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Mary Elizabeth King
Conflict and persistent insecurity became hallmarks of the African continent in the post-colonial period. Civil unrest and political stalemates remain widespread, causing political instability, as evident in the civil wars in Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Uganda. The recent Arab revolutions across North Africa (and the Middle East) are also a reflection of this continent-wide political and social discontent. In the current setting, women remain society’s underprivileged, subjected to unequal treatment in resource allocation and the running of society. This issue of the *Africa Peace and Conflict Journal* examines whether the African continent in the post-colonial era can alter its story thus far and develop in a positive direction, leading to the building of peace and security for all Africans.

Conflict and insecurity rank among the worst of the disasters that have afflicted Africa and serve as major causes of poverty, hunger, and unemployment. They are also primary factors leading many Africans to emigrate and seek asylum in other parts of the world. The contributions in this issue examine these factors and together point toward the need for a protracted approach for addressing the Africa problem. A number of efforts to bring peace to the countries of the continent have been attempted and some remain ongoing. One such example is the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Sudan, the aftermath of which Kizito Sabala explores. The CPA addressed the issues that bred war between northern Sudan and southern Sudan, but the agreement remained silent on or ineffective in regard to some issues that would need to be resolved following an independence referendum by southerners. Thus peace, even after the declaration of the Republic of South Sudan, remains a matter of concern. Outstanding issues involve citizenship, borders and grazing rights, resource sharing and economic cooperation, as well as security. Sabala concludes that negotiations about the border and cross-border relationships need to be carefully managed because of their effect on all the other issues requiring resolution.

Post-war recovery tends to be fraught with a number of challenges and in most instances is not properly managed. In this way, it perpetuates suppression and can prolong conflict. Pushpa Iyer advances this argument in regard to Sierra Leone, where the cost of war continues to be paid in the form of an economy at odds with peacebuilding and promoting citizens’ livelihoods and well-being. Dependence on foreign assistance has in some ways negatively affected the country’s capacity to recover from war. Iyer suggests a shift from thinking about development as a product of funding and instead as a process for achieving peace in which the affected actors are actively involved in prioritizing.

Christine Cubitt questions growing tensions in Sierra Leone and the general failure of the international mission there to deliver on promises of peace. She asserts that the idea of liberal peace and its introduction in Sierra Leone are flawed in that they fail to address the causes of war and do little more than create a negative peace. Where ‘liberal peace’ means liberalizing state institutions, what tends to result is corruption,
economic mismanagement, and repression. Cubitt asserts that the liberal peace approach currently grounding international missions in the end creates a dysfunctional hybrid peace that is neither local nor sustainable.

Civility is often a casualty of war and conflict. Despite this, Biafran women during the Nigerian civil war pulled together through the survival strategies they adopted to cope with the absence of men and the presence of violence. Jacinta Chiamaka Nwaka looks at how these women met challenges raging from hunger to avoiding air raids to obtaining military intelligence. Through their various survival strategies, their cooperation ultimately meant providing support to one another. Their example and experiences offer some valuable lessons for African woman today who are faced with the hardships of conflict and war.

Sone Patience Munge looks at discriminatory customary practices and the application of statutory land laws in Anglophone Cameroon. Despite court rulings in favor of women administering land, customary law still holds sway in the minds of many. Munge also notes that local elites and bureaucrats use their positions to amass large parcels of land for business purposes and thus deprive women of land for subsistence. Her analysis looks at the social status of women in general as well: in short, women are considered property, and property cannot own property. This perspective creates problems in terms of equality in gender relations.

Sidonia Angom analyzes women’s coping abilities during war and their contributions to peace in northern Uganda. She uses John Paul Lederach’s model of actors and approaches to peacebuilding in making the argument that women as well as men have significant contributions to make to peace and conflict resolution and notes their position as top leadership actors. She notes that at the stalemated Juba peace talks, women presented the Peace Torch to representatives in the conflict who on the occasion shook hands for the first time.

The briefings in this issue of APCJ assess the origin and meaning of the wave of revolutions that swept across North Africa in 2010 and 2011. Amr Abdalla examines the historical antecedents of the Egyptian revolution dating from colonial rule. Most important is the alienation and repression experienced by youths with only limited, if any, access to the resources they need and the growing gap between a small, extremely rich minority and an increasingly destitute majority. The humiliating existence that led a young Tunisian man to self-immolation resonated among North Africans, particularly youths. Abdalla cautions that these revolutions offer no guarantee of development and prosperity. Rather, obtaining them will require the same spirit of determination that led to revolution.

Menan Omar notes the low morale among pre-revolutionary Egyptians, caused in part by failures to realize political and social reforms. He asserts that the 25 January Revolution evolved from a collective will to put an end to decades of oppression. The act of Egyptians coming together in Cairo and elsewhere to topple the government restored their sense of unity and pride. He contends that many of the youths involved in the revolution’s online mobilization hope to build on Egyptians’ rejuvenated sense of unity to bring about positive societal change. This issue of APCJ concludes with remarks delivered by Mary Elizabeth King to the 2011 graduating class at Ohio Wesleyan University, in which she encourages its members to use their education to become peacemakers and to improve their societies.
Dissecting issues of African security in terms of causes of war necessarily relates to discussion of the conditions needed for peace. Security is often viewed as the capacity of states to defend their sovereignty and integrity although peace is also attainable by aligning state agencies' and institutions' activities with the interests and needs of citizens and their ability to lead decent lives. There must also be an emphasis on civic input to promote acceptance of living together. The costs of war and insecurity demand that Africans work together to find solutions to the problems they face. Relying on donors has not been in the best interest of the continent.

Fr. Maximiano Ngabirano

_Uganda Martyrs University_
From the Managing Editor

When we posted a call for papers in December 2010, it was with the intention of publishing a special issue on governance and human security in Africa. Although we did not receive a sufficient number of articles relating the two areas, what we did receive was a collection of articles with a governance theme. As historic events began unfolding before our eyes in North Africa and the Middle East in December 2010 and into 2011, we knew our instincts had been right. The articles and briefings in this edition of the *Africa Peace and Conflict Journal* address governance or gender and sometimes both. They touch on pertinent aspects of governance and security that affect not only Africa, but the international community as well.

Africa’s history is replete with events that prior to them had been unforeseen by scholars or pundits. No one predicted the food riots and mass protests that spread like wildfire across the continent during the 1980s, spurred by the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) implemented by African governments as stipulated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as a condition for aid. Pundits, scholars, and researchers also failed to suspect the implosion of the African state when the cold war came to a close between 1989 and 1992. The same can now be said of the mass protests for freedom and democracy in North Africa and the Middle East during what many refer to as the Arab Spring.

Even before the recent events in North Africa, other states on the continent had been simmering with political unrest or appeared to be on the verge of exploding. In November 2010 in Côte d’Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo refused to relinquish power, even after the United Nations declared his political opponent, Alassane Ouattara, the winner of long-awaited presidential elections. His reluctance to hand over state authority resulted in violent conflict and the displacement of thousands of people internally as well as into Liberia and Ghana. Neither the African Union nor the international community seemed to take sufficient care in quelling the unrest, addressing violence, or protecting Ivorians from their government. Months later in Libya, however, when instability and political unrest threatened the security of civilians, governments, through the auspices of the United Nations, authorized military support to counter the forces of Muammar Qaddafi.

Thus, once again, two sets of standards apply to Africa: in one, the international community takes decisive action when there is sufficient geo-political interest in a state, and in the other, the international community remains on the sideline as belligerents, typically sub-Saharan, fight on without intervention until a clear winner emerges. The situation in Côte d’Ivoire could have easily replicated situations from the 1990s, when citizens of African states were often left vulnerable to insecurity and violence from their own military or rebel groups.

The Arab Spring emerged from confrontations between citizens demanding new and better governance and positive changes in their lives and those benefiting from the status quo. For decades, and in some instances for almost half a century, a minority group of elites and ruling classes using structural violence developed political and
economic policies resulting in acute poverty and injustice. This situation was almost universal across North Africa and the Middle East. Thus, it should not have been surprising to see the Tunisian uprising cascade across two continents.

In this issue, two briefings consider the conditions that led to the Arab Spring and the political, economic, and social prerequisites needed to address structural violence, injustice, and inequality in Arab societies. One salient characteristic of the pieces in this edition of APCJ is the individual’s position in relation to the state, including in regard to issues of governance, democracy, marginalization, and discrimination. The articles here illustrate that post-conflict African societies are little different in terms of the pervasive conditions of inequality and marginalization that prevail in relatively stable African states. Using economic liberalization to address societal problems appears to have not only failed in the former, but also to have compromised societies of the latter. Normative elections have proved to be insufficient therapy for political marginalization and economic discrimination. Some academics and scholars therefore continue to challenge the liberal peace project and to question whether international engagement in peace processes in Africa and elsewhere is not a misguided effort that will always fail to bring about local ownership of peacebuilding.

In its fourth year of publication, APCJ continues to examine issues pertinent across the African continent. This edition covers revolutions in the MENA region (the Middle East and North Africa), post-conflict reconstruction in Sierra Leone, challenges for the world’s newest nation, the Republic of South Sudan, women’s participation in peacebuilding in northern Uganda, legal frameworks for landownership in Cameroon, and women’s roles and survival strategies in the Biafran war in Nigeria. The common thread among these articles is civic participation in governance, conflict, and processes of institution and state building. Important as this is, inadequate and sometimes inappropriate responses for sustainability appear to have been offered at various points in efforts to address the issues being confronted.

We would like to once again thank the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada for its support in this progressive endeavor to promote quality research by scholars offering new approaches to peacebuilding and development. With the IDRC’s assistance, the Africa Peace and Conflict Journal continues to offer a platform for academics throughout Africa to make their voices heard and their ideas known. We would also like to thank our guest editor, Fr. Maximiano Ngabirano, Uganda Martyrs University, for an excellent summary of the articles in this issue.

We would like to take this opportunity to encourage readers to return a survey on APCJ that can be accessed through the journal’s Web site, http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22CXTB5VZ5X. By taking a few moments to provide us feedback through this survey, you, as readers and contributors, will help determine the future direction of the journal. We thank you in advance for your time.

Tony Karbo
Building an Illiberal Peace: Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Sierra Leone

Christine Cubitt

Is it a liberal peace or a hybrid peace that has made Sierra Leone peaceful? After eleven years of civil war, Sierra Leone still enjoys relative peace and stability, but growing political tensions and unrest among the populace are giving cause for concern. An examination of the reforms involved in the reconstruction of Sierra Leone, and their outcomes, challenges the notion that the international mission accurately reflects the claims of liberal peacebuilders. Evidence drawn from fieldwork supports an analysis of the economic and political reforms implemented for the country's post-war recovery and their propriety to address the greatest challenges for securing long-term peace. The result of post-conflict reconstruction has been the creation of a dysfunctional hybrid peace that is neither liberal nor local nor sustainable.

As Sierra Leone celebrates its fiftieth year of independence and almost a decade of peaceful change after war, it is an appropriate time to reflect upon its post-conflict reforms to analyse their propriety for addressing the challenges that continue to threaten the nation’s longer-term peace and stability. Since the civil war that formally ended in 2002, Sierra Leoneans have experienced nearly ten years of relative peace within a functioning and growing national economy. They have benefited from reform of their security services and have participated in several rounds of free and fair democratic elections. Reform of the economy has secured resource flows from the international community, and new leadership has been successful in attracting foreign private sector investment. The parliament has passed legislation on human rights, for example the Child Rights Act and Gender Laws (both in 2007), and convictions have

Fieldwork for this article was carried out in Sierra Leone in November 2006 and March 2007 as part of doctoral research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, United Kingdom.

1. For example, a $400 million agri-business deal to produce bio-fuels from sugar cane was secured in March 2010. See ‘4,000 jobs created as President Koroma secures $400 million bio-fuel investment for Sierra Leone’, Newstime Africa, 9 February 2010, www.newstimeafrica.com/archives/10799.

Christine Cubitt is director of the UK-based Reiga Research Group and associate researcher at the University of Bradford, where she completed her PhD. Her book on the peacebuilding mission and reconstruction in Sierra Leone is to be published by Routledge in 2011. She is currently undertaking new research on post-conflict job creation in Liberia and Sierra Leone.
been secured against war criminals. Meanwhile, locals continue to enjoy political freedoms never before experienced. In 2012, Sierra Leoneans will go to the polls to decide whether to reinstate an incumbent, President Ernest Bai Koromo, who took control in 2007 after a unique and historic peaceful transfer of power. Given the country’s political and war histories, these advances have been most welcome for Sierra Leonean citizens and their partners and supporters around the world.

From a distance, Sierra Leone appears to be a successful example of the ‘liberal peace’, that is, the beneficiary of a successful international peacebuilding mission involving broad-based liberalising reforms. These reforms have included the promotion of constitutional democracy and human rights, civilian control of security forces, liberalisation of the national economy, civic peacebuilding, and enforcement of the rule of law. It has been a complex and ‘eclectic’ approach to building peace, with the goal of creating a state that mirrors peaceful, stable, and developed democracies elsewhere in the international system.  

So what explains the current growing tensions in Sierra Leone and the general failure of the international mission to deliver the most pertinent promises for peace—the creation of sustainable and meaningful employment (especially for the youth of the country), a transformed relationship between the state and its citizens, and transparency and accountability among governing elites? What explains the continued marginalisation of certain groups and communities, for example, youth and mining populations; the deepening of poverty among women, the disabled, and children; or increases in criminal activity, including the trafficking of people and drugs? Indeed, what explains the tensions among political parties that have bred violence and intimidation among the populace when the country has achieved so much on a continent known for democracy denied? Those who have dug deep into the nature of the peacebuilding mission and the project for state reconstruction in Sierra Leone have found that all is not well with the liberal peace.

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2. In July 2007, three former members of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council received prison sentences of up to fifty years; in May 2008, two members of the former Civil Defence Force were sentenced to up to twenty years; in April 2009, three former members of the Revolutionary United Front received sentences of up to fifty-two years. The trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor is ongoing in The Hague.


LIBERAL PEACEBUILDING

After the demise of communism in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the 1980s and 1990s, a consensus emerged among international decision makers that peaceful and prosperous states are liberal democratic states. This line of thinking holds that securing durable peace in states affected by conflict requires a particular form of governance and that successful transformation of states and societies after war necessitates a formulaic approach to peacebuilding and reconstruction. Critics of this perspective argue that the ‘urge to engineer’ troubled and complex societies, using a technocratic approach, reflects the hubris of external actors who are convinced that they know what local peace might be and who believe that the liberal peace is the ‘ideology upon which life, culture, society, prosperity and politics . . . rest’. Proponents of the liberal peace dismiss the influence of indigenous cultural norms and values and the histories specific to individual conflicts in states facing difficult transformations, and yet these local influences can seriously affect the long-term success of peacebuilding missions. The African continent is a patchwork of complex, post–cold war and post-colonial challenges, yet African states became the subjects of formulaic peacebuilding operations based on liberal peace philosophising. These missions have had mixed outcomes, and the lessons learned are as ‘enlightening in the negative as [they are] in the positive’.

Contemporary peacebuilding missions reflect a subjective, western perspective of what peace should be, which is based loosely on Kant’s thesis of the democratic peace. The goal is to reconstruct collapsed or fragile states so that they can be integrated into the global system to fulfil their international, as well as local, obligations. Kant’s thesis argues that shared international norms and practices can solidify democratic consciousness and that nations can be unified through economic interdependency and shared interests in security. This is how some claim the international system works best; proponents of this view note that democratic states do not go to war with each other. Yet the poor success rate of liberal interventions calls into question the legitimacy of liberal reform for local populations or indeed its relevance or efficacy for traditional societies newly emerging from civil strife.

Conditional relationships disconnected from the general populace are central to the process of liberal peacebuilding. The main players—states, donors, and interna-

10. Examples include Angola, Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Sudan (Darfur and the north-south conflict).
12. I. Kant, Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch (1795).
tional and regional organizations—form multilevel and non-territorial decision-making networks and power-brokering zones, quite detached from the residents of post-conflict nation-states. Members of such societies, however, expect to be engaged after conflict, to be part of the decision-making process, and to benefit from reform outcomes.

Critical commentators have argued that the peace which follows broad-based liberal interventions is deeply compromised due to its failure to address the underlying causes of war and that technocratic solutions for complex local problems produce little more than a negative peace. This is because the liberal peace involves a systematic approach to policy implementation and institutional reform. Economic liberalisation, for example, privileges the private sector over the public good, and this often has profound human consequences, disconnecting the majority of the populace from the economic dividends of peace. Some commentators have emphasised the need to move beyond western conceptualisations of what peace is and how it can be achieved. Certainly, conceptualising the feasibility of cultural transfer from western, developed liberal democracies to complex, developing, and war-affected states in Africa is not without its challenges; the very notion involves a great leap of faith. Yet the epistemic community of peacebuilders remains emboldened by the belief that it knows the precise components, processes, and goals of peace relevant to locales everywhere.

Peacebuilding missions do sometimes meet resistance. Local actors often have their own ideas about keeping the peace in their communities and reject the role of passive recipients of global formulas for reconstruction, especially when local power structures remain in place after a conflict. In these circumstances, people might choose to 'hybridise' the peace as they resist, ignore, or adapt interventions to their own ends and needs, especially when peacebuilding comes with large amounts of aid and other resources attached. In some cases this can be a positive development as traditional relationships, structures, and networks of support often hold more legitimacy locally than those imposed from outside. If the existing power structures have, however, been historically problematic in states facing difficult transformations, such as in Sierra Leone, hybrid versions of peace have the potential to perpetuate unrest by cementing troublesome power relations rather than constructing new, more equitable ones.

20. Mac Ginty, ‘Hybrid peace.’
THE LIBERAL PEACE IN SIERRA LEONE

The evidence to suggest that liberal peacebuilding has been operationalised in Sierra Leone is best analysed with reference to the four central components most associated with it.21 The first component, the victor’s peace, involves some form of militarisation and securitisation. This was manifest in the form of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (which was initially unsuccessful in securing the country), the Nigerian-led Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, and the British Armed Forces, along with various mercenary groups, including Executive Outcomes. The military component of the 'liberal peace' also involved security sector reform, which included efforts to retrain and re-equip the Sierra Leone Armed Forces by the British Ministry of Defence in collaboration with the International Military Advisory and Training Team.22

The second component of liberal peace is institutional peace, which involves the acceptance of international governance and conditions on lending established by the international financial institutions (IFIs). This requires commitments by recipient governments to uphold and respect international law, such as the Child Rights Act, and implementation of international industry initiatives, for example, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (launched in Sierra Leone in 2007). The third component of the liberal peace is constitutional peace, which is evidenced by democratisation and trade liberalisation and promises by government to adhere to the rule of law. The fourth component, civil peace, involves creating a strong civil society to participate in the peacebuilding process, because there can be no sustainable peace without one.23 In Sierra Leone, support of civil society during reconstruction included policy programming by all the major development agencies. 24

Something like a liberal peace was operationalised in Sierra Leone, but the conceptualisation of such a theoretical and philosophical approach to peace carries several basic assumptions. One is that peace, democracy, and free markets are a viable combination and that this combination is unproblematic and acceptable to those working and living in country, that is, residents who survived war and understand its antecedents.25 Another is that the characteristics of liberal states and the norms of the international system can successfully be mirrored and absorbed by fragile states emerging from war or merged with political cultures born of specific local traditions and unique histories. Can trade liberalisation create sustainable and meaningful economic opportunities in a fragile, single-commodity economy such as Sierra Leone’s, however, and

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21. O. Richmond, Peace in International Relations (Abingdon, Routledge, 2008).
can democratic reform address Sierra Leone’s old political fractures, provide for an inclusive society, and secure representative and accountable government?

**Liberalising the Economy**

In the aftermath of war, Sierra Leone was almost totally dependent on multilateral and bilateral institutions and arrangements for the reconstruction of its state apparatus and infrastructure. The challenges facing the country and its partners were enormous, compounded by severely limited human, technical, and financial capacities and a legacy of chronic economic mismanagement. The conditionalities associated with much-needed support for reconstruction dictated the rules of the new economy, that is, liberalisation and export-oriented market reforms. This approach is similar to that underpinning the era of structural adjustment policies (1980s) and the enhanced structural adjustment facility (1990s). What differs in the 2000s in terms of the relationship between states under construction and the lending institutions is the assertion that the process is locally owned. The process, codified in poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), involves stakeholder consultations (albeit on already predefined templates for reform) because it is believed that a consultative process will produce ‘democratic, equitable and sustainable development’. Of interest here is that the most important reforms for post-war support centre on poverty reduction and development, which are not necessarily the same as peacebuilding. As a result of the approach implemented for post-conflict reconstruction, national policy is linked to the Millennium Development Goals (and articulated by the government in PRSPs).

In Sierra Leone, liberalising reform led to a reduced role for the government in the national economy, an improved environment for private investment, and the privatisation of public enterprises. It involved trade liberalisation and the promotion of exports, reduction or elimination of price controls or subsidies, removal of trade barriers, contraction of government wage bills, good fiscal management, and open and transparent processes. This recipe for success is grounded in the notion that such

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27. For example, see R. Brynen, *A Very Political Reconstruction: Peacebuilding and Foreign Aid in the West Bank and Gaza* (Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000). The importance of the IFIs and conditionalities attached to loans cannot be underestimated. IFIs have a broad sphere of influence and determine the future of development in post-conflict nations such as Sierra Leone. Without their approval, it is extremely difficult for governments to attract private investment or resource flows from donors. See A. Thomas and T. Allen, ‘Agencies of development’ in T. Allen and A. Thomas (eds.), *Development in the 21st Century* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000).


29. Cubitt, *Local and Global Dynamics of Peacebuilding*.

reform will produce economic growth, which creates jobs and reduces poverty. The country had to achieve high and sustained economic growth in order to service its debt. The debt burden in Sierra Leone was a major obstruction to the country’s recovery, and a commitment to drastic and penetrating economic reform became essential to obtain relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). The three performance criteria upon which resource flows (and debt relief) were linked were sustained growth in GDP (between 6 and 7 percent), low inflation (below 5 percent), and acceptable levels of international reserves.

Sierra Leone’s government committed to all that was required to reform the economy. It anticipated growth through the regeneration of rutile mining, the recovery of agricultural production, the expansion of industry, services, and construction, and growth in the fishing and mining sectors through public and private investment. New trade policies would bring a reduction in state protectionism, enhanced by liberal trading and exchange mechanisms and privatisation, and the private sector would be revitalised through new legislation. Private sector development was crucial because the liberalising reforms demanded severe contraction of the state budget and a consequent reduction in the public sector wage bill. Reductions in state spending would inevitably mean fewer public sector jobs or a vast reduction in salaries; employment in the private sector was therefore necessary to soak up the casualties and provide jobs for those already out of work. Government commitments to reform were successful in securing $21 million in emergency funds during the period 1999 through 2001 and consistent flows thereafter.

The reforms, supported by technical and financial assistance from the international community, were hugely successful in stabilising and regenerating the national economy—an impressive feat after eleven years of civil war and an even longer period of economic mismanagement and decline. The previously dysfunctional revenue authority was transformed into an efficient mechanism for revenue generation, and trade increased in line with World Bank conditionalities for an export-oriented economy. Between 2000 and 2007, annual growth averaged around 8 percent of gross domestic product, although it slowed during 2008 and 2009 (to 5.5 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively) due in part to the global recession and the fall of diamond prices.

The country’s growth performance was due to buoyant activities in the agricultural, mining, construction, and services sectors, but could not necessarily be attributed to liberalising reforms: the absence of war was bound to have some beneficial effect, and the rehabilitation of agricultural land, previously degraded by rebel mining activities, vastly increased productivity in that sector. The introduction of the

32. Ibid.
33. HPCPs, an instrument to legitimise debt relief for the poorest nations, involves national economies being restructured to meet agreed performance criteria.
35. These included the Investment Promotion Act (2004), Core Mineral Policy (2003), and National Revenue Authority Act (2003).
Kimberley Process also had a positive effect. \(^{37}\) By 2010 growth had stabilised at around 5 percent. The vast majority of economic activity, however, involved informal markets, as formal job creation remained elusive. \(^{38}\) Government statistics confirmed that more than 80 percent of post-war economic activity took place in informal, family, or farm businesses. \(^{39}\) This is relevant because informal activities do not contribute revenue to the national treasury, and constrained flows to government coffers perpetuate dependency on external support, stunt capacity building across all sectors, and preclude autonomous decision making free from external conditionalities. High levels of informal employment also disconnect citizens from governance because they have no monetary stake in the state through their taxation.

Controlling inflation proved to be problematic for the government due to rising prices on the global markets, especially for fuel and rice. This had a severe impact on the hundreds of thousands who remained out of work. By 2010, inflation stood at 18.4 percent. Progress accumulating international reserves went well, however, with the country reaching a figure equivalent to around five months of imports by 2010. \(^{40}\)

Despite promises for ‘good governance’ and determined efforts to promote democratic processes by various donors, lack of transparency and accountability in the management of public finances continued unabated. \(^{41}\) The government passed into law various instruments to improve financial management, in particular, to curb the serious problem of corruption, but Transparency International downgraded Sierra Leone from 126 out of 159 countries in 2005 to 142 out of 163 in 2006; there was only a slight improvement by 2010 (134 out of 178). \(^{42}\) Although the National Revenue Authority had been successfully transformed into an efficient tool for tax collection, it was discovered that accounting mechanisms were inserted only at the final stages of the process, by which time much [revenue] ha[d] already disappeared. \(^{43}\) The country remained at or near the bottom of the Human Development Index, and well more than half the populace continued to live in the deepest poverty, on less than $1.25 a day. \(^{44}\) The majority of citizens have yet to benefit from the economic dividends of peace while their perceptions of corruption grow.

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\(^{37}\) Sierra Leone’s economy centres around the export of diamonds. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme—the internationally recognised certification system for rough diamonds which established national import-export standards aimed at combating the illegal diamond trade—led to increased numbers of diamonds being exported through official channels.

\(^{38}\) World Bank and African Development Bank, ‘Joint country assistance strategy for the Republic of Sierra Leone’.


\(^{40}\) All data retrieved from International Monetary Fund country statistics through www.imf.org.

\(^{41}\) World Bank and African Development Bank, ‘Joint country assistance strategy for the Republic of Sierra Leone’.


The Private Sector

Government authorities did not appear to be fully committed to the promises they had made to improve the climate for private investment.45 Indeed, in 2007 the World Bank judged the country to be one of the ‘worst regulatory environments in the world’ to do business,46 and in 2010 Sierra Leone ranked 148 out of 183 countries based on the bank’s measures of ‘ease of doing business’.47 The country was an expensive place to register a business, legislation was confusing, building-permit processes were problematic, and the taxation system discriminated against non-nationals and small companies. In addition, pervasive corruption increased invisible costs and corporate risks to potential investors.48

Foreign and local investment was severely constrained by the lack of infrastructure, the lax regulatory environment, and weak financial sector. Traditional land laws limited participation of the private sector in agriculture. Rural land in Sierra Leone either belonged to elite, landed families, or the customary system allowed chiefs to approve all land issues in an archaic land administration system; this system continues today.49 In this respect, the chieftaincy system is problematic because these powerful traditional leaders’ control over land issues in the countryside stifles ordinary people’s ability to benefit fully from development and work opportunities in rural areas.50 Many people, especially in mining areas, continue to live in the deepest of poverty amid debilitating conditions.51

Marginalisation of the private sector constrained the creation of new jobs and associated revenue for government. Being a post-conflict country is usually not conducive to attracting private investment, so investors had to be granted tax concessions to tempt them to expand their operations there.52 Recently, in response to global markets, some private investment has been attracted to the country, but the constrained private sector remains a challenge for recovery and equitable development.53 Privatisation has fared little better than the private sector. Twenty-four state-owned enterprises were targeted with the view of enhancing the efficiency of government op-

50. Freehold land and property is only available in the Freetown peninsula, which previously had been a British colony. The rest of the country still operates under traditional land tenure systems.
52. Cooper, ‘As good as it gets’.
53. Cubitt, Local and Global Dynamics of Peacebuilding.
erations and increasing revenues, but the government retained its ‘critical mass’ of inefficient and unaccountable parastatals with huge debts. The assumption that private investment could be drawn into failing national authorities ignored the realities of local conditions and the development challenges faced by the country. Privatising the National Power Authority, for example, was not just a matter of generating power, but also one of investing millions of dollars for infrastructure. Large amounts of wastage along the collection and distribution lines produced only expensive private power, which local people simply could not afford. In addition, international companies cited corruption in all branches of government as an obstacle to investment in state-owned enterprises.

The failures of growth to create jobs meant that ‘illiberal’, or artificial, methods of job creation became the norm. Temporary, ad hoc job-creation projects—mostly funded by development agencies and others—including plans to generate twelve hundred jobs or training opportunities through a World Food Programme ‘food for work’ scheme and a palm kernel enterprise supported by the United Nations Development Programme. To avoid riots during the global food crisis of 2008, when the price of rice soared, the World Bank injected a $4 million grant into Sierra Leone’s economy. This created approximately 16,000 temporary employment opportunities through 360 cash-for-work projects involving the rehabilitation of 475 kilometres of road and the development of 656 acres of arable swamps and woodlands. Artificially constructed employment is not normally associated with liberalisation which had failed to live up to its promise to create jobs. The few opportunities created in the private sector—for example, in the mining of bauxite and rutile—were financed by a 25 million euro grant from the European Union as private investors shied away from full commitments.

LIBERALISING THE BODY POLITIC

After the war, one of the central priorities for consolidating the peace was political reform. Profound failures of leadership in the past meant that an effective, new democratic process was required to produce responsive and representative government accountable to the people. Bad governance, endemic corruption, and abuse of human rights had plagued the nation-building project of the independence years. Failures of leadership had been a pre-cursor for war as ‘the entire political elite collectively placed their personal and political interests above those of the nation’.

