CONFLICT TRENDS

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Editorial focus: Building local and national instruments to resolve conflicts

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ACCORD
THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

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Cover Photo: The 27th African Union Summit held in Kigali, Rwanda (July 2016). Photo credit: GovernmentZA.

EDITORIAL

BY **VASU GOUNDEN**

Twenty-five years after the cold war, we are experiencing one of the most peaceful and prosperous eras in the history of humanity, and yet inequality is at its highest level ever and violent intrastate conflicts continue to proliferate across the world. In Africa, inequality and violent intrastate wars overshadow the progress that the continent has made in growing its economies by getting young people into schools and rolling out the necessary infrastructure to create a climate for businesses to grow.

The last five years in Africa have been particularly disappointing in the number of countries that seem to revert to instability and conflict after a period of relative stability. Why is Africa experiencing this apparent reversal of fortunes? In the last 25 years, we have built a formidable global, regional and sub-regional architecture for peace and security. The shift from interstate to intrastate conflict has led to the creation of mechanisms to deal with conflicts that involve not just the opposing armies of two or more states but, increasingly, a combination of states, militia or rebel groups, and civilians.

As a consequence of this change in the nature of conflict and the protagonists, existing mechanisms had to be adapted and new ones created. Peacekeeping departments at the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU) and other intergovernmental organisations had to adapt their peacekeeping doctrines to include protocols on the protection of civilians, respect for human rights, mainstreaming gender into peacekeeping and a host of other initiatives that take into account the fact that civilians are at the centre of conflicts. Mediation has been strengthened with the creation of mediation support units and the preparation of hundreds of mediators. Peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction have become mainstream thinking in intergovernmental organisations.

This comprehensive conflict resolution architecture is backed by significant funding and an army of personnel experienced in managing such conflicts. The funding and personnel have been deployed around the world with relative success. The question, then, is why are we still seeing resurgence in these conflicts? The answer lies in understanding the nature of such conflicts, determining where our emphasis has been in attempting to resolve these conflicts, and analysing whether our efforts have been sufficient and correctly deployed.

Intrastate conflict requires the external intervention of regional organisations, such as the AU or the Southern African Development Community (SADC), when the conflict reaches a stage where it borders on civil war and threatens to spill over into neighbouring countries, thereby jeopardising global peace and security. It is for this particular eventuality that we have invested so much over the last 25 years in building conflict resolution mechanisms, infrastructure and personnel.

While all these efforts have been valuable and useful in maintaining global peace and security, we have missed one important opportunity to build a more effective response: building local and national capacities for conflict resolution. Many intrastate conflicts have a growth trajectory; they do not just suddenly appear as civil wars. These conflicts begin with some level of dissatisfaction that manifests in low-level peaceful opposition and graduates to street-level protests, which can be peaceful or violent. This state of conflict can fester for years in a country and increase in complexity and intensity over a period of time. By the time it reaches the stage of a civil war, trust and confidence among the protagonists have completely broken down, combatants on all sides may have been killed, thereby hardening attitudes, and the nature of the grievances may have changed and become more complex. At this stage, resolving the conflict becomes much more difficult. Syria is a current case in point.

The gap, therefore, in our elaborate architecture for resolving intrastate conflicts is our lack of investment in building local and national capacities for peace that can be deployed at an early stage to mitigate conflicts before they escalate into civil wars. Respected members of societies who have gravitas, authority and respect, and who stand out as role models, need to be equipped with skills that enable them to intervene in societies to diffuse situations that can explode into violent conflict. Over the next decade, while we strengthen our global and regional instruments to resolve conflicts, we must also build our local and national instruments.

Vasu Gounden is the Founder and Executive Director of ACCORD.

CONFLICT RESURGENCE AND THE AGREEMENT ON THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN: A HURRIED AND IMPOSED PEACE PACT?

BY **CLAYTON HAZVINEI VHUMBUNU**

UN PHOTO/ISAAC BILLY

Above: Salva Kiir, president of South Sudan, signs the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan at a ceremony held in Juba on 26 August 2015.

Introduction

The hope for peace and stability in South Sudan was restored when a peace pact – the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) – was signed between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Army in Government (SPLM/A-IG) and SPLM/A in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), as represented by President Salva Kiir Mayardit and First Vice President Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon respectively. The agreement, which was signed on 17 August 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and on 26 August 2015 in Juba, South Sudan, was ratified by the South Sudan National Legislative Assembly on 10 September 2015. The agreement sought to end the deadly civil war that had broken out in South Sudan in December 2013, following power struggles between Kiir and Machar and the allegations of an attempted coup made by the former against the latter.

ARCSS culminated in the formation of a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) on 29 April 2016

SOUTH SUDAN

National capital
State (wilayah) capital
Town
Major airport
International boundary
Undetermined boundary*
State (wilayah) boundary
Abyei region**
Main road
Railroad

* Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.
** Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Map No. 4450 Rev.1 UNITED NATIONS
October 2011

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section

with the return of Machar, who had fled Juba following the outbreak of the civil war. However, events on the night of 7 July 2016, less than 48 hours before the celebration of the country's fifth anniversary of independence, were characterised by violent confrontations in Juba between the SPLM/A-IG and SPLM/A-IO and spread to many parts of the city, resulting in the deaths of many soldiers and civilians as well as the destruction of property and displacement of people. This quick return to violence provoked analysts of conflict and peace studies to rethink and reflect on the processes leading to the signing of the ARCSS. This article analyses the events leading to the conclusion of the ARCSS and the extent to which they undermine the ownership, buy-in and commitment of stakeholders in the South Sudan peace process. It further recommends critical interventions to address identified gaps for securing lasting peace in South Sudan.

Contextualising the 2015 ARCSS

The civil war that broke out in December 2013 came after South Sudan attained its independence in July 2011, as a result of an affirmative secession vote in January 2011. The build-up to the civil war can be traced back to the difficult, strained and uneasy political relationship between Kiir and Machar, both in government and within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). During the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) interim period from 2005 to 2011, the two political leaders were said to have supported different candidates in the run-up to the envisaged 2010 elections.[1]

GALLO IMAGES/REUTERS/TIKSA NEGERI

South Sudan's former Vice President, Riek Machar, addresses a news conference during the peace agreement signing meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (17 August 2015).

GALLO IMAGES/REUTERS/TIKSA NEGERI

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) members attend the final mediation report meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (2 April 2016).

Further factional political struggles within SPLM became rife in 2013 as South Sudan approached its first general elections after independence, which were scheduled for 2015. Machar, together with Pagan Amum Okiech (SPLM secretary-general) and Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior (a fellow member of the SPLM Political Bureau and widow of the late SPLM leader, General John Garang de Mabior), openly criticised the SPLM chairman and announced that they would contest the presidency against Kiir.[2] The non-cooperative relations between the Office of the President and that of the Vice President, and contestations over skewed and irregular army recruitments in 2013, were also factors in the civil war, which was triggered by disagreements within the presidential guard over alleged orders to disarm Machar-aligned Nuer members as a result of an alleged coup.[3]

The conflict was mediated by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), an East African regional integration-inspired organisation premised on Chapter VII of the United Nations (UN) Charter, which provides for regional initiatives in conflict mediation and resolution. The peace talks commenced on 4 January 2015 in Addis Ababa. They were fraught with missed deadlines, although they eventually delivered the ARCSS in August 2015, and this subsequently resulted in the formation of a TGoNU in April 2016. The TGoNU also includes James Wani Igga as second vice president of South Sudan, although he is not a signatory to the ARCSS.

Just prior to the signing of ARCSS, the continued fighting in South Sudan had resulted in a deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country. As an example, the United Nations (UN) reported: "South Sudan faced the worst levels of food insecurity in its history" with "4,6 million people projected to face severe food insecurity during the months of May–July 2015" and "[m]ore than 4,1 million people [were] in critical need of water sanitation and hygiene services".[4] It is against this background that the ARCSS had been negotiated and signed.

It should not be ignored, however, that Kiir reluctantly signed the ARCSS with reservations, amid apparent pressure from the UN Security Council Resolution 2206 (2015) that had "created a system to impose sanctions" on those engaging in, inter alia, "[a]ctions or policies that have the purpose or effect of expanding or extending the conflict in South Sudan or obstructing reconciliation or peace talks or processes, including breaches of Hostilities Agreement".[5] Among other issues, Kiir's reservations related to the scope of the permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements; functions of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC); amendment procedures for the ARCSS; transitional justice, accountability, reconciliation and healing mechanisms; powers and status of the vice presidents in the TGoNU; the structure and composition of state governorships; power-sharing in the executive; control of the humanitarian and reconstruction initiatives; resource, economic and financial management; and timelines for the reconstitution of the Constituent Assembly within the parameters of drafting the permanent Constitution.[6]

Kiir's statement upon the signing of the ARCSS should have sent warning signals to the mediators in Addis Ababa and stakeholders in the South Sudanese peace process about the level of commitment in the future implementation of the agreement. Kiir stated:

> With all those reservations that we have, we will sign this [ARCSS] document… some features of the document are not in the interest of just and lasting peace. We had only one of the two options, the option of an imposed peace or the option of a continued war.[7]

Further, whilst assuring the South Sudanese people that he had "fully committed the government to the faithful implementation" of the ARCSS, Kiir declared in his Public Statement to the Nation with regard to the ARCSS on 15 September 2015:

> This IGA [Inter-Governmental Authority] prescribed peace document on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, is the most divisive and unprecedented peace deal ever seen in the history of our country and the African continent at large… This agreement has also attacked the sovereignty of our country… There were many messages of intimidations and threats for me in the last few weeks, to just sign the Agreement silently without any changes or reservations… There is no doubt in my mind that the implementation of some of the provisions of the Agreement will be confronted by practical difficulties that will make it inevitable to review or amend such provisions.[8]

This statement, when scrutinised thoroughly, would lead one to the inescapable conclusion that the events leading to the conclusion of the ARCSS may have largely undermined ownership, buy-in and commitment of the SPLM/A-IG and other aligned stakeholders to the South Sudanese peace process. His assurances of "full commitment" may be read as political rhetoric in front of an expectant nation and hopeful regional peace brokers.

What further complicates the peace equation are the perceptions and positions in Machar's political camp. It is instructive to note that even Machar's SPLM/A-IO had its own reservations about the ARCSS:

> We dropped our reservations in favour of peace and he [Kiir] should also drop his reservations in favour of peace. If he [Kiir] has reservations he should keep them to himself like we kept ours to ourselves.[9]

In reality, Machar's proposition to Kiir is easier said than done. Whilst the reservations appear to have more to do with competition for power, influence and control by both SPLM/A-IG and SPLM/A-IO, and less to do with how sustainable peace can be secured and how the welfare of the South Sudanese will be transformed, it will be a disservice to the peace process to ignore the respective positions of these key players in the conflict, especially given their influence on the conflict dynamics.

Kiir's Reservations: Power Politics or Nation-building?

The 16 reservations held by Kiir have largely been swept aside by many analysts and those involved in the South Sudanese conflict. The danger is that they quickly forget how this erodes the SPLM/A-IG's political will and ownership of the ARCSS. Even in the ARCSS preamble, the parties to the agreement (were expected to) acknowledge "the need to promote inclusivity and popular ownership of this Agreement", so as to ensure effective implementation.[10]

One of Kiir's substantive reservations was on the scope of the permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements. Article 5.5 of ARCSS provides for the redeployment of military forces within Juba and outside a 25 km radius from the capital city. Kiir interprets this as the de facto demilitarisation of Juba – yet, according to him, "the army has the responsibility to protect the nation, its people and leadership," which is a "matter of sovereignty"; hence, it should remain stationed in the capital.[11] He adds that the army "protected the capital during a failed coup".[12] His reservations may appear unreasonable, especially given that the ARCSS Article 5 (5.1) has exceptions on presidential guards; guard forces to protect military barracks, bases and warehouses; and Joint Integrated Police – which are enough to defend the sovereignty of South Sudan. Kiir's insistence that the army protected the capital during a failed coup in December 2013 is against the spirit of reconciliation. This follows revelations in the African Union (AU) Final Report of the AU Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan that there was not any available evidence to suggest an attempted coup in South Sudan.[13] Kiir's references to the "failed coup" is a signal that mistrust and suspicion will still characterise his working relationship with Machar in the TGoNU.

THIS FOLLOWS REVELATIONS IN THE AFRICAN UNION (AU) FINAL REPORT OF THE AU COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON SOUTH SUDAN THAT THERE WAS NOT ANY AVAILABLE EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST AN ATTEMPTED COUP IN SOUTH SUDAN

The SPLM/A-IG also objected to the transition of the monitoring and verification mechanism (MVM), which is responsible for reporting implementation progress of the permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements (PCTSA) to the ceasefire and transitional security arrangement monitoring mechanism (CTSAMM). Kiir objected to the MVM role, arguing that its current performance was unsatisfactory as its reports were based on unofficial information, further suggesting that the MVM transition to CTSAMM should only be based on government approval. Whilst the over-reliance on unofficial information or statistics in security reporting can be detrimental to peace efforts – as such information is often over-exaggerated and manipulated in pursuit of narrow sectional interests – there is no justification to eliminate whatever can be useful and positive. Apparently, the work of CTSAMM will be overseen by a more independent and representative Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), as provided under Chapter VII (2.7) of the ARCSS. Hence, progressive and constructive discussions should be centred on strengthening the JMEC's capacity to execute its oversight role, instead of contemplating government interference into the transition

of MVM. This can be potentially destructive, considering the extent of political polarisation occurring in South Sudan.

Kiir also had reservations on the roles and functions of the JMEC – which, according to Chapter VII (3) of the ARCSS, is responsible for "monitoring and overseeing the implementation of the Agreement and the mandate and tasks of the TGoNU, including the adherence of the parties to the agreed timelines and implementation schedule".[14] He objected to the "overseeing" function – according to him, this would make the JMEC "the governing authority of the Republic of South Sudan", leaving the government and national legislature uninvolved.[15] Further, Kiir commented that the provisions under Chapter VII (5) of the ARCSS – which mandates the JMEC to report regularly in writing to the TGoNU Council of Ministers and the Transitional National Assembly as well as IGAD, the AU Commission, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the UN Security Council (UNSC) on the status of implementation of the Agreement – makes the JMEC "the actual ruling body in South Sudan".[16] Whilst Kiir's reservations on the JMEC are reasonable, it must be noted that all political parties in South Sudan will be represented in the JMEC and will be part of the deliberations. Moreover, Chapter VII (9) clearly provides that the JMEC quorum "be eighteen (18), of which at least 10 of the members shall be from South Sudan and the other 8 from regional and international groups".[17] This makes the JMEC agenda, proceedings and outcomes national and/or regional in outlook, dispelling sovereignty threats and fears. If the government is made to oversee the functions of the JMEC – an institution that the mediators attempted to make independent and impartial, with minimum interference from the implementers of the ARCSS – it will be tantamount to having the government (SPLM/A-IG and SPLM/A-IO) monitoring and evaluating itself. This would make the JMEC vulnerable and pliant to elite manipulation.

The amendment procedure for the ARCSS, as stipulated under Chapter VIII (Article 4), provides that the agreement can only be amended with at least two-thirds majority in the Council of Ministers and at least two-thirds majority votes of the JMEC. Kiir strongly objects to this, considering this arrangement as "effectively neo-colonialism" and confirming "the supremacy of the JMEC over the TGoNU and national legislature".[18] Here, the SPLM/A-IG's objections may be motivated by the reality that unilaterally amending the ARCSS may be technically impossible, given that the SPLM/A-IG – just as the SPLM/A-IO – only has two out of 18 members who make up the JMEC quorum. The SPLM/A-IG has 16 ministers out of the total of 30 ministers prescribed by Chapter 1 (Article 10) of the ARCSS to make up the Council of Ministers. The amendment procedure, involving two well-balanced institutions (in terms of composition and structure) in the form of the Council of Ministers and the JMEC, appears to be appropriate as a check and balance mechanism against politically motivated unilateral amendments to the ARCSS.

GALLO IMAGES/REUTERS/STRINGER

President Kiir has reservations about the possible redeployment of military forces within Juba that the peace agreement calls for.

If there are well thought-out and progressive amendments, there is no doubt that the provided procedures will not be a stumbling block.

Kiir also had reservations on the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA) provided under Chapter 5 (4), whose role is to manage the Compensation and Reparation Fund for the compensation and reparation of crime victims. He argued that this will be prone to abuse and that instead, the funds should be channelled to "the reconstruction of the infrastructure and rebuilding of livelihoods of communities in the states most affected by the conflict".[19] He cites impracticalities of the same model in Sierra Leone, South Africa, Liberia and Rwanda. Kiir's fears are understandably justified, given the sensitivities and complexities that are associated with any national healing and transitional justice mechanism. It requires much caution. However, the mere fact that a policy initiative failed elsewhere is not sufficient to justify policy dismissal. Circumstances and contexts differ. In fact, the cited cases of Sierra Leone, South Africa, Liberia and Rwanda should present a golden opportunity for South Sudan to draw lessons and develop a unique model that can be successful. The success of such initiatives is largely dependent upon the political will of the leadership.

