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BURSA ULUDAG UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA: THE CASES OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, AND MALI.

(PhD. THESIS)

Isidore Agha NDZAMANGWI

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THE DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA: THE CASES OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, AND MALI

This research examines conflict and peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali. Intrastate conflicts have spillover consequences. This explains why a holistic understanding of such conflict is relevant. The study seeks to examine the causes of conflict and the ambiguous role of nonstate armed actors. It equally aims to evaluate the effectiveness of regional, continental, and international peacekeeping operations and the extent to which such missions contribute to peacebuilding. The study relied on several theories to explain the causes of conflict, and a conceptual framework on conflict and peacebuilding was applied to analyze regional, continental, and international interventions. Informed by the case study research design, the study ostensibly unraveled the complex dynamics of conflict and peacebuilding in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali. From the three hypotheses analyzed, the research demonstrated that the political economy of African state leadership and ethnoreligious sentiments are significant drivers of conflict. Qualitative analysis from the study showed that nonstate armed actors influence the dynamics of intrastate conflicts in complex and contradictory ways. The involvement of armed groups in conflicts significantly impacts the level and severity of violence and instability. Evidence from the research revealed that the successes and challenges of peacekeeping missions significantly affect the achievement of conflict resolution. The study thus concludes with recommendations, maintaining that host state authorities should respect the terms of peace agreements as a matter of necessity. At the same time, regional and international peacekeeping missions must take broader measures to clearly explain the contents of their mandates to their host populations.

Keywords: Conflict, Peacebuilding, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Mali, Regional Economic Communities, African Union, United Nations.

ÖZET

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AFRİKA'DA ÇATIŞMA VE BARIŞ İNŞASI DİNAMİKLERİ: KONGO DEMOKRATİK CUMHURİYETİ, ORTA AFRİKA CUMHURİYETİ VE MALİ ÖRNEKLERİ

Bu araştırma, Demokratik Kongo Cumhuriyeti, Orta Afrika Cumhuriyeti ve Mali'deki çatışma ve barış inşasını incelemektedir. Devlet içi çatışmaların yayılma sonuçları vardır. Bu, böyle bir çatışmanın bütüncül bir anlayışının neden alakalı olduğunu açıklar. Çalışma, çatışmanın nedenlerini ve devlet dışı silahlı aktörlerin belirsiz rolünü incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Aynı şekilde bölgesel, kıtasal ve uluslararası barışı koruma operasyonlarının etkinliğini ve bu tür misyonların barış inşasına ne ölçüde katkıda bulunduğunu değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, çatışmanın nedenlerini açıklamak için çeşitli bölgesel teorilere dayanmakta olup, bölgesel, kıtasal ve uluslararası müdahaleleri analiz etmek için çatışma ve çatışma çözümüne ilişkin kavramsal bir çerçeve uygulanmıştır. Vaka çalışması araştırma tasarımı açısından ele alınan çalışma, Demokratik Kongo Cumhuriyeti, Orta Afrika Cumhuriyeti ve Mali'deki çatışma ve barış inşasının karmaşık dinamiklerini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Analiz edilen üç hipotez üzerinden araştırma, Afrika devlet liderliğinin politik ekonomisinin ve etnik-dini duyguların çatışmanın önemli itici güçleri olduğunu göstermiştir. Çalışmanın nitel analizi, devlet dışı silahlı aktörlerin, devlet içi çatışmaların dinamiklerini karmaşık ve çelişkili şekillerde etkilediğini göstermiştir. Silahlı grupların çatışmalara dahil olması, şiddetin ve istikrarsızlığın düzeyini ve ciddiyetini önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. Araştırmadan elde edilen kanıtlar, barışı koruma misyonlarının başarılarının ve zorluklarının çatışma çözümünün başarısını önemli ölçüde etkilediğini ortaya koymuştur. DKC, OAC ve Mali'deki çatışma ve barış inşasının karşılaştırmalı bir analizi aracılığıyla bu araştırma, üç ülkenin de belirli çatışma tetikleyicileri olduğunu göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte çalışma, incelenen üç ülkede çatışma oluşumunu açıklayan belirli ortak faktörleri eşit olarak belirlemiştir. Aynı şekilde çalışma, yukarıdaki çatışma senaryolarındaki devlet yetkililerinin hepsinin, çatışmanın büyüklüğünü tanımlayan ve şekillendiren ortak özellikleri paylaştığını incelemiş ve ortaya koymuştur. Çalışma, bölgesel, kıtasal ve uluslararası barışı koruma operasyonlarının etkinliğini değerlendirmenin yanı sıra, bu tür barış misyonlarının karşılaştığı zorlukları da vurgulamıştır. DKC, OAC ve

Mali vakalarında analiz edildiği üzere çatışmaların hem hükümetler hem de siviller üzerinde yıkıcı etkiler ortaya çıkardığı söylenebilir. Afrika Birliği, Bölgesel Ekonomik Topluluklar ve BM misyonları, bu devletlerde krizi çözmek ve barışı inşa etmek için müdahale etmeye devam etmektedir. Her ne kadar zorluklar çok büyük olsa da bölgesel, kıtasal veya uluslararası barış misyonları önemli başarılar kaydetmiş ve DKC, OAC ve Mali'yi istikrara kavuşturma konusımda muazzam ilerleme kaydetmiştir. Bu nedenle çalışma, ev sahibi devlet makamlarının bir zorunluluk olarak barış anlaşmalarının şartlarına uyması gerektiğini savunan tavsiyelerle sona ermektedir. Aynı zamanda, bölgesel ve uluslararası barışı koruma misyonları, yetkilerinin içeriğini ev sahibi nüfusa net bir şekilde açıklamak için daha geniş önlemler almalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çatışma, Barışın İnşası, Demokratik Kongo Cumhuriyeti, Orta Afrika Cumhuriyeti, Mali, Bölgesel Ekonomik Topluluklar, Afrika Birliği, Birleşmiş Milletler

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAPC	All African Peoples Conference
ABAKO	Association de Bakongo
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
ADC	Democratic Alliance for Change
ADEMA	Alliance for Democracy in Mali
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ADFL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo
ADP	Democratic Alliance of the People
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission in Mali
ALEC	Alliance for the Liberation of East Congo
ANE	National Elections Authority
APR	Rwandan Patriotic Army
APRD	Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Maghreb
ARLA	Revolutionary Army for the Liberation of Azawad
ATNMC	Tuareg Alliance of Northern Mali for Change
AU	African Union
BINUCA	Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic
CAR	Central African Republic
CCPR	Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CDC	Congolese Democratic Coalition
CENCO	National Episcopal Conference of Congo
CENI	Independent National Electoral Commission
CESCR	Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CFS	Congo Free State
CMA	Coordination of Azawad Movements
CNDP	Congress for the Defense of the People
CNRD	National Resistance Council for Democracy
CNRDR	National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and State
CLA	Community Liaison Assistance
CONAKAT	Confederation de Association du Katanga
CRC	Covenant on the Rights of the Child
CRD	Conseil de la Resistance pour la Democratie
CVR	Community Violence Reduction
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRC	Congo Democratic Republic of Congo
DSP	Special Presidential Division
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAC	Congolese Armed Forces
FACA	Central African Armed Forces
FAR	Force Armees Rwandaise
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

FDC	Forces de Defense Congolaises
FDD	Forces for the Defense of Democracy
FDPC	Democratic Front for the Central African People
FIAA	Arab Islamic Front of Azawad
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade
FLNA	National Front for the liberation of Azawad
FOLC	Ecumenical Force for the Liberation of Congo
FOMAC	Multinational Force for Central Africa
FPLA	Popular Front for the Liberation of Azawad
FWA	French West African Federation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoS	Government of Sudan
HCUA	High Council for the Unity of Azawad
HDI	Human Development Index Report
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
HRD	Human Rights Division
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICGLR	International Conference of the Great Lakes
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IEDs	Improvised Explosive Devices
IHRC	International Human Rights Covenants IHRC
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISGS	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
ISIS	Islamic State
JMAC	Joint Mission Analysis Cell
JMC	Joint Military Commission
JNIM	Jama'a Nusrat Al-Islam waal-Muslimin
LRA	Lord Resistance Army
M23	March 23 Movement
MCW	Major Conventional Weapons
MDSF	Mali Defense and Security Forces
MESAN	Movement for the Social Evolution of Black Africa
MFUA	Unified Movements and Fronts of Azawad
MICOPAX	Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic
MINURCA	Mission de Nations Unies pour la Centrafricaine
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MISAB	Mission Interafricaine de Surveillance de Accords de Bangui
MISCA	African Union-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic
MLC	Movement for the Liberation of the Congo
MLPC	Central African People's Liberation Movement
MNC	Mouvement National Congolais
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MOJWA	Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MONUSCO   United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MPA   Popular Movement of Azawad
MPC   Central African Patriotic Movement
MPLA   Popular Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MPR   Mouvement Populaire de Revolution
MRLZ   Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of Zaire
NCDI   National Congress for Democratic Initiative
NGOs   Non-Governmental Organizations
NSAG   Non-state Armed Groups
NSP   National Security Policy
OAU   Organization of African Unity
OCHA   Humanitarian Affairs
OCA   Office for Civil Affairs
OHCHR   United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHCRC   United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIOS   Internal Oversight Services
PKO   Peacekeeping Operations
PNC   National Police Force
PRP   People Revolutionary Party
PSP   Parti Progressiste du Sudan
RCD   Congolese Democratic Coalition
RCD   Rally for Congolese Democracy
RDA   Rassemblement Democratic Africaine
RDA   Rassemblement Democratic Africaine
RDP   Rally for Democracy and Progress
RECs   Regional Economic Communities
RLD   Rally for Labor Democracy
RM   Rally for Mali
RPF   Rwandan Patriotic Front
SADC   Southern African Development Community
SALW   Small Arms and Light Weapons
SARM   Action Intelligence Service
SPLA   Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLA   Sudanese People's Liberation Army
SSR   Security Sector Reform
TCC   Contributing Countries
TTF   Takuba Task Force
UDHR   Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UDPM   Union Democratique du Peuple Malien
UDPS   Union for Democracy and Social Progress
UFDR   Union of Democratic Forces for Unity
UNHCR   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF   United Nations Children Emergency Fund
UNICEF   United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNITA   National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNO   United Nations Organization
UNSC   United Nations Security Council

UPC	Union for Peace in CAR
UPDF	Uganda by the Ugandan Peoples Defense Forces
UPDF	Ugandan Peoples Defense Forces
US	Union Sudanais
USA	United States of America
US-RDA	Sudanese Union-African Democratic Rally
WASB	West African Standby Brigade
WB	World Bank
WBNF	West Bank Nile Front
World War I	WWI
World War II	WWII

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

When the Cold War ended, the world brazed up with profound hopes for more peaceful and less tense relations among states aligned with the East or the West. This came with reassurances that interstate wars, which had hitherto characterized and defined states, had been laid to rest. While the world watched the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics crumble, the United States of America, which had emerged as a victor from the Cold War, began minting the infrastructure and processes to sustain its new world order agenda. With the former Soviet Union disintegrated, the US emerged as a unipolar power. The US projected itself as the moral and political guardian of the new world with its attendant democratization project. New African states, which were still making their first steps as independent entities, dived into the democratic agenda of the US, swayed by the persuasion that the United Nations, strongly backed by the US, had the answers to peacekeeping and stabilization in the continent.

As the number of UN peacekeeping operations increased, the use of force increased as a primary means of quelling down conflicts.[1] Democracy was believed to be the driving force for the continent and a springboard from which strong, buoyant, and stable states would emerge. This highly acclaimed democratic project had rarely taken root into the fabrics of most African states than what would later be described by Mary Kaldor as new wars swept over the continent in the 1990s. The interstate wars were quickly replaced by intrastate wars, ethnic conflicts, civil wars, and political violence.[2] The continuance of these tragic new wars and conflicts set in motion a domino effect of failed and collapsed states within the continent.

The 1994 Rwandan genocide provided a foretaste of how conflict and violence can ravage a nation. As the United Nations and the larger international community looked away

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[1] Muzaffer Ercan Yilmaz, "The United Nations As Conflict Manager: A Discussion on Global Collective Security," *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi/Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2009), p. 37, http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/login.aspx?direct=true&db=snh&AN=51467655&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

[2] Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, 3rd ed., Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006, pp. 4–14.

while the genocide unraveled, hundreds of thousands of Hutus and Tutsis were slaughtered. The genocide later spilled over into neighboring Congo, with Rwandans fleeing for safety. The civil war in Somalia and Rwanda in the early 1990s was a litmus test for the UN Security Council, which it failed to pass.[3] Among those who entered the Congo as Rwandan refugees were genocide fighters. Since the start of the 1998 Congo crisis, such former genocide fighters have played critical roles as members of militia groups that have fostered the violence in Congo. This research, therefore, focused on how conflict dynamics, external intervention, and peacebuilding is carried out in Africa. DR Congo, Mali, and Central African Republic (CAR) formed this research's base and case studies. Conflict in the countries mentioned above has taken on complex patterns that have only served to further plunge the countries into deteriorating conditions of instability.

Instability in Congo, Mali, CAR, and those which have occurred within other countries in Africa, have more often than not opened up the critical resources of these states to looting, pillage, and smuggling. This depends on violence which further sustains and keeps conflicts burning and ravaging communities. Africa as a continent is blessed with enormous human and material resources. However, this richly endowed continent is often faced with dire situations of human rights violations, organized crimes, and conflicts that stagnate its states' functioning. This has left states like Congo, Mali, and CAR in an ill-equipped space to deal effectively with the security challenges infiltrating and threatening the dysfunctioning of their sovereign territorial landscapes. The inability of these states to meet up with their security challenges has given rise to militias, terrorist groups, and multinational corporations who are all towering their agendas to fill the security gap and, in so doing, inadvertently creating a marketplace for insecurity. The high refugee numbers, humanitarian crisis, and violence of these conflicts remain challenging. In response to these challenges, recourse to external intervention under the Doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect has come to represent a panacea to the malaise of global conflicts.[4] Within the various conflict situations, Congo, Mali, and CAR have resorted to

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[3] Ian. Taylor, Paul Williams (eds.), *Africa in International Politics.: External Involvement on the Continent*, London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 200–207.

[4] ICISS, *The Responsibility to Protect*, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001, pp. 11–16.

seeking bailouts from global intervention structures like the United Nations, the African Union, and other external forces that try to rebuild peace within global governance. The successful implementation of peacebuilding initiatives did not depend on the intervening forces alone. The realization of meaningful peace in conflict-affected areas had to do with all stakeholders' inclusion. This study, therefore, not only sort to unravel the forces that foster conflicts but more so on how intervention and peacebuilding have played out in the three case studies, with a keen focus on how peacebuilding initiatives have contributed towards conflict resolutions and, in the process instilled an atmosphere of peace and serenity conducive for socio-political and economic development.

Statement of the Problem

Contemporary African states have come to the consciousness that forging their agendas for growth and development, whether globally or locally, must be done in an enabling atmosphere void of conflicts and violence of any sort. While the nebulous political economy and bad governance of African leaders have always been labeled as the causes of conflict, in Congo, Mali, and CAR, the quest for power, resource control, identity politics, and ethnoreligious motives took center stage. As conflict surges on over the continent, non-state actors, militia groups, jihadists, transnational terrorists, and ethnoreligious rebel movements have risen. These groups take it upon themselves to spread their agendas while seeking to alter the structure and functioning of the state from their areas of influence. At the center of this stands helpless citizens who find themselves as pawns between the militias' smoking guns and the state army's heavy machinery. This has given rise to deaths, untold humanitarian crises, refugee problems, and the destruction of resources. No matter the cause of the conflicts, once the state cannot guarantee national security, intervention for protecting the human person within the liberal peace framework becomes imperative. The commitment by the community of states not to see any country slide into genocide like Rwanda in 1994 is always evoked when the need for conflict resolution and peacebuilding becomes necessary.[5] Though the UN, AU, and other regional organizations have made significant efforts to bring solutions to conflicts, their operations and outcomes have only served to raise further questions on their raison d'etre.

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[5] Kingsley Moghalu, *Rwanda's Genocide: The Politics of Global Justice*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 6–10.

Some tend to see interventions as mechanisms to prioritize human rights over the state's sovereignty. Nevertheless, others have consistently cast doubts on the legality and effectiveness of interventions. While this debate rages on, other schools of thought are picking issues with whether intervening forces are there to fight the enemy forces of the state or to protect the citizens. The above has been further complicated because the citizens for whom intervention forces are deployed to protect rarely know or understand the mandate of the intervening mission.[6] This has caused the locals to set up high expectations, which are nowhere closer to the mandate of the intervening mission. When their expectations get dashed, they interpret the mission as a failure. To address the above and reverse conflicts fuelled by the inadequacies of leadership, weak institutions, and ethnoreligious undertones, it is vital that the controversy over conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives be examined.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine and critically assess the dynamics of conflict and peacebuilding in Africa. This study is aimed to examine the drivers of conflict in Congo, Mali, and the Central African Republic. The study will equally seek to identify and assess the various external actors who intervened to resolve the conflicts in the above countries and the extent to which their interventions were effective, taking the relevant peacebuilding initiatives that followed the intervention into cognizance. This study, therefore, sought to attain the following specific objectives;

1. To examine the existing factors that create and sustain conflict in Congo, Mali, and the Central African Republic.

2. To critically assess how Non-state Armed Groups influence the dynamics of conflict in Congo, Mali, and the Central African Republic.

3. To evaluate the successes and challenges of peace missions and how such challenges impact on peacebuilding in Congo, CAR, and Mali.

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[6] Elizabeth Smith, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From Cold War to the War on Terror*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 2–10.

Significance of the Study

The continent of Africa is, most often than not, quoted outside its shores as the bedrock of conflicts in the world. Most African countries have experienced violence that has destroyed the organization of communities and, by extension, robbed its citizens from benefiting from the vast natural resources these countries possess. Congo, for instance, could be said to be one of the richest naturally endowed countries in Africa; the civil wars that have rocked this nation have seen its natural resources clandestinely carted away by militias in complicity with multinational corporations. Congo's coltan, diamond, gold, copper, and cobalt are vital for technological and automotive industries in the West. The central African Republic is home to timber, diamond, oil, uranium, and gold.[7] Mali also has enormous deposits of uranium, gold, and phosphate. Despite being rich with such vast deposits of natural resources, these countries have remained plagued with violence and strife within their borders. However, the outcry of these countries and the conflict resolution mechanisms that followed to restore peace in these conflict-ridden zones attracted controversial feedback on how security and humanitarian aid were managed.

The inability of the external interveners to synergize and act in unison has instead put the very people they came to protect in jeopardy. Therefore, this study is significant because it will generate meaningful data and information that will enable global governance agencies like the UN, AU, and other intervening bodies to rethink and redesign their patterns of intervention. This will afford them the leverage to forge ahead as forces to reckon with in countering violent extremism and resolving conflict in troubled zones worldwide. The findings and recommendations will enable states, intervening agencies, and local pro-peace organizations to rediscover the power of synergy, which will enable them to construct a more robust conflict resolution and peacebuilding compass in line with other regional groupings, as well as extend the same to powerful states in the West who usually lead stabilization missions in Africa. The research results generated from this study equally served as a measuring rod for African leaders to gauge their culpability in the occurrence of conflicts that have frequently retarded the continent's development agenda. The study generated a critical analysis of conflicts in Africa, which will serve as

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[7] George. Clooney, John Prendergast, "The Key to Making Peace in Africa: Fighting Corruption Can Help End Conflict," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. March (2018).

a springboard from which other researchers will develop their research work on the continent. The information generated from the study has contributed enormously to the literature on conflict dynamics and significantly addressed the relationship between the external and internal mechanisms of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Scope and Limitation of The Study

This research was focused on understanding how conflict dynamics and peacebuilding play out in Africa, especially in Congo, Mali, and the Central African Republic. The data for the research was collected from a variety of sources. The qualitative data collected and analyzed focused on the First and Second Congo Civil War and the Malian and Central African Republic intrastate conflicts in 2012. All data collected spanned into the present-day realities of conflict in these countries and how ensuing violence has affected the path to peace and stability.

Research Questions

1. Does the political economy of the state leadership, resource control and ethnoreligious aspirations constitute significant drivers of conflict?
2. How do Nonstate Armed Actors influence the dynamics of intrastate conflicts?
3. What are the successes and challenges faced by peace missions in Congo, CAR, and Mali?

Research Hypotheses

1. The quest for political power, control of economic resources and ethnoreligious aspirations are significant drivers of conflict.
2. Non-state Armed Actors influence the dynamics of intrastate conflicts in complex and contradictory ways.
3. The successes and challenges encountered by peace missions significantly affect peacebuiling in Congo, CAR, and Mali.

Methodology

This research was carried out using the case study research design[8]. The case study design provides us with a methodology vital for developing a sample size that is representative of the population of interest. A qualitative case study enables one to explore and explain a phenomenon by collecting data from various sources. Such an exploration is undertaken to reveal the dynamics of a phenomenon within a particular context by engaging various analysis angles.[9]. This design was relevant in the total construction of this study. Through this design, the researcher presented qualitative data in analyzing the experiences and perspectives of the target population, which has been at the center of violent conflicts. Data for the study was obtained from secondary sources. Secondary information sources were obtained from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, acclaimed newspapers, and organizational reports. The data sources served as vital tools in ensuring the validity and reliability of the study.

Sampling

This study relied on random sampling. African countries that have experienced intrastate wars and violent extremism since 1990 were shuffled, and the desired number for our case study was drawn for the focus of the study. The sample cases included the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali for this study. We also relied on the purposive sampling technique to identify and gather focused data from key actors who have been active in the dynamics of conflict, intervention, and peacebuilding within the countries under study. Such actors included non-state armed groups and regional and international peacekeeping organizations. This target population is appropriate for this study because the sampled countries have played host to some of the most devasting conflicts and violence experienced within the African continent. Therefore, the sample population gives one an insight into the experiences and perspectives on how conflict and intervention have played out and what works to halt instability not just in their particular cases but even so in Africa as a continent.

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[8] Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, California: Sage Publications, 2009, pp. 3–12.
[9] Yasir. Rashid et al., "Case Study Method: A Step-by-Step Guide for Business Researchers," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, vol. 18 (2019), pp. 1–13.

Congo has diamond and gold. It equally has coltan, copper, and cobalt which are vital for technological and automotive industries in the West. The Central African Republic is home to timber, diamond, oil, uranium, and gold. Mali also has enormous deposits of uranium, gold, and phosphate. Despite being rich with such vast deposits of natural resources, these countries have remained plagued with violence and strife within their borders.

The reason why Congo, Mali, CAR, were chosen for this study is because conflict in these countries opened up the critical resources of these states to looting, pillage, and smuggling. This depends on violence which further sustains and keeps conflicts burning and ravaging communities. Africa as a continent is blessed with enormous human and material resources. However, this richly endowed continent is often faced with dire situations of human rights violations, organized crimes, and conflicts that stagnate its states' functioning. This has left states like Congo, Mali, and CAR in an ill-equipped space to deal effectively with the security challenges infiltrating and threatening the dysfunctioning of their sovereign territorial landscapes.

The inability of these states to meet up with their security challenges has given rise to militias, terrorist groups, and multinational corporations who are all towering their agendas to fill the security gap and, in so doing, inadvertently creating a marketplace for insecurity. The high refugee numbers, humanitarian crisis, and violence of these conflicts remain challenging. In response to these challenges, recourse to external intervention under the Doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect has come to represent a panacea to the malaise of global conflicts. Within the various conflict situations, Congo, Mali, and CAR have resorted to seeking bailouts from global intervention structures like the United Nations, the African Union, and other external forces that try to rebuild peace within global governance.

The UN peacebuilding operations in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali have been described as the most dangerous and most expensive missions that the UN has ever had. The doctrine of UN peacekeeping has demonstrated over the years that state building is an important phase of the entire peacebuilding process. Once the state is stable, every

other aspect of state development can be achieved. In this regard, the UN has spent a fortune in funding the operations of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MNUSMA. The annual budget of these peace operation missions exceeds $1 billion per year.

This study, therefore, not only sort to unravel the forces that foster conflicts but more so on how intervention and peacebuilding have played out in the three case studies, with a keen focus on how peacebuilding initiatives have contributed towards conflict resolutions and, in the process instilled an atmosphere of peace and serenity conducive for socio-political and economic development.

Method of Data Analysis

The data was collected from books, journals, reports, newspaper articles, and the world wide web and analyzed through content analysis. This is so because the data generated categorical frequencies of the description of views, perceptions, attitudes, and realities. This approach tried to establish how the observed frequencies agree with the expected frequencies. The data gathered was compared with the study's hypotheses to ascertain the level of significance of each stated hypothesis.

Organisation of the Study

This study was arranged into an introductory section and six chapters. The introduction analyzed the background to the study, stretching through the statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, hypotheses, significance, scope and limitations, and methodology.

Chapter one focused on a holistic analysis and review of related literature. Using conflict-related theories, the chapter gave an exhaustive detail on conflict dynamics, the politics of intervention, and peacebuilding initiatives that resolve conflicts and contribute to sustainable, peaceful environments.

Chapter two examined the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It equally analyzed the foundations of strife and instability in the country, considering its colonial experiences and the politics of its post-independent elites.

Chapter three focused on analyzing intrastate conflict in the Central African Republic. The chapter provided an understanding of the evolution and drivers of fragility. It equally examined the making and breaking of the rebel alliance and the steps taken at regional and international levels to resolve the conflict.

Chapter four provided an understanding of the conflict in Mali and how this conflict has continued to shape insecurity in the Sahel region.

Chapter five focused on evaluating the effectiveness of peacebuilding and its implications for conflict resolution in Congo, CAR, and Mali

Finally, chapter six brings the study to an end with a comparative analysis of conflict and conflict peacebuilding in Congo, CAR, and Mali. It presented a concise comparism of the data collected and analyzed the data to validate the hypotheses of the study. The chapter ended with proffering recommendations for policy options that will reduce conflict, maximize the mandate of intervention missions, and design a robust and integrated stakeholder approach to peacebuilding.

CHAPTER ONE

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DYNAMICS OF AFRICAN CONFLICTS

1 CONFLICTS IN AFRICA: UNDERSTANDING THE REMOTE FORCES THAT CREATE AND SUSTAIN UNREST

Africa, as a continent with the makeup of its various countries, has gone through many defining moments of history, some of which have been benign to allocate the continent a pride of place and some of which have discarded its resilience and focused on its demerits. Conflicts and violence in Africa are as old as the continent itself. This, however, does not exclusively map out the continent as the altar of unrest in the world. However, contemporary discourse on the continent has presented the continent globally and even to its people as a continent endowed with unlimited natural resources yet destined to be doomed partly because of conflicts and the humanitarian challenges that come with it. Such grotesque description of the continent has painted it with the imageries of hunger, perpetual instability, violence, and a breeding ground for refugees. Though this may seem exaggerated and biased to some extent, the truth is that the plethora of interstate wars and civil conflicts that have rocked the continent are intrinsically linked to the entirety of the continent's past and its interaction with slavery and colonialism alike.

As one grapples with the paradox of a continent so endowed with natural resources yet with a negative balance in almost every sector of life, Africa's skeptics and admirers alike are poised to see a change in the dark narrative that has since been a banner to describe the woes of the continent. This notwithstanding, power dynamics and the political economy of African leaders entangled with neo-colonial patronage have brought forth strange policies and unpalatable outcomes that have rarely served to change the reality on the ground.

From the shackles of slavery through the bondage of colonialism and the exploitation that came with imperialism, Africa as a continent has dangled through all these eras to maintain its stability and resilience. The post-independence euphoria that lighted the continent was quickly quenched by both internal and external trends that sought to redesign and determine the path of the new states. As interstate conflicts dwindled by the end of the Cold War, another gruesome reality –civil wars, gripped many parts of the

continent, transforming its landscape into a theatre of armed conflicts, fueled primarily by the quest for power and resource control. These 'new wars' that replaced interstate wars ushered in systematic machinery of violence that does not only target opposing combatants but civilians alike.[10] In many countries within the continent, conflicts erupted for many reasons. The ethnic diversity of failed political institutions, epileptic economies, linguistic fractionalization, and externally induced neo-patrimonial tendencies have been signaled among the many reasons why armed conflicts continue to thrive. Africa is caught up at the crossroads of many power centers, both within its states and outside influences that seek to reshape it and gain control, each according to their whims and caprices. Though made of countries richly endowed with natural resources like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Mali, Chad, Sudan, Nigeria, Cameroon, and others, the escalation of conflicts and political violence within the borders of these countries have persistently made nonsense of the rich human and natural resources which these countries hold. The following discourse will take an in-depth review and analysis of the political, economic, socio-linguistic, environmental, and external drivers of conflict that have propelled instability in Africa. However, it should be noted that Africa has all too often been described as a country or a single entity by the media and research works. As we shall discuss here, the causes of conflicts in Africa are at the root of many violence and internal armed conflicts in most African countries. However, this does not imply that the arguments advanced here can be generalized as the reasons for all conflicts within the continent. The table below shows the various causes of conflict in Africa, and the theories that explain such conflicts.

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[10] Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in A Global Era*, 3rd ed., Malden: Polity Press, 2012., Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers, eds., The Changing Character of War. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 109-113.

Table 1: The Causes of Conflicts and Theories that Explain them

General Causes	Specific	Theoretical Framework
Political Causes	Quest for Power	Realism Institutional Theory of Aggression
	Weak Democracies	Democratic Peace Theory
	Corruption and Bad Governance	Conflict Theory
	Violation of Human Rights	Basic Human Needs Theory
Economic Causes	Resource Curse	Rent-Seeking Theory Greed and Grievance Theory
Social Inequality	Inequality, Poverty, Unemployment	Relative Deprivation Theory
Ethno-Religious Diversity	Politicized Ethnicity	Constructivism Ethnic Competition Theory
Environmental Pressures	-Climate Change -Population Growth -Natural Disasters	Neo-Malthusian Theory
External Causes		
Multinational Corporations and Comprador Bourgeoisie	-Destabilization of constitutional governments -Exploitation of Natural Resources	Dependency Theory
Diaspora	Foreign Remittances	Frustration Aggression Theory
Neighborhood Contagion	Hostile Neighbors	Spill Over Theory

1.1 Political Factors

This study relied on random sampling. African countries that have experienced intrastate wars and violent extremism since 1990 were shuffled, and the desired number for our case study was drawn for the focus of the study. The sample cases included the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali for this study. We also relied on the purposive sampling technique to identify and gather focused data from key actors who have been active in the dynamics of conflict, intervention, and peacebuilding within the countries under study. Such actors included non-state armed groups and regional and international peacekeeping organizations. This target population is appropriate for this study because the sampled countries have played host to some of the most devasting conflicts and violence experienced within the African continent. Therefore, the sample population gives one an insight into the experiences and

perspectives on how conflict and intervention have played out and what works to halt instability not just in their particular cases but even so in Africa as a continent.

1.1.1   The Quest for Power

The outbreak and evolution of civil wars and intrastate conflicts in Africa have deep political undertones that cannot be ignored in analyzing violent clashes that have somewhat set the continent back in many respects. The constant quest for political power and control by elite politicians, accounts for why many states within the continent have found themselves in the regrettable space of failed and collapsed entities within the sub-regional and the larger spectrum of the international system of states. The quest to capture political power and control the central government has been a trend that is way too common in many African nations. Competing individuals and groups with the will and finance to engage in conflict challenge each other over territorial control through battles sponsored by them.

Realists like Thomas Hobbes and Hans Morgenthau have provided strong theoretical foundations which explain why power causes conflict. In advancing his proposition on man's self-seeking or selfish nature, Hobbes maintained that the quest for power constantly drives human beings. Political power-seekers are thus in the futile and aggressive pursuit of power to dominate others.[11] This relentless drive to capture the power and maintain absolute control over others is responsible for why humans go to war. In the same vein, Hans Morgenthau posits that conflicts are triggered by man's natural impulse to control others.[12] This aggressive approach to dominating is what Morgenthau described as *'animus dominandi*.' The inability of people to coexist peacefully with others is a fundamental problem. Most often than not, protecting these selfish interests comes at the expense of dominating others with the very instruments of power that were supposed to provide the people with protection and support. When political elites fight for power, their careless quest to dominate generates a further pursuit of self-preservation which

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[11] Arash Abizadeh, "Hobbes on the Causes of War: A Disagreement Theory," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 105, no. 2 (2011), pp. 298–315, doi:10.1017/S0003055411000098., See also Ross Rudolph, "Conflict, Egoism and Power," *History of Political Thought*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1986), pp. 73–88.

[12] Barry Buzan, "The Timeless Wisdom of Realism?," *International Theory: Positivism & Beyond*, ed. by Ken Booth & Marysia Zalewski Steve Smith, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 47–65.

triggers the instincts of aggression, be it from their competitors or the masses. Sigmund Freud described the above scenario in his instinct theory of aggression.

According to the instinct theory of aggression, advanced by Fred, aggression is an inherent part of the biological composition of human beings. The instinct of aggression comes from the innate desire to dominate or fight back for survival. In whatever way it is perceived, the instinct theory has two primary sources: psychoanalysis and ethnology. From the psychoanalytic perspective, Eros and Thanatos form the opposite sets of instincts that shape and motivate human behavior. Once triggered, they are usually expressed outwardly through violence. Whether for domination or survival, the above theories shed light on how claims to power and counterclaims lead to conflicts.

In line with the above, leaders who came to power through unconstitutional and violent means have often sought to build a personality cult around them to safeguard their continuous stay in power. To maintain the stability and control of the central government, they resort to erecting autocratic regimes that are highly undemocratic and repressive to the same people they were meant to lead and protect. This has therefore pushed many schools of thought in their analysis of African democracy to contend that undemocratic regimes are prone to conflict because the people are most likely to rise against such governments that only parade a veneer of democracy without any valid political will to let the people enjoy the dividends of the democratic agenda. Often, the debate on conflict and internal armed violence in Africa has hugely been dominated by condemnation of the weak democratic structures of these countries and their leaders who benefit from such democratic deficit to reign in terror and oppression of the very people they swore to unite and protect via the social contract.

However, pundits on these issues like Ayoob have argued that democracy in the western hemisphere only emerged as a fruit of state construction efforts, where the laws and institutions to manage democracy were already in place. Compared to the above, African states are weak, fragmented, and new compared to their western counterparts. They have been saddled with a double load of state-building and the construction of workable democratic systems, -a task which has been proven too often to be a failing experiment.[13]

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[13]Mohammed Ayoob, "State Making, State Breaking, And State Failure," *Leashing the Dogs of War : Conflict Management in a Divided World.*, 2007.

Weak states provide the ground and opportunity necessary for conflict to thrive. Most of the conflict in the world has so far been in Africa. The African states only began gaining independence in the 1960s. These third-world states that are still building their state structures are fragile. This fragility has hindered the government and state from resolving conflicts promptly. While conflict can be seen as a natural element in the general puzzle of state construction, not all developing states have the wealth and capability to process the pressures and demands placed on them by their citizens or dissenting armed groups that rise from within their territorial confines. During the 70s and 90s, Lebanon and Somalia, respectively, found themselves on the statistics of failed states due to the absence of a working government that could effectively steer the affairs of the state. To this end, Havard Hegree et al. have maintained that rogue autocratic regimes and fully functional democratic state systems usually have high records of prevailing civil peace. They, however, contend that civil wars tend to strive more within the territorial confines of semi-democracies[14]. This is well in place because in most cases where civil war has broken out in Africa, there has been ample proof to show that the processes and institutions that were supposed to safeguard the smooth functioning of the democratic machinery of the state have been compromised by self-seeking sit tight incumbents and their cohorts. This is even worse because democracy has been made nonsense in most countries within Africa. The meaning and scope ascribed to the democratic plan have been reduced to electoral campaigns, regular elections, voting, counting, and declarations of electoral results constantly challenged in tribunals.

The instability that accompanies the general functioning of political institutions and, by extension, the electoral process has failed to erect a robust democracy that can command the people's trust.[15] The continuation of such trends across countries in the continent has brought the legitimacy of its leaders to serious debates and questioning. Aggrieved individuals who cannot find solutions to the problems plaguing the state through the ballot box because of entrenched electoral malpractices tend to use violence as their last

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[14] Håvard Hegre, "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816–1992," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 95, no. 1 (2001), pp. 33–48, doi:10.1017/s0003055401000119.

[15] N. Collier P., Elliott, V. L., Hegre, H., Hoeffler, A., Reynal-Querol, M., & Sambanis, "Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy (World Bank Policy Research Report).," *World Bank and Oxford University Press.*, 2003.

alternative with which they hope to undo the mishaps of the central government and, by so doing, have their interests and aspirations feature as a significant priority once they become commanders of the government and the state once they oust the incumbent through an armed conflict.

One of the defining characteristics of autocratic regimes is that freedom of expression is highly muscled. This, in many cases, has left the aggrieved group or population to find solace in violent demonstrations in a bid to transmit their grievance to the central authority of power.[16] Sometimes, however, the argument will be that such discrepancies between the central authority and the aggrieved population, ethnic or urban, could be addressed through universal suffrage.

Nevertheless, the case of ethnic groups seeking representation of their interests in the overall development allocations from the central government tends to be even more complicated when they must follow the path of universal suffrage, given that most of these groups do not have the political weight to push through their grievances, rebellion against the state becomes the next available option for them. An excellent example is that of the Tuaregs of Mali. They built on the failure of democracy to salvage the enormous prejudice they suffered in budgetary allocation as a valid reason for them to engage the central government in an armed conflict. The exclusion and deprivation of such groups from equitably benefitting from the shared resources of the state have sparked political and economic grievances that have, by extension, opened the country to extremist groups seeking grounds to further their operation.[17] When governments fail to ensure the equitable distribution of state resources, they inadvertently lay the grounds for future hostilities that will rock the state's foundations.

Democracy is a concept that has been widely embraced in Africa since the early 90s. Mainly many see it as a vehicle through which their civil and political rights can be expressed and guaranteed through the electoral process. However, the rigging of elections is at the root of much post-electoral violence that has been witnessed across the continent.

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[16] Jean-Paul Azam, Christian Morrison, Sophie Chauvin and Sandrine Rospabe, Conflict and Growth in Africa: Vol. 1 The Sahel, (Paris: OECD Publications Service, 1999) 21-23.
[17] David J Francis, "The Regional Impact of Armed Conflict and French Intervention in Mali," 2013, doi:10.1080/13629395.2013.799351.

Those disillusioned by the outcomes of elections or the violence that ensue have been quick to label democracy as a western concept forced on Africans by their former colonial masters. This assertion is complex and contradictory and leaves much to be desired.[18] The election process in countries like Nigeria, Libya, Cameroon, DR Congo, and others has been marred by rigging, bribery, vote-buying, and manipulation of the electoral outcomes.

Presidents have tinkered both the constitution to extend their term limits and manipulated the electoral processes to maintain power. The supporters of opposition parties who feel cheated by the election outcomes take to violence to reclaim what they call stolen mandate or election. The 1992 elections in Congo-Brazzaville, which were shrouded with irregularities, pushed the country into a situation of political violence and later full-scale civil war that left many in their thousand dead. When Denise Sassou Ngessou rejected the victory of the then President Pascal Lissouba, this opened the flood gates of political violence.[19] In a continuous bid to assert himself as the winner of the 1992 elections, Ngesssou staged a coup and gripped the seat of state power in 1997. This led to a civil war that lasted two years, leaving many citizens dead and others internally displaced.

When examining democracy, peace, and conflict in Africa, one must look at the theoretical foundations upon which democracy and peace thrive or are forestalled. In this regard, proponents of the democratic peace theory from Immanuel Kant, Michael Doyle, and Francis Fukuyama maintain that democracies seldom engage each other in war.[20] They contend that because of the rule of law and democratic principles which guide the functioning of the affairs of democratic states, such states will almost immediately shun war and choose alternative means of resolving disputes. Immanuel Kant's 'perpetual peace' is based on the fact that peace is bound to prevail when republican governments interact.[21] The democratic peace theory has found a strong expression at the interstate level. This is explained by the fact that interstate wars have significantly declined after the Cold War period. However, conflicts have increased within democratic states at the

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[18] Lars Erik Cederman, Simon Hug, Lutz F. Krebs, "Democratization and Civil War: Empirical Evidence," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 47, no. 4 (2010), pp. 377–94, doi:10.1177/0022343310368336.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Dan Reiter, "Democratic Peace Theory," *Oxford Bibliographies*, 2012, doi:10.1093/OBO/9780199756223-0014.
[21] Jeff Pugh, "Democratic Peace Theory: A Review and Evaluation," Cumming, 2005, pp. 2–17.

subnational or intrastate level. The multiple cases of intrastate conflicts in Africa from 1990 to the present pose a different challenge to the democratic peace theory. While democratic states have invested diplomacy and tact in maintaining peaceful relations with other states, the dividends of democracy have hardly been felt within states like Mali, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Burundi, Ivory Coast, and Cameroon.

The inability of African leaders to apply republican tenets and respect the rule of law as postulated by the proponents of the democratic peace theory explains why these African states continue to suffer the rise of internal conflicts. Although they have embraced republicanism and democracy as guiding principles for the functioning of government business, the actual implementation of these principles has only been nominally applied. The concrete respect for the rule of law and the constitution remains a prevalent problem across African countries that have experienced internal conflicts.

The electorates' poor understanding of the democratic process or willful concealment of information on how the democratic machinery works have often left the masses to become susceptible pawns in the hands of politicians. Politicians seeking to be elected capitalized on the dire conditions of their electorates to buy their votes through what John Sunday Ojo has described the above scenario as the politics of stomach infrastructure[22]. The corruption that governs the electoral process has structured politics through tribal, ethnoreligious as well as identity lines,[23] that pay no attention to the policies or campaign manifesto of the politicians. The electorates, in such instances, focus more on material things, campaign fabrics, foodstuff, agricultural tools, and money. This represents a vicious circle because the failures of the politicians to deliver on developmental projects will become sources of grievance and aggression within the community in the long run.

1.1.2 Corruption and Bad Governance

The discourse on corruption and governance has attracted a wide array of scholarly efforts to ascertain how these issues affect the African state's growth, development, and

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[22] John Sunday Ojo, "Weep for the One Who Descends? African Democracies, Politics of Stomach Infrastructure, and Homology of Corruption," *International Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 42, no. 3 (2019), pp. 240–58, doi:10.1080/01900692.2018.1426008.

[23] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen, and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, London: Princeton University Press, 1996. , Allen, Chris (1995), 'Understanding African Politics' *Review of African Political Economy* 22, 65, pp. 301-320;

functioning. Corruption and bad governance are at the core of the many conflicts and violence that rocked the African state. Good governance emerged in the late 1980s as a World Bank policy prescription for Africa's governance and development.[24] The doctrine of good governance holds that stable environments and vibrant economic policies are crucial for egalitarian development. In this sense, good governance encompasses the uncontrolled flow of information and transparency in state operations, the management of the public sector effectively, the promotion of administrative responsibility and accountability, and legal substructures that support the state's development plan.

In understanding how corruption and bad governance causes conflict, it is relevant to look into the conflict theory postulated by Karl Marx. The conflict theory holds that the limited resources in society have put it in a state of inequality and competition. According to Marx, the rich reinforced this inequality and use their wealth and power to exploit vulnerable groups under their control. Corruption and bad governance have widened the gap between the rich and the poor, the powerful political elites, and the ordinary citizens. Because state resources and institutions benefit the powerful political elites, they try to do everything in their power to maintain the corrupt machinery to remain in power. Such scenarios have sown conflicts causing the people to rebel. Social change has thus occurred in some instances where the armed rebellions succeeded. Consequently, our understanding of the conflict theory in explaining corruption and bad governance permits us to understand that governments can be toppled or restructured, thus bringing socio-economic and political change to the polity.

At independence, most African elites who came to form the core of the newly independent states were enticed by the luxury and grandeur that the colonial masters enjoyed as they exploited their colonies. Driven by the desire to express a certain level of supremacy over their people, they immediately adopted the lavish lifestyles of their former colonial masters. During the last part of the 20th century, it became abundantly clear that the cabal and personality cults that these leaders had erected around themselves transformed into

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networks of clienteles, neo-patronage, nepotism, and cronyism.[25] With this in place, the machinery of corruption grew at an industrial scale alongside the young African states.[26] The system of governance and institutions that followed was subsequently wired in compromise to feed the agenda of the incumbent and his cohorts. This gave birth to governments that looked nationalistic and development-oriented on the outside but were internally collapsing away on the wheels of corruption and bad governance that thrived, excluding a vast majority of the population.[27] As presidents sought all means to remain in power, the parliamentarians and ministers also engaged in political corruption.

The offering and taking of bribes to win public contracts and gain access to the economic space in the country became the channel through which internal and external economic elites used to thwart the process of public policies to favor their selfish interests. When personal gains triumph over the collective good and functioning of the state, it becomes dysfunctional, and conflict erupts because of the failures of the state. This has metamorphosed into what is known as state capture today. In many African countries recovering or are currently falling into violence, it has become increasingly difficult to differentiate between the private purse of state officials and the state treasury as looting and diversion of public funds to fund political campaigns of the incumbents have become the new normal in African politics.[28] Administrative corruption has taken a whole new dimension. Citizens seeking public services are condemned to bride public officials or go unattended. The consumption of these public services, which fall within the constitutional rights of the citizens to benefit, is an extension of the social contract.[29] Collier (2007) argued that the absence of governance is a death trap for the citizens of that country. In 2014, the corruption in Chad's health sector came to the fore. Out of the total public health

[25] Morris Szeftel, "Clientelism, Corruption, and Catastrophe," *Review of African Political Economy*, vol. 27, no. 85 (2000), pp. 427–41, doi:10.1080/03056240008704476.

[26] Martin Meredith, *The State in Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence*, London: Free Press, 2006.

[27] Philippe Le Billon, "Buying Peace or Fuelling War: The Role of Corruption in Armed Conflicts," *Journal of International Development*, vol. 15, no. 4 (2003), pp. 413–26, doi:10.1002/jid.993.

[28] Borgi M and Meyer P (ed.), *La Corruption L'Envers de Driot de L'homme*, Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1995.

[29] Samuel Mondays Atuobi, "Corruption and State Instability in West Africa : An Examination of Policy Options," *KAIPTC Occasional Paper*, no. 21 (2007), pp. 1–24.

funds disbursed, only a meager 1% made it to the health facilities. The rest remained mysteriously unaccounted for[30]

As the dynamics of contemporary politics, economics, and socio-ethnic forces interplay, corruption has become an endemic issue that is tearing down the fabric of the African state. At a time when political and administrative appointments are made based on clienteles and ethnic lines, corruption with impunity is increased as it further deepens inequalities within the society. Mali has suffered conflict and instability because of poor performance by the very structures that were supposed to foster good governance in the country. This led to a Malian security force that was highly politicized along ethnic lines, thereby bringing the state to the edge of fragility. [31] Aggrieved out-groups who felt excluded and marginalized saw a resort to violence as the solution to right the wrongs they have suffered because of corruption and bad governance.

Consequently, corruption has become a powerful force that drives conflict in Africa. It suffices to say that it is not the only reason why conflicts occur and state collapse. However, corruption and bad governance have far-reaching effects that transcend national borders into neighboring states.[32] Corruption and governance have a considerable bearing on all areas of a country's drive toward development. In the absence of good governance via the respect of institutional policies, the rule of law, respect for human rights and civil liberties, underdevelopment and violence become inevitable.[33] When a vast majority of the population cannot express themselves freely on the workings and actions of the government, the only opportunity left for their voice to be heard is through armed violence.[34] A classic example here is Mobutu Sese Sekou of Zaire (present-day DRC), who consistently ruled the state with an iron fist and plundered the country's resources through corruption to maintain his grip on power. He allocated critical

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[30] Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* ., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

[31] Thian Hee Yiew et al., "Does Bad Governance Cause Armed Conflict?," *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, vol. 14, no. 6 (2016), pp. 3741–55.

