

## The Root Causes and Emerging Trajectories of Violent Conflict in Africa, Implications for Socio-Economic Development

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### Abstract

Africa in the last two decades has been the most conflict-affected region in the world. Ten of the 24 most war-affected countries between 1980 and 1994 were African, and four of these (Liberia, Angola, Mozambique and Somalia) were ranked within the five most severely affected countries in the world. Conflict has been responsible for more death and displacement than famine or flood. The scale and nature of warfare have directly affected the lives of many millions of Africans. The main elements of this tragedy are the millions of uprooted people who have lost their homes and livelihood, the increasing numbers of direct civilian casualties and increased levels of violence, abuse and mutilation suffered by non-combatants. While successive governments of the various nation states and the international communities have made concerted efforts to curb this menace, all efforts have proven abortive as emerging trajectories to violent conflict continue to arise, putting the continent in great jeopardy. The paper attempts to bring to the fore, the root causes of violent extremism in the continent, new trajectories to the rise of violent conflict, its extremism and measures through which the monster, violent conflict can be brought to its knees. Consequently, three research questions guided the works and secondary source of data was collated as descriptive design was used in the analysis recommendations were based on the findings. The significance and purpose of the study cannot be overemphasised as it will unravel the impending dangers inherent in the prevailing trajectory of violence in Africa

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**Keywords:** Trajectory, Conflicts, trajectory, Violence, Africa

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### INTRODUCTION

Conflict is undesirable. In its violent form, it claims the lives of many people, destroys property, and diverts human as well as financial resources away from development. (Alexander cited in Muhabie, 2015). No country or Continent is devoid of conflict of some form. While this may be true, it is also true to note that that of Africa is at a prevalent and violent state. Africa is one of the most conflict-ravaged continents in the world. It has become a continent well known for being a volatile, hostile and poor place due to numerous conflicts, wars, and colorizations. The states of the continent have endured many inter-state and intra-state armed conflicts. Although interconnected, Africa's conflicts occur at several levels, including direct inter-state wars and armed conflicts; intra-state civil wars and conflicts; and inter-communal conflicts (Kidane M., 2011). The fact that Africa is central to the politics of the USA, Europe and the Arab world has gained worldwide recognition due to the frequent incidents of war in the region. The solution for the conflicts in the area should be sought in the context of the history, political system, religious affiliations and economic relations of the countries to the rest of the world. Recent changes in the political order of the

world may have also changed the influence of the East on the continent. This has been demonstrated in the direction western countries are taking on matters concerning the continent, countries especially after the end of the cold war. This, however, does not mean that the old ties between African states and the international bodies have been broken. The tie between them has only been loosened and it can be tightened in times of emergency. This factor can intensify conflicts between neighbouring countries of the Horn (Shemelis Gizaw, 2003)

### Statement of the problem

With the advent of the Organisation of African Union (OAU) in 1963 now known as the African Union (AU), it was assumed that end has come to the African colonial rule cum a total end to violent conflicts in Africa, but over the years, especially in the last two decades, conflict totally seems to be the hallmark of African societies. Violent conflicts has been the order of the day in Africa with unending wars, incessant killings, destruction of communities which has led to displacements of lives and properties, hardship, disarray and state collapse. According to Chabal (2005), the African continent endures greater degree of violence since it attained

independence. The conflicts ranges from large scale regional conflicts (as in the central Africa region) to intractable civil wars(as in Angola or Liberia) by way of genocide (as in Rwanda) Warlodism (as in Sierra Leone). These conflicts are more prevalent or dominant amongst countries whose economies are dependent on natural resources such as oil and minerals. Series of inter and intra conflicts has taken place in Africa since 1960's Example Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Angola, Liberia etc. have witnessed civil wars while Nigeria-Cameroun (since 1970's), Algeria-Morocco (1963), Entrea-Ethiopia (1962-1979), Chad-Libya (1980-1982) among others have equally been challenged with interstate conflicts (Aremu: 2010).

Today, Africa has been highly susceptible to violent conflict, a more reason the continent is equated as a home of war and instability whose history is replete with conflict (Alabi: 2006, Aremu: 2010). The Department of International Development (2001), recorded that ten of the twenty four most war and conflict affected countries between the year 1980 and 1994 were Africa, and out of these (Liberia, Angola, Mozambique and Somalia) were ranked within the five most severely affected countries in the world. This has been responsible for more deaths and displacement than epidemic diseases, famine and flood which has bedevilled development in Africa.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center in the year 2017, recorded that 15,000 people are displaced every day inside African countries, 75% of the displacement were caused by conflict in the first half of 2017 and 70% in 2016. Countries like Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa are regularly among the five countries worst affected. Also, their 2018 record equally showed that there were estimated 5.2 million new internal displacement within the first half of the year and sub Saharan Africa accounted for six out of the ten countries with the highest figure. These countries includes: Ethiopia(1.4million), Syria(1.2million), Democratic republic of Congo(946,000), Nigeria(417,00), Somalia(341,000), Central Africa Republic(232,000),South Sudan(215,000), Afghanistan(168,000), India (166,000) and Yemen(142,000).The recent increase in riot and conflicts in Africa has led to the following research questions