IN FACT, THE CITED CASES OF SIERRA LEONE, SOUTH AFRICA, LIBERIA AND RWANDA SHOULD PRESENT A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR SOUTH SUDAN TO DRAW LESSONS AND DEVELOP A UNIQUE MODEL THAT CAN BE SUCCESSFUL

Moreover, the idea to compensate victims of war atrocities appears progressive in light of international law obligations derived from declarations such as the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (1985); the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984); and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948). This would assist in building the legitimacy of the newest state within the international community. Nevertheless, Kiir's prioritisation of infrastructure reconstruction and rebuilding the livelihoods of the South Sudanese people should be welcome, unless it is being used as a diversionary tactic to underplay and discount the merits of the compensation and reparation scheme. Generally, compensation and reparation should be seriously considered as essential elements of transitional justice, national healing and reconciliation, and key aspects in any post-conflict situation.

There is also a reservation voiced about having two vice presidents with different statuses. Kiir preferred having two vice presidents with equal status, arguing that having a first vice president and a second vice president would be "a reward for rebellion" and "a humiliation to the [Second] Vice President and his constituency and has the potential to cause more problems in the entire South Sudan".[20] He further objected to power-sharing ratios proposed for the State Council of Ministers in Unity, Jonglei and Upper Nile states, as well as the nomination of governors from Kiir's Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS), Machar's South Sudan Armed Opposition (SSAO), Amum's Former Detainees (FDs) and other political parties – which are collectively referred to as "rebels" by Kiir in his reservations. Kiir's continued use of the term "rebels" in reference to individuals who will be his partners in government may be interpreted as being against the spirit of accommodation and reconciliation, and this attitude may create sour relations within the TGoNU.

Whether Kiir's reservations are reasonable and valid, only mediation dialogue and further engagement can establish. Such a dialogue would assist to discern reservations motivated by the desire to gain and retain power, from substantive and genuine reservations driven by nationalist desires to protect the "sovereignty and territorial integrity" of South Sudan, as claimed by Kiir.[21]

The Status of Implementation of the ARCSS

Since the signing of the ARCSS, there have been calls from both the regional and international community questioning the slow pace at which the peace deal is being implemented. There has been a lack of implementation progress and a violation of prior agreements – notably the Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) Agreement, signed on 23 January 2014; the Agreement to Resolve the Crisis in South Sudan of 9 May 2014; and the Areas of Agreement on the Establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity in the Republic of South Sudan, signed on 1 February 2015.

In terms of implementation progress, leaders in South Sudan have not been moving as fast as expected when their progress is measured against the milestones stipulated in the ARCSS. The leaders in Juba should be credited for managing to form the TGoNU, as well as constituting the Council of Ministers in April 2016, as provided for in the ARCSS. They have started establishing the necessary institutions of governance provided for in the ARCSS. However, the implementation of other provisions of the ARCSS has been slow.

There has been a lack of progress on the formation of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA) through the expansion of the existing 300-member National Legislative Assembly by an additional 68 members – comprising 50 members from the SSAO, one member from the FDs and 17 members from other political parties – as provided for under Chapter 1 (11) of the ARCSS. The JMEC also reported that there are disagreements in the selection of the speaker of the TNLA, lack of consensus over the appointment of presidential advisors, and lack of movement with regard to reviewing the 28 states.[22] The 28

South Sudan's President Salva Kiir (center) is pictured with the new First Vice President Taban Deng Gai (left) and Second Vice President James Wani Igga (right) at the presidential palace in Juba (26 July 2016).

states were unilaterally created by Kiir after he dissolved the 10 regional states in South Sudan through the issuance of Order 6/2015 on 2 October 2015, with the aim of "devolving power and bringing resources closer to the people, reducing government expenditure and promoting development".[23] However, the decision to create more states has been criticised as a veiled attempt by the SPLM/A-IG "to grab other communities' land in Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal and annex them to the Dinka lands".[24]

The CTSAMM – with the mandate, provided for under Chapter II (4) of the ARCSS, of monitoring compliance and reporting to the JMEC on the implementation progress of the PCTSA – is reported to be facing restrictions in doing its work, whilst humanitarian deliveries were reportedly being obstructed in Western Equatoria and Northern Bahr el Ghazal.[25] There were reports that CTSAMM monitoring and verification teams in areas such as Yambio, Torit and Juba were being intimidated and restricted in terms of carrying out their operations, with some local authorities demanding to see presidential authority before any access is granted.[26]

Government departments and offices within the TGoNU appear to be disjointed and lack collaboration. Of course, this is one of the serious challenges any government of national unity faces as interparty trust, consultation, communication, cooperation, dialogue and consensus are difficult to forge. For example, Machar and Igga issued a joint press statement on 1 June 2016 to the effect that the South Sudan presidency – comprising Kiir, Machar and Igga – had agreed to review the 28 states of South Sudan through a 15-member committee, constituted by 10 South Sudanese and five representatives from international partners.[27] However, on 3 June 2016, Tor Deng Mawien, a senior presidential advisor to Kiir on decentralisation and intergovernmental linkages, dismissed the press statement whilst denying that consensus had been reached to review the 28 states.[28] Such actions may affect the continued effective implementation of the ARCSS.

The slow implementation of the ARCSS is also evidenced by the delays in the formation and reconstitution of transitional institutions and mechanisms, provided for under Chapter 1 (14.1) of the agreement and including, inter alia, the Peace Commission (PC); Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC); Refugees Commission (RC) and other institutions such as the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH); Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS); CRA; and the Board of the Special Reconstruction Fund (BSRF). All these have not yet been established – yet most were supposed to be in place within the first month of the TGoNU, as provided in the ARCSS.

With respect to the National Architecture and Joint Military Ceasefire Commission, the JMEC has also reported that the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission (JMCC), whose mandate under Chapter 1 (3.3) is to oversee and coordinate forces in cantonments and barracks, is not fully operational as its chair is distracted by other commitments. In addition, the Strategic Defence and Security Review Board (SDSRB) is not carrying out its work, as it is failing to reach a quorum with other security institutions such as the Joint Integrated Police (JIP), Joint Operations Centre (JOC) and the Joint

GALLO IMAGES/REUTERS/GORAN TOMASEVIC

In the spirit of inclusivity, local self-defence groups and rebel groups should also be involved in any agreement on the resolution of conflict in South Sudan.

Military Ceasefire Team (JMCT). The SDSRB is also failing to perform its functions due to a shortage of working space, and lack of transport and communication essentials.[29] However, Festus Mogae, chair of the JMEC, dismissed the explanation that these institutions were failing to operate due to funding shortages, arguing that there was no political will.[30]

Mogae also noted that the JMCC's failure to meet and work as a team "impeded the integration of forces", resulting in widespread violence committed by members of the Shilluk and Dinka communities in Malakal, which culminated in the death of 18 people and injuries to 50 people, as reported in February 2016.[31] Again, in March 2016, there was reported violence in Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Malakal and Upper Nile states around March 2016.[32] UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed his concern over the fighting between the SPLM/A-IG and SPLM/A-IO in Juba, Wau and Bentiu, as well as reported attacks on the UN and humanitarian operations.[33]

Due to the reported violence and hostilities in most parts of South Sudan, in March 2016 Ban Ki-moon urged the warring parties to "rebuild mutual trust and confidence from the people and the international community to set the country on a path to stability". He further implored the South Sudanese leaders to "[p]ut peace above politics" through compromise, so as to bring stability.[34]

More recently, Ban Ki-moon made remarks at the IGAD Extra-Ordinary Summit in Kigali, Rwanda on 16 July 2016, after reports of renewed fighting in Juba, attacks at UN compounds and the pillaging of UN humanitarian food stocks:

> We are all appalled by the magnitude of the violence, the indiscriminate attacks on civilians and peacekeepers, and the immense loss of lives and suffering this crisis has inflicted on the people of South Sudan. The renewed fighting is horrendous and totally unacceptable.[35]

At the AU Summit in Kigali on 13 July 2016, the AU's outgoing chairperson, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, also condemned the fighting in Juba:

> [O]ver the past few days we see the resurgence of the conflict in South Sudan, after more than two years of talks. Hardly two months after the formation of the Government of National Unity, the belligerents seem to be back in the trenches, and the people of South Sudan, instead of celebrating five years of independence, once again are barricaded in their homes or must flee like sheep before the wolves.[36]

The slow progress recorded in implementing the ARCSS is one of the main causes of this return to violence. Political will has also been singled out by the JMEC as one of the key factors behind this limited implementation progress. The fact that key signatories to the peace deal – specifically Kiir – signed the peace pact with many reservations, obviously has a bearing on his will and commitment to the agreement. This, however, does not in any way downplay the other factors contributing to the limited progress in implementing the ARCSS – notably the struggle for power and control between SPLM/A-IG and SPLM/A-IO leaders Kiir and Machar; the exclusion of other stakeholders to the conflict in the ARCSS negotiation process; and nation-building complexities that naturally face the South Sudanese, as the state is still in its formative stages with very little institutional infrastructure to anchor governance and other systems.

Revisiting the ARCSS: The Way Forward

What any peacebuilding practitioner involved in the peace process in Sudan needs to understand clearly is that South Sudan as a state is still in its infancy. While the country's politicians have been exposed to numerous peace negotiations and have signed several peace pacts in years dating back to the pre-secession era, it is imperative to note that their exposure to nation-building and governance has been very limited. It is such particularities and nuances of which mediators involved in the South Sudan peace process should be cognisant.

South Sudan has no sound foundational institutions of governance to build on, unlike other African countries that inherited such institutions and simply re-engineered or reconfigured them to suit their new normal. South Sudan is building from an almost clean slate. The institutional infrastructure is weak and its governance culture is new and fragile.

Granted, peace accords do not automatically deliver peace. Particularly in circumstances where the protagonists in the conflict have a history of engaging in confrontational politics, peace agreements will likely be preceded by tensions, suspicions and mistrust. This usually results in selective implementation of the agreement and the violation of certain provisions, which results in the resurgence of conflict. The South Sudanese case fits this scenario, as both Kiir and Machar engage in zero-sum strategies for the purposes of shifting the balance of power in their respective favour. But a defective or controversial peace deal like the ARCSS will compound the situation further and make it difficult for signatories to invest their political will.

UNSC resolution 2206 (2015), which threatened the imposition of sanctions on those obstructing the peace process in South Sudan, may be understandable – especially considering the civilian and uniformed force casualties recorded as protagonists pondered and contemplated signing the proposed peace deal. However, the non-consideration of the 16 reservations made by Kiir, and those held by Machar, are not without any future implications.

It is recommended that the mediators to the conflict and guarantors to the agreement reopen dialogue on the outstanding issues that present as obstacles to the peace process. In addition, in the spirit of inclusivity, local self-defence groups and rebel groups – such as the Arrow Boys in Central Equatoria State and the Tiger Faction New Forces – should be part of the ARCSS as they, together with other community rebels, have been contributing to intercommunal violence.[37] Key issues that should be renegotiated with due diligence include security arrangements, power-sharing modalities, and national healing and reconciliation mechanisms. These hold the key to a sustainable peace settlement.

PARTICULARLY IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THE PROTAGONISTS IN THE CONFLICT HAVE A HISTORY OF ENGAGING IN CONFRONTATIONAL POLITICS, PEACE AGREEMENTS WILL LIKELY BE PRECEDED BY TENSIONS, SUSPICIONS AND MISTRUST

Such negotiations should consider the reservations expressed by both Kiir and Machar. Although some South Sudanese may be losing patience, faith and trust in the two leaders after witnessing episodes of conflicts in the post-independence era, it should be acknowledged that any attempts to exclude these two from any peace process may even worsen the situation. The most important step for mediators, therefore, is to understand the political differences as well as the grievances between Kiir and Machar. These, together with their respective reservations, should be high on the peace agenda, and mediators need to develop a strategy to incorporate their respective issues into the agreement. This will ensure that mutual trust is restored, so that the warring parties are able to work together peacefully.

Conclusion

The durability of peace agreements usually depends on the extent to which the key parties to the conflict exhibit ownership of the peace pact. The imposition of deadlines to force conflicting parties to sign agreements – even in circumstances when the end justifies the means – succeeds in getting signatures on papers but largely fails to secure much-needed peace, as parties are usually reluctant and unwilling to implement actions. As Rudolph Rummel points out, "[T]o make peace is to achieve a balance of powers, an interlocking of mutual interests, capabilities and wills."[38] Thus, negotiating peace agreements requires patience, persistence and determination. Mediators to the ARCSS should engage all the parties to the agreement, and dialogue

on the reservations of either side, in such a way that the functioning of the TGoNU in South Sudan is not affected. At the same time, they need to put measures in place to ensure that what has been achieved so far by the South Sudanese TGoNU is not reversed. This is achievable through dialogue and well-negotiated compromises by all the conflicting parties.

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AFRICAN FUNDS FOR AFRICAN PEACE: ASSESSING THE AFRICAN UNION'S NEW FINANCING PLAN

BY **LESLEY CONNOLLY**[1]

GOVERNMENTZA

As the African Union (AU) has become a stronger actor in peace operations, coordination with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has risen in importance. Beyond working together on a case-by-case basis, such as the AU–United Nations (UN) hybrid mission in Somalia, the two organisations are seeking a broader and more complementary relationship. In the last year, we have witnessed an increasing convergence, with the development of the AU Common Position on the Peace Operations Review and Joint UN–AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. These were followed by recommendations stressing the importance of partnerships with regional organisations, from the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the Secretary-General's response to this seminal report. Yet, the issue of financing African peace operations has been a long-standing contentious issue, leaving the AU in a subordinate position and reliant on external donors to support its operations. This is all about to change, however, with the recent decision taken at the 27th AU Summit to introduce a 0.2% levy on imports, thus moving the two organisations towards a more complementary relationship.

The AU Peace Fund and New Import Levy

The 27th AU Summit, held in July 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda, resulted in several significant outcomes for the institution. However, it was the approval of a new funding model for the AU Peace Fund that has been heralded as a landmark move for African solutions to African problems. The AU chairperson, Idriss Déby, claimed it was the most important

Above: The 27th African Union (AU) Summit held in Kigali, Rwanda, resulted in the approval of a new funding model for the AU Peace Fund that has been heralded as a landmark move for African solutions to African problems (July 2016).

GALLO IMAGES/REUTERS/THOMAS MUKOYA

Idriss Déby, the AU chairperson, indicated that with the new funding model the continent will take charge of its own destiny for the first time.

outcome of the summit. "For the first time, the continent is taking charge of its own destiny," Déby said, adding that the plan would put an end to the "frustrating and troublesome dependency on outside financing".[2] The announcement moves the AU toward a more complementary relationship with the UN. The AU will now be able to begin funding its own peace operations and work towards achieving the overall strategy of the AU Peace and Security Architecture. This will move the AU away from being seen as only a subsidiary of the UN.

At the June 2015 AU meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Assembly decided that AU members would strive to achieve the following targets regarding financing: 100% of the operational budget, 75% of the programme budget and 25% for the peace support operations budget.[3] In January 2016, African heads of state reiterated this decision by agreeing to pay at least 25% of the AU's peace and security activities by 2020, with the remainder coming from the UN.[4] To achieve this, outgoing African Development Bank president, Dr Donald Kaberuka, was appointed as the High Representative for the AU Peace Fund and asked to formulate a clear roadmap for financing these activities. The Kigali Summit approved Kaberuka's recommendations – which will, if successful, ensure the Fund gains US$65 million a year from each of the continent's five subregions (US$325 million in total) through a "community levy" of 0.002 (0.2%) on imports from outside the continent to cover the assessed contribution of all member states. This provision will increase to US$80 million per region by 2020, resulting in a total of US$400 million to fund the AU's operating programme and peace and security operations budget.[5] This levy should enable member states to fully fund the functioning of the AU Commission and cover 25% of African peace operations. The central beneficiaries will be the AU's five peace and security programmes, which are a main focus of the AU's work and development on the continent as a whole: the African Standby Force (ASF), the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, Capacity Building and Conflict Prevention.

Reliable and sustainable funding for the AU has been a challenge for the organisation for the past 15 years. In the 2016 financial year, of the AU's US$416 million budget, only 40% is funded from AU member states' contributions. These contributions, however, are based on each country's total output (gross domestic product).[6] This has resulted in a situation where more than 65% of member state contributions come from five countries – South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Libya and Algeria.[7] The remaining funds

come from international donors, which has resulted in a very strong interdependence and a subordinate role for African countries in decision-making.[8] Not only did African peace operations led by the AU need UN authorisation, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, but leaders were also unable to credibly claim that Africa could solve its own problems. Now, the AU can, for the first time, have a predictable funding mechanism that will grow over time, providing it with more independence and greater leverage. The new funding model will also lay the groundwork for a more complementary relationship with the UN, which is a long-term goal of both institutions – as highlighted in the African Common Position on the Peace Operations Review, as well as the 2015 High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's response to its report.

Will the Fund Work?

