effort that concomitantly foregrounds short-term, medium-term and long-term action plans for more sustainable engagement.[10] This was reinforced by an AU stakeholder when he noted that the AU approach to PCRD encapsulates three components of "stabilization, rebuilding and reconstruction, and development".[11] The framework equally demarcates responsibilities for actors at national, regional, continental and international levels to facilitate coordinated actions, subsidiarity and complementarity in the realm of post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa. The AU's PCRD framework showcases more than just a policy. It reflects a pan-African vision in AU peacebuilding engagement that does not just stabilise a state after a period of conflict, but equally helps such a country to follow a path of comprehensive reconstruction and sustainable development. The reason for this visionary idea is understandable: if peace and stability can be sustained in every African country that is emerging from violence, then the African collective aspiration for a united, stable and prosperous Africa would, in a very short time, come to reality.

Notwithstanding the level of willingness and commitment attributed to this post-conflict reconstruction undertaking, especially at the continental level, some challenges confronted the AU in its endeavour to implement the ideas and measures that are explicitly set out in the PCRD blueprint. This became clear, particularly from 2012 onwards, when a number of post-conflict African countries

ALEXANDER JOE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

South African President, Thabo Mbeki, addresses the Africa Forum of 20 former African heads of state, gathered to discuss "Mobilising International Support for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cote d'Ivoire" (31 October 2006).

STAFF SGT. BRADLEY C. CHURCH, U.S. AIR FORCE

The African Peace and Security Architecture reinforces the centrality of the African Solidarity Initiative as the continental resource mobilisation instrument for African Union peacebuilding undertakings.

could not be prevented from relapsing into conflict, despite the operationalisation of this framework.[12] A central problem was inadequate resources,[13] which mostly resulted from Africa's overdependence on extra-regional partners for resources when discharging peacebuilding activities. In other words, effective implementation of the AU PCRD projects in Africa was contingent on a degree of African self-reliance in the realm of resource ownership. It was this realisation for the necessity of a mechanism to mobilise resources from within the African continent, to strengthen AU interventions in post-conflict countries, that led to the launch of the ASI in July 2012.[14] This corroborates the contention put forward by Timothy Murithi that "adopting a strategy of coming together in the spirit of solidarity and cooperation is viewed by most African leaders as the only way forward,"[15] especially for reconstructing war-torn African societies.

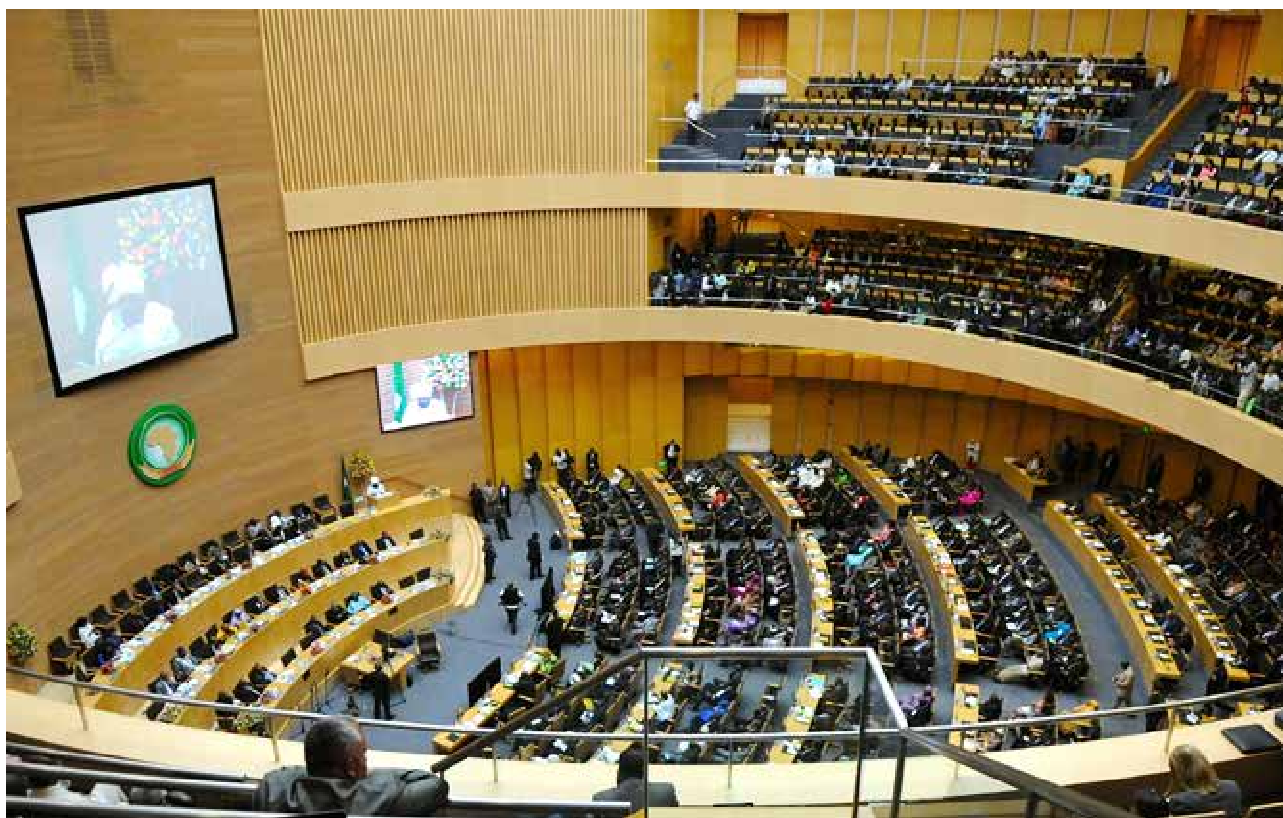
The Emergence and Atrophy of the African Solidarity Initiative

As a response to the urgency for an African self-reliance approach to peacebuilding in Africa, the ministers of foreign affairs of the AU member states officially launched the ASI on 13 July 2012, on the margins of the AU's 19th Ordinary Session of the Assembly.[16] This innovative mechanism was later endorsed by the AU Assembly; the highest decision-making body of the continental organisation. Based on the distinct characterisation of its purpose, the ASI was designed as the flagship scheme for mobilising both financial and in-kind resources from within the African continent for implementing the AU's PCRD action plan.[17] Some of the specific abridged objectives of the ASI include:

1. "to deepen the essence of African solidarity and promote a paradigm shift which center stages African mutual assistance;
2. to encourage, motivate, and empower African countries to offer support to post-conflict African states;
3. to provide a unique opportunity for generating additional 'out of the box' ideas for addressing PCRD challenges, by actively involving African actors;
4. to promote intra-African solutions to the complex challenges of post-conflict reconstruction;
5. to contribute towards a renewed sense of urgency in consolidating peace where it has been achieved".[18]

A CENTRAL PROBLEM WAS INADEQUATE RESOURCES, WHICH MOSTLY RESULTED FROM AFRICA'S OVERDEPENDENCE ON EXTRA-REGIONAL PARTNERS FOR RESOURCES WHEN DISCHARGING PEACEBUILDING ACTIVITIES

PUBLIC DOMAIN



The first African solidarity conference under the umbrella of the African Solidarity Initiative took place in Addis Ababa, to mobilise needed resources for post-conflict states across the African continent. It drew participants from different African countries and international partner organisations (1 February 2014).

By and large, the ASI is a complementary mechanism that was devised to help African actors to look inward in the process of their collective attempts in supporting post-conflict African states to prevent costly relapse.

The ASI was informed by the urgency to activate "the spirit of pan-Africanism, solidarity and African renaissance" that is necessary for the holistic implementation of the AU's documented peacebuilding strategy.[19] At a more theoretical level, what necessitated the development of the ASI in the overall agenda of the AU's PCRD has both internal and external dimensions. From the internal perspective, there was a notion of African oneness and the indivisibility of African security, which reminded the AU member states of the pressing need to work together and showcase mutual solidarity in the PCRD for a stable Africa. From the external perspective, there was a realisation that extra-regional support was neither reliable nor sufficient to reconstruct and develop African societies that were coming out of violence. From both perspectives, it was a means to project African self-reliance and African ownership. It was not a mistake, therefore, that the initiative was launched under the motto "Africans helping Africa".

The ASI is therefore not just an intra-African resource mobilisation instrument, but equally an African model on how to approach peacebuilding in a way that can yield expected results. It identifies some key strategies through which its overarching aim could be achieved. These include the deployment of advocacy and lobby missions on behalf of post-conflict African states for different strategic purposes; the organisation of African solidarity conferences (ASCs) to assemble varying resources for projects in post-conflict African states; the development of capacity-building programmes for institutional empowerment in post-conflict African states; convening experience-sharing workshops where post-conflict African states would have the opportunity to learn from the experiences of other African states; the deployment of expertise to post-conflict countries by other African states; and the organisation of investment forums for the purpose of facilitating the African private sector's involvement in the AU's PCRD undertakings. The responsibility of coordinating the implementation of the central dictates of the ASI was bestowed on the AUC. It was envisaged that the AUC would do this by developing a corresponding implementation roadmap, in consultation with relevant stakeholders such as the beneficiary states, RECs, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), among others. Following this mandate, a meeting was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 24 to 26 October 2012, to put in place a roadmap for the

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Some of the African Union's ongoing intra-African solidarity actions on post-conflict reconstruction in countries, such as, South Sudan, are carried out without any explicit reference to the African Solidarity Initiative.

implementation of the scheme. The outcome of the meeting was adopted as the three-year roadmap for the execution of the ASI agenda.

In the last seven years, the AUC has attempted the implementation of the ASI by putting some of its ideas into practice. Two central achievements are noted. First, at the policy level, the ASI gained visibility as the AU's flagship continental mechanism for mobilising diverse resources from within the African continent for rebuilding African countries that are emerging from violence. The 2016–2020 African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) reinforces the centrality of the ASI as the continental resource mobilisation instrument for AU peacebuilding undertakings in Africa. Second, at the implementation level, two ASCs have been organised so far. On 1 February 2014, the first ASC under the umbrella of the ASI was organised in Addis Ababa to mobilise needed resources for post-conflict states across the African continent. It drew participants from different African countries and partner international organisations, such as the AfDB, UNECA and so on. The second ASC was held on 1 February 2017, specifically to mobilise multifaceted support for the implementation of AU PCRD projects in the Central African Republic (CAR). These resource-raising conferences recorded only a very limited level of success, as the total financial donation traceable to the two instances is US$25 000, which was contributed by Liberia in 2017.[20]

The current reality shows that the ASI as an instrument for implementing the AU's PCRD policy is gradually becoming an abandoned project. Besides the fact that the mechanism has not been effective in mobilising financial and in-kind resources for PCRD engagements in Africa, it is very hard today to find the continuing relevance of the scheme in the AU's present peacebuilding enterprise. According to an AU policymaker, the "ASI has become a dead policy".[21] In fact, some of the AU's ongoing intra-African solidarity actions on post-conflict reconstruction in countries such as The Gambia and South Sudan are carried out without any explicit reference to the ASI. A question that needs to be broached at this point is: what could have accounted for the atrophy of the initially celebrated ASI? Some of the key reasons that accounted for this development include the following. First, there is a problem of an "ambition-commitment gap"[22] in the member states' response to the ASI as a framework. There is no misgiving about the fact that the AU member states tend to have a shared ambition and conviction of the necessity for all African actors to collectively support post-conflict African countries to revamp and create an African continent that is peaceful, stable and developed. It was this very shared idea

that propelled the process which eventually culminated in the creation of the ASI. Nonetheless, the actual commitment in this regard is either exiguous or not commensurable. This explains why pledges made by some member states during the 2014 ASC have still not been redeemed.[23]

Second, the AUC's approach to the implementation of the ASI may have been problematic. The roadmap that was adopted for the three-year implementation of the mechanism was not comprehensive.[24] It only identified *what* needed to be achieved in the first three years, and not *how* it would be achieved. The roadmap for implementation lacked details on specific strategies and processes. There also did not appear to have been follow-through on the roadmap. Even though it was recommended in the action plan, neither the ASI Secretariat nor the ASI Joint Steering Committee were created for the actualisation of the ASI. The three-year time frame for the roadmap elapsed in 2015 and no extended actionable plan was developed for the ASI, despite its recognition in the 2016–2020 APSA Roadmap as a subsisting instrument for the AU's PCRD policy.