To secure long-term peacebuilding goals and move away from the tensions of the past, Sierra Leone needed impartial and accountable politicians; good governing structures, political processes that would give citizens a stake in decision-making processes, and a strong and independent judiciary to counter-balance executive excess and protect the rights of civilians. Success for any reforms would also require a strong and independent civil society, through broader citizen representation, that could monitor government and champion the reforms essential for addressing key peacebuilding challenges. These were ambitious goals given the prevailing culture of colonial and independence politics, but small steps in the right direction could give the populace hope of change.

By all accounts, post-war democratisation, based on a multiparty system of government and an elected president, appeared to have gained real traction, but this was a shallow exercise on several counts. Although reform of the national electoral commission produced a series of successful elections, all other accountability mechanisms remained dysfunctional. Being able to choose a candidate was rather irrelevant if there were no mechanisms to hold them accountable in the interim between elections. Parliament, for example, received little support from either government or donors and had minimal efficacy as an institution.61 It was weak because many MPs struggled to understand their function and their powers, which had serious implications for the law-making process, approval of state budgets, and appointment of senior officials. Parliament lacked all the resources required to support its proper functioning, including secretarial and support staff with relevant knowledge and expertise, computerised technology, well-stocked libraries, and appropriate buildings and meeting spaces.62

As an institution of representation, the parliament found itself unable to fulfil one of its primary functions—monitoring of the executive.63 This desperate malaise was widely recognised locally, and the international community was urged to help parliamentarians develop knowledge on integrity and methods of securing political stability, the theory of separation of powers, and the rule of law.64 Parliamentarians themselves had a case to answer as their commitment to serve the interest of the electorate simply could not be relied upon. According to one observer, ‘MPs [were] bribed and given different incentives to act or not’. Low salaries meant they ‘could not exercise a will of their own’ or afford to travel to their constituencies to meet with local citizens.65 Some parliamentarians were even hostile to the needs of constituents as they continued the long-established practice of prioritising their own needs while working within the state infrastructure.66 A proposed capacity-building project for parliamentary committees was cancelled by the donor, the UK Department for International Development, because of insufficient support from key stakeholders

63. Ibid.
across party lines in parliament.\textsuperscript{67} There were also concerns that political elites were resuming the practice of co-opting unemployed youth as personal ‘political thugs’ during election campaigning.\textsuperscript{68}

The justice sector fared little better in terms of reform and functionality. One source observed, ‘With a judiciary operating under two jurisprudential philosophies and exercising power according to the whims of an overreaching executive, the backbone of a Sierra Leone democracy appears too weak to succeed.’\textsuperscript{69} The two-tiered system of justice—consisting of English Common Law and local, customary law—presented major challenges for reform, which was described by some as an unmitigated failure.\textsuperscript{70} Although the international community bankrolled the salaries of judges and magistrates, the judicial branch became the main impediment of change. The quality of judicial delivery remained poor and vulnerable to ‘co-option’; in addition, as noted earlier, the failure to separate the powers of the executive and judiciary had negative consequences. The poor performance of the Anti-Corruption Commission was influenced by the lack of reform across the justice sector and the close relationship between the office of the attorney general and the executive.\textsuperscript{71}

Funding from the main donor, the UK Department for International Development, was withdrawn in 2007 due to the commission’s failures to make progress in reducing corruption, improve its capacity to do so, or produce high-level convictions.\textsuperscript{72} It was estimated that over a five-year period, the commission was effective during some six to nine months and that its members had no real understanding of the investigative doctrine; high-level staff showed no desire to improve professional conduct.\textsuperscript{73} More recently some progress has been recorded in terms of the efficacy and functionality of the Anti-Corruption Commission, but levels of perceived corruption remain high.\textsuperscript{74}

In 2010, the serious deficiencies noted in the judicial system included ‘extortion and bribe-taking by officials; insufficient numbers of judges, magistrates, and prosecuting attorneys; absenteeism by court personnel; and inadequate remuneration for judiciary personnel.’\textsuperscript{75} Extortion and bribe taking by court officials meant that justice was beyond the pocket of ordinary citizens, and lack of representation for those accused meant that a fair trial remained elusive. Failures in judicial reform not

\textsuperscript{68} Christensen and Utas, ‘Mercenaries of democracy’.
\textsuperscript{69} A. K. Bangura and S. K. Ganji, Sierra Leone’s Judiciary: Colonial Traditions and Postcolonial Legality (Freetown, Patriotic Vanguard, 2009).
\textsuperscript{73} Principal investigating officer of the commission, interview, Freetown, March 2007.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
only marginalised the general populace from the protection of the law, it also al-
lowed unscrupulous elites to go about their business free from the reach of the ju-
diciary. In their manifestos for the 2007 elections, no political party expressed an
interest in judicial reform despite the fact that only one of the Truth and Re-
conciliation Commission’s recommendations for reform in that sector had been
carried out.76 This was a major concern because lack of accountability or real com-
mitment to an efficient justice sector during reconstruction sets a bad precedent for
the future. Serious deficiencies remained evident in 2011. Whether these realities
will be acknowledged in political party campaigning for the 2012 elections remains
to be seen.77

Sierra Leone’s official documentation for its poverty reduction strategy was littered
with references to the importance of civil society for democratic consolidation.78
Post-war support for civil society was minimal, however, and generally in the form of
accountable grants through international nongovernmental organizations to well-
established local actors. In some cases, the same personnel worked for different civil
society organizations (CSOs).79 After the war, the number of CSOs reached epidemic
proportions as people took advantage of the civil society ‘ticket’, which in many re-
spects was the only game in town in terms of decent earnings.80 CSOs became the new
entrepreneurs, often working the donors by ‘skewing’ their projects to align with in-
ternational agendas for reform on issues not particularly grass-roots driven and some-
times lacking local legitimacy.81

Most support went to urban-based organizations that were predominantly English
speaking, elite led, and far from being government watchdogs. It was feared that some
CSOs had become part of the state apparatus (or even a global apparatus).82 What had
been constructed after the war was rather an ‘illiberal’ version of civil society bearing
questionable democratic credentials. This was an irony because Sierra Leone already
had a functioning and strong civil society that had contributed a great deal to peace-
making and peacebuilding efforts in the country.83 There was no need to reconstruct
what was already functioning; support to grassroots organizations for local projects
was noticeable by its absence.

newsletter.pdf.
77. Joseph Kamanda, ‘Sierra Leone justice system crumbles apart’, Africa News.com, 8 April 2011,
www.africanews.com/site/Sierra_Leone_Justice_sector_crumbles_apart/list_messages/38089.
78. Department for International Development, ‘Evaluation of DfID country programmes: Sierra
Leone’, London, 2008; Sierra Leone and European Union, ‘Country strategy paper and national indicative
programme for the period 2008–2013’.
81. See R. Belloni, ‘Civil society in war to democracy transitions’ in A. K. Jarstad and T. D. Sisk (eds.),
From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008); Cubitt,
Local and Global Dynamics of Peacebuilding.
82. See J. Hearn and M. Robinson, ‘Civil society and democracy assistance in Africa’ in P. Burnell
Thompson, Sierra Leone; International Crisis Group, ‘New era of reform?’ Africa Report no. 143, 2008,
reform.aspx.
83. Take for example the Women’s Forum, Civil Society Movement, and Council of Churches.
CONCLUSION

Lacking effective key mechanisms of accountability, the ambition to bring meaningful democracy to Sierra Leone was somewhat futile even though free and fair elections were remarkably efficient in changing government and a great success, in terms of procedure, for the country and its partners. Although space for participation grew considerably, it was stifled by the general weakness of civilian representations, a dysfunctional judiciary and inutile parliament, and a ‘bad attitude’ among politicians. Such constraints on democracy bred frustration among genuine democrats, while their undemocratic counterparts were safe in the knowledge that they were free to do what they wanted between elections.

What remains, therefore, is a shallow and unconsolidated democracy. The process has been procedural and built around a template not altogether compatible with local conditions and local practices; indeed, local elites have not embraced the central tenets of democracy, continuing to struggle with the very concept. To some it is business as usual, siphoning off resources that belong to the state and its citizens to fund historic networks based on patrimony and graft. Yet, the failure to consolidate democracy may not have been altogether unintentional as a true functioning democracy in Sierra Leone might challenge the liberal internationalism beyond its borders. The negotiations between global and local elites disconnected the populace from decisions about their future and marginalised them still further from the political economy of their peace.

The evidence here supports the argument that the ‘liberal peace’ is not a useful or even tangible concept for describing international peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts in Sierra Leone. Local and global conditions, and decisions by local and global elites, made liberal democracy undoable even if it was desirable in such a complex, fragile, and debilitated environment. The outcome had to be an illiberal, or hybrid, compromise. Severe capacity constraints in the difficult post-war environment, the unreliable behaviour of political elites, and traditional practices were all inhospitable to the consolidation of democracy or the functioning of a free market economy. Resistance was not confined to the local. Decisions made by externals—on the way they supported or did not support the reconstruction project—were an equal challenge for long-term peacebuilding. Global actors also seemed resistant, confining their commitment to ‘just enough’ liberal peace and prioritising growth and debt repayments, on the pretext of development, over local peacebuilding ambitions. This state of affairs reveals genuine tensions between global demands and local needs, and the requirement for fresh approaches to international peacebuilding missions focused more on the populations they claim to support.

The fragmented reforms achieved so far have not brought about the most essential prerequisites for longer-term peace in Sierra Leone because they have helped perpetuate historical political fractures and have consolidated the local power base in ways similar to before. The current dysfunctional hybridity is not a positive outcome for Sierra Leone because it weakens rather than strengthens legitimacy. Peace is holding so far, but it is less to do with a liberal peace or a hybrid peace and more to do with the determination of the population to preserve their peace at all costs. A liberal hybrid peace may yet be the worst possible combination for long-term positive peace outcomes in Sierra Leone.
Development and peacebuilding practitioners are aware of areas of overlap in their programmes, but also of the differences in the way they approach the challenges that post-war societies face. Peacebuilding resembles development today because the United Nations and other international donor agencies support the liberal peacebuilding model, which goes hand in hand with the neoliberal economic development models supported by the international financial institutions. Peacebuilding as defined and developed in the field of conflict resolution and transformation is a much broader concept than development and requires a long-term commitment. A brief look at Sierra Leone would appear to advocate an inclusivist approach to peacebuilding, in which development plays an integral part and where the need is not so much to differentiate between peacebuilding and development as it is to move away from the liberal peace model.

The donors insist on us doing development and call it so; what we continue to do on the ground is peacebuilding.

—Stephanie Pratt, academic and peacebuilding practitioner, Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 14 January 2010

In societies transitioning from violent conflict, the various actors involved in building peace perceive and therefore experience post-war realities differently from one another. Stephanie Pratt’s statement above aptly describes in only a few words the tensions between actors involved in rebuilding Sierra Leone after a brutal civil war from 1991 to 2002. Field research in Sierra Leone indicates that the challenges and failures in measuring peacebuilding’s impact and successes, along with the fact that what constitutes peace depends on the donor community and its agenda, have made possible the resurgence or continuance of development-dominated initiatives there. Peacebuilding, a concept introduced with much aplomb in the post–cold war era,

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gained momentum in the years following, but today seems to be failing to live up to its potential.

BACKGROUND

This paper is the outcome of the course Challenges to Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, in which fourteen students participated.1 The two objectives of the course were as follows: First, the on-the-ground experience seeing and understanding peacebuilders in action and through conversations with Sierra Leoneans about the country’s past, present, and future were designed to complement the theories on war, violence, and peacebuilding examined in the classroom. For students working towards a career in the field of conflict and peace, learning about the ‘real world’ is an important and necessary element of their education. Second, students were to acquire the skills for conducting field research, that is, data gathering and analysis and reporting. A great deal of effort went into pre-departure literature review, developing interview questions, and honing observation skills for use on the ground.

During two weeks spent in Sierra Leone in January 2010, the students visited more than forty nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and government institutions in four provinces of the country. They also met with other members of civil society and travelled to villages and diamond mines to witness the daily life of the marginalised. Although the lack of economic development hit the group hard every day, many of the issues they researched reflect the political and social dimensions of recovery after violent war. What they saw and experienced were the many challenges facing Sierra Leone in the areas of good governance, justice, reconciliation, demilitarisation, demobilisation, reintegration, gender mainstreaming, health, education, security, and trauma healing. Many are elements of peacebuilding, a much broader concept and longer-term initiative than economic growth and development.

It did not surprise or shock the students to see that the people’s needs—often the most basic ones—were unmet. Some students, however, experienced feelings of frustration at the dearth of visible development almost a decade after the end of war. An overwhelming sense of the difficulty in developing clear and widely accepted indicators for ‘real’ peace left many of them with more questions than answers about how one can coordinate and prioritise peacebuilding activities in a transitional society.

The issues discussed here are those repeatedly highlighted by actors engaged in building peace in Sierra Leone and by those affected by the decade-long violence. This article explores the approaches to development and security challenges in post-war Sierra Leone and opines that they are part of a long list of challenges identified under peacebuilding. In praxis, however, distinct development and peacebuilding mindsets appear to clash, giving rise to additional challenges of prioritisation and coordination among the many local and international actors who have descended on Sierra Leone since 2000. Although security is considered critical by development as well as peacebuilding practitioners, the integration of security reforms with other programmes still has a long way to go.

1. Twelve of them were graduate students of policy studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, California, and the other two were undergraduate students from Middlebury College, Vermont. Pushpa Iyer taught the class.
SIERRA LEONE: PRE-WAR AND IN CONFLICT

Sierra Leone—one of the poorest countries but also one of the richest in terms of its diamond and other mineral resources—experienced civil war from 1991 to 2002. The country’s governing polity, as in most of Africa, was neopatrimonial, with a small group of elites reaping benefits from the country’s assets. When the war began, a government led by Joseph Momoh had held power for the previous six years, having taken over from Siaka Stevens in 1985. When Momoh assumed power, the country’s economy was already in dire straits. In the years that Momoh governed Sierra Leone, it continued to decline: the gross domestic product (GDP) fell to $857 million in 1990, from $1.1 billion in 1980, and the GDP growth rate, which had been around 3 percent during 1980–1985, dropped to 1.1 percent during 1985–1990. Approximately 2.8 million people, or 68 percent, lived in absolute poverty and mostly in rural areas.

Pre-war Sierra Leone consistently ranked low on the Human Development Index (HDI). Poverty was endemic, inflation high, and corruption rampant. Many observers, such as P. Collier, have argued that poverty is the root cause of conflict and have extended this argument to contend that people in conflict are usually not driven by grievances but by the desire to accumulate resources for themselves—in other words, greed. The solution, therefore, according to those advocating the theory of correlation or a causality between poverty and conflict, is economic growth and development. The counter-argument asserts, however, that overemphasis on the economic, as opposed to the political, might actually delegitimise the oppression, discrimination, and rights abuses that societies in conflict experience. Those who support this counter-argument insist that the inequitable distribution of wealth (resources) and competition and division among state elites and the rank-and-file are the prime drivers of conflict, not poverty. Other causes of civil war include ethnic and religious divisions, often exacerbated by repressive governments, weak or illegitimate states, and scarcity or lack of access to basic resources.

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2. While neopatrimonial governance is common in Africa, Boas argues that in settler countries, such as Sierra Leone (and Liberia), the high level of insecurity leads to the establishment of extreme forms of neopatrimonial systems. M. Boas, ‘Liberia and Sierra Leone: Dead ringers? The logic of neopatrimonial rule’, *Third World Quarterly*, 22:5 (2001), 697–723.


5. In 1999, close to the end of the war, Sierra Leone ranked 162 (out of 174 countries) on the HDI. See the HDI’s Annex 2, http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/publicationsarchive/nhdr01/en/inc/content/annex2.html.


Sierra Leone, with its neopatrimonial system of governance, extreme poverty, low economic growth, high levels of corruption, and alienation of youth had all the conditions for making conflict a likely outcome. The ground was thus also fertile for the rise and growth of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), an armed group whose reported primary goal was regime change. The RUF emerged in 1991 primarily from among political exiles (mainly students and intellectuals) and economic refugees (mainly rural peasants and unemployed youth from the mining fields). In the initial stages, people (especially youth) voluntarily joined the RUF. It soon became clear, however, that the group, led by Foday Sankoh and supported by Charles Taylor in neighbouring Liberia, lacked a clear political ideology and that its primary goal was to gain control over the country's diamond mines.

A few years before the outbreak of war in 1991, the Momoh government was pressured by international financial institutions (IFIs), primarily the World Bank, into cutting public funding and increasing privatisation as conditions for economic assistance. The cut in public funding negatively affected health, education, and defence. The government’s inability to pay teachers and hire new ones, along with declining institutional facilities, meant that fewer children and youth had access to education. Streamlining the civil service, another requirement of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), meant the retrenchment of what the World Bank calls 'redundant daily workers'. As a result, unemployment dramatically rose, especially around the capital, where most civil servants resided.

Of equal seriousness was the government’s inability to pay and retain soldiers. The RUF took control of large amounts of territory and most of the diamond mines in eastern Sierra Leone in 1996. To confront the RUF, Momoh increased the size of the army from 3,000 to 14,000 most of them from 'lumpen' communities. The growing disorder among an unpaid, undertrained, and ill-equipped army led to a coup in 1992 by Captain Valentine Strasser. New recruits, many of whom had joined the military in order to go to the war front and pillage diamond reserves, turned out to be more fierce and ruthless than the RUF rebels, earning them the nickname 'sobels', referencing their being soldiers by day and rebels by night.

In 1996, Strasser was overthrown in a coup by his own defence minister, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, but not before he had invited Executive Outcomes (EO), a South Africa–based private military outfit to come in and restore control of the diamond mines to the government. The EO had been hired in 1995 through a loan of almost $1.8 million dollars from the International Monetary Fund. Although it managed to take control of the mines, EO was not paid in full. As a result, its members, like other

10. Boas, 'Liberia and Sierra Leone'.
11. Williams, 'Peace operations and the international financial institutions'. The World Bank has admitted that the structural adjustment programmes imposed on Sierra Leone in 1989 were ineffective because the state lacked the 'requisite human and institutional capacity'. 'Sierra Leone: Governance capacity building', World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2000, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/05/12/000094946_00051205391841/Rendered/INDEX/multi0page.txt.
12. Kandeh, 'Ransoming the state', classifies the unemployed and 'strays', along with thugs, bandits, and the like, as 'lumpens'.
13. The army and the rebels both recruited children.
armed entities, made the most of an unstable economy and the country’s rich resources.14

During Sierra Leone’s decade-long war, the population’s alienation from the government grew. Increasing layoffs fed unemployment, with encouragement by IFIs to further cut public spending. The structural adjustments programmes implemented in 1989 could not be properly administered, due to the lack of institutional capacity, even after threats by the World Bank to halt the release of additional funds owing to the government’s inability to pay arrears. The IFI reforms were quite limited and failed to take into consideration the political upheavals in the country, including the ongoing war.

SYERRA LEONE: POST-WAR

Almost a decade after the end of its civil war, Sierra Leone remains a transitional society where development, reducing insecurity, and building peace are key areas of engagement for local and international actors. A conflict that began over control of diamond mines continues to be fuelled by the political and social factors inherent in bad governance, corruption, and the alienation of youth, all of which were exacerbated by the war.15

Following various peace agreements—the Abidjan accord of 1996 and the Lomé agreement of 1999—and along with the presence of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), UN peacekeeping forces, and an armed contingent from Britain, the process of rebuilding Sierra Leone began after 2000. Although peacemaking and peacekeeping ensured security, the economic and social challenges were mammoth. After decades of war, along with pre-war damage and decay due to corruption, rebuilding infrastructure and establishing economic growth became the key tasks for post-war Sierra Leone.

Today, poverty remains at endemic levels, which is evident in Freetown as well as in rural areas. Inflation was an estimated 11.7 percent in 2007.16 In addition, one can-

14. Bio was pressured by the international community to hold democratic elections, which brought Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to power in 1996. Tejan signed a peace deal with the rebels. He was ousted, however, in another coup, in 1997, by Johnny Paul Koroma. With the RUF about to enter Freetown, the capital, soldiers of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) stepped in and pushed them back into the countryside and returned Kabbah to power. In 1999, the RUF entered Freetown and took control of parts of it before ECOMOG once again pushed them back. A cease-fire and a peace agreement brokered in Lomé followed. The rebels were then invited to join the government. UN peacekeeping forces came under attack by renegade rebels in 2000, shattering the optimism of many that peace would prevail. UN forces working with British contingents eventually regained control, and peacekeeping operations began. By 2001, demilitarisation of the rebels had begun, and in January 2002, the Sierra Leonean army had become functional, and peace was officially declared.

15. Members of civil society, NGO workers, and academics who were interviewed for this study repeatedly highlighted these three factors as the cause for the war. In 2007 and 2008, Sierra Leone ranked last on the HDI. In the 2009 Human Development Report, Sierra Leone was positioned at 180 out of 182 countries, with a GDP per capita of SUS679. Human Development Report, 2009: Overcoming Barriers. Human Mobility and Development (New York, United Nations Development Programme, 2009), http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2009_EN_Complete.pdf.

16. Ibid.
not underestimate the damage to the social fabric inflicted by the civil war through death, mutilation, and displacement in massive numbers. It is widely accepted that during the war, more than 50,000 people died and thousands more were maimed. More than half of the population of 5 million were displaced. Thus Sierra Leone requires more than physical reconstruction.

Although Sierra Leone was extremely poor before civil war, its complete dependency on aid after the conflict has served to further poverty and economic inequality. Much of the blame can be attributed to the conditions set out by the IFIs, which continued to push macroeconomic reforms. As noted, the government was forced to cut public spending, and as a result, such vital areas as health and education suffered. Malnutrition rates in Sierra Leone are among the highest, with 46 percent of children’s deaths attributed to malnutrition. The direct links between nutrition and health, education, and productivity make improving nutrition a key aspect of poverty eradication. Aid policies, however, have rarely taken note of health issues, such as nutrition, as a way of furthering economic growth.

ActionAid, an international organization whose primary goals are to eradicate poverty and injustice, reports that between 2003 and 2005 the IMF directly restricted teacher recruitment in Sierra Leone to curtail government spending on wages. In a poverty eradication effort, the government had set forth goals of ensuring six years of primary and three years of secondary education by abolishing school fees, but IMF-required policies led to teacher shortages and insufficient numbers of qualified instructors to sustain a decent educational system. Thus, in a seeming contradiction noted by ActionAid and others, on one hand the World Bank pushed Sierra Leone to deliver on its educational objectives, while on the other hand the IMF stood in the way of achieving these goals. In response to criticism of its restrictions, the IMF argues that despite its conditions regarding reduced public spending, it does not determine which sectors countries should make a priority; it considered the decision regarding the recruitment of teachers an internal matter of the government. The counter-argument asks how poor countries, with already constrained budgets, can even begin to address the innumerable challenges faced by post-war societies under such conditions? ActionAid contends that IMF policies in Sierra Leone have negatively affected the country’s economic stability since the war because most donor’s link their aid to the country’s IMF ratings.

Among the NGOs we visited were some focusing on health issues, violence against women, children’s rights, reparations, and rehabilitation for war-affected

individuals and community reconciliation. At almost every organization, representatives remarked how funding determined their programmes, not vice versa. Donor agencies push development and peacebuilding in a particular direction, thus dictating the pattern of economic and social transformation. A classic example of this is the high visibility of billboards about HIV/AIDS awareness. Such campaigns could be seen everywhere, yet we kept hearing from local organizations that the biggest killers were malaria and water-borne diseases. From this situation, one can conclude that the international community views AIDS prevention and awareness as a priority for Africa and therefore does not direct sufficient funds elsewhere—in the case of Sierra Leone, towards malaria. This is not to say that there is no awareness of such issues as malaria at the macro level as there is at the micro level; rather, the way in which funds trickle down through donor agencies and institutions does not usually involve seeking the advice of local organizations in prioritising programme investments. In discussing how aid can cause harm, M. Anderson advocates allowing aid workers to design and support assistance programmes that reinforce locally prioritised issues.

Donor coordination presents another challenge to effective aid. The existence of a multitude of donors points to a variety of agendas, some overlapping and some contradictory. Despite growing donor awareness about responsibility for enhancing local peacebuilding efforts, much remains to be done, primarily in the area of donor coordination. Every NGO we visited had a programme, irrespective of its organizational focus, relating to education and training for democratisation and good governance. It was obvious that the availability of funding for governance-related programmes was a motivating factor in the NGOs’ emphasis of this area. As another example of donor-driven agendas, most NGOs appeared to pay insufficient attention to the actual building and revival of the institutions that support good governance. The military, police, judicial, and parliamentary institutions that needed to be rejuvenated—along with such entities as truth and reconciliation commissions, special courts, and anti-corruption commissions, which need to be built from the ground up—were viewed as state responsibilities. There did not seem to be much of an effort to link governance

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23. The estimated adult (ages 15 to 49) HIV prevalence rate for Sierra Leone is 1.6 percent. UNICEF, ‘At a glance: Sierra Leone’, 2009, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sierra_leone_statistics.html. (See ‘AIDS and HIV in Africa’, http://www.avert.org/hiv-aids-africa.htm, for rates in other countries.) In December 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reported that malaria deaths among children under five had increased significantly in the previous months, pointing to less emphasis on the preventive and more on the curative in Sierra Leone. There were also problems procuring drugs, thus adding to the problem. One child dies every thirty minutes from malaria in Sierra Leone. See Irin, ‘Sierra Leone: Appeal for aid as malaria “emergency” looms’, 11 December 2009.
25. N. Ball, ‘The challenge of rebuilding war-torn societies’ in Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, Turbulent Peace.
26. A gender coordinator for International Alert asserted during our visit, ‘We need institutions that can sustain some form of democracy’. Freetown, 10 January 2010.
and democratisation to institution building, which is a failure of the liberal peace approach.28

There is a growing acceptance on the part of the United Nations and others to include peacekeeping among the first steps in peacebuilding. A consequence of this effort to counter insecurity is that peacebuilding activities are initiated by peacekeepers.29 In Sierra Leone, the UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding programmes faced a number of challenges. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the peacekeeping force, took over from ECOMOG, which had been deployed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). With the support of British forces, UNAMSIL was finally able to seize control and help end the war in 2002. Peacekeeping through UNAMSIL ultimately resulted in (negative) peace,30 but it was not without difficulty. The weak peace agreement brokered at Lomé did not give it the ability to forcefully ensure the peace. Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programmes and an emphasis on security sector reforms, both key UN peacebuilding initiatives, have achieved success to an extent. In furthering this work, however, the UN-sponsored peacebuilding commission in Sierra Leone today struggles to provide a political framework for projects funded through a peacebuilding fund.31 The fund continues to address immediate peacebuilding needs, but without integrating such programmes as governance with political will in the post-war context. At the same time, it struggles with reintegration and arms reduction.32 Such difficulties have led J. Hazen to argue that although peacekeeping provides a foundation for peacebuilding, the two operations are not the same.33

The DDR programme ensured that Sierra Leone is mostly weapons free.34 Regardless, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continues to be involved in ensuring security through its Arms for Development project, which was initiated in 2004 in response to growing crime and small arms and light weapons possession. The project promotes ‘stability, security and development in Sierra Leone through support to grass root communities, civil society and security institutions by creating condi-

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31. Sierra Leone was approved to receive such monies in October 2006. The peacebuilding fund approved seven projects in the areas of good governance, security and justice sector reform, youth employment and empowerment, and capacity building. See A. Sola-Martin, ‘Is peacebuilding sustainable in Sierra Leone?’ Global Change, Peace and Security, 21:3 (2009), 291–307.


34. In Sierra Leone, guns were surrendered in exchange for money. It is estimated that half the weapons in the country during the war have been surrendered. In Liberia, double the money was offered and it is thought that most weapons were surrendered there.
tions for the voluntary surrender of weapons and community recovery. While Arms for Development has had success in collecting weapons, there have been problems in that people are not always willing to volunteer for community development if their socio-economic condition has somewhat improved. Also, because of delays in changing gun laws, some gun owners refrained from surrendering weapons for fear that they might not be able to register their weapons in the future. In evaluating peace-building in Sierra Leone, A. Sola-Martin warns that the challenges in reintegrating ex-combatants and addressing mine workers’ grievances could, if not properly handled, lead to a violent flare-up. Despite criticism from some quarters that it has worked through NGOs and civil society, rather than the government, the UNDP concludes in internal evaluations that it, along with the international community, has made positive contributions to the building of peace and governance and poverty reduction in Sierra Leone.

In Sierra Leone, it appears that reducing insecurity is a key aspect of development and peacebuilding programmes. The powers that be currently accept that insecurity is linked to poverty, and this causes conflict. Security is understood to mean human security, and as long as ‘all social and political issues are framed in security terms, the strategies born will come from concern for security rather than for social justice, human rights and equality and leave out moral and governance responsibilities of the state’. Thus security is the prime concern of the Sierra Leone government, leaving the other aspects of recovery and reconstruction to a market-based development system in which macroeconomic development is supposed to trickle down as peace. If anything, Sierra Leone illustrates the harmfulness of the assumption that integration with a liberal world economy will necessarily lead to a reduction of conflict simply because market-based solutions are applied to social, economic, and political issues.

Such shortcomings should not detract from the international and local NGOs engaged in development and peacebuilding activities in Sierra Leone. As is typical in post-war societies, there has been a mushrooming of NGOs owing to the influx of funds and the pressing needs that emerged after the end of conflict. The motivation for NGOs’ involvement, their ability to respond to assorted needs, and their access to resources naturally varies. In Sierra Leone, what stands out is the lack of coordination among the many efforts being made, in part because of differences in areas of activity, how head and field offices assess situations, and donor agendas.