Some question how the new levy will be managed and enforced within the AU. At the Kigali Summit, Kaberuka rejected suggestions that his proposal is too ambitious and said that because Africa is already organised into a number of free-trade zones, it can easily be implemented by 2017. The plan is based on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Common External Tariff (CET), adopted in 2006, which is seen as a success in the region. The CET was designed to help expand ECOWAS's Customs Union, as well as promote cooperation and integration among member states. The CET was adopted at the 29th Summit of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government on 12 January 2006 in Niamey, Niger, and provided for the adoption of a four-band tariff structure made up of basic social goods (category 0), attracting an import duty of 0%; basic essential goods, raw materials, capital goods and specific inputs (category 1), attracting an import duty of 5%; intermediate goods (category 2) with an import duty of 10%; and finished goods (category 3) with an import duty of 20%. The 2006 Summit also provided for a number of taxes as part of the CET, including a community levy, statistical tax and certain accompanying measures. This levy was seen as a means of expanding ECOWAS's Customs Union as well as promoting cooperation and integration among members and providing financing for the activities of the community, including initiatives around responding to security challenges. This has resulted in an increase in overall imports in the region.[9]

Similar plans have previously been presented to AU member states, including a plan put forward in 2014 by former Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, to initiate a levy on flights or hotel occupations. This plan aimed to initiate a US$2 levy on a stay hotel tax and a US$10 flight levy on flights to and from Africa. However, the plan was rejected, because it was felt that it would unfairly burden countries that rely on tourism and aviation for income. Tunisia, for example, is largely dependent on tourism because of its proximity to Europe and its favourable weather, and rejected the tourism taxes. "If we make the tax, we will become the (largest) contributor to the AU," Tunisian ambassador to Nigeria, Hattab Haddaoui, said of the tourism levy.[10]

It seems, however, that the AU has realised that to genuinely gain independence, it must raise its own revenue. In the past, the AU had to forgo a number of projects, as it relied entirely on donor funding. Relying on donors for AU programmes compromises the organisation's ability to respond to armed conflicts, said Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the AU Commission's chairwoman. "They do want to have money [so] they can at least start to do something if there is a crisis and when there needs to be preventative measures they can take without having to wait for months and months ... because they don't even have a small amount of money to start."[11] It seems the AU has now accepted that it must be funded by African countries because, as Pravin Gordhan, South Africa's minister of finance, said in Abuja in 2014, "We should take some pride in our own sovereignty. Each country can manage some contribution."[12]

WHAT IS VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE FUND IS ENSURING TRANSPARENCY AND COMPLIANCE, WITH A PLEDGE TO NAME AND SHAME THOSE WHO DO NOT CONTRIBUTE

The new financial plan requires immense administrative oversight, though, especially since certain products – such as medicines and fertiliser – would be excluded from the levy. Yet, Claver Gatete, Rwanda's finance minister, told journalists that administrating the fund would not be a problem since the levy would be channelled directly from revenue authorities to the treasury. It would not figure in the budgets of countries, so it would not have the same impact as financing AU membership through regular channels. "The new formula is simple and automatic and doesn't pose any budgetary constraints," Gatete said,[13] and it has seen success in some regions, for example ECOWAS, which has already implemented a similar levy to finance its Commission.

What is vital to the success of the fund is ensuring transparency and compliance, with a pledge to name and shame those who do not contribute. As Gatete stated, "The decision of heads of state is binding on all countries."[14] To ensure this, a committee of finance ministers will be charged with overseeing the process and checking compliance. Work will need to be done in this area, though. As it stands now, if a country defaults twice on its annual contributions, sanctions are supposed to kick in and these countries are not allowed to vote on AU decisions, such as

the election of the new AU Commission chairperson – yet this is rarely implemented.

Despite these challenges, the AU Peace and Security Commissioner, Smaïl Chergui, is especially pleased with the new funding proposal, and travelled to New York the week following the summit to discuss it with the UN. The UN Secretary-General commended the AU leadership on achieving agreement well ahead of the initial objective of 2020. As well as improving African peace operations and the partnership between the AU and UN, this decision could also improve the relationship between the AU and Africa's regional economic communities (RECs) in the provision of peacekeeping troops, which has, at times, been challenging.

Towards a Complementary Relationship

The AU has fought hard to change the narrative around the relationship with other institutions considered to be the political and financial big brothers of the AU, and there has been a growing recognition of the need to shift this narrative. As the AU becomes a stronger actor in peace operations, coordination with the UNSC has risen in importance. At the most recent Open Debate between the AU and UN, held in New York in May 2016, Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, said: "The African Union, directly or not, is the most important partner of the UN in peacekeeping."[15] Ethiopia's Permanent Representative, Tekeda Alemu, stated at a seminar on the same topic that "the mutual dependence of the UN and the AU for effective peace operations has made their partnership indispensable for both".[16] This relationship is not only important because crises and conflicts in Africa take up the largest portion of time of the UNSC, but also because African capacities are an important resource for UN peacekeeping. Africa's member states contribute close to 51% of all the UN's uniformed peacekeepers, 60% of its international civilian peacekeepers and 80% of its national peacekeeping staff. This is an increase in contributions from 10 000 peacekeepers 10 years ago to 50 000 today. [17] There is no denying the value the AU adds to UN missions, especially with stabilisation forces.

Further, through the development of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) – in particular the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the ASF – the AU and the RECs have become significant actors and an important resource in international peace operations.[18] Practically, national, multinational and regional-led responses are fast to deploy and very capable of combating well-equipped and determined belligerents. The UN faces budget and administrative challenges relating to issues of member state contribution and political will challenges. UNSC members may be more inclined to endorse a regional mission, because

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The new AU funding model will allow for a more complementary partnership with the UN.

GALLO IMAGES/REUTERS/THOMAS MUKOYA

The AU has a proven track record of being able to deploy troops quickly to stabilise a conflict situation.

these do not require personal troop contributions and are thus less costly in terms of budget and personnel. Linked to this, the introduction of the ASF and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis means that there are troops already mobilised for immediate deployment.[19]

Ultimately, with the changing nature of conflict and the rise of violent extremism, there is a greater need for forces that can act where there is no peace to keep, and which can be tasked to neutralise the spoilers of peace. The AU has a proven track record of being able to deploy fast and the ability to use force to stabilise a conflict situation, as has been seen in Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Darfur and Mali. Such peace enforcement and counterterror operations fall outside the current UN doctrine on peacekeeping. On the other hand, the AU lacks a strong civilian capacity component, and thus does not have the capacity to develop multidimensional missions that can sustain peace over the long term. This is where the UN's predictable funding and ability to recruit a large civilian component in every mission provide it with a competitive advantage. Hybrid missions such as the UN–AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the working relationship between the UN and the AU regarding the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) show that a strategic relationship is possible and is very useful in managing conflict on the continent.

UNSC MEMBERS MAY BE MORE INCLINED TO ENDORSE A REGIONAL MISSION, BECAUSE THESE DO NOT REQUIRE PERSONAL TROOP CONTRIBUTIONS AND ARE THUS LESS COSTLY IN TERMS OF BUDGET AND PERSONNEL

The Quest for a Better Partnership

Recent developments have shown us that an effective relationship between the AU and UN is no longer optional but rather "an absolute necessity",[20] as the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, El Ghassim Wane, stated. Over the past decade, there have been significant improvements in the relationship between the two institutions. UNSC members and AU PSC members started holding annual joint meetings in 2007, alternating between their respective headquarters. This is a noteworthy development, considering the UNSC's previous refusal to travel to the AU headquarters. The AU–UN Joint Task Force has convened and desk-to-desk meetings are regularly held. This shows a growing commitment to bring the organisations together structurally. There are also collaborative exercises taking place to look at the lessons the AU and UN can learn from political transitions – for example, in Mali and CAR – thus illustrating the intention of holding more joint or collaborative missions in the future.

We have also seen a growing collaboration in mediation processes – for example, in Sudan, where the AU is leading the mission with UN contributions, and in South Sudan,

where the UN is leading the process with AU support. Over the past decade, the AU has built up its capacity to respond to crisis and support peace operations. In Mali and CAR, the AU was the first responder, and a UN mission followed. However, there are, of course, some challenges in this quest for better coordination. While the AU PSC member states recognise the primacy of the UNSC in matters of international peace and security, there is growing frustration about the perceived unwillingness of the UNSC to fulfil this duty. There is also frustration with the lack of financial support the AU receives from the UN for those tasks the AU is undertaking on behalf of the UNSC. The AU PSC feels that for the AU to be strong, the UNSC should not only authorise the AU to take responsibility for maintaining international peace and security in Africa, but the UN should properly resource the AU to do so.

A lack of predictable and sustainable financing has, in the past, been a major constraint for the AU in maintaining regional peace and security effectively, which is why the initiation of the levy is such a landmark decision. Earlier this year, the European Union's (EU) decision to reroute funding of the AU mission in Somalia by 20% resulted in a near-crisis that the AU could not rectify. In CAR and Mali, meanwhile, the UN took over missions earlier than was desirable, because the AU and troop-contributing countries did not have the necessary resources to continue. In both cases, the UN missions ultimately lacked the same level of flexibility as their AU-led predecessors, which were able to undertake more offensive measures. The reality is that the AU can use more force in an offensive manner against armed groups in a conflict situation whereas the UN, according to the UN peacekeeping doctrine, cannot engage in force beyond self-defence. In both CAR and Mali, when the UN was deployed, the missions found themselves in a precarious situation where they could not intervene with enough force to secure the situation.[21] These challenges could now be more avoidable, including at the mission start-up phase, because there is less reliance on voluntary donor contributions. Therefore, AU missions will be better able to meet the needs of conflicts and will be able to deploy for longer, regardless of the external contribution of funds.

Conclusion

When the AU intervenes in a conflict in Africa, it shows solidarity within the continent, and that the organisation is taking responsibility for resolving problems on its own continent – that is, African solutions for African problems. These interventions are often closely coordinated with national governments, as well as the RECs. African peace operations are different to UN peacekeeping operations, but they should not be seen as inferior – rather as complementary to each other. The AU does peace enforcement; the UN does peacekeeping. However, the relationship between the organisations could be stronger, deeper and wider. As recent

UN PHOTO/OLIVIER CHASSOT

Hybrid missions, such as the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), show that a strategic relationship between the organisations is possible and very important for managing conflict in Africa.

actions show, Africa wants to do more than just provide boots on the ground as part of this relationship. It wants a more balanced financial relationship, and this development within the AU Peace Fund takes the UN–AU partnership one step further. It is, however, only a subset of a number of larger strategic challenges for the relationship and the evolving notion of a global peace and security architecture. To reach a sufficiently strategic partnership, it is necessary to investigate a more clearly defined division of labour and burden-sharing arrangement that will enhance cooperation and efficiency, with the overall goal of providing the most effective responses to conflict. Progress on the financing side will, hopefully, act as a catalyst for this broader conversation. The next step for the two organisations will be to move beyond the narrow agenda of the number of troops and who pays for them to a much broader outlook of working together to resolve the political problems underlying Africa's conflicts.

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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

BY **NATASJA RUPESINGHE**

Introduction

Strengthening and deepening engagement with communities in United Nations (UN) peace operations has emerged as a key priority among high-level reviews of the UN system. The report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), the report of the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) for the Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, the Global Study on the Implementation of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, have all emphasised the need to develop bottom-up, people-centred approaches. Across the board, there is a renewed commitment to support constructive state-society relations through inclusive, nationally and locally owned, broad-based, consultative processes.

This consensus has come to the fore amidst growing criticisms that the UN remains too state-centric, that it applies predefined peacebuilding templates to diverse contexts and that it increasingly leans on military solutions

Above: Strengthening and deepening engagement with communities in UN peace operations must be a key priority.

over political ones. Existing practices often alienate and marginalise the local people whom missions are mandated to serve, and risk "perpetuating exclusion".[1] The renewed resolve to "put people first" is a welcome commitment on the part of the UN, but as a policy commitment, it represents nothing new. What the review processes revealed is that the UN is still not doing enough to ensure local people play an active role in deciding the roadmap to peace. This article highlights the opportunities, challenges and trade-offs peacekeepers have to face when deciding when, who and how to engage with people effectively at the field level. It argues that by integrating bottom-up and people-centric approaches as a core strategy in peace operations, UN practices can be more sensitive and responsive to local people. This will be more realistic if existing practices are incorporated into a coherent strategy, and if communities are involved systematically in decision-making.

A Renewed Resolve to Serve and Protect Local People?

In 2015, the HIPPO report argued that the UN should develop better strategies for community engagement at all stages of the mission cycle, to improve mandate implementation and to ensure that the mission is always responding to local demands.[2] The report went on to state that "countries emerging from conflict are not blank pages and their people are not 'projects'. They are the main agents of peace."[3] The peacebuilding report, criticising the tendency to favour capitals and elites, calls for "inclusive national ownership" and ensuring the participation of broad sectors of society including community groups, women, youth, labour organisations, political parties, the private sector, civil society and marginalised or under-represented groups.[4] Both reports call for broadening engagement, particularly to enhance the role played by women and youth in new, challenging domains such as addressing radicalisation and violent extremism. The Global Study also underlined the empirical links between women's participation and the stability and sustainability of peace, calling for the enhanced role of women in decision-making in all areas of peace operations.[5]

What is Community Engagement?

Engaging communities and using people-centred approaches have been the backbone of both the development and humanitarian fields for decades. The advent of "participatory approaches" in the 1970s and, later, "people-centred" development in the 1980s emerged as responses to top-down externally led interventions, to empower communities as agents in the design of projects and programmes. Both the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) have released practitioner guidance on "community-based approaches".[6]

PEWEE FLOMOKU

Women's participation is vital for the stability and sustainability of peace; their role in decision-making in all areas of peace operations must be enhanced.

While "community engagement" has not yet been well defined in the realm of UN peace operations, the Department of Peacekeeping is developing a set of guidelines for mission staff. This is currently in the form of a draft practice note on community engagement. Echoing the HIPPO report, it argues that communities should play an active role in decision-making, implementation, assessment and monitoring, and maps out the potential role of communities at each of these junctures. Three core engagement goals are stated.[7] The first is communication, which ensures communities receive the information necessary for self-organisation. The second is consultation, which enables the sharing of perspectives, grievances, needs and priorities that become key data for decision-making and evaluation. The third is empowerment, which facilitates local people's direct involvement in decision-making. These principles are already practised in most peacekeeping missions, and are usually applied as parallel, complementary processes. For instance, strategies to tackle intercommunal violence often involve communication through media campaigns to assuage hate speech and rumours; consultation with communities take place to monitor volatile situations; and community leaders are often empowered as conflict mediators.[8]

Community Engagement in UN Peace Operations: Tools, Policies and Best Practices

Over the years, the UN has developed a range of tools, policies and best practices to ensure peacekeeping missions are better equipped to engage with local people. These approaches are still not systematic, and lack a consistent methodology.

Gathering Local Data and Information Management

Evidence shows that peacekeeping forces which valorise local sources of knowledge consistently develop better relations with local people, and are thus able to carry out their mandates more effectively.[9] Civil Affairs teams gather vast and rich data on local conflict dynamics and protection threats on a daily basis. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Must-Should-Could Protection of Civilians Matrix (MSC) enables actors in the field to jointly define and rank protection threats, as well as defining what action should be taken – such as setting up a patrol in a particular village. A key challenge in many missions, however, is that information is not always routinely or effectively funnelled into mission-wide analyses. Local Civil Affairs teams in the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) have overcome this by using the Joint Mission Analysis Cell's (JMAC) weekly predictive risk assessment matrix, which synthesises risks against civilians in a geographic table, as a modality for organising its information into concise briefs, often on a province-by-province basis.[10] This contributes to the overall mission-wide awareness of protection threats.[11] Another challenge is that views from the field do not always travel upstream, and fail to reach senior leadership. Experts have thus advocated for both formal processes, such as increased community participation in formal planning and assessment processes, as well as more informal processes, such as systematising town hall visits by senior leadership.[12]

Perception Surveys

Capturing local perceptions is becoming an important best practice for peacekeeping missions, and helps the mission understand how its interventions impact people on the ground. Since 2005, UN peacekeeping operations have commissioned perception surveys in the DRC, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Somalia. Perceptions of local people provide useful insight on local drivers of violence against civilians, which is important when designing protection strategies.[13] Public opinion surveys are also useful means of tracking priorities and needs of communities, which change over time. For example, in the DRC, perception surveys revealed that people prioritised softer peacebuilding initiatives (such as local conflict resolution and reconciliation) over infrastructure development, while in Sudan, surveys have resulted in a shift in programming to be significantly more community-based, targeting youth in particular to foster stability.

Information and Communications Technology, and Media

Media and information and communications technology (ICT) are increasingly used as resources for facilitating community engagement from the bottom up, ensuring that key messages reach remote populations. Radio is often the most far-reaching and commonly used means of spreading information in current peace operations. In Mali, radio was an important communication tool used to raise awareness on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali's

UN PHOTO/JC MCILWAINE

Radio Miraya, the UN mission radio in South Sudan, hosts a children's debate to commemorate the International Day of Peace. Children discuss the theme, "Peace can be achieved through mutual understanding and tolerance, not through violence and war" on the air (September 2014).

UN PHOTO/CATIANNE TIJERINA

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) officials meet with local muslim leaders in Bangui (July 2014).

(MINUSMA) mandate, and to inform the public about the purpose of its operations.[14] Similarly, Radio Miraya in UNMISS has been an effective channel for explaining the government's official priorities to remote communities. Still, challenges remain when communities do not have access to such media outlets and when missions reside in large countries with limited infrastructure. ICT can also be used to report back to the mission. For example, text messaging as an early warning tool has been piloted in the DRC to alert the mission about protection threats, and in Kenya to track electoral violence.[15] The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) has distributed mobile phones to women, enabling them to report incidents of conflict-related sexual violence.

Who to Engage?

Both the HIPPO and AGE reports advocate for broader engagement, moving beyond elites to include women, youth and marginalised groups in particular. But choosing who to engage with deserves careful consideration by mission staff. Perceptions by local people that the mission is engaging with one group more than another could lead to accusations of partiality. Common practice has seen the engagement of elites, residing in capital cities, who do not always represent the views of communities living remotely. Exclusion is one of the main reasons why people take up arms and resort to violence.[16] Research shows that inclusive processes substantially increase the chances of achieving sustainable peace – particularly when stakeholders are able to make quality contributions that influence decision-making and implementation.[17] Locating legitimate representatives can be challenging, as local actors, too, come with their own agendas. Stakeholder mapping – a common practice carried out by Civil Affairs – can be key to deciphering whether leaders have a strong constituent base, which is a critical indicator of legitimacy.