Third, there was a focus solely on the financial and state-centric aspects of the ASI, at the expense of other important parts of the initiative. It is therefore not surprising that the few documented efforts to operationalise the programme relied heavily on the utility of the ASCs, where the targeted resources were financial pledges and where the participants were mainly state actors. Invariably, other significant African actors such as the private sector, civil society organisations, academia, African experts, the diaspora and so on were rejected. In addition, other techniques – such as advocacy and lobbying missions, intra-African sharing of expertise, capacity-building programmes, tapping into existing bilateral technical cooperation schemes, investment forums and experience-sharing workshops – were also not given focus.

Fourth, for the past seven years, there was neither an active department coordinating actions under the ASI framework nor any implementation stakeholders that could engage different African actors and sectors at strategic levels for the robust implementation of the ASI. To this end, even though some of the AU's recent resource mobilisation approaches for PCRD in Africa conveniently fall under the logic of the ASI programme, they were never executed through the ASI. For example, the pan-African deployment of experts to South Sudan and Gambia did not occur under the ASI.

THE ROADMAP THAT WAS ADOPTED FOR THE THREE-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MECHANISM WAS NOT COMPREHENSIVE

UN PHOTO/LOGAN ABASSI

Reconstruction for sustainable stability in post-conflict states consistently demands enormous resources and efforts.

Is it Necessary to Reinvigorate the African Solidarity Initiative?

The AU's engagement in PCRD is a continuous, long-term process, as different African countries are still in their post-conflict phases. African policymakers have identified PCRD as one of the pathways to rekindle, renew and reengineer African growth and sustainable development. In this regard, is it necessary to reinvigorate the ASI as an instrument for implementing the AU's PCRD policy? Answering this question is important for setting a policy direction for relevant AU organs and stakeholders in the context of their resource mobilisation strategies for post-conflict reconstruction in Africa. Three reasons stand out for the need to reorganise, re-energise and relaunch the ASI framework.

AFRICAN POLICYMAKERS HAVE IDENTIFIED PCRD AS ONE OF THE PATHWAYS TO REKINDLE, RENEW AND REENGINEER AFRICAN GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

First, the reactivation of the ASI mechanism would strengthen African self-reliance in the AU's PCRD activities and address the problem of overdependence on unpredictable international donors in African peacebuilding. It is worth noting that the underlying issues and challenges which led to the introduction of the ASI in 2012 are still very much relevant in the overall analysis of PCRD in Africa today. Because civil wars are always devastating and destructive to existing national structures, it is common knowledge that reconstruction for sustainable stability in post-conflict states consistently demands enormous resources and efforts. However, in the case of Africa, due to the combined factors of donor fatigue, preconditionality and inimical interests, resources coming from outside Africa are neither dependable nor sufficient to establish enduring peaceful coexistence in many post-conflict African countries.[25] Siphamandla Zondi contends that "dependence on external financing of peacebuilding defeats the very purpose of the AU approach".[26] Reports from interdisciplinary missions that were deployed to different post-war African countries reveal that resource scarcity, in different forms, is central to the challenges confronting post-conflict stabilisation projects in Africa.[27] At least for the next few years, resources contributed by international partners are never going to be sufficient for implementing the AU's agenda in post-conflict peacebuilding. It is still in the collective interest of African stakeholders to jointly look inward for an effective, self-reliant resource mobilisation strategy that will prevent further conflict relapse. In the words of Claude Ake, "A vague belief in a common destiny, and the failure of certain imported Western institutions [and solutions] have predisposed Africans to look increasingly within the continent for the answers to their problems."[28] As such, the revival of the ASI is one of the surest ways to rekindle and institutionalise African self-reliance and ownership in the AU's peacebuilding endeavours and for operationalising the shared idea of "African solutions to Africa's problems".[29]

Second, reviving the ASI is pivotal for institutionalising a unique African approach to PCRD that could hardly be offered externally. For so long, Western powers and their international agencies have somehow placed liberal democracy – and perhaps liberal economic reforms – at the heart of their approach to peacebuilding in post-conflict countries, particularly in the Global South.[30] The acute implication of this is that they pay less attention to other key aspects of peacebuilding, such as capacity-building, experience-sharing, investment and the participation of African private sector actors. These missing aspects are what the ASI can focus on in the AU's PCRD engagement, by harnessing human and technical resources from within the African continent.

Third, the reinvigoration of the ASI framework is indispensable for consolidating, empowering, institutionalising and channelling age-long African solidarity norms for peacebuilding interventions in Africa. The practice of African solidarity and mutual assistance, even in the face of post-conflict realities, is key in the international relations between and among countries in Africa. However, the operationalisation of this solidarity norm is ad hoc, disjointed and uncoordinated, and therefore does not yield expected outcomes in terms of adequate resources mobilisation for African post-conflict reconstruction. The revival of the ASI framework would help to institutionalise coordination and synergy in African solidarity norms for more effective post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa. The robust implementation of the AU's PCRD policy, in this case, requires the effective operationalisation of the ASI framework.[31]

Conclusion: Recommendations for the Resuscitation of the African Solidarity Initiative

The usefulness of the ASI in the AU's PCRD interventions in Africa is indispensable and cannot be overemphasised. Resuscitation of the ASI would re-engineer and strengthen the AU's efforts in post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa. How, then, can the ASI be reactivated?

First, there must be a renewal of political engagement at strategic policy levels. The present key document containing the ASI ideas is, at best, a declarative statement, which is more a statement of intention and does not contain concrete steps to bring it to reality. There should be a purposeful policy framework designed, which contains details for implementation to become a clear action plan. This is important for at least three reasons. It would rekindle a new political commitment and buy-in at strategic levels across the relevant AU decision-making organs; articulate the ASI's

CARSTEN TEN BRINK

Private sector actors, such as Mobile Telephone Networks (MTN), have the capacity to offer necessary contributions for sustainable peacebuilding interventions in Africa.

implementation modalities; and enunciate how it differs from, or relates to, the AU Peace Fund (PF).

Second, the means of generating financial resources for the ASI, particularly from the member states, should focus exclusively on the PF rather than the ASC, to avoid duplication of contributions. In this scenario, the means of funding the initiative through African-owned resources would be self-assuring, since African countries are increasingly demonstrating their commitments to the AU's PF.[32] This is not difficult to achieve, since the AU PSC, at its 593rd meeting on 26 April 2016, unequivocally asserted that a percentage of the PF would "be dedicated to support AU PCRD projects on the continent".[33]

Third, there should be a focus on the mobilisation of in-kind resources, while depending on the PF as a key financial source. In-kind supports – which are not necessarily measured in monetary terms – are germane for sustainable peacebuilding processes. Effective mobilisation of in-kind resources through the ASI would invariably strengthen the AU's interventions in post-conflict states. A clear way to facilitate this process is for AU policymakers to develop a strategy that would integrate existing pan-African bilateral cooperation into the ASI framework.

Fourth, African private sector actors must be engaged to participate and contribute to the ASI. For the past seven years, these actors have been largely neglected in the effort to implement the ASI. Many of these private sector actors, such as Mobile Telephone Networks (MTN), have the capacity to offer necessary contributions that are pivotal for peacebuilding interventions in Africa.

Fifth, there is no doubt that the newly established AU PCRD Centre has a central role to play if the ASI becomes an effective and functioning mechanism for intra-African resource mobilisation for peacebuilding interventions in Africa. The centre should be empowered as a platform for coordinating and implementing the ASI project in terms of advocacy, strategic engagement and reporting.

Finally, a group of ASI implementation stakeholders and advocates should be established. The membership of the group should include, among others, regular AU staff, peacebuilding policy experts and representatives of some member states. They should serve as the interface, while working very closely with the PCRD Centre in engaging different African constituencies in the implementation of the ASI.

The renascence of the ASI as a way of empowering African peacebuilding is not impossible. To achieve this goal, however, demands a new ASI implementation framework, activation of the PF as the ASI's major financial source, and placing of more focus on in-kind resource mobilisation within

the scheme. There is also a need for the participation of African private sector actors, coordinating the role of the AU PCRD Centre and the establishment of ASI implementation ambassadors. Taking these steps may be necessary for an African renaissance in the area of post-conflict peacebuilding. As Ali Mazrui asserted, "African hopes may… lie in other areas of organized self-reliance."[34]

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Endnotes

1 This research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) scholarship.

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6 "Silencing the Guns by 2020" is a policy agenda enunciated by the AU's Assembly of Head of State and Government on 26 May 2013. It aims at ending all violent conflicts in Africa by the year 2020. For more information about this policy goal, see OAU/AU (2013) *50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, 26 May*.

7 African Union (2015) op. cit.

8 African Union (2002) *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union*. Addis Ababa: African Union Commission.

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10 Lotze, Walter and De Coning, Cedric (2010) Looking Back when Looking Forward: Peacebuilding Policy Approaches and Processes in Africa. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 5 (2), p. 108.

11 Personal interview, 17 September 2019. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This further buttresses Zondi's argument that the "AU sees peace as linked to development". See Zondi, Siphamandla (2017) African Union Approaches to Peacebuilding: Efforts at Shifting the Continent towards Decolonial Peace. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 17 (1), p. 123.

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15 Murithi, Timothy (2005) op. cit., p. 2.

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17 Lucey, Amanda and Gida, Sibongile (2014) Enhancing South Africa's Post-conflict Development Role in the African Union. *Institute for Security Studies (ISS),* Paper 256, May.

18 African Union (2012a) op. cit.

19 Ibid.

20 Personal Interview, 23 August 2019. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

21 Personal interview, 17 September 2019. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

22 The concept of "ambition-commitment gap" resembles what Lucey and Gida describe as "over-committing and under-delivering". Lucey, Amanda and Gida, Sibongile (2014) op. cit.