- i)What are the root causes of violent conflict in Africa?
- ii) What are the implications of violent conflict in the socio economic development of Africa?
- iii) How can trajectory of violent conflict in Africa be reduced to barest minimum to pave way to socio economic development of the continent?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study has both theoretical and empirical significance, theoretically, it will further add credence towards the validation of conflict theory and

enrich the body of literature while also serving as a reference materials for further reading and research, empirically, it will serve as a policy guide for African leaders in particular and AU in general in the areas of governance and conflict management.

### **Methodology**

Data of this study were generated through a careful review of already existing and relevant literature drawn from the subject under study. These literature consists of journals, text books and internet sources. The research is mainly qualitative thus the data was analysed using content analytic method.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The inability of the researcher to travel to the violent prone areas of African states to have a first hand information on the nature and cause of trajectory of violence forms the major limitations of this work, however the research was able to rely on secondary data to ensure that the quality and authenticity of the work is intact.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Conflict Theory, developed by Karl Marx, (1818-1883) developed in 1847 was adopted in this study, it purports that due to society's never-ending competition for finite resources it will always be in a state of conflict. The implication of this theory is that those in possession of wealth and resources will protect and hoard those resources, while those without will do whatever they can to obtain them. This dynamic means there is a constant struggle between the rich and the poor.

### **Applications of Conflict Theory in Understanding Conflict**

The theory is that if the wealth gap, marginalization, tussle for power and religious intolerance becomes too wide, social unrest will ensue. If the government doesn't help reduce the degree of inequality, conflict will run out of control and protests, terrorism, insurgency, or even civil wars will break out.

## **CONCEPTUAL EXPLICATION**

### **The Concept of Violence**

Coady (1986) is probably right when he reminds us that the normal or ordinary understanding of the term 'violence' is in terms of interpersonal acts of force usually involving the infliction of physical injury, which suggests that the concept of violence cannot be understood independently from the concept of force. This strong affinity between the terms 'violence' and 'force' would appear to be vindicated by the Oxford English Dictionary, where violence is defined as 'the exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury on, or cause damage to, person or property'. Notwithstanding its linguistic roots and common perception, the relationship between violence and force is one of the most debated issues

in the literature on violence. On one side there are those who have no qualms about defining violence in terms of force. One of the earliest and most authoritative representatives of this group is the American pragmatist John Dewey. In a series of articles originally published in 1916, Dewey (1980: 246) argues that violence is force gone wrong, or, put another way, force that is destructive and harmful: 'energy becomes violence when it defeats or frustrates purposes instead of executing or realizing it. When the dynamite charge blows up human beings instead of rocks, when its outcome is waste instead of production, destruction instead of construction, we call it not energy or power but violence'

It is important to emphasize that Dewey is not saying that force and violence are synonymous. Clearly not all force is violence (rescuing someone from drowning or preventing someone from harming themselves), just as not all acts of violence require the use of force (murder by poisoning). Instead, according to Dewey it is only when force becomes destructive and harmful that it turns into an act of violence. Apart from being destructive, it has been suggested that an act of force must also be intentional or deliberate in order to count as an act of violence. Thus, for example, Thomas Pogge (1991: 67) claims that 'a person uses physical violence if he deliberately acts in a way that blocks another's exercise of her legitimate claim-rights by physical means', while Steger (2003: 13) argues that 'violence is the intentional infliction of physical or psychological injury on a person or persons'. There is also a debate whether excessive force, apart from being intentional or deliberate, should also be unwanted. The advantage of adding this clause is that it would rule out acts of intentional, excessive force that are clearly not acts of violence, such as surgery, although the risk is that clear examples of violence, such as foot binding or voluntary labial infibulations, would not be recognised for what they really are.

### **The Concept of Conflict**

The term conflict is taken from the Latin word, "conflictus" meaning strike together. Conflict means clash, contention, confrontation, a battle or struggle or quarrel (Nwolise, 1997). Coser (1956 cited in Otite 2001) defines conflict as a struggle over values and claims of scarce status, power and resources, in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralise, injure or eliminate their rivals. It has also been noted that conflict arises as a consequence of the striving of man, the social being who in the course of promoting some of his objectives, either intentionally or unintentionally upsets and direct to negative uses, instead of strengthening along beneficial line, some of the arrangement that ought to be for the benefit of man (Nwangegbo, 2005). Conflict becomes violence when it is accompanied with threat and actual destruction of life and property.