There are, of course, trade-offs between opting for wide versus deep engagement. Small processes may be easily steered and deliver quicker results, while large consultations offer the means for broader representation and participation, but are time-consuming and resource-heavy, as in the case of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation in Central African Republic (CAR). The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) facilitated widespread local consultations prior to the forum to ensure community representatives' participation. The event gathered over 600 leaders from diverse sections of CAR's society – including the transitional government, political parties, the main armed groups (the Séléka and anti-Balaka), the private sector, civil society, traditional chiefs and religious groups, women, diaspora and refugee populations – to arrive at a collective vision for the future. However, the consultations were not backed by action plans and failed to generate a concrete roadmap. The donor community was largely absent from the process, which raised scepticism about the feasibility of implementing these recommendations – signalling the importance of also engaging key, strategic players from the top down.

Using local intermediaries that connect the mission with communities is now becoming an institutionalised practice in UN peace operations. UNMISS used county support bases

UN PHOTO/MYRIAM ASMANI

UN peacekeepers visit a remote community in the DRC with the assistance of civilian liaison assistants (July 2013).

(CSBs) in South Sudan as remote offices for mission staff in rural, remote areas to expand the mission's presence. In 2010, community liaison assistants (CLAs) were introduced by the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC's (MONUSCO) Civil Affairs to bridge the gap between local communities and the mission. These local staff, trained and hired by the UN, are deployed with peacekeepers to build networks with local authorities, civil societies and communities in remote parts of the country. As of 2015, there were over 200 CLAs in about 70 military bases throughout the eastern DRC.[18] They support increased engagement by offering translation services, establishing connections and informing local people about the mission's mandate, and are a vital resource for gathering information on local conflict dynamics. This best practice has been commended for facilitating confidence-building between peacekeepers and local communities, and has been replicated in other missions including CAR and Sudan.

The question of whether to engage non-state actors is becoming particularly challenging in conflicts that fall under the purview of the "global war on terror". Theoretically, the UN has the potential to act as a neutral and impartial arbiter, with the legitimacy to engage all parties to a conflict. However, in the post 9/11 context, labels used to categorise armed non-state actors (ANSA) as "terrorists" and "Islamic violent extremists" place boundaries on with whom missions can publicly engage. This has been a challenge for mission staff in MINUSMA. Being perceived to be soft on "terrorists" will likely result in a backlash from the host state and conflict-affected populations who have been subjected to abuse and occupation. While missions engage in quiet advocacy to encourage ANSA to adhere to international humanitarian law or to stop the recruitment of children, such engagement remains limited and controversial.[19]

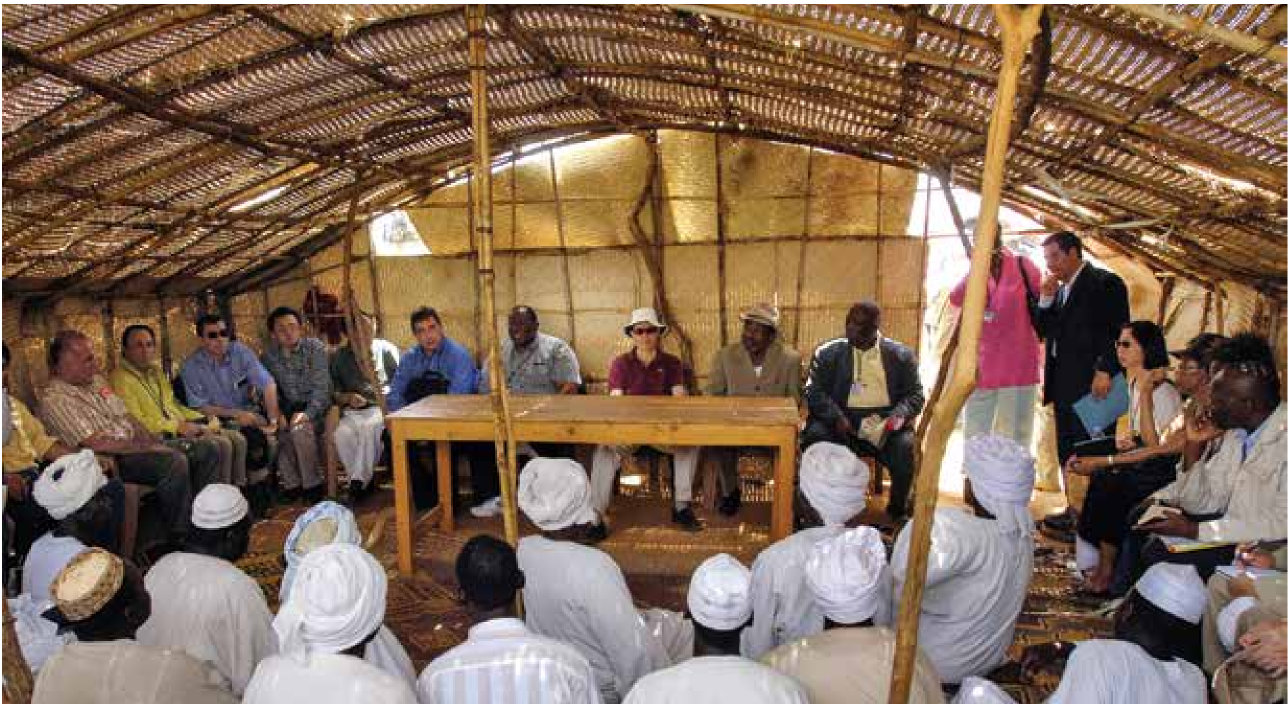
Finally, reconciling engagement with the host state is another challenge for peace operations. Missions face a number of restrictions from the state in places such as Darfur, South Sudan and Burundi, which is a challenge to mandate implementation. When missions take on issues that fall into the domain of "politics", they are often accused of meddling with sovereign affairs. For example, the UN–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is restricted in its ability to engage with communities because of access restrictions. The state prevents the mission from reaching communities that have been affected by state-led counterinsurgency campaigns and which are in grave need of humanitarian assistance, fearing international scrutiny. Negotiating the parameters of consent is a delicate exercise. Pushing these limits too far could result in the removal of the mission – which could jeopardise the well-being of the communities the mission does have access to.

INCENTIVISING SENIOR LEADERSHIP TO SHIFT THEIR THINKING TOWARDS COMMUNITIES WILL BE KEY FOR AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

How to Engage Local Communities Effectively

What role should the UN play in community engagement? There is broad consensus among field staff that the UN should play a facilitating or "accompaniment" role, which involves enabling more and doing less.[20] This is critical to allow space for self-organisation – an important tenet for building resilience[21], local ownership and sustainability. This involves enhancing existing structures, such as traditional justice mechanisms or local conflict resolution bodies. This resonates with the "process over content" argument, which suggests that the UN should avoid influencing the outcome of engagement activities.[22] Such back-seat facilitation could involve providing technical capacity and providing logistical support – for example, by transporting key figures to dialogues or meetings, or using air assets to reach cut-off regions.

Engaging local people can also happen at a micro scale – in the daily practices of peacekeepers. As a first step, this would involve increasing interaction with local staff by sharing office spaces and resources to integrate local colleagues, as ways to increase "socialisation".[23] However, community engagement must also be strategic, with sufficient buy-in from top-level leadership. Field staff with the best intentions regularly face bureaucratic and programmatic challenges. Incentivising senior leadership to shift their thinking towards communities will be key for an effective community engagement strategy. This could be achieved through incorporating benchmarks in



UN PHOTO/TIM MCKULKA

UN missions engage local communities through a range of modalities including workshops and community meetings.

the mission strategy and tying community engagement to the mission mandate, to hold decision-makers accountable. These commitments must also be backed by financial and human resources, which should be reflected in the mission budget.

UN missions engage local communities through a range of modalities. Examples include organising workshops and meetings with government officials, tribal leaders or other authority figures for conflict resolution, or facilitating town hall meetings. Of course, these types of meetings should be backed up with action to avoid "dialogue fatigue". Consultations create expectations, and if these are not met it can lead to frustration from local people. Practitioners have also highlighted that ensuring two-way information streams between the mission and local people is fundamental to building trust and confidence. Local people often complain that mission staff only visit to collect information, but rarely provide answers to their questions in return. Improved mechanisms for follow-up, feedback and complaint channels should be developed.

The most comprehensive, systematic attempt to integrate a bottom-up strategy that involved local people in decision-making was implemented in the DRC under the purview of the International Security and Stabilisation Support Strategy (I4S) – a donor-led stabilisation initiative that seeks to unite MONUSCO, UN agencies, local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and donors behind a common strategy for stability. Between 2009 and 2012, US$367 million was spent on stabilisation activities such as infrastructure projects, and extending state authority through the training and deployment of state officials and the army. This strategy was criticised for being elite-focused, top-down, technical and far removed from the local dynamics of conflict. Most significantly, it did not lead to a reduction in violence.[24] These failures precipitated a drastic revision of the I4S, led by the Stabilisation Support Unit (SSU) in MONUSCO. In the revised strategy, one of the core pillars is "democratic dialogue", which gathers representatives from all sections of the community – including armed groups – in an effort to identify root causes and solutions to conflict.[25] Local peacebuilding NGOs function as implementing partners in the roll-out of projects. The downside of such a methodological approach, however, is that it is time-consuming, resource-heavy and project-heavy, which means replicability to other missions that are already underfunded could be challenging.

Operating in a Securitised Landscape

As peace operations are increasingly being deployed in areas where there is no peace to keep, security constraints will hinder systematic community engagement in the absence of a peace agreement. In Mali, MINUSMA's Stabilization and Recovery Section (S&R) designed regional stabilisation strategies through a bottom-up consultative process, but was limited in its engagement with local actors because of security threats – civilian staff had to be accompanied by military contingents, and the most remote regions under armed group occupation could not be reached at all. The mission had to rely on the All Source Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU) – the first intelligence unit deployed in a UN mission –

to conduct its conflict analysis, which served as a basis for developing programme priorities. Another important issue to consider is the risk borne by communities that engage with mission staff. In Mali, one of the key causes for armed groups attacks on civilians is retaliation and reprisals for suspected collusion with "foreign" forces.[26] In such cases, it is vital that the mission conducts comprehensive risk assessments to ensure that individuals or communities are not jeopardised by the mission's actions.

Conclusion

Community engagement strategies have the potential to make peace operations more responsive to local dynamics. Yet, as this article highlights, there are a number of dilemmas that arise when considering community engagement strategies in practice. The UN already has a range of tools and policies at its disposal, but for community engagement to be more systematic, these need to be harnessed into a coherent strategy. Choosing who to engage with also requires careful stakeholder mapping and identifying the risks associated with excluding certain groups. Not all contexts will be conducive to introducing a system-wide community engagement strategy, due to resource and security constraints. Moving forward, the UN will not only have to develop concrete guidance and toolkits for peacekeepers, but will also have to foster senior leadership buy-in to consider how mission structures and budgets can be reformed to ensure that the commitment to engage communities moves from rhetoric to reality.

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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SADC INTERVENTIONS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

BY **MARTHA MUTISI**

The current era has witnessed the increasing need by the African Union (AU) and subregional organisations to be more involved as first responders to conflict situations in the region. This trend, which involves the use of preventive diplomacy efforts, mediation, peace support operations, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts, has situated Africa at the forefront of peace processes on the continent. A number of developments explain this trend, including the specific provisions in the United Nations (UN) Charter, specifically Chapter VIII, which provides for regional arrangements to deal with peace and security matters, provided that "such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations".[1]

The role of regional mechanisms in conflict intervention is further necessitated by the reality that conflict in the region provides a setback to regional development, and has the capacity to impact beyond the region. Another reason for the increasing ownership of primary responsibility towards conflict resolution in Africa by African institutions is the disillusionment with "Western interventions", double standards and the conditions that come with such. In addition, the reality is that collaboration, cooperation and concerted efforts are critical for resolving complex conflicts, such as the violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Increasingly, African leaders are realising that the intervention

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SADC is a regional economic community in southern Africa that seeks to promote sustainable economic growth and socio-economic development through integration, good governance and durable peace and security.

of Western actors is often determined by Western priorities, which currently seem to be stretched due to the focus on countering violent extremism and terrorism in regions such as Somalia, Libya, Mali and Syria; dealing with the challenge of immigration; and other issues such as the implications of the recent exit of Britain from the European Union.

The DRC further provides an example of a conflict that not only has regional and transboundary dimensions and impact, but also requires regional efforts towards sustainably resolving it. The DRC is bordered by nine countries: Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia. Thus, the DRC conflict, particularly its intractability, has numerous risks for neighbouring countries and the region, due to the negative consequences from unstable conflict spillovers.[2] Furthermore, the emphasis on "African Renaissance", which was revitalised during Thabo Mbeki's South African presidency, has found expression in various AU policy documents, among others the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI)[3] and Agenda 2063. The deliberate and determined involvement of African organisations in intervention efforts in the DRC is based on the recognition that this conflict risks becoming forgotten, and that its endurance will breed intractability and an ingrained culture of violence. Against this background, the AU and regional organisations – such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) – have been at the forefront of working with both the UN and national actors in the DRC to ensure that they combine expertise and strengths to address the drawn-out conflict in the eastern DRC.

Arguing that SADC was the central regional organisation involved in conflict intervention efforts in the DRC, this article examines the background to the conflict in the DRC, provides a brief appraisal of the factors and issues that have contributed to its intractability, and discusses the role of African organisations in finding solutions to the crisis. The article further evaluates SADC interventions, drawing lessons on how these efforts can be strengthened and bolstered for lasting peace.

SADC is a regional economic community (REC) in the southern African region that seeks to promote sustainable economic growth and socio-economic development through integration, good governance and durable peace and security. Although it is only about 25 years old, SADC's roots can be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s, when the leaders of newly independent states and national liberation movements mobilised together politically, diplomatically and militarily as the Frontline States (FLS) to unite against apartheid South Africa's expansionism and to support further decolonisation. In 1980, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was born as further consolidation of the FLS, with the main objective of coordinating development projects in the region. Due to the changing political environment, SADCC was transformed into SADC in 1992,[4] and its mandate was broadened to focus not only on economic development and regional integration, but also to pursue peace and security objectives.

Conflict in the DRC: Background and Overview

Since its independence in 1960, the DRC has not known peace, and its problems have a long history dating as far back as the colonial era. The Belgian administration during the colonial era established a political system that was more focused on the exploitation of national resources than on addressing the needs of its citizens.[5] The conflict in the DRC is one of the most complex on the continent, as it often connects political, economic, institutional, social and security factors into one complicated and interconnected web

of intractability. During the period 1996–1997, the conflict in the DRC was referred to as "Africa's first world war" – a phrase that highlighted the regional nature of this conflict. This period was followed by what is often referred to as the second Congo War (1998–1999), which involved more than nine countries including Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. A 2014 UN report acknowledges the setbacks in stability and conflict resolution in the DRC, pointing out the volatility of the situation in the country and the continuing sporadic attacks, particularly in the eastern DRC.[6] On the one hand, the eastern DRC is characterised by communal violence and internal armed conflict among local groups, and community security groups or local militias. On the other hand, the conflict is also about political power contestations and competition to access state resources, which often play out at the national and local levels.

There are several actors involved in the DRC conflict. Local actors include the government and armed groups, while external actors include the DRC's neighbours, some members of the international community and multinational corporations (MNCs). Apart from land and forests, the DRC has extensive mineral resources including coltan, tin, copper, diamonds and gold. This resource abundance has made the DRC a theatre for the battle for control and ownership of these natural resources. The global scramble for natural resources and the increasing demand for energy has also made the DRC susceptible to conflict. In fact, resource-rich regions of the DRC, such as the eastern part of the country and Katanga, have often been the battle ground for conflict. The conflict in the DRC also reflects a huge security vacuum and weak institutional capacity, as the government continues to struggle to extend state control and authority in many parts of the country. A 2014 UN Development Programme report notes the challenge of poor governance at political, administrative, economic, judicial and security levels in the DRC. Furthermore, the social dimensions of the DRC conflict are epitomised by the manipulation of identity issues by various leaders, particularly around citizenship and nationality laws, coupled with the politics of exclusion and the instrumentalisation of ethnicity and the Congolese identity. The issue of contested citizenship in the DRC, especially of those people of Rwandophone origin,[7] partly contributed to the Kivu conflict, where the *Alliance des Forces pour la Libération du Congo–Zaïre* (AFDL) was formed as a coalition to topple Mobutu Seso Seko with support from Rwanda, Uganda and Angola.

Over the past three decades, the DRC has experienced a number of interventions by a wide range of actors including the UN, AU, SADC, ICGLR, state institutions and eminent persons. SADC has been at the centre of most of these interventions. While these peace efforts have resulted in some notable peace agreements[8] and milestones for the consolidation of peace – such as the 2006 and 2011 elections – the situation in the DRC remains fragile, particularly as state authority has not been fully established across the entire country.

GALLO IMAGES/REUTERS/ KENNY KATOMBE

The DRC conflict is one of the most complex on the continent, as it often connects political, economic, institutional, social and security factors into a complicated and interconnected web of intractability.