23 For a detailed analysis of pledges made during this conference, see Bruce-Tetteh, Vivian (2014) *Drafted Report on the African Solidarity Conference*.

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25 Englebert, Pierre and Tull, Denis M. (2008) Postconflict Reconstruction in Africa: Flawed Ideas about Failed States. *International Security*, (32) 4, pp. 106–139.

26 See Zondi, Siphamandla (2017) op. cit., p. 125.

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30 Paris, Roland (2004) *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

31 The points raised in this section reinforce the opinions and thoughts shared by a number of AU policymakers and practitioners during the author's personal communication with them.

32 Personal interview, 24 September 2019. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

33 AU PSC (2016), *Communiqué*, PSC/PR/COMM. (DXCIII), 26 April, Addis Ababa.

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OLYMPIA DE MAISMONT/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

SOCIAL MEDIA: A SPACE FOR DIALOGUE OR A TOOL FOR WARFARE?

BY **CAROLYNE MANDE LUNGA**

Introduction

The power of social media in contemporary society cannot be ignored. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp, among others, provide a space in which society can communicate freely and cheaply, articulating their divergent viewpoints. Social media can be used to promote peace and tolerance if used carefully. However, academics have noted that social media can also have destructive consequences for society, such as heightened conflicts and hatred, due to the spread of "fake" information from various sectors of society. There is empirical evidence showing how social media has been used as a tool to promote hate speech and the isolation of certain groups in society. When parties with divergent viewpoints take their conflict into the offline sphere, it can lead to bloodshed and death.

Above: Social media has the power to raise awareness and help issues get out into the global public arena.

YASSINE GAIDI/ANADOLU AGENCY VIA GETTY IMAGES

People clean the streets in Tunis to raise awareness for environmental cleaning organised via social media during a cleaning campaign in Tunisia (20 October 2019).

This article provides examples of movements on Facebook and Twitter, which show how social media is a place for both good and destructive conflict resolution. "Good" refers to the idea that social media can give marginalised groups voice and help protesters acquire solidarity with the international community, resulting in policy change and action from government and other stakeholders. "Destructive" refers to the idea that social media can be used to create tensions and spread "fake news" with the intention to mislead, thereby inciting conflict and violence.

Literature Review

The internet and social media are a huge part of our lives, and they feature prominently in our social and political lives. They affect how we do business, share information and knowledge and how we relate to other people in the local and global contexts. Social media refers to "specific sets of internet-based and networked communication platforms enabling a convergence of public and personal communication".[1] Social media is also defined as referring to the content posted on various social platforms.[2] This content ranges from images, videos and texts about personal, social and political lives posted and shared on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, among others. Other scholarly definitions emphasise how information and ideas are shared within an online community via mobile phones, tablets and desktop computers, among other tools, if they are connected to the internet.[3] The power of social media in raising awareness helps issues get out into the global public arena. The explosion of online political groups and activism across the world shows how citizens use social media to air their grievances, which extends their participation in the social and political spheres,[4] or their participation in the Habermasian public sphere,[5] which refers to the social spaces where individuals gather to discuss their common public affairs. "Digital storytelling and the internet thus provide a powerful counterpoint to mainstream, or political narratives and act as conduits for stimulating dialogue amongst ordinary citizens and influencing change."[6]

There has been an increase in the number of online protests, as citizens continue to clamour for the respect of human rights and the rule of law the world over. Through social media, citizens are able to freely express themselves on social and political issues. Scholars argue that "the

REUTERS/ZOHRA BENSEMRA

Simon Munzu, who is campaigning for peace in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, shows a threat message posted against him on social media by separatists (November 2018).

internet is seen as helping marginalised groups develop their own deliberative forums, link up, and subsequently contest dominant meanings and practices" through the creation and exchange of user-generated content.[7] The role of alternative media in reinforcing the ability of subaltern groups to challenge dominant power structures is made evident.[8]

On the other hand, scholars have noted that there are negative uses of social media by citizens that have detrimental results. People use social media to attack the reputation of others, to post inflammatory and digressive messages, and to persecute others. This is evident in the spread of hate speech for the promotion of violent agendas, and the spread of fake news with the deliberate intention to mislead.[9] Social media is used by some as weapons of war to discredit and fight the "enemy" through fake news.[10] Fake news and online misinformation are serious problems across the world.[11] Bots and the rise of artificial intelligence are contributing to the spread of false content via fake user accounts, making conflict inevitable. With the opening of the democratic space, more fake news is being circulated online, which undermines trust in mainstream media, builds and feeds on community divisions, and distorts democratic processes.[12] False news spreads fast on social media, and those behind it do it knowingly or unknowingly.[13] The British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) research project on fake news in India, Kenya and Nigeria in 2018 showed that health, religion and terrorism were among the issues circulated under the banner of fake news, with the intention to create scares and fuel hate speech, leading to violence and death.[14]

WITH THE OPENING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SPACE, MORE FAKE NEWS IS BEING CIRCULATED ONLINE, WHICH UNDERMINES TRUST IN MAINSTREAM MEDIA, BUILDS AND FEEDS ON COMMUNITY DIVISIONS, AND DISTORTS DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

Protest Movements in Africa and Across the World

Through social media, society has witnessed the communication, organisation and mobilisation of various kinds of protests including the Arab Spring (2011), #BlackLivesMatter (2013), #BringBackOurGirls (2014) and #MeToo (2017), among others. Through these protest

movements, oppressed groups were able to share their grievances and find support in the global world[15] via social media platforms. The #BringBackOurGirls[16] campaign, which started in 2014 after more than 200 girls were kidnapped by the Boko Haram insurgent group from Chibok Secondary School in north-east Nigeria, shows how tweets from a few Nigerians gave birth to a global response in support of the cause.[17] As soon as the cause spread on social media, it became one of international importance. Social media played a key role in forcing the issue onto the international agenda as millions, including the former first lady of the United States of America (USA), Michelle Obama, posted images of themselves in support of the cause.[18] However, without real action on the ground, hashtags, likes and shares cannot bring real meaningful change, as some scholars argue. The advantage of social media in this movement is seen in how "the spotlight continues to shine on the plight of the Chibok girls, years after the kidnapping".[19] However, others argue that the Nigerian government did not do enough to address this challenge, as kidnappings by Boko Haram continued.[20] Online campaigns only helped campaigners and journalists put pressure on the Nigerian government, but nothing much changed.

IN THE USA, WOMEN PROTESTED POLICIES SUCH AS REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS, IMMIGRATION AND CIVIL RIGHTS, AND POLICE VIOLENCE IMMEDIATELY AFTER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP TOOK OFFICE IN 2017

The Women's March in 2017 in the USA and #MeToo movements began on Facebook and gathered international support. These movements also demonstrated the blurred line between the online and offline worlds. In the USA, women protested policies such as reproductive rights, immigration and civil rights, and police violence immediately after President Donald Trump took office in 2017.[21] The marches, across the different states, involved hundreds of thousands of women with support from influential personalities, such as former first lady Hillary Clinton and Senator Elizabeth Warren, and many celebrities. The #MeToo movement involved millions of individuals

PUBLIC DOMAIN

The former first lady of the United States of America, Michelle Obama, posted images in support of the #BringBackOurGirls campaign.

around the world, who used the #MeToo hashtag in support of survivors of sexual harassment and violence in the wake of sexual harassment and assault allegations against high-profile Hollywood producer, Harvey Weinstein.[22] The mass sharing of the #MeToo hashtag in 24 hours made apparent the magnitude of sexual harassment against women across the world, as it gave rise to further movements by women in different parts of the world (China, Spain, Italy and Argentina, among others). It also helped women establish a community of survivors, and is seen as a historic milestone in the fight for women's rights. In Africa, #MeToo took its own form as African women held marches in various places. Social media[23] is thus empowering women and other marginalised groups in society, enabling them to voice their grievances.

In South Africa, thousands of women embarked on marches in 2019 "at the government's failure to deal with rising violence against women in the wake of a string of brutal attacks that shocked the country".[24] The protest, organised by WomenProtestSA, saw local celebrities and thousands of people take to social media to express their anger and frustrations about gender violence under the hashtags #NotInMyName, #AmINext and #SAShutDown. Before the protest, women used social media to share images of women who were murdered by their partners and were often victims of rape.[25] There was anger over the state's failure to protect women and children. The protest was an indication that there is a crisis of gender-based violence in the country that needs urgent action.

In Zimbabwe, a movement by citizens started on Facebook enabled them to challenge late former president Robert Mugabe's power in 2016–2017. The #ThisFlag movement, which was started accidentally on Facebook by Pastor Evan Mawarire, attracted tens of thousands of hits and went viral. Local citizens in public and private institutions, together with those in neighbouring countries such as South Africa and in the wider diaspora, joined in the protest when they demonstrated at various Zimbabwean consulate offices, demanding that Mugabe and his government step down. Mawarire's Facebook video and subsequent posts on Twitter helped set the stage for the biggest protest against the government. The movement, which became known as #ShutdownZimbabwe, came in the wake of a deepening economic crisis in the country that had resulted in failure by the government to pay civil servants on time.[26] Increasing levels of unemployment among graduates, corruption and police brutality, among others, were on the list of problems cited by aggrieved protesters. Restricted democratic space has spawned a multiplicity of alternative public spheres that

PHILL MAGAKOE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

South African women and supporters protest against increased gender-based violence in the country (27 September 2019).

JEKESAI NJIKIZANA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Supporters of the #ThisFlag campaign protest peacefully outside the Harare magistrate's court where Pastor Evan Mawarire appeared on charges of inciting public violence and attempting to overthrow the government (July 2016).

give groups and individuals the power to participate and engage in debates on the Zimbabwean crises and resistance to state propaganda churned out through the mainstream media.[27]

The #ThisFlag movement gained international sympathy and support, and influenced the global and regional news media agenda when large media organisations such as Cable News Network (CNN), the BBC, Africa News Network (ANN7), South Africa Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), Al Jazeera and Sky News, among others, reported these events, thus placing Zimbabwe in the international spotlight and putting pressure on Mugabe's government to introduce reforms. The Zimbabwe media, which was largely pro-government, attempted to play down the movement, but it was difficult because it had already gathered momentum and become a global spectacle, with mounting pressure for Mugabe and his government to step down coming from within and outside Zimbabwe. In response to the protest, Mugabe's government reduced the number of police officers on the streets and provided salary payment dates for civil servants, but the government also intensified efforts to regulate social media.

Social media has become a focal point for uniting individuals, regardless of their personal experiences, cultural differences and geographic location. The importance of social media in enabling citizens to organise themselves and garner support on a national and international scale is evident in the many examples of protests.

SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BECOME A FOCAL POINT FOR UNITING INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The downside of social media is evident in its use to propagate fake news and hate speech with the intention of creating instability and conflict. Fake news is being used as a political weapon in conflict. A Reuters investigation[28] exposed more than 1 000 examples of hateful posts, images and comments against the Muslim community in Myanmar. For example, Twitter was used to spread hate speech against the Rohingya. Examples from the Reuters report indicate that posts referred to the Rohingya as "dogs, maggots, rapists and that they should be fed to pigs, be shot and exterminated", among others.[29] The same tools used in the

PHILL MAGAKOE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Myanmar's presidential spokesman, Ye Htut, delivers a speech during a conference organised by the United States Embassy in Yangon (28 June 2013). The Embassy hosted the conference on hate speech in Myanmar after bouts of deadly religious violence raised questions about the nation's reform process.

previously mentioned protests that galvanised people for a common good cause can also be used to promote hate and isolation. As social media's presence in our society grows, there is more fear of increasing polarisation, hate speech and fake news, which all fuel conflict.[30] Facebook was blamed for failing to control the crisis in Myanmar. An analyst from the Institute for War and Peace Reporting who led a two-year study of hate speech in Myanmar, Alan Davis, said that in the months before August 2017, he noticed posts on Facebook becoming "more organised and odious, and more militarised".[31]

Similarly, in the 2019 xenophobic attacks against migrants in South Africa, which led to thousands being displaced and several dying, social media was used by perpetrators of violence to circulate misinformation and rumours to foster panic and confusion. "Anti-migrant rhetoric had been circulating on social media among groups alleging immigrants cheat their customers with out-of-date produce in their shops, take jobs from locals and defraud the state."[32] During the attacks, old videos and photos of violence from other countries were circulated online and passed off as recent footage, which provoked outrage in South Africa and outside the country.[33] Some individuals in other countries such as Nigeria, who saw the images and videos, began attacking South Africans in their country.[34] Scholars have highlighted that in conflict, the spread of information on social media is increased, making it difficult to control.

Conclusion

It is clear that social media can be used by people as a tool for good and bad. Some of the good or positive uses are when users share their grievances online with the potential of getting national and international support. This puts pressure on local governments to introduce reforms to help solve problems. On the negative side, people use social media to spread hate speech, fake news and propaganda, which incites conflict and violence and can result in death. While both the positive and negative examples of social media in conflict have been discussed, the positive uses of social media in conflict resolution should be encouraged among people. Social media can be used to prevent conflict if users share constructive messages and create peace campaigns.[35] Social media can play a huge role in emancipating and giving voice to those who otherwise may not be heard, with the potential to become a significant factor in conflict resolution.

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SOUTH AFRICA'S POSSIBLE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT: IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND ZIMBABWE

BY **INNOCENT MANGWIRO**

Introduction

Human rights violations continue to dominate Zimbabwe's social and political spaces. Despite being a signatory to continental and global human rights conventions, Zimbabwe's commitment to human rights remains questionable. As there remains a rift between the African Union (AU), some member states and the International Criminal Court (ICC), the South African government tabled a motion in parliament to withdraw from the Rome Statute in October 2019. This followed an earlier attempt in October 2016 to withdraw, one year after the then AU chairperson, Robert Mugabe, insisted that its members must not cooperate with the ICC, as it was accused of being anti-African.[1] South Africa initially rejected

REUTERS/EVERT ELZINGA/POOL

The International Criminal Court issues a ruling on South Africa's failure to arrest Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir, during a three-day visit in June 2015, during a session of the Court in The Hague, Netherlands (6 July 2017).

the call for non-cooperation but, in 2015, refused to arrest Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir, with the ICC's powers of universal jurisdiction, signalling contempt of court.[2] Given this context, this article contends that it will not be South Africans who will bear the consequences if the country eventually succeeds and withdraws from the ICC, but other African people living under regimes without good human rights records, such as Zimbabwe. While the dimension of South Africa's geopolitical interests in Africa has sufficiently been analysed by Isike and Ogunnubi,[3] I argue that the implications for human rights of the country's withdrawal have not been exhausted.

South Africa's withdrawal from the ICC can have both negative and positive consequences for human rights in Zimbabwe. It could lead to more human rights violations in Zimbabwe, as South Africa might remain silent on issues of accountability on international crimes to win allies. However, South Africa could push for the ratification of the Malabo Protocol, as has been predicted[4], which would compel it to hold Zimbabwe accountable for human rights violations, with international crimes enunciated in the African Court of Justice and Human Rights (ACJHR). The justification for linking South Africa's withdrawal to Zimbabwe lies in the fact that whenever there is a crisis in Zimbabwe (persecution of human rights defenders, violence and economic collapse), many Zimbabweans seek refuge in South Africa. Victims without proper documentation face refoulement, often preceded by counter-accusations between the two states and less diplomatic commitment to address undocumented refugees.

The article proceeds with historical antecedents of international criminal trials and the ICC's work in Africa since its conception. There is no shortage of literature in this area, but it helps to understand the background of South Africa's willingness to cease to be a signatory of the Rome Statute. Following an analysis of South Africa's grounds for leaving the ICC, the article discusses the implications for human

SOUTH AFRICA'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ICC CAN HAVE BOTH NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN ZIMBABWE

rights in Zimbabwe – itself a signatory to the Rome Statute, but not a party member of the ICC. Zimbabwe benefits from South Africa's involvement, largely due to the socio-economic and political ties that exist between these two southern African neighbours.

Historical Antecedents of ICC Trials

The ICC was preceded by ad hoc tribunals that were intended to hold perpetrators of human rights violations to account, following harrowing experiences of aggression and genocides. Serious human rights violations that were classified as international crimes were committed during the First World War and Second World War, as well as genocides in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.[5] The Nuremburg Trial and Tokyo Trial were designed to deal with the crimes of the Second World War following the conceptualisation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945, whilst the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 827 established the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to deal with the genocide that claimed thousands of lives during the ethnic conflicts which led to the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia.[6] After the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was established under UNSC Resolution 955.[7] The key objective of these tribunals was to prosecute perpetrators of the genocides and war crimes so that such heinous crimes are never repeated, referred to by Mills as the "never again" stance of the UN on international crimes.[8]

For the UN and member states, the ICC was established as a permanent court – as opposed to the original ad hoc tribunals – to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of such crimes.[9] The Nuremburg and Tokyo trials were established to address serious human rights violations in specific parts of the world. The ICC was largely concentrated in Africa during a period when most African leaders referred cases to the Court amidst serious violations during, and after, the third wave of democratisation. Of course, this does not mean that the ICC should not have acted in regions where international crimes were being committed.

ICC and Africa

As previously stated, there is no shortage of literature on the work and controversies of the ICC in Africa. The court's record gives a sense of why South Africa is determined to withdraw its membership. At the outset, it is important to underscore that the mandate and scope of the ICC regards it as a court of last resort, as it can only prosecute if national courts are unwilling or unable to, or if the ICC is invited by

UN PHOTO/MILTON GRANT

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was established by the United Nations Security Council, following the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

UN PHOTO/RICK BAJORNAS

The International Criminal Court was established as a permanent court to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocides, war crimes and other heinous crimes.

a country to do so.[10] As such, in 2003, the government of Uganda referred cases in northern Uganda, involving Lord's Resistance Army leaders Joseph Kony and others. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) did the same in 2004, resulting in arrests in the eastern part of the country, while the Central African Republic (CAR) followed with a referral in 2005 leading to the pre-trial detention of former vice-president, Jean-Pierre Bemba.[11] Drexler added that these cases were less controversial because they originated from incumbent governments. But things turned controversial when the UNSC requested that the ICC indict al-Bashir in connection with the Darfur atrocities. Many scholars agree that until the attempted indictment of al-Bashir, African governments who had referred cases to the Court wanted to take advantage of incumbents to reign over political opponents. The furore originated from the long pursuance of al-Bashir, followed by Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta. This posed a threat to other African ruling elites as they could also be indicted, and they thus coalesced to withdraw from the Rome Statute.

From a transitional justice and legal perspective, when the ICC was invited to investigate, there was an acknowledgement that heinous crimes were committed and that perpetrators were expected to account for their atrocities. This does not regard whoever holds power, but who was responsible for the crimes committed. Although some African governments did not like the idea of the UNSC inviting the ICC to Sudan, the harrowing conflict experiences in Darfur were real and the atrocities could not be ignored. The UNSC itself is often accused of being anti-African, as the permanent member league of five excludes any African states. If the ICC is still being accused of being anti-African, then the December 2019 declaration by the prosecutor general to open investigations of war crimes between Israel and Palestine might change such perceptions. The prosecutor said: "I am satisfied that… war crimes have been or are being committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza strip."[12] Such developments might quash allegations that the ICC is anti-African. The closest meaningful explanation would be that the ICC was invited to Africa when serious crimes were being committed there. Its progression towards the Middle East and Asia shows some degree of concern for human rights violations, regardless of location.

THE UNSC ITSELF IS OFTEN ACCUSED OF BEING ANTI-AFRICAN, AS THE PERMANENT MEMBER LEAGUE OF FIVE EXCLUDES ANY AFRICAN STATES

UN PHOTO/ESKINDER DEBEBE

In 2014, the African Union (AU) at its Heads of State and Government meeting in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, adopted the Protocol on Amendments to the Protocol of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACJHR) Statute, otherwise known as the Malabo Protocol. The AU foresees the ACJHR as an alternative to the International Criminal Court to deal with international crimes committed in Africa.

The Malabo Protocol

In 2014, the AU adopted the Protocol on Amendments to the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights to extend its jurisdiction to crimes under international law and transnational crimes.[13] Amnesty International acknowledged that the contents of the Protocol are praiseworthy, with the inclusion of respect for human rights, sanctity of life, rejection and fighting impunity, peace, stability and the prevention of serious crimes seen as progressive.[14] It is important to note that the AU accelerated its efforts to ratify the Protocol following the warrants of arrests against al-Bashir, Kenyatta and William Ruto, among other sitting leaders, giving an impression that the ACJHR would replace the ICC in Africa to make sure that sitting presidents are not indicted. This departure would more likely extend impunity, given that more often than not, incumbents, with state power behind them, are usually the perpetrators of heinous human rights violations. However, it might be premature to conclude that it will be difficult for the ACJHR to address human rights violations without the indictment of heads of states.

South Africa's Mooted Withdrawal from the ICC

South Africa intends to withdraw from the ICC because it claimed that "the ICC was incompatible with its efforts to mediate peace in Africa".[15] The South African government also stated, in its withdrawal notification, that "the ICC as a judicial body has lost its credibility because of its relationship with the UNSC and also because of perceived focus on African states notwithstanding the clear evidence of violations outside Africa".[16]

Some see economic interests as a primary reason for why South Africa wants to leave the ICC. As Africa's economic giant, many countries would be expected to support South Africa's interests. However, South Africa has also long been accused of being "condescending to other African countries, rendering its attempt to assume the moral high ground regarding the ICC patronizing at best".[17] It would be interesting to see how African nations react to the withdrawal of their so-called "patronizing friend". South Africa may also want to prove that it can impartially mediate peace in Africa. Of course, the country previously deployed peacekeeping missions in the DRC and the CAR, among others, after the ICC had already started prosecuting

REUTERS/PHILIMON BULAWAYO

South African president, Thabo Mbeki, arrives to mediate meetings aimed at resolving the crisis resulting from Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's victory in the June 2008 presidential election, which was boycotted by the opposition and widely condemned (9 August 2008).

in Africa. This suggests that South Africa can still be effective in mediating conflicts in Africa with the ICC present. South Africa mediated between political parties in Zimbabwe in 2008 to bridge the worsening human rights situation following a disputed election, but its stance on accountability for human rights violations committed was not clear. This could be the reason why Isike and Ogunnubi concluded that South Africa's intentions are centred around winning back African trust.