[32] Hvard Hegre, Nicholas Sambanis, "Sensitivity Analysis of Empirical Results on Civil War Onset," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 50, no. 4 (2006), pp. 508–55, doi:10.1177/0022002706289303.

[33] Zekeri Momoh, "Corruption and Governance in Africa," *Proceedings of the International Conference for Sub-Sahara Africa Transformation and Development*, 2015, doi:10.1007/978-3-319-50191-8.

[34] Natalie Mann, Bert Theuermann, "Children and the Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone," *UNICEF*, 2001, pp. 1–46.

governmental positions to those who were loyal to him. The financial dividends that accrued to the country from the trade of its natural resources were used to maintain the army and keep them loyal to him. His cronies equally mainly benefitted from the widespread corruption that characterized his rule. His regime came crashing in 1997 through a civil war because of the corrupt machinery he had built and supervised.[35]

Corruption accounts for many of the coup d'état in post-independence Africa. As the quest for political hygiene prompted the need for political change, so too did violence accompany this process. The domino effect that followed the success of this coup d'état was that neighboring states began making demands and pressures on their governments to halt corruption and ensure that the government apparatus was viable enough to ensure the equitable allocation of state resources through the mechanisms of good governance.

Corruption and bad governance rank high on the index of war onset in conflict research data sets. Corruption Perception Index, Afro barometer, Transparency International, and World Governance Indicators have all carried out critical studies to measure and assess the intensity and effect of corruption in Africa to determine how corruption intertwines with state fragility and foreign direct investment and aid.[36] The broad analysis of these institutions all points to the fact that African states at the close of any measurement report occupy high-risk areas of corruption on the perception indexes. Once corruption and bad governance prevail in a country, the security of its citizens is compromised, the educational facilities necessary to build and equip its future generation is neglected, and its health sector suffers dilapidation. Since corruption has not given rise to any meaningful health infrastructure, African leaders tend to engage in medical tourism to seek medical attention in good hospitals abroad whenever they fall sick.

The discourse on state failure, corruption, and good governance remains a crucial reason African states have continued to experience war within their territorial confines. The civil war in DR Congo, Burundi, and Uganda in the 1980s and Rwanda in 1994 erupted because of bad governance and corruption. [37]These conflicts and others that have shaped

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[35] Vayrynen R. Nafziger E. W, Stewart F (ed.), *Weak States and Vulnerable Economies: Humanitarian Emergencies in Developing Countries*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, n.d.
[36] UNECA, *Measuring Corruption in Africa: The International Dimension Matters*, 2016.
[37] Yiew et al., "Does Bad Governance Cause Armed Conflict?" pp. 3741–55.

instability in Africa illustrate that the continent is running on a deficit when it comes to issues of state stability, development, and effective governance. For any country to achieve meaningful growth, a stable political system is of utmost importance, as this affects all other aspects of national life within the state. When corruption and bad governance bring about political instability, the capacity of the state and even those of individual entrepreneurs to steer a vibrant economy is diminished.[38] A weakened economy translates into low levels of development and poverty within the state.

Furthermore, the discourse on conflicts in Africa on international platforms has attributed the continent's woes to corruption and bad governance. Noli 2003, thus argued that for Africa to rise above the many conflicts that have hampered its development, these states must push for effective governance and put institutions and available resources to enhance the general living conditions of its people. In the face of staggering poverty, inequality, and low levels of development caused by corruption, international agencies began putting pressure on African presidents to enhance their democratization process and set up anti-corruption task agencies that could investigate and fish out defaulters to be named and shamed as a deterrence to those who might want to admire the spoils of corruption.[39] The political reform packages and economic restructuring that followed were geared toward meeting the conditions for good governance as a prerequisite for aid. However, the anti-corruption agencies that were set up lacked the capacity and force to implement their audit findings independently. Among many things, agencies like the National Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC) in Cameroon lack independence. It must submit its report and recommendation to the president, who then decides who is to be pursued by the commission.

State instability in Nigeria, Africa's largest country, has been traceable to corruption and bad governance. Influential power brokers and politicians have resorted to taking advantage of the country's ethnic divide to foster tensions.[40] Ethnic tensions have thus been used as a mask to shield the inadequacies of the ruling class in Nigeria. The absence

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[38] Azmat Gani, "Governance and Growth in Developing Countries," *Journal of Economic Issues*, vol. 45, no. 1 (2011), pp. 19–40, doi:10.2753/JEI0021-3624450102.

[39] O Nnoli, *Introduction to Politics*, Enugu: SNAAP Press, 2003.

[40] Hajja A. M.S and Goni U. A Usman I., Kyari G. A, "Is Bad Governance /Corruption the Major Source of Conflict in Nigeria?," *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy*, vol. 5, no. 3 (2013), pp. 30–43.

of a robust system of governance is a testament to the failures of the country's successive leadership.[41] This has resulted in conflicts between communities predicated on the fault lines of ethnic and religious factionalism. The failure of the state to provide meaningful employment opportunities to its young population has made them easy recruits to extremist groups whose sole agenda is to destabilize the Nigerian state through violence.

If African states seek to remain resilient and keep their territories stable, they must invest heavily to ensure that the rule of law is respected without fear or favor. Government agencies must work effectively for the common good of all. Fighting corruption in Africa remains a complex and arduous task for which there is no easy way out.

1.1.3 Human Rights Violations

The issue of human rights and the onset of violent conflict is fundamental when analyzing the triggers of internal conflict within states. When weak states add repression to human rights abuse, conflict is bound to occur. Conflicts just don't break out because one or two rights of the citizens have been violated. It takes a process and time within which victims of human rights abuse process their grievances. At an opportune moment, with the available motivation and leader in place, these groups burst out to agitate against the violations of their civil, political, and socio-economic liberties. When governments fail to uphold the human rights of their citizens because of their incapacity or neglect to do so, criminal groups and merchants of terror that are opposed to the government policies tend to appropriate these grievances and pry on the human rights violations of the aggrieved people offering them leadership to stage armed revolts against the government.[42] Countries like Burundi, the Central African Republic, South Sudan,

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[41] B Salawu, "Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Causal Analysis and Proposals for New Management Strategies." *European Journal of Social Science*, vol. 13, no. 3 (2010), pp. 345–53.

[42] Nicolas Rost, "Human Rights Violations, Weak States, and Civil War," *Human Rights Review*, vol. 12, no. 4 (2011), pp. 417–40, doi:10.1007/s12142-011-0196-9.Nancy Annan, "Violent Conflicts and Civil Strife in West Africa: Causes, Challenges, and Prospects," *Stability*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2014), pp. 1–16, doi:10.5334/sta.da.

Nigeria, Somalia, Libya, and Cameroon have all experienced high and low-intensity violent conflicts, which have their roots in violating human rights.[43]

The basic human needs theory, in all its merits, provides essential theoretical underpinnings necessary for grasping how the violation of human rights causes conflict in society. Abraham Maslow has been popularly acclaimed as the foremost proponent of the basic human need theory. Maslow, in his wisdom, advanced a hierarchy of needs that he thought were vital for the survival of man within any given polity. These needs are broadly categorized under psychological, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization.[44] Other proponents of the basic human needs school, like John Burton, equally advanced several human needs, though his thesis did not particularly follow Maslow's hierarchical order. Burton identified the needs for distributive justice, freedom, self-esteem, safety and security, identity, personal fulfillment, and cultural security.[45]

Proponents of the human need theory maintained that conflicts occur because people cannot meet up or enjoy their basic needs in life. The argument is more potent because human interests can be negotiated while human needs are non-negotiable. What constitutes needs and what constitutes interest remains a contested issue that has been subject to many debates on the human needs theory. Positivists have criticized the human needs theory because its proponents came up with numerous needs, with each theorist claiming that his list of needs is conclusive and all-encompassing. The positivists even further argue that the testability and validity of these needs remain very uncertain.

Despite the above, what remains very outstanding is that the human need theorists have advanced a list of needs and propositions vital for the survival of the human being within any given polity. Conflict and violence are bound to happen when there is gross human rights violation of such needs as security and sustenance, right to equality, happiness and personal freedom, and justice.

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[43] Jakkie Cilliers, "Violence in Africa: Trends, Drivers and Prospects to 2023," *Institute for Security Studies*, no. August (2018).

[44] Kevin Avruch, Christopher Mitchell, *Conflict Resolution and Human Needs Linking Theory and Practice Conflict Resolution and Human Needs*, New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 6–10.

[45] John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.

Apart from being a privilege that every citizen in a polity is due to enjoy, human rights are inalienable because all men are born equal. Equal opportunities should be put at their disposal for their personal and collective development. It goes without saying that in situations of violent rebel groups usually forcefully recruit those whom they consider as potential combatants from the civilian population.[46] In such instances, the quest for survival becomes an even more important factor than the cause the rebellion seeks to redress. Remaining neutral in areas largely under rebel control is no guarantee for survival.[47] The government's response is crucial at such moments because it can either quell down the rebellion through pacific means or heavy repressive measures. Repression will only serve to legitimize the cause of the already incentivized combatants. Respecting human rights in African countries is a first step toward reducing the prevalence of violent conflicts. Rebellion and repression are early signs that determine the dynamics and complexity of any conflict.

Many African countries are party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), as well as other International Human Rights Covenants like the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights(CESCR), Covenant on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as they are equally signatories to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR). The later covenant is relevant here because it was meant to uphold and foster political, economic, and socio-cultural rights, taking into cognizance the realities and particularities of the African continent. These international instruments clearly in their spheres collectively spell out and uphold the right to life, freedom from torture, political and civil rights of free speech, not leaving out socio-economic rights for development and growth.

The blatant disrespect of these rights and liberties of citizens has been orchestrated by African leaders through state repression, state weakness, or willful ignorance to uphold and maintain such rights. The effect of this violation is that many leaders within the continent have found their legitimacy and government in contested spaces as the aggrieved citizens rise through class action in violence to reclaim their lost rights. The former head of state like Idi Amin of Uganda and Jean Bokassa of the troubled Central

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[46] Gated Scott, "Recruitment and Allegiance. The Microfoundations of Rebellion.," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 46, no. 1 (2002), pp. 111–30.
[47] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

African Republic have known examples of leaders whose tenure in office recorded gross human rights violations. Human rights have thus become a yardstick in contemporary governance through which the leadership and character of a regime are judged and assessed. States that do not follow the rhythm of ensuring strong and equitable economic development and enhanced political participation of their citizens in a democratic fashion are most likely to contend with the complexities of violence.

The complex relationship between human rights, development, and democracy cannot be ignored. Understanding this nexus is relevant to why regimes face violent political challenges. Democracy provides the framework within which the freedom of association, expression, and the right of assembly are safeguarded. [48]The UDRH, in its article 21, maintains that the wheel of the governmental authority shall run on the will of the people. This implies that the democratic practice is a condition sine qua non for the respect of human rights, which ensures the enjoyment of development opportunities and stifles bad governance. When civil, political, and economic rights are respected, the distribution of state resources follows transparent channels.[49] This ensures the right to a just and decent living. When this fails to happen, the regime's legitimacy fades away in the view of the people, and the inequality they suffer highlights enemy images in their psyche, which translates into hostilities towards the state.

The violations of human rights always flourish in weak states. There exists a plethora of evidence to support the fact that violations of human rights through repressive state measures lead to violence and instability. It was revealed that there is a 0,04% chance of civil war occurrence in stable states that do not usually engage in repressiveness in dealing with their population. On the contrary, a 78% probability of civil war onset was noticed in repressive regimes that violate human rights.[50] Repression is usually accompanied by an infringement of personal human rights and employs measures that permit arbitrary

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[48] Anthony. J. Langlois, "Human Rights Without Democracy? A Critique of the Separatist Thesis," *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 5–15 (2003).
[49] Jack Donelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed., New York: Cornell University Press, 2013.
[50] Fearon James D and Laitin D, "Ethnicity, Insurgence and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, 2003, pp. 75–90.

execution, mass torture, and unlawful incarceration.[51] While repression in weak states violates human rights, it equally sets the stage for full-fledged civil war. In seeking self-determination in Somaliland, the Issaq were clamped down upon by Said Barre, then president of Somali. Under his directives, the military killed and tortured a vast majority of the Issaq people. Government forces unleashed operations scourged earth as they poisoned drinkable water sources and burned down every means of subsistence they came across, including livestock. [52]

Repressive regimes tend to trigger violence as they use their military might to go after real or perceived enemies. The repressiveness of such regimes motivates and triggers the escalation of violence that destroys communities and disrupts their life patterns.[53] The state army mercilessly targeted dissenting groups in the Central African Republic. The army engaged in manslaughter leaving thousands homeless.[54] Repression has the form and shape of an amoeba. It unfolds at different times based on circumstances that the regime's leadership interprets as threatening to their survival and stay in power. The violation of human and personal rights is not the exclusive domain of the repressive state. Non-state actors in various conflicts in Africa and around the world have been known to violate the rights of civilians through forceful recruitment to form part of their combatants. Such groups have equally witnessed the recruitment of child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Somalia.

1.2   Economic Factors

1.2.1   Resource Curse

Africa's political leadership class and the battle for control over the state's resources have contributed significantly to the scope and number of deadly conflicts that have rocked most countries' stability. The resource curse is a popular discourse that represents powerful and complex rhetoric when examining Africa's poverty base. This has been fueled and kept alive by the recurrent conflicts that frequently erupt in countries around

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[51] Nicholas Sambanis, "What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 44, no. 6 (2004), pp. 814–58, doi:10.1177/0022002704269355.

[52] Human Rights Watch, *World Report*, 2009.

[53] Oskar N.T. Thoms, James Ron, "Do Human Rights Violations Cause Internal Conflict?," *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 3 (2007), pp. 674–705, doi:10.1353/hrq.2007.0034.

[54] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2008 - Ethiopia*, *Refworld.Com*, 2008.

the continent, at the bottom of which is a continuous quest for power and wealth. The resource curse brings a fundamental question to the limelight: How can Africa, a continent so endowed with substantial natural and human resources, find itself among the wretched of the earth? Out of the 36 countries that were designated to be part of the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), 30 of those countries were from Africa, thereby representing 83% of the total WB, IMF Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. These countries include Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Mali. The inability of these countries and others to service their foreign debt burdens brought them into such a disgraceful and humiliating initiative. Corruption and bad governance brought these countries to this point.

The state in Africa does not only stand as a guarantor and protector of the rights of its citizens but equally as a significant stakeholder in the allocation of resources and equitable distribution of wealth.[55] This, unfortunately, has not been the reality in many African countries where conflicts have erupted. Despite the abundance of natural resources in African states, instead of being a blessing, the presence of these resources has come to be the reason why conflicts erupt within African states. The works of rent-seeking theorists like Gordon Tullock, James Buchanan, Anne Crueger, and Richard Posner provide one with the theoretical tools to understand how rent-seeking as a theory captured the dynamics of resource curse as a cause of conflict.

Rent-seeking is a theory that contends that powerful individuals or power-broking entities within a state use the state apparatus and resources to seek wealth for themselves that does not benefit the general society in any way.[56] Rent-seeking is, thus, any activity that seeks to achieve financial gains by manipulating the distribution of economic resources. This reality is all too prevalent within African states. The over-centralization of power in the hands of a few individuals has allocated resources to the discretionary authority of these state leaders.[57] These leaders often ignore the general welfare of the economy and

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[55] Gordon Tullock, James Buchanan, Robert Tollison (ed.), *Toward a Theory of the Rent-seeking Society*, College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1980.

[56] Robert D. Tollison, "The Economic Theory of Rent-Seeking," *Public Choice*, vol. 152, no. 1–2 (2012), pp. 73–82, doi:10.1007/s11127-011-9852-5.

[57] Jonathan Di John, "The ' Resource Curse ': Theory and Evidence," *Real Instituto Elcano*, 2010, pp. 1–9, http://biblioteca.ribei.org/1973/1/ARI-172-2010-I.pdf.

allocate resources where they will reap financial gains or political benefits. When other components of the society feel excluded from enjoying the dividends of the state's natural resources, they turn to violence as a last resort, leading to intrastate conflict.

When rebel groups launch insurgent attacks against the state to clamor for the equal distribution of resources, they do so with the intent to immediately right the wrongs committed by those in power. However, what has been observed in most of these conflicts is that once instability sets in, the line between greed and grievance becomes blurred. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) postulated that the greed and grievance theory is essential in understanding the resource curse as a cause of civil war. Collier and Hoeffler's greed and grievance approach argues that civil wars are triggered by the greed and economic gains that rebels hope to achieve by creating instability rather than by any genuine grievance.[58] The economic motivations of capturing resource-rich areas and exploiting these resources for financial gains override any ethnic or political grievance that they may have advanced. Consequently, the greed and grievance theorists argue that ethnic or political grievances are merely cover-ups for rebel groups' economic motivation, which stand as the real motive for engaging in civil wars. While the greed and grievance theory explain the onset of rebellion and civil wars, it provides a more profound theoretical underpinning in describing how the resource curse causes conflict and sustains violence.

Unlike western countries, which see the production of goods and services as a bedrock of the economy and as a concrete illustration of leadership capability, in most African countries that have witnessed civil war, the access to political power has always been interpreted as leverage to lay uncontested grip on the natural resources of these countries. In countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nigeria, the army and armed groups staged ravaging civil wars to maintain control over diamond fields, gas, cobalt, petrol, and gold.[59] Consequently, the citizens (noncombatants) become trapped between the armed groups' smoking guns and the heavy machinery of the national army. This trend has persistently continued in escalating conflicts because both sides in the conflict commercialize these natural resources and make money to finance their combat operations. In situations where the armed groups have not been able to capture

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[58] Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 2355*, 2000, pp. 563–95, doi:10.4324/9780203842256.
[59] Robert Guest, p.10

the seat of national power, they have retreated to hold over communities and swathes of land that contain mineral resources. This is the case in DR Congo, where armed groups have taken over large communities. In such areas, there is virtually little or no government presence. The rebels set the political organization and taxation system of the community. Control is almost always absent in such communities. The inability or weakness of the national army to recapture such resource-rich territories from the rebels means that the population under the captivity and command of the heavily armed militias have been sacrificed on the altar of war. This unravels a blanket of instability as the rebel groups adopt repressive rule over anyone who fails to comply with their directives. Hence the vicious circle of conflict continues. The sale of natural resources provides the armed groups with the war capital necessary to purchase ammunitions and withstand protracted battles with national armies or other armed groups contesting their jurisdiction over a resource endowed territory.

In most conflict situations reviewed within the continent of Africa, the architects of rebellions use chaos to establish an industry that thrives primarily on looting. In this regard, the line between who is a pirate, a bandit, or an insurgent becomes increasingly blurred.[60] In such instances, the rebellion is backed and sustained by a high degree of greed so that every available chance to make profits from the instability is taken with a do-or-die approach. Such agitations or rebellion cannot be attributed or explained solely by the motives for which they emerged but equally and more so by the opportunities and events available to make financial gains.[61] When analyzing these conflicts from an international relations or political science point of research, the backgrounds will base the onset of conflict on the grievance. However, greed will explain conflicts as the foundation and sustaining factor from a critical economic perspective. While conflicts may arise from the quest to redress the saliency of political rights within a given polity, the opportunities for resource grabbing most often than not become building blocks upon which conflicts thrive and are sustained within an extended period. This brings one to the critical point of balancing motive, grievance, and opportunity in our explanation of civil wars. Rebel

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[60] H. Grossman, "Kleptocracy and Revolutions," *Oxford Economic Papers*, vol. 51, no. 2 (1999), pp. 267–83, doi:10.1093/oep/51.2.267.
[61] Collier, Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," pp. 1–34.

groups often fight to lay claim over geographical areas with a perceived abundance of natural resources, which, when exploited and sold, become a huge source of finance.

Since decolonization, the African diasporas have played a crucial role in how conflicts began and significantly how they are shaped within the continent. In most cases, the diasporas may not be at the forefront of the onset of the conflict, but their subsequent role in supporting the dissenting rebels cannot be waved aside. Once conflicts broke out, diasporas who do not want the incumbent government in the embattled country to continue ruling weigh in on rebel sides with financial support. Most of these folks were forced to leave their country of origin because of poverty, bad governance, or conflicts. Consequently, they see rebellion against such regimes as a justified cause to support. This is even made easier once they tend to identify with the rebel groups through ethnolinguistic inclinations or simply through shared grievances against the government.[62] Diaspora financial support for rebellions in Africa is an integral part of the general drama of conflict within the continent that cannot be overlooked. Similarly, hostile neighboring states with ethnic linkages to the fighting groups within an embattled country have supported such rebel groups to unseat or wrestle with the incumbent government to settle political or boundary differences, which otherwise will have proved challenging to achieve through interstate war. Rebel groups fighting the state within the framework of such proxy arrangements do so not just to push their original agenda but also because of the financial support from hostile neighboring states, which they use to sustain their cause. A classical case in point is Laurent Desire Kabila, who was actively supported by the Rwandan government through a rebel-led initiative to seize power from Mobutu Sese Seko in the Congo.

1.2.2   The Proliferation of Small Arms.

The proliferation of small arms has given leeway to increased civil wars within most African states. The proliferation of small arms is both cause and sustainer of conflicts. The easy purchase and transportation of these weapons like mines, guns, and explosives

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[62] Sambanis Paul, Collier, and Nicholas (ed.), *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*, 1st ed., Washington D.C: The World Bank, 2005.

through the porous borders of states within the continent has given an edge to rebel movements to engage in combat with other rebel groups or with the state army. However, multilateral institutions like the United Nations and other power brokers within the larger international scene have erroneously or in willful ignorance directed their energy to curtail much larger weapons, and, in the process, they have not paid equal attention to the transit and use of these light weapons that tend to sustain and characterize many conflicts within the continent. This insufficient attention paid to the proliferation of small arms has been hinged on the interest of arm manufacturing countries that, in some ways, form part of the significant power brokers within the larger international community.[63] Any effective engagements to control this arms trade from sliding into and fueling conflicts will directly mean a sharp decrease in the enormous gains they make from the sale of such weapons.

The discourse on arms and the outbreak of conflicts shifted and increased after 1992 as the focus of conflict occurrence drifted from interstate to intrastate.[64] This change in the nature and character of conflicts equally brought increased attention only in comparison to how Major Conventional Weapons (MCW) and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) influence the cause and course of the war. Though scholarship on internal conflicts and the arms factor has seen the light of day in many academic and policy-centered forums, the complexity of establishing a correlation between weapon inflows and conflict outbreaks remains a crucial factor in analyzing why conflicts occur.

According to Oliver Pamp et al., the predominant focus on MCW in analyzing civil wars is faulty. They maintain that research of conflict outbreaks must, as a matter of necessity, include both MCW and SALW. While acknowledging the import and export trade of MCW as the sole prerogative of government, equal attention ought to be paid to ascertaining the transfer and trafficking of small arms by rebel groups.[65] Though SALW

[63] Anthony Sampson, *The Arms Bazaar in the Nineties: From Krupp to Saddam*, London: Coronet, 1991.
[64] Stathis N. Kalyvas, Laia Balcells, "International Systems and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 104, no. 3 (2010), pp. 415–29.
[65] Oliver Pamp et al., "The Build-up of Coercive Capacities: Arms Imports and the Outbreak of Violent Intrastate Conflicts," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 55, no. 4 (2018), pp. 430–44.

flows are largely illicit, they can influence intrastate conflicts in complex and contradictory ways.

In their examination of 137 countries, laying particular focus on 1949-2013, Pamp et al. posited that the trade and import of major conventional weapons play a significant role in the outbreak of internal conflicts. They established their arguments that countries with a high probability of falling into the conflict trap fit the view above. Consequently, the importation of MCW in such instances by governments will be a less effective tool for deterrence. Conversely, it will catalyze conflict upsurge, resulting in a civil war. This has been particular for countries sub of the Sahara.[66]

In this light, two schools of thought have emerged. Those who see arms as having a destabilizing effect and those who uphold that it is vital for maintaining the stability of the polity. MCW gives the government an edge over rebellion within its territorial confines to provide security for its citizens through its military units. Similarly, the availability of sophisticated weapons in possession of the state army equally may cause conflict, as the government will be pruned to stage and take an active part in intrastate conflicts.[67] The opposing rebel movements may equally interpret the acquisition of MCW as an existential risk to their agenda, which needs to be inhibited through some form of political violence. Proponents of the stabilizing school of thought posit that the acquisition of MCW has a considerable capacity to deter conflicts.[68] Deterrence, however, can only be effective to the degree to which rebel groups' weapons do not match those of the state. The complexity involved in establishing which effect is more dominant is no easy matter.

1.3 Social Inequality

While many African governments talk about an increase in their Gross Domestic Product and boast about striving for a healthier economy, it is incredible that a vast majority of the populations in these countries do not benefit from the trade deals that these

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[66] Cassady Craft, Joseph P. Smaldone, "The Arms Trade and the Incidence of Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1967-97," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 39, no. 6 (2002), pp. 693–710.
[67] Shannon Lindsey Blanton, "Instruments of Security or Tools of Repression? Arms Imports and Human Rights Conditions in Developing Countries," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 36, no. 2 (1999), pp. 233–44
[68] Giacomo De Luca, Petros G. Sekeris, "Deterrence in Contests," *Economica*, vol. 80, no. 317 (2013), pp. 171–89.

governments sign now and then. Despite the much-talked-about low inflation rates and palatable budget deficits that characterize political discourses to indicate that the continent is growing, inequality, poverty, and unemployment have remained staggeringly high.[69]. Local investments keep struggling to survive in harsh domestic economic climates. In contrast, the dividends of the seemingly buoyant foreign investments do not trickle down to the masses, as many are still trapped in poverty.[70] These socio-political and economic inequalities have erected structures of exclusion that stifle and limit the possibility of enjoying the benefits of an inclusive society.

The theoretical foundations of the relative deprivation theory enable one to grasp a perfect understanding of how social inequality, poverty, and ethnicity led to the outbreak of violence. Relative deprivation theorists maintain that relative deprivation is a consciousness about a group's present realities vis-à-vis their legitimate expectations compared to other groups or individuals. The Tuareg rebellion in Mali began because the country's northern regions felt neglected and relatively deprived of enjoying state resources and social amenities. While the north remained underdeveloped, the southern part of Mali flourished with development projects.

An outstanding proponent of the relative deprivation theory is Robert Ted Gurr. His works and propositions have helped establish a strong link between deprivation and conflict.[71] Gurr purported that the potential outbreak of collective violence depends on the level of discontent that people within a given community feel. Such discontent, whether real or perceived, is seen as a discrepancy between what they have and what they think they should have.[72]. This gap between their present realities and expectations has been described as relative deprivation. Frustration and aggression thus come because of poverty and finds expression through the psychological motive for collective violence.

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[69] Lucky Asuelime, *Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development*, Heidelberg: Springer International Publishing, 2014, pp. 100–104.

[70] Earl Conteh-Morgan, *Collective Political Violence: An Introduction to the Theories and Cases of Violent Conflicts*, New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 276–79.

[71] Robert Ted Gurr, "Psychological Factors in Civil Violence. 20:245-78," *World Politics*, vol. 20 (1968), pp. 245–78., See also Robert Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970.

[72] Stephen G. Brush, "Dynamics of Theory Change in the Social Sciences: Relative Deprivation and Collective Violence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 40, no. 4 (1996), pp. 523–45, doi:10.1177/0022002796040004001.

Proponents of relative deprivation strongly opine that the consequences of political discontent such as revolution, protest, violence, and instability depend on how wealth and opportunities are distributed within the economic system. When people feel that they have been deprived of such essential things for life and living as employment, development projects, electricity, potable water, schools, hospitals, and rights, there exists a high propensity for them to mobilize into rebel groups to fight and get what they have been deprived of

Such inequalities metamorphose and are politicized as tools for conflicts that, within time, manifest themselves as a significant destabilizing factor in society. The many divides that social inequalities create only solidify as the population grows and begins forming networks of grievance that tend to stage a rebellion against the state, not leaving out those who control state power.[73] In most countries south of the Sahara, these inequalities have been exacerbated by limited opportunities for employment, poorly equipped health facilities, and educational systems that even those who run the affairs of the government do not believe in them. In the face of such gruesome poverty and a sense of exclusion from the larger state structure, extraordinarily religious and politicized networks emerge on the ticket of exclusivity, seeking to lay claims or establish a supremacist agenda over their rights to enjoy the benefits of being an in-group.

1.4 Ethno-Religious Diversity and the Politics of Identity

In many African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Congo, and the Central African Republic, ethnic tensions have affected the people in more ways than one. The discourse on ethnicity in Africa has been an issue that has been misconstrued and sometimes misinterpreted by many authors who have attempted to explain the conflict in the continent through an ethnic lens. Ethnicity in and through itself is not a harmful or dangerous concept. The problem with ethnicity resides with its politicization and how it is socially constructed in each context by powerful politicians, rebel groups, or state institutions.

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[73] Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods (ed.), *Inequality, Globalisation, and World Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 248–60.

Understanding how ethnicity causes conflict can best be sharpened within the theoretical framework of constructivism. Though being an international relations state-level theory, the tenets of this theory are equally relevant in explaining the local levels of conflict dynamics. The leading proponents of the constructivist school include Nicholas Onuf, Alexander Wendt, Martha Finnemor, and Friedrich Kratochwill. The politicization of ethnicity follows a constructivist pattern which is crucial for understanding the issue under examination. In explaining conflict through the ethnic lens, it is essential to note how culture, identity, and ideologies are constructed. Constructivists are particularly interested in the critical concepts of norms, rules, and identity and how they affect our conceptions and relate to the world and others.

Constructivists argue that ideologies not only socialize individuals to heed certain norms constraining them from pursuing their interests but also that ideas form the bedrock upon which identities and interests of people are socially constructed. This then determines and shapes the meanings they appropriate to events and actions.[74] Before politicized ethnicity becomes a cause for violence, it is first and foremost constructed in the psyche of the groups so that they tend to problematize the identities and interests of other groups. Events of violence in Africa have proven that those who occupy political positions favor their ethnic clans in allocating resources and development projects. This creates a scenario where the in-groups in power tend to see other ethnic groups as enemies of the state. The out-groups on their own equally resort to designating the in-groups as enemies of the people. When situations like electoral irregularities or rigging occur, aggrieved groups exploit it as a window of opportunity to fight each other or engage in combat with the state army.

The politicization of ethnicity began with the Europeans' colonization and balkanization of Africa. This was crafted and implemented through the policy of divide and rule, which in the understanding of the colonial powers, was to serve as a bulwark to any resistance towards their government. During the partition of Africa, ethnic groups with different cultural and political patterns of social cohesion were arbitrarily lumped up in what was later to become new African states. This policy of divide and rule gave a sense of direction

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[74] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization*, vol. 46, no. 2 (1992), pp. 391–425.

to the newly independent African elites. To successfully rule over their people, they needed to adopt a strategy like those of their former colonial masters. Their strategy thus found expression in amplifying ethnic differences between and amongst groups within the political entity. Regrettably, at independence and the years that have followed suit, many African countries have found themselves trapped in the web of ethnic antagonism- either as dominant ethnic groups seeking to maintain control of the central power and resources of the state or marginalized minorities seeking to challenge the status and take over control.

It is true that within the boundaries of African countries, inhabitants of various ethnic groups uphold the sanctity of their identity and belonging to such a clan than to the state. The corruption and bad governance that has rocked the development of most African countries have caused the people in tribes and communities to regroup through ethnic mobilization to aggregate and channel their interests to the central system of the state or as a vehicle for local development to step in where the state has failed. This has always translated into massive support for anyone who emerges from that tribe and seeks political votes and helps to wield national power politics. Many politicians in such countries have exploited this trend to whip up ethnic sentiments among groups.

While the groups tend to engage each other in ethnic conflicts, the politicians reap the benefits of such instability to maintain their grip on power or to divert attention from their poor performance to bring about the much-desired development and governance which was promised to the community before the elections[75]. Behind many ethnic conflicts that have brought untold suffering and caused persons to be internally displaced, agriculture disrupted, houses burnt, women raped, and pillage orchestrated, there is usually an invisible political power base stirring trouble by capitalizing and highlighting what divides than what unites the people. Countries like Rwanda, Cameroon, Mali, and Nigeria have witnessed the scourge of ethnic conflicts.

The problem that drives and keeps ethnic tension or politicization of ethnicity is that people engage in the electoral processes backed by solidified ethnic affinity to the candidate. Very often than not, little or no attention is paid to what concrete or achievable

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[75] Robert Guest, p.11

policies are in his political or development agenda. Therefore, conflicts tend to rise because people are hurt and frustrated. After all, such emotional investments always yield nothing. However, the support to a particular candidate is always informed by the misconception that they can only be better or enjoy development as a people if one of theirs rises to the position of minister or president. As a people, Africans must liberate themselves from such jingoistic narrow ethnic inclinations. When a political candidate or leader's ethnic extraction becomes the benchmark for his ascension to power, we tend to see partial or complete neglect of other ethnic extractions that do not share his political views. This aggrieved and excluded lot always serves as a breeding ground from where dissent and frustration of their neglect make them easy recruits to warlords seeking to instigate violence to express their grievance and as a channel through which they hope to change the status quo to fit their agenda. This trend in African politics continues to sustain a vicious cycle that replicates itself repeatedly, leaving behind an enemy image that threatens the social cohesion of society. The ethnic leaders believe that assistance will only come to their community when one of them ascends to the seat of power. Negative ethnicity takes from here and sets the stage for all future conflicts or violence within the society.

1.5   *Environment Pressures and the Psychology of Violent Conflicts*

Most African countries south of the Sahara have tropical climates. Unlike temperate climates in western countries, the tropical climate of African countries makes them breeding grounds for diseases to thrive. This comes with adverse effects on the land's agricultural production and the rearing and development of livestock. Without the availability of large portions of cultivable fertile land, the agricultural endeavors of the rural population are hindered. This equally means that they will not be able to feed themselves adequately, and low agricultural yields are translated into a poor income base for the people. The resentment that comes with such environmental challenges has found expression in violent rebellion channeled towards the central power base of the state.[76] The inability of the state leadership to halt and reverse such environmental challenges as drought and floods has exposed the administration's authority to attacks through

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[76] Robert Guest, The Shackled Continent: Power, Corruption and African Lives,(London: Smithsonian Books, 2004) 3-6

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organized crimes by armed groups whose principal objective is to topple the existing government and take overpower.

With high fluctuations in weather conditions caused by climate change, many states like Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Chad, and Mali are among some of the countries in Africa that have been hard hit by drought and desertification. The increased demand for Africa's Forest products like timber has led to an unprecedented scale of unsustainable deforestation with its challenges. With limited opportunities for employment, low income, and widened inequality gaps, intra-community violence is bound to occur as groups lay claims to the land. [77] Ethiopia and Zimbabwe are classic examples of countries that have experienced violence driven by hunger and the quest for the redistribution of resources.

An increase in the population growth as it is being witnessed proportionately translates into increased pressures and demand over land and water resources, thereby increasing the chances of violence and instability as competition for these scarce resource soars.[78] From pre-colonial times to today, population growth in Africa was seen as a source of human resources for agriculture and security for the tribe or state. It was a common belief that the number of people a state or community had meant that it could defend itself against external attacks. However, in contemporary times, population growth is beginning to mean different things to different schools of thought. While those clamoring for a reduction in the world's population interpret population increase as a threat and unsustainable for earth's scarce resources, rebel groups, on the other hand like Al Shabab, ISIS in the Maghreb, and Boko Haram see population as a base from which combatants can be quickly recruited to fuel the flame of armed conflict.

Despite investing heavily in its national armies, it is increasingly difficult for African states to lay substantial control over their ever-increasing population.[79] The probability of an armed rebellion erupting and being sustained for a long time becomes feasible. In

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[77] John. L Martin, "Population, Environment and Political Instability: A Tangle Triangle," *Immigration Review*, vol. 18 (1994), pp. 7–13.

[78] J. A Goldstone, "Population and Security: How Demographic Change Can Lead to Violent Conflict," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 1 (2002), pp. 3–21.

[79] D, "Ethnicity, Insurgence and Civil War," pp. 75–90., A Collier, P., and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War in A Frica," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 46 (2004), pp. 13–28.

the same vein, neo-Malthusian proponents argue that steady population growth will lay unbearable pressures that can cause rapid degradation of the environment, thus laying the foundations on which armed rebellion can be ignited.[80] In addition to the above, other proponents of the population-environment –conflict nexus opine that geographical feature play an essential part in the onset of violent intrastate conflicts. States mountainously characterized by an uneven and rough topography provide a haven for rebel groups.[81] It is a fact that guerilla fighters and rebels master the routes of such rugged terrains more than the national army. Therefore, it has become challenging for state troops to readily attack and disarm rebel groups in their strongholds. This is not to say that national armies have not done so before with success. However, the inability and challenge to gather intelligence on rebels who operate from caves and bushes limit the capacity and margin of success during counterinsurgency operations. Countries like Cameroon, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Kenya, Nigeria, Libya, and Somalia all have rough landscapes that serve as fortresses for rebel groups that unleash violence on the state and civilians alike.

Natural disasters in themselves do not directly cause conflict. Floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, and storms only provide a breeding ground and avenue on which grievances are transformed into violent conflicts, putting heavy demands and pressure on the state to act decisively. [82] Environmental factors and grievances have mainly been discussed and analyzed in many academic and policy circles in complex and contradictory ways. While many analysts have argued that environmental factors cause political instability, other contending views say natural disasters can unite and reconcile people more than lead to civil unrest[83]. This argument is based on the ground that communities stick together in solidarity and channel their collective efforts to seek relief during such difficult moments. Such an organized strategy unites society more. In some cases, old grievances are abandoned for the common good of all parties affected by the disaster irrespective of race,

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[80] H. Ehrlich Paul, R. Ehrlich., and Anne, *Betrayal of Science and Reason: How Anti-Environmental Rhetoric and Reason Threatens Our Future*, Washington DC: Island Press, 1996.

[81] D Nunn, N. and Puga, "Ruggedness: The Blessing of Bad Geography in Africa.," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, vol. 94, no. 1 (2002), pp. 20–36.

[82] Mariya Y. Omelicheva, "Natural Disasters: Triggers of Political Instability?," *International Interactions*, vol. 37, no. 4 (2011), pp. 441–65, doi:10.1080/03050629.2011.622653.

[83] Vincent Gawronski, Olson Richard, "From Disaster Event to Political Crisis: A '5C+A' Framework for Analysis.," *Nternational Studies Perspectives*, vol. 11, no. 3 (2010), pp. 205–11.

ethnicity, color, linguistic or religious affiliations. Environmental disasters have inherent abilities to either make or mare the stability of the state. This depends mainly on the type of regime in place and how resilient its institutions and governmental structures are. The government's response at such moments is critical because it can either quell down simmering tensions or help strengthen the cause of dissenting groups challenging the sovereignty and integrity of the state's leadership.[84] Governments with strong and accountable institutions are likely to survive, make more political capital and enhance their legitimacy through actions and measures that foster relief and cohesion when disaster strikes. On the other hand, weak states in the face of natural disasters are most like to plunge into collapse, putting the state authority up for the contest by dissenting groups. The connection between leadership, natural disasters, and regime type is very relevant in shaping our understanding of why violent conflicts erupt within a state after a natural disaster. Psychological speaking, climates like that of sub-Saharan countries affect and increase a person's propensity for violence.

2 EXTERNAL DETERMINANTS OF CONFLICT IN AFRICA: A CAUSAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Multinational Corporations and Comprador Bourgeoisie

At the center of most violent conflicts in Africa, the economic/resource nexus has often played a significant role in the emergence and shape of disputes. This economic-resource nexus is fueled by the comprador bourgeoisie, who have strong ties with the erstwhile colonial powers. Their short-term goals of self-gratification have worked well to destroy nations through corrupt practices that go on at the very highest levels of government. This set of people has the uncanny habit of getting into public office. They steal on an industrial scale. Most of them mask as pseudo shareholders and register multinational companies under their names to evade taxation. They mastermind the shady deals that cart away the country's resources at prices that yield insignificant dividends to the nation.

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[84] Ole Magnus Theisen Buhaug, Halvard, Nils P. Gleditsch, "Implications of Climate Change for Armed Conflict," *Paper Presented at the World Bank Workshop on Social Dimensions of Climate Change, Washington, DC, March 5–6.*, 2008. Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press., 1999.

Multinational Corporations and their local allies have caused the collapse of many African governments through coup d'état or sponsored militias. This often happens in situations where they have the impression that the president in power is not serving their business interest enough or is against their growth and expansion within the territorial confines of the state where their operations are being managed. Consequently, the president's removal is either staged through coup plots or simply through violent agitations from some factions of the country, which later culminates into large-scale political violence. While the nation's people are busy fighting each other, the MNCs and their local surrogates illegally exploit and carry away resources like oil, gold, and diamond.

Since during moments of state instability, the exploitation and regulation of these resources are absent, MNCs engage warlords who protect their business interests and keep the area hostile, preventing any meaningful government engagement from thriving. This argument, however, holds on both ends as agents within the state have equally given MNCs exploitation rights that do not favor the environmental and health conditions of the populace where these multinationals operate. Oil spills from Shell and ENI constituted significant health and environmental hazards to the Niger Delta communities. The oil spills from these companies polluted the rivers and poisoned the fish, thereby crippling the local fishing, which was a source of livelihood for thousands in the region. Though this region holds a vast majority of Nigeria's oil resources, it has persistently suffered neglect from the Nigerian leadership and the multinationals operating in this region. While the plunder and pillage of this region's oil wealth go unchecked, the rural communities continue to wallow in extreme poverty. All they had to their credit were dilapidated health and educational facilities. The inability of the locals to reconcile the riches of their region with the hardship they suffered brewed tensions between armed groups from the area, MNCs, and the central government[85]. The absence of adequate social amenities drove the people into hopelessness that found expression in armed violence and a separatist call to secede from the more significant Nigerian state. As armed violence escalated, the infrastructures of oil-producing multinational companies were attacked, destroyed, and burnt down. Oil pipes were sabotaged. Many of the foreigners

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[85] George Klay Kieh, "The State and Political Instability in Africa," *Journal of Developing Societies*, vol. 25, no. 1 (2009), pp. 1–25, doi:10.1177/0169796X0902500101.

who worked in these factories were kidnapped, and the payments of huge ransoms were preconditions for their release.

Where the government has become entirely oblivious of the need to see that multinationals adequately meet the requirements of their corporate social responsibility, communities have been endangered and livelihoods destroyed. Local communities rise in violence against such multinational corporations in their areas to reverse these trends. This very fact is at the root of the Niger Delta crisis, and though it has ended, the vestige of that conflict still threatens to tear Nigeria apart.

Other schools of thought opine that multinational companies have provided financial support to governments in volatile conflict environments where they operate their businesses. This argument is based on the ground that conflict makes it difficult for governments to collect revenue effectively. At such moments, the financial packages that flow from multinationals to governments are meant to cushion the state's economy from collapsing and help maintain its leadership. The dividends from resource rents make it possible for multinationals to ensure such financial flows.[86]

States like DR Congo, Nigeria, Sudan, Angola, and others have benefitted from such financial flows from multinationals operating in their territories.[87] Internal strife in these countries has been traceable to MNCs under the extractive industries framework. The exploitation of resources like timber, oil, diamonds, and gas keeps these multinationals steady in Africa, even when socio-economic and political instability make the environment less business friendly. Multinational companies have long been seen as formidable drivers of the economy and agents of development through their corporate social responsibility schemes. Conversely, their involvement in intrastate conflicts cannot be overlooked. The resource royalties that multinationals channel to state treasuries tend to increase the government's purchasing power to secure more sophisticated military artilleries to combat dissenting groups within the state. The lack of accountability and transparency of resource rents coupled with the repressiveness of these governments

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[86] OECD, "'Multinational Enterprises in Situations of Violent Conflict and Widespread Human Rights Abuses,'" *OECD Working Papers on International Investment*, 2002, pp. 1–36.

[87] Ballentine Karen and Heiko Nietschke (ed.), *Profiting from Peace: Managing the Resource Dimension of Civil War.*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publications., 2005.

further fuels grievances and puts the integrity of multinationals into question, especially during moments of state instability.

When multinationals have not been seen to be directly involved in inciting violence in a country, there is ample evidence that they have done so covertly through secret strategic plans. Most of the internal wars that characterized the 1990s witnessed considerable collaboration between militias, rebel groups, and multinationals. The multinationals engaged in such sordid deals because conquered rebel territory would offer them free passage to extract national resources in the troubled state.[88] Though other MNCs and international organizations criticized this way of doing business, it was a reality that kept the guns firing in Africa to sustain the economic wheel of the West at a cost and effort far cheaper than they would have had through regular government channels. Civil wars funded by external sources of finance with arms logistics tend to be more protracted than those with little or no external support.[89] These illicit financial flows into civil wars prolong the conflicts and enable an environment where international dark market trade operations flourish. Illegal trade of resources like gold, uranium, opium, cobalt, and diamond continues to flow into uninhibited foreign commercial markets amidst the chaos in the conflict-stricken country. The quest of MNCs to meet up with the demands and complex tastes of their consumers is at the bottom of why civil wars are sustained.

Sudan's civil war registered the participation of multinational companies and their power relations with the Government of Sudan (GoS). The interactions of these MNCs equally included relations with the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Multinationals like the Canadian Talisman Energy, Malaysia's Petronas, India's ONGC, and Sweden's Lundin Petroleum are among the many international companies that played significant roles in shaping the war in Sudan.[90] These multinationals forged ties with the government of Sudan to secure some form of protection over their businesses and equally to ensure the continuation of their extractive activities once the war was over. This strategic step was crucial for the survival of their business empires. The alliance between the GoS and

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[88] Ian Bannon and Collier Paul (ed.), *Natural Resources and Violent Conflict: Options and Actions.*, Washington, DC: World Bank., 2003.

[89] Blanton, "Instruments of Security or Tools of Repression? Arms Imports and Human Rights Conditions in Developing Countries," pp. 233–44.

[90] Luke A. Patey, "Understanding Multinational Corporations in War-Torn Societies: Sudan in Focus," *DIIS Brief*, 2006, pp. 1–10.

the MNCs saw a significant flow of financial packages to the GoS to keep it afloat during the turbulence.

2.2   *Neighborhood Contagion*

The contagion effect in civil war analysis is both a cause and an effect. Empirical investigations have revealed that a civil war is likely to occur in a particular state if one or more states in its neighborhood conflict.[91] As a trigger of civil war, the contagion effect has found expression in varied and multifaceted conflict analysis frameworks. In Africa, the presence of a hostile state within a particular neighborhood is a perfect recipe for conflict to occur. Hostile neighbors have the characteristics of instigating and sponsoring violence in neighboring states. They do this to show strength and hegemonic power or as a prerequisite to lay hold on the resources of their neighbors once they are in conflict. This was the case with Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi's engagement in DR Congo's civil wars. On the other hand, the rebel groups within a country may draw ideological inspiration from combatants in a neighboring country to begin violence in their state. Porous African territorial borders make it even more feasible for ammunitions and fighters to smuggle into another country quickly.

Conflicts in countries like Mali, Niger, Chad, Senegal, and Libya have witnessed the crossing of weapons of war and significant inflows of fighters from each other at various times of their respective moments of state instability.[92] The Tuaregs who championed the cause of conflict in Mali were effectively trained, and their combat skills were refined through their participation in the Chadian conflict. At the outbreak of violence in Mali, these fighters became ready combatants who challenged the status quo to reverse the inequalities they suffered from the central Malian government. The availability of weapons and easy movement of combatants from one country to another makes the outbreak or longevity of conflict very possible. What further reinforces this argument is the element of shared ethnicity and religious affinity, which solidifies the conviction of the rebel groups to engage in supporting their kin groups in another country. They see it

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[91] Nicolas Sambanis, "'Do Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes? A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry,'" *Journal of Conflict Resolution.*, vol. 45, no. 3 (2001), pp. 259–82.

[92] Paul, Collier, and Nicholas, *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*., Barbara F Walter, "'Explaining the Intractability of Territorial Conflict,'" *International Studies Review*, vol. 5, no. 4 (2003), pp. 137–53.

as a duty to preserve the survival of their ethnic group by engaging in its plan to incite violence against other ethnic groups or the state.