**Gap in literature:** Notwithstanding a lot literature abound in the areas of trajectories of violence in Africa, there are little or nothing in the implications of such violence towards the economic development of Africa as it borders on her achieving agenda 2063, this is the gap that this work fills

## **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **Research Question 1. What are the root causes of violent conflict in Africa?**

#### **The Colonial legacy as basis of conflict**

Some scholars, including Mokwugo Okoyo (1977), Bonny Duala-M'Bedy (1984), Claude Ake (1985) and Herman J. Cohen (1995), consider the numerous pat conflicts in Africa as a natural consequence of Africa's colonial past. Okoyo (1977:93), for example, posits that 'political instability is rooted in the very structure of society and, for most new countries, in the colonial past'. He also adds that 'Africa's post-colonial present can be said to have been fashioned for Africa by Africa's colonial past'. Subscribing to this viewpoint, Ambassador Herman J. Cohen (1995) asserted that 'the sources and consequences of Africa's internal conflicts have their roots in colonialism, the subsequent processes of de-colonisation and state formation, and the ensuing crisis of nation building'. For Cohen, the colonial state was fraught with contradictions. As he put it, 'The modern African state was created by colonial powers out of ethnic and regional diversities, and in the uneven distribution of national wealth and development opportunities' (Cohen 1995:11). In other words, the basis had been created for many of the conflicts experienced in post-independence Africa. Duala-M'Bedy (1984:10), subscribing to this viewpoint, asserted that 'the problems being experienced by modern African States are based on our colonial experience'.

Cohen (1995:11) also indicted the de-colonisation process when he observed that in many countries the contradictions of the colonial state were passed on to the independent states through a flawed process of de-colonisation. He argued that 'conflict, recurring instability, and bad governance in Zaire, Rwanda, and Burundi can be traced back to the hasty and unprepared granting of independence by Belgium in 1960'. He also considered the major wars in Angola and Mozambique as arising out of 'panic de-colonisation from a revolutionary and chaotic Portugal in 1974-75'. Insofar as the war in Sudan was concerned, he traced it to 'the manner in which the Anglo-Egyptian administration brought the North and the South together, but kept them apart under a separatist policy for most of the Condominium rule, and then left them in a centralized unitary state without constitutional guarantees for the disadvantaged South' (Cohen 1995:12). These are only some examples of the conflicts in Africa which General Obasanjo (1991) described aptly as the

continent with the greatest number of conflicts. heard' (Thomas 1994:195).

In the case of British Southern Cameroons, for example, the United Kingdom (UK) failed to nurture a United Nations (UN) Trust Territory to Statehood in accordance with the UN Trusteeship Agreement. Rather, the UK lobbied the UN to hastily lump together British Southern Cameroons and a Trust Territory of France without constitutional guarantees for the disadvantaged former British Territory of Southern Cameroons. While the on-going Western Sahara conflict is about the right of self-determination afforded other former European dependencies, the conflicting situation in Côte d'Ivoire following the death of the country's first President, Houphouët Boigny, is also closely associated with the nature of the country's independence and political leadership.

### Political Crisis

Most of politicians of the region are not visionaries rather they struggle to seize state power seemingly for the purpose of rent seeking and in order to redress grievances that leads to the weakening of the state. Most of the countries of the Africa are known for their centralized states which contribute for the acceleration of instabilities and corruption which at the end directs to their fragmentation and failure. From the above analysis, it is obvious that, there is no single cause of conflict. Rather, conflict is context-specific, multi-causal and multi-dimensional and can result from a combination of the following factors:

1. Political and institutional factors: weak state institutions, elite power struggles and political exclusion, breakdown in social contract and corruption, identity politics
2. Socio-economic factors: inequality, exclusion and marginalisation, absence or weakening of social cohesion, poverty
3. Resource and environmental factors: greed, scarcity of national resources often due to population growth leading to environmental insecurity, unjust resource exploitation

### Ethnic Polarities

As it is known by its multi-ethnic groups, Africa is also a home of racial divergence groups. Some of them thought that they were excluded by the former governmental systems and they started the hatred for other ethnicities which are assumed to have a strong tie with the previous systems. In Ethiopia, though the reality is different, the oromo and some other ethnic groups consider as Amhara peoples were the most beneficiaries of the then governments. This is one of the major factors that direct the intrastate conflicts in the country. The political elites of the country, in the present days, use this as a fertile ground for manipulation of ethnic and regional sentiments.

### Religious Radicalism

A majority of Muslims in West Africa are adherents of the Sunni branch of Islam, and several centuries of practicing Islam have led to some integration and normalisation of certain elements of indigenous cultural practices as parts of the religion. The infiltration of the region by alternative sects, especially Shia (from Iran) and Ahmadiyah (from Pakistan) over the past 50 years has led to a challenge of the Sunni orthodoxy or aspects of it. The doctrinal rivalries and challenges within and between Sunni and Shia followers are the fiercest and are often at the root of radicalisation

In Sierra Leone, the radical Salafist groups and their leaders (Imam Bashar and Sheikh Mujtabah) emerged through their rejection of orthodox Sunni doctrines and their call for puritanical Islam. In Ghana, the Ahlussunna Waljama'a group follows a similar pattern of criticising, condemning and rejecting orthodox Sunni practices and advocating Islamic revival and renewal. In Nigeria, the Boko Haram group with the meaning and intent of, Western Education is Forbidden is born out of religious fanaticism and radicalism, thus is making the continent replete with violent conflict.