South Africa, Zimbabwe and Withdrawal from the ICC

When post-electoral violence broke out in Zimbabwe in 2008, the then South African president, Thabo Mbeki, played a crucial role in brokering dialogue between political parties that had participated in the election. On the economic front, Zimbabwe gets 49.4% of its total imports from South Africa, making South Africa Zimbabwe's largest trading partner.[18] The two countries share economic and political interests in the region. A crisis in Zimbabwe – be it humanitarian or human rights violations – therefore affects South Africa, too. Mbeki returned to Zimbabwe in December 2019 to persuade political parties to talk and to halt the worsening human rights, economic, social and political crisis. These relations could imply that Zimbabwe would support its neighbour's intent to leave the ICC. However, such support could have unforeseen consequences for Zimbabwe's own human rights situation.

A CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE – BE IT HUMANITARIAN OR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS – THEREFORE AFFECTS SOUTH AFRICA, TOO

For South Africa to argue that the ICC's work in Africa is not compatible with its mediation efforts in Africa is confusing, given that South Africa was one of the countries which played a critical role in conceptualising the ICC informally before 1998, as it was determined to avoid the horrors of apartheid.[19] As South Africa is seen as a leader in many regards, including having a progressive bill of rights and hosting world-class sports events and global

political leader forums, for example, its move might lead to massive African withdrawals from the ICC.[20] Amnesty International went further to predict that this may lead to impunity through the Court of Justice and Human Rights.[21] The rights watchdog believes that African leaders will not want to see fellow sitting leaders being prosecuted if Africa finally leaves the ICC. With Zimbabwe's non-membership in the ICC, it is possible that South Africa may not hold its neighbour accountable in the event of human rights violations. It did not speak boldly against massive military shootings in the aftermath of the 2018 elections, neither did it rebuke the same in January 2019. For a country as isolated from the international community as Zimbabwe, when South Africa remains silent, human rights defenders and citizens may suffer. For South Africa, the goal might be to retain Zimbabwe as a geopolitical partner in its bid to be a continental leader at all costs, possibly jeopardising the security of defenceless citizens in the process. Human rights could be sacrificed to preserve the strong economic ties that exist between the two countries.

However, South Africa has been touted as a progressive human rights nation. Its withdrawal from the ICC does not totally cast doom on its northern neighbour. South Africa may push for the ratification and operationalisation of the ACJHR – which, on paper, is a progressive document just like the Rome Statute, encapsulating international crimes. While human rights organisations[22] warned that impunity to the same leaders who are responsible for heinous crimes might be the greatest undoing of the mooted ACJHR, the court may be effective in ending human rights violations in Africa through various peer monitoring mechanisms.

African luminaries such as Mbeki and Mahmood Mamdani have been advocating for political processes to end conflicts and human rights violations, as opposed to courts.[23] In this vein, South Africa's withdrawal from the ICC could present an opportunity for the country to lead in domesticating peacebuilding mechanisms that are supported by the AU's Peer Review Mechanism (PRM) and, more specifically, the Transitional Justice Policy (TJP) that was adopted in February 2019. The PRM encourages member states to assess each other in areas of democracy, human rights and other related issues, although some scholars criticise it for being Eurocentric. Having mechanisms such as the ACJHR, PRM and TJP could mean more support

IT IS LIKELY THAT THERE WILL BE MORE INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION AND FOCUS BY SOUTH AFRICA ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, AND THEREFORE THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF ADHERENCE TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE ACJHR FOR COUNTRIES SUCH AS ZIMBABWE

to grassroots conflict transformation and human rights initiatives. Objective 2 of the TJP clarifies that it is "an African model and mechanism for dealing with not only the legacies of conflicts and violations, but also governance deficits and development with a view to advancing the noble goals of the AU's Agenda 2063, The Africa We Want".[24] While this might be a cryptic acknowledgement of the continental body's failure to address past violations adequately, there is renewed resolve to address them the African way, without advancing impunity. The implementation of the TJP by member states will stand the test of time. With the TJP in place, South Africa's withdrawal from the ICC could be an opportunity to help fledgling democracies such as Zimbabwe to uphold human rights. With an ACJHR that may be headquartered or have a regional office in South Africa, Zimbabwe's human rights record might improve. It is likely that there will be more international attention and focus by South Africa on human rights issues, and therefore the encouragement of adherence to the provisions of the ACJHR for countries such as Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

The ICC still has much to prove in that it is not anti-African, by investigating cases outside Africa. That it has started hearing cases in Myanmar, and has indicated that it would soon investigate Israel and Palestine for possible war crimes, is a step in the right direction. It may have come too late, pushing countries such as Burundi, The Gambia, Kenya and South Africa to seek withdrawals. South Africa, seen as an economic and political giant in the continent, believed that its efforts to mediate peace were being thwarted by the ICC. Accordingly, it might rigorously campaign for the ratification of the Malabo Protocol, which would give powers to the ACJHR to address international crimes with home-grown approaches. For Zimbabwe, its human rights record could improve, given that the ACJHR will be closer to home and will also inculcate African ways of transitional justice and accountability. However, it must be cautioned that if political and economic interests are prioritised over accountability, South Africa's possible withdrawal from the ICC could lead to more human rights violations and impunity in Zimbabwe, which remains a signatory but non-party member to the ICC.

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KEY LESSONS FOR GLOBAL COUNTER-INSURGENCY FROM THE FIGHT AGAINST BOKO HARAM

BY **ANDREW HANKINS**

US ARMY AFRICA

Whilst the number of insurgencies has steadily increased since the end of the 1990s, today they constitute the majority of all globally monitored conflicts.[1] Insurgencies, defined as "organized subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region"[2] have consequently become a key focus for conflict analysts, with counter-insurgency (COIN) operations now a central tenant within the education of modern professional armed forces.[3] COIN itself consists of a "combination of measures undertaken by a government, sometimes with [...] multinational partner support, to defeat an insurgency".[4] These missions have been primarily conducted by Western forces, which this article defines as those belonging to the European Union, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom or the United States of America – as not only are these states in line with what is traditionally considered Western society, but are well documented as leaders of Western COIN operations.[5]

However, non-Western COIN operations now constitute the majority of global COIN operations. One such example is the ongoing operation against the Islamist group known as Boko Haram, in the Lake Chad Basin.[6] Despite the fact

Above: A Nigerian military officer briefs his working group during a Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force planning and coordination exercise conducted at Douala Naval Base, Cameroon (April 26, 2017).

THINK DEFENCE

Cross-border free movement is a key factor in Boko Haram's operational functioning.

that Boko Haram continues to operate today, between 2011 and 2019 the Nigerian Joint Task Force (NJTF), as part of the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), successfully reduced both the ability and reach of Boko Haram. This was achieved by adopting the widely accepted best practices of COIN: a regional focus, a political strategy and a population-centric security focus.[7] This article explores each of these strategies, analysing them through a theoretical lens, before outlining the mission's shortcomings and finally considering the lessons that can be learnt and contrasting them with Western COIN missions in Afghanistan, Vietnam and Kenya.

Regional Focus: Securing the Borders

Since 1945, the majority of COIN operations have been conducted by forces outside of their sovereign territory[8] – either as interventions or as part of imperial policy limited to "crushing the insurgency" within the borders of the state and returning control to allied forms of governance.[9] The Boko Haram insurgency, however, relies on the states around it, using the porous borders that are no longer heavily secured (as a result of the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons) as a way in which they can smuggle weapons and personnel across the region.[10]

HOWEVER, NON-WESTERN COIN OPERATIONS NOW CONSTITUTE THE MAJORITY OF GLOBAL COIN OPERATIONS

Moreover, by allying with organisations in neighbouring countries to hide insurgents, Boko Haram has developed rear bases for its operations, which are scattered across several states.[11] Therefore, the cross-border free movement is a key element in the functioning of Boko Haram that renders Boko Haram less as a collection of actors but rather a system reliant on inputs in the form of weaponry and support via free movement to produce insurgents.[12]

AUDU MARTE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Chadian soldiers belonging to the Multinational Joint Task Force patrol the area in Monguno, Chad.

Therefore, COIN operations cannot focus solely on the insurgents, but rather require an approach that is tailored to Boko Haram's strategy. As such, from its inception, the MNJTF prioritised a regional approach, seeking to disrupt the ability of fighters to use porous borders as part of their strategy[13] by securing the border before diminishing Boko Haram's operational area.[14] This was most successful during 2014, when Chadian and Cameroonian forces secured their mutual border, before forcing fighters towards the Chadian border[15] and dislodging them from Cameroonian territory. Once expelled, this approach ensured "that Boko Haram [did] not have access to the use of the borders for launching attacks", and this denied it safe havens and significantly degraded its capacity.[16] By restricting the ability of Boko Haram to draw resources into the conflict via safe havens, this securing of the border by the MNJTF can be viewed as a successful domination of the social field that the conflict embodies, as the MNJTF also denied access to socio-economic capital through the disruption of both monetary and social networks.[17] Therefore, by excluding these networks from the social field, the MNJTF has reduced the capacity of Boko Haram's agents to maintain the system of insurgency, thereby crippling its military capability.[18]

THEREFORE, COIN OPERATIONS CANNOT FOCUS SOLELY ON THE INSURGENTS, BUT RATHER REQUIRE AN APPROACH THAT IS TAILORED TO BOKO HARAM'S STRATEGY

Political Strategy: Local Legitimacy

Boko Haram's cross-border approach also sought to develop its legitimacy among the Muslim, Kanuri and Shuwa people, of whom the largest proportion live within the areas of Boko Haram's operations.[19] This saw Boko Haram portraying itself as a defender of both Islam and of the Kanuri and Shuwa cultures, attempting to drive a wedge between locals and the state. Boko Haram began this by disseminating information that the Nigerian government wanted Muslims to place Nigeria before God, effectively promoting idolism[20] – the most serious of sins for Muslims, according to the Qur'an. Boko Haram then expanded this narrative to include all of the governments in the Lake Chad Basin, before offering Boko Haram as the solution, stating that Muslims under its territorial control were in "the land of our own creator

REUTERS/JOE PENNEY

The Multinational Joint Task Force actively sought to build legitimacy with the local people while undermining Boko Haram's message and influence.

[not] Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger or Chad".[21] This not only reinforced the idea that the states were anti-Islamic, but also created the perception that Boko Haram was the only Islamically valid alternative form of governance.[22] Simultaneously, Boko Haram exploited the "Kanuri and Shuwa [...] linguistic, cultural, and ethnic ties"[23] within the Lake Chad Basin, delivering sermons on the topic of cultural links between rural Nigerians and urban Nigerians, and claiming that both groups were in conflict with their official governments that neglected them because of their heritage.[24] These sermons were then broadcast in the languages of the ethnic groups around the Lake Chad Basin, with Boko Haram claiming that these languages were a form of defiance against the government forces that had also neglected them.[25] This facilitated a narrative that not only was Boko Haram an indigenous and pious movement, but also one that sought to liberate the people from a negligent security force, creating significant ties with the local population.