Several scholars have examined the contagion effect and made valid contributions to our understanding of how civil wars erupt and are sustained. The empirical results these studies convey are that trouble in one state raises the probability of chaos in another, especially when both states are in the same geographical neighborhood.[93] Saleyhan and Gleditsch argue that states that play host to refugees from a neighboring conflict are vulnerable to experiencing an outbreak of conflict. The contagion effect also comes along with issues of the domino effects. The gains and achievements of one rebel and or ethnically constituted group in a neighboring country send signals to those in other nearby states that their aspirations can be met through the same means of violence.[94]Though the Biafran secessionist war in Nigeria, which ran from 1976-to 1970, did not secure a separate Biafran state for the secessionist, it gave inspiration and lessons to other separatist movements within the continent. In 2016, teachers and lawyers in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon began a nationwide protest to resist the disregard of the Anglo-Saxon legal and educational system, which that part of the country had been used to since the colonial days. The high-handedness of the dominant francophone-led government had marginalized these two English regions for a long time. The protest was quickly hijacked by separatist groups calling for an independent Ambazonia state, and today it has evolved into a full-scale violent conflict. The secessionist fighters took refuge in neighboring Nigeria, where they planned and strategized attacks on the Cameroon military. The ramifications of intrastate conflicts go far beyond the territorial confines of their host countries. Nigeria is currently host to thousands of refugees fleeing armed violence from the two restive English regions.

The spillover effect of violent conflict has been experienced mainly within the African continent and beyond. The Arab Spring revolts, which began between 2010 and 2011 as a simple protest in Tunisia, later engulfed Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.

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[93] Buhaug Halvard and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "'Contagion or Confusion? Why Conflicts Cluster in Space,'" *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 52, no. 2 (2008), pp. 215–30. Hegre Håvard and Nicholas Sambanis, "'Sensitivity Analysis of Empirical Results on Civil War Onset,'" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 50, no. 4 (2006), pp. 508–35. ,

[94] Henry E. Hale, "'The Parade of Sovereignties: Testing Theories of Secession in the Soviet Setting,'" *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 30, no. 1 (2000), pp. 31–56.

The socio-political and economic grievances that came along with these revolts challenged the limits of authoritarianism in North Africa and the Middle East. The repressiveness of national regime armies that countered the uprisings did not stop it from being emulated within other states in the neighborhood. Increased repression met with more great protests that led to the toppling of the regimes of Ben Ali in Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, and Gaddafi in Libya.[95] The protesters' significant achievements in Tunisia and Egypt registered sent a green light to those in Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria. The democratic agenda for which the Arab Spring began has not been fully realized in countries swept by the revolts wave. However, the Arab Spring demonstrated how the contagion effect of conflict could spread.[96] While the Middle East and North Africa endure the effects of the Arab Spring, fundamental questions have arisen.

The Arab Spring introduced new and contested meanings into the approach, attitude, and relations that had characterized the East, the West, and Africa. It equally brought to the limelight the limited extent to which external influence shapes conflict outcomes within the continent. The protracted Syrian conflict, which produces hundreds of refugees each passing day, is a testament to this limitation. The inability of Libya to erect a democratic, stable, and legitimate government portrays the fact that the United States (US) and France, who led the capture and killing of Muammar Gaddafi, had no concrete plans of development or democracy for a post-Gaddafi Libya. The cross-comparative perspectives which the Arab Spring represents bring one to understand how the contagion effect of conflict transcends regional, sub-regional and continental boundaries shaping the dynamics of the international relations arena.

3 CONCEPTUALIZING CONFLICT IN AFRICA

The contemporary conceptualization of conflict in Africa is as complex a process as the conflicts within the continent. Africa's interaction with wars is a common feature that has evolved with it throughout its history. In pre-colonial times Africans fought against European colonialization of their territory. In colonial times, many wars of resistance

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[95] Jason .E. Strakes, *The Arab Spring Through a Libyan Prism: Contagion, Cleavages, and Adverse Transition. In: Çakmak C. (Eds) The Arab Spring, Civil Society, and Innovative Activism.*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

[96] Graeme Herd, "The Arab Spring: Challenges, Obstacles and Dilemmas.," *Connections*, vol. 10, no. 4 (2011), pp. 103–20.

were fought across the continent between the colonizers and the indigenous inhabitants of territories in Africa. These wars were agitations against forced labor and other barbaric practices which the Europeans inflicted on Africans. Then came WWI and WWII, where Africans fought for their colonial masters in Africa and abroad. The international rivalry between the West and the East later dragged them again to fight on either side of the divide during the Cold War. As Africans became more enlightened and politically conscious, they began engaging in wars of decolonization against their colonial masters. It is worth noting that from the pre-colonial wars to the end of the Cold War, most of the wars in Africa were predominantly interstate wars.

While the end of the Cold War brought a significant reduction in the number of Interstate wars, a new phenomenon evolved. Intrastate wars soon became the replacement for Interstate wars. The complex nature of intrastate wars and the violent conflicts that came along with them have since caused a serious debate on the nature of these new wars, what triggered them, and how they are perceived and resolved. The conceptualization of conflict in Africa, especially after the post-Cold War era, becomes imperative. It provides a valuable compass to policymakers and practitioners alike to develop a concrete analysis of these conflicts and how they can be settled. Contemporary conflicts in Africa thus defile the pre-Cold war state-centric traditional classifications. The dynamics of these new wars have been shaped not by the political ideologies of the Cold War years but by group and ethnic inclinations that challenged the state's sovereignty and stability. These conflicts have come to be described as civil wars, insurgency, terrorism, ethnic conflict, and social and political unrest. No matter what name they are called, a defining characteristic of these conflicts is that they occur within the territorial conference of states. What equally makes these conflicts worthy of attention is that though they are typically characterized by violence, killing, kidnapping, and destruction within a particular state, the effect of such violence usually spills over into neighboring states and, by extension, puts pressure on both regional and international security.

In a bid to conceptualize contemporary African conflicts, several definitions have been advanced by scholars and policymakers alike on how these conflicts can be understood and resolved. Intrastate conflicts are caused by an array of factors that are intertwined. The factors that cause conflict in Africa include corruption, bad governance, weak states,

resource control, the politicization of ethnicity, environmental pressure, and the abuse of power.

Most recent definitions of conflicts draw inspiration from Carl von Clausewitz's thesis, which maintained that war is simply the continuance of politics by other means.[97] If one were to go by this understanding, it would mean that the absence of democratic institutions through which legitimate grievances can be channeled and addressed causes groups to take up arms as a way out to settle their grievance with the central authorities of the state. According to Raymond Gilpin, the Clausewitzian definition of conflict adequately sheds light on the issue of governance but focuses too much attention on how such conflicts impact the state.[98] Gilpin's definition and understanding of African conflicts thus shift from the statehood approach and focuses more on how groups challenge oppression to secure their freedom and ensure their survival. Hence a more functional approach to understanding conflicts in Africa will hinge more on group dynamics, how these groups are socially organized and what motivates their action.

Conflict was used interchangeably with civil war, political instability, violent conflict, and strife. More specifically, conflict in this study refers to situations where because of unmet legitimate grievances or out of sheer desire to challenge the territorial integrity of the state, groups take up arms to fight other groups or engage in combat with the state military. Such conflicts usually result in the death of combatants and civilians alike.

According to Oscar Mateos, a robust, comprehensive approach is vital in understanding African conflicts. He opines that since 1990, scholarly and policy debates on the nature and causes of armed conflict in Africa have increased significantly. These, according to him, laid the foundation for the emergence of the greed and grievance school of thought. This notwithstanding, the passage of time and the evolution of conflict has given space to alternative explanations which highlight the varied internal and external causes and actors in conflicts. In her view, Bernard Mayer tied her explanation of conflict to a three-dimensional approach. Conflict, according to her, can be explained and understood as

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[97] Bernard Brodie. Carl von Clausewitz., Michael Howard., Peter Paret., *On War*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.
[98] Raymond Gilpin, "Understanding the Nature and Origins of Violent Conflict in Africa," *Minding the Gap: African Conflict Management in a Time of Change*, ed. by Pamela Aall and Chester A. Crocker, Waterloo: CIGI Publications, 2016.

perception, a feeling, and an action.[99] Conflict as perception is because a group or an individual's values, needs, wants, and interests are not compatible with others. Mayer further opines that conflict can be expressed through feelings of sadness, fear, bitterness, and anger. Action Has to do with violent and destructive behavior.

In many Westerners' views, Africa has been conceptualized to reflect a dark continent with continuous episodes of war, disease, poverty, and hardship. Ashley Jackson argues that such representation of Africa by the western media creates a false picture of the continent, which does not adequately reflect its riches, strength, and capabilities.[100] While acknowledging the fact that Africa has experienced its fair share of ethnic conflicts, Jackson argues that the difficulty in crafting a meaningful solution to Africa's wars stems from the fact that it is a continent that has been grossly misunderstood.

Similar to Jackson, Romain Malejaqc took a critical analysis of western understandings of conflict in Africa. Malejaqc maintains that in explaining conflicts in Africa, the West has relied theoretically on perspectives that paid much attention to the political, economic, and social triggers of conflict. This approach has shaped Western policies and determined how the West reacts to armed conflicts in Africa. Before the Cold War, the West only sought to describe conflicts in Africa as barbaric without adequately comprehending the root causes.[101]

However, Malejaqc maintains that the pattern of explaining African conflicts in the West changed after the Cold War. The democratic peace theory became the premise on which African conflicts were explained. The argument thus rested on Africa's experience with conflict because its countries were undemocratic. In Malejaqc's view, the democratic peace theory did not only provide a more disciplinary approach but equally a holistic framework through which the causes of conflict in Africa came to be better understood. While Malejaqc's proposition is valid to some extent, it goes without saying that the democratic peace theory does not entirely explain why conflicts occur or do not occur in Africa. African countries that have embraced democracy have still been seen embroiled

[99] Bernard S. Mayer, *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: A Practitioner's Guide.*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

[100] Ashley Jackson, "War, Violence, and Peace in Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2008), pp. 969–79.

[101] Richard. Bowd, Annie Barbara Chikwanha (eds.), *Understanding Africa's Contemporary Conflicts:Origins, Challenges and Peacebuilding*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2010, pp. 3–20.

in violent clashes. Even in America and European countries, where democracy is practiced in its most refined form, gun violence and sporadic shootings have claimed many lives. Whatever the case may be, Africans must provide empirical research that tells the African conflict story in a balanced and fairway.

The categorization of conflicts in Africa into low and high-intensity conflicts presents a framework that contextualizes and explains the magnitude of the conflict. The low intensity and high-intensity measurements of conflict are relevant for providing international intervening agencies like the UN with informed concrete information on whether to intervene or not in the conflict. For all its merits, this categorization remains problematic. According to the above categorization, a civil war can only be of high intensity when it has been ascertained that significant battles led to 1000 or more deaths within one year. In the same light, 25 battle-related deaths within 12 months qualify a conflict to be designated as an armed conflict. This categorization of conflict by the number of fatalities is problematic. If 999 people die within one year, the conflict may not make it to the category of high intensity, which will necessitate intervention or some form of assistance to end the conflict.

The adequate contextualization and categorization of African conflicts are critical for understanding the nature and root causes of these conflicts and how they can be effectively resolved. Without the above, it becomes challenging to design and implement international or regional conflict resolution strategies. Stephen Ryan explained that conflict resolution usually comes across as an umbrella term that addresses violence but whose processes are hardly ever clearly understood.[102] The above assertion is very salient because it sheds light on the processes that shape the resolution of conflicts in Africa. In this regard, Achankeng posits that our understanding of conflict resolution and conflict management features is crucial for ascertaining the motivation and actions of international or subregional intervening agencies. The conflict resolution approach is premised on the fact that the underlying factors that caused the conflict can be addressed and solved. On the other hand, those of the management approach maintain that conflict

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[102] Stephen Ryan, *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations*, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1990, p. 50.

cannot be resolved; it can only be managed.[103] This means that instead of focusing on the root causes of the conflict, attention should be paid to the symptoms to reduce the friction and pain. It, however, remains that resolution may take a longer time and more resources, but it is more sustainable than management. This is because management will only serve as a placebo. Before long, the real issues of the conflict will emerge again with more complex actors.

Over the years, conflicts in Africa have taken different forms, from civil wars in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Ivory Coast to coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and the Central African Republic. Conflicts in Africa have equally taken the form of ethnic wars and inter-religious strife. Whatever the name or nature of the conflict, these conflicts have always had devastating effects on host communities. Conflicts in Africa have caused the loss of lives, property, and stalled development. In the crisis of Mali, DR Congo, and the Central African Republic, the transnational effects of these conflicts have been felt by their neighbors in the migration of refugees, the movement of transnational armed actors, and the proliferation of small and light weapons.

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In explaining conflict and instability in Africa, it is relevant to establish a solid theoretical foundation that sheds light on the subject matter under investigation. In the previous sections above, the study has integrated specific theories to explain the causes of conflict. This withstanding, the study relied on the postcolonial theory as an umbrella theory that in some way or the other connects with other theoretical explanations to explain the phenomenon of conflict in Africa. The postcolonial theory describes how European colonial rule impacted the colonized territories' political, historical, social, ethnic, and economic spheres.[104] The postcolonial theory thus provides an avenue for reimagining Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the rest of the world after colonialism. This theory aims to explain a decolonized African continent shaped by uncompleted processes, hybridity, contradictions, and confusions. The significance of the postcolonial theory is that it

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[103] Fonkem Achankeng, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Africa: Engaging the Colonial Factor," *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2013), pp. 11–28.
[104] J Daniel Elam, "Postcolonial Theory," *Literary and Critical Theory*, vol. 5, no. 4 (2019).

establishes an explanation of the political, economic, and social relations between the colonizers and the colonized and how such interactions have continued to shape governance, conflict, and state instability in modern-day Congo CAR, and Mali. Most of the conflicts that have occurred in postmodern African states are attributable to unequal power relations amongst political elites and the unequal distribution of scarce resources.

In a bid to redress such discriminatory and exclusionary politics, armed groups began fighting against constitutional state authorities. The numerous civil wars that Africa has experienced are a fallout of the flawed legacy of colonialism. Colonialism did not sufficiently prepare the African political elite to take over the affairs of the state. When these indigenous leaders eventually took overpower from the colonial masters, they began ruling the same way their colonial masters had ruled the territory.[105] It will be recalled that in many African countries, Africans fought against colonial rule in what was described as wars of resistance. If Africans could fight against the draconian role of white colonialism, there was no guarantee that they would become passive in the face of bad governmental policies initiated by their own indigenous African political elites. The postcolonial theory thus connects the failures of colonialism and the manipulations of neocolonialism with the socio-political and economic inadequacies of the African ruling class to explain why conflict and instability have continued to tear the continent apart.

The postcolonial theory thus provides us with an understanding of why the postcolonial African state has been caught up in so many conflicts. The leading proponents of the postcolonial theory include Edward Said, Bill Ashcroft, come on Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha. The writings of these postcolonial scholars were focused on erasing the colonial past and its cruelty while awakening the consciousness of nation-building.

Many scholars concerned which postcolonial studies have credited Edward Said as the father of postcolonial theory. According to these authors, Said's 1978 publication *Orientalism* provided the foundation for the postcolonial theory and subsequent theorists. Said defined orientalism as a pattern of thought that is premised upon an epistemological and ontological contrast between the West, referred to as the Occident, and the East,

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[105] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, London: Pluto Press, 1952.

referred to as the Orient[106]. According to Said, Europeans systematically established a hegemonic culture that glorified the superiority of European identity over non-Europeans. That dichotomy between the West and the East was thus reinforced by the notion of European superiority, which gave the former the impetus to marginalize and suppress Indians, Asians, and those in the Middle East[107]. This superior European cultural concept was eventually experienced in colonial Africa. The orientalist approach was equally expressed in the writings of European scholars who described the oriental world as wild, inferior, irrational, and backward. This savage categorization of the oriental world was contrasted with Europe as civil, superior, rational, and progressive.

In addition to the above, Childs and William (1997) agreed with Said's propositions and maintain that the discourse of orientalism evokes discriminatory strategies embedded in power politics that have transcended centuries into contemporary times.[108] Childs and William further contended that orientalism had gained global spread because of mass media and its ability to transmit and reach other parts of the world. In the same light, Gandhi agreed with Said and argued that orientalism unmasks the ideologies of domination inherent in colonialism and imperialism.[109]. The power and knowledge binary advanced by postcolonial theorists suppose that the claim of the Occidentals to have superior knowledge of the Orient gave the Europeans the leeway to apply power dynamics that gave the former the ability to control oriental people. These sorts of control have continued to dominate the politics and economics of postcolonial African states. The Postcolonial theory is essentially a theory of difference that characterized the colonial state but has since transposed to explain political power relations and political actions in the postcolonial state.[110]

Another proponent that has significantly shaped the development of the postcolonial theory is Frantz Fanon. His contributions to postcolonial theory as a body of thought are contained in the *Wretched of The Earth* and *Black Skin, White Mask*. Fanon's *'Wretched*

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[106] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London: Penguin, 1977, pp. 3–5.

[107] cited, pp. 7–12.

[108] Peter Childs, R. J. Patrick Williams, *An Introduction to Postcolonial Theory*, London: Routledge, 2013, pp. 101–15.

[109] Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1998, pp. 67–75.

[110] Carol A. Breckenridge, Peter Van Der Veer (eds.), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

of The Earth' is a strong criticism of colonialism, imperialism, and the decolonization process in Africa. He criticized colonialism for demonizing the black man both mentally and physically, thus placing him in a state of servitude to their colonizers. Fanon equally argued that the postcolonial African elites used the process of decolonization to benefit themselves to the disadvantage of most of their people. He maintained that the primary motivation of the postcolonial African elite was to take charge of the wealth and social status that their colonial masters once enjoyed.[111] The objective of the African bourgeoisie was to take over control of the natural resources of the territory and usurp it, just like their former colonial masters had exploited it to their benefit. After independence, the politics in most African states did not change much from what the colonized people witnessed under European colonialism.

Fanon contended that the inability of the postcolonial African elite to manage the economy caused them to continually link the economies of their countries to those of their former colonial masters[112]. This meant that the growth and development of African economies were dependent upon those of their former colonial masters. This, therefore, explains why the former colonial masters exploited this dependency to their benefit. Fanon maintained that colonialism had destroyed the identity of the black man and established tendencies of the racial divide that were counterproductive to the development of African consciousness. Colonialism thus developed a system where the black man, even in the postcolonial era, only felt validated through the lens of white supremacy.[113] To reverse the above situation, Fanon maintained that the proletariat had to stage violent revolutions to destroy colonialism and its vestiges and then start reconstructing the society from scratch. Conflict thus arises when the need to be seen and heard challenges both colonial and postcolonial structures of the state.

In her writings on subalternity, Spivak used the term subaltern to refer to those who have been oppressed. She painted a detailed picture of the relationships between the powerful civilizing colonizers and the working class as the oppressed. She further laid out a perfect explanation of the differences in spaces that have reinforced discrimination amongst

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[111] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, *Frantz Fanon*, New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963, p. 53.
[112] cited, pp. 54–60.
[113] Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.

minority groups in the postcolonial period.[114] Spivak drew her inspiration from Foucauldian epistemic violence to highlight the contrast between how the world is perceived through non-Western and western views. In her conceptualization of epistemic violence, the woman is described as the subaltern whose interaction with colonialism has destroyed her culture and reshaped her ways of understanding, perceiving wasting ways, and viewing the world. Spivak criticized the postcolonial discourses that purported to have given a voice to the unheard. In contrast, such discourses only reinforced the marginalization and oppression of the subaltern. In the same vein, post-independent African political elites had claimed to be agents of development and change, only for them to continue the practices of their ex-colonizers.

Moreover, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin are also vital proponents of the postcolonial theory. Ashcroft et al. were primarily concerned with the decolonization of the English language. Their work was focused on analyzing literature from colonized societies and how such literary studies challenged the language of colonialism, reshaped the worldview of the colonized, and provided alternative means of representation.[115] The proposition of Ashcroft et al. reconfigured colonial values and identity through language. The postcolonial theory provides the framework for analyzing a wide array of issues that connect developments in the modern African state to its colonial background. Some of these issues include anti-colonial nationalism, ethnicity, racism, the question of indigenous African bourgeois, and the development of the state. The postcolonial theory thus explores Africa's experience with imperialism and how the continent's relations with colonialism provide essential insights into how marginalized and suppressed people reacted to both their colonizers and post-independent political elites. Africa's relations with colonialism and neocolonialism explain the dependence of African political elites on their former colonial masters and how these ex-colonizers continue to influence their former colonies' political, economic, and military policies. In strengthening their relations with their former colonial masters, post-independent African political elites became negligent and unaccountable towards the developmental needs of their people. The

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[114] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward A History of the Vanishing Present*, Massachusetts: Havard University Press, 1999, pp. 113–45.

[115] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literature*, 2nd ed., New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 118–54.

frustrated people had to resort to armed conflicts to get the attention of the state through various acts of aggression, as witnessed in Congo, CAR, and Mali.

Apart from the postcolonial theory, this study equally explained the various causes of conflict and linked these causes to theories that describe them. Most of these causes of conflict are an extension of colonialism's flawed legacy, which is adequately captured in the postcolonial theory. Realists like Thomas Hobbes and Hans Morgenthau have provided strong theoretical foundations which explain why power causes conflict. In advancing his proposition on man's self-seeking or selfish nature, Hobbes maintained that the quest for power constantly drives human beings.[116] Political power-seekers are thus in the futile and aggressive pursuit of power to dominate others. Such a state of anarchy in the quest for political power manifests in situations like the scramble for Africa, where Europeans occupied territories to project their power and relevance on the world stage.

One cause of conflict in Africa has been weak democracies. When examining democracy, peace, and conflict in Africa, one must look at the theoretical foundations upon which democracy and peace thrive or are forestalled. In this regard, proponents of the democratic peace theory from Immanuel Kant, Michael Doyle, and Francis Fukuyama maintain that democracies seldom engage each other in war.[117] The inability of African leaders to apply republican tenets and respect the rule of law as postulated by the proponents of the democratic peace theory explains why these African states continue to suffer the rise of internal conflicts.

In understanding how corruption and bad governance causes conflict, it is relevant to look into the conflict theory postulated by Karl Marx. The conflict theory holds that the limited resources in society have put it in a state of inequality and competition. At independence, most African elites who came to form the core of the newly independent states were enticed by the luxury and grandeur that the colonial masters enjoyed as they exploited their colonies. In many African countries recovering or are currently falling into violence, it has become increasingly difficult to differentiate between the private purse of state

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[116] Arash Abizadeh, "Hobbes on the Causes of War: A Disagreement Theory," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 105, no. 2 (2011), pp. 298–315, doi:10.1017/S0003055411000098.
[117] Jeff Pugh, "Democratic Peace Theory: A Review and Evaluation," Cumming, 2005, pp. 2–17.

officials and the state treasury as looting and diversion of public funds to fund political campaigns of the incumbents have become the new normal in African politics.[118]

The basic human needs theory, in all its merits, provides essential theoretical underpinnings necessary for grasping how the violation of human rights causes conflict in society. Abraham Maslow has been popularly acclaimed as the foremost proponent of the basic human need theory.[119] Proponents of the human need theory maintained that conflicts occur because people cannot meet up or enjoy their basic needs in life. The argument is more potent because human interests can be negotiated while human needs are non-negotiable.

The state in Africa does not only stand as a guarantor and protector of the rights of its citizens but equally as a significant stakeholder in the allocation of resources and equitable distribution of wealth.[120] The works of rent-seeking theorists like Gordon Tullock, James Buchanan, Anne Crueger, and Richard Posner provide one with the theoretical tools to understand how rent-seeking as a theory captured the dynamics of resource curse as a cause of conflict. Rent-seeking is, thus, any activity that seeks to achieve financial gains by manipulating the distribution of economic resources. This reality is all too prevalent within African states. The over-centralization of power in the hands of a few individuals has allocated resources to the discretionary authority of these state leaders.

At the center of most violent conflicts in Africa, the economic/resource nexus has often played a significant role in the emergence and shape of disputes. This economic-resource nexus is fueled by the comprador bourgeoisie, who have strong ties with the erstwhile colonial powers. The dependency theory has explained the role of MNCs in intrastate conflicts. The dependency theory has strong connections with postcolonial theory. Multinationals mastermind shady deals that cart away the country's resources at prices

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[118] Borgi M and Meyer P (ed.), *La Corruption L'Envers de Driot de L'homme*, Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1995.

[119] Kevin Avruch, Christopher Mitchell, *Conflict Resolution and Human Needs Linking Theory and Practice Conflict Resolution and Human Needs*, New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 6–10.

[120] Gordon Tullock James Buchanan, Robert Tollison (ed.), *Toward a Theory of the Rent-seeking Society*, College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1980.

that yield insignificant dividends to the host nation. According to the postcolonial and dependency theories, MNCs are vehicles of neocolonialism that continue to achieve economic gains over African states.

CHAPTER TWO

CIVIL WAR WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

1 CONGO: SITUATING THE FOUNDATIONS OF EXPLOITATION, KLEPTOCRACY, AND STRIFE

When Africa or the Congo is mentioned, what comes to the minds of those who are not akin to the trajectory of this continent or country are images of hunger, conflict, disease, endless wars, poverty, and hunger. Most of the literature has tended to give Africa and its parts; this dark portrait is always oblivious or willfully leaves out the role of western imperialists and colonizers in the general discourse that seeks to explain the continent's woes. The discourse of conflict in Congo will never be complete without considering the country's interaction with imperialist exploitation, colonial oppression, and neocolonial clientelism. Conflict in Congo as we know it today might have changed in cause and course; however, the seeds of violence were sawn in its inglorious epoch of imperial exploitation that has since spilled over into present-day Congo.

The foundations of the modern Congo state were built on economic exploitation, forced labor, and abuse of the native Congolese, accompanied by a broad historical outline of self-proclaimed rulers from King Leopold II of Belgium, Joseph Kasavubu, Mobutu Sese Seko, and Laurent Kabila. These leaders were guided by the quest for wealth accumulation rather than effectively uniting the country or fostering meaningful development. Their successive mandates were characterized by plunder, pillage, oppression, and strife. Therefore, the historical antecedents of Congo's leadership explain why Congolese have been deprived of the virtues of freedom, liberty, and prosperity, despite being one of the resource endowed nations on earth.

The parceling out of Congo to King Leopold II of Belgium under the name of the Congo Free State (CFS) at the Berlin Conference in 1885 was the beginning of chaos for that country. From 1885-to 1908, Congo was ruled as King Leopold II's personal property and private estate. His rule over Congo can only be compared in contemporary times to Bill Gates' position as founder of Microsoft Corporation. Apart from the torture, oppression, abuse, murder, and exploitation that characterized his rule, Nzongola Ntalaja maintained

that throughout the 23-year period within which King Leopold ruled over Congo, he never did physically enter the Congo.[121] His rule was by proxy managers and European companies that paid royalties to him.

The main objective of King Leopold's imperialism and later Belgian colonialism was maximizing profits through the gross exploitation of Congo's resources like ivory and rubber. Congo's human and natural resources were exploited to fuel the imperialist agenda of King Leopold.[122] This was the nature of the relationship between the Congo Free State and King Leopold II. The European commercial corporations shaped the extractive industry to facilitate their exploitation of the country's resources at little or no cost. Leopold's administration's forced labor policy provided these companies with an unpaid labor force. No actual, meaningful development is said to have accompanied the huge financial profits that the trade of Congo's natural resources accrued to the imperialist and colonial enterprise.

The invention of the tyre from rubber by John Boyd in 1888 further plunged the people of the Congo Free State into bondage. While Europeans felt relieved and rejoiced over such an innovative invention, the same could not be said of the people in the CFS. King Leopold quickly saw the boding rubber industry as an opportunity to make wealth. He exploited the opportunity and turned Congo into a rubber production estate.[123] The high demand for tyres necessitated rubber production in tons of thousands to meet the demand from companies in Europe. The availability of the rubber plant, which was widespread across the Congo, gave Leopold the drive to appropriate land without compensating the native Congolese. Hence, all land in Congo was put under the King's sovereign ownership, command, and authority. This meant that farmers who depended on these farmlands for their primary livelihood could no longer survive.[124] As rubber production took over cultivable lands, hunger and starvation became imminent. Those whose lands were encroached by the imperial rubber trade were left with no choice but to migrate to

[121] Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila A People's History*, London: Zed Books, 2002, pp. 20–23.
[122] Samuel H Nelson, *Colonialism in the Congo Basin 1880-1940*, Ohio: Center for International Studies, 1994, p. 195.
[123] Michael A. Rutz, *King Leopold's Congo and the "Scramble for Africa,"* Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2018, pp. 12–20.
[124] Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila A People's History*, pp. 10–15.

other communities. To effectively enhance the large-scale production of rubber, King Leopold and his agents in the Congo established draconian laws that forced native Congolese to provide labor under very stringent conditions, which included the production of a specific quota of rubber to be harvested daily.

While rubber production was financially beneficial to Leopold and the European companies that shared their profits with him, its extraction was not an easy task for the local people. It was a do-or-die affair. Communities and individuals who failed to supply the required rubber-faced severe punishment. In some instances, their bodies were mutilated, and houses in villages got burnt by the *Force Publique.*[125] It served as the imperial police force for King Leopold in Congo. The burning down of houses in such communities served as a deterrent to others who may have wanted to relax on the instructions of the imperial agents. In response to such violence, the local people fought back. Those who could not fight were forced to run away from the communities. This disrupted and destroyed the organized pattern of life that the Congolese were used to before imperialist rule.[126] The violence that came with the rubber and ivory trade opposed the socio-cultural and traditional life structures that the Congolese knew.

With all the brutality, violence, and risk that accompanied it, rubber production failed to erect a workable economy for the people of the Congo Free State. To make matters worse, the citizens of Congo had to pay imperial taxes. Women and children were often taken as hostages by the imperial *Force Publique.* Their husbands and fathers had to be hard-pressed to produce huge amounts of rubber before their families were released. Corporations like the Compagnie du Kasai, Société General de Belgique (SGB), and the Baron Empain Banking Group, which had secured concessions from Leopold to exploit Congolese land on lease, equally participated in the dehumanization of Congolese, all in a bid to get the rubber to feed their western tyre production companies.[127] The infamous Anglo-Belgian India Rubber Company (ABIR) recorded a considerable gain of $100 million from the exploitation and sale of rubber. This dividend accrued to the company

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[125] Edmund Dene Morel, *Red Rubber: The Story of the Rubber Slave Trade Which Flourished in the Congo for Twenty Years, 1890–1910*, New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1919.

[126] Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila A People's History*, pp. 4–26.

[127] Sven Lindqvist, *'Exterminate All the Brutes,' Trans. from Swedish by Joan Tate*, New York: The New Press, 1996, pp. 29–78., See also Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila A People's History*, pp. 15–30. Rutz, *King Leopold's Congo and the "Scramble for Africa."*

from 1898-to 1908.[128] This significantly boosted its share capital in the stock exchange market. The rubber trade of King Leopold and his associates sacrificed the life, liberty, and prosperity of the Congolese on the altar of power, resource, and benefits.

King Leopold's bid for the Congo Free State was based solely on humanitarian grounds, with the principal objective to civilize the native people while improving their livelihoods. This was equally connected to his agenda of abolishing the trade of human beings. However, the violence, oppression, killings, and dehumanization of the Congolese went strictly against the General Act of the Berlin Conference. The invention and demand for rubber in Europe fueled King Leopold's quest for financial profits that took every little detail of the imperial state into account, except the welfare and liberty of the Congolese. The brutalization, hand amputation and violence, and rape that characterize Leopold's regime led to the death of 10 million Congolese[129]. When Edmund Morel published the monstrosity of Leopold's regime in the 1890s, his report on the dire human conditions and calamity of the Congolese attracted criticism and widespread disdain for the King. In the face of such a backlash, Leopold was compelled to hand over the Congo to the Belgian government for a substantial financial reward. Amazingly, this transaction went on without the participation of l-knowledge of the Congolese.

1.1   Belgian Congo, Congolese Leadership, and Cold War Realities

The atrocities and brutality perpetrated by the agents of King Leopold through the *Force Publique* drew significant indignation from the Congolese and other international bodies and countries. These criticisms of Leopold's rule over the Congo necessitated him relinquishing control over a territory that he had hitherto exploited as his private property.[130] In 1908, the colony was transferred to the Belgian government, and it officially became a Belgian colony. Its name changed from the Congo Free State to the Belgian Congo. The taking over of the territory by the Belgian government was greeted with mixed feelings from the colonized people. The hostilities of Leopold's ivory and rubber trade were still fresh in their minds, and the onset of Belgian colonization only

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[128] Ch. Didier Gondola, *The History of Congo*, London: Greenwood Press, 2002, pp. 71–72.

[129] Joseph R. Oppong and Tania Woodruff, *Modern World Nations: the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2007, pp. 25–38.

[130] Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Tale of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, Houghton Mifflin: (New York, 1998.

reinforced the Congolese's uncertainty. Beneath the people's uncertainty was a resolve to resist anything that came close to tampering with their local realities. As was later experienced in the latter days of the colonial experiment, the Congolese resisted colonial policies and demands that compromised and undervalued their traditional systems and means of livelihood.[131] Conversely, less resistance was recorded when the colonial agency allowed the people to follow their policies and showed regard for indigenous social structures. Samuel Nelson, through historical analysis of the Belgian Congo, maintained that in 1920 the region of Tsuapa is said to have experienced strong resistance against the *Société Anonyme Belge pour la Commerce du Haut Congo* (SAB) because the extractive activities of the company did put the health of the people in jeopardy and threatened their local means of agricultural subsistence.[132] Resistance against colonial rule increased as the Congolese interacted with other forces outside their country.

During WWI and WWII, the human and material resources of the Congo played a significant role. Congo's uranium was a key ingredient used in developing the atomic bomb, which the United States used to shatter Hiroshima and Nagasaki, consequently leading to the defeat of the Japanese in the Second World War.[133] Congolese soldiers fought alongside Belgian soldiers and the allied forces against the Germans. The vigor and valiant effort of the Congolese soldiers reshaped the perspectives of their colonial masters, who came to recognize in them a force to be reckoned with. Training and development were then seen as the channels through which the Congolese potential could be harnessed. In this regard, schools were opened for Congolese[134]. The training prioritized primary education over other levels of academic training like secondary and tertiary education. This was so because the Belgian colonizers trained the Congolese to fill only lower-level administrative positions. Education was tailored to serve the economic machinery of exploitation. The colonialists did not in any way deem Africans fit for tertiary education.[135] The inability of the colonialists to provide a meaningful

[131] Gondola, *The History of Congo*, pp. 60–72.

[132] Nelson, *Colonialism in the Congo Basin 1880-1940*. Pp. 194-220

[133] Woodruff, *Modern World Nations: The Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p. 43.

[134] Emizet Francois, F Scott Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 3rd ed., Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2010, pp. 40–63.

[135] Marc Depaepe, *"Writing Histories of Congolese Colonial Education: A Historio- Graphical View from Belgium," in Connecting Histories of Education: Transnational Exchanges and Cross-Cultural Transfers, Ed. Barnita Bagchi, Eckhardt Fuchs, and Kate Rousmanie*, 2012, New York: Berghahn Books, n.d., pp. 1–

secondary and tertiary education was to keep the Congolese in a subordinate position so that they would never become enlightened enough to challenge their colonial masters. The Belgians did not invest much in enhancing an educational system that could produce human resources for the independent state. This led to the emergence of an ill-equipped political class that took over the affairs of the newly independent state. At the attainment of independence in 1960, Congo had a small number of twenty-two people who were holders of university degrees.[136] Patrice Lumumba, the firebrand Pan Africanist and pioneer prime minister of Congo, had only a primary school leaving certificate.

Like Leopold, the Belgian colonial state continued exploiting the Congo for their economic interest. To effectively gain control over the territory, the Belgians engaged in a policy of indirect rule with the help of local chiefs. This, at other points, took the form of divide and rule. This division among the people was a way of easing their work and, at the same time, a means by which communities would not easily find common ground to join forces to cause a rebellion against the colonial administration. This was, however, a policy in error because it did not quench the spirit of resistance as the colonizers had anticipated.

Most countries in the developing world today are struggling with institutions and political structures that do not adequately meet the needs of their people, as enshrined in the social contract. The health care system, public security, environmental protection, and academic institutions of countries like Cameroon, Senegal, Nigeria, Mali, Congo, and others within the continent stand pale in comparison with those of their former colonial masters like Britain, France, and Belgium. The high level of poverty in Congo, like in the other African countries today, is not unconnected with the exploitation that accompanied colonial rule.[137] While the colonizers extracted resources from the colonies, built their economies, and strengthened political and human rights through enhanced living conditions, the contrary happened in Africa.[138]. This explains why the institutions and political systems

30., See equally; Jan Vansina, *Being Colonized: The Kuba Experience in Rural Congo, 1880– 1960*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010, pp. 10–80.

[136] Woodruff, *Modern World Nations: Democratic Republic of the Congo*, pp. 41–42.

[137] Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1972, pp. 203–20.

[138] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen, and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, London: Princeton University Press, 1996.

which the newly independent states inherited from their colonial masters lacked the structure and tenacity to uphold the political stoutness of the territory.

In a demonstration of inequality, the Belgians allocated more resources. They threw their administrative weight towards communities that showed docility and less challenge to their rule and exploitation of the territory.[139] The land tenure system of the colonial state ushered in ambiguities that reinforced this inequality. In a bid to settle migrants of Hutu origin, the colonial states handed the administration of this tribe to the Tutsis, who fared well with the colonial administration. To appease the Hunde tribe, the Hutus were later placed under their control.[140] The continuous subservience of the Hutus was the strategy of the colonial state to empower and reward the Hundes politically. They had hitherto given up some parts of their land for the settlement of immigrants. This arrangement later proved futile as a contestation between the two tribes to exert power and lay claim over land rights ignited strife. During colonial rule, gold, copal, and diamonds were discovered. The discovery of these resources did not translate into the large-scale development of the colony.

On the other hand, some scholars have maintained that the interaction of Africa with colonialism did open the continent to the dynamics of global international trade and the capitalist world market. They argue that the educational curriculum of the Europeans, transport networks, health facilities, and methods of governance introduced in the colonized states have greatly served to shape the lifestyle and living standards of the former colonies.[141] Similarly, African countries that went through prolonged periods of colonial rule under the close and direct administration of the colonizers had better government infrastructure, which emerged with the state at independence, than those countries where there was no robust and effective presence between the colonized and the colonizers.[142] This assertion, however, remains highly contested, taking into

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[139] Chris Huggins, "Land, Power, and Identity: Roots of Violent Conflict in Eastern DRC," 2010, https://www.international-alert.org.
[140] B. Mararo, "Land, Power, and Ethnic Conflict in Masisi: Congo-Kinshasa 1940s-1994'," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 30, no. 3 (1997), pp. 503–38.
[141] Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, New York: Basic Books., 2004.
[142] R.M. Grier, "Colonial Legacies and Economic Growth," *Public Choice*, vol. 98 (1991), pp. 317–35. ; See also, Mathew Lange, *Lineages of Despotism and Development. British Colonialism and State Power*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009, pp. 21–67.

consideration the socio-economic and political realities of the states that emerged out of colonial rule.

The putting further exacerbated this discriminatory practice in place of ethnically based identity cards which emphasized sharp distinctions amongst the various tribes. The differences between the Congolese tribes were reconstructed during the colonial period through the passing on of benefits to one tribe to the detriment of other tribes. As ethnic tensions intensified, so too did the tribes begin tearing each other apart[143]. Everything about national life in the colonial state revolved around the pivot of ethnic identity. This agenda slipped into a zero-sum game where every ethnic group was trying to lay hold of power and resources to the disadvantage of the other. This division and ethnic antagonisms provided the bedrock for rebel groups to get easy recruits for combat.[144] Though the Belgian Congo abolished forced labor and brought some level of education and missionary presence in the Congo, it did not guarantee full economic, political, and socio-cultural rights to the Congolese. Those who had some levels of education were looked upon as the emancipated ones within the communities. With these classes of people, the colonizers had a fluid relationship. Though closer to the colonizers because of his privileged education, the educated Congolese still felt an emptiness that haunted his humanity. He was only treated a little bit higher in status than the rest of his native people because of his educational level. This put the educated Congolese class in a dilemma, not being able to define an identity for themselves- whether they were natives or westerners. The complexities of such a troubled identity nursed in them the aspirations to one day take over the management of their country and redefine themselves collectively together with the natives as one people.

On the other hand, independence was far off the scale of preference of the colonizers. This conflicted Congolese-educated class would later mount the seat of power. Their successive failures to define themselves within an authentic Congolese framework will set the country spiraling into violence and strife.

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[143] Connolly, William, E., *Identity, Difference.*, 1st ed., (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, p. 64.
[144] MacQueen, Norrie., *Humanitarian Intervention. An Introduction The New World of UN Peace Operations.*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford Uni Press, 2011, p. 126.

1.1.1 Decolonization /Independence

From the early 1950s, the Congolese began clamoring for complete independence and the total liberation of the territory from the shackles of colonial rule. In this regard, the formation of political parties characterized much of that decade in Congo. Patrice Lumumba came out as the flag bearer of the *Mouvement National Congolais* (MNC). He initially adopted a moderate disposition in his discourse for independence and a friendly posture towards the Belgians.[145] He later changed and became a hardliner as time and circumstances unveiled. Lumumba stood for a unitary government that transcended ethnic boundaries and could work to allocate the country's resources effectively and equitably to its populations. Joseph Kassavubu led the Association de Bakongo (ABAKO), while Moise Tshombe was at the helm of the Confederation de Association du Katanga (CONAKAT)[146]. All these parties began as cultural associations with strong ethnic affiliations because the Belgian colonial administration strictly prohibited the formation of political parties. The eruption of widespread nationalist agitations against colonial rule from 1959 forced the Belgian government to grant independence to Congo in 1960. On 30 June 1960, the former Belgian colony of Congo gained its independence and became the Republic of Congo[147]. Many scholars have described the Belgian departure and the eventual granting of independence to Congo as an ill-prepared move. The Belgian colonial government did not prepare the Congolese for leadership after their departure. This is so because they did not envisage a day when they would leave the country to its citizens. The paternalistic lens with which they saw and interpreted the Congolese was based on the narrow view that Congolese were resourceful but were not good enough or prepared to handle the affairs of their own country. Had the 1959 riots not occurred, maybe Congo's independence would have come later. The riots of 1959 forced many foreign companies within Congo to repatriate sizable amounts of their capital back to Belgium and other European countries. Congo's economic deficits stood at a whopping £40 million for the 1960 fiscal year alone.[148] The total debt burden of the

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[145] Patrice Lumumba, *Congo, My Country*, London: Pall Mall Press, 1963, p. 13.

[146] Woodruff, *Modern World Nations: Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p. 39.

[147] Kevin C. Dunn, *Imagining The Congo: The International Relations of Identity*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 60–63.

[148] Colin Legum, *Congo Disaster*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961, p. 92.

country stood at £320 million.[149] This implied that the new independent leaders took over a country whose economic liquidity could not guarantee the stability of its state structures. This was a country where the extraction of copper, cobalt, gold, and diamond had generated billions of dollars for Belgian companies.

The independence of Congo was triggered by events both within and outside of the country. The increased call for decolonization and eventual independence was one that the Belgians could not ignore. The French granting of independence to Congo Brazzaville in August 1958 fired up the quest for decolonization in Belgian Congo.[150] In December of the same year, Patrice Lumumba participated in the All-African Peoples Conference (AAPC), which took place in Ghana.[151] The discourse of instant independence, which dominated deliberations at the conference, gave Lumumba the impetus to channel the same energy into the decolonization movements in his own country.

At independence, Patrice Lumumba became the pioneer prime minister of the country, while Joseph Kasavubu assumed the function of head of state. No sooner than later had the euphoria of independence died down than the two leaders began disagreeing on major state decisions[152]. While Lumumba favored a strong central government, Kasavubu was for the option of a loose federation. The loose federation meant that ethnic and networks of nepotism would have a broader space to thrive. This brought a severe rift between the two politicians. Lumumba's stands on erecting a stable, organized, and unitary government did not augur well with Kasavubu, whose preference was for a government that was managed and functioned along ethnic fault lines. Kassavubu's inclination to organize his government along ethnic lines can be traceable to the colonizers who, in a bid to control the territory, resorted to the policy of indirect rule and clamped down on chiefs and communities who were against their exploitative policies. Conflict and violence continued in Congo even after Congolese leadership had taken over the

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[149] Jeanne M. Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo: From Decolonization to Dictatorship*, New York: Algora Publishing, 2005, p. 20.

[150] Ernest E. Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo: A United Nations Force in Action*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1965, pp. 7–10.

[151] Legum, *Congo Disaster*, pp. 65–69.

[152] Belachew Gebrewold, *Anatomy of Violence: Understanding the Systems of Conflict and Violence in Africa*, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2009, pp. 89–95.

management of the country's affairs. One of Lumumba's early challenges was the mutiny of his army which took place from 1-4 of July 1961.

The army rose in violence, demanding better working conditions and higher wages than they had received during the colonial era. They equally requested to replace the Belgian army officers who were still occupying top positions in the army after independence.[153] Lumumba's reaction to this mutiny was that he went ahead and appointed the Congolese army officials to strategic positions. They replaced the Belgian officials who had hitherto occupied these positions. However, another battle and violence ensued as the Belgian army officials found that unacceptable. Moise Tshombe will, later on 11 July, declare the secession of the Katanga province from the rest of Congo. He sought and secured Belgian backing in his secession claims. The United Nations, which Lumumba had solicited to intervene and help equally, left Tshombe unchallenged.[154] This step sparked new rounds of violence as Lumumba engaged Tshombe in military battles to recover control of Katanga. It will be recalled that Katanga was home to many foreigners who dwelt in the Congo. It equally harbored about 90% of the natural resources of the country. Tshombe instigated his fighters with ethnic doctrine to fight so he could retain control over the resource-rich Katanga, which served as the economic nerve center of the Congo. It became abundantly clear that the US was unwilling to help Lumumba, who found his new government in such an imbroglio. He had to turn to the UN under Dag Hammarskjold for intervention and assistance.[155] Kasai and Kivu joined the bandwagon with Katanga's call for secession. This plunged the country into further chaos. Under the UN-led mission, troops from Ghana, Sudan, Ethiopia, Morocco, and Tunisia poured into Congo.

The events that shaped the Congo after its independence can only be primarily understood within the young country's interaction with the Unites States' pro-democratic plan, the Soviet Union's communist manifesto, and Congo's proxy role in this Cold War web-like relations. Strategic partnerships with either bloc was conditioned upon the uncontrolled flow of political, military, and economic backing to the proxy state.[156] The proxy state, in

[153] Robert Govender, *The Martyrdom of Patrice Lumumba*, London: Neillgo, 1971, pp. 66–67.
[154] Dunn, *Imagining The Congo: The International Relations of Identity*, pp. 64–65.
[155] Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo: A United Nations Force in Action*, pp. 14–23.
[156] Alan James, *Britain, and the Congo Crisis, 1960– 63*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, pp. 61–62.

return, became the external incubator and projector of the ideological stands of the East or West.[157]

Worthy of note is that the ideological differences that characterized the bipolar era were not only in outsmarting others to show control over more alliances. Underneath this rivalry was the dire quest for Congo's natural resources. The geographic location of the Congo at the heart of Africa made the quest to control it a significant priority for the East and West. He who controlled the Congo then controlled its wealth of natural resources and ipso facto will project more political and economic power. This analysis is tied to the Heartland Theory of Helford Mackinder. Congo became the heartland for the US and the Soviets. The inability of Congo's new nationalist leaders to harness their power into a coordinated approach to development landed them into the malleable hands of the superpowers. The table below shows an outline of the evolution of political leadership in Congo from independence to the present. The table equally shows the methods through which the various leaders came to power, their term of office, political ideology, and political affiliation.