Even though significant advances have been made towards securing peace in the DRC, the eastern part of the country remains significantly affected by conflict. Communal violence and internal armed conflict among local groups, community security groups or local militias, which take advantage of the coalescing of cross-border insurgencies and regional conflict complexes, characterises that area. Armed groups control large parts of the territory, and civilians are at the receiving end of the consequences of this conflict: death, sexual violence and exploitation, and extortion. Several explanations have been given for the continued violent conflict in the eastern DRC, including the politics of exclusion, competition for land and natural resources, economic motives for violence, absence of the rule of law, weak state capacity and limited territorial coverage, impunity for serious human rights abuses, and external interference.

SADC Interventions in the DRC

The DRC is a member of SADC, having been admitted into the regional body in 1998 when Laurent Kabila's forces defeated the ruling Mobutu. Since then, the relationship between SADC and the DRC has largely been that of cooperation. Although the DRC is a member of multiple RECs including the East African Community, the ICGLR, the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), SADC interventions in securing peace and stability in the DRC have been more salient and sustained. SADC's conflict interventions in the DRC have ranged from the involvement of the regional bloc and coalitions of the willing within southern Africa to the involvement of individual countries such as Angola, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, among others.

Since its independence in 1960, the DRC has been a site of continuous attempts at conflict resolution.[9] Several peace processes and conflict interventions have been undertaken in the DRC, including political and diplomatic efforts leading to negotiations between warring parties; peacekeeping interventions; and stabilisation missions. As early as 1998, SADC intervened in the DRC through a combination of military intervention and mediation. In 1998, there was a military intervention from three SADC countries – Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe – under the auspices of the SADC Allied Forces. This intervention was authorised by the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SADC Troika), which was then chaired by Zimbabwe. The intervention came shortly after the invasion of the DRC by Rwanda and Uganda, and the subsequent request by the then-president of the country, Laurent Kabila, for SADC to assist him with curbing the aggression from neighbours. Under the auspices of the SADC Allied Forces, the military intervention was codenamed "Operation Sovereign Legitimacy" (OSLEG). Its objectives were to ward off rebels (which were notably sponsored by Rwanda and Uganda), to secure the DRC territory, and to protect civilians. Although there are mixed assessments on the efforts of the SADC Allied Forces' intervention in the DRC,[10] what remains a point of agreement is that the four years of troop presence and active military engagement in the DRC helped the country to regain its authority and sovereignty. The intervention by the SADC Allied Forces arguably was concluded with the signing of the Lusaka Agreement in 1999.

Apart from intervening militarily in DRC, since the 1990s SADC has also supported mediation and preventive diplomacy efforts in the country. Carayannis notes: "Many of the efforts to mediate a peaceful settlement during the second Congo war were SADC-driven and much of the mediation in both wars was undertaken by leaders in the SADC region."[11] Indeed, through the mediation processes of various African leaders, SADC has been at the forefront of advancing dialogues and negotiations to end the various conflicts in the DRC. In fact, the Lusaka Peace Agreement and the Inter-Congolese Dialogue were facilitated by SADC leaders – including the former president of Botswana, Ketumile Masire; the late president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela;[12] President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia;[13] and former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki,[14] among other eminent personalities. During the earlier phases of the SADC-led mediation processes in the DRC (1996–1997), Mandela largely facilitated the dialogue between Mobutu and Kabila. This was followed by the mediation process led by Chiluba, which resulted in the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement on 10 July 1999. This agreement provided for the cessation of hostilities; the withdrawal of foreign groups; disarming, demobilising and reintegrating of combatants; and the re-establishment of government administration.

SADC'S CONFLICT INTERVENTIONS IN THE DRC HAVE RANGED FROM THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE REGIONAL BLOC AND COALITIONS OF THE WILLING WITHIN SOUTHERN AFRICA TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES SUCH AS ANGOLA, MALAWI, NAMIBIA, SOUTH AFRICA, TANZANIA AND ZIMBABWE, AMONG OTHERS

Following the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, further SADC-led mediations, led initially by Masire and then by Mbeki, gave birth to the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. In July 2002, two peace accords were signed between the DRC and the Rwandan and Ugandan governments, providing for the two countries to pull their troops out of the eastern DRC.[15] These peace processes paved the way for the adoption of political pluralism and the holding of democratic elections in 2006, which somewhat strengthened the legitimacy of state institutions and the central government. The involvement of

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Eleven countries signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region, in Ethiopia, under the auspices of the guarantors of the Framework, namely the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Chairperson of SADC, and the Chairperson of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (24 February 2013).

SADC in these mediation processes reflected a huge amount of political will by the leaders of this regional mechanism to decisively bring an end to the political crisis in the DRC. It is from such SADC-mandated mediation efforts in the DRC that a report, written by Carayannis for the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, observes that "despite deep regional divisions, regional actors can (and did) initiate and successfully negotiate agreements to end conflicts in which large and important portions of that region are participants in the conflict".[16] While these mediation efforts by SADC have had mixed results, there is overwhelming consensus that they largely contributed to halting violence, ceasing hostilities and paving the way for a transitional government, which ultimately led to the first post-conflict elections in 2006.

Following the SADC interventions and the 2006 elections, the conflict in the DRC continued, necessitating extended conflict intervention by SADC. In January 2008, another peace deal was signed between the DRC government and rebel groups, which paved the way for the elections in 2011. In 2013, the Regional Pact on Peace and Security and the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC (the "Framework of Hope") was signed by 11 countries, and sought to build stability by addressing the root causes of the conflict and fostering trust between neighbours.[17] These peacemaking efforts have somewhat led to the reduction of some direct forms of violence and the cessation of hostilities.

One way SADC has been demonstrating its assertiveness in the DRC is through its cooperation with the AU on peace and security issues, and in devising strategies for peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the country. For example, SADC has established a joint office with the AU in the DRC, which is tasked with supporting peacemaking and peacebuilding initiatives. A seminar report by the Centre for Conflict Resolution observes: "SADC has attempted to make a meaningful contribution to combating violence in the DRC. The organisation has recognised the need to establish institutional structures to engage in a robust approach to peacebuilding and reconstruction in the DRC. In particular, it has established a joint office with the African Union (AU) in Kinshasa."[18] Based on its actions in the DRC, it is apparent that SADC is demonstrably committed to the ideals of the AU in pursuing peace and security and regional cooperation. This is a reflection of SADC's work towards enhancing and strengthening its military and diplomatic efforts in the DRC, but it is also a reflection of the regional mechanism's operational capacity. SADC continues to monitor the security and political situation in the eastern DRC, with a view to determining political and other courses of action. In July 2015, the ministers of SADC's Interstate Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) met in Pretoria to review the security situation in the region, including the eastern part of the DRC.[19]

Another example of the determined involvement of southern African leaders in efforts to bring lasting peace to the DRC can be discerned from the role played by SADC, the ICGLR and the Force Interventions Brigade (FIB), which operates with a Chapter VII mandate under the main UN peacekeeping mission, the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO).[20] SADC was one of the institutions (including the UN, AU and the ICGLR) that made the call to deploy the FIB in eastern DRC in 2013.

Essentially, the FIB is a regional peacekeeping force, comprising 6 000 troops from SADC countries (Malawi, Tanzania and South Africa), which seeks to stabilise the eastern DRC and prevent mass atrocities. FIB was established

UN PHOTO/CLARA PADOVAN

The Force Interventions Brigade is a regional peacekeeping force, comprising troops from SADC countries, which seeks to stabilise the eastern DRC and prevent mass atrocities.

in March 2013, following the signing of the Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the DRC and the Region,[21] and adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2098 of 2013. With the mandate to pursue armed groups and negative forces in the eastern DRC, and ultimately help the government to regain control of its territory, the FIB has already recorded notable successes, particularly the surrender of the M23 rebel movement.[22] This development resulted in the Kampala Dialogue and Declarations for Peace and the Nairobi Declaration for Peace in the Eastern DRC[23] in December 2013.

The FIB's intervention has also resulted in a partial neutralisation of the *Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda* (FDLR). These cumulative processes of securing the DRC have given a sense of optimism to that government – to the extent that in March 2015, the government called upon MONUSCO to begin withdrawing its peacekeeping troops from the country, citing the reason that the DRC is "ready to assume the responsibility of securing its state."[24] The role of SADC's Force in securing the DRC territory has led some observers to contend that "the east of the DRC, for the first time in many years, is no longer held hostage by rebel groups with significant links to neighbouring governments, though these undoubtedly remain".[25] However, despite these initial successes, the FIB has not yet been able to completely disarm the FDLR. This is likely because of the significant size of this armed group, and the fact that the FDLR is more spread out, is deeply embedded in local communities and is located in difficult-to-reach areas.

Review and Evaluation of SADC's Interventions in the DRC

Despite the recognition of the need for Africa to become more involved in its peace and security processes, one of the challenges that SADC interventions in the DRC face is the limited institutional capacity of both the continental and regional organisations to support and sustain conflict prevention, peacemaking and peace support processes. For example, while the AU, SADC and ICGLR have the political will to lead interventions in the DRC, the reality is that these organisations still depend on external support to mobilise resources and drive the peace and security agenda. The focus on "African ownership" of peace and security challenges and processes is likely to remain hollow, particularly if those seeking to drive such processes do not have adequate resources to fully operationalise this. The limited funding has meant that the SADC-led FIB in the DRC operates under the guidance of MONUSCO, with most funding coming from

the UN. While this institutional set-up is reflective of UN-REC cooperation, on the ground it could sometimes present command and control challenges. Against this background, SADC is currently in the process of fully operationalising the SADC Standby Force, and it is hoped that this force will be well resourced and capacitated to be readily deployed in situations, such as that of the eastern DRC.

While it is notable that SADC has been significantly involved in processes to facilitate the securing of the Congolese territory, there is still a long way to go for DRC state authority to be fully reinserted. To date, a number of armed groups still remain in the DRC and the majority are markedly localised, with the exception of the FDLR. Other prominent armed groups that are active in the DRC include the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Burundian *Forces nationales de libération* (FNL). According to Stearns and Vogel, at least 70 armed groups remain active in the DRC.[26] The proliferation of armed groups in the DRC could be a reflection, not of the weakness of SADC, but of the limited opportunities of young men, who find opportunity in joining rebellion. This could also point to the challenges of the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) processes that have followed the signing of most of the peace deals since 1999. Discontentment with reintegration processes has often been accompanied by the re-arming and remobilisation of groups, and a relapse into violence and conflict.

The continuation of armed violence in the eastern DRC might require not only renewed commitment and capacity by the state to secure its territory, but a review of the current modus operandi of regional interventions in the country. It is in this cyclical context of violence that SADC's conflict prevention, management and resolution processes are being tested, and would require continued exploration of how to design and effect innovative approaches towards peace. Since 2011, the approaches to negotiations have somewhat shifted, with the DRC government no longer keen to offer incentives to armed groups who surrender. While this might reduce the tendency to regroup by armed groups who do not get government positions, it is not clear how such an approach would address the root causes of conflict, as some armed groups often cite political exclusion as a reason for taking up arms.

Another challenge that SADC faces in intervening in the DRC is the multiplicity of actors in this theatre of conflict. This, coupled with the lack of any existing system of coordinating peace and security actors, has meant that efforts to bring lasting peace to the DRC are not as coordinated and harmonised as would be expected. Admittedly, SADC institutions in the DRC currently work closely with the AU Liaison Office in the country, as well as with the UN, especially MONUSCO. Perhaps, what is needed is a regional or country liaison office that could help to coordinate the various political, diplomatic and security processes that are being led by SADC. In addition, a liaison office would also ensure that the work of the SADC Secretariat being undertaken by structures such as the SADC Mediation Unit and the SADC Regional Early Warning Centre (REWC), among others, is harmonised. Such a liaison office could also provide necessary technical capacity for the various initiatives by SADC member states and coalitions of the willing that are currently involved in conflict interventions in the DRC.

UN PHOTO/CLARA PADOVAN

The Force Interventions Brigade in the DRC operates under the guidance of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), with most funding coming from the UN.

While SADC notably espouses solidarity among member states, based upon a common history of providing an affront against colonialism and foreign domination, in some instances SADC's interventions in the DRC reveal that it has not always reflected absolute consensus. There are a few instances where member states have sometimes had differing perspectives, priorities and approaches to bringing lasting peace to the country. For example, the SADC Allies intervention in the DRC in 1998 is often cited as a case reflecting divided opinions among SADC political leaders. For example, Mandela, who was then the chair of SADC, did not initially agree with a military intervention, which was proposed by Mugabe, who was then the chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SADC Troika). Some SADC member states preferred diplomacy as a strategy to end the DRC crisis, while Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia argued from a standpoint of collective security, highlighting that a military intervention was imperative since the DRC was facing an act of aggression from its neighbouring countries. Making reference to the SADC Treaty and the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation – which cumulatively provide that the regional community's member states have to support any member state facing aggression from one or several foreign forces – the SADC Allies (Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola) intervened militarily in the DRC, despite the controversy, and limited support from the international community.

SADC's interventions in the DRC could be better enhanced if it made more salient overtures to work with civil society organisations (CSOs). While the mediation processes undertaken especially by South Africa (Inter-Congolese Dialogue) created space for the participation of CSOs, this could be further broadened, especially in the post-conflict reconstruction and development phase. Civil society partners could be key in unlocking potential avenues for achieving sustainable peace, as they are closer to the ground and possess both vertical and horizontal linkages with conflict actors. Therefore, SADC's efforts in the DRC would be better enhanced through the design and implementation of coherent national peacebuilding processes, which encourage people-to-people and people-to-state engagements.

Conclusion

SADC's intervention in the DRC is rooted in the appreciation of the interconnectedness of African countries, and the recognition of the imperative for mutual dependence. Its response to the DRC conflict has taken several forms, ranging from military intervention, mediation and supporting peacebuilding processes to advocacy with the international community. An examination of the history of SADC's involvement in the DRC since 1998 reveals a degree of consistency, determination and commitment to securing not only the DRC, but the region. Evidently, SADC initiatives in the DRC seek to secure the state and restore state authority, protect civilians and, ultimately, build long-term sustainable peace.

While SADC has been consistent since the late 1990s in being part of the solution to the DRC crisis, it has not been an easy journey. The fact that the conflict in the DRC is still not fully addressed, particularly in the eastern part of the country, reflects the complex environment in which SADC operates. In addition, there are multiple actors and players in the DRC who sometimes act as spoilers to the peace process, and SADC has to navigate these intricacies with political dexterity. Indeed, while the DRC reflects the multiplicity of conflict intervention actors, ranging from the UN and AU to other RECs and bilateral initiatives, SADC has increasingly recognised that it is not a lone player in the DRC. It has adopted strategies of partnering not only with the AU, but with other regional organisations such as the ICGLR, to ensure that there is a harmonised approach to the resolution of conflict in the country. The "Framework of Hope" – signed in 2013 by 11 countries, the UN, AU, ICGLR and SADC – provides an indication that RECs and members of the international community are increasingly adopting a collaborative approach to addressing conflicts in the region. However, this is still a work in progress.

Going forward, there is a need to design and implement effective UN–AU–REC modes of cooperation in the DRC to ensure that interventions are harmonised. While the conflict in the DRC might seem daunting, SADC's interventions highlight the increased engagement of regional actors in promoting peace and security, and is evidence of the evolving nature of regional security cooperation. Indeed, SADC has exhibited a strong sense of solidarity on matters relating to peace and security, and its role in the DRC reflects the increasing primacy of African actors in conflict resolution in the region.

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Endnotes

1 United Nations (n.d.) 'Charter of the United Nations: Chapter VIII: Regional Arrangements, Article 52:1', Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-viii/index.html> [Accessed 18 July 2016].

2 Mutisi, Martha (2016) Mass Atrocity Prevention in Africa: SADC Case Study and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Whitlock, Mark (ed.) The African Task Force on Mass Atrocity Prevention and the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Mass Atrocities and Genocide, Budapest, Report of the African Task Force, August 2016 (forthcoming).

3 The African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) was launched by AU member states on 13 July 2012 to mobilise enhanced support from within the continent for post conflict reconstruction and development in African countries emerging from conflict. The ASI launch occurred

within the context of the AU Post-Conflict, Reconstruction and Development (AU PCRD) Policy, which was adopted in Banjul in June 2006.

4 The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was launched on 17 August 1992 when the Windhoek Declaration and the SADC Treaty were signed by the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) leaders as well as Namibia, which gained its independence in 1990. The transformation of SADCC into SADC gave the regional organisation legal status through the SADC Treaty (1992), which underscores the peaceful settlement of disputes as one of the fundamental principles of the organisation.

5 Kisangani, E. (2012) *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 1960–2010*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

6 United Nations Security Council (2014) 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region', (S2014/153), Available at: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2014_153.pdf>.

7 A Rwandophone is defined as anyone who resides in the DRC but is of Rwandan origin, and this applies to both Hutus and Tutsis.

8 These peace processes include the Chiluba mediation, which led to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in 1999 and called for the immediate cessation of hostilities; the withdrawal of foreign groups; the disarming, demobilising and reintegrating of combatants; and re-establishment of government administration. This was followed by the Masire and Mbeki mediation processes, which culminated in the Sun City Talks, also known as the Inter-Congolese Dialogue.

9 Kisangani, E. (2012) op. cit.

10 Institute for Security Studies (2004) 'Hawks, Doves or Penguins: A Critical Review of the SADC Military Intervention in the DRC', Paper 88, April, Available at: <https://www.issafrica.org/uploads/PAPER88.PDF> [Accessed 18 July 2016].

11 Carayannis, Tatiana (2009) 'The Challenge of Building Sustainable Peace in the DRC', Background paper, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, July, Available at: <http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx_news/69DRCpaper.pdf> [Accessed 18 July 2016], p. 11.