The government is, of course, a primary actor in peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. Recovery-based economic growth has not worked for Sierra Leone, as evidenced by its complete dependence on foreign aid. Sola-Martin concludes that the neo-patrimonial

36. Ibid.
37. Sola-Martin, ‘Is peacebuilding sustainable in Sierra Leone?’
40. Williams, ‘Peace operations and the international financial institutions’. 
system, together with corruption and a capitalist economy, continues to make compa-
nies, tribal chiefs, and political parties the beneficiaries of profits from the mining
areas.\textsuperscript{41} Some of the liberal peacebuilding agenda of democratisation and promotion
of human rights has, however, produced some successes in post-war Sierra Leone. At
the same time, the neoliberal economic policies pursued have further fed the patrimo-
nial networks that sustain the structural inequalities that served as the root causes of
the civil war. Economic benefits have certainly not reached all sections of society and
cannot ensure that war may not erupt again.\textsuperscript{42}

In praxis, it is hard to distinguish between development and peacebuilding actors
in Sierra Leone. That said, it is not as if grassroots actors see an advantage in distin-
guishing between the two, but they certainly recognise the advantage of characterising
themselves largely as ‘development’ oriented. Why? Because more funds are available
for development, or at least that is what donor agencies want to hear. Development is
also a more attractive concept—when understood as economic growth and infra-
structure building—in a country that has been torn by war and is extremely poor.
When NGOs on the ground used the word \textit{peacebuilding}, they seemed to dispropor-
tionately understand it as ‘liberal peacebuilding’. In evaluating the approach and role
of different actors involved in Sierra Leone in the ten years since the end of war, one
cannot make definitive conclusions, but emerging patterns of motivations, agendas,
and policies and practices are evident. While there are similarities among the actors,
the contradictions in their goals and approaches can be stark.

\textbf{SECURITY’S PLACE IN DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING}

The battle of peace has to be fought on two fronts. The first front is the security front,
where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the economic and social front,
where victory means freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the
world of an enduring peace.\textsuperscript{43}

During the cold war, peace and security were addressed separately from development.
Socio-economic development was considered the responsibility of nation-states and
was supported by international financial institutions, the United Nations, and donor
agencies and other countries. Peace and security, narrowly defined, was the absence
of violence and the protection of territorial boundaries and sovereignty of nation-states.
For this, international assistance came primarily from the United Nations.\textsuperscript{44}

In the post–cold war era, and especially post-9/11, the distinction between develop-
ment and peacebuilding became blurred. This is because the approach of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{41} Sola-Martin, ‘Is peacebuilding sustainable in Sierra Leone?’ One of the academics in Jhala
University told us that all the conditions that led to war in Sierra Leone still exist today. Interview, Freetown,
12 January 2010.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Sola-Martin, ‘Is peacebuilding sustainable in Sierra Leone?’
\item \textsuperscript{43} U.S. secretary of state Edward R. Stettinius, in 1945, reporting on the results of the conference in
San Francisco at which the United Nations was established. See “Securing our common future”: On the
occasion of the “Golden Spear” high-level seminar; http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=1376&catid
=14&typeid=8&subMenuId=0.
\item \textsuperscript{44} N. Tschirgi, ‘Peacebuilding as the link between security and development: Is the window of opportu-
\end{itemize}
United Nations and regional organizations and institutions evolved from pure peacekeeping (ending violence) into more direct intervention to end conflicts. In fact, it became a moral obligation and a necessity to intervene in post-war and post-conflict societies. Issues such as democracy, governance, poverty eradication, justice, rehabilitation, human rights, and security emerged as key areas around which all relevant actors—including the United Nations, IFIs, and international NGOs—designed programmatic interventions for countries transitioning from war. At this point, tensions between the Bretton Woods institutions (BWIs), donor agencies, and the United Nations and other international NGOs arose over differences in goals to be pursued and the methods employed to achieve them. Some problems flowed from the manner in which development and peacebuilding were operationalised on the ground and the ineffective integration of security in pursuit of these goals.

Studies indicate that while intra-state violent conflicts are on the decrease, the incidence of conflicts recurring after a peace agreement has been brokered or after being dormant for years is on the increase. This means that efforts to bring peace, security, and development to post-conflict societies have not had much success. In trying to find a reason for this failure, development and peacebuilding actors point fingers at one another. There is also debate about whether peace is a pre-condition for development or whether development is necessary for peace. When peace is defined as the absence of insecurity and violence, it can be a pre-condition for development. For there to be sustainable peace, however, there must be sustainable development. Scholars and practitioners thus are discussing what is called the inclusivist approach: instead of treating development and peacebuilding separately, the two should perhaps be integrated because they are mutually reinforcing and can contribute simultaneously towards a common goal.

Re-thinking Development

Development as a concept exists on a number of levels. At the macro level, it is the study of a nation’s growth; at the meso level, it involves interactions with government agencies, NGOs, other institutions and their policies; at the micro level, it is involvement in local issues, such as community development. The three levels are, obviously, connected.

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In the post–cold war, when the link between security and development was acknowledged, it became hard to ignore the multitude of threats faced by people in conflict zones. For organizations that have traditionally operated with a development mindset, the shift has involved moving from working around conflicts and in conflicts to working on conflict. Development today is largely understood in terms of economic and social development, that is, human development. Focus on human development (or sustainable development), as opposed to pure economic growth, has led to a focus on the economic and social well-being of the individual through satisfaction of basic human needs along with eradication of poverty, disease, hunger, inequality, injustice, and extreme vulnerability and ensuring civil and political rights.50

Development, therefore, involves an array of actors who specialize in one or another aspect of human development. When it comes to economic reforms and reconstruction in societies emerging from conflict, the biggest players remain the Bretton Woods institutions—the World Bank and IMF—and the United Nations (primarily through the UNDP) and other bilateral and multilateral donors. According to some observers and practitioners, the failure of many transitional societies to integrate economic with social development and economic development with peace has been blamed on the policies of the IFIs because they continue to fund most development projects. IFI policies have a significant impact because countries emerging from war are highly dependent on aid. Macroeconomic reforms pushed by IFIs have generally had three outcomes: increased disparity in incomes, less economic security for the vulnerable, and less government spending, which then is viewed as poor governance. All of these are problems that likely existed in most of these countries pre-war.51

A consensus now exists in support of the argument that the approach of the IFIs has led to furthering inequalities and even contributing to conflict. If the policies of organizations like the IMF do indeed hurt the poor and the otherwise marginalised, it can be argued that they are a form of human rights violation. Also, if their policies cause dissent and therefore require violent suppression, they would be guilty of further trampling human rights.52 Thus, blame for much of the continued inequality in conflict regions is attributed to neoliberal economic policies, primarily the structural adjustment programmes advocated by the IFIs.53 Adding to the problem is the absence of formal mechanisms for communication between the United Nations and the IMF. In post-war countries, it is not uncommon for the United Nations to encourage governments to spend on peacebuilding activities while the IFIs insist that these same governments lower spending, as part of macroeconomic reform packages, to receive assistance.54

The BWIs have transformed the way in which they approach reforms in transitional societies in that they are now more sensitive to the conflict context and to the specific and differing needs of vulnerable groups in these countries. They made significant policy changes to focus on macro and micro reforms, management of natural

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50. Tschirgi, ‘Peacebuilding as the link between security and development’.
51. Williams, ‘Peace operations and the international financial institutions’.
53. Paris, At War’s End. Some studies show that SAPs, if fully adopted by local governments, can lead to a significant reduction in poverty, Draman, ‘Poverty and conflict in Africa’.
54. Williams, ‘Peace operations and the international financial institutions’.
resource, poverty alleviation, and social spending, including greater support for programmes involving reconciliation, rehabilitation, and infrastructure.\textsuperscript{55} For example, one now finds increasing IFI investment in governance, security sectors, and rule of law, but as N. Tschirgi argues, there is hardly any vertical integration between these programmes and other economic reforms or horizontal integration among these programmes.\textsuperscript{56}

Although the neoliberal economic consensus so strongly advocated in the 1990s is highly contested today, and the failure of the neoliberal approach recognised, there has not necessarily been a change in the mindset or ideology of the IFIs themselves.\textsuperscript{57} The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been at the centre of the field of development since their introduction. Setting goals to be achieved fifteen years after the turn of the century offered a sense of direction and broadened the scope of development practitioners. J. Galtung opines that the MDGs are laudable in that they focus on distribution without making growth a pre-condition. He also points out that in reality, however, the MDGs are unattainable under current economies because they require that someone or something—that is, the basic needs of the very poor—yield.\textsuperscript{58}

The MDGs have successfully shifted the focus from development as economic growth to development as human development. The allocation of aid and resources to human development is as striking as the growth of programmes that focus on social development. The linking of economic development to social development, however, is still missing with the result that most development continues to be measured by economic growth. This was obvious in Sierra Leone, with community demands to provide for basic human needs and donor agendas prioritising needs without much awareness of realities on the ground.\textsuperscript{59} Human development requires a much longer time commitment than development does, a situation that peacebuilders are more comfortable with than are development practitioners.

\textbf{Re-thinking Security}

Much of development literature today is located within the context of societies that have experienced or are experiencing some kind of civil strife or violent conflict. Lack of security is an element in each of these conflict areas. Drawing a causal relationship between insecurity and conflict, however, is not an easy task, and it is made even harder when it comes to developing domestic and foreign policies on governance and development.\textsuperscript{60}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{55} Castillo notes that there was a time when BWIs argued that conflicts had a political dimension that was beyond their mandate, so they would carry on development activities without consideration of the political environment. G. del Castillo, ‘The Bretton Woods institutions, reconstruction and peacebuilding’ in \textit{Ending Wars, Consolidating Peace: Economic Perspectives}, Adelphi Series 50:412–413 (2010), 75–100.
  \item \textsuperscript{56} Tschirgi, ‘Peacebuilding as the link between security and development’.
  \item \textsuperscript{57} Pugh, ‘The political economy of peacebuilding’.
  \item \textsuperscript{58} J. Galtung, \textit{A Theory of Development: Overcoming Structural Violence} (Transcend University Press, 2010).
  \item \textsuperscript{59} One member of civil society told us, ‘Economic growth is peacebuilding’. Interview, Freetown, 12 January 2012.
\end{itemize}
The idea that security is best understood by making the individual the central figure has gained in acceptance. Thus security is now taken to mean human security, an outlook much broader than simply freedom from physical fear or protection of territorial boundaries. It includes, among others issues, economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. Some like R. Paris, criticize this concept of human security as being too expansive, vague, and lacking precise definition, and thus question whether it could serve as a ‘practical guide for academic research or governmental policymaking’. Yet, as Paris himself acknowledges, human security is not all rhetoric and that it could as a concept help in bettering understanding of the conditions that affect the survival (and growth) of individuals, groups, as well as societies.

In insecure and unstable conflict-ridden environments such as Sierra Leone, providing and re-establishing security are major challenges. Security has always been a key part of any peacebuilding process, and now development agencies and practitioners recognise the need to include the security dimension in their programmes. This stems from a growing realisation based on evidence that insecurity and conflict have a clear interdependent relationship, not a causal one, and therefore require integrated policies. Much of development praxis, however, finds itself hard pressed to deal with issues around security, a newfound area of involvement for the field after the cold war. Besides, pursuing efforts, including the Millennium Development Goals, irrespective of the security environment in a region, could mean that development may actually increase the risk of conflict. Peacebuilding now integrates the concept of human security into its scope, in many ways not simply ensuring that people have freedom from fear and from want, but also live in conditions where conflict will not arise in the future.

**Re-thinking Peacebuilding**

*Peacebuilding*, a term coined by Galtung in 1975, did not take off as a practical concept and did not receive due attention until Boutros Boutros-Ghali used it in 1992 in his ‘Agenda for Peace’ to highlight the efforts made by the United Nations and other actors to rebuild war-torn societies. Boutros-Ghali described peacebuilding as a set of actions undertaken to prevent the recurrence of conflict that may take the form of concrete cooperative projects that link two or more countries in a mutually beneficial undertaking, which not only can contribute to economic and social development, but can also enhance the confidence fundamental for peace.

The academic discipline of conflict and peace studies has researched and built extensively on peacebuilding but is yet to provide a concrete and clear definition for the term. Peacebuilding therefore ends up meaning a lot of different things to a lot of dif-

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63. Ibid.
64. Tschirgi, Lund, and Mancini, ‘The security-development nexus’.
ferent people. Some refer to it as a set of activities following a war; others view it as a relational and psychological process, and yet others define it as a new way of approaching development, with an emphasis on peace. Peacebuilding, in the academic discipline, is best understood as the set of actions that seeks to prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence that has not yet led to massive civil unrest. At the same time, it empowers people to foster relationships at all levels that sustain them and their environment.

In looking at the history of peacebuilding, it is clear that in the post–cold war period, the concept gained acceptance when the United Nations began emphasising the idea that human security and peace should be concerns of the international community. The principle of ‘responsibility to protect’ began gaining acceptance even among humanitarian agencies. The linking of security and development, which finds its overlap in human security and human development concepts, began incorporating peacebuilding concepts, emphasising the prevention, reduction, and transformation of violence and the rebuilding of relationships among people in conflict areas. A further boost came when others, including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Development Assistance Committee advocated that donors link development to security and think of new ways to address violent conflicts. Peacebuilding is a much broader concept than development or security and has a vision for the future that is more comprehensive. Some of the challenges in adopting peacebuilding goals include ensuring long-term commitments from all actors, selecting indicators for development, and lack of coordination among actors.

### PEACEBUILDING OR DEVELOPMENT?

In terms of praxis, peacebuilding has been much maligned in the last two decades for a variety of reasons. One of the criticisms is that it is too broad a concept; it includes many different activities under its umbrella. Owing to this, the actors involved in peacebuilding cover almost anyone working within the framework and principles of peacebuilding as advocated by researchers, academic scholars, and actual practitioners. Further, liberal peace commonly understood as peacebuilding is imposed without any consideration to pre-existing political systems. Underpinned by the neoliberal economic policies of the IFIs, the results have been increased inequality and failure for peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding faces additional challenges in that among civil society, ‘development’ is more of a buzzword than is ‘peacebuilding’. Peacebuilding is seen as a form of external intervention, specifically as an imposition of western values and cultures over domestic traditions. Further, when misunderstood, a commitment to peacebuilding is

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68. Ibid.
70. Tschirgi, ‘Peacebuilding as the link between security and development’.
often seen as siphoning funds away from the MDGs, which are closely tied to development, which is tied to receiving aid.

‘Peacebuilding’, unfortunately, has become code for UN-sponsored programmes, which affects the ways in which critics evaluate it. As an academic discipline that includes scholars and practitioners, peacebuilding in praxis and peacebuilding in theory are still not integrated. Some research and scholarship in the field of conflict and peace argue that removing root causes of conflict—including addressing structural inequalities—combined with conflict prevention tasks to be undertaken for the creation of positive peace are key elements of peacebuilding. This points to peacebuilding being closely tied to conflict prevention, an idea mirroring Boutros-Ghali’s when he appropriated the term. His idea of peacebuilding was in the context of post-conflict societies, distinguishing it from peacekeeping, peacemaking, and preventive diplomacy.72 Yet, in reality, the United Nations has mostly undertaken peacebuilding through the liberal peace approach.

W. Knight categorises three ways, not mutually exclusive, in which actors can approach peacebuilding in praxis:

- Violent conflicts are political and therefore require political solutions of governance and power adjustments.
- Violent conflicts are driven by socio-economic conditions and therefore socio-economic development is needed to address such conflicts.
- Violent conflicts exist because of an overabundance of arms—the security perspective—for which the solution lies in demilitarisation and demobilisation and security sector reforms.73

All three approaches to peacebuilding are identifiable in Sierra Leone. Various actors also address issues of trauma, historical memory, reconciliation, and identity. As such, it appears that at least for some, peacebuilding is a well-rounded integrated approach. The problem perhaps lies more with the coordination and integration of these three approaches to building peace. In this area, peacebuilders could contribute more. Better coordination among actors would enhance prioritisation of tasks although power politics and agenda pushing would likely remain issues.

Castillo argues that there can be no development without peace, so peace (the political objective) should receive priority over development (the economic objective). He adds, however, that in the short term, policymakers may emphasise reconstruction to impede a return to war, but in the long term, development should follow the establishment of peace.74 Castillo’s argument finds resonance in J. P. Lederach’s time-sensitive model of peacebuilding.75 According to his framework, peacebuilding is a long-term endeavour, requiring not only a vision for the future but also the motivation and commitment of actors to be involved. Meanwhile, in the short term, immediate needs must be addressed. Here is where economic and social development are key. In the long term, the structural problems that are the root causes of conflicts must

72. Knight, ‘Evaluating recent trends in peacebuilding research’.
73. Ibid.
74. Castillo, ‘The Bretton Woods institutions, reconstruction and peacebuilding’.
75. J. P. Lederach, Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies (Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).
be resolved. Thus, it is not that development should follow peace, but that the two need to be integrated. The inclusivist approach is the best way this works in praxis. 76

Organizations like the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the UN agency dedicated to fighting rural poverty in developing countries, continue to stress peace through development. Their programmes centre around poverty eradication despite on-going protracted conflicts. 77 In another example, the Peace for Development programme (PDEV), which focuses on integrated activities involving governance, youth, and media for marginalised communities, was set up in Chad, Niger, and Mauritania to counter possible terrorist and other extremist activities there. 78

J. Cerretti opines that the ‘one size fits all’ Washington consensus model, with neo-liberalism as its core, and the gender and development model have both failed in societies emerging from violent conflict. These models, he argues, do not address the inequalities of societies that have experienced conflict. He offers instead a conflict-aware model of development encompassing six elements: demilitarisation; a focus on the most deprived; fast, non-segregated resettlement; rewards for cooperation; limited private foreign investment; and some form of truth and reconciliation. If development models hope to positively impact the largest possible number of people, their policies need to reflect the historical and current realities of a conflict. 79

Galtung and P. Scott argue that democracy and development go hand in hand: Where democracy helps articulate goals and the means to achieve them, development, in practice, harnesses the means to achieve the goals. As they see it, the problem arises, however, when ‘development’ becomes a verb—‘to develop’. 80 This occurs when outsiders—for example, the IFIs, donor agencies, and other international organizations—from more-developed societies take it upon themselves to develop less-developed societies, such as those emerging from war. If, for instance in Sierra Leone, they would work on development together, with local organizations, the result would be development that is both owned and sustainable.

In the same vein, peacebuilding as a field of conflict resolution and transformation suggests adopting a bottom-up approach. That is, build peace from the grass roots. Local NGOs and other community-based organizations would play primary roles in bringing peace to societies, such as Sierra Leone, emerging from war. Often, however, many of these grassroots organizations are drawn to conflict areas in a competition for overflowing post-war funding and are not willing to be a part of coordinated efforts to build peace. Organizations such as these make familiar criticisms that well-meaning peacebuilders often unwittingly prolong or worsen conflict by serving the interests of the powerful, distorting local economies, and failing to empower the locals. 81

Another major issue with peacebuilding as seen in Sierra Leone is the difference in how the field of conflict resolution and transformation approaches the term and how peacebuilding in practice plays out through the actions of the United Nations and other agencies that have adopted the term peacebuilding as liberal peacebuilding. Peacebuilders trained under the academic discipline of conflict resolution and transformation, end up working for development organizations or UN agencies where they must adjust their notions of peacebuilding if they are to access aid and other funding resources.82

One of the biggest challenges for development and peacebuilding actors is evaluating their programmes. The Millennium Development Goals assist development practitioners in devising indicators for measuring growth and recording positive changes in social conditions. Development as economic growth is measurable, and indicators for social and political development can be done at the community, societal, national, and regional levels. Peacebuilding actors, on the other hand, are challenged to create evaluative indicators and tools that can measure the many dimensions of peace. That peace needs to be contextualised means there are no common or general indicators for peacebuilding. Each context demands its set of peacebuilding indicators.83 Peacebuilders often work with narrow definitions of peace dictated by funding and expertise, making it difficult to develop common indicators. In addition, elements of peace, such as trauma healing and lessening hatred, are hard to measure. Peacebuilding practitioners are challenged by vertical and horizontal coordination of their efforts, the lack of which can lead some peacebuilding approaches to contradict others.84

Peacebuilding needs more refinement on the ground. The academic field comprising scholars and practitioners has made progress in defining and developing the theory and practice of peacebuilding, but much more needs to be done to draw boundaries and articulate the field’s notion of peacebuilding to those who advocate the more popular liberal peacebuilding, which ties more neatly into neoliberal economic development.

CONCLUSION

Peace as freedom suggests that the means and ends of peace and development practices should be to ensure the equitable distribution of economic opportunities, political freedoms, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, protective security and freedom from direct violence.85

The similarities between human development, human security, and peacebuilding are numerous. The overlaps should make the task of rebuilding societies after war easy for all actors, so it is hard to comprehend why there should be tensions between develop-

82. This was the general feeling we gathered when speaking to peacebuilding professionals in Sierra Leone.
84. Schirch, The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding.
ment and peacebuilding on the ground and why security needs to become more integrated into policy and practice.

Development and peacebuilding actors are often the same. Funds received for programmes often lead actors to try to make a distinction concerning whether their work falls under development or peacebuilding. For most NGOs, the tasks overlap, but the politics make the presentation of the programmes lean more toward development. Concepts of neoliberal economic policies and liberal peace dominate the mindset of international actors engaged in transitional societies, such as in Sierra Leone. Security, while seen as critical to development and peacebuilding, is not well integrated into either programme. The current situation appears to call for change in the approaches of development and peacebuilding actors.

The academic debate and the case of Sierra Leone suggest that tension should not exist over what comes first or where greater emphasis should be placed. Development should be understood as a process, not a product. Development is often seen as a short-term commitment, which needs to change, while peacebuilding, viewed as a long-term effort, needs to develop clear indicators for evaluation as well as play a greater role in the coordination and prioritising of tasks.

86. Barbanti, 'Development and conflict theory'.
Biafran Women and the Nigerian Civil War: Challenges and Survival Strategies

Jacinta Chiamaka Nwaka

During the Nigerian civil war from 1967 to 1970, food crises, as well as insecurity, were among the significant challenges faced by large numbers of people, especially women. Migration, bush combing, farming, trading, and prostitution were among the strategies women adopted for survival. Others contributed to the Biafran war effort by joining the Biafran militia. Although some of these coping mechanisms availed women of the opportunity to prove that they could sustain their families in the absence of men, the war in general had disastrous effects on them. In spite of women's contributions and whatever gain survival strategies conferred, the Biafran war exposed the vulnerabilities of women in wartime.

Writing on the Nigerian civil war, J. Osuntokun notes, has been a thriving industry, attracting an array of writers with various motives throwing light on the events that shaped Nigerian history from 1967 to 1970. Despite the obvious interest in this period, the roles and situation of women during the war have scarcely attracted the attention of scholars, particularly historians. Apart from E. Uchendu and G. Chuku, who examine Anioma women in the civil war and Biafran women's role in the economy, researchers have largely ignored the unique challenges Biafran women faced at that time. S. Emezue makes no distinction between Biafran women and other Nigerian women who, though Igbo, were not part of Biafra. Moreover, his article, like the undergraduate project of N. Ezeigwe, deals largely with women combatants and the general contributions of women to the Biafran military effort.

4. N. Ezeigwe, 'Women in combat' (undergraduate project, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1995).

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War is generally regarded as an affair among men that should not involve input from women. Although women rarely take part in discussions leading to war, in most cases they bear the brunt of war’s consequences. In the 1990s alone, it was estimated that approximately 90 percent of the casualties in wars around the world were civilians, mostly women and children. The introduction of increasingly sophisticated weapons and the concept of total warfare have blurred the distinction between combatants and civilians, making women and children widespread victims of armed conflicts. In addition, women must also struggle against starvation and epidemics associated with war and take responsibility for the survival of their children and other relatives, especially the elderly, in the absence of men. Some of them are exposed to rape at the hands of soldiers.

Some recent works have raised awareness of the increasing role of women as spies and combatants in conflict situations. L. Klein and G. Chuku emphasize the hidden power and potential of women during war, which they claim liberates and expands their roles in the labor market. The agony women experience generally in violent settings is so great that it cannot be compared favorably to any role they play as quasi-combatants or economic actors in these situations.

The Nigerian civil war was the first conflict in Africa that generated a highly criticized humanitarian crisis. It consequently contributed to redefining the role of non-governmental organizations in the management of such crises in war situations. What were the challenges faced by Biafran women during the war that in part point to the reason for the aggressive intervention of humanitarian agencies? How did the women cope? Oral interviews, archival documents, and extant literature reveal these struggles and the survival strategies they adopted.

SECESSION AND WAR

The Nigerian civil war stemmed, like most such conflicts, from a number of political, economic, and social factors. It was a gruesome confrontation between the Federal Republic of Nigeria, under Col. Yakubu Gowon, and the Eastern Region of Nigeria, under Lt. Col. Odimegwu Ojukwu. On 30 May 1967, the Eastern Region seceded, declaring itself the Republic of Biafra (see Fig. 1). The Igbo constituted the primary group in the new republic, which was also the home to the Andoni, Efik, Ibibio, Ikwere, Izon,
Ogoja, and Okirika, and various other minority ethnic groups in present-day Rivers and Cross River states. On 6 July 1967, federal troops fired a shot at Gakem, on the northern border of the Eastern Region, and the shrinking of Biafra began.

Following a counter-coup in July 1966 overthrowing the military government headed by Gen. Aguyi Ironsi and mass killings of easterners, in particular of Igbos in the north, the population of the Eastern Region had swelled, as returnees from the north and other parts of Nigeria flowed into the area. Of about 2 million people who returned, only about 1 million could be absorbed by their relatives and friends. The rest were quartered in town halls, church buildings, and schools transformed into camps. More than half the returnees were women and children, many of them now with severed limbs and shattered bodies. Commenting on the state of those returning, a correspondent for the London Observer noted, that they had been ‘hacked, slashed, mangled, stripped naked and robbed of all their possessions; the orphans, the widows, the traumatized. A woman, mute and dazed, arrived back in her village with only a bowl in her lap. She held her child’s head which was severed before her eyes. Another woman stepped off a refugee

10. Within the area declared as Biafra, the Igbo population was estimated at 9 million, while the other ethnic groups was thought to be 5 million combined.
11. Ojukwu issued a call for Igbo residing in other parts of Nigeria to return to the Eastern Region because their safety could not be guaranteed outside it.
lorry, her face battered. By her side was her little boy, one of whose eyes had been gouged out, and her little girl, who had severe scalp wounds.13

Many of the returnee women had lost their husbands during the pogrom in the north and inherited the burden of catering for their children.14 It is pertinent to note that most migrant Igbo were the breadwinners of their (usually large) families back home prior to the crisis; they would send part of their earnings home for the maintenance of their nuclear and extended families, especially for care of the aged. With the flight home, survival became more difficult for them and their dependants. Although the government of the Eastern Region paid five pounds to every widow who had lost a husband during the pogrom and ten shillings per month for a period of six months to every child who had lost a parent,15 the amounts were too meagre to significantly ameliorate living conditions at that time.

Exacerbating the situation, after the onset of fighting, the federal military government on 1 January 1968, changed its currency as part of its war effort. The Biafran government followed with the issuance of its own new currency.16 Obtaining the new currencies, especially the Nigerian currency, which women needed for trans-border trade, was not easy. Racketeers from the federal and Biafran sides exploited these women. The Biafran currency, which was needed to purchase scarce commodities within the enclave, was not valued as much as the Nigerian currency. By mid-1968, Nigerian coins, shillings, were preferred to the Biafran notes in Biafra because they had a far higher purchasing value. A thousand Biafran notes were equivalent to twenty Nigerian pounds.17

The war had begun during planting season, and crops were abandoned as people fled shelling by Nigerian soldiers. Some Igbo from Nsukka and Enugu who had availed themselves of the fertile land in the Middle Belt could not harvest their crops before the fall of Enugu and its environs to federal troops. Fighting in the northeastern and southern parts of Biafra led to the capture of Abakaliki, Bende, Cross River Valley, Delta Ibibioland, and Ogoja, on which the easterners depended for their food supply.18 The population began concentrating in the Igbo heartland, which is not particularly fertile. The food crisis heightened with the influx of easterners from Rivers and Cross River into the Igbo enclave as the federal government recaptured their lands. The number of refugees increased from 1 million in February 1968 to 3.5 million by April 1968.19 By the end of 1968, there were about 650 refugee camps with some 700,000 occupants.20 In early 1969, the population of Biafra was lumped be-

14. The most hunted in the north and other parts of Nigeria were Igbo men in the military. They dominated among the coupists in January 1966 and were believed to be planning to dominate Nigerian politics.
15. Janice Odogwu, interview, Onitsha, 17 November 2009. Odogwu is one of the recipients of five pounds from the Eastern government. See also Daily Times, 9 September 1966, 1.
17. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 33.
between Uli and Onitsha. Later that year, Biafran soldiers retook some areas over which federal troops had reasserted control.

**FOOD CRISIS, DISEASE, AND OTHER STRESSORS**

It soon became obvious with the outbreak of war that Biafra lacked what it needed to seriously challenge federal might. The willingness of Biafran men to defend their fledgling secession largely sustained the beleaguered republic for thirty months. Almost every able-bodied man was conscripted. Those who escaped enlistment went into hiding, sheltered by their wives and other female relations. Even those at the front sometimes depended on their wives and other Biafran women for their food. Military enlistment reduced the agricultural manpower of the region and placed the burden of food production on women. This situation, combined with the exodus from agricultural lands, made it impossible to feed the expanding population in Biafra with internally produced food resources.

Though it is true that international relief agencies, including African Concern, Caritas, International Committee of the Red Cross, Oxfam, and World Council of Churches, helped to lessen the burden of women by airlifting food and drugs into Biafra, disagreement between the federal government and the Biafran government over how to get relief supplies to the region frustrated the activities of these groups. While Caritas, for instance, violated the federal government’s relief policy, the Red Cross had no option other than to halt its programme in 1969 following the bombing of its relief plane by federal forces.

A federal blockade of the region eventually led to a total breakdown of food-supply mechanisms and distribution. Eastern Nigeria, which had been relatively self-sufficient in basic foodstuffs like cocoyam, maize, palm and vegetable oil, plantain cassava, and yams prior to the civil war, found itself without conventional protein sources. Apart from having a limited number of livestock reared by a few families and occasionally catching bush meat, the people of the region depended on cattle and stockfish from the north and the Scandinavian countries, respectively, for their protein requirements. The region had imported approximately 80 percent of its protein. An effective blockade would thus spell doom. In addition, the fighting made it dangerous for fishermen in riverine areas to venture into the water.