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[157] Taekyoon Kim, "External-Internal Nexus for the Sources of Insecurity in the Third World.," *International Area Review,* vol. 12, no. 2 (2009), pp. 61–84.

Table 2: Political Leadership in the Democratic Republic of Congo 1960-2022

Political Leader	Method of Ascension to Power	Term of Office	Political Ideology	Political Affiliation
Joseph Kasavubu	Elected	1 July 1960-24 November 1965	Anti-Communist	The Alliance of Bakongo (ABAKO)
Patrice Lumumba	Elected (PM)	24 June 1960-5 September 1960	Pan-Africanist Socialist Leftwing Nationalist	Movement National Congolais (MNC)
Mobutu Sese Seko	Coup d'état	24 November 1965-16 May 1997 (deposed)	Anti-Communist Autocracy	Popular Movement of the Revolution (PMR)
Laurent Desire Kabila	Coup d'état	17 May 1997-16 January 2001 (assassinated)	Marxist Social Democratic	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL)
Joseph Kabila Kabange	Political Consensus (later elected president in 2006)	17 January 2001-24 January 2019	Social Democracy	Peoples Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD)
Felix Tshisekedi	Elected	24 January 2019-Present (Incumbent)	Progressive Social Democracy Social Liberalism	Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDSP)

Patrice Lumumba's hard stands on making the country's resources work for the welfare of his countrymen and women did not sit well with the Belgians, who, though they had granted independence, did so only halfheartedly. They later pitted Moise Tshombe, who oversaw Katanga, against the elected Prime Minister Lumumba. As Lumumba sought external support, the USA and Soviets came into the country through a United Nations-led mission (MONUSC). The failure of Lumumba to secure tangible assistance from the USA pushed him to gravitate into the willing hands of the Soviets. The United States, its leaders, and foreign companies saw Lumumba's nationalist policies as antagonistic to their commercial interests in the Congo. The US later backed Tshombe and Kassavubu to oust Lumumba.[158] Under the leadership of Joseph Desire Mobutu, serving as an army

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[158] Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa— from Eisenhower to Kennedy*, New York: Macmillan Co, 1982, pp. 27–28.

general at the time, Lumumba was apprehended and assassinated to the delight of Kasavubu, Tshombe, Belgium, and the Americans alike.[159] Lumumba was shot alongside his other comrades like Mpolo and Okito.[160] The execution of Lumumba in February 1961 sent shock waves through the communist bloc of the Soviet Union. Patrice Lumumba had become the political spine of the Soviets in Congo. His demise was not a welcomed development to the expansion of the communist ideology. The death of Lumumba was an obituary for Pan Africanism, a funeral for economic self-determination, and a burial of the liberty and development that many within the Congo had dreamt of.

The death of Lumumba did not bring an end to the tensions and contest for power that had gripped the new ruling class. Joseph Desire Mobutu exploited the power tussle between Kasavubu, Moise Tshombe, and Evariste Kimba to his advantage. Under the aegis of the USA and through a military coup, General Mobutu overthrew Kasavubu and became Congo's president on 24 November 1965[161]. Upon ascension to power, he changed the country's name from Congo to Zaire. In continuation with the kleptocratic and ethnic tendencies of Kasavubu, Mobutu allocated power and resources based on ethnicity and made his cronies flourish along the corridors of power, looting the country's natural resources at an industrial scale.

Mobutu's leadership was characterized by gross economic decline, widespread abuse of fundamental human rights, and ethnic tensions.[162] Despite these inadequacies, he was still able to remain at the helm of Congo for thirty years, with the support of the USA. The proxy role he played in keeping the Soviets off the affairs and resources of the Congo endeared him to the Americans and the UN, to the chagrin of his people, who became victims of his brutal rule. The logistical support that the East and West blocs provided to the army in Congo and the militias and rebel groups demonstrated that colonialism might have come to an end, but its vestiges were still active within the Congo state. The Cold War proxy alliances which were forged with Congo under Mobutu demonstrated that the

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[159] David Seddon & Leo Zeilig David Renton, *The Congo: Plunder and Resistance*, New Jersey: Zed Books, 2007, pp. 4–50.

[160] Emmanuel Gerard and Bruce Kuklick, *Death in the Congo: Murdering Patrice Lumumba*, London: Havard University Press, 2015, p. 204.

[161] Francois, Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, pp. 2–6.

[162] Akude Emeka. John, *Governance, and Crisis In The State In Africa.*, 1st ed., London: Adonis & Abbey, 2009, pp. 68–75.

colonial project had simply taken on neo-colonial strategies which were, by and large, cheaper and had less confrontation and consequences for the new African masters compared to the mutiny and revolts which the Belgians experienced firsthand throughout their management of the country's affairs. The corruption, political terror, kleptocracy, and nepotism that marked Mobutu's rule led to the emergence of numerous rebel groups within the country. These groups all sought to oust Mobutu through armed battles that left the local populations in peril.

2   CONGO'S FIRST CIVIL WAR: THE END OF A DICTATOR

In 1965 Mobutu, through a military coup d'état masterminded by him, seized power and became the president of the Congo. The power tussle, political misunderstandings, and conflict between President Kasavubu and his serving Prime Minister Moise Tshombe gave Mobutu the leeway as army general to overthrow their government and assume the seat of power.[163]   Mobutu described the coup as an act of patriotism to save the country from instability due to its lack of cohesion among its leaders. Unknown to him was that he would be subjected to the same fate thirty years later. Mobutu moved swiftly and made rapid changes within the country to consolidate his power. He set up his *Mouvement Populaire de Revolution* (MPR). His MPR became the only political party in the land wherein every Congolese was supposed to belong, participate, and pay allegiance to him.[164] The ascension of Mobutu to the helm of power of the Congo brought very little relief to the Congolese, who had long waited to experience stability and prosperity in a country that was all too akin to instability and strife.

Like King Leopold II, Mobutu ruled and managed the affairs of the Congo like it was his estate.[165] One of his early policies as president was that in 1971, he changed the country's name from Congo to Zaire.[166] This was in line with his ambitious policy of defining an African identity and a Congolese authenticity for his country's men and women. He modified his name from Joseph Desire Mobutu to Mobutu Sese Sekou. Historic and strategic towns like Leopoldville, Elisabethville, and Stanleyville became Kinshasa,

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[163] Sandra Meditz and Tim Merrill, *Zaire: A Country Study*, Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, 1994, p. 43.
[164] David Van Reybrouck, *Congo: The Epic History of a People*, New York: Harper Collins, 2014, p. 342.
[165] Theodore Trefon, *Congo Masquerade. The Political Culture of Aid Inefficiency and Reform.*, London: Zed Books., 2011, p. 19.
[166] Dunn, *Imagining The Congo: The International Relations of Identity*, p. 110.

Lubumbashi, and Kisangani. This was imagined to be a drift away from colonialism and its vestiges. Ironically Mobutu's Zaireanization project did not translate into meaningful development and prosperity for the Congolese.

His thirty-year dictatorship over the Congo was characterized by tyranny, oppression, poverty, economic hardship, nepotism, and corruption. His administration sowed the seeds of dissent that later translated into chaos and instability, and various rival groups sought to take him off the seat of power. His ascension to power and brutal rule did not stop pockets of rebellion against his government. Those who opposed him or who were perceived by him as threats to his power and office were summarily executed or arbitrarily arrested and jailed without any formal due legal process. Under his directives, political opponents like Pierre Mulele, Evariste Kimba, and others were killed in public display.[167] The elimination of such influential political figures was an indication that Mobutu's vision of Congo was one wherein his power was to remain unchallenged. Consequently, anyone who dared his authority was equally eliminated like the others.

As these gruesome human rights abuses continued, Mobutu grew stronger in power and stature. While Congo bled economically and politically at the iron-fisted rule of Mobutu, the USA and other western countries that backed Mobutu's rule chose to look in the other direction. For them, Mobutu had become a bulwark against the spread of communism and an insurer of their economic interests not just in Congo but in other parts of Africa. Therefore, they found that it was not to their advantage if Mobutu's human rights atrocities were brought to the fore. The rattling of his political nest meant could have meant the loss of their economic benefits and huge profits they were making in the Congo. They needed a proxy force and a stable ally like Mobutu to stop the spread of socialism and ensure that their Cold War agenda was achieved.[168] Through the instrumentality of the USA, Mobutu emerged as a strong ally of US economic interest in the Congo. This contributed significantly to curbing the economic influence of Belgium multinationals operating in the country.

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[167] Michaela Wrong, *Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu's Congo: In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*, New York: (Perennial, 2002, p. 90. See also Leslie Winsome, *Zaire: Continuity and Political Change in an Oppressive State*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993, p. 32.

[168] Kris Berwouts, *Congo's Violent Peace: Conflict and Struggle Since the Great African War*, London: Zed Books, 2017, pp. 7–11.

The vast potential for economic activities in Congo attracted other countries like Japan, France, Germany, and Italy. These countries entered the race for Congo's natural resources with their related companies.[169] As foreign companies paved their way into the Congo, so too did a Congolese bourgeoisie class begin rising. Most of those who formed part of this bourgeoisie were cronies of Mobutu, who had enriched themselves through embezzlement and corruption. From 1965 through 1974, the economy under Mobutu witnessed tremendous growth and expansion. This brief period of economic prosperity has been attributed to the influx of foreign investments, which took advantage of the conducive business climate to engage in large-scale economic activities. With most opponents of Mobutu assassinated or cowed into silence, the country enjoyed political stability that reassured investors and attracted foreign capital. In 1967, the Congolese economy witnessed an increase in the export of copper from the country. All these events contributed to keeping the economy strong and buoyant. Between 1967 and 1970, Congo's Gross Domestic Product stood at a 10% growth rate[170]. This significant period of economic growth was, however, short-lived.

Mobutu's economic policies after that were not sustainable, and neither were they healthy for the economy's survival. He constructed an international airport in his village. Prestigious projects like the power line constructed in Inga-Shaba and the steel plant in Maluku brought no real economic gain to the state's coffers. The inability of these and other white elephant ventures which Mobutu championed made it difficult for the country to service its foreign debts. As of 1970, Congo's external debt burden stood at a whopping $5billion[171]. From the early 70s until Mobutu left power in 1997, Congo struggled through a difficult economic situation. The epileptic economic condition of the country translated into poverty and hardship for many of the citizens. Congo's crippled economy under Mobutu was not reflective of a country endowed with abundant natural resources.

In addition to the economic atrocities that characterized his rule, Mobutu used his MPR party as a yardstick through which allegiance to him was measured. There was hence no clear-cut distinction between the party and the state. All appointments to strategic positions within his government were tied to party loyalists. The party thus became a

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[169] Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila A People's History*, pp. 147–48.

[170] cited, pp. 149–52.

[171] Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila A People's History*.

framework through which clientelist networks of nepotism, corruption, and embezzlement thrived. Mobutu and his cronies plundered and pillaged the natural and financial resources of the Congo for their benefit. In the early 70s, the price of copper on the world market plummeted. This sent shock waves through the spine of the Congolese economy. By the earlier 80s, it became abundantly clear that kleptocracy and the ineffectiveness of Mobutu's cronies had crippled the economy.[172] Mobutu's legitimacy began paying the price with the economy in bad shape. Agitations and rebellion began rising against the state and its corrupt machinery, which was in place.[173] The citizens could no longer identify with public officials or state institutions because the corruption that gripped these institutions alienated the Congolese.

At the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in the last quarter of the 80s and early 90s, it became abundantly clear that challenges to Mobutu's tyranny had risen in and out of the Congo. With the Cold War rivalry gone, the new wave of multiparty party politics that characterized the early years of the 90s did not leave Congo unaffected. However, Mobutu made pronouncements and took steps to liberalize the political space. The shadow of dictatorship, which had somehow come to represent his rule, could still be felt, and seen in many areas of administration and politics in the country. As ethnic tensions, political dissent, and protests within the country grew against the rule of the ailing dictator from 1990-to 1993, an equally potent force that facilitated the outbreak of the First Congo War and the ousting of Mobutu from power emerged with the Rwandan Genocide.

In the North and South of Kivu, the Congolese began attacks on Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda settlers during the first quarter of 1993. These settlers who had come into the Congo from Burundi and Rwanda benefited from the Zairian National Act of 1981 to gain citizenship[174]. As the settlers began expanding and laid claims over land and resources, this did not go down well with native Congolese, who felt these resources rightly belonged to them. This hatred towards the settlers culminated in full-blown ethnic

[172] Michael Deibert, *The Democratic Republic of the Congo: Between Hope and Despair.*, London: Zed Books., 2014, pp. 31–34.

[173] Rene Lemarchand, *The Democratic Republic of Congo: From Collapse to Potential Reconstruction'.*, University of Copenhagen.: Centre of African Studies, 2001, pp. 17–19.

[174] Elikia Mbokolo, "Aux Sources de La Crise Zairoise," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, vol. Mai (1997), p. 67.

rivalries. By the second half of 1994, thousands in North Kivu had lost their lives to ethnic tension, while others took off to find safety in South Kivu and Rwanda.[175] Ethnic identities in North and South Kivu have continued to change and placed demands on the state, especially with the advent of democracy.[176] Kankwenda argued that these ethnic identities were minted during the Congo's Belgian administration and have since continued to gain expression even after the post-colonial era.[177] The ethnic agenda in Congo has metamorphosed through ethnic rhetoric, networks, groups, and institutions that seek to lay hold on uncontested claims over political and economic spaces.

The first Congo war unraveled with the shooting of the aircraft of Juvenal Habyarimana, Rwanda's president, in 1994. To avenge the killing of Habyarimana, Hutus took it upon themselves to massacre 800.000 Tutsis. This dreadful episode in the history of Rwanda came to represent what has been widely referred to as the 1994 Rwandan genocide[178]. Amazingly, as the Tutsis were being slaughtered, the international community stood by and did nothing. Before leaving office and even after that, US former president Bill Clinton has frequently admitted his administration's indifference to the plight of the Rwandans during the genocide. He agreed that his inaction to stop the genocide was the most significant error he committed during his mandate as president of the most powerful nation in the world.[179] More than the inaction of the US and other European countries is the domino effect of instability that this genocide caused in the Congo and, by extension, the Great Lakes Region in general. Every conflict and violence that has robbed this region of its peace and stability is tied to the vestiges of the genocide episode in one way or another.

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[175] Gérard Prunier, "'The Great Lakes Crisis.,'" *Current History*, vol. 96, no. 610 (1997), pp. 193–95.

[176] Jean-Claude Willame, *Banyarwanda et Banyamulenge: Violences Ethniques et Gestion de l'identitaire Au Kiwu.*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997, pp. 62-8–68.

[177] Mbaya Kankwenda, *L'Économie Politique de La Prédation Au Congo Kinshasa: Des Origines à Nous Jours 1885–2003.*, Montréal and Washington: Icredes., 2005, pp. 279–78.

[178] 1998, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda.*, New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux., n.d., See also; Berwouts, *Congo's Violent Peace: Conflict and Struggle Since the Great African War*, p. 14. See Timothy Longman, *"Rwanda: Chaos from Above." In Villalón and Huxtable, Eds. The African State at a Critical Juncture: Between Disintegration and Reconfiguration.*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner., 1998.

[179] Jason Edwards, Thomasena Shaw, "A Superpower Apologizes? President Clinton's Address in Rwanda," *Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal*, vol. 40, no. 1 (2013), pp. 2–6.

In response to the mass killing of Tutsis, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), headed by Paul Kagame, who had taken up refuge in Uganda, reorganized and staged a counter-offensive against the Force Armees Rwandaise (FAR) and the Interahamwe militia, which had together caused the genocide. The revenge combat of the RPF led to the death of 300.000 people.[180]While the FAR and its accompanying militias crossed over into eastern Congo and sought refuge there[181].

The defeat of Habyarimana's Force Armees Rwandaise (FAR) by the RPF led to about 200.000 refugees who fled the violence and trooped into Eastern Congo for survival.[182] Once in Congo, the FAR and the militias which had masterminded the genocide took it upon themselves to set up order and commanded authority over the Hutu refugees in the camps. They used the camps as a ground to recruit more fighters and training in a bid to launch an offensive against the Tutsi government that was in Kigali. The internal strife and ethnic clashes that had bedeviled the Congo and Mobutu's made it even easier for the fleeing Rwandan army and militia groups to establish themselves in the eastern part of the Congo without much resistance from the government.

The refugee camps were not only used to plan and execute attacks against the Tutsi RPF-led government in Rwanda. Similar attacks equally targeted Tutsis in the Congo.[183] The FAR took to itself to unleash spontaneous attacks against the Banyamulenge. In retaliation, the Banyamulenge erected counterattacks against the FAR. By mid-1996, Banyamulenge counterattacks against the FAR had metamorphosed into full-scale rebellion. The RPF, who had become the masters of the Rwandan state together with Uganda, covertly aided the Banyamulenge Tutsis in arming and defending themselves against the combat assaults of the ex-FAR.[184] The aid provided to the Banyamulenge was equally luring to engage them as a proxy force to eliminate the FAR in Congo and, by extension, do away with any impending threat that the FAR could pose to the RPF-led Rwandan government. The Rwandan genocide came to an end, and some form of order

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[180] Gérard Prunier, *From Genocide to Continental War. The 'Congolese' Conflict and the Crisis of Contemporary Africa.*, London: Hurst., 2009, p. 128.
[181] Alberto Barrera, "The Congo Trap: MONUSCO Islands of Stability in the Sea of Instability," *Stability*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2015), p. 2, doi:10.5334/sta.gn.
[182] Peter Abbott, "Modern African Wars: The Congo 1960-2002," no. 4 (2002), pp. 29–33.
[183] Thomas Turner, "The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth, and Reality," London: Zed Books, 2007, pp. 3–6.
[184] Abbott, "Modern African Wars: The Congo 1960-2002," p. 34.

and authority reigned in Rwanda. However, the evolution of the genocide was an ill omen that cast the spell of instability and violence in Cong, consequently ushering in the First Congo War.

To halt the ambush on the new government in Kigali, both Rwandan and Ugandan forces teamed up and invaded the refugee camps in eastern Congo in 1996. Their mission was to eradicate the perpetrators of the genocide. After all, Mobutu had collaborated with and provided both territory and support to the FAR to launch attacks and destabilize the Tutsi-led government in Kigali. To make the invasion look like an internally generated affair, a Congolese rebel leader who had sojourned in Rwanda and Uganda- Laurent Desire Kabila, was put at the forefront of the invasion to oust Mobutu.[185] Kabila and his backer all had genuine reasons why they wanted to remove Mobutu from power. Laurent Kabila was an ardent follower and supporter of Lumumba. He had always rebelled against Mobutu from day one.[186] Putting Kabila at the forefront was not just to pain the rebellion as purely a Congolese affair, but equally because it had the relevant rebel training and leadership potential to outdo the Mobutu.

Uganda's involvement in the First Congo War, which ousted Mobutu, was because Yoweri Museveni hailed from the Hima tribe, which shares kindred links with the Rwandan and Congolese Tutsis. He was thus moved by this consideration, coupled with the fact that it was a strategic choice to project the power and influence of his country in the Great Lakes region. Museveni saw the participation of his troops in the first Congo war as an opportunity to weaken the influence of the West Bank Nile Front (WBNF), Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), and the Lord Resistance Army (LRA)[187] And deprive them of setting up safe havens within the Congo, from where they could easily stage an incursion against the Ugandan government.[188]

In the same light Hutu rebels of Burundian origin, like the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD), had taken advantage of Congo's mountainous and rough terrain to

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185 Dunn, *Imagining The Congo: The International Relations of Identity*, p. 144.
186 Wilungula B. Cosma, *Fizi 1967–1986: Le Maquis Kabila.*, Brussels: CEDAF, 1997.
187 Arseneault Michel, "La Folle Guerre de l'Armee de Resistance Du Seigneur.," *Le Monde Diplomatique,* no. Fevrier (1998).
188 Reyntjens Filip, "The New Geostrategic Situation in Central Africa," *African Issues*, vol. 26, no. 1 (1998), p. 10.; See also, Ali Mazrui, "Capitalism, Democracy, and Stability in Africa.," *USAfrica*, no. 22 March (1998).

initiate attacks on the Tutsi-led government.[189] In addition to this, Burundi interpreted the ex-FAR Hutu and Interahamwe militia as a source of motivation for the FDD. This explained why they threw their weight behind Kabila. Angola's backing for Kabila was based on the premise that the Mobutu regime had provided territory in Congo from where the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) operated. It was thus a vendetta against Mobutu. Supporting Angola to oust Mobutu was Angola's response to the ailing dictator.[190] Kabila equally gathered support from other African countries like Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Namibia, and South Africa. Such assistance to his crusade for power came in diplomatic aid.

The heated battles of the first Congo came to the fore between October and November 1996. The Banyamulenge had taken it upon themselves to launch an intense assault against the Hutus in the refugee camps, where the ex-Force Armees Rwandaise had settled[191]. The Hutu forces equally moved swiftly, launched an attack on the Zairian forces, and staged an incursion on the military's Action Intelligence Service (SARM).[192] In a bid to counter these attacks, Mobutu's government reacted by dispatching the troops of the Presidential Special Division (DSP). Their efforts proved futile in the face of the determined fighting rebels whose objective was to stop at nothing less than removing Mobutu from power. The capability and motivation of the 50.000man military state military stood in pale comparison to the motivation and drive for conquest, which fueled the spirits of the rebels. The army, which made up the state military, had gone for several months without pay. Hence their motivation to engage fully in combat was diminished even before being dispatched.[193]

With massive support from the Rwandan Patriotic Army (APR), the advancing rebels were able to seize Uvira by 24 October 1996. By the end of November, Bukavu was already in rebel captivity. Goma came under rebel captivity on 1 November 1996[194]. Rebel attacks left the refugee camps empty and in ruin as their former occupants fled for

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[189]   Colette Braeckman, "Incertitudes d'une Fin de Regne Au Zaire.," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. Fevrie (1997), pp. 8–9.

[190] Braeckman, "Incertitudes d'une Fin de Regne Au Zaire."

[191] Dunn, *Imagining The Congo: The International Relations of Identity*, p. 144.

[192] Abbott, "Modern African Wars: The Congo 1960-2002," p. 34.

[193] Prunier, *From Genocide to Continental War. The 'Congolese' Conflict and the Crisis of Contemporary Africa.*, p. 129.

[194] Turner, "The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth, and Reality," pp. 2–3.

the safety of their lives. As fighting continued, Bunia was captured on 25 December. The town of Kindu fell into rebel hands on 28 February 1997.

As Mobutu has estimated, the second phase of the first Congo did not reverse things in favor of the national army. It thus became all too clear that the combat success of the Banyamulenge rebels was not all locally manned, as it was backed by Laurent Desire Kabila and his Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (ADFL)[195].The ADFL was a coalition of many anti-Mobutu groups which had long opposed his tyranny over the Congo. Hence, they all always had a common goal-that of removing Mobutu from the helm of power. The nepotism, corruption, misuse of public financial and natural resources, and cronyism that characterized the rule of Mobutu served to alienate many Congolese from the state. In a display of shrewd intelligence and cohesive capability, Kabila merged the People Revolutionary Party (PRP), Democratic Alliance of the People (ADP), Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of Zaire (MRLZ), and the National Resistance Council for Democracy (CNRD)[196]. This alliance was strongly backed and supported by the post-genocide Tutsi regime in Rwanda.

The ADFL brought the necessary military might to oust Mobutu from power and ushered in Laurent Kabila. The military and logistical support which the ADFL enjoyed from its Rwandan and Ugandan backers gave it the impetus to thrive. Such support gave the rebels the courage to conquer territories and defeat the unmotivated Congolese army, who themselves, in some respects, were hoping to see the end of Mobutu's regime. As the war progressed against Mobutu and his ill-prepared and ill-equipped army, he hired 300mercenaries from Britain, France, and Belgium.[197] Unfortunately, this, too, could not change the tides of the conflict in his favor. Against all odds, the rebels led by ADFL captured Kisangani and brought it under their control on 15 March 1997[198]. Katanga Congo's economic hub and naturally endowed resource-rich province fell to the rebels the following month.

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[195] F. Ngolet, "African and American Connivance in Congo-Zaire," *Africa Today*, vol. 47, no. 1 (2000), pp. 68–72.

[196] Colette Braeckman, "Hantise de Genocide Au Burundi.," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. Mars (1996).

[197] Abbott, "Modern African Wars: The Congo 1960-2002," pp. 32–35.

[198] Reybrouck, *Congo: The Epic History of a People*, p. 425.

The third phase of the war unraveled in the town of Lubumbashi and the capital Kinshasa.[199] Angola's support for the ADFL took center stage as victory became imminent. The military artilleries and troops that Angola provided to the ADFL enhanced the capability of the rebels to conquer Kasai.[200] The Force Armees Zairian, in unison with UNITA, struggled to put up a fierce battle to halt the rebels from entering the capital. However, this attempt only registered brief success as it finally proved futile.

With no chances of winning the war or safeguarding his stay in power, Mobutu fled from the Congo on 17 May 1997. On 20 May, Kabila was proclaimed president of the Congo[201]. One of the first policies Kabila enacted as president was to change the country's name from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[202] The defeat and ouster of Mobutu took place within the context of the first Congo war, which spanned from October 1996-May 1997. However, the end of the first war was a preparatory phase for the second Congo war.

Critics and admirers alike have given several interpretations to the war. Agencies like the United Nations and other human rights institutions faulted the ADFL rebels for the attacks they staged against the Hutu militias and former FAR and the senseless slaughter of helpless refugees. Kabila's unwillingness to open the country to UN investigators who wanted to determine what had happened to the refugees was stifled by him. This did not endear Kabila to many in the West. However, Kabila's victory and the toppling of the dictator Mobutu has, on the other hand, been described by pundits and commentators on Congolese affairs as a landmark event, not just in the political history of Congo but equally for Africa as a continent. The table below gives one a vivid picture of the coups which have taken place in Congo. The table equally presents the coup leaders and the outcome of the coups.

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[199] Colette Braeckman, "Comment Le Zaire Fut Libere," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. Juillet (1997).
[200] Turner, "The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth, and Reality," pp. 3–10.
[201] Berwouts, *Congo's Violent Peace: Conflict and Struggle Since the Great African War*, pp. 17–19.
[202] Ngolet, "African and American Connivance in Congo-Zaire," pp. 69–70.

Table 3: Coup D'états in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Coups	Coup Leader(s)	Outcome
11 July 1960	Moise Tshombe	Moise Tshombe declared the independence and secession of the Katanga region from the rest of Congo. Tshombe was eventually driven out of Katanga 2 years later by UN troops
14 September 1960	Mobutu Sese Seko	Mobutu overthrew the government of Kasavubu and Patrice Lumumba. He kept Lumumba under arrest and reinstated Kasavubu as president
24 November 1965	Mobutu Sese Seko	Mobutu seized power from Kasavubu and became the head of state
17 May 1997	Laurent Desire Kabila	Mobutu was ousted from power, and Kabila became president
16 January 2001	Rashidi Kasereka (body guard of Laurent Kabila)	Laurent Kabila was assassinated b his bodyguard. Kabila was eventually succeeded by his son Joseph Kabila.
28 March 2004	Mobutu's Old Guard	An attempted coup against Joseph Kabila. The coup failed.

At the demise of Mobutu, Kabila took overpower. It will be recalled that Mobutu got replaced through a military coup by Kabila in the same way he got into power by overthrowing Joseph Kasavubu and Moise Tshombe. Kabila's lack of statesmanship led him to make dire errors at the genesis of his rule, which later cost him his life and office, and further propelled the country into greater instability. His entourage was principally made up of Tutsis, both of Rwandan and Congolese origin. He followed in the line of Mobutu to ensure that his administration and appointments to key positions were pinned to the flawed politics of ethnic identity.[203] Kabila thus failed to create a government that was inclusive and less coercive. The Mobutu regime's illegitimacy had earned through its notorious policies and brutality rubbed off on Kabila's government. The euphoria that

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[203] Ngolet, "African and American Connivance in Congo-Zaire," pp. 65–85.

accompanied the new Kabila administration soon died down, and dissent began anew in a country still to heal from its colonial and post-colonial wounds.

3 SECOND CONGO WAR: THE REGIONALISM OF AN INTRASTATE CONFLICT.1998-2002

The rise of Kabila to power after his triumphant military victory over Mobutu was greeted with a lot of jubilation by native Congolese who had hitherto suffered the brunt of Mobutu's misrule. It was equally an opportunity and an era where the international community, together with Kabila's backers, Rwanda, and Uganda, looked upon the new revolutionary president for a change in the Congo and its neighborhood. This, amongst many other things, included the redesigning of the geopolitical and security dynamics of the Great Lakes region. The opportunities, stakes, and challenges that later confronted Kabila's presidency make it apt for one to say that he was a mixed blessing. Little had Kabila settled down in Kinshasa when he began making sweeping changes to establish his government. While still in the early days of consolidating his power and asserting himself at the helm of the Congolese state, dissent against him began brewing.

His early actions and policies sent mixed signals not just to the Congolese who had come to see him as a 'liberator' but also to his Rwanda and Ugandan patrons, who saw a puppet that could not be tossed around at their whims and caprices. The masquerade they had tactfully crowned to get rid of the 'genocidaires' and, by extension, to oust Mobutu was no longer dancing to their tunes. He had in his own right become a composer of his political tunes for the Congo, one which was not pleasant in the ears of his former masters. While the bolts in the Kabila-Rwanda-Uganda alliance loosened, things began falling apart within the Congo. Native Congolese saw the appointment and influence of Rwandan Tutsis as an affront and humiliation to their liberty. Their perceptions of the Rwandans and Ugandans within the ranks of Kabila's government made them develop anti-Rwandan sentiments based on a feeling of being conquered by a neighbor that was many times smaller than the Mighty Congo. However, while these anti-foreigner feelings spiraled, the Congolese, in their hastiness, were oblivious that they did not liberate themselves. Their liberation from the dictatorship of Mobutu was only made possible with the resources and logistics that Rwanda and Uganda placed at the disposal of their proxy AFDL. By the last quarter of 1998, it became clear that Kabila was in a fix-a position

where he had to make hard choices. To assert his control and authority, he rolled out a Congolese authenticity agenda like that of Mobutu's Zaireanization plan. To this effect, Kabila began purging Rwandans from his administration. Next was a decree for all Rwandans to leave the country back to Rwanda. This, for all intent and purposes, did not sit well with the Rwandans and Ugandans who had helped him to power.

By July of 1998, the simmering tensions in the country were pointers to the fact that the forces of rivalry against Kabila were ready to whisk him off the seat of power.[204]. The various rebel groups that sprang up against Kabila's rule had one mission to remove him from power, even if they weren't clear about what would come next. From FARDC, the Congolese Democratic Coalition (RCD), the Congolese Democratic Coalition, and M23 all were poised to see the downfall of Kabila. These rebel groups, as well as fighters within the Congo, were dissatisfied with Kabila's administration. Among many other things, they accused him of not correctly managing the country to erect a stable economy that could effectively work to the benefit of native Congolese. His stifling of opposition voices and lack of political sensitivity made him an enemy of many dissenting factions within the Congo. The RCD argued that Kabila's government was corrupt and tolerated tribalistic tendencies.[205]

His inability or unwillingness to not recognize the contributions of the Sovereign National Council caused the proponents and adherents of the councils' endeavors to see Kabila as a threat not too distant from the likes of Mobutu he had just replaced. Before Kabila invaded the Congo in 1997, the Sovereign National Council had since the 90s been instrumental in forcing the government of Mobutu to enact changes and democratize the country in a way that gave rival factions a fairground to compete and build their political capital. The outcome and action of this Council's work were instrumental in challenging the dictatorship of Mobutu. This signals that the all-powerful Mobutu was not unconquerable after all. They may not have adopted the method of outright military combat in which Kabila and his backers had laid the fallowed ground on which Kabila's invasion to oust Mobutu was founded.

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[204] Herbert Weiss, "War and Peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *Current African Issues*, vol. 22 (2000), pp. 32–33.

[205] Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila A People's History*, p. 6.

In addition to this, dissenting voices within the Congo were discontented that Rwandans occupied strategic positions in Kabila's administration. This left the Congolese embittered with the perception of being ruled by shadow occupier forces. Rwandans like James Kabare and Bizima Karaha occupied the position of army chief of staff and minister of foreign affairs, respectively.[206] While the ordinary Congolese felt conquered under Kabila's foreign-dominated administration, their grievance gained weight from the composition of Kabila's army in the immediate post-Mobutu era. In the wake of Kabila's rule, close to 20.000 military officials handled the streets of Kinshasa.[207] These men in uniform were primarily drawn from the Ugandan and Rwandan forces, which had, under the umbrella of AFDL, helped Kabila to come to power.

On the other hand, the Rwandans were equally aggrieved that Kabila's government was replete with people hailed from the Katanga like himself.[208] The concerns of Congolese that Kabila was a stooge of Rwanda were confirmed when Paul Kagame, on multiple outings, stated that Rwanda, under the guise of the ADFL, was instrumental in the overthrow of Mobutu.[209] Though his pronouncements were meant to justify that Rwanda aided the rebels partly because they wanted to disband the 'genocidaires' Hutus from attacking Rwanda, Congolese Kagame's affirmations as a dark cloud of Rwandan control hanging over their heads.[210] This gave them cause for more worry as to how Kabila could rule in their interest when they saw his victory coming from somewhere else. This tainted the image and legitimacy of Kabila's government and further questioned its ability to serve the varying interests of the Congolese.

Kabila took decisive but very dangerous steps to shield his legitimacy and reclaim his fading image to prove to his fellow citizens that he was in charge.[211] He began by

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[206] Francois Ngolet, *Crisis in the Congo: The Rise and Fall of Laurent Kabila*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 31–33.

[207] The African, *The African Stakes of the Congo War*, ed. by John F. Clark, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp. 110–11.

[208] IRIN, "DRC: Rebels Consolidate Gains in West as Expatriate Evacuate," *1998*, n.d., https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/drc-rebels-consolidate-gains-west-expatriates-evacuate.

[209] Filip Reyntjens, *The Great African War: Congo and Regional Geopolitics, 1996-2006*, Madrid: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 167.

[210] René Lemarchand, "The Fire in the Great Lakes," *Current History*, vol. 98, no. 628 (1999), pp. 199–200.

[211] Reyntjens, *Gt. African War Congo Reg. Geopolit. 1996-2006*, p. 167.

declaring that all Rwandans and foreign military troops should return to their nations of origin. This ipso facto meant that he was invariable parting ways with the Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers who were serving in his government[212]. By this time, the Rwandans and Ugandans themselves had become disillusioned with the prospect of Kabila leading the Congo and protecting their regional and security interest- the very reason for which they had supported his rebellion to oust Mobutu. Kabila's inability or unwillingness to effectively halt the activities of the Hutu rebels on the eastern borders with Rwanda and Uganda kept his former backers worried. Conversely, politics is about permanent interest, not so much about permanent friends. While fresh in power, Kabila's priority was consolidating his power and position in a widely polarized country.

Conversely, the attempt by Rwanda and Uganda to take complete charge of the Congo's eastern borders to tackle rebel groups that threatened their security was not given the green light by Kabila.[213] If Kabila had taken the path of loyalty to accent this plan, it would have exposed him as a leader who is not fit to man a territory, he fought so hard to gain control over. In addition, this would have meant that sovereign Congo had lost control over part of its eastern territory to its neighbors. Since Kabila could not ensure the security interests of his benefactors, they were left with no option but to stage a plan to remove him from power and, in his place, someone who could give them a freer hand in addressing their security concerns with rebels in Congo's eastern borders.

Kabila's political fortunes dwindled as relations with the US and other western powers entered an all-time low. His refusal to allow UN investigators to carry out findings of human rights abuse against the Hutu refugees made him fall apart with international organizations and other political power brokers in the western world.[214] France and Belgium were not in very warm relations with Kabila because his relationship with the US had disenfranchised France and Belgium from occupying a dominant space within the natural resource-rich Congolese economy. Moreover, Kabila gravitated toward countries like Sudan, Cuba, and Libya, driven by his Marxist philosophy.[215] This caused the US to become increasingly hostile to the Kabila's regime at the time when he needed them the

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[212] Vesely Milan, "Carving up the Congo," *African Business*, 1998, pp. 11–12.

[213] Dunn, *Imagining The Congo: The International Relations of Identity*, p. 156.

[214] Peter Rosenblum, "Endgame in Zaire," *Current History*, vol. 96, no. 610 (1997), pp. 199–201.

[215] Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila A People's History*, p. 234.

most. The hostility towards Kabila later manifested in the depth of the Second Congo War, when they maintained reluctance and docility as Kabila battled with the Rwandan and Ugandan-backed rebellion, which rose against him in the early days of August 1998. With internal rebellion rising and international hostility against Kabila gaining momentum, the ingredients for the war were already set in place.

The Second Congo War erupted on 2 August 1998. This war which lasted till 2002, has come to be described as Africa's World War by many scholars and commentators alike. The war drew state and non-state groups from within and outside the Great Lakes Region. These state actors or rebel groups participated in the conflict for many personal reasons. However, their overall involvement broadly focused on supporting the rebellion against Kabila or assisting his regime in maintaining its grip on power and, by so doing, halted his removal from the helm of the state. In the heat of the Second Congo War- Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi sided with the rebels, while Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia aligned with Kabila.[216]

The removal of James Kabarebe, who was Kabila's army chief of staff, was the immediate cause of the War. Kabarebe was the leader of the Tutsi Rwandan army who had led the invasion of the Congo in 1996 to eliminate Hutu militias and oust Mobutu. His removal from that key position was not considered a welcomed development in Kigali. To the Rwandan and Congolese Tutsis alike, they interpreted the ejection of Kabarebe from office as the height of marginalization against them. This explains why the call to take up arms against Kabila's government gained currency among the Banyamulenge and Tutsis of Rwanda origin who were residents in the Congo. These ethnic rivalries intensified and manifested within the ranks of the Congolese Armed Forces (FAC). As the army of Tutsi origin rebelled, so did they, and other Tutsi civilians paid the ultimate price with their lives.[217]

At the onset of the conflict, Kabila's former foreign affairs minister Bizima Karaha, who had linked up with the dissenting groups to fight Kabila, said that the rebellion was purely

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[216] Abbott, "Modern African Wars: The Congo 1960-2002," pp. 36–37.

[217] Tatiana Carayannis, "The Complex Wars of the Congo: Towards a New Analytic Approach," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 2003.

an internal affair to oust Kabila from power.[218] Contrary to this view and like those who saw the Congo War as an internal affair, Nzongala argued that there exists no empirical evidence to support such an assertion. According to him, Rwanda and Uganda orchestrated the Second Congo War in collaboration with rebel groups within Congo to remove Kabila from power[219]. In addition to this, Nzongala contended that the plan to take Kabila off the helm of the state was already in motion right from the beginning of 1998. Deogracias Bugera, who had served the ADFL as its secretary-general, was the mastermind behind the plan[220].

Unknown to Kabila was that before the conflict that ousted him, his chief of staff, Kabarebe, had strategically caused the transfer and stationing of Tutsi loyalists' troops in the country's east. He had equally ensured that sophisticated ammunition was stored in these military stations.[221] After his removal from office, Kabarebe summoned these loyalist troops to take up arms to oust Kabila. Within less than 73hours, a large portion of Congo's eastern region was under rebel control. The pouring of Rwanda and Ugandan troops enhanced their advancement into the Congo. This set the Kabila administration in panic and confusion as uncertainty loomed over them. Congo, as a country, has witnessed these trends of conflicts repeatedly over the years. This war resulted in the death of an estimated 4 million people, with hundreds of thousands displaced within the country and those who later became refugees seeking safety in neighboring countries.[222] The war brought dire humanitarian conditions to the Congo. Though it ended with a negotiated settlement in line with the Lusaka Agreement, this did not completely wipe out hostilities in the country.

4   INSTABILITY IN CONGO: OF REBEL GROUPS AND WAR LORDS

Conflict in DRC has come to represent a part of the country's history that cannot be quickly deleted. The evolution of the state in this resource endowed country has ambiguously coincided with an equal expansion of violent non-state actors. These armed

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[218] Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo: A United Nations Force in Action*, p. 21.
[219] Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila A People's History*, pp. 216–27.
[220] Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila A People's History*.
[221] Jason Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: The Collapse of the Congo and the Great War of Africa*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2011, p. 224.
[222] Benjamin Coghlan et al., "Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Nationwide Survey," *Lancet*, vol. 367, no. 9504 (2006), p. 49, doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(06)67923-3.

groups have persistently engaged the national army of the Congo, combating, and contesting the legitimacy of all the regimes which have ruled the country from Mobutu to present-day Etienne Tshisekedi. The table below shows the various armed groups that have participated in Congo's conflict. The table equally outlines the leaders of such armed groups, the objective of the group and their period of activity in the Congo.

Table 4: Nonstate Armed Groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Armed Groups	Rebel Leader(s)	Active Period	Motive
Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)	Joseph Kony Dominic Ongwen Vincent Otti Odong Latek Raska Lukwiga	1987-present	The mission of the LRA was to establish a theocratic state in Uganda. The group later moved into Congo and continued committing atrocities.
Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)	Jamil Mukulu	1995-present	The motive of this armed group was to overthrow Yoweri Museveni from power and Islamize Uganda.
Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of (ADFL)	Laurent Desire Kabila Andre Kisase Ngandu Deogratias Bugera	1996-1997	To topple Mobuto Sese Seko
Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)	Paul Rwarakabje Sylvestre Mudacumura Ignace Murwana	2000-present	Its objective is to topple the government of Rwanda and defeat the present government led by the Rwanda Patriotic Front.
Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS)	Janvier Buingo Karairi	2006-2016	The ideology of the APCLS is geared towards opposing Tutsi ethnic groups in Congo.
March 23 Movement (M23)	Bosco Ntaganda Sultani Makenga Jean Marie Lugerero	2012-2013	Their mission was to agitate against the government of Lauren Kabila for reneging on the terms of the 23 March 2009 agreement they signed with the government of Congo.

In understanding the dynamics that surround these armed groups and the respective warlords that have led them, it is relevant to know the political context in which they find themselves and how such a context triggered their rise and resilience. In line with this, it

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is a truism that most violent armed groups emerged because of the breakdown or absence of an effective social contract.[223] Because of inertia or political bias, governments neglect to establish effective control over certain parts of their territory; dissents begin to ferment and later transform into armed rebellion. This scene is often too familiar in many African countries that have so far witnessed civil war. The armed groups' motivation that fuels such conflicts is to challenge the central state authority.[224] This explains why in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, many armed groups have arisen and taken control of the peripheral areas of the country, where government control was either absent or inadequate.

The argument of whether their agenda for rivaling the state is genuine or not has raised countless debates and academic discourse. Whether for genuine or dubious reasons, one thing remains that the past and current state arrangements in Congo have been forced to welcome the participation of armed groups. The activities of these armed groups, their recruitment strategies, and how they maintain group cohesion have demonstrated that the state no longer holds a monopoly over violence, as was the case before. Non-state actors in the DRC have changed the country's political landscape, but they have played significant roles in the socio-administrative sphere. Evidence shows that they have become vital actors in determining and reshaping the economic landscape. These armed groups captured and laid contested claims over vast territories containing resources like gold, copper, and bauxite. They illicitly exploit and market across the dark trade channels through neighboring countries like Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi. These groups' unpredictable rise and fall are mirrored in the complex and contradictory alliances they form among themselves and the state itself. The issue with state failure and the eventual rise of armed groups based on greed or grievance is that the local population becomes trapped in an ecosystem of violence that they did not bargain for or fully understand.

4.1   Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo

The reign of Mobutu Sese Seko over Zaire was characterized by repression, arbitrariness, corruption, and nepotism. The collapse of his rule came as no surprise because the

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[223] Tony Addison and S. Mansoob Murshed, "From Conflict to Reconstruction : Reviving the Social Contract," *WIDER Discussion Paper*, Helsinki, 2001, pp. 2–10.
[224] Phil Williams, "Violent Non-State Actors And National and International Security," *International Relations and Security Network*, 2008, pp. 1–21.

elements of state decay had already been entrenched deep into the fabric of the state.[225] This was worsened by the fact that he provided shelter and support to the Hutus who had perpetrated the genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda. This gave the Hutu militias the edge to continue challenging the Tutsi-led government, which took over Kigali post-genocide. The Tutsis who had long lived in the Kivu regions were not spared of attack by the Mobutu-supported Interahamwe militia[226]. Meantime within the Congo, Tutsis felt the brunt of Mobutu's bad governance and discrimination. This prompted them to set up their self-security networks. In this regard, the Rwandan government teamed up with these Tutsi led movements, and eventually, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (ADFL) was formed[227]. The ADFL was actively supported by Rwanda, Uganda, and Angola. The alliance was formed by a combination of the Partie de la Revolution Populaire (PRP) of Laurent Kabila, Alliance Democratique des Peuples (ADP) headed by Deogratias Bugera, Mouvement Revolutionnaire pour la Liberation du Zaire (MRLZ) championed by Masasu Ningaba and Kisase Ngandu's Conseil de la Resistance pour la Democratie (CRD)[228].

The ADFL quickly gathered support and sympathy, and its combatants swelled to 80.000 and above. The primary motive of this rebel group was to oust Mobutu from power and put an end to his repressive rule in Zaire. In 1996, they launched an attack on Mobutu's regime, fought their way through to Kinshasa, and took over the seat of power. The rebellion of the ADFL against Mobutu marked what has come to be described as the First Congo War. While the battle for Kinshasa lasted, youths sympathetic to the cause of the ADFL joined its other combatants. Some military officers in the *Forces Armees Zairean* defected and joined the rebel movement. Their success in toppling the regime of Mobutu won them widespread praise and admiration both in Congo and elsewhere.

In May 1997, Kabila became the president. One of his first policy moves was that he renamed the country from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The former ADFL fighters were transformed into the national army of the state –the Congolese

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[225] Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo: From Decolonization to Dictatorship*, pp. 214–15.
[226] cited, p. 78.
[227] George Klay Kieh and Ida Rousseau Mukenge (ed.), *Zones of Conflict in Africa: Theories and Cases*, Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2002, p. 59.
[228] Ngolet, "African and American Connivance in Congo-Zaire," p. 68.

Armed Forces (FAC)[229]. The rise of Kabila and the victory of the ADFL came to be described as a new epoch for Africa, where Africans themselves could rise and take charge to resolve their issues[230]. Others have since argued that the ADFL's victory could not have been achieved without external support from Rwanda and Uganda.

4.2   Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD)

The battle for Kinshasa and Kabila's eventual rise to power brought hope not just to the ordinary Congolese but also to Africans. However, the euphoria that accompanied the toppling of Mobutu's dictatorship soon gave way to dissent and violence, ushering in the Second Congo War. Kabila's administration did not do much to act differently from that of Mobutu as a dictatorship, and high-handedness continued under the new administration. In addition to this, Rwanda, and Uganda, which had helped Kabila to seize power, were not so much in a hurry to leave the territory to their people.[231] Beyond their nominal arguments of disbanding the Hutu militias was a veiled agenda to lay their grip on Congolese rich mineral resources like gold, coltan, and copper. Kabila's lack of cooperation with his former backers caused them to establish the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD), which came to play an influential role in the Second Congo War, which erupted in 1998[232]. The main objective of the RCD was to oust Kabila from power. Ernest Wamba initially led it. By May 1999, differences in the operational strategy and methods put the leadership of RCD into a crisis of control. The leadership tussle which ensued fragmented the rebel alliance into two groups. Wamba's group became known as the RCD-Kisangani. The other faction which chose to operate from Goma became known as RCD-Goma.[233] Adolph Onosunba took over the operational command of RCD-Goma. This later faction received enormous military and financial support from Rwanda. Wamba's faction forged an alliance with another warlord Jean Pierre Bemba's Movement for the Liberation of the Congo. This rebel faction came to be known as RCD-ML.[234]

[229] Abbott, "Modern African Wars: The Congo 1960-2002," p. 36.

[230] Davidson Basil, "Kabila, Une Chance Pour l'Afrique.," *Jeune Afrique*, no. 14 Mai (1997), p. 22.