### Farmland-herd Communal Disputes

In the past many African countries were blessed with relative land abundance. This situation has, however, changed radically in most of the countries. People in Africa are now increasingly competing to get access to arable land and pastures, and open land conflicts are becoming more and more common across the continent. Market development and population growth provide an important part of the explanation for this development (Quan et al 2004).

According to the Global Terrorism Index, "Fulani militants were the fourth deadliest terrorist group in 2014, using machine guns and attacks on villages to assault and intimidate farmers. After killing around 80 people in total from 2010 to 2013, they killed 1,229 in 2014. Most deaths occurred in the Nigerian Middle Belt, in particular in the states of Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba, which recorded 847 deaths. The state of Zamfara, in the northern belt, recorded 229 deaths. In addition to terrorist attacks, Fulani militants were also involved in non-state armed conflicts with groups from Eggon, Jukun and Tiv farming communities. These conflicts resulted in over 800 deaths by 2015. The year 2016 saw further incidents in Agatu, Benue and Nimbo, Enugu State. In April 2018 Fulani gunmen killed 19 people during an attack on the church, afterwards they burnt dozens of nearby homes. In June 2018, over 200 people were killed and 50 houses were burnt in clashes between farmers and Fulani cattle herders in Plateau State. In

October 2018, Fulani herdsmen killed at least 19 people in Bassa By 2018, over 2000 people were killed in those conflicts. On 16 December 2018, Militants believed to be Fulani Herdsmen attacked a village in Jema'a, killing 15 people and injuring at least 24 others, the attack occurred at a wedding ceremony.”

**Hate Speeches through social and conventional media**

Over the last nearly fifteen years, the media—and radio broadcasting in particular—has been instrumental in instigating and sustaining rebel wars and ethnic conflicts in the Great Lakes region of Africa, especially in Burundi, Rwanda, and the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In this region, the media has become an effective tool in propagating hatred and ethnic divisions, thereby increasing existing tensions between and within the countries by reinforcing nationalistic sentiments, or

heightening and politicizing ethnic identities. Through encouraging violent activities, tension or hatred between races, ethnic or social groups, or countries for political goals and/or to foster conflict by offering one-sided and biased views and opinions, and resorting to deception” (Radio Netherlands Media Network). They disseminate hate speech, which is characterized by unsubstantiated and intense negative views of and expressions directed toward a group or a group’s representative (Tsesis 2002). A central characteristic of hate speech is that it is dehumanizing and defaming, and is used to denigrate and harm the target the radio station Radio T’el’evision Mille Collines (RTL) during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. The broadcasts of this government-owned station, which incited the Hutu majority to murder Tutsis and opponents of the regime, are commonly recognized as having played a major role in this genocide (des Forges 1999; Gourevitch 1998).

# The World’s Poorest Countries



Figure 1. Showing the world poorest countries being dominated by African States

The top of the list are mostly least developed countries of which the majority are from Sub-Saharan Africa. Africa tops the list of the poorest countries of the world which the major cause has been traced to unstable economy as a result of violent crisis.

The significance relationship between poverty and conflict has become more obvious and threatening since the demise of the Cold War. Of 63 low-income (poor) countries, 38 are located in Sub-Saharan Africa and strikingly, these are the countries associated with conflict (Luckham et al, 2001). Poverty is also one of the cardinal forces that accounts for instability in many parts in the African continent. West Africa for example harbours 11 of the 25 most poorest and underdeveloped countries and is currently one of the unstable regions globally There is a strong correlation between the absence of material well-being and the prospects for violence, from crime in inner-city neighbourhood to political

instability and social conflict in poor nations (Atwood, 2005).

**Bad Governance and Inept Leadership**

Africa has consistently suffered from the problem of inept leadership which has retarded political integration and unity in almost all African states. Given the heterogeneous composition of most African states, perhaps what they needed most are the virtues of administrative efficiency, political tolerance, equity, fairness and social justice. These essential ingredients are to be provided by the continent’s leadership. Unfortunately however, the realities on ground in most African nations have revealed that most African leaders are weak, corrupt and unpatriotic.