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22. The Biafran government insisted on night flights. Its acceptance of daytime flights was contingent upon them being arranged independently of the federal military government. Because such an arrangement might allow Biafra to smuggle arms, the federal government refused. Thus relief agencies operating in Biafra proceeded without the permission of the federal government. The International Committee of the Red Cross seemed to have secured federal permission to operate in Biafra in the early days, but later fell out with Lagos.

23. See International Committee of the Red Cross, *Annual Report*, Geneva, 1969, 5. The federal government required that all relief agencies seeking to send supplies had to do so through Lagos, and thus with its knowledge. The supplies would be checked there before being transported to Biafra.
Kwashiorkor, a protein-deficiency disease, became common among women and children in the region. A medical survey from 1968 revealed that more than 60 percent of refugees were suffering from some degree of malnutrition. About 15 percent of children between one and twelve years of age had developed kwashiorkor. The worst cases of starvation outside refugee camps were seen in places like Ikot Ekpene and Aba, which were trapped between federal and Biafran troops. Describing the state of the people in these places, A. Madiebo wrote, ‘Immediately Ikot Ekpene fell, I went into the prisons there. . . . I saw several hundreds of Zombie-like creatures—men, women and children—lying or squatting in the midst of others who were dead. The living were completely reduced to skeleton’ and could not talk. According to J. D. Jorre, ‘The worst situation in Biafra came in September/October, 1968 when an estimated 5 to 10 thousand people died daily.’ Anthony Byrne, Caritas relief coordinator for Biafra, lamented in a cable to Catholic Relief Services, ‘2000 children die daily, for God’s sake send baby food.’

Following the collapse of an attempt of the Biafran troops to gain and control the Midwest region, hysteria about saboteurs dominated Biafra. A large number of women lost their husbands at this time. Although some labeled saboteurs were executed immediately under orders from the Biafran government, some, including Lt. Col. Hilary Njoku, were kept in custody for the duration of the war. The fear of losing partners to the saboteur imbroglio kept women on roadsides begging for cars and fuel with which to track down and visit their husbands.

The federal government issued a code of conduct that stated among other things that women would be protected against attack on their person, honor, and any form of incident of assault, including rape; under no circumstances should pregnant women be ill-treated or killed; children would be protected and cared for; hospitals, medical staff, and patients would not be harassed or otherwise molested. The code went beyond the Geneva Conventions and was laudable. Evidence abounds, however, that it was not respected by federal soldiers in Biafra.

Air raids against civilian populations were significant stressors for Biafran women, causing losses of life and property. William Norris, who paid a visit to Biafra in April 1968, observed, ‘I have seen things in Biafra this week which no man should have to

24. It is characterized by edema and ulcerating dermatosis.
26. Ibid.
30. A. Byrne, Airlift to Biafra: Breaching the Blockade (Dublin, Columba Press, 1997), 150.
31. R. Njoku, Withstand the Storm: War Memoirs of a Housewife (Ibadan, Heinemann, 1986), 87. On a trip in search of her husband, Njoku was involved in an accident that left her with a permanent spinal cord injury.
see, sights to scorch the mind and sicken the conscience. I have seen children roasted alive, young girls torn to two by shrapnel, pregnant women eviscerated and old men blown to fragments, caused by high flying Russian Ilyushin jets operated by federal Nigeria dropping their bombs on civilian centres throughout Biafra.

John Horgan noted, ‘It is difficult to believe that the Nigerian Air Force should spend so much time and trouble attacking civilian targets. What is even harder to believe is that they have rarely attacked anything else. Every major town in Biafra has been subjected to daylight bombing by Russian and Czech-built fighter bombers.’

Rev. Fr. Doheny, reporting about an attack on feeding centres in Owerri, said that a Nigerian MiG dropped a bomb on a refugee centre housing some 8,000 people, killing around 22 and wounding many others. In the face of the above challenges, women in Biafra were expected to care for themselves, their children, their husbands (hidden and enlisted), and their parents and in-laws.

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

War tests the limits of human endurance. Biafran women adopted a number of strategies to endure and cope with the crisis during the period under review. Following a massacre of Igbo in the north in 1966, the Igbo outside the Eastern Region adopted migration; women joined in this movement. Because their flight was spontaneous, most of them returned home empty-handed. They therefore depended on their relatives for cloth, kitchen utensils, foodstuffs, and so on. Those quartered in camps received assistance from various agencies, particularly church groups. In the Onitsha archdiocese, for instance, groups of local church committees were formed to organize collections every Sunday for returnees. The Eastern Region government made provision for money for women and children who had lost husbands and parents. Some women organized cooperative societies where contributions were gathered and given to individuals as loans with little or no interest. The aim, as one woman noted, was to enable them to start businesses at home.

Another strategy was farming, which was ultimately abandoned when people began fleeing. Agricultural activities intensified in the region following the return of large numbers of former residents from various parts of Nigeria. Although returnees came back during the harvest period, it did not prevent them from engaging in aggressive cultivation and processing of palm oil and palm kernels for a few months. Hyper-inflationary food prices made agriculture attractive as families tried to save the little money in their possession by producing most of what they needed. Virtually all the

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34. J. Horgan, ‘War in the air: Defenseless civilians are massacred by the Nigerian jets’, Irish Times, 22 March 1968.
38. Edna Okosisi, interview, Nnobi, 16 August 2009. Okosisi was the first leader of the Nwanneamaka Cooperative Society, formed in March 1966 by Nnobi women.
available lands in the Igbo heartland were put into cultivation. Multiple cropping was
done by women to maximize land utility. For instance, cassava, cocoyam, melon,
pumpkin, and other fruits and vegetables were planted alongside yams and maize,
hitherto the two major crops planted together. Unfortunately, these richly farmed
lands had hardly matured before the eruption of the war and their subsequent aban-
donment to federal troops, birds, and rodents.

After the outbreak of war and imposition of the blockade, women engaged in a sec-
ond wave of migration. Following the collapse of the northern borders and federal
troops' capture of towns in Cross River and Rivers states, women in these areas moved
from the Biafran frontier into the interior, to present-day Anambra and Imo. While
some of them settled in camps, others joined their friends, relatives, and other gener-
ous people willing to accommodate refugees. Some of them were able to secure pieces
of land for cultivating cassava, maize, cocoyam, and other crops. It is pertinent to note
that in Igboland yams lost their pride of place to cassava during the civil war. With the
enlistment of virtually every Biafran able-bodied man, the cultivation of yams, tradi-
tionally regarded as a masculine activity, suffered. As a result, a new breed of cassava
that could be boiled and eaten like yams appeared.40

It was largely the new cassava that provided Biafran women with carbohydrates
during wartime. Hunger and the impossibility of practicing specialized crafts forced
women to become dedicated farmers. Pilfering of farm products escalated. Refugee
women and children roamed farms harvesting whatever they could get their hands on.
If possible, and in spite of perhaps having secured portions of land in the areas to
which they had fled, refugee women would visit their old farms to gather produce.
This they did carefully, avoiding the constant curfew. Usually, these women moved in
groups with a sense of trepidation and ears alert to their surroundings.

Bush combing became a common practice among Biafran women beginning in the
second half of 1968. Women and children sought a substitute for meat, fish, and other
protein-laden foods following the federal government's blockade. They foraged in
bushes and rivers for mushrooms, tortoises, snails, rats, lizards, alligators, rabbits,
snakes, crocodiles, birds, termites, periwinkles, and other edibles. Previously, the con-
sumption of some rodents and reptiles had been considered taboo in most parts of
Igboland; those people who broke with the traditional food culture and ate whatever
was available survived the war largely without injury to their health.41 Allegations of
cannibalism arose in some parts of Biafra. According to an oral account, people
around Abagana ate the flesh of some Nigerian troops killed by a mortar in 1968; they
had been on their way to capture Onitsha.42 A French journalist's reports, compiled
and translated by I. Ojinta, contain pictures of Biafran women cooking a human leg.43

An interviewee told this researcher that the idea of constructing a second bunker
in their compound emerged when his brother started polluting their one bunker with

40. Prior to the civil war, planted cassava in Igboland took about a year to mature and needed to be fer-
mented, cooked, and pounded before being eaten. The exigencies of the war saw the introduction of this
new type of cassava that took only a few months to mature and could be boiled for a few minutes and eaten
with raw oil.

41. Ikpe, 'Migration,' 83.

42. Victor Nwaka, interview, Eziovelle, 5 January 2006. Nwaka is a Biafran war veteran (no relation to
the author).

43. Ojinta, The Death of Biafra, 48.
the smoke from human flesh. Some leaves, grasses, and roots previously viewed as non-consumable became part of women's daily diets. For example, some ate lemon-grass, which was believed to be medicinal, especially for relieving the uncomfortable feeling and effects of hunger. Cassava, guava pawpaw, and cocoyam leaves were all sought after and used in making soup.

To provide food for themselves and their dependants, most women sold their personal belongings, such as jewellery and apparel and household goods, or exchanged them for the food they desperately needed. Barter was common. Some women went house to house with items to exchange for scarce commodities, such as salt and sugar. Others tried to pawn their precious jewellery for food with the hope of retrieving it months later, though some were not successful in obtaining their return.

Some women resorted to begging. As Uchendu notes, begging was not considered demeaning, and it was not confined to a particular group. The women who solicited aid, she maintains, saw it as transitory, as were its gains. Such beggars were rarely ignored by their fellow women. The prevalent desperation of this period made women ever-willing to assist one another. Funds and foodstuffs from relief agencies were used to establish kwashiorkor kitchens. Biafran women occasionally received food from these kitchens. Ration cards were made and distributed to women and children suffering severe hunger and diseases caused by malnutrition although they did not live in the camps. Such kitchens could be found in Ekwulumili, Ihioma, Nnewi, Nnokwa, Obodoukwu, Uruialla, and other areas at a distance from the front.

Some women who could no longer fight hunger could also not resist efforts that removed their children from their care. To save their children, Biafra women endured separations from them when in late 1968 and early 1969, thousands of children suffering from kwashiorkor and other hunger-related illnesses were evacuated to São Tomé, Gabon, and Ivory Coast. Lamenting the psychological trauma of such separations, one woman noted, 'Only a mother who had been beaten, hands down, can allow a child of less than four years to be taken away from her.'

A number of women engaged in prostitution as a survival strategy. They had sexual relationships with soldiers, especially federal soldiers, not just for food and other needed items, but also in an effort to escape the psychological torment stemming from fear and uncertainty. One woman described prostitution as the easiest route to luxury and scarce goods as well as money, especially Nigerian currency. Some women entered into relationships with federal soldiers for similar purposes. A good number of

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44. Nwaka, interview, 5 January 2006.
45. Eunice Ughakwesiri, interview, Awka, 12 December 2009. Ughakwesiri lost a box of jewellery to a lender. Her husband did not survive the war, and her hopes of retrieving the jewellery with the assets in his bank account were dashed when at the end of the war, the Nigerian government paid every Biafran twenty pounds irrespective of the amount of money they had actually deposited in the bank.
47. O. Ibeanu 'Child refugee and the Nigerian civil war' in Osaghae, Onwudiwe, and Zuberu, Nigerian Civil War and Its Aftermath, 230-46; Obiekezie and Mere, Children in the Nigerian Civil War, 47.
48. Rosaline Udokwe, interview, Ekwuluobia, 14 July 2009. Udokwe's son Vincent was evacuated to São Tomé by Caritas in 1968. Vincent, according to her, returned in 1970, along with other children, looking robust.
49. Ughakwesiri, interview, 12 December 2009. Ughakwesiri had been a frontline trader involved with midwesterners.
them fled to the northern and western parts of the country, where they had children by the soldiers. Although some latter legalized their marriages, many did not.

Most of these types of relationships ended with the Nigerian crisis in 1970, leaving the women to deal with the consequences of their liaisons alone. In some cases, the soldiers involved did not survive the war, and the women became (unrecognized) widows, who had to bear the embarrassment and ridicule associated with this status in Igboland. Those forced to return home following maltreatment by their husbands’ relatives were derisively called *agaracha* (woman of ‘easy virtue’) and taunted with the sentiment that ‘she who absconds with a foreigner is bound to return’. These women and their children lived under the psychological stress of neither being welcomed by their own people nor by those of the soldiers.50

Another group of women did not enter into sexual contracts with soldiers but instead acted as pimps, arranging assignations. The pimps made money and obtained luxury goods from soldiers as well. The conditions of the women for whom they sought clients was pitiable. The level of deprivation to which these women were exposed explains to a large extent their decision to engage in prostitution.51 In addition to being demeaning, prostitution caused tensions and problems in many homes. Some families accused their daughters-in-law of flirting with soldiers in the absence of their husbands. As a consequence, some Biafran soldiers abandoned their wives at the end of the war. The character Chike in T. Ubesie’s novel *Isi akwu dara n’ala* symbolizes these men when he tells his wife, Ada, *’Isi akwu dara n’ala emetula aja’* (A palm nut that touches the ground has licked the dust). Another consequence of prostitution in Biafra during the war was an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases. The most common one was called Bonny Special.52

Trade was the most effective strategy employed by Biafran women for surviving the war. They took part in either local trade, within Biafra, or trans-border, or struggle, trade, also popularly known as ‘ahia attack’ (frontline trade). In local trade, markets centres shifted from place to place for security reasons. For example, markets set up in places that became susceptible to air raids were moved to villages and towns to avoid detection. Some of them were moved to bushes and houses. For instance, Eke Ndizuogu moved to Ogbo Roba and Obollo Afor Nsukka to Afor Owoko. Eke Imoha of Abakaliki and the Onitsha main market were deserted in favor of bush markets.53

In addition to shifting market sites, women devised other methods of avoiding air raids during their commercial transactions. Some markets operated at night and very early in the morning, dispersing with the sunrise. One such market was called Anya Afu Iji (‘The eye that does not see flies’), indicating that transactions at this market took place early in the morning, before daybreak. At one, Nkwo Ogbi (Deaf and dumb Nkwo), women engaged in buying and selling using signs and symbols.54 Among the

54. The market was located at Ezioelle. Victoria Nwaka, interview, Ezioelle, 26 November 2009. Nwaka sold fish at Nkwo Ogbi in the early days of the war.
articles sold in these markets were palm oil, cocoyams, bananas, plantains, crayfish, smoked fish, and vegetables.

Some local markets were turned into trans-border markets with the fall of the towns in which they were located. Umobu market in Enugu state developed into a trans-border operation with the collapse of the northern border of Biafra, as did the Ikpe Ikoroguru market in Ibibioland when that area fell to federal troops. These markets sold domestic animals, fish, cloth, cigarettes, tobacco, medicine, salt, rice, garri, and provisions. Some of these articles were smuggled by federal troops. Since transport facilities were scarce, women used head porterage to move goods. New routes in addition to old ones were developed to enable them to escape air raids. Those with grown daughters opted them into the business to assist in carrying goods to market centres.

Struggle trade took place between Biafran and Nigerian women at the borders of Biafra and Nigeria. The two most important areas of trade were between the Igbo in the Midwestern region and their kit and kin across the Niger in Biafra and between Biafra and the Benue-Plateau region. It was a risky business that involved travelling at night to avoid being captured by federal soldiers. Most of the women involved in this trade were returnees from other parts of Nigeria who could speak Bini, Hausa, Idoma, Igala, Tiv, Yoruba, and so on. Their ability to speak these languages became a kind of travel immunity as they were able to communicate with soldiers. Items brought into Biafra through struggle trade included beans, stockfish, cigarettes, salt, gin, milk, rice, cloth, dry meat (kpomo), and other scarce commodities. These were sold in the local markets to supplement local products.

Participation in frontline trade exposed Biafran women to dangers that claimed some of their lives. Others lost their families and sense of dignity as Igbo women. Frontline traders were viewed with suspicion by both sides in the war. In Biafra, some suspected them of being saboteurs, willing to sell their country for money. On the federal side, people suspected them of being spies. In Biafra, army officers’ wives were accorded preferential treatment by soldiers manning roadblocks to avoid being punished by their bosses for harassing their wives. Some traders therefore disguised themselves as officers’ wives by wearing expensive clothes and jewellery to pass through checkpoints. Some others painted themselves with charcoal and wore rags that made them look mentally impaired. Some limped to appear old or infirm. Among those traders who were nonetheless detected and detained, some were raped while others lost their lives at the hands of soldiers. Some women had sexual relationships with the soldiers to save themselves and their families. Sometimes the women surrendered their goods and cash to the soldiers.

Transportation also posed problems for frontline traders. Bedford trucks were occasionally used for getting around, and women who sat in the open backs faced some

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56. Despite the federal commitment to enforcing the blockade in Midwestern, by sealing the River Niger and prohibiting travelers from Biafra to Asaba from carrying more than five pounds, the trans-border trade between Midwest and Biafran women thrived as they devised means of outflanking these rules. See Daily Times, June 1967, 8.
57. Beatrice Oguadi, interview, Abatete, 12 October 2009. Oguadi was the wife of the late Patrick Oguadi, a colonel in the Biafran 62nd Brigade.
58. Ibid.
adverse conditions, including the risk of falling off. More so, it was counter to Igbo culture for women to climb aboard them. As with war in general, the conflict in Biafra swept aside some cultural and gender-based traditions as women inherited men’s responsibilities and ways of carrying them out. Survival took precedent.

The local and trans-border trade remained susceptible to air raids despite the precautions taken by traders. Some bombings of markets resulted in large numbers of casualties among women and children. At the Afor Umuohagu market in Mbano, an estimated 300 people, mostly women and children, were killed in federal air raids. A raid on the Afor Oru Uzuakoli market was said to have killed seventeen women.59

The survival strategies adopted by Biafran women during the civil war brought to the fore their untapped potential to contribute more in the economic and social spheres of society through their innovative abilities and business acumen. In rising to the challenges of wartime, some of them acquired huge sums of money, which they used to re-establish their businesses after the conflict ended. Others provided their husbands with capital for opening businesses after the war. Indeed as Chuku notes, the civil war changed the economic role of Igbo women, as they found the wherewithal to contribute financially towards the upkeep and survival of their families in the absence of men and continued to do so after their return.60 Furthermore, some Igbo women married to soldiers, especially high-ranking officers who legalized their marriages, benefited in one way or another after the war, particularly during the military era, when their in-laws held power.

A number of women contributed to the Biafran war effort more directly by joining the militia or civil defence operations to provide internal security and to reinforce the Biafran army. Some women acted as spies for the military, fraternizing with federal troops to get information about their camps and military strength. Some women worked with the Biafran food directorate, providing sustenance for soldiers and sometimes for civilians. In a spirit of patriotism, but also revenge at times, a few Biafran women believed that by eliminating federal troops, they could avenge the death of a husband or son. Hence one source reported how a woman in Mbano who managed a restaurant after the war poisoned a group of federal soldiers who were part of the army occupying Biafra; she served them a soup made with a poisonous root.61

CONCLUSION

The Nigerian civil war brought untold physical and psychological agony to women, the gains for some notwithstanding. Psychological trauma remains; some of the interviewees for this article were moved to tears while recounting the ordeals of the period. According to one account, ‘Few wars in modern times have aroused such widespread anguish as that between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the breakaway Biafra.’62 It is not surprising that the war was the first one in which relief agencies, part-

61. Mrs. Ukaegbu, interview, Isi Ala Mbano, 13 May 2009. Ukaegbu is from Isiala Mbano, where the incident took place.
particularly church agencies, stood firmly on moral grounds to successfully override po-
litical considerations in distributing aid and to eventually influence world opinion.63
Juxtaposing the benefit gained by some Biafran women with the agony and (human
and material) losses of the war, it is clear that the latter considerably outweighs the
former.

63. N. Obiaga, *The Politics of Humanitarian Organization in the Nigerian Civil War* (Trenton, N.J.,
Africa World Press, 2004); L. Wiseberg, 'Christian churches and the Nigerian civil war', *Journal of African
Studies*, 2 (1975), 297–33.
The ruling National Congress Party and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement began negotiations in July 2010 based on a framework and structure agreed to in June 2010 concerning arrangements that were to follow a referendum in the south on secession from the north. Having signed the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the two parties still needed to address outstanding issues related to boundaries, citizenship, economics, security, and the status of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. Agreement in these areas is essential for ensuring a peaceful era in which to lay a solid foundation for post-conflict reconstruction. Resolution of the two sides’ differences became even more critical following the January 2011 referendum, in which the southern Sudanese voted overwhelmingly to secede from the north, and the declaration of the independent Republic of South Sudan on 9 July 2011. Although difficult, the differences between the north and the south are not beyond resolution. If addressed unsatisfactorily, however, they could undermine the prospects for peace and have far-reaching implications at the national and regional levels. At the same time, South Sudan must now contend with the challenges of building a new nation.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT (CPA) of 2005 between the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) ended nearly twenty-three years of civil war that had devastated Sudan.¹ The civil war can be traced to unresolved problems related to the unity and cohesiveness of the country at independence on 1 January 1956.² These include the fact that during the fifty-eight years

1. The CPA consists of six protocols. In the protocol of Machakos, signed 20 July 2002 in Machakos, Kenya, the parties agreed on a broad framework, setting forth a transitional process, principles of governance, structures of government and religion, and the right to self-determination for the people of southern Sudan. The other protocols are on security arrangements, signed 25 September 2003; wealth sharing, signed 7 January 2004; and power sharing, resolution of conflict in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile states, and resolution of conflict in Abyei, all signed 26 May 2004. See the CPA Monitor, August 2010, http://unmis.unmissions.org/Portals/UNMIS/CPA%20Monitor/CPA%20Monitor%20August%202010.pdf.

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of Anglo-Egyptian administration, southern and northern Sudan were governed as separate entities, under a governor general. North Sudan was ruled as a colonial territory oriented along Islamic lines towards Egypt and the Arab world. Meanwhile, south Sudan was oriented towards East Africa because of its African languages and culture, and Christianity was encouraged to thrive there.3 The first civil war began in 1955, less than a year before independence, and lasted until 1972, when the warring parties signed a peace agreement in Addis Ababa. The agreement brought about a period of relative peace, but war resumed in 1983, when President Jaafar al-Numeiri abrogated the agreement.4 The hostilities that ensured lasted twenty-two years, formally ending with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) in 2005.

The CPA spells out steps for addressing issues related to governance, marginalization and discrimination, identity, religion, and resources that had fueled war over the years.5 The CPA provided for an interim government of national unity in Khartoum in which the north and the south shared ministerial positions, a census (held 22 April to 6 May 2008),6 and general elections (in April 2010). General executive and legislative balloting were the first multi-party elections held during more than twenty years of military rule. The CPA also allowed residents of the south to hold a referendum, conducted between 9 and 15 January 2011, to decide whether to secede from the north. More than 40 percent of registered southern Sudanese voters participated, surpassing the threshold required to validate the results. According to the CPA, if southerners voted for secession, implementation would take effect six months after the poll. Indeed, on 9 July 2011, the Republic of South Sudan became Africa’s newest state, declaring independence from what had been the largest country in Africa.7

Several international actors, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the United Nations, and the United States, served as guarantors of the CPA. The Assessment and Evaluation Committee (AEC) monitored its implementation and encouraged the parties to adhere to the terms of the agreement.8 Despite the tortuous journey toward implementation of the CPA, prior to the refer-

3. Ibid.
6. The results were released a year later. See Darfur Relief and Documentation Centre, ‘5th population and housing census in Sudan: An incomplete exercise’, Geneva, February 2010.
7. The Sudanese parliament that had passed the referendum law consisted of representatives and backers of the NCP as well as the SPLM. See A. Boya, ‘Interaction of ethnicity, economy and society in separatist movements in Africa’ in Trude Andresen et al. (eds.), Separatism: Culture Counts, Resources Decide (Fantoft, Chr. Michelsen Institute, 1997), 72–105.
8. The AEC was established on 30 October 2005 in accordance with the CPA. Its members consisted of representatives from the unity government (three from the NCP, three from the SPLM), representatives from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and representatives from Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The African Union, the Arab League, the European Union, and the United Nations hold observer status.
endum, significant progress had been made in sustaining the peace, respecting the cease-fire, and maintaining the political arrangements and institutions provided for in the agreement.9 The Khartoum government implemented key aspects of the CPA, though slowly, paving the way for the elections in April 2010 and the referendum in January 2011, both of which were held peacefully. The gradual implementation of the CPA was attributed to a number of reasons, including ‘mistrust between the parties, political maneuvering to consolidate support in contested areas or attempts to gain or maintain political influence in other regions’.10

In the post-independence south, there remain contentious issues that need to be addressed. They are difficult but not beyond resolution. An agreement between the two parties on the unresolved issues is essential in order to defuse tensions, avoid a recurrence of war, and lay a solid foundation for rebuilding the two countries. The two parties must address these outstanding matters soberly, otherwise they have the potential to undermine prospects for peace by sparking instability in several parts of Sudan and unleashing far-reaching implications for the country and the region.11

PRE- AND POST-REFERENDUM ISSUES

The outstanding issues regarding full implementation of the CPA are or were the question of Abyei belonging to Sudan or South Sudan (and the establishment of an effective referendum commission);12 demarcation of the border between the north and south; establishment of a commission for the protection of the rights of non-Muslims in Khartoum;13 various provisions of the security protocol, including the redeployment of forces and the use of Joint Integrated Units (JIU) comprised of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA); popular consultations for South Kordofan and Blue Nile states; and sharing of oil revenues.14

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11. Although the CPA may have resulted in a cessation of hostilities between the north and the south, inter- and intra-tribal conflicts continue in parts of the south while the north remains engaged in conflict in Darfur and insurrections in the east.

12. The South Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) was eventually established, but faced numerous challenges in creating favorable conditions for the referendum, including donors following through with promises of funding for its work preparing the ground for a credible referendum.

13. The commission mandate is to ensure the rights of non-Muslims in accordance with the human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the interim national constitution and the principles set out in the CPA guiding judges and law enforcement agencies in ‘dispensing justice and enforcing law’ in Khartoum. The intent is to prevent non-Muslims from being adversely affected by the application of Islamic law (sharia).

14. The issues listed here are based on the agenda for a ministerial-level session of the IGAD subcommittee on the Sudan held 22 November 2010 and an IGAD summit of the subcommittee on 23 November 2010.
The problems in implementation nurtured mistrust between the two parties and contributed to heightened anxiety, tensions, and insecurity along some border areas (including Abyei), raising fears of chaos and a return to war between the north and the south. Various actors—among them the African Union High Implementation Panel (AUHIP), IGAD, and the United States—attempted to assist the parties in resolving their differences. Negotiations on them began in July 2010, following the development of a framework and structure in an agreement signed the preceding month. In this regard, the AUHIP established working groups on the border, security arrangements, citizenship, economics, and popular consultations for South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. The resolution of these socio-economic, political, and diplomatic issues call for sober dialogue and understanding, but more important, the development of concrete strategies and measures to address them. One cannot draw a line dividing the pre- and post-referendum periods in terms of issues needing to be addressed, because they spilled over into the post-referendum period.

The Abyei Question

During southerners’ referendum on whether to secede, the people of Abyei, in South Kordofan, were supposed to vote on whether to be part of the north or the south, a decision that stood to divide some border communities between two countries. The Abyei vote was put on hold, however, over disagreement about who would be eligible to vote and the composition of a referendum commission. According to the Abyei Protocol, the Messeriya are not considered to be residents of Abyei, but ‘retain their traditional rights to graze cattle and move across Abyei’. The NCP held that the Messeriya, most of whom do not live in Abyei year round, were eligible to vote; the

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15. Wolfram Lacher, ‘Sudan: Negotiating Sudan independence. High stakes in the talks on post-referendum arrangements’, comments made at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, 23 September 2010. A war of words and accusations fueled some fears (and continues to characterize the relationship between the parties). Observers had argued that more time needed to be devoted to logistics and administrative preparations for the referendum and discussing post-referendum issues.

16. The African Union High Implementation Panel was created in 2008 by the Africa Union’s Peace and Security Council when the mandate of the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur was expanded to support the Sudanese parties in the implementation of the CPA and other related political processes.

17. These issues have also been identified in the Framework for Resolving Outstanding Issues Relating to the Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Future Relations of North and South Sudan, agreed upon by the two parties during the discussion under the auspices of AUHIP of 7 November 2010, Khartoum.

18. On 7 November 2010 during negotiations in Khartoum, it was decided that discussion on Abyei would continue at the level of the political principals—President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and First Vice President Salva Kiir Mayardit—and with the participation of the AUHIP. See the statement of the AUHIP on negotiations on the Sudan framework agreement, 15 November 2010, www.gurtong.net/ECM/Editorial/tabid/124/ctl/ArticleView/mid/519/articleId/4362/Statement-of-The-AUHIP-Report-on-Negotiations-on-The-Sudan-Framework-Agreement.aspx.

19. Douglas H. Johnson, a British expert and former member of the Abyei Boundaries Commission, wrote, ‘The Abyei Protocol stated that “the territory is defined as the area of the nine Ngok Dinka chiefdoms transferred to Kordofan in 1905” (Abyei Protocol, article 1.1.2), but the two sides could not agree on what the extent of that territory was’. Douglas H. Johnson, ‘The Abyei Protocol demystified’, Sudan Tribune, 11 December 2007.
SPLM held that the Messeriya had no right to vote in areas assigned to the Ngok Dinka in a ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) on Abyei's boundaries. The Abyei referendum commission will have the final word on who can and cannot vote.