12 The late President Nelson Mandela was especially instrumental in the SADC-backed negotiations that led to the signing of the agreement between Mobutu Sese Seko and the then-leader of the Banyamulenge rebel group, Laurent Kabila.

13 President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia played a critical role in the regional SADC-backed mediation process that led to the signing of the Lusaka Peace Agreement in 2002.

14 President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa largely brokered the Pretoria agreement, which was signed on 16 December 2002.

15 See the 'Agreement Between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Uganda on Withdrawal of Ugandan Troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cooperation and Normalisation of Relations Between the Two Countries', Available at: <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/drc_uganda_09062002.pdf>. Also see: 'Peace Agreement Between the Governments of the Republic of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the Withdrawal of the Rwandan Troops from the Territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Dismantling of the Ex-FAR and Interahamwe Forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)', Available at: <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/drc_rwanda_pa07302002.pdf> [Accessed 11 August 2016].

16 Carayannis, Tatiana (2009) op. cit.

17 These 11 countries are Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, DRC, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region was facilitated by the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa. The Framework of Hope came on the heels of the adoption of Resolution 2098 by the UN Security Council, and the appointment of Mary Robinson as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes. Robinson's mandate focuses on encouraging the parties to the framework to deliver on their commitments while supporting regional efforts to reach durable solutions in the Great Lakes region.

18 Centre for Conflict Resolution (2010) Post-conflict Reconstruction in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)', Policy Advisory Group Seminar Report, Available at: <http://dev.ccr.org.za/images/pdfs/Vol_36_post_conflict_reconstruction_mar2011.pdf> [Accessed 10 August 2016].

19 Agência Angola Press (ANGOP) (2015) 'Ministers at SADC's Defence, Security Organ Meeting', 20 July, Available at: <http://www.portalangop.co.ao/angola/en_us/noticias/politica/2015/6/30/Minister-SADC-Defence-Security-organ-meeting,0c7ea8e1-cb5a-402e-a2b3-e8b1be201e4c.html>.

20 Sheeran, Scott and Case, Stephanie (2014) 'The Intervention Brigade: Legal Issues for the UN in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', Available at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/267461654/The-Intervention-Brigade-Legal-Issues-for-the-UN-in-the-Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo#scribd> [Accessed 25 May 2016].

21 The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region was signed on 24 February 2014 by 11 African countries (Angola, Burundi, CAR, DRC, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia). In addition, leaders of four regional/international organisations also signed the agreement: the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the Chairperson of the ICGLR, the Chairperson of SADC and the Secretary-General of the UN. For details, see: <http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/undpa/shared/undpa/pdf/SESG%20Great%20Lakes%20Framework%20of%20Hope.pdf> [Accessed 24 May 2015].

22 The rebel March 23 Movement (Mouvement du 23-Mars, or M23), also known as the Congolese Revolutionary Army, was a rebel military group based in the eastern areas of the DRC, mainly operating in the province of North Kivu. The M23 rebels were named after a peace agreement they signed with the Congolese government on 23 March 2009, when they were fighting as part of a group calling itself the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP). Many CNDP fighters were integrated into the Congolese army, the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC). However, a number of CNDP troops mutinied, in response to their alleged discontent towards the implementation of the peace agreement, as well as their dissatisfaction with their pay conditions within the Congolese army.

23 The Nairobi Declaration was facilitated by President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya. The M23 agreed to cease the rebellion, demobilise and transform itself into a legitimate political party, while the DRC committed to grant amnesty to M23 members and release those under detention for acts of war and rebellion.

24 For details, see: Author unknown (2015) 'DRC Calls for an End to UN Peacekeeping Mission', Aljazeera, 19 March, Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/drc-calls-peacekeeping-mission-150319200034331.html> [Accessed 15 July 2015].

25 For details, see: Shepherd, Ben (2014) *Beyond Crisis in the DRC: The Dilemmas of International Engagement and Sustainable Change*. Research paper. London: Chatham House

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IDEOLOGY AND CULTURAL VIOLENCE IN DARFUR

BY **DANIEL ROTHBART AND ADEEB YOUSIF**

GALLO IMAGES/REUTERS/ MOHAMED NURELDIN ABDALLAH

Since its independence in 1956, Sudan has been ravaged by war. For residents of the western-most state in the country, Darfur, the war has led to ethnic cleansing on a massive scale.[1] During the peak years of the war, 2003–2005, the Sudanese Air Force struck villages using assault helicopters and Russian-made Antonov bombers. Ground forces followed aerial attacks with infantry assaults, targeting ethnic tribes that the Sudanese government accused of supporting rebel resistance movements. Three ethnic tribes received the brunt of these assaults: the Fur, Massalit and Zaghawa. The perpetrators included the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), as well as the Arab militia group known as the Janjaweed. From a sociological perspective, the Janjaweed is comprised of a loose consolidation of five subgroups: former bandits, demobilised government soldiers, young members of Arab tribes, common criminals and young unemployed Arab men.[2] The term *janjaweed* originally meant "horsemen with G [Jim] guns",[3] and later evolved to mean "devil on a horse".[4] The attackers systematically killed men, raped women and abducted children; they also targeted essential resources, destroying livestock, torching fields, poisoning wells and levelling health clinics and schools.[5] According to United Nations (UN) reports, more than 300 000 Darfuri civilians have been killed since 2003, and approximately 3 000 000 people were forcibly exiled.[6] The UN Security Council condemned such attacks in 2004, and imposed sanctions and a ban on the import and export

Above: Since its independence in 1956, Sudan has been ravaged by conflict and war.

of military equipment to any non-state militia group, such as the Janjaweed. At the time of writing, the SAF is facing four major resistance movements: the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), led currently by Gibril Ibrahim; the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur; a separate branch of the SLM/A, led by Minni Minawi; and an umbrella group known as the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), comprising factions of previous movements, led by Tigani El-Sissi.[7]

The militancy of Sudan's central government is driven, in part, by an ideology that promotes a polarising duality between "Sudanese Arabs" and "Sudanese Africans". The Sudanese Arabs are treated as genuine citizens of the nation – true Sudanese – who are worthy of rights, capable of holding positions of power and suitable subjects of state protection. In stark contrast, Sudanese Africans are assigned a subordinate status – presumably because of their historical subjugation as slaves, their apparently alien cultural practices and their alleged incapacity to hold positions of leadership. This alleged duality has a direct impact on the government's military campaign in Darfur. For example, in conjunction with monetary incentives and the lure of administration positions, government officials exploited the Janjaweed's historical grievances against non-Arab tribes.[8]

In this article, we show that the Arab-African duality represents a case of cultural violence against the non-Arab tribes of Darfur. In general, cultural violence refers to aspects of culture – such as religious faith, educational institutions, ideological notions, the arts and patterns of speech – that are strategically constructed and coordinated to support systems of stark inequality between society's "haves" and "have nots" while burying awareness of such inequalities under layers of cultural symbols, such as flags, anthems, military marches, icons of political leaders, and so on.[9] We identify two social areas in which such violence occurs: the policies of the nation's education system and government-prompted practices regarding changes in the use of language.

Arabism and Political Islam

The adherents of Arabism seek to rejoice in the fruits of Arab culture, achievements and conquests. Its followers seek to share vicariously in the rich heritage of Arab nations, which includes past military conquests.[10] Central to this ideology is the social-political differentiation between the

GALLO IMAGES/AFP/ASHRAF SHAZLY

Sudanese President, Omar al-Bashir (left), with Sudan's Janjaweed militia leader, Mussa Hilal, during a ceremony in Khartoum (20 January 2012).

pure citizen – who is worthy of rights, privileges and benefits that the state can offer – and the impure subject that state officials regard with suspicion, mistrust or possibly disdain.

Of course, Arabism did not originate with the current social-political leadership. Before Sudan achieved independence from the British, Europeans defined Sudan as a nation of two distinct population groups. Residents of the northern region – primarily Arabs and Muslims – were cast as civilized people, because their cultural practices resembled those of "advanced" societies (meaning European), while the southern Sudanese were thought to be primitive people. This constructed duality served as an ideological cover for a flourishing slave trade orchestrated by colonial rulers. When the British conquered Sudan, the separation of the population continued, with Sudanese Arabs cast as superior by race to Africans and with special privileges going to Arabs, such as access to higher education, positions of power and economic resources.[11]

From the early days of Omar al-Bashir's presidency, the central government imposed an ideology that, in effect, politicised Islam. Adherents of political Islam seek to establish a political state based on a particular interpretation of the sacred text. They "see Islam not as a mere religion, but as a political ideology which should be integrated into all aspects of society: politics, law, economy, social justice, foreign policy".[12] Based on its version of Islam, this movement's members grounded their political activism in a personal commitment to follow the teachings of the Prophet.[13] Muslims who hold alternative interpretations of the sacred text are caste as infidels and subject to persecution.[14]

In addition to its religious framing, this ideological division between Arabs and Africans comes with a stereotypical racial division that reflects a strong preference for light skin rather than dark skin, which is associated with the legacy of slavery.[15] In fact, many Africans are shamed by their dark skin and seek treatments to get lighter skin through the use of bleaches, cosmetics and medicines. Despite the stereotypical distinction between light-skinned Arabs and dark-skinned Africans, the Arab/non-Arab distinction in fact cannot be associated with skin colour. While some people who self-identify as Arabs are light-skinned, many others are not. People are often described not as black, but as brown or green. To be green in Sudan means to bear the privilege of Arab ancestry – or, more specifically, to be not black. Sudanese passports, for example, rarely describe a skin colour as black, but instead as green, as a national standard. Yet, depending on the region, the same characteristics by which someone self-identifies as Arab can also be cited for a Sudanese to self-identify as African.[16]

IN ADDITION TO ITS RELIGIOUS FRAMING, THIS IDEOLOGICAL DIVISION BETWEEN ARABS AND AFRICANS COMES WITH A STEREOTYPICAL RACIAL DIVISION THAT REFLECTS A STRONG PREFERENCE FOR LIGHT SKIN RATHER THAN DARK SKIN, WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY

Central Government and Political Elites

The military coup of 1989 that elevated al-Bashir to the presidency represented a major victory for hardline Islamists. At that time, the figurehead of this movement was a Sunni Muslim named Hassan al-Turabi. His leadership represents the political ascendency of the National Congress Party (NCP), which was called the National Islamic Front until 1993. Today, its members hold key positions throughout society – business, religion, military and security.[17] National governance was and is controlled by the NCP.

The political elites in Khartoum have implemented policies that seek to protect and promote domination of the northern riverine Arabs, giving them privileges, power and

UN PHOTO/TOBIN JONES

Some of the last people from the Zaghawa tribe live next to the United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) base for protection before leaving for the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced people in North Darfur (March 2009).

prestige that no African – or even Arab from Darfur – could expect to enjoy.[18] Among these Arabs, the higher status group is the Jaali. The ideology of the Jaali – to advance the Arab culture and their form of Islam throughout Sudan – has been embraced by post-colonial governments. The NCP controls the nation's civil affairs, which affects economics, healthcare, family law and education.[19] For example, under the current regime, the ex-minister of finance and national economics, Abdel Rahim Mohamed Hamdi, called for the government to focus its economic resources on the limited northern region. He argued that the population of this region deserves great economic resources because they are descendants of the traditional, pure Sudanese – which, in turn, makes a political alliance with these people "easy". Presumably, these people could not survive as an effective state with the burdensome drain of resources going to other regions such as eastern Sudan, Darfur and the southern region.[20]

The NCP also shapes government policy in favour of advancing an Islamic state.[21] In the early years of his presidency, al-Bashir launched a campaign to impose an Arab-African rank ordering throughout the nation, targeting every village, school and clinic according to Arab-Islamic practices.[22] This was a campaign to advance the ideology of national purity, with "pure" Sudanese being those who speak only Arabic, practise Sharia[23] and live according to the Arabic-Muslim culture.[24] With this campaign, Sudan would be a beacon of hope for a pan-Arabic movement.[25] Those Sudanese who deviate from such social practices are stigmatised as bad Muslims and often perceived to represent a danger to the nation. Al-Bashir declared in 1990 that his regime is "fighting for Sudan's Arabic-Islamic existence, waging Jihad against the rebels".[26]

Al-Bashir assigned this campaign to Ali Osman Mohammed Taha, who was appointed minister of Social Affairs. Taha created the so-called Civilizational Project, which embraces the mission of purifying Sudanese society and imposing strict Islamic norms, including Sharia, for all Sudanese. A cadre of ideologically driven activists was sent throughout the country to foment a new Islamic consciousness in every village and region according to Arab-Islamic practices.[27]

The activists targeted the educational system, creating the so-called higher education revolution throughout the nation's 26 universities. All principals, deans and heads of department were required to be loyal to both the NCP edicts

and government policies. With such transformation, the government dismissed a large number of professors under a policy known as "Al-Saleh Al'Am", which means "for the sake of public interests".[28] And all students who studied abroad were required to return home, at the risk of losing all government support for their studies abroad.

The 1990 Higher Education Act called for major reforms that were strategically designed to promote Islamic culture, values and norms, as understood by the NCP.[29] To implement this Act, in 1991 the Ministry of Higher Education created the National Center for Curriculum and Education Research (NCCER), which was charged with designing, writing and distributing curricula throughout the country. Such curricula were crafted to promote a single vision of Islam, with emphasis on Sharia, while simultaneously suppressing the diversity of Darfuri culture, languages, religious beliefs and history. The textbooks linked to these educational policies include distortions and omissions of Darfuri achievements, contributions and glories. For example, the history of Darfur's flourishing economy in past centuries is omitted. Also omitted is the history that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Darfur enjoyed a period of relative prosperity, due to extensive trade with regions in what is now northern Sudan.

The cultural violence is also extended to policies about language. Particular attention is given to the imposition of "Arabism", which includes the requirement that Arabic would be the only official language of instruction for all educational institutions, places of worship and public media. Those Darfurians who speak only an indigenous language are excluded from participation in such social institutions. Even the meanings of specific terms have been changed. For example, the duality of "Arab-African" gained widespread usage from the government's description of certain non-Arab tribes. By the time non-Arab groups – led by the Fur, Zaghawa and Massalit – engaged in military conflict with the central government in 2003, the term "Arab-African" became widely circulated throughout the nation, reflecting the government's divisive tactics.[30] Yet, this apparent duality between Sudanese Arabs and Africans glosses over the following critical fact: there are no purely objective indicators to distinguish between all Sudanese Arabs and Sudanese Africans. Of course, both groups live in Africa, and language cannot be the mark of differentiation, since most Sudanese – Arabs and non-Arabs alike – speak Arabic, as well as other languages associated with their tribe or region.

In addition, during the years of intense fighting in Darfur (from 2002 to 2006), the SAF exploited the forced

GALLO IMAGES/REUTERS/ MOHAMED NURELDIN ABDALLAH

A sheikh helps students to read the koran in a *khalwa*, or quranic school.

displacement of local residents to change the names of the villages and cities from those given by indigenous culture. Many of the new names reflect Arab-Islamic meanings. For example, the name given by indigenous people to the village of Umbala was changed by the central government to the Arabic Umkhier, which means "mother of blessing". The village of Khor Jahenam means "the stream of hell", which is based on a myth told by the local culture about something tragic; the central government changed it to the Arab name Almoda, which is a position in the local authority. Fugo Kafur literally means "the mountain of infidels"; the government changed it to the Arab name Jebel Moia, meaning "the mountain of water". Attempts to resist such name changes by local residents have resulted in severe repressive measures by government officials.

In sum, the two forms of cultural violence presented – first, the policies of the Ministry of Higher Education to transform curricula throughout the nation, and second, the government's practice to change the meanings of familiar terms and impose new names for villages and cities – represent a campaign to impose a national rank-ordering. While certain segments of the Arab population are cast as genuinely Sudanese, the non-Arab group members as a whole are not; they are denigrated, humiliated and made to feel inferior by their African identity. The political implications of this ordering are obvious: only Sudanese Arabs are worthy of positions of power and authority throughout the country.

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PARTICIPATORY MEDIA PRACTICES IN CONFLICT COMMUNITIES

BY **OLUBUNMI D. AKANDE**

GALLO IMAGES/AFP/ MARCO LONGARI

Introduction

The complexities of contemporary violent conflicts in Africa, coupled with the need to engage more holistic models of conflict management that prioritise social structures and relations, have given rise to participatory approaches at all levels of conflict management. Participatory media provides ample opportunities to challenge elitist models of communication and also creates space for interactive processes that reinforce a sense of shared identity in communities affected by violent conflicts. This article conceptualises participatory media and explores the potential of participatory communication methodologies for rebuilding fractured social relations and facilitating reconciliation in conflict communities. Examples of participatory media practices in post-conflict communities in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa are presented to project the potential of this approach for conflict transformation.

Following the counterproductive role of media technologies and practitioners in the Holocaust, Rwandan genocide, Kenyan elections, Nigerian sectarian conflicts and South African xenophobic crisis, the media has been construed as a threat to conflict resolution in many societies. In many African countries, the media is associated

Above: The emerging field of media and peacebuilding has experienced an unprecedented growth. The media can create new frontiers to redefine conflict management.

GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES/ JONATHAN TORGOVNIK

Participatory media, like participatory action research, goes beyond understanding social problems to seeking solutions to them.

with ethical and technical shortfalls, which has impeded its performance, especially in areas of nation-building and conflict prevention.[1] While this has long hampered the constructive application of media practices in peacebuilding, it has drawn the attention of scholars and donors to the media's potential for peacebuilding in recent times.[2] The assumption is that the media's potential for conflict escalation can be harnessed and deployed for the de-escalation of conflicts.[3]

In the last 20 years, the emerging field of media and peacebuilding has experienced an unprecedented growth, and has been accompanied with policies and practices which project that the media can create new frontiers to redefine conflict management.[4] New theories, such as peace journalism and conflict-sensitive journalism, have drawn the attention of scholars and practitioners to the potentials of constructive reportage for the de-escalation of violence and for peacebuilding. While these models have been embraced in most parts of the world, they have also generated controversies on the ethical obligations of the media to society.[5]

On a similar note, the inclusion of community members in the design and production of local media content has opened up opportunities for social change, which have been harnessed by development practitioners to stimulate social transformation in different parts of the world. The strength of these participatory models of communication has been bolstered by recent developments in information technologies, which have tipped the traditional horizontal models of communication to favour the participation of "users" in the generation and circulation of media content. This, in turn, articulates voices and stories that have been long ignored by the mainstream media. By amplifying the voices of those affected by structural and social irregularities, participatory media practices are gaining recognition for shaping social, economic, political and cultural processes and institutions. This transformative capacity underscores the place of community-driven media initiatives in driving sociopolitical transformations in modern times, and which must be extensively deployed for dialogue and reconciliation in communities that have been affected by violent conflicts.[6]

Constructive media practices for conflict transformation are expected to create spaces for dialogue in conflict contexts.[7] In this light, participatory media practices have been credited with providing cross-sectional forums for discussing issues like tolerance, conflict experiences, human rights, forgiveness and trust, which are crucial for transforming social structures and attitudes in conflict

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Participatory action research was developed out of the need to liberate marginalised communities from oppressive socio-economic structures and empower them to influence positive social changes in their communities.

societies. The interactions and socialisation that accompany the planning and production of media content can provide individual healings that could have spill-over effects in the community. Although not too popular in conflict interventions, the incorporation of participatory media production in some post-conflict communities in Africa has elicited significant changes that must be explored.[8] This article therefore examines some of these cases to highlight the potential of participatory media practices for conflict transformation.

Defining Participatory Media

Simply put, participatory media includes practices that empower community members with knowledge and technical skills to create visual, audio, theatrical, musical and textual representations of social, political, economic and cultural issues affecting them, with the ultimate aim of stimulating dialogues, experiential learning and social change. Participatory media practices are closely linked to participatory action research (PAR), whose core aim is community empowerment for social change. PAR was developed out of the need to liberate marginalised communities from oppressive socio-economic structures and empower them to influence positive social changes in their communities.[9] By incorporating the participants into iterative processes of research, PAR goes beyond understanding social problems to seeking solutions to them. This approach has been necessitated by the emerging need to engage the repertoire of knowledge outside the academic domain.[10] This is especially relevant in rural areas, where grassroots contributions in developmental processes have been hindered by the literacy barrier. Thus, participatory processes present an alternate method for marginalised communities to join the development discourse.

THIS IS ESPECIALLY RELEVANT IN RURAL AREAS, WHERE GRASSROOTS CONTRIBUTIONS IN DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES HAVE BEEN HINDERED BY THE LITERACY BARRIER

Similarly, participatory media provides platforms to document as well as harness local knowledge for collective problem-solving and human development. Typically, participatory media production processes feature joint collaboration between the lead researcher and other members of the community, who become the participants. Most decisions pertaining to production and circulation of the proposed media content are jointly made by the

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Participatory media production processes feature joint collaboration between the lead researcher and other members of the community, who become the participants.

researchers and the participants. The cooperative and dialogical nature of participatory media practices has been known to ignite social change processes that have had effects on attitudes, behaviour, perception and policy change in communities.[11] The need to engage participatory media interventions in post-conflict communities is related to the current manifestations of conflicts on the continent. Most violent intergroup conflicts are enmeshed in polarised social institutions and relations that have dire implications for post-conflict relations, as most communities affected by violence usually feature high levels of intergroup tensions.

Participatory media – such as participatory videos (PV) and participatory photography – normally involves a range of capacity-building exercises where participants are facilitated to produce videos on selected themes in their communities, some of which include workshops on video-making, editing, development of themes and storylines, and narration, among others. These sessions usually feature dialogical group settings that Sadan, cited in Tremblay and Oliveira-Jayme,[12] notes can serve as an avenue to alter power dynamics or social structures. Constructive interactive sessions facilitate a liberal exchange of conflict experiences between opposing factions, which can illuminate similarities in the pain, loss and scars of the conflicts, thereby leading to a shared conflict narrative that, in turn, fosters a sense of collective identity. The interactions between the symbolic presentations of human experiences and liberal dialogic processes stimulate cognitive reactions that promote the attainment of commonalities. This was manifested during the "Never Again" campaign in Sierra Leone, where participatory communication approaches such as theatre, songs, proverbs, riddles and skits were used to engage victims and perpetrators of violence in storytelling processes that led to the cultivation of shared understandings of the conflict.[13] These understandings captured the victims' pain as well as the perpetrators' motivations for committing the atrocities.

Participatory communication is linked to one of the major tenets of peace journalism, which is rooted in stimulating change processes in conflict contexts by presenting issues in a manner that elicits constructive dialogues, counters stereotypes and enhances non-violent conflict resolution. Through participatory communication processes, marginalised parties are empowered to project their stories and create images or sounds that counter negative labels and affirm their commitment to peace, as was observed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In a community affected with high levels of drug violence, members of the community were trained to create videos that projected positive aspects of the community, to counter the violent

GALLO IMAGES/AFP/ CARL DE SOUZA

The inclusion of storytelling, dancing and healing rituals in the production processes of participatory media have made them forums for healing and reconciliation in post-conflict communities.

labels attached to that community by the mainstream media.[14]

The establishment of creative forms of engagement for adversarial parties in post-conflict societies is also a route to constructive transformation because it projects the similarities between adversarial parties, thereby giving them opportunities to redefine their relations. In some cases, monuments are jointly erected to serve as a sign of reconciliation and as a reminder of the resolve for peace. The inclusion of storytelling, dancing and healing rituals in the production processes of participatory media have made them forums for healing and reconciliation in post-conflict communities.

Case Studies

Some cases of participatory media practices in post-conflict communities are examined in this section.

Participatory Photography for Dialogue in Post-conflict Communities in Kenya

The post-election violence of 2007–2008 in Kenya left a number of scars on the communities affected. Apart from the loss of lives and displacement of about 300 000 people,[15] the violence fractured social relations between the belligerent tribes. There were widespread feelings of distrust, fear, anger and hatred in the communities. Driven by the need to re-establish communication between the opposing sides and rebuild the social fabric broken by the conflict, *Lenses of Conflict and Peace*, a participatory photography project, was implemented in Eldoret, Rift Valley to engage members of different ethnic groups in dialogic processes that complemented reconciliatory efforts in the area.[16]

Some members of the communities were selected to participate in the programme; the selection was done heterogeneously as the participants were drawn from all the tribes in the area. The participants were trained in basic photography, after which they were paired, given cameras and asked to go into the community to capture images that depicted their experiences of the conflict. The major aim was to use the images to create individual narratives of the 2007–2008 election violence and to engage them in a discussion that focused on conflict and peacebuilding. Once the photographs were taken, it generated interactive sessions, with each participant sharing the stories of their

pictures and how they related to the conflict. The storytelling sessions were filled with memories, emotions and reflections from all the participants, and eventually culminated in experiential learning processes. The evaluation of the project, though limited, revealed that the interactive sessions played a significant role in the development of a collective understanding of participants' conflict experiences. It also showed that the dialogues and socialisation stimulated a reversal of antagonistic ethnic labels with some of the participants.[17]

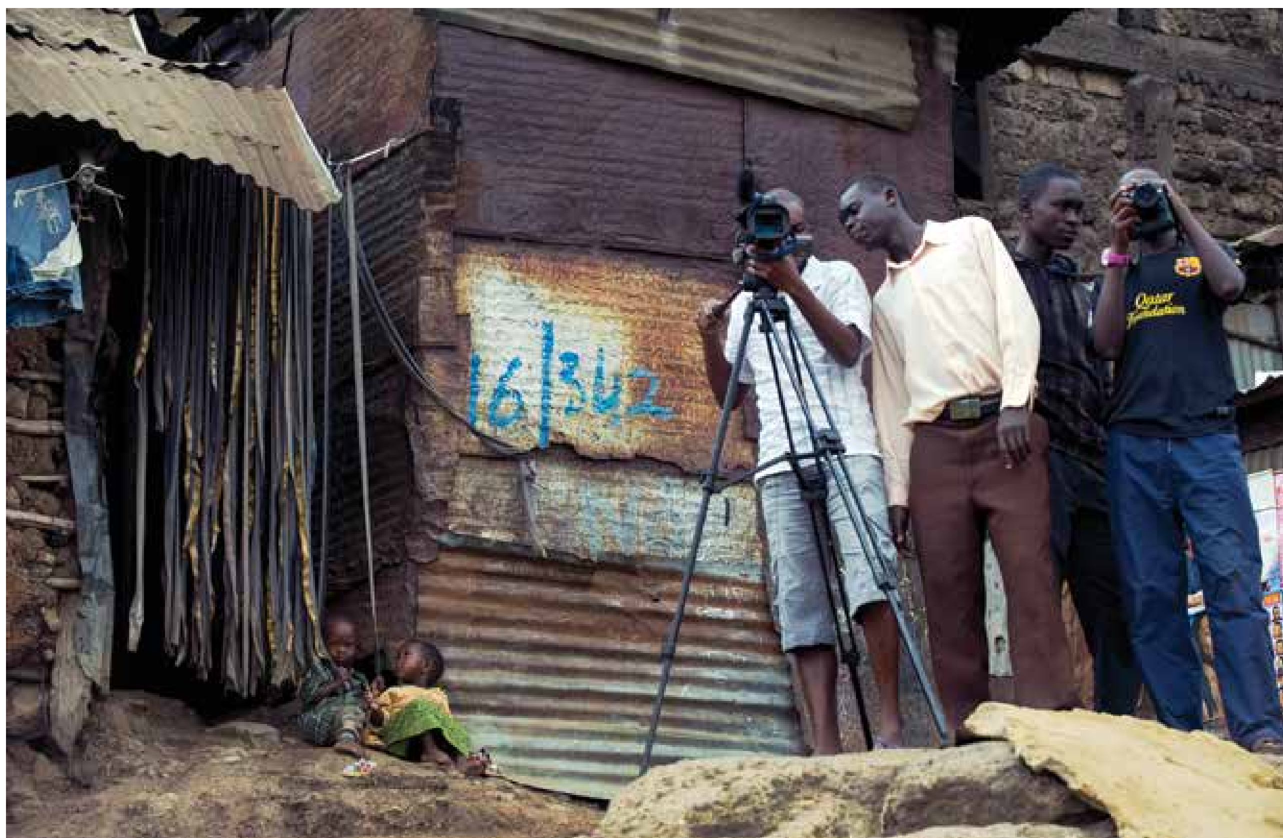
Participatory Theatre for Social Change in Post-conflict Communities in Nigeria

Several cities in northern Nigeria have been the scene of violent ethno-religious conflicts. These conflicts are normally precipitated by sociopolitical factors but escalate along the lines of ethnicity and religion. In effect, the conflict has fractured social relations between ethnic and religious groups in some areas. To change the attitude of the groups in conflict, the Theatre for Development Centre (TFDC) initiated a series of participatory dramas in some of the worst-affected cities in Kaduna, Kano and Plateau states.[18]

Participatory drama was strategically used to overcome the barrier posed by language and illiteracy. The major purpose of the plays was to investigate and interrogate conflict narratives, establish commonality and project the need for sustainable peace. The dramas featured the TFDC drama team and some selected members of the communities. The themes of the dramas were developed from data collated on conflict experiences in the area. The dramas were performed in public and were followed by interactive sessions during which other community members were allowed to re-enact certain characters and aspects of the play to aid discussions and provide deeper understanding on the themes of the plays. At the end of the project, the evaluation showed that the project went beyond promoting interaction and socialisation between opposing sides, to stimulating experiential learning and the cultivation of collective narratives on the causes and experiences of the conflict. The project gave insights into the dynamics of the conflict at the local level, which is an essential element of conflict transformation. The attainment of social change in any conflict situation must be informed by a deep understanding of the conflict, the core issues and how the conflict affects the lives of ordinary citizens.[19]

Participatory Video for Reconciliation in South Africa

The period that preceded the 1994 elections in South Africa was characterised by high levels of political violence that led to unwanted loss of lives in different parts of the



GALLO IMAGES/AFP/TONY KARUMBA

In Kenya, community participants were trained in basic photography and given cameras to go into the community and capture images that depicted their experiences of conflict.

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Participatory projects were executed in post-conflict communities in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, where community members were engaged in creative media processes for reconciliation.

country. As typical of most violent conflicts, the post-conflict phase was filled with destructive narratives that made reconciliation a difficult task. Most communities affected by the violence were divided and had feelings of fear, resentment and suspicion. The communities of Kathlehong, Thokoza and Vosloorus in south-east Johannesburg were also affected by these crises. Between 1990 and 1994, over 2 000 people lost their lives to political violence in these communities.[20]

Due to the need to strengthen communal bonds in these areas, a video dialogue project was introduced to the communities by the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre in collaboration with the Media Peace Centre and Simunye community organisation. The major goal was to promote reconciliation and cohesion through a community-led video production. In effect, video cameras were given to leaders of two political groups, the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), to document the conflict experiences of their communities. After separate recording exercises, a mutual process of editing and collating the stories was conducted to produce a new joint story that was acceptable to all. The joint story was a 90-minute video clip that analysed the conflict and solicited solutions from the community. The video was screened publicly to different segments of the community, and spaces for dialogue on the themes depicted in the videos were created.

The project created interactive sessions that strengthened social bonds in the community and facilitated the development of a common understanding, thereby promoting reconciliation. It also helped to break deconstructive perceptions and stereotypes that were fuelling animosities between both sides. The video went beyond strengthening community bonds to coordinating cooperative efforts for addressing some of the economic and development needs in the community.[21]

Benefits of Participatory Media in Post-conflict Communities

On a general note, participatory media provides a number of opportunities for groups and individuals to experience and influence positive change in communities affected by conflict. Some of these are:

- It empowers participants with knowledge and skills to bring economic and developmental benefits for themselves and their communities.
- It creates a shared sense of community.
- The circulation of the media output can open opportunities to engage policymakers on pressing socio-economic problems.
- During high-intensity conflicts, when mainstream media structures are dilapidated, participatory media can provide an alternative means of projecting the stories of the communities.
- Participatory media practices provide positive channels for diverting youth energies in post-conflict societies, which is a crucial part of conflict transformation.
- Participatory media can enhance intercultural dialogue and tolerance by providing a physical and social opportunity for diverse groups.
- By offering a space for interaction between perpetrators and victims, it promotes forgiveness in post-conflict communities.

Conclusion

The practice of participatory media empowers communities to undertake collaborative processes for social change in different contexts. The joint inclusion of adversarial groups in the planning and production of strategic local content strengthens their ability to undertake personal and collective actions for peace. This was evident in the participatory projects executed in post-conflict communities in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, where community members were engaged in creative media processes for reconciliation. The exchange of conflict experiences through visual and artistic presentation facilitated learning processes through which opposing groups were able to cultivate a shared understanding of the conflict. Moreover, the communicative processes facilitated the deconstruction of stereotypes and the articulation of relational patterns that are crucial for restoring communal bonds in polarised societies or communities. This practice presents a good model for conflict transformation, in line with the growing emphasis on dialogic engagement and localised peacebuilding.