Potentially, the quality of the bureaucratic apparatus, the extent of political corruption, and the appropriateness of the economic policies chosen by political leaders also affect governments’ ability to prevent domestic violent conflicts. This conception of

governance is much wider than the formal setup of the institutions that stipulates the formal rules for this process. We argue that governance such defined improves our understanding of the link between deprivation and armed conflict

**Research question 11) What are the implications of violent conflict in the socio economic development of Africa?**

**Loss of life and property**

According to UNICEF study which looked at nearly 15,500 conflicts in 34 of Africa's 54 nations over two decades and examined data on conflict-related deaths, live births and child mortality rates. "Conflicts were found to have a substantial impact on child mortality, accounting for around seven percent of all child deaths. Infants born within 50 km

(30 miles) of conflict had a greater risk of dying in their first year compared to those born in conflict-free years within the same region. When conflict-related violence increased in intensity, the researchers found that the risk of infant death increased to around 30 percent. Infant mortality rates were four times higher in conflicts lasting five years or more, the study found"

This higher risk of child death was still prevalent even at a distance of 100 km from a conflict, and children born up to eight years after conflicts had subsided still faced the risk of death. Conflict appears to substantially increase the risk of death and stunting for young children over vast areas and for many years after conflicts have ended,

**Increase in internally displaced persons**

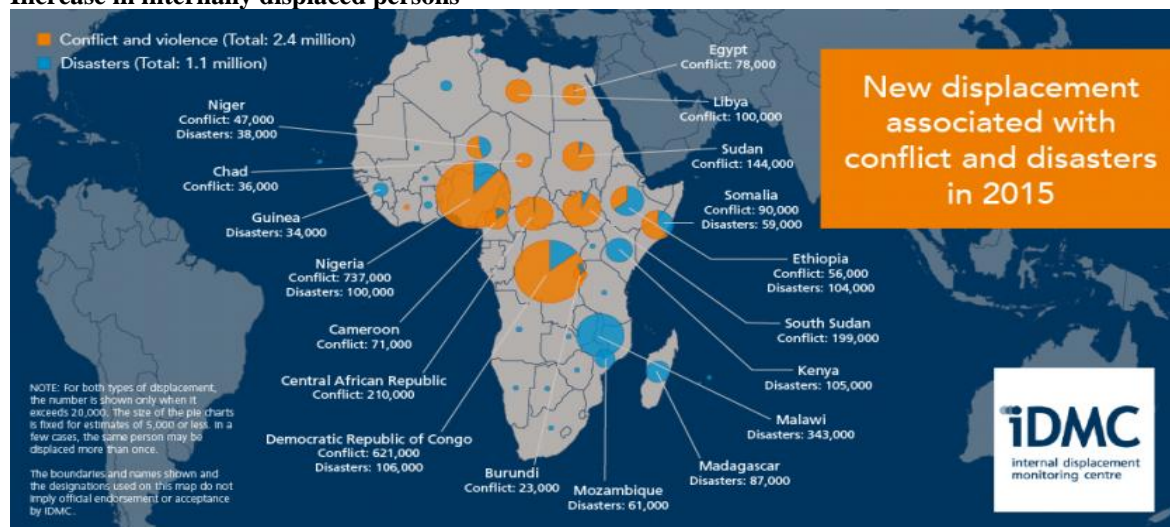


Figure 2: showing the number of internally displaced persons in Africa as a result of conflict  
Source :Africa report on internal displacement

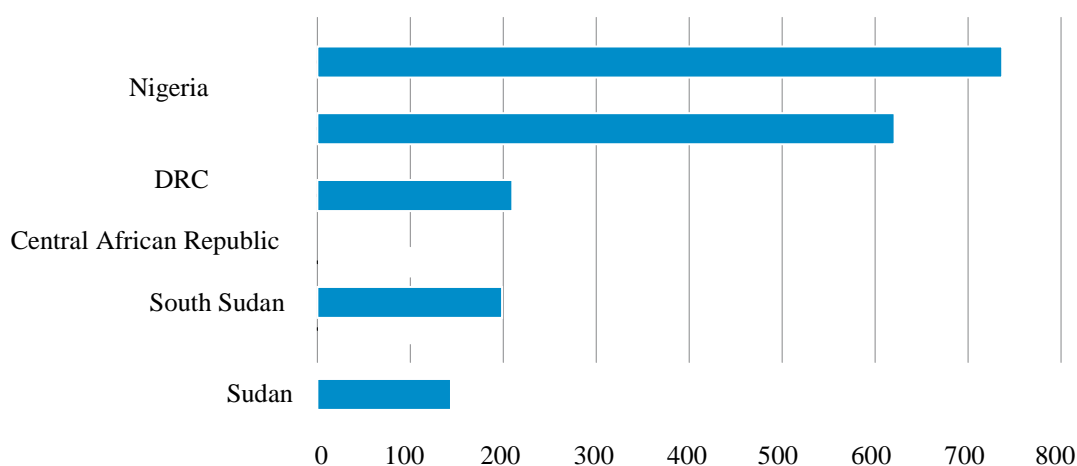


Figure 3: showing Countries with most new displacement linked to conflict in 2015  
People newly displaced, in thousands  
Source: Africa report on internal displacement

Conflict displaced more than 2.4 million people in 14 African countries during 2015, making the continent

second only to the Middle East for violence as a cause of flight. Nigeria accounted for more than 30 per cent of the figure, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) a quarter. As figure 3 shows,

violence forced more than 736,000 people from their homes in Nigeria during the year, more than in any other African country. It is indicative of the scale cost African leaders incurred taking care of the IDPs.