[231] Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila A People's History*, pp. 241–42.

[232] Joanne Richards, "Implementing DDR in Settings of Ongoing Conflict: The Organization and Fragmentation of Armed Groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)," *Stability*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2016), pp. 3–5, doi:10.5334/sta.467.

[233] Sadiki Koko, "From Rebels to Politicians: Explaining the Transformation of the RCD-Goma and the MLC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *South African Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 23, no. 4 (2016), p. 524, doi:10.1080/10220461.2017.1298054.

[234] David Renton, *The Congo: Plunder and Resistance*, p. 195.

While operating as a proxy belligerent of Rwanda in Congo's Second War, RCD-Goma was able to raise and maintain about 45,000 fighters[235]. These combatants enabled the rebel group to fight and maintained control over large swaths of territory in the Kivus as well as in Kasai[236].

The economic agendas of Rwanda and Uganda in the war were soon exposed as they clashed over the control and exploitation of resource-rich territories which contained minerals like gold, diamonds, and uranium.[237] South Kivu and Ituri, which had an abundance of these resources, became a hotbed of war not just with the army of Kabila but more so with their proxy rebel groups. Militia groups like the Interahamwe, which had support from Kabila's government, made the war more complex than the RCD rebel group had thought.[238] As instabilities increased, so did the atrocities of the armed groups. All armed groups in the conflict recruited child soldiers killed innocent civilians and forced others to work in gold mines under very inhumane conditions. The armed group RCD provided the local cover with which Rwanda and Uganda plundered the resources of Congo. Statistics from 1996 to 1997 show that coltan amounted to $80 million in revenue per quarter for Rwanda. Between the above period, Rwanda and Uganda's external trade in diamonds grew exponentially in quantity and revenue. The exportation revenue earned from the sale of golf by Rwanda shifted from $12.4 million in 1994 to an all-time high of $110 million in 1996[239].

4.3   Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)

The Allied Democratic Forces is an armed group that has played an equally important and controversial role in the conflict in Congo. It originated in Uganda in 1996 with the sole objective of ousting Yoweri Museveni from power and Islamizing Uganda.[240] This plan failed to see the light of day as the group was fiercely combated by the Ugandan

[235] Zoë Marriage, "Flip-Flop Rebel, Dollar Soldier: Demobilisation in the Democratic Republic of Congo," *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2007), p. 291, doi:10.1080/14678800701333085.

[236] De Goede M, *The Price for Peace in the Congo: The Incorporation of Political-Economy of War in the State and Governance System*, Saint Andrews: Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, 2007, pp. 5–6.

[237] Phillipe Tremblay, *The Transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Historic Opportunity*, Montreal, Quebec: Droits et Democratie, 2004, p. 54.

[238] Koko, "From Rebels to Politicians: Explaining the Transformation of the RCD-Goma and the MLC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," p. 524.

[239] Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo: From Decolonization to Dictatorship*, pp. 113–15.

[240] Gérard Prunier, "Rebel Movements and Proxy Warfare: Uganda, Sudan and the Congo (1986-99)," *African Affairs*, vol. 103, no. 412 (2004), pp. 359–83, doi:10.1093/afraf/adh050.

Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) in 1995. The surviving members of the group later moved on to the Congolese border in North Kivu and established their stronghold there in 1996 in the Beni area[241]. They operated several attacks not only on Uganda but subsequently because masters of their own, even within the Congolese territory. The instability that came with the Congolese wars opened spaces for armed actors like the ADF to find a fertile ground to operate on. This was further made possible by the insufficient presence of the Congolese administration in the Rwenzori border area.[242] The transnational character of the ADF sort of robbed it of its original mission, which was to instill Islamic tenets in Uganda. In this regard, their objective somewhat became blurred as it could no longer be tangibly understood. However, within the sphere of conflict in DRC, the ADF allied with other armed actors like the former Rwanda Armed Forces (FAR)[243] which forcefully recruited young men into their ranks and orchestrated mayhem in collaboration with groups like the Mayi Mayi in 2011[244].

The inability of the ADF to effectively manage ties with its sympathizers in Uganda meant that it had to create a fief for itself on the border of Congo, from where it staged its operations. Their activities and brutality led to serious civilian atrocities and deaths. Though they have been seriously defeated by the Congolese Army and the UN Stabilization Forces, their remnants have constantly reinvented themselves to revive the activities of the armed groups. Their precise mission remains unclear, as they have continuously forged strong ties with powerful politicians and businesspeople within the Congo. The socio-economic and political dynamics of the group in the conflict landscape puts it far off from its original purpose of Islamizing Uganda and outing Museveni. The Uganda government, on its part, continues to use the presence of ADF in Congo as an excuse for their forces to continue fighting along Congolese borders. Whether this was

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[241] Kristof Titeca and Fahey Daniel, "The Many Faces of a Rebel Group: The Allied Democratic Forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo," *International Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 5 (2016), p. 4, doi:10.1111/1468-2346.12703.

[242] Kristof Titeca and Vlassenroot Koen, "Rebels Without Borders in the Rwenzori Borderland? A Biography of the Allied Democratic Forces," *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2012), pp. 165–68, doi:10.1080/17531055.2012.664708.

[243] Lindsay Scorgie, "Peripheral Pariah or Regional Rebel? The Allied Democratic Forces and the Uganda/Congo Borderland," *Round Table*, vol. 100, no. 412 (2011), pp. 79–93, doi:10.1080/00358533.2011.542297.

[244] Koen, "Rebels Without Borders in the Rwenzori Borderland? A Biography of the Allied Democratic Forces," p. 164.

for the security of Uganda or a veiled operation to exploit resources from the Congo, it goes without saying that the presence of the ADF in Congo has brought with it complex and contradictory effects on the Congolese population.

The total number of civilian deaths in 2014 resulting from ADF operations in Beni amounted to 650. The eventual arrest of ADF leader Jamil Mukulu in 2015 did not, however, put an end to the operations of the group[245]. The number of casualties almost doubled in 2017 as ADF combatants in an insurgency wounded about 60 United Nations stabilization forces and left about 20 of them dead. The ADF has played a significant role as an armed group in the DRC conflict. A UN report in 2014 stated that the ADF fighters stood at 1600-2500[246]. The transnational character of this group and their political linkages in Congo, Sudan, and Uganda have afforded them the possibility to engage in illegal money transfers, clandestine sales of raw materials, trafficking, and large-scale abuse of human rights.

4.4   The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)

The Lord's Resistance Army is a powerful insurgent group that has participated in fueling the conflict in Congo and beyond. It emerged in Uganda in 1987, intending to overthrow Yoweri Museveni and rule the country based on the Ten Commandments. Its leader Joseph Kony provided the chain of command and direction, which the group adhered to[247]. From a somewhat spiritual and mystical maneuver, Kony skillfully managed to secure the allegiance of his followers, who believed that the mysterious powers of the leader were able to shield them from bullets and casualties on the battlefield. After haven faced serious combat and defeat at the hands of the Ugandan Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF), the LRA migrated into the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2005, from where they continued their insurgent activities.[248]

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[245] Risdel Kasasira, "Aide Betrayed ADF's Mukulu," *Daily Monitor*, no. 24 May (2015).

[246] United Nations Security Council, "Allied Democratic Forces," 2014, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1533/materials/summaries/entity/allied-democratic-forces-%28adf%29.

[247] Christopher Bailey, "The Quest for Justice: Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army," *Fordham International Law Journal*, vol. 40, no. 2 (2017), pp. 248–49.

[248] Kristof Titeca, "The Lord ' s Resistance Army (LRA) in the Democratic Republic of Congo : (Un) Invited Guests ?," Antwerp, 2020, pp. 5–7.

The Lord's Resistance Army entered the DRC through its Northeastern border. They initially presented themselves not as warriors but as refugees seeking protection from the authoritarian regime of Museveni. However, their presence evoked a lot of concerns as the local population saw their presence in Congo as an invitation to trouble. Consequently, the local people constantly petitioned the government in Kinshasa to kick the LRA out of the Congo. While the local population was pushing for this to happen, the LRA, on the other hand, kept asserting their right to stay, based on complicated political negotiations which they had forged with political allies close to the president. Though the confusion and contestation continued, the LRA, under very complex circumstances, remained in DRC and has carried out many atrocities since then. They benefited from the instability in the Congo as well as other regional conflicts to expand their network and outreach[249].

The rejection of the LRA local Congolese in the Garamba area meant that the rebel group could not quickly get recruits into their ranks. Consequently, they reverted to forced conscription of men, child soldiers, and women. The woman and children served primarily as porters for the fighters. Meanwhile, the LRA equally used women as their wives.[250] The LRA plundered and pillaged the Congolese community, which was not forthright supportive of their group. The inability of the LRA and the administration of Museveni to reach a peaceful settlement between 2006 and 2008 further deteriorated the conflict in Uganda and Congo. By the end of 2008, the government of Uganda, the Central African Republic, DRC, and Sudan launched a military offensive codenamed 'Operation Lightning Thunder' to destroy the base of LRA in Garamba in DRC.[251] The aerial bombardment that accompanied this military campaign against the LRA succeeded in doing significant damage to the LRA but did not kill its leader, Joseph Kony.

While the joint military offensive on LRA turned out successful, it did not make provisions or arrangements for protecting civilians after LRA destructions.[252] Consequently, in response to the attacks on its base, the LRA embarked on exerting mass

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[249] cited, p. 11.

[250] Peter Eichstaedt, *First Kill Your Family: Child Soldiers of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army*, Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2009, pp. 8–10.

[251] Mareike Schomerus, Kennedy Tumutegyereize, "After Operation Lighting Thunder: Protecting Communities and Building Peace," *Conciliation Resources*, no. April (2009), p. 4.

[252] Anthony W. Gambino, "State Failure: The Responsibility to Protect Civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 10, no. 2 (2009), pp. 51–58.

brutality, violence, rape, and torture on the local population.[253] The mayhem unleashed on the Congolese communities resulted in the death of 1,096 people. The cases of abductions reported stood at some 1,373 for men and women, with another 255 children.[254] The LRA tactics of fear in the community through arbitrary killings, rape, and violence allowed them to escalate the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. The LRA has constantly been targeted and handicapped in various operations. However, each time, they have succeeded in resurfacing.

In 2005, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Joseph Kony and other top leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army. Vincent Otti, Raska Lukwiya, Okot Odhiambo, and Dominic Ongwen.[255] In 2007, Raska Lukwiya died. The dropping of charges against him followed this. Similarly, the court equally terminated the case against Okot Odhiambo upon his death in 2015. So far, only Dominic Ongwen has been tried by the ICC. The rebel leader Joseph Kony has remained unseen and has since not been captured, despite a mixed joint task force of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), which was subsequently renamed MONUSCO from 2010, US African Command, and other regional security arrangements.

4.5   The 23 March Movement (M23)

Conflict in the DRC has persistently been characterized by many the participation of internal and external actors. However, one very astonishing fact remains the way these actors shift and shape the way their alliances as the conflict evolve. The Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) was founded in 2006 by Laurent Nkunda to protect and secure Tutsis in the DRC from the savagery of armed groups like the FDLR and other rebel groups operating in North Kivu.[256] Upon Nkunda's arrest by the Congolese armed forces in 2009, Bosco Ntaganda became the new symbol of power and authority at the helm of the CNDP.[257] In this regard, he collaborated with the government of Joseph

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[253] Pamela Faber, "Sources of Resilience in the Lord's Resistance Army," 2017, pp. 9–11.

[254] Leonard, Emma, "The Lord's Resistance Army: An African Terrorist Group?," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, vol. 4, no. 6 (2010), pp. 20–30.

[255] ICC, "Case Information Sheet: The Prosecutor v. Joseph Kony and Vincent Otti ICC-PIDS-CIS-UGA-001-006/18_Eng," 2005, vol. 7, pp. 2–4, https://www.icc-cpi.int/CaseInformationSheets/KonyEtAlEng.pdf.

[256] Jason K. Stearns, Judith Verweijen, Maria Eriksson Baaz, *The National Army and Armed Groups in the Eastern Congo*, Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute, 2013, p. 29.

[257] Cathy Nangini et al., "Visualizing Armed Groups: The Democratic Republic of the Congo's M23 in Focus," *Stability*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2014), p. 3, doi:10.5334/sta.dd.

Kabila to integrate former fighters of the CNDP into the ranks of the national army. The government saw this in Kinshasa as a way out of ending the conflict in the country.

Consequently, on 23 March 2009, the government in Kinshasa and the Congress for the Defense of the People entered into a peace agreement. Amongst many things, this agreement was to ensure that the ex-combatants of the CNDP were integrated into the Congolese army at different levels. In addition, the CNDP was hence to give up its previous rebel activities and transform into a political party.[258] The understanding of this was that the CNDP would use its political platform as a legitimate channel through which it could transmit its discontent on national and local issues to the central government. Following the 23 March 2009 agreement, approximately 5,300 ex- CNDP fighters were eventually integrated into the Congolese armed forces

While the CNDP leaders like Bosco Ntaganda, Sultan Makenga, Jean Marie Runigo Lugerero saw this as a means of consolidating regional and local power to themselves, the DRC government, on its part, saw the peace agreement as a veiled path to finally disassemble the CNDP and its remnants[259]. President Joseph Kabila's government was to achieve this by randomly spreading the ex-CNDP rebels all around the country, thus making it difficult for the insurgents to regroup and stage rebellions on the state structures and authority. Once integrated into the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC), the former CNDP fighters began agitating against the Kinshasa regime; it did not respect the 2009 agreement.[260] Hence on 4 April 2012, a group of former CNDP fighters mutinied from the Congolese army and formed the M23 Movement.

The newly formed M23 Movement complained that the regimentation process which the Kinshasa government initiated in 2011 to break the command structure of the CNDP and disperse its former combatants to various military outposts all over the territory was not in the best interest of the former CNDP fighters.[261] The M23 rebels equally premised their

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[258] Jason Stearns, *From CNDP To M23: The Evolution of An Armed Movement in Eastern Congo*, Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute, 2012, p. 41.
[259] cited, p. 39.
[260] Koen and Vlassenroot, Judith Verweijen, "Democratic Republic of Congo: The Democratization of Militarized Politics," *Africa's Insurgents. Navigating an Evolving Landscape*, ed. by Morten Bøås and Kevin Dunn, Boulder: Lynne Rienner., 2017, pp. 99–118.
[261] Jason Stearns et Al., *Raia Mutomboki: The Flawed Peace Process in the DRC and the Birth of an Armed Franchise*, Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute, 2013, pp. 19–21.

rebellion because ex-CNDP combatants were discriminated against in the army and deprived of appointment to critical central government positions. However, this grievance had no weighty bearing because Bosco Ntaganda and Sultani Makenga made huge profits through forced taxation, illegal sale of mineral resources they exploited from the Kivus, and money racketeering.

To strengthen its mobilization in the Kivus, the M23, under the leadership of Ntaganda, established alliances with many other rebel groups in Congo and had strong ties with the Rwanda Defense Force.[262] Though Rwanda has persistently denied having connections with M23, the government of DRC and the United Nations held a contrary view. In collaboration with its Rwandan backers, the M23 created other satellite armed groups like the Alliance for the Liberation of East Congo (ALEC). This group, ALEC, carried out its operations mainly in the Uvira area. The M23 also had alliances with the Ecumenical Force for the Liberation of Congo (FOLC), actively headed by Hilair Kombi, who had defected from the Congolese national army. This latter rebel group operated mainly in the North of Kivu, specifically in the Beni region.[263] The M23 broad base alliance equally included the *Mouvement de Resistance Populaire au Congo (MRPC), the Forces de Defense Congolaises (FDC), and a coalition* of other armed groups in Ituri.[264]

The M23 rebels are known to have committed crimes against the civilian population of the North and South of Kivu. These crimes include rape, forced taxation, the forceful recruitment of young men, illegal exploitation of natural resources, mass killing, and torture. The high point of the M23 was in 2012 when its fighters successfully brought Goma under their control. This was detrimental to the civilian population and the joint DRC Armed forces and UN peacekeeping mission with a personnel capacity of about 20.000. In March 2013, Bosco Ntaganda surrendered himself to the United States Embassy in Kigali and requested that he be transferred to the International Criminal Court[265]. By August of the same year, the military might of the M23 had significantly

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[262] Stearns, *From CNDP To M23: The Evolution of An Armed Movement in Eastern Congo*, p. 44.
[263] Stearns, Verweijen, Eriksson Baaz, *The National Army and Armed Groups in the Eastern Congo*, pp. 28–30.
[264] Stearns, *From CNDP To M23: The Evolution of An Armed Movement in Eastern Congo*, pp. 48–52.
[265] Washington Post, "Why Did Infamous War Criminal Bosco Ntaganda Just Surrender at a US Embassy?," *18 March* 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/03/18/why-did-infamous-war-criminal-bosco-ntaganda-just-surrender-at-a-u-s-embassy/.

been weakened, partly because of significant defections, coupled with its inability to secure more recruits as it had done in the past. The withdrawal of Rwandan support to the group equally contributed to paralyzing its mobilization efforts. A joint FARDC and UN Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) was set up in 2013. This task force continued the search for Joseph Kony and began counter-insurgent attacks against the M23. Multiple attacks were launched against M23 bases.[266] By November, this joint task force had defeated the M23, and most of its surviving rebels fled to other regions.[267] This notwithstanding, the Democratic Republic of Congo witnessed an upsurge in armed groups and insurgencies, especially from 2014-to 2016. On 7 November 2019, the ICC sentenced M23 ringleader Bosco Ntaganda to 30years in prison based on crimes against humanity and war crimes that he committed in Congo.

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[266] Stearns, Verweijen, Eriksson Baaz, *The National Army and Armed Groups in the Eastern Congo*, p. 30.
[267] Vlassenroot, Verweijen, "Democratic Republic of Congo: The Democratization of Militarized Politics," pp. 99–118.

CHAPTER THREE

INTRASTATE CONFLICT IN CENTRAL AFRICAN RPUBLIC

1   UNDERSTANDING THE EVOLUTION AND DRIVERS OF FRAGILITY

The Central African Republic is a country at war with itself. Though situated in the heart of Africa, this geographic location has accorded it little or no significance in its state-building initiative. The violence and conflict that have characterized the state evolution of this landlocked country have only added to forestall any meaningful stride it has taken towards meaningful stability and development. After all, the development and prosperity of every state, especially those that have suffered colonialism, is to ensure that they prosper and rise above the vestiges of this brutal history which kept the continent backward. As much as this seems the ideal and reasonable path to follow, the reality of this vision for the Central African Republic has been a herculean task. With about 4.5 million inhabitants, this country consistently experiences widespread instability generated by its history of coups, countercoups, mutinies, authoritarianism, nepotism, violence, armed groups, and civil wars.[268] All these have, within the years, contributed to dispersing its population. Most of those who have fled the conflict in the Central African Republic have taken refuge in neighboring countries like Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Chad. This constantly fleeing population means that social and economic development prospects are significantly compromised. Citizens' participation in the process of state-building has been sacrificed on the altar of personal survival, owing to the volatile state of the country. Our understanding of the drivers of fragility in CAR cannot be complete without critically looking at the evolution of political leadership in the country. The following table presents the various leaders who have led CAR since independence.

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[268] Yapatake Kossele Thales Pacific, "Fragility of State in the Central African Republic: An Econometric Approach to Efficiency Understanding," *Global Business Review*, vol. 21, no. 3 (2020), p. 682, doi:10.1177/0972150918779291.

Table 5: Political Leadership in the Central African Republic 1960-2022

Political Leader	Method of Ascension to Power	Term of Office	Political Ideology	Political Affiliation
David Dacko	Appointed	14 August 1960-1 January 1966	African Nationalism Progressivism Presidential Dictatorship	The Movement for the Social Evolution of Black Africa (MESAN)
Jean-Bedel Bokassa	Coup d'état	1 January 1966-21 September 1979	African Nationalism Dictatorship	The Movement for the Social Evolution of Black African (MESAN)
David Dacko	Elected	21 September 1979-1 September 1981	African Nationalism Progressivism Presidential Dictatorship	The Central African Democratic Union (UDC)
Andre Kolingba	Coup d'état	1 September 1981-21 September 1985	Military Dictatorship	Military
		21 September 1985-21 November 1986	African Nationalism Social Democracy Republicanism	Central African Democratic Rally (RDC)
Ange Felix Patasse	Elected	22 October 1993-15 March 2003	Democratic Socialism Socialism Social Democracy	The Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People (MLPC)
Francois Bozize	Coup d'état	15 March 2003-24 March 2014	Dictatorship Authoritarianism	The National Convergence (Kwa Na Kwa) (KNK)
Michel Djotodia	Coup d'état	24 March 2013-10 January 2014	/	Seleka
Catherine Samba Panza	Elected (Transitional President)	23 January 2014-30 March 2016	/	Independent
Faustin-Archange Touadera	Elected	30 March 2016-Present (incumbent)	Social Democracy	The United Hearts Movement

According to World Data Atlas, the CAR in 2020 ranked as the sixth most fragile state in the world[269]. The Fund for Peace Fragile States Index scores CAR under the high alert category together with other countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Sudan, and Afghanistan[270]. The same report places CAR under the category of states whose long-term fragility has worsened from 2010-to 2020[271]. No single factor is accountable for such fragility. However, it is a combination of violence, corruption, the lack of social cohesion, weak political institutions, armed groups, militias, and repressions. As much as this ranking tells us where CAR is in terms of fragility, it equally gives us informed data and insight on how to sustainably address this conflict-ridden country's social, economic, and political woes.

Going by the Weberian concept of the state as a defined political structure having the monopoly of the use of force within its territorial confines, the state, once established, becomes the wielder of such power.[272] The command and use of legitimate physical force give states the mandate and ability to erect pillars of economic progress and political structures that favor the state's integral development. However, the path on which instability in the Central African Republic has prevailed paints a different picture from the Weberian state concept. The entrance of armed groups and warlords, which have frequently challenged the country's state apparatus, is evidence that the monopoly of violence as we know it within the Weberian context has not been fully applied within the state infrastructure and government of this troubled country. The rise of armed groups and their seeming success in laying contested claims on the state resources and control raises further questions about the sovereignty and sanctity of the notion of state in the Central African Republic. This conundrum has further been exacerbated because this country's political revolution has been characterized by a militarized history that has, in essence, accorded little or no place for the full expression of the social contract.[273] The

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[269] Knoema, "Fragile States Index," 2020, https://knoema.fr/atlas/topics/Classements-du-monde/Classements-du-monde/Fragile-states-index?baseRegion=CF , accessed on 1.06.2016.

[270] J.J. Messner, "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2020," Washington DC, 2020, p. 7, www.fundforpeace.org.

[271] cited, p. 11.

[272] Daron Acemoglu, James A. Robinson, Rafael J. Santos, "The Monopoly of Violence: Evidence from Colombia," *Journal of the European Economic Association*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2013), pp. 6–10, doi:10.1111/j.1542-4774.2012.01099.x.

[273] Fred D'Agostino, *Free Public Reason: Making It Up as We Go*, *American Political Science Review*, New York: Oxford Press, 1996, vol. 91, p. 23.

little importance attached to the social contract has given birth to dictatorships and unaccountable governments. Such scenarios have limited CAR citizens from the centers of power in Bangui and, by extension, robbed the successive governments of any real legitimacy. While a few political and administrative authorities enjoy government facilities and services in Bangui, most of the country is left to suffer and go through harsh social and economic conditions. This has caused the disadvantaged population to develop a mental image of center-periphery, where those in the cities are seen as privileged, and the rest of the population is left to languish in biting poverty coupled with an acute shortage of social amenities like roads, hospitals, and schools. With the inability of the central government to command the loyalty of its citizens, the incentives to take up arms against the state becomes a marketable idea and strategy of those seeking to contest those in the seat of power. Whether for greed or grievance, the trajectory of CAR's history is replete with opportunistic leaders, warlords, and armed groups, which have all contributed to bringing the country to its knees.

In line with the Weberian concept of the state, John Locke conceptualized and viewed the state not just as the principal holder of the instruments of violence. He viewed the state as a principal channel and guarantor of the fulfillment of the social contract in such a way that the general welfare of its citizens is assured.[274] States that come under the category of fragile states have not been able to perform their critical public administrative functions of ensuring stable political processes, economic development, and social cohesion to meet and sustain acceptable levels of stability and livelihoods.[275]According to world categorization, the Central African Republic is one of the most fragile streets and even within the African continent. The numerous coup d'état and civil wars that have rocked this country's history have deprived it of genuine legitimacy in the eyes of its population. Such instability has ushered in the undesirable elements of poverty, stagnating agricultural sector, low literacy rate, weak governments, violence, poor economic performance, and a general atmosphere of despair. This beautiful African nation seems to be on life support always.

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[274] Jennifer Milliken and Keith Krause, "State Failure, State Collapse, and State Reconstruction: Concepts, Lessons and Strategies," *Development and Change*, vol. 33, no. 5 (2002), pp. 753–74, doi:10.1111/1467-7660.t01-1-00247.

[275] Monika François and Inder Sud, "Promoting Stability and Development in Fragile and Failed States," *Development Policy Review*, vol. 24, no. 2 (2006), pp. 141–60, doi:10.1111/j.1467-7679.2006.00319.x.

1.1   The Flawed Legacy of French Colonialism

In line with the scramble for Africa and the balkanization of the continent, which emerged from the 1885 Berlin Conference, France officially laid claims and declared Ubangi-Shari (present-day CAR) as a French colony in 1894[276]. This was immediately followed by the granting of concessions to French-owned companies. These concessions included, among many other things, the right to engage in the exploitation of the resources of the territory. In return, these companies paid concession fees to the colonial government.[277] Both the French colonial administration and its concessionary companies were, to say the least brutal to the people of Ubangi-Shari. From forced and unpaid labor in colonial projects to harsh taxation policies, the people became nothing but tools in the hands of their colonial masters. The exploitation of natural resources to feed the demands of the colonial administration took precedence over the value of human life and the welfare of the people of Ubangi-Shari.

In reaction to the externally induced colonial rule and domination, resistance movements began emerging, culminating in the Congo Wara War.[278] This war was an uprising against the forced recruitment of labor and a taxation system that did not benefit the people of Ubangi-Shari. Many of those who championed this resistance came from the Gbaya tribe.[279] It will be noted that Francois Bozize was a former president of CAR and former coup leader of Gbaya ethnic extraction. The resistance movements that challenged French colonial rule in Ubangi-Shari are not to say that the French did nothing worthwhile for the continent. The colonial administration-built schools, railroads, clinics, and other social amenities. This notwithstanding, the era of French colonialism in Ubangi-Shari was marked by the gross exploitation of human and material resources. The brutality that accompanied the day-to-day running of the colonial state brought little solace to the plight of the colonized. The legacy of violence and the failure of the colonial administration to bring about inclusive development was subsequently inherited by the independent

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[276] Clifford J. Mugnier, "Central African Republic," *Grids and Datums*, 2012, p. 192, http://www.asprs.org/a/resources/grids/03-2012-Central-African-Republic.pdf.
[277] Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, London: Red Globe Press, 2019, pp. 394–408.
[278] Thomas O'Toole, "The 1928-1931 Gbaya Insurrection in Ubangui-Shari : Messianic Movement or Village Self- Defense ?," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2 (2018), pp. 329–44.
[279] William J . Samarin, "The Gbeya Language : Grammar, Texts, and Vocabularies.," *Linguistic Society of America*, vol. 44, no. 2 (1968), pp. 420–23.

indigenous leaders of the Central African Republic.[280] The instability in this country as experienced from its post-independence years to today is not unconnected with its colonial history.

Like all other French colonies, Frances's colonial policy in Ubangi-Shari was primarily administered through direct rule, unlike the British, who implemented an indirect rule.[281] The direct rule meant that the colonial masters maintained a highly supervised and central means of administration which gave the indigents little opportunity into how the colonial administrative machinery functioned.[282] Consequently, at independence, the French bequeathed the nation of CAR to an indigenous leadership that was unprepared and had not mastered the intricacies and management that come with the burden of statecraft. The sovereignty and sanctity of the state were not ingrained in the psyche of the Central Africans who took control after independence, hence the numerous coups and countercoups.

France intrinsically saw Ubangi Shari as an extended province of the grand French empire. To this end, their policy of assimilation was geared towards making Africans in CAR become French men overseas. Assimilation was, therefore, a tool through which the Africans were to be accustomed to French culture, language, lifestyle, and politics.[283] Unfortunately, no matter how well-intentioned this policy was, it failed to have a trickledown effect on the local African population. Those who eventually got assimilated were those who had the privilege to go to school and would later become engaged in local politics. The assimilated African elites saw the lavish lifestyle and aristocratic privileges that their colonial masters enjoyed. Upon assuming power at independence, they replicated the same by erecting flamboyant palaces for themselves and lived lavishly to the chagrin of their population.[284] The chasm created by this class separation is accountable for why armed rebellions have become the norm instead of the exception in

[280] Eline Rosenhart, "Central African Republic: Between France and Russia," *Ifriqiya*, vol. 4, no. 10 (2019), pp. 1–5.

[281] William Miles, *Hausaland Divided: Colonialism and Independence in Nigeria and Niger*, *New York*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

[282] Michael Crowder, "The White Chiefs of Tropical Africa," *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960*, ed. by Peter Duignan and L. H. Gann, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971, pp. 320–50.

[283] Raymond F. Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914*, New York: University of Nebraska Press, 1961.

[284] William G. Moseley, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on African Issues*, New York: McGraw Hill, 2007, p. 68.

CAR today. The neglected parts of the country tend to see those in Bangui as the blessed and privileged few. This view has reinforced a hostile atmosphere off 'center-periphery' where those at the periphery continuously strive to enter the center of power through all means, including armed violence. The debate of continuity or change is thus evoked in our understanding of a country that has perpetually known violence since its inception as an independent state.

On 13 August 1960, the CAR achieved its independence from France.[285] Independence did not, however, come with immunity from French dominance in the affairs of its former colony. The pre-independence accords and agreements that France signed with the new leaders of the independent states tied the two countries together. Most of the accords and agreements France signed with CAR and other African countries are shrouded in secrecy and hardly ever made known to the population of these countries. These accords, however, keep the former French colonies to be heavily reliant on their former colonizer militarily, politically, economically, and technologically.[286] France continues to be the choice destination of imports for CAR. The exploitation of natural resources like gold, diamond, and uranium continues to be exploited by France under these accords at prices far lesser than what obtains in the international market.[287] Such neo-colonialist economic practices have continued to stagnate the economy of this country which ranks among the 'wretched of the earth' in the community of sovereign nations despite the wealth of its natural resources. CAR's political and economic growth is not contingent upon its population's local realities and challenges but upon the technocratic directives dished out by France. While many CAR leaders recognize the moral depravity and injustice the French neo-colonial machinery brings to their people, they are equally aware that their collaboration with their erstwhile colonizers only assures their continuous stay in power.

The Central African Republic has often been tagged as the hub of instability in the African continent after it attained independence. This creates a false picture of pre-independence

[285] Thomas O ' Toole, "Made in France ": The Second Central African Republic," *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society*, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1982, vol. 6, p. 136.

[286] Guy Martin, "The Historical, Economic, and Political Bases of France's African Policy," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2018), pp. 189–208.

[287] Douglas A. Yates, "Paradoxes of Predation in Francophone Africa," *International Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 47, no. 2 (2018), pp. 130–50, doi:10.1080/08911916.2018.1497505.

stability and, in some ways, exonerates France from the seeds of discord and strife, which its colonial mandate unraveled. Post-independence violence and instability in CAR today can only be fully understood within the framework of the colonial legacy it inherited from France, combined with other internal realities of the country.

After granting independence to Central Africa in 1960, France has still, to date, as in the past, continued to intervene militarily in this country.[288] France has continued to justify such intervention to secure its strategic interests in the country. Such strategic interest transcends economic interests to maintaining the political status quo or overthrowing a leader. This explains why France has always had prior knowledge or sanctioned every coup that has brought about a change of government in the Central African Republic.[289] A classic example in point is the overthrowing of Jean Bedel Bokassa to reinstate David Dacko. The French intervention in Central Africa has always been a mixed blessing. In as much as it provided a semblance of stability to the local population, it did not altogether calm down dissenting voices. The disarmament of the Seleka rebels was seen as impartial to the path of peace as French troops did not equally disarm the Anti-balaka in the same way. This only served to propel continuous violence and instability in CAR.

1.2   Power Struggle and Coups

The Central African Republic as a nation emerged out of the colonial experiment of France in Africa. On many levels, the present sorry state of this country cannot be divorced entirely from its colonial experience, which was marked by dissents, forced labor, draconian taxation policies, repression, and resistance. The above is a pointer to understanding the present dynamics of instability in the country because the post-colonial leaders who were minted to handle the affairs of this country have to the dismay of many, transformed the country into a battleground of guns and blood.

From 1960 when the country first gained its independence, almost every president who came to power did so with the barrel of a gun through military coups, mutinies, and

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[288] Kiven James Kewir, "Rethinking Regional Security in Central Africa: The Case of the Central African Republic," *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2 (2020), pp. 115–33, doi:10.1080/18186874.2019.1671774.

[289] Andreas Mehler, "Why Security Forces Do Not Deliver Security: Evidence from Liberia and the Central African Republic," *Armed Forces and Society*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2012), pp. 49–69, doi:10.1177/0095327X10390468.

violence. In more than 50 decades after independence, CAR has witnessed only two episodes of democratic transfer of power. The only democratically elected leaders include Ange Felix Patasse (1993-2003) and Faustin Archange Touadera (2016-present). The other non-military coup leader who came to power peacefully was Catherine Samba Panza, a career lawyer and entrepreneur who became transition president of CAR from 2014- to 2016 and eventually organized elections that brought Touadera into office. The struggle to grab power by hook or crook is one of the principal reasons this resource-rich country has been plundered and pillaged by the vagaries of war. The stability and development of this country have often been sacrificed on the altar of instability and greed. Every coup plotter who later became president began by coming in with messianic promises and policies to save the people. Once in power, the circle tends to repeat itself from authoritarianism, corruption, mismanagement, and neglect.

The final stages of decolonization culminated with the French transferring the leadership of Ubangi Shari (CAR) to indigenous leadership. This began with Barthelemy Boganda, who has been described as the father of the Central African Republic. On 10 November 1946, Boganda, who was a priest by formation, became the first Central African to represent the interests of his territory and country in the French National Assembly.[290] His exposure in France and the simplicity of livelihood he saw there prompted him to begin agitating against the injustices and abuses of the colonial system. That did not endear him too much to the French. However, he proceeded to form the Movement for the Social Evolution of Black Africa (MESAN)[291]. He used MESAN as a political platform to clamor for an end to racism and forced labor. It was also a platform to agitate for better working conditions for those working in the colonial plantations. The dismantling of French colonial rule in Equatorial Africa in 1957 and his subsequent winning of local elections ushered him in as the first Prime Minister of Ubangi Shari. He later renamed the country the Central African Republic.[292] Boganda died on 29 March

[290] Pierre Kalck, *Historical Dictionary of the Central African Republic*, United States of America: Library of Congress, 1980, p. 17.

[291] Thomas O ' Toole, "Made in France ": The Second Central African Republic," p. 137.

[292] Amakievi Gabriel, "A Historical Analysis of Foreign and African Interventions in the Central African Republic ' s Civil War :2004-2008," *Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol. 1, no. 4 (2020), pp. 60–66.

1959 in an air crash that left many suspicious about the circumstances that led to the end of such a dedicated statesman.

Upon the demise of Boganda, David Dacko took over the country's leadership. In 1960, the Central African Republic became independent, with Dacko as the first president.[293] In becoming president, Dacko equally took over the leadership of MESAN and, in an authoritarian style, transformed CAR into a single-party state in 1962[294]. This paid off because the 1964 elections witnessed him as the sole candidate for president. He was eventually re-elected into office. Under his leadership, CAR entered into bilateral trade and defense agreements with France. Foreign relations were equally strengthened between CAR and France. These arrangements brought enormous French support for the Dacko regime. In a bit to diversify the economic potential of CAR, Dacko fostered economic ties with China. This move was against the good pleasure of the French, who interpreted Chinese engagement in CAR as a threat to French economic and strategic interests. Dacko's regime witnessed gross neglect of the Muslim-dominated northern part of the country. In contrast, the Christian majority south flourished in infrastructure and development.[295] This disparity and neglect were the first cracks on the wall, signifying that all was not well within CAR. For the most part, most of the southerners and leaders that managed the country did not consider the northerners as indigenous Central Africans. The northerners were somewhat looked upon as migrant nomad settlers from neighboring countries to settle in the northern part of CAR. These continuous years of neglect of the northern region formed the dissent, which later erupted into the Seleka coup, which ousted Bozize from power.

On 31 December 1965, Jean Bedell Bokassa, the chief of staff to David Dacko, orchestrated a coup d'état, overthrew Dacko's government, and seized power.[296] After seizing power and proclaiming himself president, Bokassa maintained MESAN as the only national party, thus continuing with the single-party legacy of David Dacko. Political misrule, economic mismanagement, corruption, repression, and clientelism became

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[293] Paul Melly, "Central African Republic: Uncertain Prospects," Geneva, 2002, pp. 2–3.
[294] Timothy Stapleton, "Central African Republic: Coups, Mutinies, and Civil War," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 2019, pp. 3–6, doi:10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1802.
[295] Jaqueline Woodfork, *Culture and Customs of the Central African Republic*, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2006, pp. 15–17.
[296] Thomas O ' Toole, "Made in France ": The Second Central African Republic," pp. 139–42.

defining features of Bokassa's regime. He ruled CAR with an iron fist rooted in dictatorship and authoritarianism.[297] To consolidate his power after the coup, he suspended the constitution. The dissolution of the National Assembly followed this. With constitutional and parliamentary safeguards gone, Bokassa had a free hand to exert his military dictatorship upon the Central Africans.

In the early days of his regime, the French hesitancy to recognize him as the leader of CAR did not halt him from running the country as his private estate. He, however, made a strategic move to send the Chinese away from CAR.[298] This was a reassurance to France that Bokassa could secure their interest. It was mainly his craftiness to maneuver the French that prompted the recognition of his administration by Charles De Gaulle. This recognition paved the way for serious trade and diplomatic relations. The warm ties between Bangui and Paris proved beneficial to Bokassa, as French troops poured into the country to ensure his safety and security.

After taking power through a military coup, Bokassa's regime was not immune to coup attempts. Several attempts to seize power from him became a standard feature during his reign.[299] The whole 1970s was mainly a very precarious one for him. As these coup attempts intensified, he was also encumbered with the fragile task of holding up a national army that was all too divided along ethnic, discriminatory, and interest lines[300] For a man who raised himself to the rank of general of armed forces in 1971 and president for life in 1972, the accumulation of accolades for Bokassa was his ambition to show how invincible, powerful, and unconquerable a leader he had become.

By the close of 1977, he had become too obsessed with the reign of Napoleon that he decided to self-coronate himself as emperor. He went further to change the country's name from the Central African Republic to the Central African Empire.[301] His coronation is estimated to have cost around$110 million. This was suicidal to a country's economy that was still striving to find its place within the international capital market.[302] Very many

[297] Melly, "Central African Republic: Uncertain Prospects," p. 5.
[298] Thomas O ' Toole, "Made in France ": The Second Central African Republic," p. 141.
[299] Kalck, *Historical Dictionary of the Central African Republic*, p. 18.
[300] Pierre Kalck, *Historical Dictionary of the Central African Republic.*, 3rd ed., Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005.
[301] Stapleton, "Central African Republic: Coups, Mutinies, and Civil War," p. 5.
[302] John H. Crabb, "The Coronation of Emperor Bokassa," vol. 25, no. 3 (1978), pp. 25–44.

scholars and commentators on the Central African Republic have noted in their study that Bokassa enjoyed warm relations with French President Giscard D'Estaing. Bokassa enjoyed the friendship and support of D'Estaing in every way possible. He ensured that French companies involved in the mining sector and other exploitative ventures of CAR's resources got their licenses and protection to operate.

Bokassa used diamond gifts and hunting games to cement his relationship with D'Estaing.[303] Bokassa's rapport with the French crumbled because of his inability to understand that power equally required restraint and moderation, no matter how strong and secure it may be. His brutality and regime excesses had become too normal for him and his cronies to the extent that nothing was off-limits. The same thing that had guaranteed him the lavish lifestyle and assurance to stay in power became his waterloo in 1979. In April of that year, schoolchildren protested in CAR because they were agitating against a regime policy to buy expensive uniforms with Bokassa's effigy. Bokassa had shares in the said company that printed the school uniforms to make matters worse. It was not just an issue of material, the effigy, or his interest, but the economic situation in CAR could not permit parents to afford uniforms for their children at such exorbitant rates as had been set by the regime.

In reaction to the protests, regime forces massacred 100 school children. Initially, France tried to downplay the matter. However, investigations and reports that Amnesty International later published from the crisis and the culpability of Bokassa's security forces in the face of such grief human rights abuse forced the French to react.[304] The French reaction to the crisis as the former colonial power did not come as a solidarity move to decry the massacre of children. Instead, it was hinged on preserving their image, which international pressure and criticisms from rights organizations were already damaging. Practical and collaborative as Bokassa had been, French interest and image were far more significant concerns than maintaining support for an overzealous dictator

[303] Valéry Giscard D'Estaing, *Power and Life*, Paris: The Pocket Book, 2004, p. 615.
[304] Nathaniel K. Powell, "The Decline and Fall of the Central African Empire," *France's Wars in Chad: Military Intervention and Decolonization in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 2020, pp. 225–63.

somewhere in the backwaters of Africa. The French thus decided that it was time for Bokassa to leave office.

In a characteristic show of French intervention and dominance in CAR, they planned and masterminded a coup and ousted Bokassa on 20 September 1979[305]. This was an operation code-named Operation Barracuda orchestrated by 130 French elite forces in alliance with other French paratroopers numbered around 600. After capturing the airport in Bangui and outmaneuvering CAR's security forces, they moved forward to reinstate David Dacko as president once more[306]. The choice of David Dacko was not mainly because he was the best but because the French needed someone they could trust and maneuver to do their bidding. After years of exile in France and the Ivory Coast, Bokassa returned to CAR in 1986. His return was followed by reopening the cases against him, which included cannibalism and murder. Initially, he was sentenced to death. However, the sentence was subsequently scaled down to 20 years in incarceration.[307]

The French continued their support for Dacko even after the ashes of the coup had settled. Dacko's administration was nevertheless weak, corrupt, and gross mismanagement prevailed. He equally surrounded himself with presidential guards drawn mainly from his ethnic group. The malfunctioning of Dacko's second administration and the country's economic problems generated a general atmosphere of discontent. Consequently, in September 1981, General Andre Kolingba, Dacko's chief of staff, staged a military coup against his boss and later proclaimed himself president.[308] He ruled as president from 1981-to 1993. Like his predecessors Dacko and Bokassa, Kolingba hailed from the southern part of the country, which represented the most developed and vibrant section of the country for all terms and purposes. From Bangui and beyond, the southern front was well structured, with streetlights, developmental projects, and infrastructure sprung up like mushrooms. The prosperity of the south was in contrast with the northern part of the country, which suffered neglect and abandonment by the successive governments that ruled CAR before Kolingba. Kolingba himself hailed from the Yakoma ethnic

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[305] Gabriel, "A Historical Analysis of Foreign and African Interventions in Central African Republic ' s Civil War :2004-2008," p. 60.
[306] Melly, "Central African Republic: Uncertain Prospects," pp. 5–42.
[307] Kalck, *Historical Dictionary of the Central African Republic.*
[308] Patrick Berg, *The Dynamics of Conflict in the Tri-Border Region of the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic*, Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2008.

extraction.[309] In the arrangement and set up of his military structure of the country, more than 70% of the national army was drawn from his Yakoma tribe. The military dictatorship, authoritarian rule, and corruption that accompanied Kolingba's rule generated dissent and led to a few coups attempts to oust him from power. Kolingba's administration worked hard to improve the economic and agricultural sectors of the country. He devoted tremendous support to increasing the production of palm oil and sugar to diversify the economy.

The 1990s came with increased mobilization and evolvement of the once authoritarian single-party regimes in Africa into multiparty politics.[310] The wave of multiparty politics swept across Africa like a wildfire to the dimension that autocratic regimes which were adamant about this change found it hard to survive. Enormous pressures from international aid and donor agencies and mass political mobilizations by pressure groups within African states left the autocratic rulers with little choice but to give in to the democratic flow. The first multiparty elections in the Central African Republic took place in 1993. During the elections, Ange Felix Patasse, a former Prime Minister under Bokassa's regime and leader of the Central African People's Liberation Movement (MLPC) defeated Andre Kolingba and became the first-ever democratically elected president of CAR[311]. Kolingba conceded defeat and peacefully handed power over to Patasse. This was a milestone event in CAR's history since it achieved independence in 1960.

Though Patasse's regime kicked off with stable economic and financial development, the political atmosphere in which he had been groomed did not give him the assurances of a steady stay in power. To cushion himself from the outburst of coups, he began playing the ethnic card just like the other presidents before. His presidential guard was restructured to constitute mainly soldiers from his own ethnic group Kaba[312]. The general

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[309] Alain Foka, "Les Archives d'Afrique: Portrait de Jean-Bedel Bokassa et de David Dacko," *Radio France Internationale*, 2009, http://www.rfi.fr/radiofr/emissions/072/archives_9.asp.

[310] Axel Hadenius, "From One-Party Rule to Multipartism in Africa," *African Development and Public Policy*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994, pp. 231–35, doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-23355-7_9 pg 231-235.

[311] Gabriel, "A Historical Analysis of Foreign and African Interventions in the Central African Republic ' s Civil War :2004-2008," pp. 59–67.

[312] and Damiano Sguaitamatti Jennifer Giroux, David Lanz, "The Tormented Triangle : The Regionalisation of Conflict in Sudan, Chad and The Central African Republic," London, 2009, p. 5.

army, made up primarily of Kolingba's Yakoma ethnic group soldiers, was neglected and poorly treated. In contrast, the presidential guard was treated with respect and privileges that appeared somewhat superior to the rest of the army. The creation of such ethnic division within the *Force Armees Centrafricaine* (FACA) set the bases of grievances within the army, culminating in a series of mutinies between 1996-and 1997. In the face of these bloody and violent mutinies, the French pressured Patasse to enter negotiations with the dissenting soldiers. This led to the creation of *Mission Interafricaine de Surveillance de Accords de Bangui* (MISAB)[313]. MISAB was a French African-led peacekeeping mission of 1400 troops whose objective was to prevent the escalation of hostilities between forces loyal to Patasse and the rest of the mutinous army. With visible stability in sight, the French withdrew their troops and handed over the peace operations to the United Nations. The *Mission de Nations Unies pour la Centrafricaine* (MINURCA) replaced MISAB and came to light in 1998[314].

The incessant mutinies and coup attempt to kill Patasse in 2001 at his residence clearly show that the country's socio-economic and political situation had deteriorated significantly. These events heightened Patasse's insecurity. To stem the tide, he reached out to Muammar Gadhafi of Libya, who sent 100 highly sophisticated troops to provide Patasse with the much-needed security. Patasse equally sought and got help from Jean Pierre Bemba, a rebel leader in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Bemba commanded the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC)[315]. The MLC leader sent close to 200 soldiers to provide military assistance to Patasse.

Despite the many security safeguards that Patasse sought and got internally and externally, this did not stop the military attempts at overthrowing him. The democratic transition that began with Patasse was a chaotic experiment that brought an uncertain political environment that made any meaningful attempts at democratizing the country fail before it ever started. Amid the chaos and violence challenging Patasse's regime,

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[313] Berg, *The Dynamics of Conflict in the Tri-Border Region of the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic*, p. 21.

[314] Berg, *The Dynamics of Conflict in the Tri-Border Region of the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic*.

[315] International Crisis Group, "Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State," 2007, https://www.crisisgroup.org/fr/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/296-reduire-les-tensions-electorales-en-republique-centrafricaine.