THIS ALLOWED THE MNJTF TO PORTRAY ITSELF AS "SONS OF THE SOIL" PROTECTING THEIR HOMELAND, DEPICTING ITSELF AS A LOCAL MOVEMENT WHILST UNDERMINING THE NARRATIVE OF BOKO HARAM

The result of this cultural manipulation was significant, with many locals supporting Boko Haram[26] and reluctant to share intelligence with the security forces.[27] To counter this, the MNJTF actively sought to build "legitimacy while marginalizing insurgents"[28] by heavily recruiting "from population groupings that belonged to the same tribes and spoke the same local languages"[29] as local communities and Boko Haram. This allowed the MNJTF to portray itself as "sons of the soil"[30] protecting their homeland, depicting itself as a local movement whilst undermining the narrative of Boko Haram. To strengthen these links, youth-based programmes were developed to teach young people "not to be afraid to question teachings that may fuel intolerance and violence, and to build a stronger sense of "national identity".[31] This was all, in turn, coupled with a "register of good imams as part of a network of credible and moderate preachers"[32] to curtail the ability of Boko Haram to spread its message via cultural figures. These "good imams" clashed directly with the predominately

Saudi Arabian-educated Salafi and Wahabi imams of Boko Haram[33] and, in so doing, allowed the MNJTF to depict Boko Haram members as radicals following talismanic holy men from abroad[34] who do not truly understand Islam. This tactic can be seen as a manifestation of orientalism, in which the MNJTF has used Islam and culture as political instruments to undermine the message of Boko Haram whilst marking its ideology as foreign. The MNJTF then built upon this by claiming that Boko Haram comprises mainly Central Africans and Malians in search of jihad,[35] who are predisposed to violence and extremism as a result of their interpretations of Islam.[36] Doing this afforded the task force a "unique position of trust among community members",[37] successfully "winning over sympathisers and co-opting local allies"[38] and undermining Boko Haram's reach by increasing its own. This resulted in an increase to 93% disapproval rating of Boko Haram after three years of the programme, with overall support for Boko Haram dropping to 1% by 2016.[39]

Population-centric Security: Civilian Task Force

Despite improved legitimacy and secure borders, there still existed the issue of Boko Haram's clandestine networks, most notably within cities in north-eastern Nigeria, such as Maiduguri.[40] In Maiduguri, Boko Haram heavily recruited local unemployed men, mostly those who had received only Qur'anic education and not formal state education.[41] Boko Haram is also unique in the fact that it disproportionally recruits women and children for clandestine operations,[42] with 56% of Boko Haram suicide bombers being women,[43] and Boko Haram financially rewarded both men and women who engaged in acts of violence.[44] This weaponisation of the local population ensured that the MNJTF had great difficulty identifying threats and, as such, required that it advance its efforts from simply influencing the community via cultural connections to directly moulding the community's views. The response was the youth empowerment scheme of 2013, which oversaw the training and financing of at least 1 800 volunteer vigilantes by the federal government,[45] who were then incorporated into previously existing groups as part the MNJTF under the title of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). Much like Boko Haram, this training scheme for security volunteers targeted young men and women with the aim of financing and legitimising their work to prevent them from being drawn to the financial offerings of Boko Haram. By recruiting women, the CJTF was also able to retain cultural sensitivity whilst enhancing its body search capabilities[46] in line with international policing standards, and reducing overall suicide bombings.[47]

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Members of the Civilian Joint Task Force in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria (May 2014).

REUTERS/JOE PENNEY

Members of the Joint Task Force (including the Civilian Force) were routinely accused of detaining and torturing Cameroonians and Nigerians suspected of working with Boko Haram.

The CJTF also acted as an information service that could contextualise any local information,[48] consequently enabling the MNJTF to gain "substantial intelligence from the population in the area of conflict".[49] Moreover, although poorly armed, the CJTF worked alongside security forces during combat operations, arresting Boko Haram members before handing them over to the MNJTF.[50] The result was a population-centric security force that transformed Maiduguri into "a 'sanctuary city' for residents of nearby towns and villages"[51] and removed Boko Haram from urban centres in the north-east by 2014.[52] By appealing directly to communities for help, the MNJTF consolidated its earlier legitimacy by demonstrating itself as part and protector of the community. This then created a dynamic in which security forces and civilians could work together to defeat a threat to their community, with the community unified in their suspicions of foreign threats.[53] In turn, this transformed acts of surveillance and collaboration into acts of citizenship,[54] as those who collaborated with the security forces proved their legitimacy and were subsequently exempt from suspicion or penalty. This was most notably evident in the praise, increased salary and honorific title of "new heroes of the nation"[55] bestowed on those who worked for the CJTF.

Failings of the Task Force

The MNJTF successfully reduced the ability of Boko Haram to conduct military operations, diluted popular support for the group and incorporated a population-centric security focus into its work. Each member state agreed to uphold the MNJTF's mandate and to ensure that the force operates within the legal parameters of international law.[56] Despite this, the mandate, which includes the protection of civilians and human rights, has been repeatedly breached through attacks on civilians, unlawful arrests and the torture of suspected Boko Haram members and displaced civilians.[57] In 2013 alone, Nigerian forces killed more than 200 civilians and destroyed over 2 000 houses[58] in an attempt to demoralise Boko Haram.

Regrettably, these actions are not confined to Nigeria, with members of the MNJTF routinely accused of torturing and detaining Cameroonians and Nigerians suspected of working with Boko Haram, often without warrants,[59] with those detained describing "a climate of fear in which they could not raise their concerns with camp officials out of fear of violent retaliation by Cameroonian soldiers".[60] Given this compromised legality and integrity of the MNJTF forces, Cameroonian soldiers are therefore breaching the convention on torture to which they are

REUTERS/EMMANUEL BRAUN

Nigerian soldiers hold up a Boko Haram flag that they seized in the retaken town of Damasak, Nigeria (18 March 2015).

party. Moreover, there is a potential security risk posed by the CJTF. Despite its success, relations with security forces have been fraught with sporadic clashes emerging between MNJTF forces and the CJTF.[61] Further, whilst there have been financial incentives for the group, there are "some members of the CJTF who see their fighting as a contract, an entitlement to an expected reward in the shape of post-insurgency state jobs".[62] This raises the question as to whether the CJTF will seek to monopolise its position once the MNJTF deems it safe to redeploy. Whilst the MNJTF has succeeded in crippling Boko Haram, its members have repeatedly violated human rights and broken international law themselves, failing to uphold their mandate and rendering many of their actions illegal.

Lessons Learnt

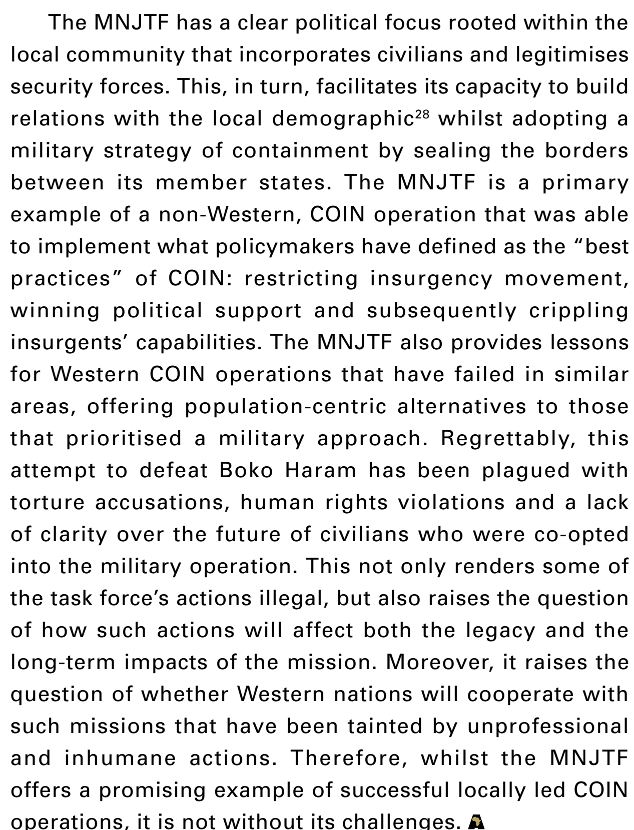
Despite the MNJTF's shortcomings, the tactics it employed helped to achieve success in areas where both historic and contemporary Western operations failed – such as Afghanistan 2001–2019, Kenya 1952–1960 and Vietnam 1955–1975. As exemplified in Afghanistan, COIN forces were faced with a cross-border insurgency but prioritised the country's capital for troop deployment, with limited troop numbers along the borders making "sealing the border virtually impossible".[63] This allowed Taliban operators to access contacts in neighbouring Pakistan who could provide the insurgency system with input in the form of intelligence and financing.[64] Therefore, it can be argued that had COIN forces followed a regional focus such as the MNJTF, they too could have reduced the combat ability of their insurgency. The MNJTF is also able to provide lessons on political strategy – that is, alienating Boko Haram through its creation of an approved network of imams and offer of training for those willing to join the fight against Boko Haram. In contrast, Britain's colonial

THEREFORE, IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT HAD COIN FORCES FOLLOWED A REGIONAL FOCUS SUCH AS THE MNJTF, THEY TOO COULD HAVE REDUCED THE COMBAT ABILITY OF THEIR INSURGENCY

war against Kenyan revolutionaries saw "the 'hearts and minds' aspects of the COIN campaign [as] subordinate to military tactics".[65] This approach hardened those they targeted and eventually caused popular support for the British to wane as casualties mounted, with independence obtained by the Kenyans only several years later.[66]

Similarly, in Vietnam, the failure of the American military to engage the civilian population resulted in the ability of the insurgency to both target and use civilians. This occurred not only from a lack of linguistic and cultural knowledge[67] but also from a lack of financial support from the Americans,[68] creating the perception that Americans were outsiders with little desire to build long-term community ties.[69] Had British and American troops followed the strategy of the MNJTF, it could be argued that they too would have garnered wider support for their COIN and undermined insurgency efforts to gather political backing, whilst solidifying the perception that they were legitimate actors.