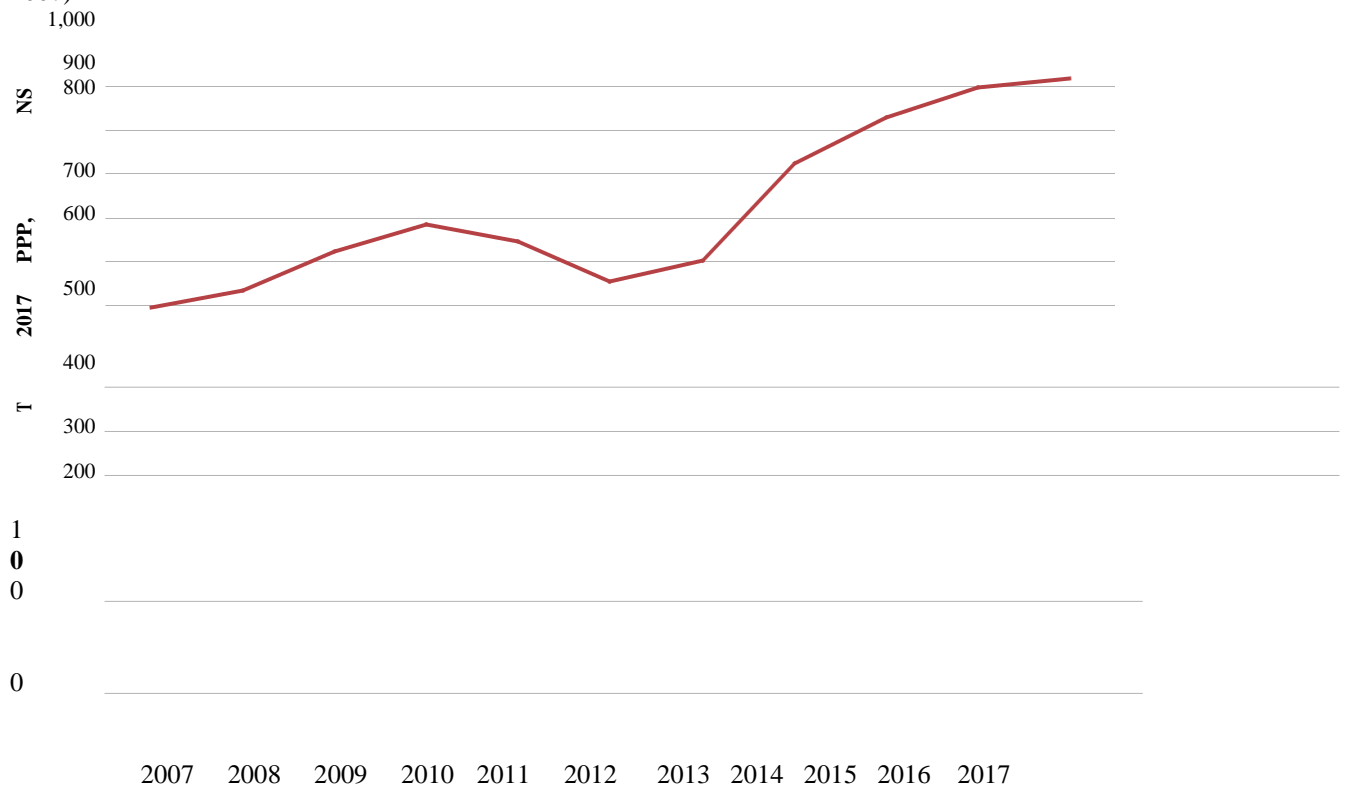
**Cost implications of reconstruction after the crisis**

African countries in conflict have, on average:

- 50 per cent more infant deaths
- 15 per cent more undernourished people
- Life expectancy reduced by five years
- 20 per cent more adult illiteracy;
- 2.5 times fewer doctors per patient; and
- 12.4 per cent less food per person.( Africa’s missing billions, IANSA, Oxfam, and Saferworld, October 2007)

The value of the Human Development Index (HDI) drops, pushing the average conflict country from medium to low development, and GDP per capita is reduced by \$1120 (63 per cent). Of course, costs are not borne equally across the population, and inequalities often rise as many conflicts are fought along regional, social, religious, or ethnic lines

The cost of conflict has recorded a steep rise since 2012 which coincides with the start of conflicts in Syria, Libya and Yemen.