The CPA called for the border between the north and the semi-autonomous south to be demarcated within six months after its signing, but six years later, the task remained unfinished. The impasse raised tensions beyond those surrounding the referenda, raising fears of a renewed north-south conflict. Both sides accused the other of amassing troops along the unofficial border. The issue failed to be resolved in various agreements, including the Abyei Protocol, the PCA ruling, and the series of bilateral agreements between the NCP and the SPLM up to the agreement reached in Kadugli, South Kordofan. U.S.-brokered talks in Ethiopia on Abyei before the proposed referenda failed to bridge differences over the composition of the electoral commission; demarcation of the region's borders had yet to start. The NCP rejected an SPLM proposal for the administration of Abyei by the African Union or the United Nations in the absence of an agreement. The SPLM accused the NCP of holding Abyei hostage and asserted that the two sides should reach a consensus on the Abyei referendum commission. Alternatively, they could agree to transfer the region to the south by presidential decree as part of a deal.

The work of the technical commission mandated with demarcating the Abyei border is yet to commence following threats from the Messeriya, who objected to the Abyei Protocol and the PCA ruling. Messeriya leaders expressed their determination to block the referendum from taking place, vowing to resort to force unless they were allowed to participate, and blamed the SPLM for tensions in Abyei. The Messeriya feared that secession by the south would result in the loss of their grazing rights, and thus their livelihoods, along an internationally recognized north-south border. As noted by the International Crisis Group, the question of Abyei is important because establishing the border “is about not only drawing a line, but also defining the nature and management of that border and the future relations of communities on both sides.”

Other contested border areas between north and south include the northernmost border that separates Renk country in Upper Nile state from White Nile state in the north, the boundary between Unity state to the south and South Kordofan to the north (which is strategic because its demarcation will determine which side controls the oil in Heglig), Bahr al-Ghazal in the south and Darfur in the north and the Bahr al-Arab River (which forms the border between the two states and which defines the border between the westernmost part that divides Western Bahr al-Ghazal and South Darfur).

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20. For the decision by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, see www.pcacpa.org/showpage.asp?page_id=1306 and www.loc.gov/lawweb/servlet/lloc_news?disp3_l205401463_text.
Citizenship

The definition of citizenship in post-referendum Sudan in the wake of the separation vote is obviously crucial in the new political dispensation because it entails addressing rights of entry and residence on both sides of the political divide. It is estimated that 1.5 million to 2 million southern Sudanese will remain to the north of the new border, along with nomadic and semi-nomadic groups, such as the Meseriya, who reside on both sides of the undetermined Abyei boundary. Even before the January referendum, concerns had been raised over the status of southern citizens in the north and northerners in the south. During the period leading up to the vote, the NCP was blamed for causing southern citizens to flee the north in large numbers with assertions that southerners who remained there would lose citizenship rights in south if the region decided to secede from the north. As the referendum drew near, foreign nationals and northerners living in southern Sudan left the region as tensions continued to build. One report noted a survey by the Juba Post in the Custom and Konyo Konyo markets in 2010 that found foreigners closing their businesses for fear of violence because of the deep-seated mistrust between the parties involved.

The question of citizenship not only touches on the issues of crossing borders, residency, and work permits, but also on trade as well as access and control of pasture land and water, which are of course vital to pastoral livelihoods. Furthermore, citizenship is important in determining the enjoyment and exercise of rights. Populations cannot simply relocate in one direction, either south or north, overnight. It is simply not practical, and such exaggerated expectations overlook the issues of property ownership and rights, marriage, and other relationships and ties. The social bonds and inter-dependencies between the south and north can, however, provide an opportunity for maintaining connections between the two countries irrespective of the 2,000-kilometer international border, rather than being a cause for restricting access and movement. As some have advocated, one approach would be to maintain a ‘soft border’ to allow for ease of movement and utilization of resources on both sides of the boundary to possibly avoid conflicts between local groups that could inflame broader confrontations, especially given SPLM suspicions of Arab nomads who supported the north during the years of war.

26. The issues noted here were acknowledged during the AUHIP negotiations on 7 November 2010, so the parties committed themselves to maintaining a ‘soft border’ to permit unhindered economic and social activity and interaction, which will be essential for economic prosperity and harmony between the two areas. The border between north and south Sudan is the longest inter-state boundary in Africa, with a significant proportion of Sudan’s population along it. This border area is also the site of significant movements of nomadic peoples in both directions. See Lacher, ‘Sudan: Negotiating Sudan independence’.
Economic Arrangements

Resolution must be reached on resource and revenue sharing, outstanding debt, and use of the waters of the Nile.

Oil Revenue and Currency. Negotiations on the protocol on wealth sharing were some of the most protracted. The parties eventually signed the agreement in Naivasha, Kenya, on 7 January 2004. It was decided that oil revenues would be shared equally, but this arrangement would conclude at the end of the interim period. In view of the centrality of oil in Sudan, especially along border areas still under contention, a new arrangement must be devised at least for the midterm.27 The border as drawn, locates oil reserves in the south, while the infrastructures for transport and export remain in the north. This symbiotic relationship makes it imperative that the two parties strike a deal.

Closely related to the issue of oil revenue is the question of currency. While the use of a single currency may be the preferred option in the short run, the issue of how the activities of each side will influence the other in the long term remains critical. Links between the central banks involving issues of monetary and fiscal management must therefore be resolved. Another concern is the temporary dollarization of the south’s economy. In the pre-referendum period, the north had reneged on a wealth-sharing agreement by remitting revenue in local currency instead of U.S. dollars, a situation that weakened and undermined the economy of the south. Going forward, the south must have guarantees that the north will respect their deal to remit revenues in dollars. Furthermore, there must be transparency and accountability regarding the amount of oil being produced in the south, the revenue generated by it, and the proportion that goes to each party. In the same vein, the technical and legal aspects of agreements on existing contracts and capital investment in the oil industry must be sorted.

Debt and Assets. Since 1980, Sudan has not been able to service its external debt, which stood at $35.7 billion at the end of 2009. Under western sanctions since 1997, Sudan has in recent years received loans from China, Indian, and some Persian Gulf states. Currently on the table is a proposal by Khartoum that part of its debt burden be shared with the south, a proposal that has sparked intense debate. The south strongly opposes the idea, arguing that the region had not been a beneficiary of recent loans acquired by the north. Even if it agreed to shoulder part of the debt for funds used in the south, the figures would be difficult to calculate.

Nile Waters. The waters of the Nile are strategic not only to the south and the north, but also of course to the other countries that benefit from the river.28 The secession of

27. In regard to the long term, there have been talks about the construction of a pipeline through Kenya and Uganda to the Kenyan coast.
southern Sudan brings the number of upstream countries to ten. The flow and utilization of the Nile among the riparian and upstream states has been governed by agreements from 1929 (signed by the British on behalf of its East African colonies) and 1959 (between Egypt and Sudan) and now the Nile Basin Co-operative Framework Agreement of 2010. The 1929 treaty gave Egypt veto power over any plans for the Nile that it deemed would interfere with the volume of water reaching Egypt. The 1959 agreement entitled Egypt to about 55 billion cubic meters of the water (from a total of some 84 billion cubic meters) and Sudan to about 18.5 billion cubic meters, or 22 percent, of the water, collectively giving them control of more than 90 percent of the Nile’s waters.

The co-operative agreement is the result of about ten years of negotiations through the Nile Basin Initiative, launched by the World Bank in 1999 and involving Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. It went into force in March 2011, when Burundi became the sixth country to sign it. With ratification, the agreement would strip Egypt of its veto powers by allowing countries upstream from Egypt to develop hydro projects. Egypt and Sudan oppose the agreement. In the short term at least, South Sudan must abide by previously reached arrangements given legal precedents that require new countries to comply with such agreements. If a newly created country demands a separate quota, upstream countries will need to put forward a new formula to be taken from Sudan’s supply or develop another system. Although it is assumed the Nile basin countries will recognize the Republic of South Sudan, it is not certain the new state will take its share of Nile water from the north indefinitely. The Naivasha agreement did not touch on Nile waters because of the complexity of the issue and the need to include other beneficiaries in any such discussion. Critical to the south will be guarantees that the use of Nile waters will not be interrupted. For now, the amount allocated to Sudan must be shared between the south and the north, at least until the overall issue of water sharing is resolved by all the countries of the Nile Basin Initiative.

Security Arrangements

One of the key features of the CPA-based security agreement signed in September 2003 was the existence of two forces—the Sudan Armed forces (SAF) in northern Sudan and the SPLA in southern Sudan. The two forces were to be ‘treated equally as Sudan’s National Armed Forces’, but ‘remain separate during the interim period’. Another feature was the creation of Joint Integrated Units (JIU), consisting of soldiers from both the SAF and the SPLA. They were expected to take part in state security throughout Sudan during the interim period leading up to the January ref-

29. The 1959 agreement has been hotly contested by the downstream states, the site of the Nile’s sources. The revised, 2010 agreement, which Egypt has opposed and has yet to sign, alters this arrangement and recognizes the use of Nile waters by other states.
erendum. Had the south voted for unity, the JIU would have become the basis of a unity army, but because it voted to secede, the JIUs are to be dissolved and its members integrated into their respective nation’s forces.

Under the security agreement, SAF members in the south, except for those assigned to JIUs, were to be redeployed north of the 1956 south-north border. SPLA forces in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile not assigned to JIUs would be redeployed south of the border. Each party was to absorb militias that had been widely used during the war, and the south was to integrate southern Sudanese demobilized from the SAF in the south. With South Sudan’s independence, one critical issue regarding the security arrangements is whether JIU members will accept redeployment or opt to return to their place of origin; the majority of them are from the south, and some of them are former members of militias. A further worry involves whether members will try to use their military role to destabilize the situation, particularly along the border. The role of military personnel stationed on both sides of the border is also unclear. The management of security in the south and along the border with the north will be dependent on how the parties address these concerns.

Both parties agreed that regardless of the outcome of the referendum, they would take no action or support any group attempting to undermine the security of the other. Instead, they would continue to cooperate and share information to enhance their capacity to deal with internal and external threats as well as trans-border crime. The parties in the south, however, appear to believe that a renewed confrontation with the north is likely, a perception that informs their thinking on security as well as planning. Authorities in the new republic must establish an effective security presence throughout the south and address the communal and factional conflicts there that threaten to undermine national security.

Kordofan and Blue Nile Popular Consultations

The problems in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states can be traced back to issues of Arab slave trading, Islamization, and Arabization, which compelled the British to introduce the concept of closed districts in these areas to protect the communities living there. They remain the home of mixed, Arab and black, populations and were on the frontline of fighting during the civil war. The CPA accorded a protocol on South Kordofan and Blue Nile, providing for popular consultations to assess the CPA vis-à-vis the ultimate aspirations of the people living there. During the war, some residents of these two states, located north of the 1956 north-south border, sided with

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32. Raymond Kitevu, ‘Build up to the south referendum and beyond: Emerging key concerns and uncertainties’, part of a mission report for IGAD–Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism following a visit to south Sudan, May 2010.
34. See Jason Gluck, ‘Why Sudan’s popular consultation matters’, Special Report 260, United States
the south, having felt or experienced oppression and discrimination by the Khartoum government, while others sided with the government. The parties to the CPA agreed that to resolve the concerns of the peoples of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the two states would be autonomous during the interim period and remain part of the north should the south secede. With secession, the two states could decide whether to accept the CPA as the final peace agreement with Khartoum or attempt to renegotiate their relationship with the Sudanese government. The decision was to have been made by 9 July 2011, the official end of the interim period.

The Popular Consultation Act of 2010, passed by the Sudan’s National Assembly, gives residents of South Kordofan and the Blue Nile states the right to express their opinions on the CPA and the protocol on resolving their disputes as well as present their views through two parliamentary commissions on how satisfied they are with implementation of the CPA. The act states that ‘the provisions of this Act shall apply so as to organize and enact the right of the people of Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile States through their respective democratically elected legislative assemblies to achieve the constitutional, political, administrative and economic aspirations of their people as stipulated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to settle the political disputes in the two states’.35

As the southern referendum drew near, tensions mounted along with a growing sentiment that the CPA had failed to effectively redress the root causes of conflict. Some thought the protocol should allow for self-determination or eventually lead to it; others saw it as a step toward full autonomy; another camp disapproved of the notion of popular consultation because they believed that the CPA should have granted them a chance at independence.36 Critics arguing that the peoples’ aspirations were not being fulfilled noted that the articles of the protocol were continually being violated. As examples, they cited the postponement of elections for governors and legislative councils until a census had been taken, and then, after the census, further delay in determining electoral constituencies and completing voter registries. The NCP was eventually pressured into releasing the results.37 Such delaying tactics led many to question whether the popular consultation and election of assemblies—with the authority to form a commission to assess progress on fulfilling the people’s aspirations—would ever take place. In another apparent violation of the protocol, these areas were heavily militarized by SAF deployments.

Institute of Peace, November 2010, www.usip.org/files/resources/SR260%20-%20Why%20Sudan's%20Popular%20Consultation%20%20Matters.pdf. Gandul Ibrahim Gandul identifies one form of popular consultation as ‘public deliberation by the people making decisions as electoral body and as legislator to exercise a form of political participation’. He notes that another form of popular consultation is the referendum, which is ‘a direct vote in which an entire electorate is asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal which may result in the adoption of a specific government policy or proposal’. See Gandul Ibrahim Gandul, ‘Popular consultations: Recipe for a new conflict in the Nuba Mountains’, SudaneseOnline.com, n.d., www.sudaneseonline.com/en/publish/Articles_and_Analyses_12/The_Popular_Consultation_Recipe_for_a_new_conflict_in_the_Nuba_Mountains_By_Dr_Gandul_Ibrahim_Gandul_PhD.shtml. Also see Kwaje, ‘The Sudan peace process from Machakos to Naivasha’, 104.

37. Ibid.
THE NORTH-SOUTH CONFLICT, DARFUR, AND THE ARAB UPRISING

An independent South Sudan will likely have some effect on the Darfur situation. At the height of the civil war, the SPLM and NCP supported different movements in Darfur, through proxies, to undermine the other’s efforts. There are growing concerns of a possible exacerbation of the security situation in Darfur through a rekindling of the alignment between southern Sudanese leaders and Darfur rebels. They are thus not included in the discussions between the south and the north. This is particularly possible given the slow pace of the Doha negotiations against the backdrop of frequent clashes between government forces and rebels from the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Movement.

Occasional fighting between the Sudanese government and rebels in Darfur as well as tensions along the south’s border have exacerbated the security situation in Darfur. It is thus feared that any armed incident along the north-south border could extend into Darfur. In late 2010, the SPLA accused militias associated with the north of provocative actions aimed at causing a breach of the cease-fire between the two sides. In a similar vein, the north accused the south of aiding JEM rebels who clashed with government forces near al-Meirem, which abuts Bahr al-Ghazal in the south.

The ongoing clamor for change in the Arab world was expected, but what surprised many was where it began—in the town of Sidi Bouzid, in Tunisia. Even more intriguing was the person at the center of it—Mohamed Bouazizi, a vegetable seller whose self-immolation led many to regard him as a hero and martyr across the Arab world. After the protests and demonstrations that forced President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali to flee Tunisia and his Egyptian counterpart, Hosni Mubarak, to surrender power, demands for more freedom, democracy, and good governance have spread in varying degrees to Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. The demands of the protesters contain one powerful message: 'people—and particularly the young—can no longer be kept in ignorance of their entitlements; the right to live without fear of oppression, to freely express themselves and to listen to the uncensored opinions of others; to thrive personally and professionally in an atmosphere of freedom, justice, and peace; to enjoy dignity and equality under the law.' The Arab leaders under siege appeared to symbolize 'everything people could no longer endure—joblessness, cronism, corruption, and the politics of intimidation and exclusion,' along with harsh, arbitrary, and prolonged detentions under their personalized rule.

Whether developments in the Arab world will significantly affect Sudan remains unknown, but it should be noted that following the successful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, Sudanese authorities crushed attempts to hold protests there. For example, at Ahlia University on 31 January one student was beaten to death and officials closed a number of universities and deployed forces in case of reprisals and additional violence.
protests. At Khartoum University, some 300 students forced their way past police forces to emerge from the campus chanting, ‘Revolution against dictatorship!’ The government tried to silence media outlets reporting on the protests.\textsuperscript{43}

For a number of reasons, ranging from political malaise to a lack of access to the internet, Sudan may not experience protests with the impact of those in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, or Syria.\textsuperscript{44} On the other hand, however, the issues at the center of the Arab protests are also present in Sudan, so the possibility of similar grassroots revolution cannot be completely dismissed. The majority of Sudanese are also frustrated by restraints on speech and association, violations of human rights, poverty, lack of opportunity, and a sense of hopelessness.\textsuperscript{45} The situation may be worsened by spiraling prices and inflation along with reductions in subsidies on petroleum products and sugar.\textsuperscript{46}

It is believed that some extremists within the NCP are blaming Bashir for allowing south Sudan to secede, and it seems only to be a matter of time before this issue, among others, splits the party. If this happens, it is likely that more groups will join in the call for change; with the question of Darfur still unresolved, such a scenario may be too much to bear. The entry of the United Nations into the Libyan crisis, with coalition partners seemingly aiding the opposition forces, must have sent shivers through the ruling elite in Khartoum. The coalition enforcement of a ‘no-fly’ zone in Libya seems possible to replicate in Sudan, if desired. The frosty relationship that Sudan has had with western powers and links to al-Qaida and other such groups does not help Khartoum’s position.

\textbf{SOUTH SUDAN: BEYOND INDEPENDENCE}

Apart from the outstanding issues arising from the CPA, the Republic of South Sudan must also now direct its energies and resources inward, focusing on rebuilding after bearing the brunt of civil war. The leadership should exploit the country’s rich diversity, history, geography, people, religions, and cultures to create a united nation devoid of marginalization and discrimination on the basis of tribe, religion, class, and gender—that is, the very ills that its citizens fought against for decades. A promising future requires establishing solidarity on the basis of shared values, vision, customs, and institutions.

Lack of good governance and democratization have been factors breeding and inflaming conflicts in almost all the countries that have experienced instability in Africa. Conflict in South Sudan can be minimized if an environment that encourages political participation in the economic, political, and social life of its people is nurtured. Freedom of association, assembly, and speech must be the pillars on which South


\textsuperscript{46} Weston, ‘Egyptian revolution reverberates throughout Arab world’. 
Sudan’s governance system is developed. An attempt to divide, exclude, or marginalize certain people will create hostilities between the rulers and the governed, which will foster discontent and create a climate for an eruption of conflict.

The issue of the rule of law is also related to the question of governance. To avoid mistakes made elsewhere in Africa, South Sudan must develop a system of governance in which every citizen is equal under the law, not only on paper, but also in practice. The country must try to develop a constitutional state where human rights and civil liberties are respected. Linked to the question of democracy, good governance, and multiparty politics are general elections. Since the 1990s, a number of African countries, such as Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, have witnessed varying levels of election-related violence. South Sudan cannot be an exception if its rulers fail to put into place structures that will ensure a level playing field for competitive politics.

In the post–cold war era, it has come to the fore that electoral systems of governance undergirded by the concept of simple majority rule have failed to nurture democracies like those in mature countries and has instead created divisions along sectarian lines. Political realities in some countries may require the formation of unity governments to accommodate and include electoral losers in the nations’ management. In other words, South Sudan must defy the reality in Africa that losing in an election means remaining in the cold until the next election, a situation that polarizes and raises political temperatures that sometimes lead to conflict.

Refugees and internally displaced persons are old as well as contemporary security threats that South Sudan will have to confront. Decades of devastating civil war resulted in the displacement of large numbers of people. Although conflict has ended, the deprivations that it engendered, such as hunger and malnutrition, unsafe water, lack of basic medical care, and inadequate clothing and housing will continue to have a devastating impact. Unless displaced persons and other refugees are resettled and can resume normal lives, the stability of South Sudan will remain a source of concern. Landmines and unexploded ordinances are another challenge flowing from decades of war and conflict.

South Sudan is joining the community of states at a time when the so-called new security challenges are gradually replacing the traditional military threats that emanated from a determined adversary. Given the adversarial relationship between north and south in Sudan, the new republic will remain wary of provocative and military posturing by the north. Like other countries in the region, South Sudan will also face nonmilitary risks and vulnerabilities that transcend international borders, such as organized crime (human and drugs trafficking) and armed informal groups

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47. Emphasizing the importance of political, social, and economic inclusion of all citizenry in the affairs of a country, the UN Commission on Human Security has noted that ‘the outright exclusion and discriminatory practices against people and communities—often on racial, religious, gender or political grounds—makes citizenship ineffective. Without it people cannot attain human security’, Commission on Human Security, Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People (New York, UN Commission on Human Security, 2003), 133.


49. Although organized crimes may not be an immediate ill that the new country will have to face, it is important that effective legislation, institutions, monitoring surveillance, and enforcement mechanisms are put in place to deal with them when they occur. This must be accompanied by building the capacity of the
and other diseases, unemployment, hunger, illiteracy, and globalization. Among threatening environmental hazards are climate change, drought, floods, locust, maritime security and piracy, Nile water resource issues, soil degradation, and rising levels of pollution.

Africa is a source, transit point, and market for human smuggling and trafficking, and South Sudan will not be exempted, especially given the past history of slavery. The situation there will be compounded by the country’s porous borders. With limited or underdeveloped customs, migration, police, and intelligence systems, South Sudan is likely to be a soft target for traffickers. Corruption facilitates illegal access to documents and unbridled individualization, particularly in the context of urban growth. These underworld dealings mean that South Sudan must develop an effective security architecture to counter it.

Where livelihoods are based mainly on climate-dependent resources and environment, the effect of climate change stands to be disproportionately severe. In Sudan, this situation could be exacerbated by a lack of capacity to adapt and cope with the adverse effects of climate variability. Related to climate are issues of drought, hunger, and famine; of note, IGAD, to which South Sudan has applied, superseded the Inter-governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), which was established to deal with recurrences of these problems.

South Sudan should not fall into the trap of poor or no planning for urban infrastructure development and one day find that all key government services are located in one city without room for expansion or new development. Indeed, South Sudan has the advantage of being able to learn lessons from the developed and developing worlds and create its own development paradigm that takes into account its own realities.

While tackling the above challenges, South Sudan must also ensure that the thousands of small arms in the hands of civilians are rendered irrelevant. While disarmament is a long-term process, the immediate strategy must be to ensure that those in possession of arms do not make a living from criminal activities. Community tensions must be assuaged, and groups of armed militias dismantled and integrated into civilian life.

CONCLUSION

The January 2011 referendum on the secession of southern Sudan marked the climax of the peace agreement signed in 2005 ending the civil war between north and south. In the wake of an overwhelming vote for succession, followed by the declaration of South Sudan as an independence state on 9 July 2011, the two parties to the CPA continue to have an obligation to resolve their outstanding issues on border demarcation, citizenship, and security and economic arrangements. The agreed-upon framework


for negotiations should be respected unless revisions or amendments are in the general interest of advancing the talks. The Abyei question, if not handled carefully, could lead to a resumption of war. Resolving the aspirations of South Kordofan and Blue Nile is bound to be a protracted endeavor and also has the potential of reigniting conflict between the two parties. Concerns related to sharing Nile River water will require diplomacy involving negotiations with other countries.

Negotiations between the two sides on arrangements and guarantees, including border management and cross-border relations, will be affected by such matters as citizenship, national resources, economic cooperation, grazing rights, and security. The leaderships of the NCP and the SPLM have repeatedly stated that a return to war is not an option and that dialogue is the only way to address the issues flowing from the CPA. The same holds for post-referendum issues. Indeed, it must be emphasized that the hard-won peace after more than two decades of devastating war is not subject to compromise.

A renewed north-south Sudan conflict has the potential to spill over into the Darfur region. The proxy-war element of the Darfur conflict means that old relations might be revived if conflicts and tension build between the two countries. Furthermore, the desire for change sweeping countries around the Arab world could affect Sudan, but to what extent is pure conjecture. The heavy-handedness of security forces in suppressing protests early on probably makes radical change in Sudan unlikely in the near future.

The issues pending from the CPA are few but difficult. They are intertwined and should be addressed simultaneously and holistically. While it will take some time for all these concerns to be resolved, ongoing negotiations and some progress on these fronts should lessen the potential of a regression to war, which would have serious implications for the region. The agreed-upon framework for negotiations represents the best chance for resolving the remaining issues.
Landownership and Gender Conflict in Anglophone Cameroon: A Legal Perspective

Sone Patience Munge

Recurrent conflicts involving gender and landownership in Anglophone Cameroon have their roots in customary practices and the discriminatory application of statutory laws. Although women have gone to court and have won the right to administer land, a culture of acknowledging their right to do so is yet to take hold. In some instances, statutory law continues to be disregarded in favor of customary practices. The institution of land reform and implementation of mechanisms of international law could address the region’s land-related gender conflicts.

Competition over landownership can be found in almost every country in sub-Saharan Africa. Where it occurs, power, wealth, and survival are measured by ownership and control of land, a vital resource needed for sustenance.1 Gender equality in terms of landownership has been a contentious and perennial problem in Anglophone Cameroon, making legal protection for this activity imperative.2 Landownership is often the primary cause of conflict between individuals at the family and community levels.3 Given that Cameroonians’ survival depends on access to land, struggle for control of it engages people at all rungs of society.4

Based on the socio-economic significance of land, it is not surprising that social or ethnic conflicts over power are occasioned by inequitable control over land, usually along ethnic and social lines and between men and women.5 In recent times, the latter

3. Ibid., 172.
4. K. Havnevik et al., African Agriculture and the World Bank: Development or Impoverishment? (Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute, 2007), 33.

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conflicts have involved state elites competing for ownership with women, who are often pushed to peripheral lands. In regions of Anglophone Cameroon, such as Bui, Fako, Meme, and Mezam to name a few, indigenous elites and bureaucrats use their positions and wealth to amass large tracts of land, on which they establish cattle ranches and plantations or construct buildings and business centers. In many cases, their activities deprive rural women of parcels of land on which their subsistence hinges.

The women affected by the above dynamic often must walk long distances in search of farmland or risk encroaching on grazing lands, which brings them into conflict with pastoralists. In some areas, women constitute the majority of the population involved in the agricultural sector. Denying a woman land hinders her productivity and development. Not only does it hamper her ability to grow food, it also prevents her from using land as collateral to access credit from financial institutions that would then perhaps enable her to purchase larger tracts on which to farm, improve her overall welfare and that of her family, and partake in community-based activities. In Cameroon, local traditions strongly influence the control of land and invariably benefit males at the expense of women.

Anglophone Cameroon is a heterogeneous region home to more than 250 ethnic groups, each with its own cultural practices. Despite this cultural diversity, when it comes to issues of women and customary land tenure, they are homogeneous. The country’s land administrators continue to heed customary rules of ownership that discriminate against women, although it is contrary to the constitution and statutory law. Some state courts have ruled in women’s favor when they have sought to administer lands in situations in which customary law would deny them. Despite these victories, and Cameroon’s obligations under international law to ensure equal rights, including the right to own property, women’s landownership continues to fuel gender conflict.

CUSTOMARY LAW

Customary laws on land vary from region to region in Cameroon. Among most tribes in Anglophone Cameroon, located in the west, land is considered a communally owned property. Property rights are vested in the hands of heads of families, who are invariably male and answerable only to chiefs, who control the land on behalf of the community. Individuals in the community have only occupancy rights to land. Under the customary system, land is highly valued because it is an important source of wealth and power. In addition to having a resource role in society, land is also con-
sidered to be a bridge between the living and the dead, that is, a connection to ancestral spirits. Thus, it plays a ritualistic role, which is the purview of men.11

Under customary rules, the right to control land is primarily based on the privilege of being a member of a family or community. Women, whether married or unmarried, have little or no control over land. Their access to it is only derivative. That is, they gain possession of land through their patrikin or their status as wives. Maintaining these relationships with male figures often determines the duration of a woman being able to remain on the land. Women are often denied the right to inherit land by their family, and in the case of marriage, land that a husband buys jointly with his wife cannot be divided between them should they divorce. The death of a husband would also lead to a woman losing access to land.

A woman’s relationship to land is limited to its use for farming, not ownership, because women are regarded as lacking the capacity to make major decisions about land use. This is also one of the reasons they cannot inherit or acquire or manage it under customary tradition.12 This sexist structure and asymmetric control over the resource greatly reduces women’s potential to exercise land rights and in other areas. Regardless, women, not surprisingly, are rarely in a position of having enough money to afford to buy land. Out of a handful of female workers, the overwhelming majority of them are involved in low-wage jobs, such as maids and secretaries. The prolonged process for land registration is costly and full of administrative bottlenecks, and land is often expensive. For all these reasons, landownership is alien to most women in Anglophone Cameroon.

The customary practice of restricting women’s land rights pre-dates the colonial period. The colonialists introduced various land laws that did not address existing gender-inequitable ownership customs in the territory. Rather, their agenda was the expropriation of land to further their economic interests. Nothing changed in respect to protecting or extending land rights for women, hence, the customary practice of restricting women from controlling land persisted into the post-colonial era.13 Under customary law before and after colonial rule, women were considered to be property.14 This concept received judicial backing in Achu v. Achu.15 In this case, the Bamenda court of appeals denied a woman’s right to own property by ruling that a married woman is herself property and thus cannot claim property in a divorce: Once a bride price has been paid by a man to a woman’s family, the woman is given to the man for marriage, and it is on this basis that she is considered property. Because property cannot own property, a woman had no rights to the land of her husband upon
divorce or his death, even if she had contributed to its acquisition during the marriage. Other judges have viewed women as minors, who are incapable of owning and controlling property. Promoting male domination in controlling property fosters gender inequality, worsening women’s status and negatively affecting their roles in production, reproduction, and participation in the community.

The Supreme Court’s decision in the landmark case *Zamcho Florence Lum v. Chibikom Peter Fru* charted a new course for customary land law. Zamcho Florence Lum, a married woman, applied to administer her late father’s estate in the Mankon customary court. Her brother Chibikom Peter Fru and four others fiercely challenged her on the ground that as a married woman, she now belonged to another family rather than the one into which she was born. Mankon customary law upheld Fru’s position, so his sister was excluded from inheriting her father’s property and *a fortiori* could not be the administrator of the estate. The Bamenda court of appeals affirmed the decision, but the Supreme Court overturned it, holding that the customary principle that denies a female the right to inherit her father’s property or to be declared next of kin is contrary to the Cameroon constitution. A preambular provision prohibits discrimination in all forms, stating, ‘the human person without distinction as to race, religion, sex or belief, possesses inalienable and sacred rights... All persons shall have equal rights and obligations. The state shall provide all its citizens with the conditions necessary for their development’.