Francois Bozize staged a coup against the former and ousted him from power in 2003. Bozize was later overthrown through a coup d'état led by Michelle Djotodia in 2013. Djotodia ruled from 2013-to 2014, and later, a transitional government led by Catherine Samba Panza, the first female president of CAR, came into office. The former managed the transition and oversaw the elections, which ushered in Faustin Archange Touadera in 2016.

The instability and conflicts which have ravished CAR are intrinsically linked to the coups and countercoups fueled by its leaders through channels of clientelism and patronage politics. This country's vicious cycle of violence evokes a bleak picture of a deep-rooted leadership crisis. The atmosphere of uncertainty that CAR has become accustomed to forces one to take a deeper look into how ethnicity and power have interacted and how such forces have shaped elite politics in the country.

A closer examination of the leadership that has animated the strife in this country shows that almost every ruler who had governed this landlocked country somehow had connections with each other. After taking office, David Dacko maintained that he was a relative of Boganda. Jean Bedel Bokassa served as chief of staff in the administration of David Dacko. Bozize himself was briefly a minister of defense under Dacko. Ange Felix Patasse was prime minister in Bokassa's regime.[316] Andre Kolingba is noted to have served as an advisor to the defense ministry and ambassador to Canada and Germany under Bokassa. Michelle Djotodia, who led the coup to overthrow Bozize, was a career diplomat in the regime of Felix Patasse. He served as CAR's diploma to Sudan. Meanwhile, the present democratically elected president of CAR, Faustin Archange Touadera, was prime minister during the regime of Bozize.

The above leadership mapping gives us a detailed and complicated picture. However, it provides one with a rich insight into conflict mapping analysis in CAR and why the country has been trapped in so much instability. The historical leadership map of this country reviews a pattern of political power struggle, which raises the question of continuity or change.

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[316] Gino Vlavonou, "An Uncertain Transition: Security, Violence, and Neopatrimonialism in the Central African Republic," *Revue Tiers Monde*, vol. 228, no. 4 (2016), pp. 123–42, doi:10.3917/rtm.228.0121.

1.3   Economic Mismanagement and Resource Curse

The Central African Republic is a country endowed with an abundance of rich mineral and natural resources. Despite the abundance of such resources as gold, diamond, uranium, oil, coffee, and cocoa, most of the country's population lives in abject poverty.[317] Poor economic governance, corruption, and mismanagement of these resources have transformed what was meant to be a blessing into a curse. The successive leaders of the country, from Dacko to present-day Touadera, have either had a fragile economy, or the state's resources have been marketed, and the proceeds went directly to their accounts.

As of 1965, 75% of CAR's export value came from diamonds. Nevertheless, corruption ruined the prosperity of this vital sector. The emergence of armed groups like the Seleka and Anti Balaka in 2013 only worsened an already bad situation. In as much as these groups, as well as other armed groups, used rebellion and violence as a tool to get their grievances addressed, the fact remains that the already weak economy of the country was translated into a war economy as these groups shielded their agreed under the umbrella of grievance and began taking over resource-rich communities to exploit their natural resources. With state and non-state actors competing over the control and governance of natural resources, the state's struggling economy transformed into a war economy, with each belligerent relying on a zero-sum strategy. This meant that revenue generation for the state treasury became a farfetched reality. The lack of revenue generation meant that the government could not back up its economic development agenda with the limited funds at its disposal. The constant violence and hostility in the country deprived the nation of attracting direct foreign investments.

With the economy in dire straits because of budgetary deficits, regular salary payments are not something civil servants in CAR are accustomed to. There have always been delays for months before salaries are paid. This has caused apathy towards the state apparatus, led to hostilities towards state institutions, and culminated in intense political instability. A perfect example is the 2000-2001 crisis, where a strike action to claim

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[317] Souleymane Coulibaly et al., "Central African Republic Economic Update: Breaking the Cycle of Conflict," Washington, DC, 2018, vol. 1, pp. 17–25, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/444491528747992733/Central-African-Republic-economic-update-breaking-the-cycle-of-conflict-and-instability.

almost 30 months of unpaid salaries almost crippled the Patasse regime.[318] It goes, therefore, without saying that the economic malaise of CAR comes with the attendant political violence, which in turn translates into the social disintegration of the country. To reverse the economic inertia, Patasse's government engaged with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) to facilitate the privatization of some state corporations as a condition sine qua non for economic growth.[319]

Corruption and the misappropriation of public funds have further deteriorated the economic situation of CAR. During Bozize's regime, a large percentage of the proceeds from export commodities like diamonds and gold was not lodged in the state treasury but private bank accounts of the president and those of his cronies. They managed the transaction and sale of these resources on behalf of the state.[320] The exploitation of diamonds accounts for more than half of the country's export revenue.

The Central African Republic today ranks among the poorest countries in the world. The truncated political history of this country is inherently tied to the sorry state of its economy. The economy of any country is the backbone of its development strides. CAR's economy has continuously seen protracted periods of decline and isolated moments of growth, only to relapse again. The authoritarian regimes of David Dacko, Jean Bokassa, and Andre Kolingba, who ruled from 1960 to 1990, did not bring about the much-needed economic growth vital for the independent state's development. During Kolingba's term in office, the mismanagement of state institutions, wanton corruption, and the fall in the prices of commodities on the world market aggravated this situation as the economy took a downward turn. The early 1990s saw part of this regime introducing some level of economic development and democratic progress. However, the military animated coups and mutinies of 1996 and 1997 reversed the democratic and economic gains of Patasse's regime. Such devastating levels of financial mismanagement, administrative irresponsibility, and the absence of suitable governance mechanisms led many foreign investors to withdraw their capital and shut down oppressions in CAR. This dealt a heavy

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[318] Francis Wiafe Amoako, *The World Series Today: Africa 2019-2020*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Inc, 2019, p. 166.

[319] Melly, "Central African Republic: Uncertain Prospects."

[320] Conciliation Resources, "Analysis of Conflict and Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic," 2015, https://www.c-r.org/resources/analysis-conflict-and-peacebuilding-central-african-republic.

blow to the general welfare of the economy, as jobs were lost together with the tax revenues from these corporations.

The government of CAR presently controls only about 45% of the entire territory. The rest of the country remains divided under rebel control. The absence of government control in such areas has given the rebel groups like Seleka or ex-Seleka, Anti-balaka, and other armed groups the leeway to control resource-rich areas. The mining of gold has been taken over by elements of the Anti-Balaka in places like Boassangoa, Mbres, and Amada Gaza. They have equally maintained control over mines in Sibut and Yaloke[321]. These armed groups have created a parallel state structure where they have implemented their system of taxation and revenue collection from the local population. The war economy they have created enables them to exploit these gold and diamond mines, sell them illicitly, and buy weapons for the continuance of the conflict. This illicit exploitation and sale of gold, diamonds, and other resources cost CAR's economy much revenue that was supposed to be lodged in its treasury. By 2014 CAR's economy saw a 1.01% increase in growth rate, even though agricultural activity, which is a huge determinant of the country's GDP, remained stagnated because of violence and insecurity that had caused the population to be displaced.

1.4   *Social Inequalities and Economic Tensions*

Social inequalities and ethnoreligious tensions are two interlinked factors that reinforce and explain why the Central African Republic is in perpetual instability. Since independence, every leader who led CAR has done so predominantly with the ethnic card. Every leader favored his ethnic group to the disadvantage of other ethnic groups in the country. This sort of discrimination matured into the neglect of other communities or ethnic areas within the country. Such communities were always deprived of social amenities. This inequality triggered by ethnic considerations sent out the wrong signals. It thus became abundantly clear that the control and distribution of the state's resources were not contingent on the rules of law and equity but on whose tribal man was in the seat of state power. This explains why the country has continued to suffer instability from

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[321] International Peace Information Service, "Central African Republic: A Conflict Mapping," Antwerp, 2018, pp. 27–40, http://ipisresearch.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/1809-CAR-conflict-mapping_web.pdf.

coups. From 1965-to 2012, social inequality and ethnoreligious disparities prevailed but were somewhat covert and only expressed under such phrases as 'North and South' 'Centre-Periphery,' 'Christians and Muslims'. By two 2012- 2013, the Seleka coup against Francois Bozize resurrected the demons of ethnoreligious tensions, as Muslims and Christians alike took to arms to outdo each other. This plunged the country into sectarian violence that it is still recovering from.

The Central African Republic is an ethnically diverse country. With 4,906,661 million people, the near distribution of resources and social amenities to the groups that make up this country is still far from reality.[322] Ethnic groups like the Bayas make up 33%, while the Bandas account for 27%, and the Manja's, the third-largest ethnic group, make up 13% of the population. Other ethnic groups like the Saras constitute 10%, while the Mbomus and Mbakas make up 7% and 4%, respectively. The Yakomas constitute 4%, and other ethnic groups make up 2%[323]. Despite having such a rich, ethnically diverse society, CAR still benefits from what such diversity brings. Note should, however, be taken that ethnic diversity on its own is not a problem as many other studies on African conflicts have posited. The crux of the issue is when such ethnic diversity becomes politicized by the power-seeking elite.

Politicians have repeatedly used the politicization of ethnic and religious sentiments in CAR as a ploy to secure their continuous stay in power. Such tendencies have bred nothing but violence and antagonism in the country. When Andre Kolingba ousted Bokassa through a coup and came to power in 1981, he restructured the national military and civil service by positioning those of the Yakoma ethnic group where he hailed from to occupy strategic positions.[324] The Yakoma from the South made up about 5%, but their population in the military was well over 70%. The same pattern was followed by his successor Ange Felix Patasse a northerner from the Sara Kaba ethnic group, predominantly Muslim. Patasse's distrust for the Yakoma-dominated military caused him

[322] Worldometers, "Central African Republic Population," 2021, https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/central-african-republic-population/.

[323] Dani Belo, Asha Siad, Micah Sienna, "Central African Republic Assessment Report," 2017.

[324] Abdurrahim Siradag, "Explaining the Conflict in the Central African Republic: Causes and Dynamics," *Epiphany*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2016), pp. 86–88, doi:10.21533/epiphany.v9i3.246.

to establish an elite presidential guard of armies from his ethnic group.[325] Under Patasse's regime, the presidential guards were privileged over the rest of the army. They were well paid and had privileges that the regular army did not have. The irregular payment of salaries for the general army and poor treatment they suffered resulted in the 1996- 1997 military mutiny staged against Patasse's regime.

The ethnicization of state institutions continued with Francois Bozize, who came to power in 2003 after ousting Patasse in a military coup. Bozize hailed from the Baya tribe, which by statistics, is the largest ethnic group in capital CAR, constituting about 33- 34% of the entire population. Like his predecessors, Bozize filled the civil service and military with people from the Baya ethnic extraction. During his regime, nepotism, clientelism, and patronage networks were standard features and defining characteristics of his time in office.[326] With such an ethnocentric administration in place, the Muslim-dominated northeastern part of the country was neglected, with no real development projects or social amenities. Schools and health facilities in that part of the country received little provision for boosting their viability.[327] Education and other basic social amenities were not prioritized. The recruitment of fighters became an easy possibility once the Seleka picked up arms against the Bozize regime in 2012[328]. Then neglect of the northeastern area and the absence of government presence made it a hub of rebel activity as rebel groups from neighboring countries like Chad and Sudan went in and out of the area without any restrictions. The absence of government control gave rise to rival state structures, which perpetuated inequality and discrimination against ordinary citizens in achieving their gains.

The northeastern question and neglect of this part of CAR and other regions raise many questions about why the country has continued to remain unstable. Those in Bangui-the political capital, are regarded as the fortunate citizens of the country who are blessed to enjoy electricity, running water, fairly good communication networks, good schools for

[325] Robert Kłosowicz, "Central African Republic: Portrait of a Collapsed State after the Last Rebellion," *Politeja*, vol. 13, no. 42 (2016), pp. 37–38, doi:10.12797/politeja.13.2016.42.04.
[326] Remofiloe Lobakeng, "Central African Republic's Coup D 'é Tat : Underlying Causes and the Resulting Future Prospects for the State," *Global Insight*, no. 127 (2016), pp. 2–5.
[327] Gabriella Ingerstad, "Central African Republic – Trapped in a Cycle of Violence? Causes, Conflict Dynamics and Prospects for Peace." *Swedish Defence Research Agency*, no. May (2014), pp. 59–70.
[328] Mesfin Gebremichael et al., "Central African Republic (CAR) Conflict Insight," Addis Ababa, 2019, pp. 1–13.

their children, and medical facilities that work. On the contrary, the northern part of the country cannot boast of such facilities not to talk of international development projects. A huge chunk of such projects gets to be concentrated in the southern part of the country from Bangui and neighboring communities close to the capital.

Apart from Bangui and other administrative districts like Lobaye, Ombella, and Bassa-Kotto, which enjoy a good electricity supply, the rest of the country struggles with little access to this vital resource that is needed for industry and business. This has pushed industrialists and small businesses to rely upon generators to power their economic activities.[329] This situation is aggravated by the poor road network that links parts of the country and its external borders. Road infrastructure in CAR is largely underdeveloped. The ones that have been constructed rarely receive adequate maintenance. This makes matters worse for those in the remote areas who must rely on earth roots to transport their goods to the main cities for sale.[330] During the rainy season, these roads become unpassable, thus causing the farmers to sell their agricultural produce very cheaply because go-betweens who can afford strong vehicles access these farmers and buy at meager prices. The state's inability or the unwillingness of its leaders to provide essential services to its people equitably and unjustly has led to ethnic and class grievances, which have laid the foundations for the formation of rebel groups. When the Seleka group launched their attack in 2012 to overthrow Bozize, he called on Christians to revolt against the Muslim Seleka that was on the verge of overthrowing him. This opened the floodgates of sectarianism in CAR and illustrated how political elites are ready to manipulate ethnoreligious identity to harness political capital.

1.5   A Hostile Neighborhood

The conflict and instability in capital CAR are inherently linked to the hostile geographical location in which it finds itself. The CAR is surrounded by countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Sudan, and Cameroon. The first three have consistently been in deadly conflict like CAR over the years, and very recently, Cameroon

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[329] World Bank, "Central African Republic Priorities for Ending Poverty and Boosting Shared Prosperity," 2019, pp. 30–37.
[330] Coulibaly et al., "Central African Republic Economic Update: Breaking the Cycle of Conflict," vol. 1, pp. 3–20.

has joined the bandwagon of instability.[331] Conflicts in these countries have spilled over into CAR to propel violence and insecurity. This situation has even been made worse by CAR's neglect of its border territories. The absence of government control, especially in the northeastern areas like Vakaga, Bamingui-Bangoran, and Haute Koto, gave rebel groups in Chad and Sudan the impetus to violate the territorial integrity of CAR.[332] The security and rebel forces of CAR, Sudan, and Chad alike have carried out the mutual violation of territorial boundaries.[333] The porousness of CAR's borders has made it possible for small arms and light weapons to come into the country easily from other neighboring states.[334]. The unhindered inflow of these weapons into the hands of rebel groups explains why the cycle of violence in CAR never seems to stop.

Almost all of CAR's presidents have had to rely on regional security forces or neighboring rebel alliances to secure their stay in power. In the face of a failed 2001 coup by Andre Kolingba to seize power, Patasse sought and got military assistance from Congolese warlord Jean Pierre Bemba.[335] Through the military wing of Bemba's movement for the liberation of Congo, more than 200 of his fighters entered CAR to protect the regime of Patasse from falling into rebel hands. Patasse's attempt at arresting his chief of staff, Bozize, whom he had suspected of foul play, failed. Bozize later ran away into Chad.

While in Chad, Bozize enjoyed the protection of Chadian president Idris Debby. From Chad, Bozize was able to build up a rebel group which later in 2003 launched an attack on Patasse and ousted him from office through a coup.[336] This coup would not have been successful without the participation of the Chadian rebels, French support, and Congolese assistance. The participation of Chadian rebels in bringing about the success of Bozize

[331] James Kewir, "Rethinking Regional Security in Central Africa: The Case of the Central African Republic," p. 118.
[332] Yannick Weins et al., "Mapping Conflict Motives: Central African Republic," *International Peace Information Service (IPIS)*, no. November (2014), pp. 1–88, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20141124_CAR.pdf.
[333] Chrysantus Ayangafac (ed.), *Political Economy of Regionalisation in Central Africa*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2008, pp. 68–72.
[334] Saıbou Issa, "La Prise D'otages Aux Confins Du Cameroun, de La Centrafrique et Du Tchad: Une Nouvelle Modalit´e Du Banditisme Transfrontalier," *Polis*, vol. 13, no. 1–2 (2006), pp. 119–46.
[335] James Kewir, "Rethinking Regional Security in Central Africa: The Case of the Central African Republic," p. 118.
[336] Jennifer Giroux, David Lanz, "The Tormented Triangle : The Regionalisation of Conflict in Sudan, Chad and The Central African Republic," pp. 7–14.

opened the door for Chadian interests to prevail in CAR's internal and external politics. This came with its attendant challenges.

Bozize's ascension to power did not wipe away all CAR's problems or guarantee him immunity from dissenting voices. The inability of Bozize to meet up with the financial and strategic compensations he had promised the Chadian and Sudanese rebels caused them to turn against their former master.[337] These rebels did not only challenge Bozize's power and authority, but they also equally began perpetrating outrageous acts of rape, looting, and killing of ordinary citizens. The 'messiahs' whom Bozize had imported to save CAR citizens from Patasse's regime became the mercenaries who destroyed the very people they came to save.

Debos (2008) has come to describe cross-border forces' complex and contradictory roles as fluid loyalties.[338] The fluidity of their loyalty is premised on the fact that the involvement of external rebel groups and mercenaries in CAR's trajectory of instability reveals that at one time, they play the role of liberators, and at other times they become villains. Nothing more can explain this than the fact that their interests, not CAR's population's welfare, are at the center of their involvement. Rebel groups from Chad and Sudan's Darfur conflict have often found sanctuary within CAR's border territories. The same armed rebels who helped to bring Bozize to power in 2003 were equally instrumental in joining other rebel movements in the northern part of CAR under the umbrella of Seleka led by Michelle Djotodia, who overthrew Bozize in 2012[339].

It is, however, clear that despite the chaos in CAR, every internal armed group, cross-border rebels from Chad, Congo, and Sudan, as well as French mercenaries, all have a common agenda of securing their economic and security interests. The means and methods on how to go about this are as complex as the conflict itself, and this has only served to heighten tensions among all stakeholders in the conflict. The involvement of Francis in CAR's conflict has always been hinged on its economic interests in

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[337] Ingerstad, "Central African Republic – Trapped in a Cycle of Violence? Causes, Conflict Dynamics and Prospects for Peace.," pp. 27–35.

[338] Marielle Debos, "Fluid Loyalties in a Regional Crisis: Chadian 'ex-Liberators' in the Central African Republic," *African Affairs*, vol. 107, no. 427 (2008), pp. 225–41, doi:10.1093/afraf/adn004.

[339] Conciliation Resources, "Analysis of Conflict and Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic," pp. 26–30.

safeguarding its gold and diamond extraction. Mercenaries from neighboring Chad, Congo, and Sudan have taken over communities with resources. Such groups have exploited these resources like gold and oil for their benefit. French interests in CAR's uranium before the country's independence to the present day is an aspect of their involvement that cannot be overlooked.

Meanwhile, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has continued to carry on its rebel activities in CAR unhindered. More than 300 people are noted to have been kidnapped by the Lord's Resistance Army in 2016. Despite establishing how Central Africa's hostile neighborhood contributes to the conflict in CAR, the bulk of the responsibility for CAR's instability rest in the leadership and internal dynamics of this country.

2   FROM COUPS TO CIVIL WARS: REOPENING PANDORA'S BOX

After attaining independence in the 1960s, many African countries witnessed coup d'états. From that period onward, coups have come to represent an ugly reality in the political transition history of these countries. The above scenario is a reality that has characterized the politico-historic evolution of the Central African Republic. Except for Ange Felix Patasse and Archange Touadera, all other presidents who have ruled CAR came to the helm of power through a coup. The numerous coups this country has experienced send a wrong signal that such an undemocratic method to achieve power is a surer path than the ballot box.

Many factors motivate coup plotters. In many instances, the quest for power and control is why coups occur.[340] Other triggers like ethnic tensions[341], economic stagnation, bad financial policies[342]Available support from insurgent forces and the readiness of the citizens to welcome the coup plotters give one a sneak-peek into why coups occur and why they have been so successful in the case of CAR.[343] The table below paints a clear

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[340] Curtis Bell, "Coup d'État and Democracy," *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 49, no. 9 (2016), pp. 1167–1200, doi:10.1177/0010414015621081.

[341] J. C. Kposowa, A. J., and Jenkins, "The Structural Sources of Military Coups in Postcolonial Africa, 1957-1984," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 99 (1993), pp. 126–63.

[342] Nam Kyu Kim, "Revisiting Economic Shocks and Coups," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2014, pp. 1–29, doi:10.1177/0022002713520531.

[343] Clayton L Thyne, "Supporter of Stability or Agent of Agitation? The Effect of US Foreign Policy on Coups in Latin America, 1960--99," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 47, no. 4 (2010), pp. 449–61, doi:10.1177/0022343310368350.

picture of the coups which have taken place in CAR. The table also identifies the coup leaders as well as the outcome of the coups.

Table 6: Coup D'états in the Central African Republic

Coups	Coup Leader(s)	Outcome
Saint Sylvestre Coup 31 December 1965	Jean Bedel Bokassa	Bokassa led the military and seized power from President David Dacko. Bokassa proclaimed himself president and took over the affairs of CAR.
1 September 1981	General Andre Kolingba	Kolingba overthrew President David Dacko a second time and took overpower in what was primarily a bloodless coup.
3 March 1982	Ange Felix Patasse Francois Bozize	Patasse's attempt to depose president Kolingba failed. Patasse went into exile in Togo. Bozize fled and sought refuge in the northern part of the country and later left for France
27-28 May 2001 (Attempted coup)	Central African Armed Forces (FACA)	Commandos of the armed forces stage a coup to seize power from president Patasse. The coup was unsuccessful, but widespread violence took over the capital of the country
15 March 2003	Francois Bozize	Bozize led an estimated 1000 troops and overthrew president Patasse while he was out of the country, attending a regional conference in Niger. About 50 people died. Bozize became president
18-24 March 2013	Seleka Rebel Group	President Francois Bozize was deposed. Seleka took over control of the capital territory Bangui. Michel Djotodia proclaimed himself as president of CAR.
13 January 2021 Battle of Bangui	The Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC Rebel Group)	The Coalition of Patriots for Change attempted to overthrow the government of President Faustin Archange Touadera, but the coup failed. Approximately 30 rebels died in the coup attempt. Five rebels were eventually captured.

In 1965 Jean Bedel Bokassa staged a coup and overthrew David Dacko. Bokassa was later overthrown through a coup by the French, and once more, Dacko was reinstated to the seat of power. In 1981 general Andre Kolingba orchestrated a coup and took overpower from Dacko. Due to international and regional pressure, Kolingba held elections that saw the coming into power of Ange Felix Patasse as CAR's first-ever elected president. That Patasse was a democratically elected president did not automatically shield him from the coup syndrome in CAR.

The transition from Kolingba to Patasse was peaceful through a smooth democratic process. This notwithstanding, Patasse did not exactly enjoy the democratic dividends of stability as his legitimacy soon plummeted because of grievances that stemmed from the failure of his administration to ensure the regular payment of salaries. Coupled with this were the social disintegration of the country, economic challenges, and ethnic tensions within the state army.[344] Despite haven sought and unsecured military and security assistance from regional and international bodies like the United Nations, the forces at work against Patasse were more than those for him. Hence, every effort to keep the country from collapsing became a difficult task as peace became elusive.[345] After several failed coup attempts and mutinies against Patasse's regime, his former chief of staff, Bozize, succeeded in 2003 in overthrowing him. Understanding Bozize's regime is central to our analysis of CAR's instability. Even though his regime was not the most inclusive, the coup that ousted him from power transitioned CAR from a prolonged period of coups into a season of classic civil wars. The 2003 coup caused the internal displacement of 300,000 people within CAR, while others crossed into neighboring Cameroon and Chad to seek refuge.

In the heat of Bozize's rebellion against Patasse, the latter called for French assistance but received none. What preoccupied the French at that time was mainly the safety of their citizens in CAR. Bozize's campaign against Patasse would never have been successful without the cross-border military assistance he received from Chadian president Idris

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[344] Angela Meyer, "Regional Conflict Management in Central Africa: From FOMUC to MICOPAX," *African Security*, vol. 2, no. 2–3 (2009), pp. 158–74, doi:10.1080/19362200903362075.

[345] Martin Welz and Angela Meyer, "Empty Acronyms: Why the Central African Republic Has Many Peacekeepers, But No Peace," *Foreign Affairs*, 2014, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/node/138767.

Debby and some rebel groups that joined his rebellion.[346] The considerable support which Bozize received from Debby was premised on the fact that the latter was concerned about the insecurity that had taken hold of his northern border with CAR and was skeptical that rebels could exploit the porousness of that territory to stage an incursion on him. Another reason he supported Bozize was solely a show of solidarity with the Democratic Republic of Congo government, which was contesting the control of its geographical territory with armed groups like the Movement of the Liberation of Congo (MLC).

Amazingly, this armed group led by Jean Pierre Bemba had come into CAR to fight on the side of Patasse.[347] Other neighboring states like Congo Brazzaville and Gabon equally threw their weight behind Bozize.[348] The Central African state army-the *Force Armees Centrafricaine* (FACA) was poorly equipped, made up of disillusioned soldiers, and the ethnic divide which had scattered their loyalty left them weak and incapable of halting Bozize and his rebels. Consequently, in March 2003, Bozize seized power and declared himself president of CAR. Bozize's strategy to overthrow Patasse was a well-calculated one. He took over Bangui at the time when Patasse was at a regional summit in Niger. The rebel control over Bangui made it impossible for president Patasse's plane to land. He was forced to land in Cameroon. He eventually moved to Togo in exile.

The success of the Bozize coup was welcomed with mixed feelings both by Central Africans and the wider international community. However, factions within the country that felt alienated from Patasse's regime praised the coup's success.[349] France, for its part, condemned the coup and undescribed it as unconstitutional and undemocratic. This reaction by the French unravels a blanket of interest and hypocrisy of their policy in capital CAR. Patasse had requested French military assistance in the heat of the rebellion and got none until he was deposed. While Bozize was gradually adjusting himself to the seat of power as the new president of CAR, his rebel warriors took advantage of the chaos

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[346] Stapleton, "Central African Republic: Coups, Mutinies, and Civil War," pp. 10–16.

[347] Andreas Mehler, "Rebels and Parties: The Impact of Armed Insurgency on Representation in the Central African Republic," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1 (2011), pp. 12–13, doi:10.1017/S0022278X10000674.

[348] Roland Marchal, "Aux Marges Du Monde , En Afrique Centrale," *Les Études Du CERI*, no. N° 153-154-mars (2009), p. 11.

[349] Louisa Lombard, *State of Rebellion Violence and Intervention in the Central African Republic*, London: Zed Books, 2016, pp. 26–30.

in the country to reward themselves with the spoils of war.[350] By looting and committing atrocities in a country where poverty was abundant, like oxygen in the air.

The ascension of Bozize to power brought much euphoria because of the change of leadership. However, his leadership did not deliver on the pre-coup promises to the Central Africans or the rebels who had helped him come to power. His regime was bedeviled with the very things he had accused Patasse of. Under his regime, democratic development was stalled, life expectancy remained low at 30years, and poverty levels increased. Upon assuming the seat of power, one of the first actions Bozize took was the dissolution of parliament and the suspension of CAR's constitution. This allowed him to rule the country with an iron fist. His promises of combatting corruption, stimulating economic growth, and inclusiveness all ended without any broad-based action to accomplish them.

The efforts of Bozize to cajole the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to stimulate and revive the economy of capital CAR did not stop Bozize from establishing a firm grip on the mining of gold and diamond. He went further to favor members of his ethnic group by elevating them to privileged positions within his administration.[351] A good example was the appointment of Sylvain Ndongthogai- a cousin of his as minister of finance.[352] This revealed how Bozize relied on clientelist networks in governing a country that was tearing apart. The political instability which characterized Bozize 's regime was not unconnected with the neglect, corruption, exclusionist politics, and economic malaise that kept the country stagnating.[353] The impunity of Bozize's rule extended to him appointing his son as minister of finance. At the same time, on 4 May 2011, his wife became a member of parliament through parliamentary elections in CAR that year.

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[350] M. Zapata, "Central African Republic: Mutinies, Civil Wars, and a Coup, 1993-2003," *The Enough Project*, 2012, pp. 1–3, https://enoughproject.org/blog/central-african-republic-mutinies-civil-wars-coup-1993-2003.

[351] Ingerstad, "Central African Republic – Trapped in a Cycle of Violence? Causes, Conflict Dynamics and Prospects for Peace.," p. 29.

[352] S Kleinsasser, *Central African Republic: The Politics of War and Peace*, San Francisco: University of San Francisco, 2010, p. 6.

[353] International Crisis Group, "Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State."

In the 2005 general elections, Bozize won the elections to continue his role as president.[354] The winning of this election did not automatically end the issues of development and democracy plaguing the country; neither did it immunize Bozize's regime from attacks. His victory sparked widespread protests and rebellion. The insurgent attacks which disrupted the northwest and northeast of CAR made life unbearable. The absence of any real administrative or military presence in these regions worsened matters.

3   BUSH WAR: THE BREAKING OF REBEL ALLIANCES

The old dictum which says 'he would live by the sword shall die by the sword' seems to have befallen almost all the presidents who came to power through coup d'état in CAR. The Bush War was a series of rebellions against Bozize's regime. The Bush War began in 2004 and spanned till 2007. The success of Bozize's coup gave a signal of hope to those in the northeastern and northwestern regions that change had come. The continued neglect of the region of Vakaga by Bozize's regime made the area become a playground for Chadian and Sudanese rebels.[355]. During the Bozize regime, heightened insecurity and clientelist politics gave rebel groups the impetus to introduce themselves as armed factions against the state formally.[356] The table below presents the rebel groups that have played critically roles in the conflict in CAR.

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[354] Mehler, "Rebels and Parties: The Impact of Armed Insurgency on Representation in the Central African Republic," p. 126.

[355] Debos, "Fluid Loyalties in a Regional Crisis: Chadian 'ex-Liberators' in the Central African Republic," p. 228.

[356] Siân Herbert, Nathalia Dukhan, Marielle Debos, *State Fragility in the Central African Republic: What Prompted the 2013 Coup?*, Birmingham: GSDRC, University of Birmingham, 2013, p. 8.

Table 7: Rebel Groups in the Central African Republic

Armed Group	Rebel Leader(s)	Active Period	Motive
Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)	Joseph Kony	1987-present	Its objective was to establish a theocratic state in Uganda.
Central African Peoples Democratic Front (FDPC)	Abdoulaye Miskine	2004-present	The motive of FDPC was to denounce the government of CAR for its numerous failures.
Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD)	Ange Felix Patasse Florian Djadder Jean Jaque Demafouth	2006-2008	The primary motive of the APRD was to depose Francois Bozize
Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR)	Michel Djotodia Zacharia Damane Justin Hassane	2006-2012	Its mission was to overthrow president Ange Felix Patasse to pave the way for Francois Bozize.
Seleka	Michel Djotodia Joseph Zoundeiko	2012-2014	The objective of Seleka was to overthrow Francois Bozize
Anti-balaka	Maxime Mokom Dieudonne Ndomate Levy Yakete Patrice Edouard	2013-present	The motif of Anti-balaka was to counter the Seleka armed group
Return, Reclamation, Rehabilitation (3R)	Sidiki Abbas	2015-present	It was formed as a protective force for Fulani herders to shield them from Anti-balaka attacks.
The Coalition of Patriots of Change	Francois Bozize	2020-present	It is a coalition of major armed groups. The motive of the alliance was to destabilize and prevents the holding of the 2020- 2021 elections in CAR.

The clientelist politics that Bozize pursued favored only him and his cronies, as the rest of the country languished in a state of want. The apologist of Felix Patasse, whom Kabila had dethroned, capitalized on the exclusionist politics of the latter and began forming armed groups to counter his reign. The Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy

(APRD) was formed according to this agenda. The APRD was led by a former defense minister of Patasse, Jean Jacque Demafouth. The emergence of the Democratic Front for the Central African People (FDPC) was championed by Colonel Abdoulaye Miskine, who had served under Patasse.[357] The Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR), led by Michelle Djotodia, equally came into the limelight.[358] When the Lord's Resistance Army was chased out of Uganda by the Ugandan Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF), they spread across neighboring countries. Some went to DRC, while a faction of the group took advantage of the porous northeastern border and established their base in the Vakaga region of CAR.

The grievances and rebellion that these groups staged against Bozize's regime were their methods of calling attention to the marginalization of the Northern part of the country, which had gone on for decades. The Vakaga region of CAR shares borders with Chad and Sudan. However, this region has hardly known development. The absence of durable road infrastructures further reinforces the lack of social amenities.[359] The educational and healthcare sectors of this region remain in a perilous state. This Muslim-dominated region is primarily looked upon as an immigrant community that came into CAR from Chad and Sudan, hence having no entitlement to the resources of the state of CAR. They are looked upon as foreigners. This explains why most southern-led regimes have paid little or no attention to this region.

The Bush war evolved while Bozize was trying to assert himself in the seat of power.[360] The very forces that had enabled him to become president became the ones who began staging the rebellion for his removal from power. Barely one year after taking over, the rebel alliance which had propelled Bozize to power disintegrated, and the former comrades-in-arms became belligerents.[361] The rebels' grievances stemmed from the fact that Bozize failed to meet up with pre-coup promises he had made to the rebels. President Bozize reneged on pulling through with his commitment to integrating his former rebels

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[357] Zapata, "Central African Republic: Mutinies, Civil Wars, and a Coup, 1993-2003," pp. 10–16.

[358] Gabriel, "A Historical Analysis of Foreign and African Interventions in Central African Republic ' s Civil War :2004-2008," pp. 2–9.

[359] Weins et al., "Mapping Conflict Motives: Central African Republic," pp. 1–88.

[360] Martin Welz, "Briefing: Crisis in the Central African Republic and the International Response," *African Affairs*, vol. 113, no. 453 (2014), p. 602, doi:10.1093/afraf/adu048.

[361] Jennifer Giroux, David Lanz, "The Tormented Triangle : The Regionalisation of Conflict in Sudan, Chad and The Central African Republic," pp. 9–12.

into the Central African armed forces. Their financial remuneration to the tune of €22,867 and other privileges like service cars which were promised never got to them.[362] The rebels who came in as liberators transformed into predators over the very people they had come to liberate. The violence and mayhem they unleashed on the country were accompanied by banditry, looting, and human rights abuses.

The UFDR, led by Michell Djotodia alongside other rebel factions, clashed with the regular army of CAR. This further escalated violence in Bangui and other parts of the country[363]. The inability of Bozize to fully meet the rebels' demands and contain their excesses led him to seek the intervention of Idriss Debby, who came in and negotiated with the Chadian rebels. They were eventually paid $1000 each on the condition that they would return to Chad.[364] This notwithstanding, a great majority of the rebels decided to return to northeastern CAR and joined the ranks of the Union for the Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR)[365]. The ease with which Bozize's former rebel supporters switched to become his opponents is evidence that interest rather than loyalty motivated the Chadian rebels.

Immediately after it was launched in 2005, the UFDR took control of many parts of the country's northeast. The rebel conquest brought Vakaga, Biroa, and San Ouandja under their control.[366] However, the UFDR's territorial capture was reversed by a coalition of French troops and Bozize's armed forces, who recaptured the areas that had fallen under UFDR rebel control. This did not stop the rebels from continuous violence. The rebel activities of UFDR in San Ouandja in 2006 led to the displacement of more than 10,000 people who fled the area to seek refuge elsewhere.

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[362] Debos, "Fluid Loyalties in a Regional Crisis: Chadian 'ex-Liberators' in the Central African Republic," pp. 225–41.

[363] Henry Kam Kah, "The Séléka Insurgency and Insecurity in the Central African Republic, 2012 - 2014," *Brazilian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2016), p. 10.

[364] Human Rights Watch, "State of Anarchy: Rebellion and Abuses against Civilians," 2007, http://www.irrawaddy.org/magazine/state-anarchy.html%0Apapers3://publication/uuid/69A701ED-C8AB-4256-95BB-A11A7074FA3D.

[365] Debos, "Fluid Loyalties in a Regional Crisis: Chadian 'ex-Liberators' in the Central African Republic," p. 230.

[366] Gabriel, "A Historical Analysis of Foreign and African Interventions in Central African Republic's Civil War :2004-2008," p. 61.

After four years of battling with armed rebellion against his regime, Bozize consented on 2 February 2007 to enter into a peace agreement with the FDPC. The agreement, signed in Sirte-Libya, became known as the Syrte Agreement. The spirit of this agreement was to bring an end to all forms of hostilities and integrate the FDPC rebels into the Central African armed forces and government.

On 1 April 2007, the Biroa Peace Agreement was equally signed between Bozize's government and the UFDR. The articles of this agreement provided amnesty to the rebels who had fought under the banner of the UFDR. It equally recognized the UFDR as a formal political party and launched a process to integrate former UFDR arrow militants into the state military. The signing of these agreements did not automatically bring about peace and stability as fighting against Bozize continued. This prompts one to question why peace agreements fail. It is usually in the interests of mediators to see that peace agreements are reached through power-sharing deals.[367] However, these deals sometimes do not address the full extent of the conflict and how belligerents and populations could benefit effectively.[368] What most times makes these peace agreements ineffective is the lack of citizen participation through a broad-based approach. High-level state interests often take precedence over the security and insecurity dynamics that shape the local levels. These very unaddressed issues often crop up to destroy the work of peace negotiators.

To ensure the country's stability and secure a peaceful reign for his administration, Bozize agreed again in 2008 in Libreville Gabon to sign a peace deal with UFDR, APRD, and FDPC. This comprehensive peace agreement between Bozize's regime and the rebel groups was a landmark of success. It brought the armed groups together with the government to negotiate peace for CAR.[369] This agreement called for all parties to cease fire and set in motion the reintegration of the rebels into the administration and society

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[367] Helga Malmin Binningsbø, "Power-Sharing and Postconflict Peace Periods," Oslo, 2016, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38262/2006_Power-Sharing and Postconflict Peace Periods.pdf.

[368] Mehler Andreas, "Not Always in the People's Interest: Power-Sharing Arrangements in African Peace Agreements," Hamburg, 2008.

[369] Mehler, "Rebels and Parties: The Impact of Armed Insurgency on Representation in the Central African Republic," pp. 115–39.

through disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process. Despite haven accented to the peace agreement Bozize remained distrustful of the rebels in CAR.

Bozize surrounded himself with a small cabal of elites to secure himself from future rebel attacks. He restructured his security details and made sure that only his South African trained presidential guards had details of his security. He did this because he had become distrustful of the state's national army.[370] Instead of striving to reunite the forces of peace and reconciliation within CAR, Bozize was more interested in strengthening his power and security. Like Andre Kolingba, Bozize favored his presidential guards and gave them privileges that the regular FACA did not have. Such favoritism reinforced nepotism and caused agitations within the military as they became disloyal and disillusioned. The comprehensive peace agreement brought some stability to CAR, but on the sidelines, the discontent within several quarters of the country painted a bleak picture that all was not well. Before now, the seeds of dissent had grown, and there was nothing Bozize or the regional security forces in CAR could do about it. The signal for Bozize's departure from power was glaring. The Seleka eventually deposed him from his position as president of CAR.

4   THE MAKING OF A CIVIL WAR

After overthrowing Patasse in 2003, Bozize introduced many economic and political changes in CAR. His intentions to rebuild the country may have been good, but his clientelist approach was not precisely the method to go about it. The corruption, mismanagement, and nepotism which characterized his regime alienated the people from the government.[371] The more the people felt alienated, the more dissent grew, and non-state armed groups exploited this unstable atmosphere to spring up from various parts of the country. Bozize had succeeded in winning the 2005 and 2011 elections. However, the socio-economic and political dynamics of the country did not provide a potent base on which Bozize could continue ruling after 2011. The accusations and counteraccusations, whether Bozize rigged the elections or not, further deteriorated his legitimacy[372]. The

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[370] Herbert, Dukhan, Debos, *State Fragility in the Central African Republic: What Prompted the 2013 Coup?* p. 4.
[371] Morten Bøås, "The Central African Republic – A History of a Collapse Foretold ?," *Noref Policy Brief*, no. January (2014).
[372] Gabriella Ingerstad, "Violence in the Central African Republic: Causes, Actors and Conflict Dynamics," *Studies in African Security*, no. July (2014), p. 12.

instability in CAR, coupled with a failed democratic experiment, had positioned the country in a situation where the entrepreneurs of violence thrived. The quest to grab power at all costs motivated the violent actors.

The rise of the Seleka (coalition), which eventually ousted Bozize from power, snowballed CAR into a protracted civil war with dire ramifications for the state's citizens.[373] The subsequent rise of the Anti-balaka, which emerged as a counterforce to the Seleka, further plunged the country into a deadly sectarian conflict. Despite the widespread dissatisfaction with his rule, after winning the elections in 2011, Bozize decided to amend the constitution to give him free passage to stand again as a presidential candidate in the 2016 presidential elections. This move did not resonate well with the political power brokers and contesters in CAR.[374] His ability to manipulate the constitution to suit his whims and caprices meant that his authoritarian role was to continue after 2016. This was not a political choice that the citizens, armed groups, and militias were willing to take. Bozize's attempt to stay in power through constitutional change was not something strange within the Central African sub-region. It was a phenomenon that was all too common. Many African dictators have used this strategy to prolong their stay in power. Constitutional manipulations have been witnessed in Congo, Gabon with Omar Bongo, Chad with Idris Debby, Congo Brazzaville with Dennis Sassou Ngesso, and Cameroon with Paul Biya. The fact that constitutional maneuvering has served the selfish political interests of some of these leaders did not inherently mean that its application in CAR would meet the same docility it met in places like Cameron.

In connection with the above, the emergence of the rebel coalition Seleka in 2012 was a direct response to the maladministration of Bozize's regime.[375] Besides this, the rebels had their agenda for wanting to seize power and overthrow Bozize. The Seleka had a long list of grievances, which among other things, included the marginalization of the eastern part of CAR. This explains why most of the rebels who later got recruited into the Seleka

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[373] Vlavonou, "An Uncertain Transition: Security, Violence, and Neopatrimonialism in the Central African Republic," pp. 18–23.
[374] Lobakeng, "Central African Republic's Coup D 'é Tat : Underlying Causes and the Resulting Future Prospects for the State," p. 3.
[375] Ingerstad, "Central African Republic – Trapped in a Cycle of Violence? Causes, Conflict Dynamics and Prospects for Peace.," pp. 32–33.

were drawn from this region.[376] With no solid educational base and sustainable means of employment, these young men saw joining the Seleka as doing something honorable to reverse the inequality and neglect they had suffered for decades.

The Seleka rebel group began its offensive against the Bozize government by capitalizing on the absence of government presence in the northeast. This motivated them to take over. Their desire to gain controlled them to take over communities like Ouadda, Ndele, and Same Ouandja by 10th December 2012[377]. However, it should be noted that the taking over of these communities was not only to show their military might but also to exploit resources like gold, diamond, and uranium to enrich themselves and sponsor the rebellion.[378] As the offensive intensified, their objectives and requests to the government became clearer. They accused Bozize of not adhering to the articles of the 2008 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which among many other things, included a financial remuneration to the rebels, their reintegration into the state army, as well as amnesty for rebels who were in prison. By the end of 2012, Christians and pro Bozize regions had come under heavy attack orchestrated by Seleka.

As much as Bozize had accented to the peace agreement with the rebels in 2008, his lack of political will to enforce the agreement's contents opened the space for renewed rebellion against his regime in 2012. The rebel alliance which resulted in the formation of Seleka was not united by any strong structural bonds or philosophy but by hate for a common enemy-Bozize, whom they wanted to oust from the seat of power.

Moreover, Seleka faulted Bozize's administration for haven failed to deliver a concrete disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process, which he promised to do within the framework of the agreement.[379] The failure of the DDR agenda led to increased instability and violence as the former combatants became loose, pillaging and plundering the communities as a means for survival. This explains why the young combatants saw

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[376] Weins et al., "Mapping Conflict Motives: Central African Republic," p. 10.

[377] Ingerstad, "Central African Republic – Trapped in a Cycle of Violence? Causes, Conflict Dynamics and Prospects for Peace.," p. 30.

[378] Gabriella Ingerstad, "Willing and Able? Challenges to SSR in Weak Post-War States: Insights from the Central African Republic," 2012, p. 62.

[379] International Crisis Group, "Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition," Brussels, 2013, p. 6, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-priorities-transition.

the Seleka rebellion as the first means through which they could economically empower themselves by exploiting natural resources and having command over the communities they conquered and captured.

Above all else, Seleka's principal motivation was to unseat Bozize and take control of the country. Hence their fighters moved quickly, fighting the national military, and capturing towns. At the beginning of January 2013, they had succeeded in coming close to Bangui, about 160 kilometers apart from the political capital.[380] Considering that Seleka could overthrow him and that the Seleka insurgency had disrupted agricultural production and left many in hunger and poverty with a hike in food and essential commodities prices, Francois Bozize was forced to negotiate with the rebels. This led to the Libreville II Peace Accords, which were mediated by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) from 8-11 January 2013[381].

According to the January 2013 peace deal, Seleka retracted from their previously held option of wanting Bozize to leave office. The belligerents agreed on a ceasefire and secession of all forms of hostilities. This included granting safe passage to humanitarian organizations which were coming in to provide aid to the embattled population[382]. Bozize was equally mandated to set up a transition government that incorporated leaders from the opposition camps within the framework. Bozize equally agreed to end his term in 2016 and not seek another term in the election that year[383]. The peace agreement led to the appointment of Nicholas Tiangaye as prime minister, while Michelle Djotodia filled in the position of minister of defense[384]. Like all other peace agreements before Libreville II, the parties to the conflict in CAR did not pursue any real, meaningful agenda to administer the country and collaborate accordingly in the spirit of the peace agreement. Both Bozize and Seleka did not show good faith in upholding the peace agreement terms. In an atmosphere of gross political instability, uncertainty, and mistrust, it was not long

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[380] Kennedy Tumutegyereize and Nicolas Tillon, "Central African Republic: Peace Talks Without Talks. A New Model of Perpetuating Violent Conflicts?," *Conciliation Resources*, 2013, https://www.c-r.org/news-and-views/comment/central-african-republic-peace-talks-without-talks-new-model-perpetuating.

[381] Kah, "The Séléka Insurgency and Insecurity in the Central African Republic, 2012 - 2014," p. 51.

[382] cited, p. 122.

[383] Conciliation Resources, "Analysis of Conflict and Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic," pp. 6–8.

[384] Kah, "The Séléka Insurgency and Insecurity in the Central African Republic, 2012 - 2014," pp. 51–54.

before the peace deal finally collapsed. The Seleka rebels relaunched their insurgency, and on 24th March 2013, they captured Bangui. Bozize fled the country, taking refuge first in Cameroon and later in Ivory Coast. Michelle Djotodia later took over command of the country and declared himself president[385]. Amazingly, the very rebels who had made Bozize president were among the Seleka that finally deposed him. The victory of the Seleka over Bozize ended an episode of violence in a protracted conflict, yet it opened another as confusion and disagreement raged within the ranks of Seleka. Meanwhile, the rise of Anti-balaka ushered in a sectarian dimension to an already devastating civil war. Michel Djotodia and his Seleka group have a long list of unending grievances, including that Bozize favored his Gbaya tribe against the rest of the country. From where the Seleka originated, the Northeast was left underdeveloped with little or no government attention. Seleka has a 5000-strong man force, and their mission was to take power. However, when Anti-balaka forces rose and began challenging the Seleka, many citizens in CAR lost their lives in the process. Bangui was home to some 130.000 Muslims, but as counter aggression against Muslim communities increased, the Muslim population in Bangui shrank from 130.000 to about 1000. The displacement of Muslim and Christian populations added injury to an already dire poverty situation to which these communities had become forcefully accustomed.