*The economic impact of conflict, mainly due to a surge in internal conflicts, has increased over the past eleven years by 106 per cent and now stands at \$1.02 trillion. This amounts to eight per cent of the total global economic impact of violence. This period corresponds with the start of the Syrian war and rising violence in the aftermath of the Arab uprising in Libya, Yemen and other parts of the Middle East and North Africa. The economic impact of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have also increased between 2012 and 2017, due to the rise of ISIL and its global affiliates. The conflict indicator in this report includes deaths from external and internal conflict, deaths and injuries from terrorism, indirect impact of conflict on the economy and the cost of population displacement. (Economic Value Of Peace 2018)*

Armed conflict has substantial adverse economic impacts through the loss of life, the displacement of civilian population, associated types of violence such as terrorism, and disruption in economic activity. Mass violence and war also destroys physical

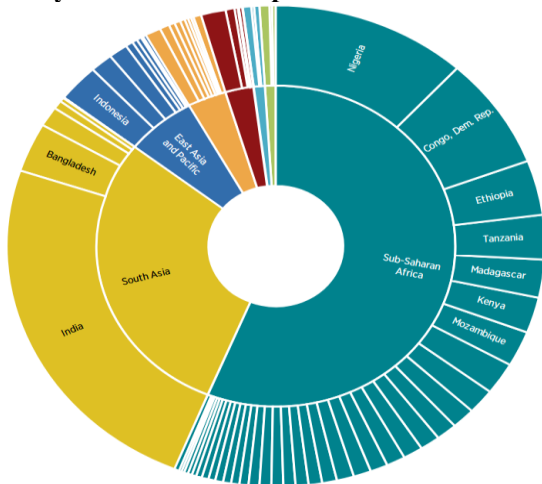
**High Rate of Unemployment**

Table 1: The list of countries of Africa with the highest level of unemployment rate

Country	Last	Previous	Range
<u>Congo</u>	46.10 Dec/13	49.1	66.9 : 45.4 %
<u>Namibia</u>	33.40 Dec/18	34	37.6 : 19.5 %
<u>South Africa</u>	27.60 Mar/19	27.1	31.2 : 21.5 %
<u>Lesotho</u>	27.25 Dec/17	27.78	44.16 : 22.96 %
<u>Swaziland</u>	26.40 Dec/17	26.4	28.6 : 21.6 %
<u>Mozambique</u>	25.04 Dec/17	24.37	25.3 : 22.55 %
<u>Nigeria</u>	23.10 Sep/18	22.7	23.1 : 5.1 %
<u>Angola</u>	20.00 Dec/18	20	35 : 19.9 %
<u>Gabon</u>	19.60 Dec/17	18.5	21.56 : 16.68 %
<u>Ethiopia</u>	19.10 Dec/18	16.9	26.4 : 16.8 %
<u>Botswana</u>	18.10 Dec/17	17.6	26.2 : 13.9 %
<u>Libya</u>	17.70 Dec/17	18.4	20.3 : 15.8

Source: Trading economics 2019 Unemployment crisis.

**Poverty and under development**



Source: PovcalNet [online analysis tool], World Bank, Washington, DC, <http://research.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>. Note: The inner circle is proportionate to the percentage of the total population of poor people living in each region. The outer circle is similarly proportionate, but at the country level. The 10 countries with the most poor people in the world are listed.

Figure 5: showing Africa taking the lead of the poorest countries of the world

The average poverty rate for sub-Saharan Africa stands at about 41 per cent, and of the world’s 28 poorest countries, 27 are in sub-Saharan Africa all with a poverty rate above 30 per cent. Projections by the World Bank also show that extreme poverty is

showing few signs of improvement in sub-Saharan Africa, and may keep countries from ending extreme poverty by 2030

**Research question 3. How can trajectory of violent conflict in Africa be reduced to barest minimum to pave way to socio economic development of the continent?**

**Religious and Ethnic Integration In Africa: A Mechanism To Conflict In Africa**

Africa is a multi-religious nation, with Islam and Christianity dominating the religious climate. In fact, these two dominant religious beliefs have served as unifying factors in national integration. However, the rise in the level of religious misunderstanding had resulted into numerous cases of intra and inter religious crises. Religious crises have become veracious and alarming during the past two decades. It is within this context that this paper examines the connection between religion and national integration in Africa. It identified some of the hindrances affecting religion in promoting national integration. After the analysis of these challenges, the paper concludes with suggestions towards sustainable national integration through religion.

**Good Governance and Poverty Alleviation: A Panacea To Violent Conflict In Africa:**

Using Nigeria as a case of study, Good Governance and poverty alleviation are key to reducing the poverty in Africa. A common parlance says, ‘a hungry man is an angry man’ Governance and security are separate concepts, yet they have a relationship. To be precise, it is governance that provokes and defines the nature of security. In effect, when there is governance failure the security framework deteriorates as has been the case in Nigeria. To ensure effective security system, there must necessarily be some link between the elements of good governance by the leadership. These elements include rule of law, accountability and transparency in the management of resources, political stability, provision of basic needs and services as well as absence of corruption. The role of the leadership is particularly important in the governance project.