SIMILARLY, IN VIETNAM, THE FAILURE OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY TO ENGAGE THE CIVILIAN POPULATION RESULTED IN THE ABILITY OF THE INSURGENCY TO BOTH TARGET AND USE CIVILIANS



Conclusion

The MNJTF has a clear political focus rooted within the local community that incorporates civilians and legitimises security forces. This, in turn, facilitates its capacity to build relations with the local demographic[28] whilst adopting a military strategy of containment by sealing the borders between its member states. The MNJTF is a primary example of a non-Western, COIN operation that was able to implement what policymakers have defined as the "best practices" of COIN: restricting insurgency movement, winning political support and subsequently crippling insurgents' capabilities. The MNJTF also provides lessons for Western COIN operations that have failed in similar areas, offering population-centric alternatives to those that prioritised a military approach. Regrettably, this attempt to defeat Boko Haram has been plagued with torture accusations, human rights violations and a lack of clarity over the future of civilians who were co-opted into the military operation. This not only renders some of the task force's actions illegal, but also raises the question of how such actions will affect both the legacy and the long-term impacts of the mission. Moreover, it raises the question of whether Western nations will cooperate with such missions that have been tainted by unprofessional and inhumane actions. Therefore, whilst the MNJTF offers a promising example of successful locally led COIN operations, it is not without its challenges.

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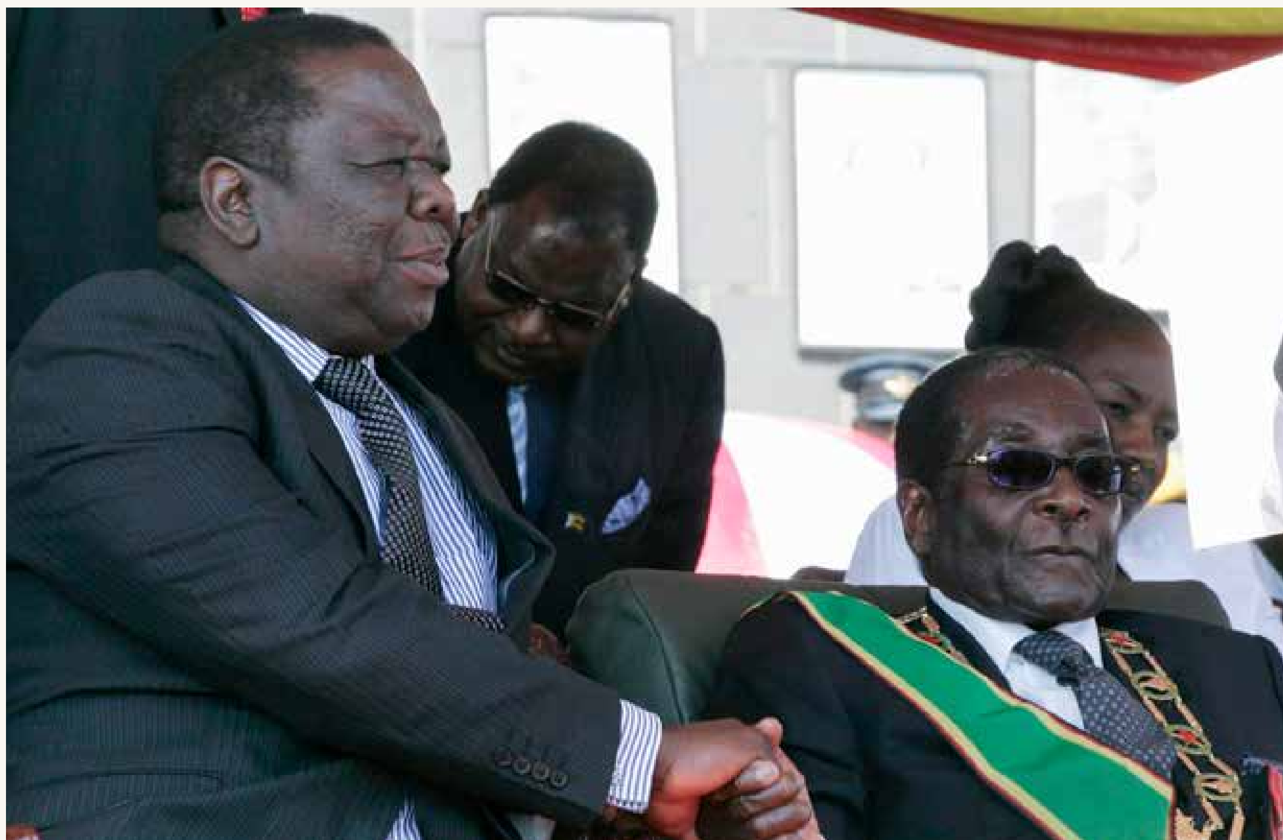
THE EFFICACY OF GOVERNMENTS OF NATIONAL UNITY IN ZIMBABWE AND LESOTHO

BY **DUDZIRO NHENGU AND STANLEY MURAIRWA**



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Introduction

Electoral disputes have long played a role in directing political conflicts towards the attainment of ephemeral peace in both Zimbabwe and Lesotho – two countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement (GPA) helped to end conflict in the country, further establishing a government of national unity (GNU) with institutional mechanisms and conditions that enabled transition to a more peaceful context. A decade later, Zimbabwe is still at a crossroads, facing almost the same political and economic hardships that it did in 2008, when the GPA was signed. The current political stand-off between the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is a manifestation of the deep-seated political problems in the country, and proof that the GNU did not enable lasting solutions to Zimbabwe's politico-economic crisis.

Above: A government of national unity is a power-sharing government comprising of major political parties that coalesce their efforts to end conflict, and is designed to accommodate all opposing political players to participate in government structures.

PHOTO: GCIS

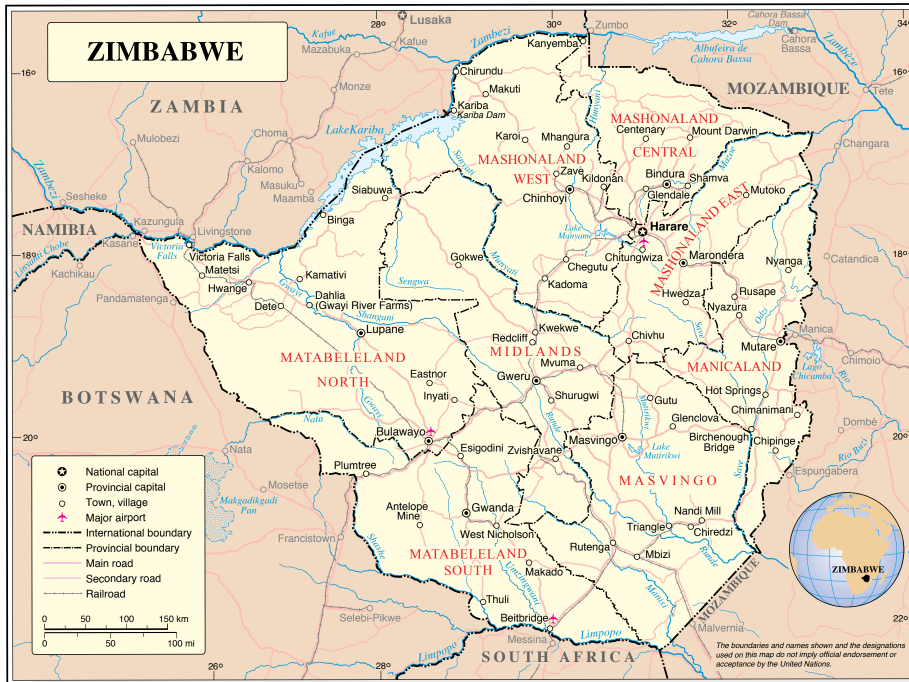
The then Deputy President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa delivers a message of encouragement to delegates in his capacity as the Southern African Development Community facilitator to Lesotho during his working visit to Maseru (18 October 2017).

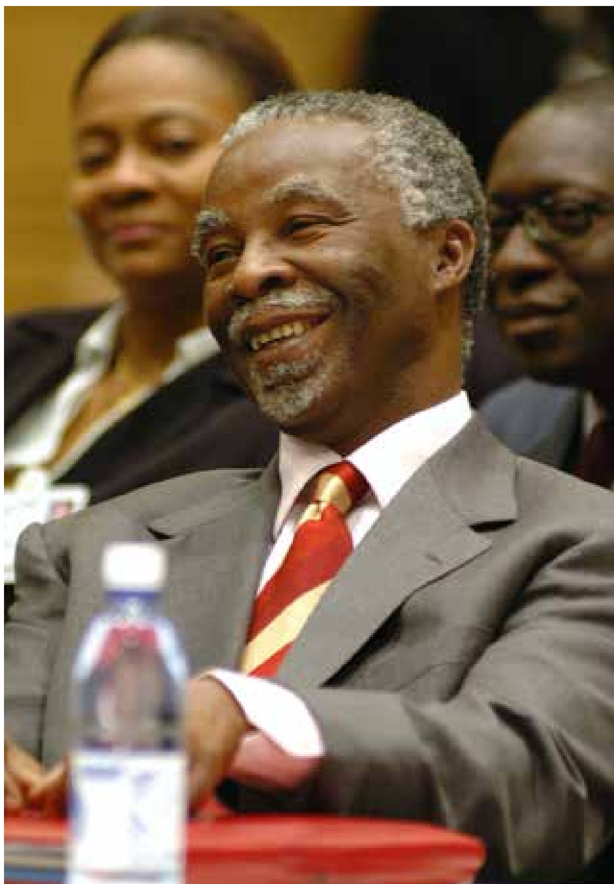
Lesotho has had three consecutive GNUs since 2014. The first two GNUs barely lasted two years beyond their dates of constitution, while the third is already presenting signs of possible disintegration. The examples from these two countries prove the need to reconceptualise GNUs as a strategy for lasting conflict resolution in Africa. This article establishes the sources of disharmony among GNU parties, using the cases of Zimbabwe and Lesotho.

A GNU is a power-sharing government comprising of major political parties that coalesce their efforts to end conflict, and is designed specifically to accommodate all opposing political players to participate in government structures.[1] The assumption is that the equitable participation of the different contenders will diminish the potential for conflict and enhance mthe prospects for good governance, development, integration and effective delivery of social goods to citizens. GNUs are preceded by peace agreements that set the framework for their creation and for monitoring success. As part of the post-conflict reconstruction system, GNUs have five dimensions that can be programmed to cumulatively inform sustainable peace, and these are political transition, inclusive participation, human rights, rule of law and resource mobilisation.[2]

Where they are properly instituted, GNUs potentially enable various political parties to bury their political differences and strive to build democratic societies. Wrongly instituted GNUs, on the other hand, can be delicate and discordant transitional institutions with the potential to disintegrate and create more political strife. Given the varied historical experiences of African countries and the limited support available to propel GNUs to viability for effective conflict transformation, it can be argued that the establishment of GNUs should be regarded as an exception only to applicable contexts, rather than a norm to all contexts.

Mapuva opines that political rivalries have the potential to bury the hatchet and work together for the common good of the nation in a GNU.[3] Matyaszak, on the other hand, describes a GNU as a tool adopted to effect relief from conflict and suspend hostilities among raging political and non-political actors.[4] In essence, the level at which a GNU accommodates various players for participation – including civil society, civil service and women's groups – determines its levels of success. This article further argues that GNUs can be effective for lasting conflict transformation only if their parameters of operation are more an outcome of decisions by local actors as opposed to being impositions by external actors such as regional bodies, global bodies and external mediators.





WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Following the 2008 election rerun in Zimbabwe, the Southern African Development Community mandated former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, to facilitate interparty negotiations between the key political players.

Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean GNU was born in 2009 on the basis of the GPA. Although there are different interpretations of the causes of the Zimbabwean conflict that culminated in the violence of 2008, there is inherent consensus that structural causes – mainly highlighted as land and property rights issues – triggered this conflict.[5] The formation of the MDC in the same period pitted it against ZANU–PF by virtue of its funding modality from the West, as well as its ideological stance against the land reform exercise. As such, conflict ensued.

The SADC mediated the Zimbabwe conflict cumulatively, starting in 2000 when it mandated former presidents Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), Joaquim Chissano (Mozambique) and Sam Nujoma (Namibia) to engage Robert Mugabe, then president of Zimbabwe, on the effects of the land reform process on the country's economy in the face of foreign-imposed sanctions and donor fatigue. These mediation efforts led to relatively

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CAUSES OF THE ZIMBABWEAN CONFLICT THAT CULMINATED IN THE VIOLENCE OF 2008, THERE IS INHERENT CONSENSUS THAT STRUCTURAL CAUSES – MAINLY HIGHLIGHTED AS LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS ISSUES – TRIGGERED THIS CONFLICT

REUTERS/PHILIMON BULAWAYO

Voters wait to cast their ballots in Zimbabwe's run-off presidential election in Harare (27 June 2008).

credible harmonised parliamentary and presidential elections in 2008. The elections did not result in a clear winner, igniting further violence and a call for a rerun. This led to the constitutional amendment that was adopted as an outcome of the SADC mediation process, requiring the winning presidential candidate to have 51% or more of the vote.

The election rerun, held in June 2008, was tainted by allegations of electoral flaws, entrenched institutionalised violence and a regression into violence, prompting the SADC to mandate Mbeki to facilitate interparty negotiations for a political solution among the key political players. The mediation concluded in September 2008 with the signing of the GPA and the formation of a GNU, comprising ZANU–PF and two MDC formations.

THE ELECTION RERUN, HELD IN JUNE 2008, WAS TAINTED BY ALLEGATIONS OF ELECTORAL FLAWS, ENTRENCHED INSTITUTIONALISED VIOLENCE AND A REGRESSION INTO VIOLENCE, PROMPTING THE SADC TO MANDATE MBEKI TO FACILITATE INTERPARTY NEGOTIATIONS FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION AMONG THE KEY POLITICAL PLAYERS

The Zimbabwean GNU achieved a number of successes when it was implemented. First, it prevented the country from descending into chaos, thereby altering the enemy images among the political parties, ZANU–PF and the two MDC formations.[6] Second, the institutionalisation of a national infrastructure for peacebuilding through the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) and the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) provided the building blocks for an ephemeral peace in the country. The work of the ONHRI and the JOMIC in the various communities influenced the elimination of the then-existing direct forms of violence, paving the way for the institutionalisation of reforms in the political and economic spheres in the country. Article 7 of the GPA also provided for gender equality in peacebuilding processes.

Economically, the Zimbabwean GNU was established at a time when the country was facing hyperinflation, a sustained period of negative gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates, and massive devaluation of the currency. Article 31(a) of the GPA prioritised the restoration of economic stability and growth in Zimbabwe. The Government of Zimbabwe came up with two Short-term

MUGABE REFUSED TO CEDE POWER TO TSVANGIRAI, OFFERING HIM THE POSITION OF THIRD VICE PRESIDENT – WHILE, ON THE OTHER HAND, TSVANGIRAI WAS ADAMANT THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT NOTHING LESS THAN THE POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER WITH FULL EXECUTIVE POWERS IN A TWO-YEAR TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT

Emergency Recovery Programmes: STERP 1 and STERP 2. Between 2009 and 2012, following the introduction of these two economic policies, the economy rebounded, registering significant growth averaging 10.5% per annum.[7]

Contrary to the highlighted achievements, a number of conflict undercurrents among the political parties resulted in disagreements and disengagements among the government's key actors. This indicates that the Government of Zimbabwe failed to effect complete conflict transformation in the country. Socially, citizens continue to suffer massive water and power cuts, poor health facilities, the collapse of the manufacturing industry and a skills flight, five years after the implementation of the GNU.

Politically, leaders from all parties focused more on political partisanship and self-aggrandisement at the expense of improving the economy. The GNU Cabinet included 41 ministers – a rise from the former composition of 31 ministers[8] – prompting overexpenditure on salaries and related packages. The appointment of the attorney general before the installation of the MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai was also a violation of the GPA, which provided for the prime minister to be appointed before the appointment of the attorney general. This showed a disregard for the rule of law, even at the onset of the GNU.

The power tug-of-war between Mugabe and Tsvangirai is enough proof of failure of political leaders to move their political interests from the individual to the collective.

REUTERS/PHILIMON BULAWAYO

Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai addresses his Movement for Democratic Change supporters in Gweru and calls for national reconciliation and forgiveness (February 2009).

Mugabe refused to cede power to Tsvangirai, offering him the position of third vice president – while, on the other hand, Tsvangirai was adamant that he would accept nothing less than the position of prime minister with full executive powers in a two-year transitional government.[9]

Lesotho

Lesotho held its third election in five years in June 2017 – a sure sign of deep-seated instability in this mountain kingdom. This election was triggered by a vote of no confidence against Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili, which was passed in March 2017. Instead of resigning, Mosisili advised the king to call for snap elections – in which his opponent, Thomas Thabane of the All Basotho Convention, emerged as the winner of 48 parliamentary

THIS ELECTION WAS TRIGGERED BY A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE AGAINST PRIME MINISTER PAKALITHA MOSISILI, WHICH WAS PASSED IN MARCH 2017

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

Pakalitha Mosisili was Prime Minister of Lesotho from May 1998 to June 2012 and again from March 2015 to June 2017.

SAMSON MOTIKOE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Newly appointed Lesotho Prime Minister Thomas Thabane, leader of the All Basotho Convention political party, arrives at his inauguration ceremony in Maseru, Lesotho (16 June 2017).

seats, but short of the 61 needed to form a government.[10] According to the Constitution of Lesotho, when a motion of no confidence against the government and the prime minister succeeds in Parliament, the incumbent has to resign within three days or advise the king to call for elections. The parties later agreed to form a coalition government.

Effectively, Lesotho has had three governing coalitions since 2014, all of which have failed to last beyond the first two years of their supposed five-year terms. The first coalition – made up of the All Basotho Convention, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy and the Basotho National Party – collapsed in 2014 after only two years. This was followed by the February 2015 snap elections that ushered in the Mosisili-led seven parties' coalition, thereby removing Thabane from power. The Mosisili-led coalition gave way to the current coalition after the June 2017 elections.

EFFECTIVELY, LESOTHO HAS HAD THREE GOVERNING COALITIONS SINCE 2014, ALL OF WHICH HAVE FAILED TO LAST BEYOND THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF THEIR SUPPOSED FIVE-YEAR TERMS

The current GNU in Lesotho has succeeded in transforming the political character of the Basotho from that of strife among the political parties, enabling them to work together to achieve peace for the first time in history. The fact that Lesotho, with a population of fewer than 2 million people, has had a significant number of political parties, is a sign of the political discord that exists. However, the ability to form a coalition government without receding into escalating conflict signifies a positive outcome of the current GNU.

AFP PHOTO / HLOMPHO LETSIELO

Lesotho Prime Minister-elect Pakalitha Mosisili (left) shakes hands with outgoing Prime Minister Thomas Thabane during his inauguration ceremony in Maseru (17 March 2015).

There are, however, major issues of discontent among the citizenry over Thabane's links to the Chinese, who now dominate the business space and possess more business contracts than local businesspeople in Lesotho. The current GNU is also accused of the mismanagement of state funds, corruption and a failure to provide employment and social services, such as health and education.

THERE ARE, HOWEVER, MAJOR ISSUES OF DISCONTENT AMONG THE CITIZENRY OVER THABANE'S LINKS TO THE CHINESE, WHO NOW DOMINATE THE BUSINESS SPACE AND POSSESS MORE BUSINESS CONTRACTS THAN LOCAL BUSINESS-PEOPLE IN LESOTHO

Politically, there are huge cracks in the current coalition, with Keketso Rantšo of the Reformed Congress of Lesotho alleging that her political party members have been sidelined for appointment to strategic political positions in the country. Thus, the GNU framework in Lesotho lacks a strategy for distributing power equally to all participants to ensure lasting peace. The major political parties exercise more power and control over the minor political parties when it comes to decision-making in the GNU. This situation is not peculiar to Lesotho alone – in the Zimbabwean GNU, Mugabe remained with his executive powers afforded to the presidency, and had no legal binding basis to consult Tsvangirai on appointments. For example, Mugabe's appointment of eight retired military officials to positions in the Information and Publicity Ministry showed not only his close connection to the military but also the powerlessness of the MDC as a party to the GNU.[11]

Political analysis of Lesotho's lack of GNU arrangements claims that whilst the conflict situation in

Lesotho is fertile ground for the success of a GNU, the failure of coalition governments emanates mainly from a lack of congruency among the political leaders involved. Political leaders often fail to ensure fulfilment of the requirements of GNU frameworks, as well as to live up to their promises to deliver social goods to citizens.

Conclusion

Among other issues, this article demonstrates that although the GNUs in both Zimbabwe and Lesotho brought some positive developments in solving political stand-offs among rival political parties, issues of unequal power-sharing between the bigger political parties and the smaller ones remained a key challenge. This led to strained relationships between and among the political parties, and ruined prospects for positive peace post-GNU in both countries. Success of any GNU's post-conflict reconstruction system is determined by the interaction of the specific internal and external actors present, coupled with a good understanding of the history of the conflict and the GNU framework. Furthermore, GNUs in Africa are often affected by endogenous forces, as their evolvement is often preceded by external mediation outcomes that enforce mediation before conflicts reach a hurting stalemate, breeding half-baked peace agreements. In Zimbabwe, the collapsing economy and associated violence triggered international isolation and constant calls by the SADC for the parties to dialogue peacefully to save the region from economic and political problems. Lesotho has been strong in refusing the imposition of GNUs by outside mediators. The country's major challenge

SUCCESS OF ANY GNU'S POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION SYSTEM IS DETERMINED BY THE INTERACTION OF THE SPECIFIC INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ACTORS PRESENT, COUPLED WITH A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT AND THE GNU FRAMEWORK

SAMSON MOTIKOE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Basotho farmers march to parliament to protest against regulations forcing them to sell their wool and mohair to a Chinese broker (28 June 2019).

has been the failure to transcend the individual political interests of the political parties for common good.

GNUs in Africa are dominated by the interests of the leading political stalwarts, often ignoring the voices of local actors such as civil society organisations, including women's groups, churches, traditional authorities; as well as, other minor political parties. As a result, political leaders often fail to understand the needs and aspirations of many, leading to incongruence and the collapse of their political agreements. In both Zimbabwe and Lesotho, GNU formation and implementation remained the preserve of formal politicians, without giving regard to the roles that regular citizens and civil society can play.

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