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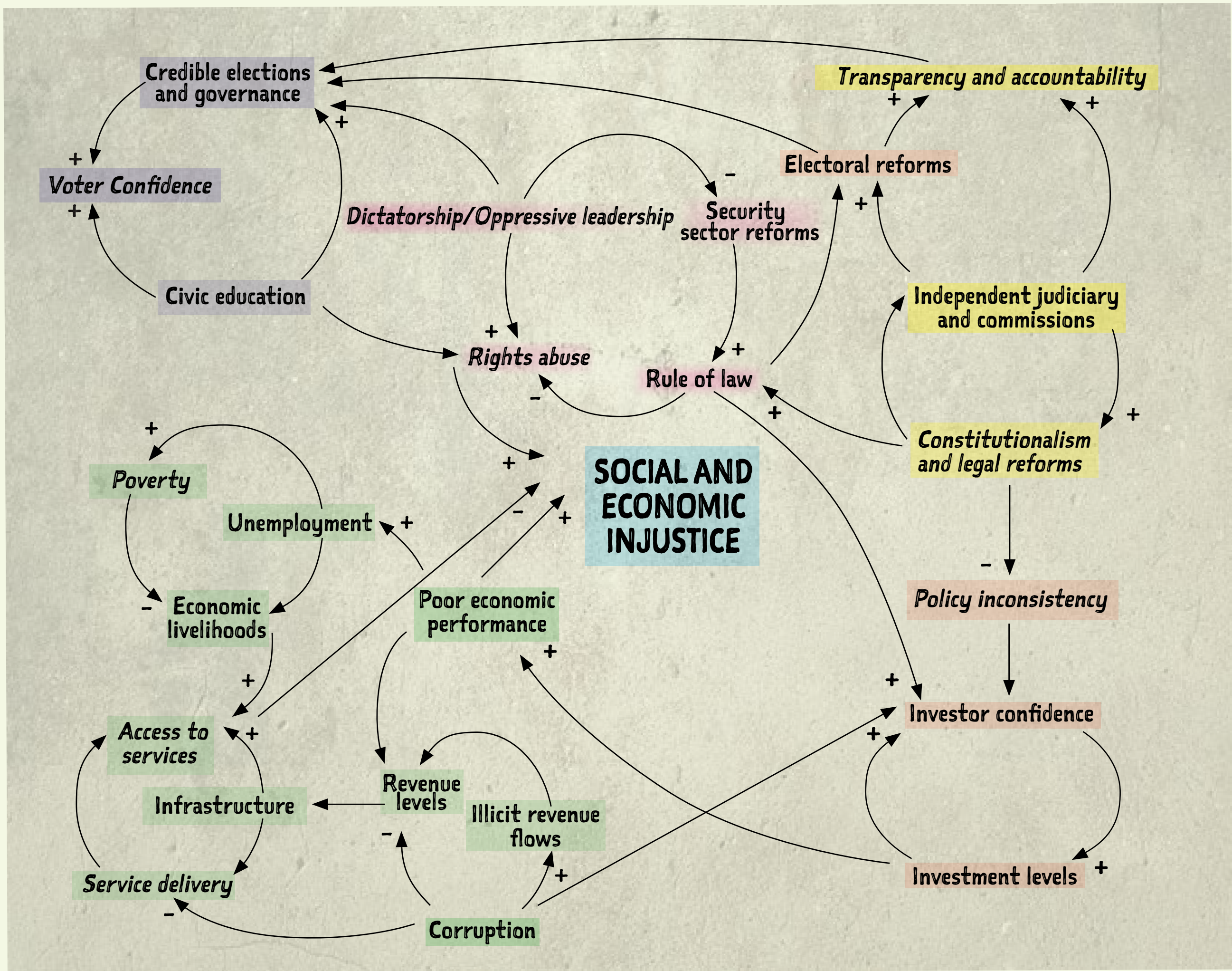
THE RISE OF YOUTH ACTIVISM AND NON-VIOLENT ACTION IN ADDRESSING ZIMBABWE'S CRISIS

BY **HILLARY JEPHAT MUSARURWA**



Introduction

Zimbabwe has experienced different forms of conflicts since independence in 1980. It is appropriate to apply a systems approach for us to unpack Zimbabwe's conflict to date. The causal loop diagram (CLD) in Figure 1 summarises the conflict.

The CLD clearly indicates that Zimbabwe's conflict is a complex web of sociopolitical and economic challenges. These include issues such as poor service delivery, corruption, poverty, unemployment, poor economic performance, policy inconsistency, lack of independence of the judiciary, lack of rule of law, human rights abuse, dictatorship, lack of civic education, reduced voter confidence and issues with the credibility of elections.

Zimbabweans have experienced structural and cultural violence. Structural violence equates to social inequality and leads to impaired human growth and development.[1] Cultural violence is the rhetorical excuses that usually follow government's failure to act or deliver on ensuring that its citizens live good lives in all spheres. Structural violence

Above: Figure 1: Causal Loop Diagramme of Zimbabwe's Conflict

GALLO IMAGES/REUTERS/ PHILIMON BULAWAYO

Anti-riot police use batons to disperse demonstrators during a protest by opposition youth against alleged brutality by security agents in Harare, Zimbabwe (24 August 2016).

delays self-actualisation and, in most cases, people always fall short and fail to reach optimum potential realisation. For the purposes of this article, structural violence and cultural violence will be taken to imply the policies and statutes that are put in place in a country whose intentions were to do good, but instead they bring harm to the citizens.[2] It will also refer to the actions related to the enforcement of such policies to the extent of infringing on the human rights of citizens. Structural violence usually occurs in public institutions such as the legal system, education, health services and other public empowerment initiatives undertaken by the government.

There is also a perpetuation of an entitlement mentality among different groups within the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF).[3] Members seem to have a right to access a number of resources such as land, loans, farming equipment or food handouts, since they are distributed by the ruling party and only members benefit. This promotes a retributive stance by those who have been alienated and victimised. They harbour resentment, anger and vengeance. Failure to address the underlying causes of the existing challenges that many Zimbabwean citizens face can easily lead to a mobocracy.

The people of Zimbabwe have internalised these forms of violence, accepting them to be a normal way of life. However, this state of negative peace is punctuated by hushed and unexpressed anger. The citizens' discontent with any situation, public or private, is heard through murmurings behind closed doors and in corridors, but never publicly. This leads to them accepting the continued justifications given by policymakers and politicians for the government's lack of action; a form of cultural violence in its own right.

Non-violent Strategies as the Option for Dealing with Zimbabwe's Conflict

Whilst gravitating to violence might come naturally for the people of Zimbabwe, there is a realistic, alternative, non-violent option to deal with conflict or even strong repression.[4] Non-violence is the appropriate option in Zimbabwe, since the freedom of expression through public events such as demonstrations, marches or merely community discussions is hampered by draconian laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). Any authorised public meetings are monitored and have resulted in a number of arrests, should the discussions or events skirt on matters deemed to be political. Civic activities are carried out in an atmosphere of intimidation and fear. The failure of activists to apply non-violent strategies result in them falling into the government's trap of breaking laws, and such actions will therefore likely be met with hard-handedness through police brutality, arbitrary arrests, abductions and, at times, the disappearance of activists.

Experiences of the Youth in Zimbabwe

Adult idealism sees the youth as lacking knowledge and experience, and they are thus unwilling to give the youth much political space. Sometimes, violence is employed to thwart youth participation. However, McEvoy-Levy[5] states that the youth are innovative, possessing and utilising different forms of power and expressing themselves through different peacebuilding activities. There are growing calls to support the efforts of innovative young activists and peacebuilders in addressing the challenges that the youth face daily. However, doing so is often dismissed as political mischief and a push for regime change in a country such as Zimbabwe. Sadly, most – if not all – political parties in Zimbabwe are guilty of closing out the political space for the youth. Politicians in Zimbabwe prefer to provide limited political space to the youth, and restrict them to their youth league formations. The modus operandi is to deprive the youth socio-economically and render them susceptible to exploitation and control by the "empowered" few in the political hierarchy who have the political and financial muscle to purchase the energy of the youth. It therefore follows that being able to address the social inequality challenges faced by the youth limits the ability of politicians to convince the youth to participate in violent acts.

The Youth are Finding their Voice and Speaking Out

The year 2016 has seen unprecedented historic events unfold in Zimbabwe as young people begin to find their voices and speak out against injustices in the country. Citizens have started to speak out against their government amid rising calls for socio-economic and political transformation. Some of the events that have triggered this backlash from young Zimbabwean citizens across the globe are listed below.

Period	Occurrence/Trigger Events
January 2016	Statutory Instrument 148 of 2015 [CAP. 23:02] Customs and Excise (General Amendment) Regulations, 2015 (No. 80), which reduces the duty rebate for travellers to US$200 from US$300 whilst, at the same time, completely scrapping it for travellers using small cross-border transport, buses or trucks, is operationalised.
March 2016	It was reported that President Robert Mugabe revealed, during his 91st birthday interview, that Zimbabwe was robbed of more than US$15 billion in revenue from diamond mining in Chiadzwa by the companies that were running the mining business in the area.
April 2016	The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education introduced the Schools National Pledge.
May 2016	The governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe announced a plan to introduce bond notes, as a measure to address the cash crisis facing the country.
June 2016	Statutory Instrument 64 of 2016, which bans the import of goods without a licence, was introduced.

The general trend in passing some of these laws was the lack of transparency and consultation by the government. The subsequent imposition of these measures angered citizens, many of whom viewed them as further spiralling the poor into poverty. Young Zimbabweans were angered in reaction to these measures, the lack of transparency and accountability with regard to the missing US$15 billion and the failure to deal with increasing levels of corruption. Youth activists reacted by increasing their mobilisation activities and starting to use social media platforms to voice their displeasure with the government.

Movements Championing the Cause of Zimbabwean Citizens

A number of increasingly recognised movements have sprung up in Zimbabwe as youth activism sweeps across the country. Three of these movements are Occupy Africa Unity Square (OAUS), #ThisFlag Movement and the Tajamuka/Sesjikile Campaign.

Occupy Africa Unity Square

OAUS is a movement that identifies itself as "a group of citizen activists founded by Itai Dzamara in 2014".[6] The movement is driven by non-violence and a principled and constitutional fight to liberate the country from corruption and mismanagement. Its members believe they have a duty to carry on the struggle started by Zimbabwe's liberators as they accomplish and protect Zimbabwean freedom, albeit by different means. The founder of the movement, Itai Dzamara, has been missing since 9 March 2015, when he was abducted by unidentified men outside a barber shop in his neighbourhood.[7] His brother, Patson Dzamara, has become the face of OAUS and together with other members, continue to use Africa Unity Square in Harare as their main protest venue. In June 2016, 15 activists were arrested as part of a clampdown on the 16-day OAUS protest, which they had started on 1 June 2016,[8]

#ThisFlag Movement

The #ThisFlag Movement started through a monologue video recording shared by Pastor Evan Mawarire on

Sheffra Dzamara, the wife of Zimbabwean activist Itai Dzamara, joins a protest that marks the one year anniversary of his abduction (March 2016).

20 April 2016 via social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter.[9] In his recording, Mawarire expressed his disappointment at the Zimbabwean government's failure to create an environment where he could provide for his children's education and upkeep. He went on to call on Zimbabwean citizens across the world to share photographs via "selfies" showing themselves holding a Zimbabwean flag, in protest to the corruption and social injustice prevailing in the country. The video went viral on social media and the response to his call for action was astounding.[10] Zimbabwean citizens from all over the world shared their selfies in protest. In June 2016, he took the protests further by inviting citizens to a meeting with the governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, where they expressed their disapproval of the introduction of bond notes. In the same month, the #ThisFlag Movement also started a petition to have the Minister of Energy and Power Development in Zimbabwe removed from office for corruption. The movement galvanises citizens in Zimbabwe and abroad to demand non-violently that the Zimbabwean government act to curtail the country's socio-economic challenges. The movement's main demands are an end to corruption, increased government transparency and accountability, and the creation of platforms for engagement between the government and citizens. One of the major achievements of the movement so far was the calling of a successful stayaway, dubbed #ShutDownZimbabwe2016, on 6 July 2016. The call to stay away coincided with strikes by teachers and commuter omnibus operators, which helped to make it a big success.

Tajamuka/Sesjikile Campaign

This campaign was started in May 2016 by a group of young people perturbed by the events in their country. The words *tajamuka* and *sesjikile* are Zimbabwean vernacular – which, when loosely translated, means "that we have rebelled". The campaign is "a gathering of 15 youth wings of the various political parties in Zimbabwe and more than 40 civic society organizations, churches, youth movements informal sector pressure groups, and labour and student movements".[11] Tajamuka was born out of the desire to bring sanity, development and accountability, and to give the people of Zimbabwe a voice in the running of the country, with the primary aim of forcing Mugabe to step down before the general elections, to be held in 2018. The members maintain that they are not a political party or group. They state that they are simply youth who are acting together in defence of their country from erstwhile liberators, who have

lost the ethos of the liberation struggle and robbed them of the very freedoms they claim to have fought. Tajamuka/Sesjikile takes its campaigns to the streets of Zimbabwe and is involved in different action across the country. It is guided by the following 10 principles:

1. No to bond notes.
2. We want our 2.2 million jobs.
3. The missing US$15 billion must be returned.
4. An end to corruption.
5. Cash crisis must be resolved urgently.
6. Itai Dzamara must be returned to his family, and there must be an end to forced disappearances, illegal arrests and detention, and state-sponsored violence.
7. Social services delivery must improve.
8. No to the national pledge.
9. Devolution of power now.
10. We want the missing US$10 million for the Youth Fund.

In June 2016, members took to the streets to address citizens in queues outside banks, and called on them to speak out against the failures of the Zimbabwean government. Members were also involved in protests against the import ban of goods, which led to the closure of the Beitbridge border post. Some Tajamuka/Sesjikile members were arrested and accused of burning down the customs warehouse at the border. The Tajamuka/Sesjikile Campaign also claimed credit for having taken part in the street protests of 6 July 2016. In some of the protests, the police fought running battles with protesters in various locations across Zimbabwe. Since this is a loosely structured campaign, it is easier for it to be associated with any youth-led street protests occurring across Zimbabwe. The Tajamuka/Sesjikile Campaign has laid claim to a number of such protests, and has also been accused by the police of fuelling violent protests countrywide. The campaign gave the president until 31 August 2016 to either resign or lay out a plan to hand over power to someone else. It warned that failure to do so would result in the protests being taken to a higher level.

GALLO IMAGES/REUTERS/ PHILIMON BULAWAYO

Young Zimbabweans protest against the government's poor handling of the economy (3 August 2016).

THEY HAVE NO MEANS OF FOLLOWING AND TRACKING PROTESTERS WHO WERE ARRESTED, SO AS TO REDUCE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ABDUCTIONS AND DISAPPEARANCES

Challenges of Youth Activism in Zimbabwe

The biggest challenge observed in the ongoing youth activism activities in Zimbabwe is their piecemeal approach to doing things. An analysis of the demands made by the #ThisFlag or OAUS movements, as well as Tajamuka/Sesjikile's 10 principles, shows that they are all advocating for the same things. What differs, then, is the manner in which they are laying out their demands and taking action. The former two movements rely mainly on social media, whilst the latter has used the streets as its rallying point. The failure by these activists to unite and undertake a combined campaign is a weakness that can be capitalised on by the very government they are tackling. This lack of unity can be the Achilles heel that could lead to the demise of youth activism before their demands are met. Another challenge is the spontaneity under which most of the action has taken place. Leaders in the many movements in Zimbabwe right now need to be more strategic and organised. The activists show this weakness through their failure to plan for and deal with the arrests of protesters. They have no means of following and tracking protesters who were arrested, so as to reduce the opportunities for abductions and disappearances. They also lack plans on how to bail out protesters, which has led to a number of people spending days in remand after failing to raise bail money. "Improving the strategic performance of leaders in nonviolent action improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the technique".[12]

GALLO IMAGES/AFP/ MUJAHID SAFODIEN

The #ThisFlag Movement started through a monologue video recording shared by Pastor Evan Mawarire via social media.

The Arrest of Pastor Evan Mawarire of the #ThisFlag Movement

Whilst many other youth leaders and protesters have been arrested in Zimbabwe, the arrest of Pastor Evan Mawarire on 12 July 2016 deserves special mention – as in the process of his arrest, the police and the government of Zimbabwe hindered themselves. Mawarire was arrested on the eve of the planned second set of stayaway protests, on charges of inciting violence and being in possession of a police helmet and baton. However, on appearing in court, a different charge – of trying to remove a constitutionally elected government – was levelled against him. His arrest is significant as it tested the level of unity among Zimbabwean citizens and across civic society movements. How citizens in Zimbabwe and across the world reacted to this arrest was unprecedented. Close to 100 human rights lawyers turned up to represent Mawarire, pro bono.[13] And whilst initially a few hundred supporters, draped in the national flag, showed up at court in the early hours of the day on 13 July 2016, the number swelled to around 5 000 by the time judgment had been passed.[14] Citizens across the world rallied behind the youth activist, and messages of support and mobilisation flooded social media. People waited outside the court in solidarity, showing unity and vowing not to leave until Mawarire was released. The magistrate threw out the case on the basis that the state's conduct was unconstitutional.

The events on the day that Mawarire was arraigned before the magistrate's court was an indication of a people who have been galvanised and empowered to speak out. Citizens mobilised themselves using social media platforms – a sign of the power that social media can have in getting messages across. Social media has become the tool that citizens can easily access and use to voice their frustrations against the regime. The united stand also reflects the ability of Zimbabweans to come together and support one cause – something that has been missing in the quest to bring about political and socio-economic change in the country over the past few years. It also marks a turnaround in the Zimbabwean political and civil society sectors, where a focused front to push the president and his government out of office can now emerge. Coalitions and collaborations should emerge in the next coming months as both political and social movement leaders take advantage of a mobilised and united citizenry yearning for change.

Conclusion

Zimbabwe finds itself at a crossroads, as many of its citizens are asking themselves what the way forward is in dealing with their conflict. Youth activists and leaders of political and civic movements have to decide on the course of action to take. Whilst a number of options present themselves, the citizens of Zimbabwe should adopt peaceful and non-violent means to express their views. Failure to do so will lead to more arrests, and likely the declaration of a state of emergency. Non-violent action assumes that "if people carry out the action long enough and in sufficient numbers it will lead to an oppressive government becoming powerless and receding".[15] Leaders of movements must take advantage of the unity displayed in the arrest of Mawarire and cross-pollinate their ideas and approaches. They must desist from spontaneity only and become more strategic and organised in the actions they take. There is need to train activists on how to lead strategic non-violent actions across the country. Activists need to be made aware of the many tried and tested non-violent actions they can adopt that do not require citizens to take to the streets and put themselves in immediate harm and danger – for example, consumer boycotts.

On the other hand, the conflict cannot be ignored any longer by the Zimbabwean government, or by neighbouring countries. As more youth become agitated, the conflict has the danger of spurring radicalism and can easily break out into a civil war if not immediately addressed. It can affect the entire region's stability and increase the numbers of economic and political refugees who flee to other countries. If left unchecked, the Zimbabwe crisis can increase the levels of social injustices in the country, with significant spill-over effects into the southern African region.

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