**STATUTORY LAW**

The constitution and the 1974 land ordinance are the main governing laws stipulating equal landownership rights in Cameroon. The preamble of the constitution defines ownership of land as ‘the right guaranteed every person by law to use, enjoy and dispose of his or her property’. This means that with ownership, one’s security over land is guaranteed, and the authority of the owner over the land cannot be challenged. One of the primary aims of the 1974 land reform was to enhance development and self-empowerment by facilitating ownership under state protection. In theory, everyone would be able to acquire and exploit tracts in any part of the country free from local customary norms and interpersonal conflicts, thus providing for greater certainty of title.

The spirit of the statutory laws demands that everyone is entitled to the guarantee of ownership, contrary to what obtains in Anglophone Cameroon, where statistics...
reveal that only a very small percentage of women have access to landownership. This situation challenges the intention of the relevant statutory provisions, including gender-neutral laws safeguarding equal ownership of land. It is apparent that laws alone are not enough to solve the problems of unequal landownership in the region.

Based on studies by the Regional Delegations of State Property and Land Tenure in the Anglophone region, from January 1980 to November 2010, out of a total of 12,224 applications received for land certificates, 10,327, or 84.5, were from men. Women submitted 1,431 applications, or 11.7 percent, and 466 applications, or 3.8 percent, were for joint ownership (spouses, establishments, etc.). Of the 11,796 land certificates granted within that period, a total of 10,216, or 86.6 percent, were issued in men’s names, while 1,128, or 9.6 percent, of the land certificates were issued in women’s name. Four hundred fifty-two certificates, or 3.8 percent, were issued for joint ownership. Fewer women (1,431) applied for land certificates than men; among them, 303 women were denied; of the men (10,327) who applied, only 111 were denied. These figures demonstrate clearly that the gender inequality of access to land. Quite apart from graphically demonstrating the profound challenges women face in becoming landowners, the statistics confirm that the gender-neutrality of the land laws are not protecting women, who constitute 52 percent of Cameroon’s total population.21 The customary practices that disadvantage women apparently continue to determine rules of ownership.

Section 1(1) of the 1974 land ordinance states that ‘the State guarantees to all natural persons and corporate bodies having landed property, the right to use, enjoy and dispose of such land.’ This provision perpetuates to an extent the unequal distribution of land between men and women created by customary law. Although the provision appears to be gender neutral, it is in practice pro-male because men dominated landholding before the enactment of the law. Furthermore, the Land Consultative Board, which oversees land registration and conflict resolution, is dominated by males, which likely affects the decisions reached by the board in settling land disputes between men and women.

**MARRIAGE AND PROPERTY**

In the Anglophone region, a woman does not own property while in a marriage. All her property, and even that acquired by her before marriage, is controlled solely by her husband. Although the wife has a right to use the property, it is exercised with her husband’s consent. The control women have usually concerns its use. As Patricia Kameri-Mbote notes, ‘This subordination of women socially and economically renders them less competitive than they should be under the current economic structuring of society.’22

The prevalence of gender-based land conflict depends in part on the type of marriage and marriage contract entered into.23 Couples often acquire family property

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21. See the 2005 national census conducted by the Ministry of Territorial Administration.
22. P. Kameri-Mbote, ‘Gender issues in land tenure under customary law’ (available online).
23. Section 49 of Civil Status Registration Ordinance no. 81-2 of 29 June 1981 states that the marriage certificate must specify whether the union is monogamous or polygamous and whether there will be jointly held or separately held property.
with the financial and moral support of the wife, but, as noted, the property is then controlled and owned by the husband. Conflict over landownership is common in polygamous marriages, in which women hardly have a say in the acquisition of property. When a husband dies, the women contest who has control over the property, but the deceased husband’s relatives often challenge them.24 In most polygamous marriages, a party can only claim real ownership of property if he or she buys or registers it in his or her name.

In monogamous marriages, any piece of land bought by a husband or a wife belongs to both of them. If one of them dies, the surviving partner takes sole possession if they had opted to hold joint property in their marriage certificate. Also, the two parties are entitled to equal shares in the property in the case of a dispute, such as in a divorce.25 If in a dispute one of the parties claims to have spent more than the other in the acquisition of the property, the other party is entitled at least to one-third of the property, taking into consideration his or her direct or indirect contribution to the acquisition of the property.26 It is often assumed that even if a woman had not worked outside the home, she effectively worked as a domestic, thus sparing her husband from spending money on a servant and therefore saving him money. Kang Nsume v. Kang Nsume considered a wife’s contribution in the acquisition of family properties and ordered the lone house to be sold and a two-fifths share given to the wife.27

In regard to community property, conflict might arise if, for example, a woman buys and registers land in her maiden name in a bid to safeguard property for her family, without her husband’s consent. A husband discovering such a situation would likely feel a sense of betrayal that might lead to conflict and dissolution of the marriage on the grounds of grave and weighty misconduct. To men, female ownership of landed property is seen as the most glaring manifestation of a woman attempting to maintain an independent identity.28 Most men would consider it reckless to marry a woman who can command material welfare and economic muscle that would allow her to opt out of the union without undue hardship.29 This type of attitude tends to inhibit land purchase and registration by married women in their names. Some women who succeeded in registering private estates have ended up with broken homes.

The monitoring committee for the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) observes, ‘When a woman cannot enter into a contract at all, or have access to financial credit, or can do so only with her husband’s or a male relative’s concurrence or guarantee, she is denied legal autonomy. Any such restriction [preventing] her from holding property as the sole owner . . . seriously limits the woman’s ability to provide for herself and her dependents’.30 The committee

24. V. Ngassa, Gender Approach to Court Actions (Yaoundé, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1999).
25. Body Lawson v. Body Lawson, HCE/128MC/86. In this case, a court held that each spouse should have ownership of property purchased in their names. Where the names of the two spouses appear on the title deed, effect will normally be given to their joint interest.
26. Ngassa, Gender Approach to Court Actions, 76.
29. Ibid.
also points out that the right to own, manage, enjoy, and dispose of property is essential to women's right to enjoy financial independence. With regard to the distribution of property upon the dissolution of a marriage or the death of a relative, CEDAW reinforces the importance of equality: 'Any law or custom that grants men a right to a greater share of property at the end of a marriage or de facto relationship, or the death of a relative, is discriminatory and will have a serious impact on a woman's practical ability to divorce her husband, to support herself or her family and to live in dignity as an independent person'.\(^{31}\) The CEDAW committee's observations perfectly capture the situation of women's relationship to land in Anglophone Cameroon.

**INHERITANCE**

In most families or tribes in Anglophone Cameroon, it is not uncommon for issues of inheritance to lead to conflict between the children of the deceased and other family members. In most tribes, the customary law governing inheritance has a patrilineal bias.\(^{32}\) Most often, the property of the deceased is passed, in order of preference, to the first son or the most cherished son, the brothers (excluding wives), and sisters and other female relations. Where there are no surviving male relatives, land rights revert to the community.\(^{33}\) The rationale for this restriction is that if women are allowed to acquire land or property through inheritance, it will become part of their marital homes, thereby enriching another family instead of their biological family.\(^{34}\)

The evolution of legal principles has empowered statutory courts to curb the discriminatory practices that have violated the equal rights of women and men to inherit property.\(^{35}\) This is illustrated in *George Evay v. Grace Evay*, in which the respondent's application for a grant of letters of administration to inherit the property of her late father, who had died intestate, was opposed under Bakweri customary law on the ground that a female child could not inherit her father's property.\(^{36}\) The Buea court of appeals dismissed the customary ruling as being repugnant to natural justice under the statutory rules governing inheritance. In *Sarah Afumbe v. Johnson Libatu Jasset*, the same appellate court in Buea reversed the decision of the Bamboko customary court giving the deceased's inheritance to his brother rather than the deceased's wife and children.\(^{37}\) The court's ruling led to the deceased man's daughter inheriting his property. Despite decisions by the Supreme Court and lower courts, the Anglophone Cameroonian male tends to continue to believe in the sanctity of patriarchal rules of

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31. Ibid., para. 27.
32. Some tribes allow women to inherit property. For example, rules of land inheritance the Bikom tribe, in the Boyo division in North West, are matrilineal. Usually the sister of the deceased inherits the property. This is also the practice in the Menchum division.
35. Section 27 of Southern Cameroon High Court Law of 1955 stated, 'the High Court shall observe, and enforce the observance of every native law and custom which is not repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience nor incompatible with any law for the time being in force in England'.
inheritance that prohibit women from accessing property upon the death of their parents and husbands.

When the husband dies in a polygamous union, the right to inherit the property goes to the wife, most probably to the first wife unless the wives agree otherwise. In the case of Noumbissie Nee Wanji Mary v. Nganjui John, Noumbissie Albert Fange died intestate and left behind two widows and six children. The respondent, the paternal uncle of the deceased, applied to administer the property and family of the deceased. The appellant, the first widow, opposed his application at the high court of Kumba, but the uncle succeeded in obtaining the letters of administration. The court of appeals reversed the decision of the Kumba court in favor of the surviving wife, based on the Non-Contentious Probate Rules of 1976. The judge in arriving at the decision also took into consideration the preambular provisions of the 2008 constitution prohibiting discrimination against females on grounds of sex with respect to inheritance of property.

CATTLE GRAZIERS AND MALE ELITES

In the North West and South West regions, women acquiring and controlling land have sometimes come into conflict with cattle graziers over land use. The Fulani began raising cattle in Anglophone Cameroon in 1919. Although they were viewed as ‘strangers and dangerous land grabbers’ with no real status as citizens in the community, the Fulani were seen as useful clients, willing to pay taxes in cows and cash, which benefited the local economy. Local chiefs welcomed them.

It was later documented that the people who paid the price for cattle grazing were women cultivators, who had to compete with the graziers for the same fertile lands; there were abundant pastures for cattle, but they often trespassed on farmlands and ate crops. This put women in a difficult situation, especially as they could not rely on their husbands or local chiefs, let alone cattle control officers, for relief. The institutional and legal mechanisms for settling disputes did not favor women. The women opted for confrontational tactics, resorting to violence when cattle trespassed and damaged their crops.

39. By virtue of this statute, there is no distinction between male and female for the purpose of inheritance. It also states that the estate of the deceased devolves to family members in the following order: surviving spouse; biological children; parents; brothers and sisters; half-brothers and half-sisters; grandparents; uncles and aunts; and cousins.
41. P. M. Kaberry, ‘Report on farmer-grazier relations and the changing pattern of agriculture in Nsaw’, 17 April 1959, Buea Archives, file Ab 17(10). Kaberry visited the North West province during the periods 1945 to 1948 and 1958–1959. She identified a genuine problem and that financial (taxes) and economic considerations militated against the women.
42. For example, in 1981, women in Wum, Menchum division, organized themselves and burned down the huts of Fulani graziers who trespassed on their farmlands. The authorities responded by sending in the police and gendarmes, who shot and killed a number of women. See Fisiy, Power and Privilege, 250.
Males, headed by the fon (chief or king), traditionally controlled the land on behalf of indigenes, but often these customary guardians monopolized the communal lands and sometimes sold it for personal gain without the consent of community members. In one case, in Big Babanki village, in the Ngoketunja division, the fon, without consulting the indigenes, used his position to sell communal land to Fulani graziers, who were comparatively wealthier than the local inhabitants. The selling of communal land rendered the villagers landless, denying the indigenes, especially women, access to farmland for family and community sustenance. The indigenes rioted against the fon, killing him, because he had misused the community land, on which lives hinged, for his personal interest. The attack on the fon, supported by women, can be seen as an indication that women have limits to male monopolization of major decision making concerning land. The Big Babanki incident can also be interpreted an insistence on correcting obvious legal wrongs, including through the enactment (or enforcement) of more equitable laws that might curb future conflicts.

Land conflicts between indigenes and the cattle graziers were further complicated by the emergence of a new class of local cattle breeders. A segment of male indigenes used their wealth and political positions to amass land and adopted Fulani grazing practices to breed cattle. Unlike the Fulani, however, they tended to seize the best land tracts and assert family claims to the land. This further marginalised women, who are often pushed to the outskirts in the search for arable land. Most often, they manage to find access only to arid land, which hampers food production and viable livelihoods. Why is there no provision under the 1974 land ordinance allowing women to register in their names the farmland to which they have had usufruct rights? Perhaps because women have only land-use rights. An attempt by a woman to register land might lead to eviction by the landlord or local outraged males because they think such an act threatens family property. Thus women have been caught between cultural restrictions that do not allow them to own land and state land reforms that encourage land registration.

GENDER AND LANDOWNERSHIP: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

Land conflicts in Anglophone Cameroon can be viewed through the prism of power relations rooted in negotiation theory on landownership. K. Izumi asserts that the ability to negotiate rests mostly in people’s socio-economic and political power, in this case to acquire property. In such situations, some benefit more than others, and more often than not, males get the better part of the bargain. These struggles usually involve the processes of exclusion, deepening social divisions, and gender conflict in the society. The above notion of landownership is strongly linked to empowerment.

44. Most families restrict women from owning land for fear that they woman may transfer the land to her new family upon marriage, thus preventing her biological family from benefiting from it because the land will be under the husband’s control.
For a woman to secure an equal position in a community through landownership, she needs to be assertive, informed, and have a sense of self-worth that facilitates her activities in the society. These qualities may help her challenge unbalanced gender-based power relations, which often exist within and outside the family circle in regard to ownership. The case of Anglophone Cameroon raises the issue of whether the rules of landownership are amenable to the principles of power relations in form and practice. This touches on the question of whether amendment of land laws can address the gender land conflict in the region.

As noted earlier, the preamble of Cameroon’s constitution affirms the state’s commitment to provide conditions that facilitate and empower all its citizens, a commitment also required under international law. The right to own land can enhance sustainable peace and justice in a society along with well-being. Cameroonian property law, which regards landownership as a human right, is theoretically consistent with international law. Cameroon has ratified many international human rights statutes that enjoin equal ownership and enjoyment of land as a natural right in the country. In particular, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women require the government of Cameroon to enforce an equitable land management regime.

Article 11 (1) of the ICESCR imposes an obligation on parties to recognize 'the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, . . . and that, state parties should take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of the right. Owning land (or having access to it for sustenance) is often a requirement for attaining a humane living standard, so for a state to fulfill its obligations under ICESCR, it would appear to need to ensure equal rights to landownership. Women with ownership rights can not only enhance their productivity, but can also use land as collateral to secure loans from financial institutions to improve their well-being and increase their participation in the human and physical development of their communities. The provision was intended to make it a duty of the state to enforce legitimate socio-economic policies under their local jurisdictions. Lum v. Fru is a case in point of the successful application of the state’s duty to create a humane regime for the attainment of land. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which monitors adherence to the ICESCR, calls on states to take measures to provide people the minimum, core standard of their basic needs. This obliges the government to protect the welfare of its citizens. Moreover, the convention regards landownership as a basic concept that may be deployed to safeguard some of the fundamental rules attached to it.

47. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979). By virtue of Article 45 of the Cameroon Constitution, all duly ratified international human rights treaties are incorporated into domestic law, and in case of a dispute between the local statute and international law, the latter prevails.
48. The decision in this case was germane to Catherine Makebe v. Chambo née Wongibe Rosemary Banila, BCA/10/2001.
CEDAW equally promotes a universal humane property regime protected by international human rights law. It requires states to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations. In particular, Article 16, ensures 'the same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property'. The CEDAW monitoring committee asserts that women’s property rights should be safeguarded by the state because ownership is critical for women’s ‘ability to earn a livelihood and provide adequate housing and nutrition for her and the family.’

The government of Cameroon is duty bound to take action against discrimination by individuals and to establish adequate legal protection for equal rights for men and women. This treaty establishes a regime that insists on general and independent protection of women against discrimination in all circumstances and protection of the right to access land and landed property on the basis of equality during and after marriage. Cameroon ratified CEDAW in 1981, but the values incorporated in it are not yet fully entrenched in the country’s judicial culture because of the strong hold of customary norms that restrict a woman’s right to own land as freely as a man.

The African Protocol on the Rights of Women strengthens the legal status of the principle of gender equality in regard to the right to own property embedded in the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights. Hence, given that some women’s lives, particularly those in rural areas, rely upon land, it is a core obligation of the state to facilitate and safeguard landownership for them as set out in the treaties discussed here.

CONCLUSION

Inequitable application of the law is the foundation of intermittent gender conflict involving landownership in Anglophone Cameroon. From pre-colonial times and into the post-colonial era, customary practices have resulted in women experiencing persistent restrictions to landownership, unlike their male counterparts. Despite the adoption of statutory laws protecting equal rights to ownership of land, gender remains an issue. As in other arenas, the institution of laws alone is not adequate to safeguard access to land and therefore peace, justice, and sustainable development.

The government of Cameroon should establish structures that ensure the equitable management and ownership of this vital resource, including, if necessary, further amendment of its laws. Gaps in the law and between legal institutions should be filled through reforms that will lead to the rational allocation of land. There is no coherent domestic legislation regulating issues of succession in Anglophone Cameroon. Sometimes the statutes from English Common Law governing succession are not re-

51. Article 2 of CEDAW provides that states take ‘all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women’.
52. See Articles 14 and 16.
flective of or compatible with the aspirations of today's Cameroon. Though these laws are on their face gender neutral, there remains a need to enact and enforce a unified code regulating issues of succession that take into account current local specificities. In addition, the adoption of dialogue, mediation, and conciliation by all stakeholders in landownership disputes is vital for conflict resolution, prevention, and management, and in the long and short terms to build a culture of sustainable peace within families and regions.

Reforms are needed to ensure female spouses the right to control ‘family land’—the place of residence or principal source of income or sustenance for the family—as true co-owners. Co-ownership would increase women’s access to land, providing them some measure of independence and financial security to sustain their families. Adequate legal measures should be taken to ensure that men and women have equal rights to land before marriage, during marriage, and after its dissolution.

The government should also institute a land fund to assist women in acquiring deeded interest in land. This can be done using lands surrendered to the government. This approach is cheaper and more cost-effective than procuring land through the private market. Also, the government could encourage financial institutions to issue loans to women at reduced interest rates. This would enable women to secure land on their own and reinforce their dignity and sense of empowerment. Education of women about land rights and sensitization of all the stakeholders in land management should also be encouraged. Such measures could ameliorate the current inequitable patterns of ownership between men and women and help all stakeholders understand that access to land on an equal basis will help foster justice, peace, and sustainable development in their region.

54. Possible examples of such received English laws include the Wills Act of 1837, the Married Women’s Property Act of 1882, the Judicature Act of 1925, the Administration of Estates Act of 1925, the Non Contentious Probate Rules of 1954, and the Family Law Reform Act of 1969.
Women in Peacemaking and Peacebuilding in Northern Uganda

Sidonia Angom

The cease-fire agreement signed in August 2006 between the Ugandan government and the Lord’s Resistance Army ended two decades of armed conflict. The efforts of many actors contributed to bringing fighting in northern Uganda to a close. The role of women in conflict resolution is often not publicly recognized or acknowledged, but in northern Uganda women have been important actors in peacemaking as well as peacebuilding processes. They have done so by organizing themselves into a civic force and assuming roles as advocates, negotiators, and most important, community peacemakers and peacebuilders. Their initiatives and nonviolent actions offer lessons for everyone trying to resolve civil conflicts in Africa.

The conflict in northern Uganda between the government and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) is deeply rooted in colonial and post-colonial politics and entwined with the history of other conflicts in Uganda and the rise to power of the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A). A. Olara-Otunnu describes the conflict as ‘a struggle between Bantu and non-Bantu speakers and more specifically as a struggle between southerners and northerners’.1 Alternative arguments advanced for the cause of the conflict include fear of revenge for the Luweero killings, the effects of poverty and economic marginalization of the north, and a struggle by the Acholi people to regain political and economic power.2 Other proximate causes include repressive state politics and policies and the militarization of politics that has characterized Uganda’s post-independence history of power struggles.3


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THE LORD’S RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AND EARLY PEACE EFFORTS

The LRA uprising emerged from a longstanding political divide between northern and southern Uganda and in direct response to the efforts of President Yoweri Museveni’s NRM to consolidate control over the north. Under colonial rule, northern ethnic groups had dominated the military while southern groups had dominated government administration. This division continued into the post-colonial era, fueling a series of conflicts. In one notable insurgency, the Holy Spirit Movement of Alice Auma Lakwena, a woman from Acholiland, had generated support in the north, but was ultimately defeated, in 1987. The LRA emerged in 1988, headed by Joseph Kony, a former commander in the Uganda People’s Democratic Army. Kony, who had little formal education, saw himself as a messenger of God and liberator of the Acholi. He invented a belief system and set of rituals drawn from a mixture of Christianity, Islam, and animist traditions. The LRA was originally called the Holy Spirit Movement II, but was later rechristened the Lord’s Salvation Army and then the United Christian Democratic Army before finally assuming its current name, in 1992.

Unlike Alice Auma Lakwena, Kony failed initially to attract popular backing. After his rejection by the general population and local leaders, he increasingly turned against civilians, accusing them of aiding the government in seeking his defeat. Thus the conflict in northern Uganda escalated between 1989 and 1991, resulting in large-scale killings, mutilations, abductions, and internally displaced persons, who lived under dismal conditions in camps. Civilians also suffered from abuses committed by the Uganda People’s Defence Forces, the national army. The armed conflict, characterized by varying degrees of severity as time passed, had a devastating effect not only on northern Uganda, but also in the northeastern region of Teso (Amuria, Kaberamado, Katakwi, and Soroti districts), the northwestern region of West Nile (Adjumani, Arua, Moyo, Nebbi, and Pakwach districts), and the southwestern region of Lango (Amolatar, Apac, Dokolo, Lira, and Oyam districts).

The conflict in northern Uganda centered around the non-Bantu-speaking Acholi people in Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader districts. It began in 1986 and ended with a ceasefire agreement signed in 2006. The conflict uprooted Acholi from their homes and farms, making those affected vulnerable to insecurity, hunger, disease, and trauma. Approximately 1.2 million out of a total of 1.8 internally displaced persons were from Acholi ethnic groups, representing 90 percent of the local population forced to move by the conflict. Two-thirds of those displaced were women and children who ended up in poorly protected camps with limited provisions of water, food, and sanitation and entirely dependent upon aid from the Red Cross and the World Food Program.

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The armed conflict had its greatest effect on women and children, many of whom were subjected to sexual violence. Outside the camps, people coped with the lack of health and education facilities, a collapsed socio-cultural system, and the threat of violence. Men developed insecure gender identities as they found it difficult to fulfill their traditional roles as breadwinners and protectors of their families. They meted out their anger and frustration against women, sometimes in the form of beatings and rape. Such situations severely tested women’s coping abilities.

Several attempts were made to end the conflict militarily and through dialogue. The government’s Operation North in 1991 and Operation Iron Fist I and Operation Iron Fist II, in 2002 and 2004, respectively, failed to weaken the LRA significantly. Each time, LRA forces managed to escape, regroup, and retaliate with attacks on civilians. By 2002, the LRA had spread the conflict east, into the non-Acholi districts of Lira and Soroti, claiming large numbers of victims in these areas. Various peace talks included, among others, military government–led negotiations in 1988, discussions in Addis Ababa in 1990, and initiatives led by Betty Bigombe in 1993/94. Between 1994 and 1996, with no end to the conflict in sight, regional and international efforts began exploring possible paths to ending the conflict peacefully. For instance the UK-based coalition Kacoke Madit (whose name in Acholi means ‘big meeting’) formed in 1996 to provide Acholi people a forum for sharing experiences and discussing how to help end the conflict. Kacoke Madit made contact with the Community of Sant’Egidio, a Rome-based lay Catholic organization with vast experience in conflict resolution and mediation.

Leonzio Onek, a Sudanese Acholi living in Kenya, started the Equatorial Civic Fund in 1997 to promote negotiations between the government and the LRA. Another diasporan initiative was launched in 1996 by Jongomoi Okidi-Olal, a controversial U.S.-based Ugandan who obtained sponsorship by Kacoke Madit to meet with high-level officials and commanders on both sides in Uganda and Sudan to encourage the parties to start talking peace. He realized that moving forward required the involvement of a third party with leverage on and respect from all the parties. He consequently approached the Carter Center, and former U.S. president Jimmy Carter agreed to mediate the peace process. Other peace efforts included the Acholi religious leaders initiative of 1997 and the district peace team initiative of 2000 and presidential initiative in 2002. Government and rebel talks in 2006 in Juba, Sudan, mediated by Riek Machar (future vice president of the Republic of South Sudan), to a large extent brought peace to northern Uganda. The LRA declared a unilateral cease-fire, and within a month, signed a formal cessation of hostilities agreement with the government as a first step toward a final settlement.

Southern Sudan had served as a base for the LRA, which had the support of the Khartoum government. It is possible that political changes in Sudan—specifically, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the north and the south—eventually prompted the LRA to enter into negotiations. It is also possible that the LRA agreed

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to talk in an effort to avoid the criminal prosecution of its leaders by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which issued indictments against them. The LRA-government cease-fire agreement offered the first significant prospect for peace, resulting in the LRA redeploying its forces from northern Uganda to Garamba National Park, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

With the guidance of a mediation team, the parties drafted a five-item agenda covering the cessation of hostilities; a comprehensive solution to the conflict; accountability and reconciliation; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; and ultimately a permanent cease-fire. The government conducted public consultations on justice and reconciliation measures, but after several walk-outs by the LRA, the peace process collapsed, in April 2007. In response to Kony’s refusal to sign the final peace agreement, the Ugandan government, together with the United Nations, Sudan, and the DRC, and supported by the United States, undertook Operation Lightning Thunder, a joint military effort to neutralize the LRA leadership and dislodge the LRA from Garamba in December 2008. The LRA survived the attack and regrouped, but the conflict had become regional, with the LRA operating mainly in the DRC and the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Ugandan army conducting joint operations there against it.11

The U.S. government authorized funding in early 2010 for apprehending members of the LRA leadership and for providing humanitarian assistance to LRA-affected areas in Uganda. In response, the LRA killed thousands of people and kidnapped hundreds of others, primarily in DRC and CAR.12 In the meantime, with the LRA’s withdrawal from northern Uganda, people began returning to their homes there. According to a survey and research by P. Pham and P. Vinck in April 2010, some 81,000 people, or 8 percent of the displaced, remained in camps in Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader, while some 920,000 of them had returned home.13

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, SETTING, SAMPLES, AND DISCUSSIONS

Gender-sensitive methodologies and the well-known three-tier peacebuilding model of J. P. Lederach constitute the theoretical framework for this study.14 Lederach visualizes peacebuilding as a process based on conflict as progression.15 He proposes three categories of actors—top, middle-range, and grassroots leaderships—with different roles, functions, and activities in building sustainable peace (see Figure 1). Thinking of peacebuilding in terms of this model offers a simple way to categorize and understand the actors who participated in the peace processes in northern Uganda.

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15. Ibid., 70.
Lederach’s framework asks such questions as Should peace be made and built from the top down or from the bottom up? Who are the actors? Who should lead the peace processes? What roles should the different actors play?

Many have debated the answers to these questions and suggested solutions or effective approaches for making and building peace among populations affected by conflict. F. O. Hampson argues that grassroots actors, at level 3, are the most important among all the leaders because of the unique resources they bring to peace processes; he asserts that it is imperative for them to own the process through meaningful participation for purposes of sustainability. F. O. Hampson, Nurturing Peace: Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail (Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), 23.

J. Havermans favors the top leadership, level 1 actors, because they have the ability through official channels and diplomacy to mobilize sufficient resources to entice or coerce warring parties, using carrots or sticks, to negotiate. J. Havermans, ‘Power for peace’ in European Centre for Conflict Prevention, People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories from Around the World (Utrecht, 1999), 134–36.
feeling isolated from the process; thus top-level mediation must not be conducted in a "void."  
C. Manning asserts that disconnection between the top and lower levels during an intervention must be overcome to make peace processes sustainable.  

Lederach points to level 2 leadership actors as the most appropriate and important by virtue of their distance from the confrontational politics dominating the top echelons of conflict-ridden societies. He also believes that middle-range leadership actors have the greatest potential for constructing peace because they link the people at the top and grassroots levels. Reconciliation is a key component of his framework, as is working with and through grassroots and traditional peace processes.  

In one of his other books, Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures, Lederach writes, ‘In the severely divided, war-torn countries such as Somalia, the formula for entry into peacemaking and peacebuilding involved, among other things, the use of delegations of women, who, by marriage, are connected to one clan, and can also safely travel back to their clans of origin to pass on communication and encourage the initiation of cross-clan dialogue.’  

Before and after the outbreak of the civil war in Somalia, a handful of elite Somali women had attempted to become active promoters of peace, sometimes with and sometimes without support from the international community.  

Lederach’s work also highlights the silenced efforts of women’s contributions to the peace processes in northern Uganda. To recognize women’s contributions here, his peacebuilding model has been modified in two ways. First, peacemaking has been included as well as peacebuilding because the concepts are interrelated and are usually carried out by the same actors (see Figure 2). Second, a gender-sensitive approach has been incorporated that takes into account the differing needs and interests of women and men. It acknowledges the unequal representation of women in different spheres of life through research design, sampling techniques, data collection approaches, and analysis and interpretation of data. The hypothesis is that women as well as men are essential contributors to peace and conflict-resolution processes, and any efforts toward meaningful development and sustainable peace must consider women as part of the peacemaking and peacebuilding processes.  

Such an approach recognizes that the experiences of conflict, peacemaking, and peacebuilding are strongly determined by gender.  