Prior to 2013, there was no history of religious antagonism in the Central African Republic. However, the predominantly Muslim Seleka, which rose to overthrow the Bozize regime, angered the Christians, who later regrouped as Anti-balaka. Many have argued for and against the religious coloration given to the conflict. While others have maintained that religion is the defining characteristic of the war, others view it as merely a civil war animated by the quest for power. In the heat of the Seleka and Ant-balaka clashes, the Multinational Force for Central Africa (FOMAC) stepped in to quell the violence ravaging the country. Though the presence of FOMAC forces did not immediately bring an end to the religious antagonism, their presence, however, signaled hope that something was changing. Some CAR residents believed the French forces favored the Anti-balaka against the Seleka. These citizens maintained that the French forces disarmed Seleka without doing the same for Anti-balaka. They argued that this

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[385] cited, p. 52.

gave the Anti-balaka the leeway to commit more attacks against the Muslim-dominated population.

Bozize's defeat by the Seleka rebels could be explained by the fact that the Central African armed forces were weak and disorganized. However, at the height of Seleka's insurgency on Bangui in 2013, Francois Bozize saw himself abandoned by allies who had always backed him up militarily and financially. In the heat of the Seleka incursion, he sought help from France and Chad, but they responded in the negative. It should be recalled that these two countries have always maintained a considerable level of influence and power brokering over CAR since its post-independence days.[386] It will be recalled that Idriss Deby of Chad provided Bozize with sanctuary, rebels, and logistics to overthrow Ange Felix Patasse from power. However, by 2013 Bozize and Debby were not on the same frequency, as their collaboration ties showed a disjointed alliance.

One of the reasons why Idriss Deby gave up on Bozize was that he had expected the latter to effectively secure the northeastern region of CAR. Unfortunately, Bozize failed to meet up with these expectations. This area was of great concern to Deby because the porous border territory with Chad provided a free corridor for rebel activity which Chadian rebels could exploit to overthrow Deby or destabilize the economic prosperity that Southern Chad was enjoying.[387]. This was not something Idriss Deby wanted to happen.

In addition to the above, Idriss Deby was disgruntled with Bozize because he did not pay the Chadian rebels and soldiers who had helped his ascension to power as they had agreed.[388]. In 2011, the Chadian president had cautioned Bozize against tampering with the constitution to run for election in 2016[389]. Against the good counsel of Deby, Bozize went ahead, and the resultant effect was the upsurge of rebellion against him. Bozize failed to adhere to Deby's directives to negotiate with the opposition.[390] The CAR president was only forced to do so when it became abundantly clear that without

[386] Ilmari Käihkö and Mats Utas, "The Crisis in CAR: Navigating Myths and Interests," *Africa Spectrum*, vol. 49, no. 1 (2014), pp. 73–75, doi:10.1177/000203971404900104.

[387] Siradag, "Explaining the Conflict in Central African Republic: Causes and Dynamics," pp. 95–96.

[388] Berg, *The Dynamics of Conflict in the Tri-Border Region of the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic*, pp. 23–24.

[389] Lobakeng, "Central African Republic's Coup D'é Tat : Underlying Causes and the Resulting Future Prospects for the State," p. 2.

[390] Ingerstad, "Central African Republic – Trapped in a Cycle of Violence? Causes, Conflict Dynamics and Prospects for Peace.," p. 32.

negotiating with the rebels, he would be overthrown by them. These issues caused Idriss Deby to become disenchanted with Francois Bozize. This explains why Deby instead gave his support to Michelle Djotodia and the Seleka in their quest to oust Bozize. With the blessing and support of Deby, Seleka was able to unseat Bozize. Such influence of Chad over the Central African Republic reveals the extent to which Chad has leverage over the landlocked country.

On the other hand, the French refused to assist Francois Bozize during the Seleka insurgency because they had come to see Bozize as a threat to their economic and strategic interests in CAR. Consequently, his overthrow by the Seleka meant nothing to them as they were confident of forming new partnerships with the government of Djotodia[391]. In a move to diversify CAR's economy and gain beneficial trading partnerships for the country, Bozize's regime entered into strong trading agreements with South Africa and China. The government of Bozize signed gold mining and oil exploration deals with South Africa.[392] In addition to this, they equally signed uranium exploitation agreements with China[393]. Since the colonial period, France had always had leverage over the exploitation of CAR's uranium, which is used to develop its nuclear plants[394]. Hence the French interpreted Bozize's move to collaborate with South Africa and China as a threat to their economic interest. A reduced influence over its former colonial territory was not something France was willing to welcome. Even though France granted independence to its former colonial territories in the Central African Region, it has always shaped, influenced, and directed these countries' political, military, and economic domains. Consequently, they have equally been very instrumental in determining who comes to the seat of power as president. Those who have failed to work with them have either been assassinated or overthrown through coups that have covertly or overtly been sponsored

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[391] Antoine Roger Lokongo, "French Complicity in the Crisis in Central African Republic," 2014, https://www.pambazuka.org/governance/french-complicity-crisis-central-african-republic , accessed on 9.03.2021.
[392] Utas, "The Crisis in CAR: Navigating Myths and Interests," p. 72.
[393] Gabriel, "A Historical Analysis of Foreign and African Interventions in Central African Republic ' s Civil War :2004-2008," p. 4.
[394] Bruno Tertrais, "Uranium from Niger: A Key Resource of Diminishing Importance for France," Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2014, http://m.diis.dk/files/media/publications/import/extra/pb2014_niger-france-uranium_cve_bruno-tertrais_web_2.pdf.

and supported by France.[395] While the Seleka was orchestrating the overthrow of Bozize, France brought in troops. However, it maintained that the troops were not there to intervene in the internal affairs of CAR but to protect French citizens in the country. Their real mission was to safeguard their citizens. Bozize had become too much of a liability for them that they wanted him gone from power.

5   THE COMPLEX ROLE OF FRANCE AND RUSSIA IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The civil war, which began in 2012 in CAR, has changed the country's political dynamics and has equally brought in rebel groups and international actors alike. To this end, France and Russia came into the country to intervene and restore the state of stability. Though both superpowers are seeking to achieve peace and stability for the citizens of CAR, they are however embroiled in a cold war of influence over CAR. Russia and former colonial ruler France revolved as the government confronted increased rebel activity. The question which arises is, what is it that these two countries want in the conflict-ridden Central African Republic? Aside from the international dimensions of this struggle for CAR, there is the human cost. Civilians have died in the crossfire, and thousands of people have been internally displaced, many of them fleeing the country. The CAR has been in turbulence since a violent takeover of power by Michel Djotodia occurred in 2013. A political agreement was signed by the CAR government and 14 armed groups in February of 2019[396]. This significant move raised hopes of peace, but violence has continued, and the December 2020 elections were a catalyst for a new crisis; on one side, the government led by president Faustin Archange Touadera who was re-elected for a second term in the recent vote, on the other hand, a coalition of rebel groups allied to former president Francois Bozize after he was prevented from presenting himself for election by the Constitutional Court of the country. These rebels launched attacks to derail the voting.

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[395] Abdurrahim Sıradağ, "Understanding French Foreign and Security Policy towards Africa: Pragmatism or Altruism," *Afro Eurasian Studies Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2014), pp. 100–122, http://www.afroeurasianstudies.net/dosyalar/site_resim/veri/7429761.pdf.
[396] Rosenhart, "Central African Republic: Between France and Russia," pp. 1–5.

According to the United Nations, renewed violence in 2020 caused more than 200 000 to flee their homes, with around half of them crossing into neighboring countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo. The lack of clean water, medicine, food, and clothes to protect civilians was further complicated by the presence of outside powers. There is a UN mission in CAR, while Rwanda and Russia have sent troops at the government's request. France, the country's former colonial ruler, has equally carried out military fly-over missions.

The concern now is that CAR is experiencing a severe state of instability but is the presence of European powers making things worse or bringing solace? Apart from being a former colonial power over CAR, France has continued to maintain its influence over the country. The currency of CAR is still pegged to the French Franc. The national reserve of CAR is lodged in the French Treasury.[397] Besides the above, many French companies operate in CAR. Hence France sees its intervention and presence as a legitimate need to protect the interests of its citizens doing business in CAR. These put together explain why France maintains influence and interest over CAR decades after colonial rule. This scenario is not limited to CAR alone. France has continued to maintain a strong military, economic and political ties with its former colonies under the umbrella of *La Francophonie.*[398].

The political infighting between President Faustin Archange Touadera and former president Francois Bozize has led many to cast doubts on the complete willingness of the French to support the government in power. France's position in all of this is somewhat confused, as one begins to wonder whether they are on the side of Bozize, the former president banned from running in the election, or are they on the government's side or perhaps a little bit of both. France has been supporting the current government in the peace process. However, the arrival of a new actor, namely Russia, has confused France's strategic interests and influence in CAR.[399] The speed and method with which Russia was able to take new positions within the country's

[397] Banque de France, "The CFA Franc Zone," 2015, pp. 1–2, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199687107.013.008.

[398] Yates, "Paradoxes of Predation in Francophone Africa," pp. 4–22.

[399] Kimberly Marten, "Russ-Afrique? Russia, France, and the Central African Republic," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo*, no. 608 (2019), pp. 1–4.

security apparatus surprised France and some other western countries to the extent that France was skeptical of losing its positions in its former colonial territory. Prior to the entry of the Russians into CAR, France never had competition from other actors, particularly those in the Security Council of the United Nations. What France does now is to support the international operation currently under MINUSCA. It is equally trying to support regional processes to help get the country out of the crisis. In 2019, France sent 1400 weapons it had confiscated from its anti-piracy mission in Somaliland. This military assistance to CAR received mixed feelings from those within and out of the country.[400] Many interpreted the donation as a strategy to reassure its influence in CAR in the phase of growing Russian military aid and expansion. The French equally sent in 90 troops to beef up support for CAR's European Union Training Mission. However, France has not shown any strong leadership in the situation in the country since the French Operation Sangaris left the country a couple of years ago, so in that sense, one can say that France is in a kind of a deadlock now in the country. This is further complicated because Russia's mission in CAR is to balance against the French, the United States, and China. The Americans do not have as much vested interest as France and China in CAR. That notwithstanding, Russia is determined to exploit every strategy to dislodge other foreign powers from wielding influence in CAR.

Russia stepped into CAR and took advantage of what appeared to be a little bit of a vacuum when the French withdrew. It has, however, been argued that Russia's interest in the country is purely financial and geostrategic. Russia stepped into the Central African Republic in 2016 after the end of Operation Sangaris, and it saw it as easy access and a convenient way to gain a broader strategic foothold in Central Africa.[401] So, by establishing a military foothold with the deployment of Wagner Group, they figured that they would be able to expand their leverage in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo, where they also have

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[400] Łukasz Maślanka, "France and the Russian Presence in Africa," *PISM BULLETIN*, vol. 47 (2020), pp. 1–2.

[401] Marcel Plichta, "France and Russia Fiddle While the Central African Republic Burns," *World Politics Review*, 2018, https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/26852/france-and-russia-fiddle-while-the-central-african-republic-burns%0A.

private military company deployments. The use of private military companies in Russia's expansionist drive is a deliberate attempt by the Kremlin to deny the implication to the state if things go wrong with its mercenaries. This explains why instead of using the regular army, it has resorted to PMCs to gather intelligence for its foreign policy, economic, and strategic expansion goals.[402] In addition, the Central African Republic's diamond reserves and mineral reserves were under international sanctions. In the future, if the United Nations lifted those sanctions, they would be very profitable for Russian companies like Rosa Diamond. The Russians wanted to get early access to these mineral resources.

The Central African Republic during the soviet era did not have very close links to the Soviet Union, except for a brief period under Bokassa when he was flirting with the communist bloc. His relationship with the Soviet Union was based on social and cultural ties than economic exchanges. There are, however, other aspects and other dimensions that are at play as far as Russia's involvement in CAR is concerned. Having a foothold in the Central African Republic could rebuild the memory of the Soviet-era power status in the broader region. By maintaining dialogue with the Seleka rebels and Touadera government, Russia has also sought to rebuild itself as a major diplomatic negotiator in the Central African Republic.[403] There are some parallels, but this is more economically driven than before.

Instability and fighting in CAR have caused hardship for civilians. Since the rebels tried to stop the election process, they cut off the road network that links CAR to Cameroon. Consequently, the movement of goods from Cameroon into CAR has been impeded by such insecurity. The influx of refugees fleeing the conflict from CAR has put pressure on the receiving towns regarding health care and financial assistance.[404] The rebels' objective was to suffocate the capital where the government was. The

[402] Nicholas Harrington Brian Katz, Seth G. Jones, and Catrina Doxsee, "Moscow's Mercenary Wars: The Expansion of Russian Private Military Companies," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 2020, https://russianpmcs.csis.org/.

[403] Kyran Goodison, "Russia in the Central African Republic: Exploitation Under the Guise of Intervention," *Philologia*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2019), pp. 35–39, doi:10.21061/ph.177.

[404] Ludwick Esone Ndokang and André Dumas Tsambou, "Political Instability in Central African Republic (Car) and Health State of the Cameroon Population," *Journal of Life Economics*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2015), pp. 113–29, doi:10.15637/jlecon.73.

struggle of the population to survive began in 2013 when Seleka came into the country. The civil war which ensued changed the life of the people. The fact that the constitutional court disqualified the candidacy of Francois Bozize in the recent elections has caused many to believe that France is also behind the court's decision. Hundreds of thousands of people left their homes and fled to different countries. Many deaths have been registered because of the infighting, which indicates that such atrocities were not perpetrated by ragtag militia but by well-organized armed groups. As civilians fled and abandoned their homes, these armed groups occupied many lands, and most of those lands they occupied were rich in diamonds and gold.

Consequently, they could get the diamond and gold they sold and use the money to acquire more weapons. Worthy of note is that CAR has been under an arms embargo. Such an embargo has significantly reduced the government's ability and caused it hard to have the right weaponry to fight against the rebels. However, the rebel's free access to weapons has caused mixed feelings among Central Africans, especially those skeptical of Russia's presence in their country.[405] This group of citizens believes that the rebels are getting their weaponry from Russia in exchange for mining concessions in rebel-held areas. Such sentiments provoke a rethinking of Russia's presence in CAR. Whether or not Russia provides arms to the rebels remains a complex and debatable issue. The government of CAR has enjoyed significant military assistance from Russia. It will therefore sound absurd to think that Russia will at the same time provide weapons to rebels to kill Russian soldiers who are trying to provide security for the government and president of CAR.

The question which remains crucial is whether Russia aims to be the sole supplier of small arms and other military supplies in exchange for new sources of minerals or if it also aspires to be a mediator between the Central African Republic and the armed rebel groups to negotiate access to diamonds, gold, and uranium in rebel-controlled areas they are trying to have? This could be a possibility. However, the fact remains that the government of CAR is trying to work with the Russians to help them bring

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[405] Goodison, "Russia in the Central African Republic: Exploitation Under the Guise of Intervention," p. 37.

peace to the country, something that France failed to do with Operation Sangaris in 2014 when they came into the country to intervene. The abrupt ending of Operation Sangaris in 2016 and the eventual withdrawal of the French from CAR pushed Touadera to seek military assistance from the Russians.[406] In the same light as the French, the United States equally ended its military operation to track and capture Joseph Kony, the infamous leader of the Lord Resistance Army. The withdrawal of both France and the US left CAR in a precarious state. The absence of these international military giants gave greater leverage to armed groups to thrive and further plunged the country into greater instability.

The entrance of the Russians into CAR was crucial for the government's survival because the state military had become a shadow of itself and could not possibly withstand the firepower and combat drive of the rebels. Russia is a new actor in CAR, and France was surprised by the extent of Russia's engagement and how Russia started being influential within the security apparatus in CAR. The real problem in CAR today is that the country does not have a functioning army. That is the problem, and neither France nor Russia has helped seriously foster the security sector reform. If it does not happen, no matter the number of weapons these two superpowers give to the Central African nation, it will not help the Central African army keep or store these weapons securely.

The Central African Republic is a nation that is rich in minerals, diamonds, gold, copper, and countless other mineral resources. This notwithstanding, it makes virtually no money from its natural wealth. Only about 3-4 % of the population has electricity. These natural resources are extremely difficult to exploit industrially, so illegal, and small-scale mining lends itself too easily to this kind of illegal exploitation. That is why armed groups can do that, and such money does not come into the state's tax coffers. Hence money made from the exploitation of minerals resources does not trickle down to the people. This explains why the country is so

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[406] Natahlia Dukhan, "Central African Republic: Ground Zero for Russian Influence in Central Africa," *Atlantic Council Eurasia Center*, 2020, pp. 2–5, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/CAR-Russian-Influence.

dependent on international cooperation and support. Nevertheless, it is a potentially wealthy country.

On the other hand, France and Chad have a very deep strategic partnership that is partially an extension of the fact that they both have a common cause in eastern Libya concerning Khalifa Haftar. President Idris Debby had a close relationship with the French government. Hence Chad is kind of France's anchor in the Sahel. Many counterinsurgency and extremism operations, particularly with Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's overthrow in Mali, and some of that cooperation is now spilling over into the Central African Republic. The Russia and Rwanda relationship has improved quite dramatically in the same vein. President Paul Kagame visited Sochi in 2020 and signed a nuclear energy deal with Rosatom. This implies a broader strategic partnership at play, and both countries were concerned about post-election violence and saw an instrumental need to converge in December. The Russians and Rwandans put special forces together in an ad hoc fashion, and now they have cooperated in the crisis setting in CAR. The above analysis shows that France-Chad and Russia-Rwanda have formed rival axes. Even though their alliances are still in the consolidation process, both France and Russia are determined to collaborate with their allies to foster their agenda in CAR.

To counter French influence in CAR, Russia has done rather well in encouraging anti-French sentiments. This strategy has turned many people in CAR against their former colonial masters. This means that Russia will eventually be the most significant international player in the country and will take advantage both financially and perhaps politically. Russia may be new to the race for influence in Africa, but it has strategies and objectives it seeks to accomplish in positioning itself against all odds. Consequently, it has exploited traditional and social media outlets to build negative propaganda against France in the CAR.[407] Russia has effectively used media propaganda to assure the citizens of CAR and the international community that the present relative stability in some parts of the country is thanks to Russian and not French efforts. This smear campaign against the French has

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[407] Maślanka, "France and the Russian Presence in Africa," pp. 1–2.

succeeded partly because CAR citizens already harbored a deep sense of resentment towards France as their former colonial master.[408] They perceived France as a predatory and oppressive force that had continued to exploit the CAR's resources through linkages of colonialism. On the other hand, they perceive Russia as a suitable alternative to France. The media propaganda launched against the French by Russia has significantly reshaped the perceptions of Central Africans towards France in a negative light.

In reaction to the ongoing anti-French campaign sponsored by Russia, France reacted in June 2021 by withdrawing its troops from CAR and holding its financial and military cooperation with CAR's government. France maintained that the Central African Republic was complicit in fostering the Russian propaganda against France[409]. The withdrawal of France comes with many meanings and implications. First, it indicates that Russia has effectively balanced against France in CAR. Traditionally, most CAR presidents before Faustin Archange Touadera came to power with France's express blessings and approval, especially those who seized power through military coups in the post-independence years of CAR. Those whom the French felt could not be maneuvered were eventually replaced through a coup. This was the case with David Dacko. This almost seemed like an established pattern in the history of CAR's political succession. The inability of the French to apply such a tactic against the present president Touadera means that the French have either decided to relinquish their grip over CAR or the Russian security framework around Touadera is too sophisticated to be infiltrated. However, when one looks at the foreign power dynamics in CAR, one thing remains evident Russian influence is growing exponentially. The Russians may not be one hundred percent better than the French, but the Touadera government has handed them the leverage to thrive in CAR.

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[408] Paul Stronski, "Late to the Party: Russia's Return to Africa," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, no. October (2019), pp. 6–20.
[409] Reuter, "France Suspends Aid, Military Support for Central African Republic," 2021, https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/france-suspends-aid-military-support-central-african-republic-2021-06-08/ , accessed on 18.07.2021.

Russia has thrived in the Central African Republic because France withdrew its interest in CAR. The United States has so far not engaged itself. Hence if the US would even engage itself minimally, it could probably play a role in reducing Russian influence, but they do not have the inclination to do so. Russia is well established in influencing CAR's socio-economic and political dynamics strategically. It has actively challenged the United Nations arms embargo on CAR and the embargo on conflict diamonds, together with the Kimberley Process, which regulates it through its adjudication of green zones that allow for diamond export. Suppose those industries partially open and the sanctions are partially diluted, the Russians will be able to reap the windfalls economically because they are already established players in the marketplace. They also have a track record of diplomatic dialogue between the government and the opposition. This may have diluted over the past years because they have tilted more strongly towards president Touadera. Valerie Zacharov, a Russian, is his national security advisor, but they still have connections with other factions. The Russians have the intelligence and the ground experience to leverage diplomatically. Russia is thus very well situated to command and probably win the peace process in the Central African Republic if the situation ever de-escalates.

In the meantime, it will take CAR much effort to shake off the legacy of French colonialism as it strives to develop itself into a vibrant, vigorous, and prosperous country. The restoration of peace in CAR is an urgent need and a prerequisite for any meaningful development. Without peace, it would be practically impossible to develop anything in this landlocked country. Unfortunately, the French colonial education system was not robust and intentional enough in forming Africans to take over the affairs of their country once the French left. The civil war and instability that have characterized this country have deprived children of adequate school opportunities. To stabilize CAR, its government would probably rely on external partners for several years to get out of its current crisis. The restoration of genuine peace will mean neutralizing some armed groups that are not ready for peace negotiation. This can only be done by neutralizing them with a robust force. On the other side, MINUSCA will equally help to stabilize the country. However, political dialogue is a path to peace that cannot be ignored. The current situation in CAR is a

dire one, with the government at loggerheads with both the political opposition and the armed groups.

The government cannot afford to be at loggerheads with all the stakeholders in the country. It needs to come to the negotiating table. The government also needs to work on a development plan because the reality is that in CAR, state services are absent in most of the country. They are absent or underequipped in most of the provinces. The development of state services like meaningful education, well-equipped hospitals, and a reliable administrative system is vital for state-building and peacebuilding in CAR.

CHAPTER FOUR

VIOLENCE IN MALI: A DESCENT INTO CHAOS

1 TRACING THE EVOLUTION AND CONSTRUCT OF THE MALIAN STATE

Mali, as we know it today, is a shadow of the glory and power which it exhibited in the days of the Mali and Songhai empires. From the days of the empire up to the colonial, postcolonial, and post-democratic period, Mali prided itself ask a social, cultural, economic, and intellectual hub in the Sahel and Africa. This territory which occupies a considerable landmass of the southern Sahara area, is home to different ethnoreligious groups who pursue divergent interests and perceive the structure and processes of state-building from their real or imaginary aspirations. With competing groups from the south and north constantly staking claims to the apparatus of state power, economic resources, and territorial control, it has become increasingly difficult to find a harmonized approach to state-building and stability in Mali. This has further been complicated by the rise and influx of armed groups and networks of organized crime, which have capitalized on state weakness to proliferate in the country.

Before 2012, Mali was regarded as a symbol of democracy and stability in Africa. Rightly or wrongly, the nation and its successive governments enjoyed the international and regional attention and prestige that came with such a status. Beyond this facade, however, laid a dark history of Tuareg and Arab insurgencies that have hitherto truncated the state-building process in Mali. The successive peace agreements which followed such insurgencies provided a semblance of peace. However, a more significant part of the Malian population, especially those in the northern regions, felt discontented and alienated from the central state power in Bamako. The long years of neglect, underdevelopment, economic stagnation, and social backwardness of the northern regions give its inhabitants the impression that they mattered less to the southern-led governments that controlled power in the capital city of Bamako. The groups that make up the northern regions consist of the Tuareg, Arabs, Songhai, and Fulani. The inattentiveness or willful neglect of the southern governments in Bamako to address the concerns of marginalization and inequality in all aspects of national life caused these groups to pick up arms against the state.

The current violence and instability tearing Mali apart began in January 2012. In 2012, several northern originated armed groups revolted against the government of President Amadou Toumani Toure. Several reasons account for the outbreak of this conflict. However, principal among the insurgents' demands was the quest to secede northern Mali from the Malian state. Principal among those who staged an insurrection against the state was the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). The mission of the MNLA and other armed groups was to carve out the northern regions of Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu to be a separate state. This new state which they called Azawad, was going to be a territory for the northern groups championed by the Tuaregs. As fighting raged on, another group Ansar Dine joined forces with MNLA to capture more territory.

What remains very intriguing is that the conflict in Mali can only be understood from a multi-dimensional perspective. To do this, one must, as a matter of necessity, examine the dynamics of the conflict from a statist, Islamist, and jihadist spectrum. Evidence from the conflict in Mali showed that the state had become a politically contested entity with different groups, both state and non-state using their available resources to construct it to fit their goals and aspirations.[410] In the light of these contestations, the concept and definition of what state is in Mali have become a complex puzzle. While the central government in Bamako is striving to maintain a monopoly over its entire geography, armed groups, on the other hand, have continuously forged alliances with state and non-state actors alike who have come in to play an increasing albeit controversial role in Mali, and in the process stretched the definition of the state beyond its geographical boundaries.

While the MNLA sort to achieve total independence for northern Mali, Ansar Dine had a contrary objective to keep the north within the ambit of the Malian state but retained the right as an autonomous region wherein the Sharia law will become the source and instrument for state regulation and policies.[411] Still, other armed groups believed that the independence of the northern regions was not just for its sake or to remain an autonomous region. To these factions, the total independence of the north was to become a prerequisite

[410] Bruce Whitehouse and Francesco Strazzari, "Introduction: Rethinking Challenges to State Sovereignty in Mali and Northwest Africa," *African Security*, vol. 8, no. 4 (2015), pp. 214–15, doi:10.1080/19392206.2015.1100498.
[411] Gregory Chauzel and Thibault van Damme, "The Roots of Mali's Conflict: Moving Beyond the 2012 Crisis," Clingendael., 2015, pp. 21–25.

to the formation of an Islamic caliphate that would stretch from northern Mali, including the Maghreb and the Middle East.[412] The participation of armed groups like Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) and that of state parties like Libya and Algeria, as well as international NGOs in the conflict, have all contributed to diluting not just the notion of state but equally in blurring the power, presence, and autonomy of the Malian central government.[413] After haven laid the above foundation, our understanding of how the Malian state has evolved cannot be complete without a critical examination of Mali as a colonial construct and how the post-independence politics of its elites have continued to shape and determine the structure and dynamics of the state.

1.1   *Colonial Mali*

French colonialism in Africa came with advantages and disadvantages for the colonized territories. Even though France continues to claim that its mission of civilization brought education and welfare to Africans, this will hardly hold true for Mali, which before French colonialism had flourished as the Malinke, Mali, and Songhai empires. Prior to the French colonization of Mali, this territory was a great African empire with cities like Timbuktu, which represented a symbol of economic prosperity and an intellectual citadel. At the peak of its glory, the Songhai Empire was an international trading hub for commodities like gold, salt, and enslaved people. As historical developments have shown, it so happened that the disintegration of empires in western Africa occurred on the eve of the scramble for Africa. Consequently, states like France could easily permeate the western African terrain to install themselves as colonizers.

In a bid to disguise its fundamental objectives, France described its colonies as part of the 'Greater France' overseas. This was primarily meant to draw the people closer to its agenda of assimilating them to think and act like French men and women. However, these colonies were simply nothing less than sources of raw materials for France's industrial growth. No doubt, these colonies came to represent symbols of French exploitation. France's mission of civilization and assimilation of the African people ran parallel to the

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[412] Francesco Strazzari and Luca Raineri, "State, Secession, and Jihad: The Micropolitical Economy of Conflict in Northern Mali," *African Security*, vol. 8, no. 4 (2015), pp. 249–71, doi:10.1080/19392206.2015.1100501.

[413] Scott Shaw, "Fallout in the Sahel: The Geographic Spread of Conflict From Libya to Mali," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2013), pp. 199–210, doi:10.1080/11926422.2013.805153.

economic exploitation, forced labor, and military conquest to which the people were subjected. The French's military might and the oppression that the people suffered did not stop them from revolting against the French in many instances in Africa.

The history of French colonialism in Mali evokes a complex and contradictory array of issues that underpin and define the period of colonial rule. Mali may have attained its independence in 1960, but the social, political, and economic structures which the independent state emerged with were practically those put in place by the colonizers. This explains why Mali's colonial experience provides us with a starting point in finding answers so the current development of violence and instability that has plagued the country.

The history of European colonialism in Africa has been described and analyzed by many scholars in and out of the continent. In line with other European countries, France joined the race to colonize Africa not just as a fallout of the scramble but more so because of the glory of territorial expansion and the quest to harvest raw materials from the resource-rich continent. West Africa thus became a destination for French colonialism. France had hitherto established connections with this region as far back as 1893 with the subsequent appointment of a governor to oversee the civilian affairs of the French government.[414] However, the official establishment of the French West African Federation(FWA) only became a reality in 1895[415]. The territories that made up the French West African Federation included Mauritania, Senegal, French Sudan(present-day Mali), Ivory Coast, Guinea, Benin, and Niger. In 1904, this territory became a French colony and assumed the name French Sudan in 1920. French Sudan thus became the name to which present-day Mali was called prior to independence. After independence, the territory became known as Mali.

In administering this territory, France sought to establish its influence politically, socially, and economically through the policy of direct rule. In areas where they faced resistance to French rule, the French used military might to conquer the people or collaborated with

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[414] Panira Ali, "French Colonialism To Neo-Colonialism in Mali : An Analytical Study," *Journal of European Studies*, vol. 34, no. 2 (2018), p. 118, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=poh&AN=135360630&site=eds-live.

[415] Ruth Ginio, *French Colonialism Unmasked: The Vichy Years in French West Africa*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006, pp. 3–4.

them through the policy of assimilation. In a nutshell, the French administration of Mali and its other colonies was highly centralized.[416]   This centralization meant that the colonies were simply an extension of the grand French Republic. Consequently, the autocracy of direct rule did not give the colonial administrators much leverage over local affairs, nor did it actively involve the locals. Hence, ordinances drew their force from the central government in Paris. French colonialism in Mali affected all areas of national life from political administration, economics, religion, ethnicity, and education.

France benefited from its control over Mali as a colonial power to recruit brave soldiers from this territory during World Wars I and II. Those who were conscripted from Mali and other African states played a pivotal role in defending France[417]. The African fighters were promised extended privileges and liberties as a reward for their participation in these wars. The conscripted fighters were equally promised French citizenship. Even though the promise of citizenship never got fully materialized, the veterans from the wars enjoyed a wide range of rights and privileges, which they later capitalized on to clamor for the decolonization of their territory.[418] French colonialism in Mali embodies a narrative that links the developments in present-day Mali to its interactions with colonization. Contrary to the arguments claiming that national identity could not be entirely constructed because of colonial domination and the mistreatment of Malians, Rosa de Jurio argues that present-day Mali is a classic example of hybridity in state development. She maintains that Mali's history is intrinsically interwoven with its experience with French colonialism.[419]

In administering Mali within the framework of managing its French West African empire, France did not do much to raise political consciousness among the colonized people. Blaise Digne made his way into the French parliament as the first African to represent his people in 1914. After that, Africans began nursing the consciousness to set up political

[416] Grier, "Colonial Legacies and Economic Growth," p. 319.
[417] Baz Lecocq, *Disputed Desert : Decolonisation, Competing Nationalisms and Tuareg Rebellions in Northern Mali*, Leiden: BRILL, 2010, pp. 31–33.
[418] Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 108–20.
[419] Rosa De Jorio, "Politics of Remembering and Forgetting : The Struggle over Colonial Monuments in Mali," *Africa Today*, vol. 52, no. 4 (2018), pp. 89–90.

parties.[420] The emergence of these political parties began with a strong wave in Senegal.[421] Prior to this, the people were made to carry out forced labor under the cruelty of French colonial rule. Under the French policy of Indigenat, Africans were punished without any fair trials.[422] The lack of sufficient political consciousness limited the involvement of Africans in the colonial administration of FWA was a deliberate strategy by the French to keep the French West Africans subjected to the superiority of French rule, and in so doing, they deprived the Africans of their political rights.

It is this same form of administration that the Malian political elite inherited from the French. Though they ruled their people, the administration and political development system were a product of the colonial machinery. This explains why they continued with the centrality of government power in Bamako to the detriment of other regions of the country. After independence, the postmodern Malian political elite instituted a single-party state, which gave no room for democratic expression or contrary political views. The single party was the president, and the president was the state.

1.2   Economy

French colonization was not only motivated by the desire for France own French oversea territories. It was equally motivated by the quest for raw materials from the backyard of Africa to feed the growing industrialization process which was ongoing in France. In this regard, Frances' colonial administrators were focused on the extraction and increased productivity of raw materials like gold, cotton, banana, palm oil, and other raw materials. Thus, France designed its colonial economy to bring enormous economic benefits at the barest minimum cost.[423] To achieve their objective, the administrators of the colonial economy relied on the cheap and available labor that was present in Africa. In areas where the people resisted the intrusion of the colonial economic structure, France resorted to its military might to enforce forced labor to produce export goods.

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[420] G. Wesley Johnson, "African Political Activity in French West Africa 1900-1945," *History of West Africa*, ed. by J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder, London: Longmans, 1974, p. 125.

[421] Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, p. 125.

[422] Ginio, *French Colonialism Unmasked: The Vichy Years in French West Africa*, pp. 4–10.

[423] Joshua Dwayne Settles, "The Impact of Colonialism on African Economic Development," *Chancellor's Honors Program Projects.*, 1996, pp. 7–13.

Though the slave trade had ended, the French colonial administration saw its strategy of forced labor as the colonizer's right over the subject it had conquered. The French colonial experiment in this territory was thus geared towards achieving commercial success by all possible means while paying little attention to the integral welfare and development of the colonized. While the colonies produced the raw materials that met the demands of French industrial expansion, these territories remained as ready markets for the consumption of finished French goods.

Before the French colonization of French Sudan (present da Mali), the country traded with neighboring countries and used economic interactions to develop its economic infrastructures and relations while maintaining its international markets. These states produced what they wanted in line with their internal and external demands. Contrary to the above, French colonialism transformed these African economies into predominantly export-oriented ventures. This did not only destroy the production of locally needed commodities, but it equally reinforced a system of inequality and unequal economic development.

Since the colonizers focused the economic activity of the colonies on areas that were resource-rich and closer to the coast because territories that were not found around the coastline got neglected economically[424]. The concentration of economic development principally around the coastal areas created a system of inequality which inadvertently laid the foundations of instability. In colonial Mali, the southern part of the country became a choice location for the French colonial economy. The north, on the other hand, which was closer to the Sahara Desert, was primarily left without meaningful economic progress. This did not just create an uneven pattern of wealth distribution, but it equally deprived the north of developing economically while the south flourished in economic prosperity.[425] The economic imbalance between the northern and southern regions invariably manifested in the welfare and living standards of the people in these two regions of Mali.

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[424] K. E. R, "Economic Development in French West Africa," *Royal Institute of International Affairs*, vol. 6, no. 12 (1950), p. 537.
[425] Georges Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, Paris: Editions Maritimes et Coloniales, 1955, pp. 90–95.

Besides the above, some schools of thought maintain that French colonialism was not entirely detrimental to the African colony. Such proponents of this argument posit that the colonial territories and their economic, political, and social development to the colonial enterprise. The argument positivists of colonialism evoked are that colonialism was more costly to the colonizers and beneficial to the colonized. This cost-benefit analysis of colonialism is worrisome in many regards, but it fails to consider the cruelty and subjection that the colonized endured. In addition to the above, the colonial estate was not managed with the taxpayer's money of the colonizer as the colonized were equally tasked and their resources exploited at the best cost to the colonizer.

According to Jacques Marseille, African territories under French rule benefited from financial subsidies from the central French treasury.[426] In line with Marseille, Francois Bloch Laine maintained that the French colonial administration made huge investments toward developing infrastructure, education, and health services in their colonial territories.[427] Contrary to Marsaille and Bloch Laine, Huillery found out that France did not invest much in developing its colonies in French West Africa. In Huillery's view, colonialism was more beneficial for France than for the colonies. To substantiate this argument, she posited that only about 0.29% of France's public expenditure was spent on its FWA colonies between 1844 to 1957. Conversely, in 1914 alone, France was able to make about 3.2 billion francs cumulatively from its FWA colonies[428].

To create a balance between the North and South of Mali, the French put in place policies and initiatives that enabled the Tuareg people in the northern regions to engage in the rearing of livestock. This became both an economic empowerment strategy and a source of livelihood for the Tuaregs[429]. Though it did not equate to the economically empowered southern regions, it did give the northerners a stake in the colonial economy. While the north pursued a monolithic agricultural system based on livestock, the south, on the other hand, thrived on the diversity of its economic framework and resources. Such disparity

[426] Jacques Marseille, "La Politique Metropolitaine D'investissements Coloniaux Dans L'entre-Deux Guerres," *Actes Du He Congres Des Historiens Economistes Franqais, La Position Intemationale de La France*, Paris: EHESS, 1973.

[427] Francis Bloch-Laine, *La Zone Franc*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956.

[428] Elise Huillery, "The Black Man's Burden: The Cost of Colonization of French West Africa," *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 74, no. 1 (2014), pp. 3–28, doi:10.1017/S0022050714000011.

[429] Jean Clauzel, "L'Administration Coloniale Française Et Les Sociétés Nomades Dans L'Ancienne Afrique Occidentale Française," *Politique Africaine*, vol. 46 (1992), p. 114.

in the volume and nature of the economy later amplified the first difference between the north and the south in the post-independent Malian state structure. The economic diversification in the south afforded it the possibility to flourish in enhancing infrastructural and social development. On the other hand, the north remained backward in development because its monolithic livestock economy could not generate the financial resources necessary for its regional and local development. This notwithstanding, the abandonment of the north by the various post-independent regimes that have ruled Mali points to the failure of these regimes to initiate programs that would make Mali a more inclusive state that fosters wealth distribution for the good of all.

1.3 Religion

The French colonizers came from a predominantly Christian background to colonize French Sudan. However, they were sensitive enough to maintain collaboration instead of confrontation with the northerners whose main religion was Islam. In recognizing the sensitive nature of religion and how it could become a destabilizing factor in the administration of the territory, the French decided to concern themselves with fostering their commercial and economic activities. In a nutshell, the religious structures of the north were mainly left unaltered by the French[430]. France adopted a friendly disposition towards Islam. They even made significant efforts to build mosques for worship. The French colonizers were swift in their approach in clamping down on dissident Islamic leaders who contested colonial rule and tried to spark up instability. Generally, northern Mali's French policy toward Islam was more cooperative and collaborative than confrontational

1.4 Post-Independence Politics

The examination of Mali's post-independence politics is relevant to understanding how the state has historically evolved, considering how it has been politically constructed and imagined by Mali's political elites who took control of the territory after colonial rule. The terrain of post-independence politics in Mali presents a dialectic process of political, economic, social, and religious dynamics that shaped the internal stability of Mali. After haven fought alongside the French on foreign soil in the Second World War, Malian

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[430] F. Clark Andrew, "Imperialism, Independence, and Islam in Senegal and Mali," *Africa Today*, vol. 2, no. 4 (1999), p. 58.

soldiers and those who had been educated through the colonial system began clamoring for greater participation in the management of their territory. This opened the way for the formation of political parties. The formation of political parties in French Sudan began by 1945[431]. The political consciousness that unraveled led to the formation of parties such as Parti Progressiste du Sudan (PSP), the Rassemblement Democratic Africaine (RDA), and the Union Sudanais (US)[432]. The emergence of these political parties provided a platform for the independence demands of the territory. However, it did not altogether scrap the complexities of identity and territoriality, which the colonial experiment had ambiguously merged into a single nation.

The undiluted affiliation of Malians towards their ethnic identity and regional boundaries spilled over into the politics of the post-independent state. The inability of the independent Malian state to craft politically inclusive policies, especially in the case of the north, only reinforced the reasons why the northerners saw themselves first as subjects to their ethnic and religious groups before considering themselves as citizens of the Republic of Mali. Such disconnect of the center from the periphery only further explains the instability and strive that has characterized modern-day politics in Mali.

In 1958, French Sudan became part of the French community in its right as an autonomous entity. By 1959, Senegal and the Sudanese Republic converged and formed the Federation of Mali.[433] After receiving recognition from France, the Mali Federation was led by Modibo Keita. French Sudan, led by Leopold Senghor of Senegal, continued to remain part of the French community. Due to the differences in the perception of its leaders and based on divergence in political views and ideological leanings, the federation disintegrated.[434] Senegal withdrew its membership and participation in August 1960. Consequently, on 22 September 1960, the Sudanese Republic achieved its independence,

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[431] Patrick Manning, *Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa 1880–1985*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 146.

[432] Christine Rebecca Smith, *National Identity, Military Rule and French Intervention in Mali's Recent Political Crisis*, University of California, 2014, pp. 7–9.

[433] Ali, "French Colonialism To Neo-Colonialism in Mali : An Analytical Study," p. 199.

[434] Donn M. Kurtz, "Political Integration in Africa: The Mali Federation," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1970), p. 407.

and it was subsequently renamed Mali [435]. Modibo Keita became the first president of the nation of Mali.

The disintegration of the Mali Federation was eminent from its creation. Both Senegal and the Sudanese Republic saw the idea of a federation as a steppingstone towards the remaking of the formidable Malian empire which preceded colonial rule. According to William Moraes, this was an impossible mission to achieve because, though autonomous, the federation was still under the influence of French colonial rule.[436] The reemergence of the Malian empire was not a project that could be achieved alongside colonial domination. The fundamental differences in the political and ideological leanings of both Keita and Senghor accounted for the brief existence of the federation. While Modibo Keita adopted a Marxist socialist approach toward building an African-centered federation that was strong, independent, and in complete control of economic resources, Senghor, on the other hand, preferred a liberal economic system to be operated under the tutelage of France. These differences explain why the Mali federation eventually collapsed, leading to the independence of Mali as a sovereign nation on 22 September 1962. The table below shows the political evolution of political leaders who led the country and how they came to power. The table also presents the term of office of these leaders, their political ideology, and affiliations.

Table 8: Political Leadership in Mali 1960-2022

Political Leader	Method of Ascension to Power	Term of Office	Political Ideology	Political Affiliation
Modibo Keita	Elected	20 June 1960-19 November 1968 (overthrown)	African Nationalism Pan Africanism Socialism	The Sudanese Union-African Democratic Rally
Moussa Traore	Coup d'état	19 November 1968-26 March 1991	Marxist-Leninist Democratic Centralism	Military/Democratic Union of the Malian People (UDPM)
Amadou Toumani Toure	Coup d'état	26 March 1991-8 June 1992	/	Military
Alpha Oumar Konare	Elected	8 June 1992-8 June 2002	Social Democracy Pan Africanism Democratic Socialism	Alliance for Democracy in Mali-African Party for Solidarity and Justice (ADEMA-PASJ)
Amadou Toumani Toure	Elected	8 June 2002-22 March 2012	/	Independent
Amadou Sanogo	Coup d'état	22 March 2012-12 April 2012	/	Military
Dioncounda Traore	Appointed (Transitional President)	12 April 2012-4 September 2013		ADEMA-PASJ
Ibrahim Boubacar Keita	Elected	4 September 2013- 18 August 2020 (deposed)	Social Democracy	Rally for Mali (RPM)
Assimi Goita	Coup d'état	18 August 2020-25 September 2020	/	Military
Bah Ndaw	Interim President	25 September 2020-24 May 2021 (deposed)	/	Independent
Assimi Goita	Coup d'état	24 May 2021-Present	/	Military

Mali, like many African countries that experienced French colonial rule, early African statemen continued to shape the policies of the new states according to the dictates of

their former colonial masters. Even though the Mali federation failed, Modibo Keita held firm to his socialist ideologies. Even though he ruled independent Mali as an authoritarian leader, Keita remained distrustful that the French could ensure the internal stability of the newly independent state. Consequently, he gravitated towards building solid connections with the Soviet Union for political and military support[437]. Modibo Keita equally strengthened his relations with other African nationalist leaders like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Sekou Toure of Guinea[438]. From 1960 to 1968, Kieta led Mali as a single-party state under the banner of Union Sudanaise-Rassemblement Democratique Africaine. (US-RDA). Through this party, the National Assembly reelected Kieta in 1964. It should be recalled that the US-RDA won all 80 legislative positions of the National Assembly in that same year.

Modi Keita's alliance with the Soviet Union was a calculated strategy to align with an external force that could provide strong support for his socialist and nationalist political ideologies. Keita's rule over Mali was a dictatorship that did not give space for political opposition. Mali's relations with the Soviet Union did not bring in the economic gains which Kieta had wished to achieve. The decline of the Malian economy caused Kieta to reintroduce his country back into the franc zone in 1967. Keita's return to the franc zone was to salvage what was left of the economy. However, this step was a little too late because the failure of his socialist policies had already sown seeds of dissent and discontent for his role in Mali.

The failure of Kieta's policies and the hardship that came along with his authoritarian rule were the elements that set the stage for his undoing. This explains why general Moussa Traore staged a coup and overthrew Kieta in 1968[439]. A cross-section of Mali's population saw the coup as a liberation from the shackles of Kieta's dictatorship, even if it meant they would be governed by military rule. Change was all the people of Mali wanted, even though they were uncertain about how such a change would play out. After the overthrow of Kieta, Traore announced that his administration was going to engage in broad-based economic and political reforms. He reversed the economic policies of Kieta

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[437] ibid.

[438] Ali, "French Colonialism To Neo-Colonialism in Mali : An Analytical Study," pp. 112–29.

[439] Sanankona Bintou, *The Fall of Modibo Keita*, Paris: Chaka Edition, 1990.

and made way for economic liberalization.[440] This notwithstanding, his reign too was characterized by difficult years of economic challenges, corruption, repression, and unemployment. Just like his predecessor Moussa Traore ruled Mali as a one-party state.

Under Moussa Traore's regime, the *Union Democratique du Peuple Malien* (UDPM) was the only known political party. Traore's administration did not give room for political opposition. During his reign, he won every election unopposed. Even though Traore had introduced some economic liberalization in the country, he did not consider it a political choice to introduce multiparty politics in Mali. However, the wind of change that blew across Africa in the 1990s did not spare Mali. The early 1990s came with a wave of multipartyism that created space for the emergence of political parties. The Alliance for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA) emerged in 1990 as a vibrant political movement to challenge Traore's regime. The repression which followed the emergence of rival opposition groups in Mali brought about wanton chaos and instability.[441] Consequently, colonel Amadou Toumani Toure toppled Moussa Traore in 1991 and took control of the country.

To maintain stability in the country, the coup leader, Toumani Toure, assured the people of delivering a civilian government built on a democratic platform. A national conference was convened, bringing together political associations, labor, social unions, and student bodies. These groups engaged constructively and produced a constitution that expressed the democratic tenets of multipartyism. Multiparty elections were eventually held for the first time in 1992. On 8 June, Alpha Oumar Konare, under the banner of Alliance for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA), took over face ask the president of Mali. After the democratic reforms of 1991, close to 80 parties have been created so far. Konare was eventually reelected for a second term in office in 1997.

After having served two uninterrupted terms of office, Konare peacefully stepped aside in 2002 when Amadou Toumani Toure won the presidential elections as an independent candidate. The ascension of Toumani Toure to power signaled the first time that power

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[440] Rosa De Jorio, "Narratives of the Nation and Democracy in Mali: A View from Modibo Keita's Memorial," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, vol. 43, no. 4 (2003), p. 830, doi:10.4000/etudesafricaines.1467.
[441] John M. Bingen, R. James., Robinson David and Staatz (ed.), *Democracy and Development in Mali*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000, pp. 261–62.

was peacefully transferred from one elected leader to the other. While serving as a lieutenant colonel in 1991, Toumani Toure was very instrumental in overthrowing Moussa Traore's regime. The significant contributions he made in bringing multiparty politics to Mali had earned him the trust and confidence of the people. His election as president in the 2000 polls thus came as no surprise. Toumani Toure worked towards developing social and economic programs to address many citizens' problems. Toumani Toure was himself overthrown in a coup in 2012. The aftermath of that coup significantly contributed to fostering the conflict and instability that tore Mali apart.