**Mass Media: A Tool for National Peace Building**

For the purposes of this paper, the term media refers to both ‘traditional’ mass media (newspapers, TV, radio) and social media (online blogs, Facebook, Twitter etc). The two have become ‘intimately intertwined, with both used as sources of news and information and tweets used as SoundBits. “Media and journalism should be understood as part of a wider ‘communication ecology’ that includes a wide range of stakeholders and practices.

The following are some of the ways the media can be used and has been used to curb violent conflict and

promote peace building, with examples from other continents:

#### **Provides early warning**

In Sri Lanka, the Foundation for Co-Existence (FCE) implemented a citizen-based system that involved media monitoring (including newspapers, websites, other public media, handbills, hate speech) followed by appropriate response mechanisms for each early warning signal.

#### **Outlet to express emotions**

Media can allow people to express their fears and frustrations and share experiences and advice with others. It can also link people with power holders, enabling open communication and dialogue. BringBackOurGirls mobilized emotional responses to the kidnapping of nearly 300 girls in Nigeria by a militant Islamist movement. Celebrities, politicians, and citizens were brought together by their online demands for the girls to be returned while airing their dismay at the radical group's actions.

#### **Motivator for peace**

The media can motivate people to take action and to participate in community events. But the media's impact on behaviour change is complex. It is more likely to work on attitudes and opinions that shape behaviours rather than directly affecting people's actions.

Through social media monitoring technology, developed by iHub in 2013, the Kenyan government was able to foster civic participation, transparency and accountability during the elections.

#### **Brings together different groups to discuss issues:**

The media can be an effective tool to build relationships. It can support greater understanding and cohesion between people who consider themselves different from one another. It can give voice to the most marginalized in society.

The South African "Peace Café" programme brought parties together who had been unwilling to meet by interviewing them separately and then editing the video and showing it to the other side. This process eventually led to direct negotiations between the parties.

#### **Helps improve governance**

Fact-based, independent, transparent, accountable and impartial reporting can serve to hold officials accountable and make public administrations more transparent. It enables citizens to be active stakeholders, to understand policies and use the impartial information provided to exercise their human rights. All of these are critical for conflict prevention.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Tracing back to the early times and coming forth to the present days and potentially in the future, Africa is the most volatile, fragile and exposed for numerous inter and intra state disputes. This could include socio-political, economical and historical origins though there is no one size for all recipe. Religious extremism and ethnic polarity are the deep rooted foundations of the escalated violence among the states of Africa. However diverse the conflicts in Africa are, it is becoming increasingly clear that these conflicts cannot be contained within the present state frameworks, especially with the very terrible cases of state failure such as in Somalia, Sudan a Congo (DRC). Notwithstanding, some ideas are being advanced which may help to solve this problem. African governments need to recognise the complexities that exist in these conflicts and to remove barriers to accessing land for pastoralists without compromising the rights of farming communities.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Early Warning System: One is the concept of 'early warning' system. Academics have for some time been proposing types of information that could be fed into databases to provide early warning of possible future conflicts. There is a growing awareness that preventive diplomacy is needed, whereby information gathering, monitoring and the provision of databases can be utilised by governments, international agencies, humanitarian organisations, the media, etc. for action to prevent the breaking-out and escalation of conflicts.

5. Preventive deployment for Peace Enforcement: In his UN report, *Agenda for Peace*, June 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali proposes 'preventive deployment' of peacekeepers, for the creation of peace enforcement units and the setting up of a UN reserve Army. Mozambique was to receive 7500 UN peacekeepers. The report, of course, was not just relating to Africa, but for the world and it represented an important phase to anticipate, limit and end conflict.

6. Continental Development Imperative: Instead of consistently blaming the woes of the continent on colonialism, slave trade and the like, African leaders should take the challenge and work towards the development of the continent for the benefit of Africans. While working towards such a stable environment, more analysis has to be made about this great idea of democratisation. What must be noted is that democracy can only be nurtured in a stable and secure society, but cannot be sustained in the midst of social turmoil and political instability. It is good leadership that brings development and prosperity and ultimately eliminates conflicts.

7. Comprehending Causes and Histories of Conflicts: African countries have to find answers to their conflicts by comprehending and understanding the underlying causes and histories of these conflicts and

work out ways of averting potential conflicts. This can be done, just as in the case of ACDESS, by undertaking case studies of conflicts in countries, with a view to developing appropriate and realistic policies towards averting conflicts in the continent. This is a bold step in the right direction.

9. New Conflict Management Ways: Finally, it is important that Africans develop new ways of conflict management. It is true that artificial societies created by colonialism in which different nationalities, ethnic groups and tribes were forcibly yoked together cannot be wielded in peaceful nation-states that can be stable and prosperous, the problem is not peculiarly African; deeply segmented societies exist virtually everywhere. The mere presence of many ethnic groups in a country does not necessary bring about internal stability, animosity and conflicts. What makes the difference between stable plural societies and unstable ones is usually the response of the leadership to the fact of multi nationality.

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