The concepts of peacemaking and peacebuilding as used in this study have come to be understood or interpreted in different ways. According to former UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali, peacemaking refers to actions taken to bring hostile parties to an agreement through such means as negotiation, mediation, reconciliation, 

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and arbitration.\textsuperscript{23} In this sense, peacemaking is the diplomatic and political effort intended to move a violent conflict into nonviolent dialogue, where differences are settled by representatives from political institutions. Peacemaking is not the final step in a peace process. As the situations in the Middle East and Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrate, it takes more than a peace accord to bring peace to a region. An accord is just the beginning, which must be followed by long-term peacebuilding, which is a process of normalizing relations and reconciling differences between the citizens of the warring factions. A large part of peacebuilding involves dealing with underlying causes of conflict, a form of nation building, in fact.

This analysis uses a case study design with a qualitative approach to data collection because the researcher was interested in respondents’ opinions, attitudes, perceptions, and views regarding women’s contribution to peace processes.\textsuperscript{24} Qualitative research allows one to focus on understanding human behavior from respondents’ points of view.


\textsuperscript{24} E. Babbie and J. Mouton, \textit{The Practice of Social Research} (Cape Town, Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2001), 53.
view as well as from the context and setting in which the situation occurs.25 The respondents include people affected by the conflict in northern Uganda and those not directly affected but who in one way or another contributed to peacemaking and peacebuilding processes there.

Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to identify and sample potential respondents for the study. Those interviewed consist of five Ugandan government officials (who were part of a government delegation that went to Juba to negotiate peace with the LRA); eight members from three civil society organizations—the Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the Women’s International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE); and forty-five community members from the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader. A total of fifty-eight people were interviewed.26 The focus group discussions and interviews conducted revolved around women’s involvement in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes in northern Uganda from 1986 to the present. The guiding questions were as follows:

1. What was the understanding of the key actors who made the main decisions about the northern Uganda peace processes regarding the role of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding?
2. Have women made distinctive contributions to the peacemaking and peacebuilding processes in northern Uganda?
3. What is the evidence concerning the effectiveness of women’s contributions or initiatives in these peace processes?
4. What major challenges have women experienced in their attempts to participate in these peacemaking and peacebuilding processes?
5. How can such challenges be modified to enhance the involvement of women in the post-conflict reconstruction phase?

PEACEMAKING

Although level 1 actors dominated the peace processes in northern Uganda, the agreement by the LRA and the Ugandan government to come together in Juba and sign a cease-fire in 2006 had been the result of the efforts of a number of other actors, including women. Many of the respondents interviewed for this study stressed that had it not been for the actions of women, the relative peace achieved in northern Uganda would not have been possible. Lucy Amito, a community development officer responsible for mainstreaming gender issues in Pader district local government, explained that women, compared to men, contributed more to peace processes because their roles and actions were regulated and directed by the society’s cultural principles,
norms, and values, which confer responsibilities that are supportive and mutually reinforcing for women. In Amito’s words, ‘According to these norms and values of Acholi traditional society, and some other places, like Karamoja in the northeastern part of Uganda, there is very little men can do without consulting women. No war for example can be fought without the blessing of women. Men take pride in fighting and winning fierce battles, while knowing that their spears will not come out without the consent of women.’ This, she concluded, reflects women’s importance to most societies in Uganda.

Geoffrey Okello, coordinator of Uganda National NGO Forum in Gulu, echoed this point, noting that women were the first to rise to action to start the war in Acholiland and the first to move to end it. He cited the case of Alice Auma Lakwena, who said she had received a divine message from God to bring deliverance to the suffering people of northern Uganda. This led her to establish the Holy Spirit Movement and organize and command the first armed rebel group in Acholiland. Lakwena advanced with her rebel group to the eastern part of Uganda with the intention of laying siege to Kampala. Near the Owen Falls Dam, some forty-five miles from the capital, however, Lakwena was defeated. She exiled herself to a refugee camp in Kenya, where she died in 2007. Okello also cited the case of Betty Bigombe, who while working for the government launched peace initiatives with the LRA in 1993–1994 and 2004. There were many other peacemaking efforts and actions by women, some at the national and international levels.

**Advocacy, Dialogue, and Negotiations**

Santa Okwera asserts that women are ‘nurturers’ of life and ‘pillars’ of peace and do not wait to take action when things get out of control. According to her, women tend to be wholly committed to a cause, whether good or bad, and never do things half way in that regard. For example, when 152 students from the Aboke Girls Senior Secondary School were abducted by rebels in northern Uganda, two women, Angelina Atyam and Sister Rachelle, went to plead with the rebels to release them. Afterward, 139 girls were set free, and the two women brought them back to school. The women extended their campaign to free thousands of other children who remained in captivity, highlighting the situation to the United Nations, the president of Sudan, the president of Uganda, and the Vatican. Their actions generated sympathy and international support. Atyam went on to found the Concerned Parents Association, along with other parents whose children had been abducted.

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27. Lucy Amito, interview, Pader, 18 July 2010.
29. *Lakwena* is an Acholi word that means ‘spiritual leader’.
30. From 1988 and into the 1990s, Bigombe served as the minister of state for Pacification of Northern Uganda, resident in Gulu; the portfolio was later changed to minister of state in the Office of the Prime Minister, resident in northern Uganda. Bigombe also worked as a scholar and World Bank conflict specialist. During the Juba negotiations, she was retained as a consultant to the peace process.
32. For details, see Els De Temmerman, *Aboke Girls: Children Abducted in Northern Uganda* (Kampala, Fountain Publishers, 2001). Sister Rachelle was headmistress of St. Mary’s College Aboke when the rebels abducted the girls.
It is believed traditionally that men start wars, stop them, and maintain security. In the last two or so decades, such thinking has changed, reflecting the roles that women have sometimes assumed during and after violent conflict as well as acknowledgement of their actions, including acceptance of responsibilities in peacemaking and rebuilding their communities. In the history of the northern Uganda conflict, the actions of Betty Bigombe to open a personal line of communication with Joseph Kony in the early 1990s has been well documented.33 Bigombe, began her quest for peace by engaging in a grassroots mobilization for negotiation with the rebels. After some successful sessions with the rebels, Bigombe, feeling confident about her initiative, convinced senior security officers that a negotiated peace option would be viable and cost effective.

For reasons difficult to explain, the peace deal that appeared on the verge of bearing fruit was frustrated and later finally faltered when President Museveni announced that the Ugandan government would instead crush the LRA militarily. S. Tamale notes the unfortunate nature of these events because Bigombe’s effort and courage to negotiate had started creating trust among many people, as well as among the national army and the rebels. Tamale explains that Bigombe began her efforts with a fact-finding tour, talking to people, eating with them, and attending local burial ceremonies and crying with them. Her approach helped build confidence among the people affected by the conflict and demonstrated that women could be powerful participants in conflict resolution.34

In focus group discussions held 29 August 2009 in Gulu and 16 January 2010 in Kitgum, respondents recalled that when rebels had moved to attack camps for internally displaced persons in 2002 and 2003, Bigombe had stepped in, initiating a second round of negotiations with the rebels in 2004. A few days into Bigombe’s contacts with the rebel leaders is when the Museveni government responded by launching Operation Iron Fist, which, it claimed, would quickly end the war.35 Rather than crushing the LRA, however, the operation crushed the signs of hope that Bigombe’s efforts had created, the Nairobi accord of 1999 (between Uganda and Sudan), and the Ugandan government’s amnesty initiatives of 2000 that were slowly beginning to show results as evidenced by the increasing number of returnees. The government’s response exacerbated the humanitarian situation, which continued until 2006, when Riek Machar appealed to President Museveni to give peace talks another chance. Machar mediated the talks along with the Community of Sant’Egidio, the religious group that had conducted a number of conflict mediation processes in Africa, including the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement in Burundi that had been stalled for some years.

The Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU) and a number of women activists were quick to note the lack of female representation on the two sides’ negotiating teams and raised their concerns with the government. The

34. S. Tamale, When Hens Begin to Crow: Gender and Parliamentary Politics in Uganda (Kampala, Makerere University, 1999), 49–50.
chief government negotiator, Ruhakana Rugunda, is reported to have termed the absence of women on his team as ‘the biggest error of omission’. The late colonel Walter Ochora, a member on the negotiating team and the resident district commissioner for Gulu, commented that such an error might have been made by the government because Kony’s agreement to talk had come as a surprise to which the government had responded in haste.36

The lack of female representation at the Juba peace talks caused tensions among women activists and civil society organizations in Uganda and the diaspora.37 The experience of the regional director for UNIFEM and the lessons learned from the north-south Sudan peace process, which failed to include women, prompted the director to send Phoebe Asiyo, as a goodwill ambassador, to meet with the negotiating teams in Sudan. In Juba, Asiyo met with the chief mediator, the LRA and government teams, and the UN resident representative to discuss the importance of having women participate in the talks.38 The mediator’s office supported her request on behalf of UNIFEM to help build the skills of women in peace negotiation. According to Isis-WICCE, the report from the UNIFEM regional office was challenging and motivating. In November 2006, the Uganda Women’s Peace Coalition was formed to respond to this challenge. The coalition, comprising seventeen women’s organizations at the national and district levels, was coordinated by the Uganda Women’s Network. It had two main objectives: to put pressure on the negotiators to include women on their teams and to include women’s issues on the Juba agenda.

THE PEACE CARAVAN

The Uganda Women’s Network, in partnership with Isis-WICCE, began preparations for a Peace Caravan to travel from Kampala to the talks in Juba. UNIFEM facilitated and supported women to organize it.39 By this time, women from all walks of life had tired of the conflict. They wanted peace, and they wanted their presence felt in Juba. The Peace Caravan was organized to bring new thinking to the peace talks. Traveling with the caravan was the Women’s Peace Torch, an international symbol of peace brought to Uganda by Kenyan female leaders and activists.40 Before arriving in Kampala, the torch had taken a continental tour, delivering messages of peace to South Africa, Angola, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Mali, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the

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37. Exchange program coordinator for Isis-WICCE, interview, Kampala, 12 August 2009.
38. UN Security Council Resolution 1325, passed in October 2000, encourages the inclusion of women at all levels in matters of conflict resolution. The African Union Assembly’s Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, passed in 2004, incorporates this provision.
40. Among the Kenyan women were Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, the regional program director for UNIFEM’s East Africa and Horn of Africa regional office; Zipporah Kittony, former member of parliament and national chairperson of Maendeleo Ya Wanawake; Esther Keino, member of parliament and of the Amani Forum; Betty Murungi, executive director of the Urgent Action Fund Africa; Wanjiku Kabira, former constitutional commissioner and director of the Collaborative Centre on Gender and Development; Anne Kamau, member of the Christian Women’s Association for Peace; and Phoebe Asiyo, UNIFEM goodwill ambassador.
Congo, and Kenya. In Uganda, the Kenyan women, along with UNIFEM’s Asiyo, handed the Peace Torch to Edward Kiwanuka Sekandi, speaker of the Ugandan parliament, and Rebecca Kagada, the deputy speaker. The torch was lit on Constitutional Square to mark the beginning of its journey to the negotiation teams in Juba. The caravan took four days, trekking northward through Luweero, Masindi (Bweyale), Lira, Gulu, and Kitgum—districts affected by conflict—before reaching Juba in November 2007. Along the way, signatures endorsing peace were collected.

Before the torch arrived in Juba, the negotiations had stalemated. Upon arrival in Juba, the women presented the torch to the mediator and negotiators. Members of the two sides shook hands for the first time when they accepted the torch. The women urged them to continue their talks. The Peace Caravan reinforced to the teams the seriousness of reaching a peace and heightened the visibility of women as stakeholders in the peace process. The women in Juba demanded that more women be included in the talks. The government responded by adding Christine Aporu, former minister of state for disaster preparedness, to its negotiating team. In the end, the LRA had three women on its team—Josephine Apire, vice chairperson; Jane Adong Anywar, a lawyer; and Santa Okot, a former member of parliament representing Pader. The government appointed two women: Aporu and Ruth Nankabirwa, the latter already being chairperson of the government peace team support committee. Some female members of the coalition were allowed to observe the peace talks, but were not given official observer status.

INSPIRED NGOS: PEACEBUILDING BY WOMEN

Nobert Mao, the chairman of Local Council V and president of the Democratic Party, asserted that women had not been frustrated by the conflict like men had been and therefore became a driving force for reconstructing the economy of northern Uganda. Informal peacebuilding initiatives established by women contributed significantly to dealing with the problems of resettlement and reintegration of ex-combatants and children returning from captivity. This created an enabling environment for sustainable peace at the grassroots level. Mao also explained that women had established support structures to handle practical issues to help consolidate the peace in the region, such as reception and trauma-counseling centers and rehabilitation and reintegration centers for war-affected children and LRA combatants. Reconciliation and accountability structures were also set up by women. The initial successes registered by these


42. Aporu is also a former member of parliament from Teso. She is best remembered for her role in the peace negotiation and pacification of Teso in the 1980s.

43. Okot, when outside the government, undertook personal initiatives to keep reminding the government and the LRA of the need for peaceful resolution of the northern conflict.

44. Nankabirwa is one of the longest-serving members of parliament and one of the longest-serving cabinet ministers in the NRM government.

initiatives and the high level of consciousness generated inspired women to create more organizations that epitomized their desire for a peaceful region.

In focus group discussions in Gulu and Kitgum, women concurred with Mao’s assessment of women’s initiatives to address the problems of resettlement, reintegration, reconciliation, and accountability. In one group interview, in Gulu on 11 January 2010, members highlighted contributions made by the Concerned Parents Association and the Gulu Save the Children Organisation. As noted above, the parents’ group was founded by Angelina Atyam and others whose girls’ had been abducted when the rebels had attacked the Aboke school. The organization advocates for the release of children and the rehabilitation of them. To-date the Concerned Parents Association has worked with 500 parents and assisted 100 youth groups, each with an average of twenty-five members. It has a resident representative in each community in which it is active. Other areas on which it focuses include psycho-social support and reintegration, education, health, peacebuilding, and economic empowerment.

The Gulu Save the Children Organisation was started by Betty Akech to promote the well-being of war-affected children in northern Uganda. The organization has developed competencies in the areas of children and education, children and participation, children in armed conflict, gender issues and girls, rights-based programming, and sexual exploitation of children. It provides psycho-social support to children who had been abducted and also focuses on capacity building in communities, education, advocacy, and peacebuilding.

The Kitgum Concerned Women’s Association was formed in 1998 to respond to the plight of abducted children from Kitgum district. It runs a reception and reintegration center for these children and their families. More than 4,200 children have benefited from its services. In 2008 the association established Girl Soldiers and War Affected Children to advocate for the rights of girl soldiers and their children, many of whom suffer from sexual, psychological, and physical abuse, and promote their reintegration. Its community-based approach focuses on education and health care, livelihood, and long-term psycho-social support.

The Kitgum Women Peace Initiative was founded with the vision of helping create a peaceful and informed society by promoting peacebuilding, reconciliation, and recovery. Its chairperson, Gladys Canogura, was among the women leaders who went to Juba, where she presented information on the initiative’s work on reconciliation and accountability. Canogura said a consultative meeting organized by the Kitgum Women Peace Initiative in November 2007 to review issues of accountability and reconciliation had been attended by religious and cultural leaders and elders from the community, members of the Kitgum NGO Forum, the Local Council V chairman, and a representative from the office of the resident district commissioner. The Concerned Parents Association in Gulu also held a similar meeting concerning youth who had been abducted and young mothers. The meeting examined the implications of reconciliation and accountability between perpetrators, victims, and local communities.

In Pader, Alice Achan, executive director of Christian Children Fellowship, explained that her organization was created to respond to the problems of child moth-
ers who had faced the challenge of raising their children born while in captivity. The organization provides formal and informal education to the mothers and their offspring. The mothers and orphans and vulnerable children are housed by the group to ensure their protection. Other services extended include livelihood support to help develop positive coping strategies.\textsuperscript{48}

\textbf{WOMEN’S RESPONSES TO GOVERNMENT PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES}

In 2007 the government launched the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) to address post-conflict issues in northern Uganda. Women of the area cautiously welcomed the initiative, although as the assistant program officer for Isis-WICCE explained, the government’s process of developing the PRDP had overlooked the needs of women. The government then tasked Isis-WICCE with identifying their concerns and needs for incorporation into the plan. Among the areas identified were sexual and gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, psychological health, land rights, girls’ education, economic empowerment, and access to justice and accountability. In addition, two prominent women, Mary Among and Elisabeth Alimadi, were appointed commissioners for the PRDP. Women members of parliament were co-opted to take part in a national steering committee, and women from civil society organizations were included on monitoring teams.\textsuperscript{49}

The women interviewed for this study noted the challenges that women have experienced during the peacemaking and peacebuilding processes and the factors that hindered their full participation.\textsuperscript{50} They cited a disconnection between the northern Ugandan women involved in the Peace Caravan and the ‘elite’ women active at the national level who viewed the former as being of the ‘grassroots’, or ‘ordinary’. This division affected how the women mobilized and presented themselves in Juba. Their lack of cohesion, respondents suggested, attributed to a north-south division among the women that appears to still be an issue. The respondents felt that the so-called national women had used them and had never provided them an opportunity to be trained in preparation for the journey to Juba. This unequal treatment consequently caused a rift in what was supposed to be a coalition. The women from the north eventually formed a group called Women from the Great North, with the expectation that they could represent the victims of war better than their counterparts in the peace talks.

The women also mentioned the hoarding of information, inadequate consultation, and lack of feedback by the national women, who were the primary organizers of the Peace Caravan activities in Uganda. There was an overall perception that the women attending lacked proper training in negotiation skills, which affected the women who went as observers and members of the peace team. The limited participation accorded to women during the peace talks restricted the overall contribution the women could make. Women and other interest groups were relegated to being morale boosters in addition to observers and advisers at times.

\textsuperscript{48} Alice Achan, interview, Pader, 18 July 2010.
\textsuperscript{49} Assistant program officer, Isis-WICCE, interview, Kampala, 27 September 2009.
\textsuperscript{50} Focus group interviews, 11 January 2010 in Gulu and 29 June 2010 in Kitgum.
Ending the armed violence and insecurity in northern Uganda has been a milestone in the country's history of conflict resolution. The efforts to end the conflict stretched over a long period of time, and women were in the forefront searching for peace. They suffered hardships and challenges during the wars, but some would argue that they turned their suffering into a driving force in the search for peace. The conflict illustrated that women are major stakeholders in war, violence, and peacemaking in Uganda.

The women of northern Uganda organized themselves into a civic force and assumed roles as advocates, negotiators, mobilizers, and most important, as community peacemakers and peacebuilders. These roles were carried out effectively because of a combination of commitment and the willingness of the women in local communities to end the conflict. They faced the challenge of conflict by initiating peacebuilding activities in their communities and ensuring the availability of families' basic needs. Women from civil society organizations and others played critical roles in advocacy, dialogue, negotiation, facilitation, mobilization, and empowerment and in supporting fellow women in peacemaking and other peacebuilding initiatives. Despite such contributions, the roles, actions, and initiatives of these women have not hitherto been widely acknowledged or well documented. To be prepared to play meaningful roles in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes in the future, women's groups should undergo relevant training in times of peace. It would make them even more effective in times of need.
The Arab Revolutions of 2011: Roots and Prospects

Amr Abdalla

The end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011 brought about the surprising spread of revolutions across North Africa and several other Arab countries. While many scholars and observers have spoken about repressive conditions under the autocratic regimes in those countries, it is difficult for anyone to claim that they had anticipated such sweeping and popular uprisings. Among those who envisioned some sort of eventual protest against repression and abuse of the rule of law, none foresaw the dramatic outcomes witnessed in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya and the events as they have unfolded in Syria and Yemen.

Scholars and observers have tended to frame political struggle in the contemporary Arab world as one between autocratic regimes that derived legitimacy from the mid-twentieth-century struggle against colonization and western occupation and radical Islamist groups that vow to establish theocracies. These same scholars and observers are now predicting, with seeming confidence, that this revolutionary wave has not crested and that the Arab world, in its entirety, will experience major democratic transformation. I optimistically agree.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

The factors leading to the Arab revolutions are numerous. Discerning them requires a careful review of historical events that shaped the region during the previous century, international relations of the last several decades—in particular the war on terror and the rise of transnational radical Islamist groups—and the dynamics of new media and its influence among frustrated youths with collapsed hopes for upward mobility.

Having suffered under western occupation and colonization since the nineteenth century, in the 1950s and 1960s the educated elites of newly carved-out Arab nation-states led the struggles of their people to gain independence while internally debating and sometimes fighting over asserting their national, Arab, Islamic, and modern identities. The Arab nations that gained independence around mid-century were led by prominent figures from the independence struggles who ruled as monarchs or mili-
tary elites. Following the emergence of new ruling establishments, most states experienced internal power struggles and conflicts among adherents of various political and religious affiliations. Such jockeying for position led those in control of government (and resources) to develop harsh security apparatuses and measures to protect themselves against competitors.

Establishing modern systems of democratic institutions and granting citizens freedoms were risks that those who had seized political power were unwilling to take for fear of losing their grip on power. The legacy of western colonization, coupled with instability stemming from the Arab-Israeli conflict, compounded the fears of Arab rulers, leading to the institutionalization of repression and suppression of civil liberties. The emergence of the cold war in the 1950s and the competition between the superpowers that lasted until the late 1980s exacerbated inter- and intra-Arab conflicts, creating a discourse in the Arab world around the competing ideologies of socialism and communism versus western democracy and capitalism. Arab nationalists and Islamists at that time aligned themselves with one discourse or the other.

The Israeli military defeat of Egypt in June 1967, and with it the Arab nationalist project of Gamal Abdel Nasser, added to the disillusion of educated Arab elites and the masses. That event led to further repression, as threats to ruling regimes and instability grew. On the ideological level, the Islamic discourse, with its deep roots in a glorified history of a long-ago victorious utopian Muslim superpower, was held up for comparison with the repressive and defeated regimes of the twentieth century. For many, the equation was simple: Muslims had prevailed when they followed their religion properly, and they became losers when they deviated from it, having been led astray down socialist, communist, and capitalist paths. The solution was also straightforward: Muslims must return to the true practices of their religion to revive the glories of the past. According to adherents of Islamic revivalism, it is the duty of each Muslim to do all that he or she can—including, for the radicals among them, employing force—to establish Islamist states and societies. Thus the stage was set for a new wave of modern political Islam. Although the majorities of political Islamists sought to achieve their goals peacefully, small, violent minorities opted for militancy. The latter viewed the ruling regimes and western powers as their enemies. Their violent struggle against them began in the late 1970s and continues to this day.

The growing influence of militant Islamists only added to the fears of the Arab ruling regimes and led to the use of brute force to suppress it. Most Arab leaders clung to power for life with the aspiration of transferring it to their sons, viewing such successions as another measure toward securing the state against threats to stability. The successful and smooth transfer from Syrian president Hafiz al-Asad to his son Bashar in 2000 inspired other Arab rulers to follow suit. The North African rulers of Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia continued to busy themselves coaching their sons to take the baton. This practice is known as tawreeth (giving inheritance) in the Arab world. To ensure the success of tawreeth, and maintenance of power within the family or tribe, Arab regimes indulged in election rigging and practices of intimidation that at times included violence and repressive measures to control the supposedly democratic, representative institutions of their nations.

The end of the cold war, which left one superpower intact, forged new alliances in the Arab world and coincided with the growth of militant Islamist threats to the Arab and Islamic regimes and also placed the United States in the line of fire of radical
groups. Attacks on U.S. facilities around the world in the 1990s, including embassies, culminated in 2001 in the September 11 al-Qaida attacks on the U.S. mainland.

To curb this threat, the U.S. ‘war on terror’ created new alliances between Arab regimes and the United States, leading to enhanced repression of liberties and democratic institutions and to gross violations of human rights in the Arab world and elsewhere. Some North African states employed their fair share of such practices, and some became notorious for using their torture machinery against suspects delivered by the United States to their prisons to extract confessions. Even for some of the most ardent, bleeding-heart democrats, preserving autocratic Arab regimes—and enabling the alienation and repression that they engendered—became a better (that is, safer) option than an Arab version of a Taliban regime, an Iranian-style Islamist state, or non-state actors with a global reach.

The ‘new world order’ of the post–cold war era dictated liberal economic, trade, and business policies and practices worldwide. For developing countries, including those in North Africa, such economic reforms meant that political elites had to introduce and implement new policies and cooperate with business elites if they were to obtain economic assistance from western institutions. In the context of the Arab world, this particular marriage of political and business elites led to the emergence of a new class of mega-billionaires, whose control over national resources depended on the preservation of the ruling order. Corruption on a massive scale increased the already substantial concentration of wealth and political power in the hands of rulers, their entourages, and business elites.

The race to accumulate wealth took place at the expense of development and services to the poor. While the wealth of elites reached unprecedented levels, more people lived below the poverty line and lacked access to basic services, such as housing and health care, and basic commodities, such as bread. Privatization policies, dictated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, increased unemployment and accelerated the pace of corruption as regimes sold off state-owned economic institutions through shady deals. Despite the proliferation of education and higher degrees, growing numbers of young people found themselves unemployed, many unable to move forward with the next stage of their lives. Many of them knew only of life under emergency laws or similar repressive regimes, had been confronted by corruption at government offices in return for the services they sought, and had experienced or witnessed abuses of power by police.

**ALIENATION AND REPRESSION: SPARKS OF REVOLUTION**

Under the circumstances described above, it would only be natural if some among Arab youth turned to political Islam, including violent forms of it, or sought some other outlet for their frustration. Even for more economically advantaged youth, political repression and the prospect of tawreeth had created a sense of political alienation. With increased exposure to new media, and through it, access to worlds beyond theirs, even well-to-do youth grew frustrated with the ruling regimes. News of corruption at the political and business levels and the growing gap between the destitute majority and the small group of extremely rich elites added to their disgust. From the regimes’ perspective, these frustrations represented threats to stability and their hold on power. They used increasingly harsh measures to confront the threat from radical-
ized youths and those bent on disrupting the ‘democratic’ institutions of their governments. The result was the institutionalization of alienation and repression. When the threat of militant Islamist groups to the United States and other powers in the world is added to the mix, one can understand why alienation and repression in the Arab world have been accepted even by those who claim to be the guardians of democracy and civil liberties. Life in such an environment eventually overwhelmed one young Tunisian man who would unwittingly change the Arab world.

Mohamed Bouazizi was from the small town of Boukhadra. He had a high school degree but had been unable to find a suitable job. Having to provide for his family, he worked as a street vendor selling vegetables in Sidi Bouzid. A police officer repeatedly harassed him for selling vegetables without the proper license. On 17 December 2010, she confiscated Bouazizi’s cart and then allegedly slapped him, spat on him, and insulted his deceased father when he tried to pay the fine for not having a permit. When Bouazizi tried to complain to municipal authorities about his treatment, they turned him away. Humiliated and without hope, Bouazizi set himself on fire that day. He lived for two weeks before dying.¹

The news of Bouazizi’s self-immolation and the reasons behind it induced outrage and sparked popular protests among Tunisia’s youth, who empathized with his frustration and humiliation. The first protest in Boukhadra started with slogans calling on the state to attend to issues of inflation and unemployment. Protesters’ demands then expanded to ending political repression and corruption. In response to the brutal and lethal use of force by the police against demonstrators, those protesting began to chant, ‘The People Demand to Topple the Regime’. As the protests spread from small towns to municipal centers and into Tunis, the capital, they brought together cross-sections of Tunisian society, young and old, men and women, rich and poor, religious and secular.

President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali and his regime attempted to respond to the protesters’ demands by shuffling the cabinet and promising to grant liberties and to change the constitution. Nonetheless, as the use of police force against protesters continued, the demand to overthrow the regime increased. On 14 January 2011, Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia along with family members and others of his entourage who managed to escape. Arabs across North Africa and the Middle East watched events unfold on television and through social media.

REVOLUTION SPREADS

In Egypt, calls went out for anti-government demonstrations to be held on 25 January 2011, National Police Day, which was chosen to call attention to the history of police brutality. Almost following the same pattern of events in Tunisia, demonstrations and protester demands led President Hosni Mubarak to step down on 11 February 2011, after thirty years in power. A few days later, Libyans took to the streets, after which the regime sent forth special military forces to embark on a campaign of intimidation through killing and destruction. The situation in Libya at press exhibits all the characteristics of a civil war and includes foreign intervention from NATO (at the behest

of the UN Security Council). Full-blown popular rebellions also took shape in Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen. Protests in Jordan and Morocco elicited some minor reforms. With the exception of Libya, where rebellion transformed into bloody civil war, the Arab revolutions share a number of characteristics.

Civic Revolution. Most scholars and observers had predicted that the toppling of repressive Arab regimes would come at the hands of ‘even-worse’ radical (and autocratic) Islamist groups. This was not the case in Egypt and Tunisia, where the revolutions represented all sectors of society and were non-religious in nature. Religious groups took part in the demonstrations, and while they made their presence known, they also made it clear that they were not imposing their banners on others. These revolutions illustrate how cross-sections of society can participate in common cause, in this case bringing about democratic reform, by striking a balance between their secular, religious, or other identities while sharing in their broader national identity.

Opposing Political Repression and Corruption. In the revolutions of the Arab Spring, the strongest demands were for political reforms, starting with toppling the existing regimes. Economic demands, although issued and having served as triggers in the early stages of the revolutions, appeared to be secondary compared to protesters’ political demands.

Nonviolent Action. In Egypt, Bahrain, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen, protesters made deliberate efforts to declare their demonstrations and protests as peaceful. The chant ‘Selmia’ (peaceful) was widely heard, especially when the lines of demonstrators and those of police came close to each other. This did not, however, stop the police from using force, some of it lethal. In response, demonstrators sometimes resorted to force in self-defense. After having pushed back, however, the demonstrators reverted to non-violent methods. This was particularly evident when forces supporting Mubarak attacked people in Tahrir Square with rocks, stones, and guns from atop horses and camels using batons and other objects. The demonstrators fought back with stones and with their bare hands. When they succeeded in stopping the onslaught, they quickly reengaged in peaceful protest.

Religion as a Means of Mobilization and Nonviolent Expression. For Muslims, Friday is the day of prayer and rest. Most Muslims, even the least religious ones, often attend the Friday noon prayers held at mosques. Friday prayers during the Arab revolutions became natural centers for sensitizing the masses and for organized marches emerging and converging from all directions. Fridays became a nightmare for Arab regimes under pressure to reform because of the large protests held after services. In anticipation of what Fridays might bring, and hoping to abort demonstrations after prayers, rulers in these countries developed the habit of issuing decrees on Thursdays in response to the demands of the protesters. A joke spread during the revolutions that Arab rulers had ‘canceled’ Fridays, shortening the week to six days.

Use of Humor. Demonstrators, especially in Egypt, made signs and flyers employing humor to express their frustration and demands. For example, protesters were spotted holding signs that read, ‘Leave, Mubarak. I need to go home to take a shower!’ and ‘Mubarak, What part of GO don’t you understand?’ After Mubarak’s departure, one
sign implored, 'Mubarak, Come back; we were joking with you; this was candid camera!' Use of humor perhaps helped to keep spirits high and created a sense of normalcy during abnormal times.

THE WAY AHEAD

The 2011 Arab revolutions have been sweeping. Egyptians and Tunisians are already reaping the fruits of their newly acquired freedoms and liberties, as evident from fair referendums on constitutions and the formation of political parties. The past cautions, however, that toppling a dictatorial regime and introducing democratic reforms, and even building democratic institutions, are not alone guarantees of development and prosperity. For example, successful struggles for democracy in the Philippines and Bangladesh in 1986 did not bring about widespread improvements in people's lives. Rather, poverty remained rampant and democracy dysfunctional, to say the least, and development failed to progress to the point of meeting the expectations of people at the time of the political upheavals. The Islamic revolution in Iran is an example of a popular uprising that led to the replacement of one autocratic regime with another.

In terms of successful development and institutionalization of effective democracy, South Korea after a popular movement in 1987 might provide hope for Arab revolutionaries today. The Arabs challenging their governments are at a historic crossroad. Many of them are for the first time trying to take charge of their destinies. At the same time, they must reckon with complex and weighty issues, such as the fair distribution of resources, poverty, development, and so on. Their actions and options are also influenced by international dynamics and with the un-settled conflict with Israel that is accompanied by a strong sense of injustice regarding Palestinians' rights. How will new, fairly elected governments in the 'free' Arab world respond to these challenges? It is anyone's guess. This author, based on frequent visits to Egypt during the revolution and shortly after, is optimistic. The spirit of hope, determination, and will to improve life there is unprecedented. Youth, not the old guard, holds the key to progress in the Arab world. One fascinating outcome of the 2011 revolutions is the revival of pan-Arabism. The Arab people see hope for true unification. It is a dream that many feel they can almost touch.
The 2011 Egyptian revolution, in its demand for radical, positive social change and citizen equality, succeeded in toppling a thirty-year authoritarian regime that had long prohibited the majority of the population from organizing politically and independently. The fall of the Hosni Mubarak government on 11 February was hailed as the liberation of the country, with people marching through the streets waving flags and chanting, ‘Egypt is free’. Ebda’ Benafsak, an organization formed in the aftermath of the revolution to promote social change, hopes to help create a positive trajectory for long-term gains from the revolution. The expression ‘ebda’ benafsak’ translates as ‘take initiative and start with yourself’.

Despite the political uncertainties of post-revolutionary Egypt and a bleak forecast for the country’s short-term economic performance, the 500-plus members of Ebda’ Benafsak firmly believe that the social change already under way is predominantly the result of a newly born sense of belonging and pride among Egyptian youth. Ebda’ Benafsak’s mandate is intrinsically tied to this renewed spirit and is expressed through a twofold approach. First, it aims to build on and strengthen the historical sense of unity between all classes of society, because a sense of shared nationhood is key to fostering social development and change. Second, it seeks to enhance community engagement through cyber technology, the primary channel that aided in bringing about the 2011 revolution and political engagement among Egyptians. Thus, by melding Egyptian unity and technology, Ebda’ Benafsak hopes to foster continued social change through development-oriented initiatives and awareness projects.

This article was written with the assistance of the following members of Ebda’ Benafsak: Ahmed Dessouky, Ahmed Badr El Din, Ahmed Medhat, Nancy Yacoub, Perihan Osman, Rania Naim, and Mostafa Bedair. Visit the Ebda’ Benafsak Web site at http://www.ebda2benafsak.com; send inquiries or comments to ebda2benafsak@gmail.com. At press, the group was in the process of registering as a non-governmental organization.

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THE 25 JANUARY REVOLUTION AND POSITIVE SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Prior to the 2011 revolution, an atmosphere of depression prevailed across Egypt, stemming from decades of dissatisfaction with the status quo, an inability to realize political and social reforms, and a belief that Egypt had lost its credibility as leader of the Arab world. This was manifested in Egyptians’ general indifference and unwillingness to participate in political life despite frustration with the government’s domestic and foreign policies.

The Mubarak regime systematically oppressed the Egyptian people from the early 1980s until 2011. Widespread poverty, lack of awareness of the country’s social realities, and denial of political participation characterized the lives of Egyptian youths and society at large. The nation’s foreign policies were greatly influenced by the United States, and with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at its core, the pan-Arab dream appeared to have faded away. As a consequence, Egyptian morale had been low for years. The people lacked hope, especially after numerous failed challenges to the Mubarak regime. Even the April 6 Movement had stopped organizing demonstrations, viewing the chances for real change as futile.1

Ownership

The revolution that began on 25 January with the gathering of Egyptians in Tahrir Square represented an unprecedented collective effort to bring an end to the seemingly endless oppression of the Mubarak regime. Previous attempts to alter the status quo had failed due to limited public support, which made it easy for security forces to crush any opposition. In 2011, however, Egyptians united across socio-economic backgrounds, reviving a long-dormant sense of belonging and ownership.

Of the 2011 uprisings across the Middle East, the public demonstrations in Egypt received the most extensive media coverage, reminding Egyptians of their country’s position as a key player in the region. With world leaders and politicians voicing support for the nonviolent protests and calling on Mubarak to respond to the people’s demands, Egyptians regained their sense of pride. George Galloway, a former British member of Parliament, declared in a speech that if the Mubarak regime fell, then all the regimes in the region would follow.2 The revolutionary spillover into Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, and the Palestinian territories, whose citizens had been similarly encouraged by the success of events in Tunisian and the Egyptian example, significantly affected Egyptians, adding to their sense of pride and self-worth and serving as evidence that their revolution had inspired others to stand up for dignity and basic rights.

Egyptians translated their restored sense of ownership of their country into concrete action the day after Mubarak’s departure when they began the cleanup of Tahrir Square. One statement widely circulating on the internet through Facebook, Twitter,

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1. The movement formed in 2007 as a Facebook group calling for a nationwide general strike because of the deteriorating political and social conditions in Egypt and to support the workers of al-Mahalla al-Kubra, an industrial city, who led a large strike that year.
and text messages asserted, ‘From this day, this is your country. Don’t litter, don’t break traffic lights, don’t bribe, don’t forge. Report anyone who is lazy at their job.’ Such sentiment reflected a remarkable shift in behavior and attitude, as Egyptians’ former sense of complacency was no longer compatible with their newfound sense of ownership. The campaign Egypt Is Changing was launched on Facebook with the aim of transforming negative behaviors through short videos on YouTube. This effort, which included such clips as ‘No to bribery’ and ‘No to forgery’, also reflected Egyptians’ revived sense of ownership and national pride.

Unity
Not only did the revolution restore Egyptians’ national pride, but it also rekindled a historical sense of unity among the various segments of society. To understand the unifying impact of the revolution, one must take a quick look at recent history. After the 1973 war and making peace with Israel, Egypt was free of the specter of war for the first time in almost five decades. Egyptian baby boomers, those who experienced Nasser’s pan-Arabism dream and who witnessed the 1967 war, lived for so long with perpetual conflict that along the way, many of them became willing to pay any price for a sense of stability.

As a result, the majority of Egyptians developed a type of socio-political apathy toward local, regional, and global events, prompting them to turn a blind eye to the absence of basic human rights, widespread corruption, and social and moral decay as expressed in the behavior of individuals. The grim plight of the poor, primarily living in sprawling, unplanned slums on the fringes of Cairo, contrasted drastically with the lifestyles of the rich, who basked in conspicuous luxury. While real gross domestic product had grown from 4.29 percent in 1996 to 6.8 percent in 2006, the percentage of Egyptians living below the poverty line increased from 19.4 percent in 1995 to 22 percent in 2008. For almost thirty years, it felt like 80 million individual nations existed within the borders of Egypt, as people indulged in solipsism and became disconnected from one another. Displays of unity appeared every two years, when the national football team played in the Africa Cup; only then did flags come out and television stations play patriotic songs. This sense of unity, however, faded as fast as it had arrived. For three decades, the different elements of society lacked a common, shared experience.

The Egyptian revolution was an experience shared by all 80 million nations within the nation. It changed their lives forever as Egyptians. One unifying factor was in people coming together, literally, to take part in the revolution, whether attending the initial demonstrations, skirmishing with the police, or milling around Tahrir Square during the revolution’s later, more festive days. From the first day that people took to the streets in January, Egyptians and people abroad noticed the diversity among the protesters. They were young and old, men and women, Muslims and Christians, rich and poor, opposition party members and other politicians, Muslim Brothers and celebrities. Among each group could be found the sentiment that they had always got-

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3. For data on gross domestic product, see the International Monetary Fund’s database at http://www.imf.org. On percentages of populations living under the poverty line, see the World Bank indicators at http://data.worldbank.org.
ten the short end of the stick under the Mubarak regime. Once in the street, they re-
alyzed that millions of others also disliked the way the country was being run and thus
found commonality in their dissatisfaction with the dictatorship, police brutality, and
corruption of the previous thirty years. This bond grew stronger day by day as they
collectively faced tear gas, rubber bullets, attacks by thugs, charging camels, and live
ammunition.

After the dust had settled and the protest entered its final week with a carnival-like
atmosphere in Tahrir Square, many Egyptians realized that they had much more in
common with each other than they had thought. Instead of fearing one another, peo-
ple embraced each other. Muslims shared meals with Copts in the square; women
from the rural governorates discussed politics with American University–educated
Cairenes, and for the first time in decades, the people raised the Egyptian flag and sang
the national anthem without inspiration from a football match.

The day after the so-called Friday of Anger, Egyptians woke to find that the police
had withdrawn from their posts across the country.4 Police stations were burning, and
prisoners were escaping en masse. There was widespread looting. At that time, the
government had shut down all mobile phone networks and blocked access to the in-
ternet. Instead of panicking, however, Egyptians decided they would not be taken
hostage by chaos. Ordinary citizens set up neighborhood watches and committees
across the country to take control of their communities. They patrolled the streets,
conducted searches, checked IDs, and maintained order.

In fact, these neighborhood watches restored something to Egyptian life that had
been missing for decades: a sense of community. For years, as Cairo and other major
cities became increasingly urbanized, Egyptians lost touch with their historical com-
munal bonds, where neighbors knew each other, and everyone was made to feel wel-
come. It is safe to say that during the community watches, most people learned their
neighbors’ names. When people are trying to protect their home and family, they are
unlikely to forget those who shared in the experience. Ebda’ Benafsak members can all
attest to this, as on a personal level, they created new bonds among neighbors, friends,
and families. One may think that the effect of such a phenomenon would be tempo-
rary, but this has not been the case in Egypt. Some of the community watch commit-
tees are evolving into ‘popular committees’, laying new foundations for society.

Political Engagement through Technology

Another tangible outcome of the 2011 upheaval is Egyptians’ increased political en-
gagement, which was aided by the use of technology in demanding regime change.
Prior to 25 January, the Egyptian political scene was largely devoid of large-scale po-
litical participation. The rigging of elections that gave the ruling party a parliamen-
tary majority of more than 90 percent, the stifling of political dissent, and state control
of the media were routine practices of the Mubarak regime. This was particularly ev-
dent in the 2005 elections, in which 88 percent of voters allegedly cast their ballots to

4. On the Friday of Anger, January 28, protesters called on more people to join them in the hope that
it would force the government to stop ignoring their demands for freedom, dignity, and social justice. The
mobilization, which also called for Mubarak to step down, was carried out largely through social network-
ing sites. The day also included clashes with police forces.
reelect Mubarak as president. Egyptians generally viewed political engagement as a useless endeavor and an ineffective medium for inducing concrete change. Thus they abandoned politics for the most part.

Under Mubarak, online interactive social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, were the only places where political opinions could be genuinely expressed with few restrictions. Inspired by the success of the Tunisian revolution, various Egyptian youth groups used Facebook to call for a day of protest, 25 January, against corruption and oppression. This call to action would be the spark for eighteen days of revolution. Following the success of social networking media in Egypt in starting a revolution, Egyptians were inspired to voice their opinions and ideas to positively influence others.

The internet has taken on a whole new meaning for a large segment of Egyptians as a medium of political expression and engagement, altering the country’s political landscape. It has changed Egyptians’ grim perception of politics, as evidenced by the numerous political parties being formed and voter turnout. For the constitutional referendum held on 19 March 2011, nearly 50 percent of voters cast ballots. The establishment of numerous youth-oriented political groups espousing a wide range of ideologies emerged from Tahrir Square. This richness of diversity is central to encouraging youth participation in politics and to sustaining an atmosphere of tolerance for political discourse with the common purpose of ensuring a prosperous Egypt.

The internet will be critical to establishing and maintaining a dialogue between different political interest groups in Egypt, including government institutions, public figures, and grassroots movements. Government bodies, like the armed forces, are now using the internet to communicate with citizens. Presidential candidates are immersed in online activities, campaigning, recruiting volunteers, and establishing their positions on the issues. The People’s Campaign to Support El Baradei is a prime example of innovative political engagement; the campaign was initiated by supporters of Mohamed El Baradei—legal scholar, former diplomat, and former director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency—not the man himself. Such campaigns, which help promote a candidate’s agenda as well as ideology, can be supplemented by technological tools like Qabila, which creates animated videos to simplify basics of democracy and various ideologies.

**EBDA’ BENAFSAK: A REVOLUTION FROM WITHIN**

The 2011 revolution paved the way for individuals to reassess their values and actions. Not only was it vital in enhancing political engagement, but it also triggered social reform movements among proactive Egyptian youths striving to make a difference and take part in creating a better Egypt. The demand for change led to the formation of several groups promoting development-oriented initiatives to revive the essence of the ethics and morale that people had disregarded prior to the revolution.

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6. Among the amendments voted on were provisions for the appointment of a vice president within sixty days of a president assuming duties and limiting presidential terms to four years and no more than two consecutive terms.
Ebda' Benafsak counts itself among the many initiatives established after the revolution. It invites individual Egyptians to consider their own actions before judging those of others and calls on them to set a good example by improving themselves. The group does not subscribe to a political ideology, and politics is not a key concern. Rather its main objective is to encourage Egyptians to play a more positive role in improving their communities and to promote positive modes of behavior among other members of society. Mohamed Abou El Naga, one of the founders of the group, said that he 'felt the need to start a revolution within oneself before starting a mass revolution'.

In Cairo, Ebda' Benafsak started a traffic campaign called Keda a'aib (This is morally wrong) by placing stickers on double-parked and otherwise illegally parked cars hindering the flow of traffic. The campaign generated so much buzz that people from other areas requested the stickers so they could start campaigns of their own. The initiative attracted a lot of media attention, with several news sources, including the newspaper al-Youm 7 and the Masrawy Web site, writing about it. Because of the campaign’s effectiveness, some Egyptians thought the police had started it. Ebda’ Benafsak founders appeared on several radio shows to discuss the campaign and upcoming projects as well. Commenting on the success of Keda a’aib, Wael Mansour, a Mega FM radio host, said, ‘I don’t think anyone of us [double] parked without coming out to find the sticker on their car’.

Keda a’aib generated an energy and passion for engaging in more humanitarian projects, such as working with kids in slums and areas with high illiteracy rates to teach them social skills and raise their awareness of hygiene, human rights, and cooperation. Ebda’ Benafsak members have begun visiting Torab al-Yahood, one of Cairo’s poorest and most densely populated areas, to get a close-up look at the lives of the children there to assess their needs and aspirations. The group organizes a visit approximately every two weeks, during which members take the kids clothes and food and play football with them in the hope of better understanding the roots of their problems and finding effective solutions.

Ebda’ Benafsak is also looking at new initiatives, such as tackling the country’s waste management issue, facilitating the process of keeping streets clean, combating bribery, recruiting participants to reinforce the role of community members in improving their neighborhoods, and forming volunteer committees to spread awareness about these and other social concerns, including gender issues.

**CONCLUSION**

On 25 January 2011, the world witnessed the first movement of an avalanche that not only reshaped Egypt, but the Middle East as well. Egyptians from all walks of life began to effectively take part in the nation’s political and social spheres, which had been closed to them for decades. One observable consequence of the revolution is the emergence of community service movements and groups, such as Ebda’ Benafsak, that aim to actively contribute to the welfare of the Egyptian nation through meaningful projects. The immediate post-revolutionary period will be one of uncertainty, but it will also likely be one of the most vibrant and dynamic periods in the history of Egypt and the Middle East. This period offers Egyptians the opportunity to become positive and productive members in their communities and to collectively advance as a nation and as a people.
Empowering Education: The Power of Youth

Mary Elizabeth King

THANK YOU PRESIDENT ROCK JONES. Special thanks to the president of the senior class, Alina Ruzmetova, as I understand that the seniors played a big part in my invitation. It is an honor to be with you.

When I had worldwide responsibility for the Peace Corps in the Carter administration, I would travel to villages and mountaintops, visiting Peace Corps volunteers in 60 countries. Often I'd talk with local people. Once, in Ethiopia, on the Horn of Africa, I met a young man who told me that the effects of the Peace Corps had for him been revolutionary. When I asked what he meant, he responded, 'The Peace Corps volunteer who was my teacher used to inquire, “What do you think?” No one had ever before asked me what I thought'.

If you want to do good, you need learning and skills. You've gotten the basics of an empowering education at Ohio Wesleyan: knowledge of social-justice issues, deep values, the ability to analyze and think for yourself, writing and communications skills, and discipline. You've had a wonderful faculty and close relations with your professors—which, by the way, is far from typical. You've had the opportunity for practical application.

In many universities, students spend four years on social networking, organizing the webs of contacts for future climbing of totem poles, polishing their address books, and planning their financial portfolios. This to me is not empowerment and not likely to bring much fulfillment. I suggest instead that you bring meaning to your life, make a difference in the world, and strive to bring about concrete change in crucial areas of human need, such as development, democracy, rights, protection of the environment. Can you do this? Absolutely. You have as much to offer as I had.

Ohio Wesleyan gave me so much. Miriam Willey in the religion and philosophy department regularly used to ask me my thoughts—a moment of empowerment when the teacher wants to learn from the taught. She also impressed upon me that possess-

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ing tolerance is not enough, because tolerance is often controlled hostility. Professor Butler A. Jones of the sociology department became my friend. I never took a course with him, yet he befriended me. He taught me about attitudinal change, and how it is difficult but not impossible to change attitudes. Charles Weis, in the English department, taught me that how one expresses a thought can be almost as important as the idea itself. Benjamin Spencer, who chaired the English department, taught me perhaps the greatest lesson of all: Life is fleeting, transitory, vanishing, evanescent.

I left Ohio Wesleyan, from the very position that you are in today, to join the civil rights movement. It was thanks to Miriam Willey and B. A. Jones that I was able to make my way into the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, pronounced *snick*). No Yellow Pages listing said phone here to put yourself on the line. I needed the help of these two fine Ohio Wesleyan educators to make this transition to SNCC, which has recently been called by historian Peniel Joseph the most significant organization in post–World War II America. My experiences working at the heart of this epochal movement more than any others define my life.

In Atlanta and Mississippi, my job was to tell the stories that southern white news media and editors routinely ignored. To them, deaths of black people or atrocities against them were not deemed newsworthy. Working with Julian Bond in a tiny office, with one manual typewriter and telephone apiece, we built an alternative media system to break the news. The stakes couldn’t have been higher. Getting a reporter to a jail, or covering an arrest, could save lives—including our own.

We used the most advanced technological methods available, but we had nearly nothing in print to teach us how to use nonviolent methods to fight for equal rights. Several professionals, who had spent time in India with participants in the independence struggles on the subcontinent, returned to the United States with personal knowledge and Gandhi’s writings. Bringing tangible wisdom from the East to the West, they shared it by word of mouth in hundreds of workshops or mass meetings in churches. Today, it is much easier to learn nonviolent civil resistance. The works of the scholar Gene Sharp have been translated into nearly forty languages.

Numerous human rights now considered ‘universal’ had first to be fought for through nonviolent struggles. Only later were they codified. In the twentieth century, people’s movements secured basic human rights for much of the world’s population, through women’s suffrage, anti-colonial, civil rights, and democracy movements that intentionally rejected the use of violence as the means to an end.

This form of struggle was used to obtain collective bargaining and the right of laborers to organize. Without it we might still have a seven-day work week. It enabled people to defy foreign occupations and coups d’état and to resist genocide. Most of Denmark’s Jews were saved from death by the Nazis because of a national nonviolent mobilization in which the entire society united as one. Ordinary persons have changed their societies through action methods deliberately chosen because they do not accomplish their goals through harm, injury, or threat of physical assault. Often with meager resources, relying on themselves, they were able to make their situation more just without creating new forms of oppression.

At Ohio Wesleyan, you have developed the courage of your convictions and also acquired discipline. I define discipline as the ability to exert concentrated energy and stick to something until completed. This is more important than you think. President
Jimmy Carter’s discipline and moral fortitude enabled him to achieve the Camp David Accords. Just recently, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that these accords have been the cornerstone of Israel’s security ever since.

Speaking of the Middle East, people have long asked, ‘Where are the Arab Gandhis and Martin Luther Kings?’ Experts claimed that Arabs were not interested in democracy. Yet national nonviolent movements led by young people have since December 2010 and January of this year changed the face of North Africa and the Middle East. Some say this Arab awakening is as historically significant as the collapse of the Ottoman Empire or the fall of the Soviet Union.

See with your own eyes: Youth and women’s groups are leading the democracy, human rights, and anti-corruption movements of the Islamic world. This includes Africa, where there are more Muslims than in the Arab world. The leader of today’s democracy movement in Yemen is a young woman. In the same way that bloggers in Tunisia and Egypt have employed their writing abilities, the writing that I had done at Ohio Wesleyan let me by age twenty-two do something important in the civil rights movement. Don’t overlook the significance of your acquired writing skills!

The frequency with which citizen groups turn to civil resistance is increasing, and our comprehension of how it is effective is accelerating. The fact that basic works and case studies by foremost scholars and theoreticians are available for download in dozens of languages partly explains the success of recent democracy movements in North Africa and the Middle East.

When the elections, political parties, parliamentary actions, or even lobbying and interest groups of institutionalized politics fail, people can exercise their inherent political power through nonviolent collective actions. Now, for the first time, violent resistance as the world’s automatic, default method for challenging grievances and rights-based struggles has a chance to be eclipsed by strategic employment of nonviolent action in the twenty-first century. It can be a practical substitute for armed struggle and guerrilla warfare, utilized in place of violent strategies, including civil war, rioting, terrorism, and conventional warfare. Your analytical skills let you understand how important these developments are.

Empirical evidence and hard data now show that countries that experience bottom-up, grass-roots nonviolent struggle are more likely to sustain human rights and democracy once established than when violence has been used.1 Scholars have shown that nonviolent movements succeed more often than violent insurrections.2

Perhaps the most remarkable transnational movement of the modern age was the women’s suffrage movement in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Yet more remained to be done. In the 1960s, I was a co-author, along with Casey Hayden, of a document called ‘Sex and caste’, which arose from discussions among women working in the civil rights movement in Mississippi.3 Movements often morph, shifting their

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targets from one issue to another as they succeed. Be prepared for transformation! Historians now believe that second-wave feminism was sparked by our ‘Sex and caste’. Calling it ‘second-wave feminism’ is a tribute, honoring an earlier wave of women’s rights action.

One secret to gratification in life is to choose something much larger than yourself in which to be involved, either full time or as a volunteer. Every returned Peace Corps volunteer I’ve met has told me that he or she gained more from their two years of service than they were able to give. Some fields and professions are highly fulfilling and enriching in a similar way. Over the years, teachers have said to me that they wished there was a civil rights movement that they could join, because they would like some form of activism. ‘Don’t you realize’, I respond, ‘teaching is a form of activism!’

Cast your eyes across the world stage. Women’s rights is becoming a central moral issue of the twenty-first century. Gender affects virtually all of human life. Over thirty years, the study of gender has emerged as a critical requirement for building peace. It is now widely understood that the socialization of men and women is crucial to the building of more peaceable societies.

The evidence is solid that the education and status of women stabilizes and uplifts the whole of societies—for men, children, and women. Uplift of women and their increased participation in public policy is now perceived as fundamental to economic growth, health status, reducing poverty, sustaining the environment, and consolidating democracy in societies long bowed down by authoritarianism and tyranny. The data are irrefutable.

Yet formidable social and cultural factors hamper policies and actions for educating women and girls, despite the scientific evidence of the wide-ranging benefits for everyone. Perhaps you can be instrumental in working on this. Both men and women are tackling these issues in Africa. Colleagues of mine in the University for Peace Africa Programme are leading the way. They never forget that approximately 1.5 billion women and girls in the world have no rights: They are sold into marriage—into forced marriages—surgically mutilated, and subjected to many forms of violence, some of it involving systematic trafficking.

‘Peacemaker’ is not a new word in English. It appears in the King James Bible. The term ‘building peace’ is, however, a new concept, dating to 1978 and the work of the United Nations in Namibia, in southern Africa. Peace building is like constructing a bridge from conflict to peace, which includes a wide range of actors, among them international donors; aid agencies; international, regional, and community groups; and grass-roots civil society organizations. Diverse players work to build security through development, gender, repatriation, protecting human rights, and introducing nonviolent modes to resolve current and future conflicts.

More conflicts today are ended by negotiated settlement than by military victory. This quantifiable fact even applies to strategies for addressing terrorism—so found a 2008 Rand Corporation study. Military force has been only rarely the primary

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reason for the end of terrorist groups. Today’s younger generations, worldwide, are showing serious interest in becoming peacemakers, engaged in building peace. They want to change the way their societies operate, to end injustices. They seek freedom and equality.

You can join this worldwide swell of the power of youth. The empowering education you received at Ohio Wesleyan will be your GPS. It will orient you on a road to tangible results for the human race and fulfillment and gratification for yourself.
UNIVERSITY FOR PEACE AFRICA PROGRAMME

The Africa Programme of the United Nations–mandated University for Peace (UPEACE) was established in 2002 to strengthen the capacity of African institutions in peace and conflict studies. Through collaborative efforts with African institutional partners, the Africa Programme oversees an array of activities in the fields of education, training, and research for peace throughout the sub-Sahara. It organises short courses and training workshops and produces a variety of publications and teaching toolkits in print and electronic formats. It also develops and facilitates distance education courses for participants from universities, government, civil society, and the security sector.

Current Publications

• ‘Bi Nka Bi’—Bite Not One Another: Selected Accounts of Nonviolent Struggle in Africa (2006)
• A Case Study: Transition from War to Peace in Sudan (2004)
• A Case Study: The Sixth Clan—Women Organize for Peace in Somalia: A Review of Published Literature (2004)
• Compendium of Key Documents on Human Rights and the African Union (2006)
• Compendium of Key Documents Relating to Peace and Security in Africa (2006)
• Distance-Education Training Course on the Role of the Media in the Rwanda Genocide (2005)
• Environment and Conflict in Africa: Reflections on Darfur (2009)
• Environmental Degradation as a Cause of Conflict in Darfur: Conference Proceedings, Khartoum, December 2004 (2006)
• Gender and Peace Building in Africa: A Reader (2006)
• Human Rights, Peace and Justice in Africa: A Reader (2006)
• Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa: A Reader (2006)
• Only Young Once: An Introduction to Nonviolent Struggle for Youths (2006)
• Peace, Conflict, and Development in Africa: A Reader (2011)
• Teaching Model: Nonviolent Transformation of Conflict (2006)

The Africa Peace and Conflict Journal (APCJ) is a publication of the University for Peace Africa Programme. It provides a vehicle for African scholars and others to express views from multidisciplinary and distinctly African perspectives on issues of peace and conflict affecting Africa. The journal also serves as an outlet for African viewpoints on global concerns.

In addition to making Africa’s voice heard on pivotal issues of peace and conflict, APCJ facilitates scholarly communities on the continent, encouraging engagement among them on questions of peace and security. It helps scholars, researchers, and practitioners tap into international knowledge networks, promoting debate, discussion, and dissemination of research findings. By publishing original research, examining current literature, and revisiting influential writings in the field of peace and conflict studies, APCJ strives to make critical contributions to the development and strengthening of institutions of good governance, equity, and democracy; the inculcation of cultures of peace; and the institutionalisation of peace and conflict studies in Africa.

The University for Peace Africa Programme works to strengthen Africa’s capacity for education, training, and research on issues of peace and security. Toward this end, it focuses on a variety of areas, including the following:

• conflict prevention, management, and resolution
• peace, conflict, and development
• human rights, justice, and peace
• nonviolent transformation of conflict
• regional integration and peace
• gender and peacebuilding
• media and peace
• endogenous knowledge systems
• refugees and internally displaced persons
• leadership and governance

African symbols known as *adinkra*, named after a legendary king and widespread in Ghana, are used on fabrics, walls, ceramics, and logos. ‘Bi Nka Bi’, the adinka symbol for harmony, means ‘bite not one another’. Based on two fish biting each other’s tail, it is representative of peace, visually cautioning against backbiting, provocation, and strife, and instead urging a community spirit of sharing, group cooperation, justice, equity, fair play, and forgiveness.