2   THE CRISIS IN MALI

2.1   *Tuareg and Arab Uprisings*

Prior to the French colonization of Mali, Tuaregs did not essentially feel they belonged to the colonized territory. The origins of the Tuaregs could be traced back to Berber and Arab tribes. Before colonization, Tuaregs and Arabs of northern Mali were nomadic people spread across Niger, Mali, Algeria, and Libya. The haphazard demarcation of colonial boundaries led to the artificial positioning of Tuaregs in the northern regions of Mali. In the early days of French colonialism, Tuaregs put up strong resistance against colonial rule. In recognition of their strong Islamic religious organization and ability to resist, the French adopted a pacifist approach towards the Tuaregs in the north of Mali. While the Southern regions of Mali experienced forced labor, the northern regions were spared the burden of such a harsh colonial reality. The French were quick to realize that governing Mali meant collaborating with and leaving the northern structures of the Tuareg society intact. While this brought stability, such stability came at a high cost to the northern people. Because the French had refrained from interfering with the social and religious construct of the north, they concentrated their educational and development initiatives principally in the southern regions. Consequently, this created a gap of inequality between the north and the South of Mali.

The north was neither developed nor educated at the end of French colonization. This explains why those who replaced the French and took over the administration of Mali at independence were predominantly southerners, who had endured the brunt of colonial rule but equally benefited from the education system which the colonizers introduced. The absence of the colonial administration in the north and the divergence in the

development paradigm of both north and south was eventually carried into the post-colonial Malian state. At independence, the Malian political elites who took over the country's affairs did little to effectively bridge the gap that colonial rule had created between the north and south. The neglect of the country's northern regions thus sheds light on why the post-independent and postmodern Malian state has suffered from continuous attacks staged by the Tuaregs. The 2012 escalation of conflict, which has kept the Malian state under perpetual instability, is essentially an upshot and a continuation of Tuareg and Arab uprisings in 1963, 1990, and 2006.

2.2   The 1963 Tuareg Rebellion

After independence from France in 1960, Mali experienced its first Tuareg revolt in 1963. While Mali's first president Modibo Keita saw the socialist model of governing the newly independent territory as means to enhance economic prosperity end development, the Tuaregs, on the other hand, capitalized on the challenges of Keita's policies to magnify their quest for a separate Tuareg state. During colonial rule, the Tuaregs did not actively engage in educating their communities. Consequently, they were left out of the governing elites that continued the administration of the state after independence. These notwithstanding, the Tuaregs felt marginalized and alienated by the central governing elites of the south. They interpreted their lack of political participation in the development of the new state as a deliberate attempt by the southerners to keep them powerless and subjugated. The Tuaregs believed the southern dominated government was not sincere enough in distributing the country's wealth in a way that could benefit the Tuaregs[442]. The Tuaregs were equally aggrieved because Keita's government did not consider the agricultural and nomadic lifestyle of the northerners and their cultural and geographical specificities.

According to Falola and Haar, military commanders whom Keita appointed to govern the northern regions administered with an iron fist. This was further compounded by drought-stricken environmental conditions, which negatively affected the agricultural endeavor of the Tuaregs[443]. The military commanders did little to bring food assistance and relief to

[442] Kalifa Keita, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1998), p. 10, doi:10.1080/09592319808423221.

[443] Hetty ter Haar and Toyin Falola, *Narrating War and Peace in Africa*, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2017, pp. 160–65.

the Tuaregs as they faced poor agricultural yields. Contrary to collaborating with the Tuaregs as the French did, the commanders meted harsh treatment on the Tuareg population. Such challenging conditions stemmed from heavy taxation policies to arbitrary arrests and torture. These grievances created a rift between Keita's administration and the Tuareg people. The 1963 attack on the new state was not just an expression of the grievances that the Tuaregs felt, but it was equally an attempt to break away from the state of Mali.

Due to the lack of adequate weapons, Tuareg fighters primarily engaged the state military through guerrilla tactics. Meanwhile, the state army fought back with state-of-the-art weapons which they had gotten from the Soviet Union. The asymmetric nature of this revolt, coupled with the poorly organized nature of the Tuaregs, left the latter no chance of succeeding in its mission. The rebellion was met with stiff repression from the Malian army.[444] The heavy military clamp down on the Tuareg rebellion led to civilians' and fighters' deaths. Approximately 1000 people lost their lives.[445]. The instability and uncertainty of the conflict led many people in the northern regions to seek refuge in neighboring countries like Libya and Algeria.

Many schools of thought have argued that the repression of the first Tuareg revolt was very harsh and militarily intense. Such pundits draw their inspiration from the consequences of the revolt and its impact on the inhabitants of the northern regions. These notwithstanding, one would equally argue that Mali was just a new state emerging from colonial rule. Consequently, Keita felt the responsibility to keep his country united. The repression of the state military against the Tuaregs may have brought about unintended consequences and deteriorated the relationship between the government and Tuareg communities. However, military force was the only available tool for Keita at the time to maintain the territorial integrity and stability of his country. The secession of the Tuaregs may have set in bad precedence that other communities within the state would have copied.

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[444] Damme, "The Roots of Mali's Conflict: Moving Beyond the 2012 Crisis," p. 31.
[445] Sambanis Paul, Collier, and Nicholas (ed.), *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*, 1st ed., Washington DC: The World Bank, 2005, p. 255.

Moreover, Modibo Keita and his military did not have any conflict resolution skills with which they would have peacefully engaged the Tuaregs to solve the problems they were agitating against. Whatever the case may be, the first Tuareg revolt only served to open the way for future instability in Mali. A considerable number of fighters who participated in the 1990 revolt were those who had fled to neighboring countries after the 1963 revolt.

2.3 The 1990 Tuareg Revolt

The Sahel region witnessed devasting levels of drought and desertification from 1970 into the mid-1980s. Since the Tuaregs and Arabs were fundamentally nomadic people with an agriculturally driven economy, the unfavorable climatic conditions significantly affected their livestock. These unfavorable conditions caused the Tuaregs to migrate into neighboring Libya and Algeria. The decision to emigrate was equally informed by the fact that the government in Bamako had addressed the drought issue but failed to follow up with concrete actions to assist the Tuaregs. The drought caused them to lose a considerable amount of their livestock. While in Libya, Tuareg rebels got enlisted and trained with Ghaddafi's army and engaged in fighting wars in Chad and Palestine. The fall of oil prices in the late 1980s and the difficult economic conditions that this caused forced the Tuaregs to seek refuge back in northern Mali. The difference was that they were returning armed and trained for warfare this time.

The wars that the Tuaregs fought for Gaddafi raised awareness in them about the obligations of state development initiatives. However, the northern regions were still largely underdeveloped and neglected. This political and economic marginalization and the lack of government commitment toward the northern regions caused the Tuaregs to pick up arms against the state.[446].

The 1990 revolt thus began with Tuareg fighters staging attacks on government infrastructures and military outposts in the northern regions. Unlike the previous rebellion, the combatants in the June 1990 revolt were well organized under the umbrella of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MPLA). These fighters were led

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[446] Ali, "French Colonialism To Neo-Colonialism in Mali : An Analytical Study," p. 120.

by Iyad Ag Ghaly, who later formed a splinter group named Ansar Dine.[447] To strengthen their fight against the state, the rebels began by launching an attack on Menaka.[448] This attack led to the liberation of many prisoners. The rebels confiscated weapons from the soldiers. The combat strength and success of the MPLA rebels enticed many Tuaregs and Arabs to join their ranks. Consequently, by the close of 1990, the Tuareg rebels had risen from a few hundred to more than 3000 combatants.[449]

The Tuareg rebels of the MPLA typically adopted a guerrilla tactic in fighting the military. Hit and run ambushes became a predominant feature of the 1990 rebellion. The Malian army were skilled fighters, but the Tuareg rebels had better mastery of the desert terrain. These gave the rebels an edge over the state military. From June to October 1990, an estimated 50 to 100 Tuareg rebels were killed. On the other hand, the military's death toll stood at approximately 500 to 1500. The rebels' success explains why by the end of 1990, their combatants had risen to well over 3000. It is, however, expedient to note that this rebel success came at a high cost for the noncombatant population of the northern regions. The inability of the Malian military to effectively suppress that Tuareg rebellion led them to adopt repressive and punitive measures against the civilian population[450]. Military retaliation came in the form of beatings meted on civilians. In instances where they suspected noncombatants of having links with the rebels, such civilians were publicly executed. In extreme cases, the houses of civilians were razed with fire. These repressive actions of Mali's military drew widespread attention and condemnation from the international community and the southern regions of Mali. The brutality of the soldiers only came to reinforce the delegitimization of Moussa Traore's regime in the eyes of the Tuareg communities.

In recognition that a military solution was not the way out of the rebellion, Traore's government accepted to negotiate with the leaders of the MNLA revolt. Algeria thus became the principal mediator between the Malian government and the rebels. Prior to

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[447] Adebayo E and Adeyemi, Mahmoud N Musa, "Understanding the Tuareg ' s Struggle in Mali : From the Rebellion of Autonomy to Rebellion of Secession," *The International Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2012), pp. 80–82.

[448] Lecocq and Baz, Klute Georg, "Tuareg Separatism in Mali," *International Journal*, vol. 68, no. 3 (2013), p. 426, doi:10.1177/0020702013505431.

[449] Paul, Collier and Nicholas, *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*, p. 256.

[450] ibid.

the negotiations, internal political rivalry rocked the rebel alliance because they could not all agree on the future of the Tuareg community they had been fighting for. This led to breakaway factions from the MPLA. Within the ranks of the rebel organization, some thought a form of autonomy within the state was fair enough as an achievement of the rebellion. However, others held contrary views to this. This second group favored a complete separation from the state and the creation of an independent state. The MPLA was eventually reorganized and renamed the Popular Movement of Azawad (MPA), while the Arab faction identified themselves as the Arab Islamic Front of Azawad (FIAA)[451].

The negotiation between the government and the Tuareg rebels culminated in what became known as the Tamanrasset agreement, signed on 6 January 1991. The Algerian government mediated this peace agreement. Major General Ousmane Goulibaly signed for the Malian government, while Iyad Ag Ghaly signed on behalf of the armed group-Popular Movement of Azawad and the Arab Islamic Front.[452] While the Tuareg rebels agreed to end hostilities to ensure the peace and stability of the northern regions, the government of Mali committed to demilitarizing the Tuareg communities and accorded some form of autonomy to the northern regions. The accord also indicated the integration of former rebels into the ranks of the state military. Development and employment opportunities were to be created by the government. One of the outstanding merits of the Tamanrasset agreement is that it brought peace and stability in the northern regions and, by extension, to the entire nation of Mali. The government of Moussa Traore did not follow through in implementing the articles of the Tamanrasset accord. The lack of government commitments to implement an accord it had committed to triggered fresh agitations for independence among the Tuareg rebels. The agitations of that were Tuaregs, coupled with the corruption, repression, and authoritarianism of Traore's government, led to his overthrow through a military coup on 26 March 1991[453]. The coup was led by Amadou Toumani Toure. This happened barely two months after signing the terms of the

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[451] Baz, Georg, "Tuareg Separatism in Mali," p. 427.

[452] UCDP, "Tamanrasset Accord Agreement on Ceasing of Hostilities," 1991, https://ucdpged.uu.se/peaceagreements/fulltext/mal19910106.pdf.

[453] Robert Edward and Poulton, Ibrahim Ag Youssouf, "A Peace of Timbuktu: Democratic Governance, Development, and African Peacemaking," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1998), p. 69, http://unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/a-peace-of-timbuktu-democratic-governance-development-and-african-peacemaking-en-21.pdf.

Tamanrasset peace accord. Despite the short span of this accord, it will rightly be described as a remarkable initiative of preventive diplomacy that averted the occurrence of a large-scale civil war in Mali. Traore had the power to command the military to continue using legitimate force over people. However, he quickly realized that state monopoly over the instruments of violence was not the last option for peace.

Upon ascension to power and putting in place a transition government, general Amadou Toumani Toure realized that the terms of the Tamanrasset accords had been violated, and the articles of that agreement no longer bound the parties involved. The situation was further exacerbated by the coming of radical groups like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Azawad (FPLA) and Revolutionary Army for the Liberation of Azawad (ARLA)[454]. The FPLA was a splinter group that broke away from the FIAA because they felt the MPA was too docile for their liking. In the same vein, ARLA was a subgroup that further broke away from the FPLA. What the FPLA and ARLA had in common was the quest for the complete independence of a Tuareg nation. Consequently, they did not subscribe to or uphold the articles of the Tamanrasset accord.

The demise of Mousa Traore's regime ushered in a democratic dispensation in Mali and signaled the end of the single-party state. After haven put in place a transitional government in December 1991, Amadou Toumani Toure equally disregarded the Tamanrasset agreement. To establish peace and stability in the fragile state he had taken over, he once again accepted the mediation of Algeria, Mauritania, and France in brokering a peace deal with the Unified Movements and Fronts of Azawad (MFUA). The MFUA was a collective body of armed insurgent groups. The mediation assistance of the above states paid off as Mali's transitional government was able to sign the National Pact with the Unified Movements a Fronts of Azawad in April 1992. The table below shows the coups d'états which have taken place in Mali. The table equally presents the coup leaders and the outcome of the coups.

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[454] Adeyemi, Musa, "Understanding the Tuareg ' s Struggle in Mali : From the Rebellion of Autonomy to Rebellion of Secession," pp. 82–83.

Table 9: Coup D'états in Mali

Coups	Coup Leader (s)	Outcome
19 November 1968	Moussa Traore	President Modibo Keita was ousted in a bloodless coup by Moussa Traore. Traore eventually became the president of Mali
26 March 1991	Amadou Toumani Toure	The government of Moussa Traore was toppled by Amadou Toumani Tour. After more than 20 years of Moussa Traore's dictatorship, Mali eventually organized multiparty elections
16 January-6 April 2012 Tuareg Rebellion	MNLA Ansar Dine MOJWA	The MNLA and Ansar Dine took over control of the northern regions of Mali and declared the independence of a separate state called Azawad
21 March 2012	Amadou Sanogo	The military mutiny and coup led to the overthrow of President Amadou Toumani Toure. The speaker of parliament, Dioncounda Traore, assumed the functions of a transitional president. More than 50 people were killed, and several hundred were wounded
18 August 2020	Assimi Goita	The military forced President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and his PM Boubou Cisse to resign. ECOWAS suspended Mali. Bah Ndaw became the interim president, while Assimi Goita assumed the position of vice president
24 May 2021	Assimi Goita	Assimi Goita and the military junta he led coerced interim president Bah Ndaw and his PM Moctar Ouane to resign. Mali's constitutional court named Assimi Goita as the interim president of Mali. The African Union and ECOWAS suspended Mali. France equally suspended all joint military operations with Mali's armed forces.

The National Pact was a crucial moment in the conflict resolution history of Mali because it fostered peace and stability. According to the pact, the government was to take concrete steps to ensure that infrastructural development and the functioning of public services in the north were a priority. The MFUA gave up the quest for independence and acknowledged that the prosperity of the north was vital but that such prosperity and development could only be achieved within the Malian state. The north was equally granted a special status within the state of Mali.[455] The pact's signing ushered in relative calm in Mali, which accorded Toumani Toure the opportunity to organize the country's first-ever multiparty elections.

Under the Alliance for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA), Alpha Oumar Konare secured 69% of the electoral vote to become the first elected president of Mali on 8 June 1992. Other political parties which participated in these landmark elections included the Sudanese Union-African Democratic Rally(US-RDA), National Congress for Democratic Initiative (NCDI), Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), and Rally for Labor Democracy (RLD). By December 1992, Konare visited the northern regions of Kidal, Timbuktu, and Gao. President Konare's visit to these regions shows that the pact had played a crucial role in bringing about stability. The Konare administration may have had good intentions to implement the National Pact. However, financial constraints and other factors limited their ability to execute the agreed-upon articles. This led to a series of armed rebellions against his administration. Negotiations usually followed these rebellions. This trend which had begun in 1990, continued till 1995 when the armed groups stopped attacking the state institutions.

2.4   The 2006 Uprising

The regime of Alpha Oumar Konare was the beginning of the democratic experiment in Mali. This notwithstanding, his administration was faced with many tumultuous moments of revolt from the Tuareg rebels. After successfully serving two terms, Konare left the stage of power. In Mali's 2012 presidential elections, Konare did not run for office.

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[455] Kåre Lode, "Mali's Peace Process: Context, Analysis & Evaluation," *ACCORD*, vol. 13 (1996), pp. 56–63.

Instead, Amadou Toumani Toure was projected as the candidate he favored. Toumani Toure eventually won the elections of 2002 and replaced Konare as president. The election of Amadou Toumani Toure marked the first time in the political history of Mali that power was peacefully transferred from one president to another through elections. Amadou Toure's success was credited to his role in organizing the transition to democracy in 1991. The pivotal role he played as the president of the transitional government won the admiration and hearts of the Malian people towards Amadou Toure. This substantial social and political capital he had accumulated significantly contributed to his election on 8 June 2002. He equally enjoyed the political support of Alpha Konare[456]. Touré's strong adherence and belief in the merits of democratic governance caused him to rally the various political groups in his country as a condition necessary to enhance national cohesion and ensure state stability.[457]

Amadou Touré's mission was to build a Mali that was inclusive and responsive to the needs of the Malian population. Touré's programs and policies endeared him to the nation and the political class. Consequently, in 2007, he was re-elected for another term in office. In essence, Toure had grand plans for his nation, but the internal conflict dynamics of the country coupled with Mali's economic constraints hindered him from constructing the Mali he wanted to see. The inability of Amadou Touré's government to accomplish their development agenda for Mali plunged the country into another rebellion in 2006. This rebellion lasted till 2009.

The leading insurgent group in the 2006 rebellion was the Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC)[458]. This rebellion which began on 23 May 2006, had many demands that they wanted the government of Amadou Toure to address. One of their primary concerns was the failure of the government to implement the 1992 National Pact effectively. The rebel movements equally clamored that the northern regions be granted greater autonomy

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[456] Willian Moraes Roberto, Antoniazzi, "The Situation in Mali," p. 75.

[457] Paulo Fagundes Visentini, "Os Países Africanos: Diversidade de Um Continente," *CEBRAFRICA*, vol. 21 (2012).

[458] Baz, Georg, "Tuareg Separatism in Mali," pp. 424–34.

and more significant development initiatives for the north through equitable distribution of national wealth and for Kidal to have a special status.[459]

The ADC rebellion was championed by erstwhile leaders of the Popular Movement of Azawad, who had benefited from the reintegration policy of the state to occupy strategic positions within the military. The flag bearers of the rebellion were colonial Hassan Fagaga and Ibrahim Bahanga. These two were former Tuareg rebels who got integrated into the Malian military after the 1990 uprising.[460] The rebel fighters launched attacks on government and military infrastructures in Tassilit, Kidal, and Menaka. This raid led to the carting away of military weapons and ammunition, which the rebels continued to use to fuel their attacks.

To prevent the conflict from spilling all over the country, Touré's government was swift in engaging the ADC rebels through a negotiation process mediated by Algeria. The negotiations led to the signing of the Algiers accord on the 4th of July, 2006[461]. The Algiers accord was essentially a restatement of the articles of the Tamanrasset and National Pact Accord, amongst many other things. The government made generous concessions to the ADC by accepting to initiate policies and programs that will significantly address the socio-economic and development needs of the northern regions. From the improvement of health and electricity infrastructures to the withdrawal of the state military from the north, the government sought to show good faith in wanting to establish peace and stability through the agreements of the accord.

However, not every government or Tuareg group member welcomed the Algiers accord readily. While those in the government felt that the state was too soft and showed weakness in accepting ADC demands, the Rally for Mali (RM) political party under the leadership of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was among those who felt the government had adopted a weak position that was not suitable enough to address the security concerns of

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[459] Stephanie Pezard, Michael Shurkin, "A Brief History of Mali ' s Rebellions and the Implementation of Peace Accords," RAND Corporation, 2015, pp. 16 17,https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt15zc57q.9?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

[460] Dukovick J Tyler, "The Republic of Mali," *Africa The World Today Series*, Harpers Ferry: Stryker-Post Publication, 2010.

[461] The University of Edinburgh, "Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali Resulting From the Algiers Process," (2015), www.peaceagreements.org.

the country.[462] There were dissenting voices among the northern Tuareg groups who did not accept the Algiers accord as binding on all Tuareg groups. Aggrieved that the Algiers accord mostly favored the Ifogha clan from where Iyad Ag Ghaly came from, other communities like it Idnan and Taghat Mellet argued that they were not effectively represented in the peace process.[463]

In response to the non-representation of other groups in the Algiers peace process, Ibrahim Ag Bahanga created a new rebel group to challenge the Algiers accord. This led to the establishment of the Tuareg Alliance of Northern Mali for Change (ATNMC). By August 2007, the ATNMC had launched deadly attacks on military outposts and engaged in taking hostages for ransom. The death of 63 soldiers between April and May 2008 forced president Amadou Toumani Toure to abandon the pacifist approach to peace in favor of a military response to the atrocities of the ATNMC. The military offensive that the state adopted led to the defeat of the ATNMC in January 2009. The rebel activities of the ATNMC and other groups which stood against the Algiers accord stalled its implementation. Like all other accords before this, the Algiers accord was not effectively implemented.

Examining the dynamics of the 2006 Tuareg uprising is critical in understanding the insurgencies that erupted in Mali after 2006. The post-independence trajectory of the state of Mali showed that the northern regions have continued to remain restive based on several reasons. Among these causes has been the claim of neglect and marginalization of the northern Tuareg-dominated regions. Both the government and armed groups have engaged in peace processes culminating in failure. The failure of each of these peace processes opened a window of opportunity for armed groups to emerge and thrive. Thus, the 2012 conflict, which continues to rage today, is a product of the failure of previous peace agreements.

This notwithstanding, the narrative of the Malian crisis has always significantly followed a pattern of blaming the government for the failures of peace agreements without

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[462] Arthur Boutellis and Marie-Joelle Zahar, "The Shadow of Past Peace Agreements (the 1960s – 2012)," 2017, p. 6.
[463] International Crisis Group, "Mali: Avoiding Escalation," 2012, www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/mali/mali-avoiding-escalation.

adequately balancing the efforts and initiatives put in place by the various governments to stabilize and ensure security in Mali. The rhetoric of government marginalization of the northern regions has clouded the judgments of many analysts of the conflict to see that the state has been engaged in making a significant effort all along. Suppose we must hold the successive Malian governments responsible for the failures of the peace agreements. In that case, we must be fair to equally accentuate their strides towards preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, and peacemaking in Mali. The government of President Alpha Konare and that of Amadou Toure all made tremendous efforts to engage dissident groups through political dialogue processes. Such processes were meant to understand their points of contention and how such grievances could be solved through peace-negotiated solutions. The peaceful approach of the state and the generous concessions made toward the Tuareg rebels came across as a manifestation of weak leadership. However, Konare and Toure intentionally sought peaceful negotiations as a first response to the Tuareg revolt. The continuation of insurgency only proves that the state of Mali does not hold a monopoly on the instruments of violence.

3 VIOLENT INSURGENCY: THE 2012 MALIAN CONFLICT

When Amadou Toumani Toure took power in 2002, his idea for a more stable and democratic Mali was lauded both at home and abroad. However, the layout of his plans and his ambitions to halt the Tuareg insurgency and ensure a stable democratic state did not ultimately come to fruition as he had envisioned. The failure to follow through with the contents of the Algiers accord reignited suspicion in the Tuaregs' minds on the state's genuine intentions to meet up to its commitments. Their fears and distrust were further compounded by the fact that previous peace accords like the Tamanrasset and National Pact all failed to deliver on their promises. The failure of the decentralization project and the continuous neglect of the northern regions of Kidal, Timbuktu, and Gao caused Tuaregs to take up arms against the government in January 2012. The events of the 2012 Tuaregs rebellion opened the window of opportunity for the disgruntled Malian military to launch a coup against the government of Amadou Toumani Toure. From 2012 to the present, Mali has remained in a steady state of conflict, enjoying only occasional episodes of truncated peace. Before analyzing the 2012 Malian coup d'état, it would be worthwhile to understand the underlying issues which triggered the fourth Tuareg rebellion.

The failure to implement the agenda of the Algiers accord reinforced the argument that Tuaregs that the southern dominated government in Bamako was intentionally neglecting the north to dominate it continuously.[464] The inability or unwillingness of the southern government elites to erect functional administrative structures in the north caused the Tuaregs to feel abandoned and began clamoring for a new state of Azawad to encompass the northern regions. What made the 2012 rebellion significant was the fact that, that Tuareg's demands shifted from autonomy to outright separation from the state of Mali. Like the northeastern regions in the Central African Republic where the Seleka originated, the northern Tuaregs in Mali felt distanced and discriminated against by the state. The preeminence of the south over the north sowed seeds of dissent that characterized the tension between Mali's northern and southern people.[465] The democratic agenda of President Amadou Toure brought in some form of reform and political liberalization of the political space in Mali. However, these gains achieved because of multiparty democracy did not eventually translate into effective decentralization and development for the northern regions of Mali, which had hitherto been accustomed to neglect.

Unstable climatic conditions led to severe drought and food crisis in northern and central Mali. The Tuaregs in northern Mali are predominantly engaged in pastoral agriculture. The drought of the 70s and 80s, coupled with those of 2005, 2010, and 2012 contributed significantly to fueling tensions over the quest for water and grazing resources between the nomadic herders and the farmers.[466] The harsh climatic conditions in the north led to the loss of a considerable number of livestock, which the Tuaregs depended on as their source of economic empowerment and livelihood. Land tenure reforms in Mali have not succeeded in addressing the issues of water scarcity, crop production, and the development of the livestock sector.[467] Claims over water and land resources have continued to fuel intergroup conflict. This explains why the drought in 2012 caused many

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[464] Arthur Boutellis and Marie-Joelle Zahar, "The Shadow of Past Peace Agreements (1960s – 2012)," pp. 2–8.

[465] A. Harmon Stephen, *Terror and Insurgency in the Sahara-Sahel Region: Corruption, Contraband, Jihad and the Mali War of 2012–2013*, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2014.

[466] Adeyemi, Musa, "Understanding the Tuareg ' s Struggle in Mali : From the Rebellion of Autonomy to Rebellion of Secession," p. 72.

[467] T.A Benjaminsen, "Does Supply-Induced Scarcity Drive Violent Conflicts in the African Sahel? The Case of the Tuareg Rebellion in Northern Mali," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 45, no. 6 (2008), pp. 819–36.

young Tuaregs to join rebel groups like the MNLA and Ansar Dine.[468] These men saw their recruitment into the ranks of these armed groups as an alternative economic opportunity from which they could benefit from the spoils of the rebellion. The rebels were dissatisfied with the management of the climate and scarcity situation in the north. They argued that an independent state of Azawad would give them the liberty and power to manage their affairs more effectively.

Not every African government can adequately address the environmental and agricultural crisis. Governments are sometimes caught between their political priorities and financial limitations, which makes the need to respond to the issues of desertification very complicated. On the other hand, the politicization of humanitarian aid only reinforces the people's distrust of their government and sometimes strained relations between the aid agencies and the receiving governments. Climate and conflict remain a very delicate combination of issues that significantly challenged the state of Mali in 2012 and have continued to do so even today. Climate change affects conflicts and gives rebel groups the incentive to challenge the state.

The administration of Amadou Toumani Toure was established on the platform of a democratic consensus that sought to develop peaceful political coalitions. This, in many ways, contributed to the growth of an inclusive democratic process but failed in wiping away the cankerworm of corruption and the legacy of a centrist state approach inherited from the French colonial system. Camilla Tallmin maintains that most of the developmental aid that came into the country was centered around the country's capital Bamako. This deprived the other regions of benefiting from such aid packages but offered Touré's cronies the opportunity to swindle state funds through corrupt networks.[469]. While the country's other regions stagnated, the political elites in Bamako enriched themselves to the detriment of the other regions, which required the equal distribution of state resources to fund their local projects and administrative affairs. In reaction to this wanton

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[468] Shreya Mitra, "Mali's Fertile Grounds for Conflict : Climate Change and Resource Stress," Clingendael., 2017.

[469] Camilla Toulmin, *Land, Investment, and Migration: Thirty-Five Years of Village Life in Mali*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, pp. 46–48.

corruption, Tuareg rebels attacked the government of Bamako in 2012, abandoning the commitment they made to a ceasefire as stipulated in the Algiers accords.

While the southern governing elites formed clientelist networks and prospered in the south socially and economically, much of the north's concerns about economic marginalization were replaced with military force. Finding their people and regions discriminated against and having no alternative channel to express their grievances, the Tuaregs resorted to rebellion. The northern regions of Mali flourished economically during the empire and colonial periods. It is worthy to note that Timbuktu was not only an international commercial hub, but it was equally a great center of learning and the exchange of ideas. The post-colonial and the post-democratic state in Mali did not follow through to uphold the economic relevance of such areas in the north. Timbuktu represented a symbol of pride and prestige not only for the northerners but also for the people of Mali. Tuaregs and Arabs have been persistently sidelined from the center of power in Mali. Like in most conflicts in Africa, being sidelined from power translates to being unable to have access to or control state resources effectively. The failure of the Malian government to develop the livestock economy of the nomadic Tuaregs left them struggling on their own only at rudimentary levels. The natural resource of the north remains largely untapped, either because of insecurity or due to the lack of political will. Northern Mali has vast deposits of untapped and underexploited resources such as oil, gas, and uranium in Gao, Timbuktu, and Kidal. The inability of the southern-led government to exploit these resources is a great disservice not only to the northern regions but also to the country's economic development.

The administration of Amadou Toure embarked on a divide and rule strategy, which constantly pitted northern groups against each other. While the Tuaregs and Arabs clamored for regional autonomy, the government used the Fulani and Songhai groups to counter the claims of the Tuaregs and Arabs[470]. The divisive nature of the north gave the Bamako elites some respite to concentrate on strengthening their rule over the country without much opposition. This led to a system where the northern peoples were drastically underrepresented. At the outbreak of the 2012 crisis, Mali's National Assembly totaled

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[470] Damme, "The Roots of Mali's Conflict: Moving Beyond the 2012 Crisis," p. 19.

147 members of parliament[471]. Out of this number, only 12 MPs were Tuaregs. Meanwhile, there was no representation for the Arabs, who amazingly consisted of about 5% of the population. The government in Mali primarily sponsored counter-insurgent groups in the north against the Tuaregs. This strategy was not only cost-effective, but it equally fostered their strategy to create splinter groups in the north to combat the Tuaregs. The more northern groups fought among themselves, the more the government in the south felt less threatened. These notwithstanding, adopting a military-security approach to the Tuareg problem was a dangerous recipe for conflict, which the government of Amadou Toure and those before him had adopted. The evidence of this was the rebellion in 2012.

The success of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in achieving the independence of South Sudan on 9 July 2011 gave hope to Tuaregs that they could equally fight and achieve the independence and creation of the state of Azawad.[472] South Sudanese independence thus motivated Tuareg rebels to pick up arms against Mali's government in 2012. It is equally important to note that Muammar Gaddafi had provided Libya as a haven to Tuaregs who fled Mali because of the drought and food crisis coupled with state repression. The Libyan military trained these Tuaregs. Upon the fall of Gadhafi's regime, these Tuaregs went back to northern Mali.[473] Such fighters became part of the rebels that attacked the Malian government in 2012. The porosity of Mali's northern borders had equally made it very easy for the inflow of arms and foreign fighters into the country.

3.1   The 2012 Coup D'état

The present conflict in Mali began with the fourth Tuareg rebellion in January 2012. All the above factors discussed culminated in accounting for the outbreak of the 2012 conflict in Mali. The National Movement essentially led the Tuareg rebellion for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). The main objective of the MNLA in 2012 was to succeed the northern regions of the state of Mali and create a separate state known as Azawad. To

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[471] cited, p. 20.

[472] Matthew LeRiche and Matthew Arnold, *South Sudan: From Revolution to Independence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 1–10.

[473] Stephanie Pezard and Michael Shurkin, *Toward a Secure and Stable Northern Mali: Approaches to Engaging Local Actors*, California: Rand Corporation, 2013, p. 5.

strengthen its position against the military, the MNLA allied with other radical rebel groups like Ansa Dine, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA)[474]. This alliance was founded on a political-military framework, which sought to achieve independence for the northern regions and, at the same time, uphold the socio-religious tenets of Islam with the instrumentality of the sharia. Despite this general outlook, the different rebel groups hard their specific agenda, which they intended to achieve through the rebellion. The main objective of the MNLA was to secure total independence for the northern population. For AQIM, the motive was to expand sharia law to northern Mali as a religious ideology that would guide the region's functioning. Meanwhile, MOJWA the rebellion and its participation as a means to guarantee the safe passage of its illicit drug business within the subregion.

The Tuaregs and their allied armed groups began attacking Menaka on 16 January 2012. The days that followed were marked by attacks on the Malian military in Tessalit and Aguelhok[475]. These attacks led to the death of more than 150 soldiers. The atrocities, insecurity, and instability caused by the rebel activities pushed the military to launch a counteroffensive. These counter-insurgency operations led to the recapture of rebel-held territories. Despite this initial success, the desert lands in the northern Sahara regions post a fundamental difficulty to the army who did not master fighting in the desert zone as much as the Tuareg rebels did[476]. The military's tactical retreat led to the rebel takeover of Menaka on 1 February 2012. This attack was followed by another on Kidal on 6 February. By the early days of March 2012, severe fighting ensued between the rebel groups and the state army. The Movement for the Liberation of Azawad recaptured Tessalit on 11 March. The remaining military personnel who had resisted the rebels eventually escaped from Tessalit and sought refuge over the border in Algeria.

Within the cause of the rebellion, the army continuously lost several battles because of the lack of adequate weapons. Several requests and complaints by the military to be

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[474] Aurelie Campana and Cedric Jourde (ed.), *Islamism and Social Movements in North Africa: The Sahel and Beyond*, Oxon: Routledge, 2018.

[475] Alexander Thurston and Andrew Lebovich, "A Handbook on Mali's 2012-2013 Crisis," Kansas, 2013, p. 1.

[476] Moctar Mariko and Florent Geel, "Crimes de Guerre Au Nord-Mali [War Crimes in Northern Mali]," *Paris: Fédération Internationale Des Ligues Des Droits de l'Homme*, 2012, p. 5.

equipped with good logistics to counter the insurgents went unattended. This did not only demoralize the army but also strengthened the rebel groups' resolve to keep on fighting. After the overthrow of Gaddafi in Libya in 2012, Tuaregs, who had fought in his Islamic legion, returned to northern Mali. These groups of trained fighters successfully smuggled state-of-the-art weapons from Libya into Mali.[477] When the 2012 rebellion began, it soon became clear that the sophisticated modern weapons of the rebels provided them the urge to outmaneuver the soldiers on the battlefield.

The defeat and humiliation suffered by the army at the hands of the rebel groups led the former to become disillusioned and disloyal to the administration of President Amadou Toumani Toure.[478] The inability of the government to provide its soldiers with the weapons of war needed to combat the rebels caused the army to feel abandoned by its government. This led to widespread discontent and frustration within the state army. Consequently, Captain Amadou Sanogo staged a coup d'état and overthrew Toumani Toure on 22 March 2012[479]. The military coup instigated widespread instability and plunged Mali into chaos. That Tuareg insurgency in the north and the military court in the south produced an estimated 400,000 refugees. Mali's decline from an outstanding success of the democratic experiment into a humanitarian crisis was shocking to many. In response to the dire humanitarian need in the country, the United Nations Security Council passed resolution 2071[480]. This resolution condemned attacks on civilians and the use of children as child soldiers. It equally called on all the belligerents in the conflict to cease fire and put an end to hostilities.

In the meantime, the coup added Mali to collapsed states' statistics. With no functioning central government in Bamako, there was no possibility of resolving the conflict and reinstating stability in the country. To this effect, Amadou Sanogo, who championed the coup, established the National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and State (CNRDR)[481]. The CNRDR thus assumed the functions as the governing body of the state.

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[477] Yusuf Ibrahim Gamawa, *The Tuaregs and the 2012 Rebellion in Mali*, South Africa: Patride Publishing, 2017.

[478] Smith, *National Identity, Military Rule and French Intervention in Mali's Recent Political Crisis*, p. 25.

[479] Adriana Lins de Albuquerque, "Explaining the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion in Mali and Lack Thereof in Niger," *FOI Memo*, Stockholm, 2014, pp. 10–15.

[480] Ali, "French Colonialism To Neo-Colonialism in Mali : An Analytical Study," p. 122.

[481] Arch Puddington (ed.), *Freedom in the World 2013: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties*, New York: Freedom House, 2013, p. 445.

This interim government suspended the constitution of the state. It equally promised to reinstate law and order and work towards organizing fresh elections to put in place a democratically elected government.

The coup d'état was not well received by the international community. The UN and the AU stated their objection to a coup to resolve state issues. On its part, (ECOWAS) suspended the membership of Mali and urged the junta to give up state power. In response to the threats of sanctions from regional and international bodies, the CNRDR began making political adjustments to relinquish power in April 2012. President Toumani Toure and the junta leader Amadou Sanogo reached an agreement on 8 April to give up their claims on state power. While Toure resigned as president, Sanogo consented to transfer power to the speaker of the National Assembly, who at the time was Dioncounda Traore. Dioncounda. Thus became the interim president of Mali.

The failure of Amadou Toumani's regime stemmed from his political blunders and miscalculations. He did not do much to equip the army to be viable and motivated enough to carry out robust counter-insurgency operations against the Tuaregs. In addition to this, he was not swift enough to address the military's worries when they raised concerns about their lack of adequate ammunition to combat the insurgent groups. Accordingly, Amadou Toumani thought he could bank on the political capital he had achieved by installing the transitional government between 1990 to 1991. The insurgency which raged in the northern regions had little to do with soft power politics. It needed a military strategy that was reliant upon the availability of weapons.

In addition to the above, Amadou Toure failed to read the political temperature in Bamako effectively. The fact that the coup went on successfully indicates that Toure did not enjoy broad-based support among the political elites in Bamako. Amadou Toure came to power as an independent candidate without any political party of his own. He based his administration on political consensus and the support which such an arrangement brought to stabilize his government. However, by 2012, not every political party which supported him in the 2002 elections was still on his side. The events of 2012 showed that alliances had changed, and political interests had been shaped and shifted significantly. While the coup could be attributed to disgruntled soldiers and the already fragile situation in the

north, it would equally be tied to Amadou Toumani Toure's politico-strategic miscalculations.

Moreover, the 2012 rebellion differed from the previous rebellions in many ways. Unlike the other rebellions, the Tuaregs had more sophisticated weapons than they had possessed in the past revolts. Tuareg and Arab insurgents in the 2012 insurgency equally enjoyed support from transnational rebel groups like AQIM and MOJWA. These factors contributed significantly to giving the 2012 rebellion a distinctive characteristic that the previous revolts did not have.

The military mutiny and coup divided the allegiance and combat momentum of the army. As a result, the MNLA and Ansa Dine took advantage and benefited from the confusion to strengthen their position and progress in the rebellion. The chaos of the coup did not affect the determination of the Tuareg fighters. The rebels thus succeeded in pushing out the army and took over control of Timbuktu, Kidal, and Gao.[482] On 6 April 2012, the National Liberation Movement of Azawad (MNLA) declared the state of Azawad, symbolizing northern Mali's independence and separation from the state of Mali. Any other country or international organization never recognized the declaration of independence of northern Mali. However, the coup had given the Tuaregs the ability to finally achieve what they had been fighting for, even if it meant having control of the territory just for a couple of days.

The seeming success of the rebels was short-lived. Power struggles and divergence in interest over how the northern territory will be governed divided the rebel alliance even before they had time to celebrate their victory. The declaration of Azawad independence revealed there was more that divided than united the rebels. The MNLA clashed with Ansa Dine over how the northern region will be administered. As far as the MNLA was concerned, Azawad was to be governed as a secular state[483]. On the other hand, Ansar Dine had already begun enforcing sharia in various communities. The differences in how Azawad was to be governed led to clashes between the two rebel groups. The quest to seize control of Azawad from MNLA led Ansa Dine to form a rival coalition with AQIM

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[482] Willian Moraes Roberto, Antoniazzi, "The Situation in Mali," p. 76.
[483] ibid.

and MOJWA[484]. The combined efforts of this new rebel alliance outsmarted the MNLA as it lost control over the territories that it was managing. The secular ideologies of MNLA were clearly at variance with the Islamic agenda of the other rebel groups.

The events of the 2012 Tuareg rebellion and military coup revealed the fragility of the state of Mali. With a military that had become weakened and divisive, it was clear that the solution to the rebel activity in the country could only be addressed with external help. Thus, by the close of 2012, the interim government of Mali led by Dioncounda Traore solicited external assistance to combat the insurgency in the country as a condition necessary for peace, security, and development. This led to an array of foreign military interventions beginning with France, which assisted the government of Mali in recapturing territories lost to rebels.

4   ARMED GROUPS IN MALI'S CONFLICT

The rise of rebel groups and their participation in armed violence and insurgent attacks against the state infrastructure are common features that characterize the new nature and scope of conflicts. Prior to this time, the study and analysis of conflict in international relations and political science focused on a state-centric approach. The statist approach predominantly maintained the state's monopoly as the controller of legitimate violence. However, the increasing rise of non-state armed groups and the challenges they pose to the fabric of the state and society merits rigorous academic attention. Such an inquiry is relevant for understanding these non-state actors and providing analysis relevant for governance and security sector reforms.

Non-state armed groups have continued to contest political and territorial authority with legitimate state governments. Apart from challenging state authority and the security challenges that this brings, the categorization of armed groups has been a daunting task for academicians, governments, and policymakers alike. The table presents the major armed groups that have shaped conflict and insecurity in contemporary Mali.

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[484] Smith, *National Identity, Military Rule and French Intervention in Mali's Recent Political Crisis*, pp. 26–27.

Table 10: Major Armed Groups in Mali

Armed Group	Rebel Leader(s)	Active Period	Motive
National Liberation Movement of Azawad (MNLA)	Ibrahim Ag Bahanga Bilal Ag Cheriff Nina Wallet Intalou	2011-present	The objective of MNLA was to secede from the state of Mali and create a northern state for Tuaregs known as Azawad.
Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA)	Hamada Ould Mohammed Kheirou	2011-2013	The aim of MOJWA was to spread jihad across West Africa and fight against French neo-colonial interests in West Africa.
Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)	Abdelmalek Droukdel Abu Ubaidah Youssef al Annabi	2007-present	Its objective is to overthrow and support the establishment of an Islamic state in northern Mali and Algeria.
Ansar Dine	Iyad Ag Ghaly	2012-2017	The aim of Ansar Dine was to fight for the establishment of an Islamic state in Mali, ruled by Sharia.

The complexity of their objectives, means, methods, and operations further compound the challenge of effectively understanding these groups. This notwithstanding, some studies have sought to classify armed groups under broad categories like separatists, jihadists, criminal networks, and militia groups.[485] Beyond the breadth and scope of such categorization, armed groups operating within the territorial confines of a particular state usually seem to have common objectives and missions which they seek to accomplish.[486]. This is usually manifested in how they relate and ally with internal armed groups and other transnational extremist networks. The truth, however, remains that these groups each have their specific objectives for challenging the state. Such individualized motives drive their military and political interests. The fluidity of their interests and shifting

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[485] Whitehouse, Strazzari, "Introduction: Rethinking Challenges to State Sovereignty in Mali and Northwest Africa," pp. 4–15.
[486] Eizenga and Wendy Williams Daniel, "The Puzzle of JNIM and Militant Islamist Groups in the Sahel," Washington, DC, 2020.

alliances is crucial in understanding why, unlike the state, these armed groups tend to disintegrate, migrate, or merge with other armed groups after the conflict is over. The operations of armed groups usually put serious pressure on the credibility and legitimacy of governments. To maintain their control over their sovereign territory, governments, through the state army, engaged in countering these armed groups. While combating rebel groups, civilian populations have always borne the cost of the conflict.

4.1   National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA)

The crisis in Mali and the state's failure are due to centrifugal forces within the country that are fighting to tear the country apart. The crisis in Mali has witnessed the presence of local and transnational armed groups, which all came into the conflict with varied objectives and divergent agendas. What, however, remains clear is that the politico-military campaigns that these groups launched against the state have contributed to the breakdown of government structures and the integration of the state, leaving the country in a perpetual mood of strife and instability.

The Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) played a significant role in the crisis in Mali. The MNLA was the leading Tuareg armed group that launched attacks against the government of Amadou Toumani Toure in 2012, leading to his overthrow from power. From 2012 to date, Mali has continued to wallow in instability. The MNLA was established on 16 October 2011[487]. This politico-military armed group was initially led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, who had participated in the 1990 and 2006 Tuareg rebellions in Mali. The demise of Bahanga on 26 August 2011 created a leadership vacuum and power tussle within the ranks of the MNLA. Two months after the death of Bahanga, Iyad Ag Ghaly put forth his candidature to become the next leader of the rebel movement. Unfortunately, the group waved Ag Ghaly in favor of Bilal Ag Cherif. The latter thus became the secretary-general of MNLA. Frustrated by the decision of the armed group, Ghaly breakaway from MNLA and created Ansar Dine. The MNLA was predominantly made up of ethnic Tuareg rebels whom Gaddafi had trained as part of his Islamic legion.[488]. The military training and combat experience these Tuareg fighters acquired in

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[487] Annyssa Bellal (ed.), *The War Report: Armed Conflict in 2014*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 209.
[488] Hsain Ilahiane, *Historical Dictionary of the Berbers*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017, p. 213.

Mali played a significant role in determining their success in outsmarting the regular Malian army. When Gaddafi was eventually overthrown in 2011, these Tuareg fighters profited from the mayhem to smuggle weapons from Libya into Mali.[489] The smuggled weapons in the hands of the Tuareg rebels were far more sophisticated than those of the country's army. This equally gave the rebels an edge to push the army out of the northern regions. Their attack against the state was launched from 16 to 17 January 2012.

Among all the armed groups in Mali's crisis, MNLA was about the only group that had a well-structured organizational pattern and a clearly defined agenda that they sought to achieve. According to Kingsbury, MNLA was the separatist group with the most precise agenda.[490] This view is equally shared by scholars like Harmon, who equally maintained that MNLA was the most unified among all the armed groups.[491]

The raison d'etre, as well as the agenda of the MNLA against the state authority in Mali, was very clear. In taking over control and launching insurgent attacks against the army, their mission was well defined. The continuous marginalization of the Tuareg, coupled with the government's failure to implement the terms of the 2006 Algiers peace agreement, caused the MNLA to launch attacks against the state. In seeking a permanent solution to reverse the decades of marginalization, the MNLA opted to fight for the separation of the northern regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu from the central Malian state and establish and establish a Tuareg controlled state of Azawad.[492] The MNLA was later joined to achieve the above agenda by other armed actors like the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA), Ansar Dine, and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). These were the major armed groups that orchestrated the insurgency against the government of Mali in 2012.

The 2012 rebellion championed by the MNLA had dire repercussions for the stability of the state of Mali and more so for the government of Amadou Toumani Toure. Criminal networks benefited from the chaos of the rebellion to traffic and smuggled drugs into Mali

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[489] M. Troy Burnett (ed.), *Nationalism Today: Extreme Political Movements around the World*, 2nd ed., California: ABC-CLIO, 2020, p. 458.
[490] Damien Kingsbury, *Separatism and the State*, Oxon: Routledge, 2021, pp. 158–60.
[491] Stephen, *Terror, and Insurgency in the Sahara-Sahel Region: Corruption, Contraband, Jihad and the Mali War of 2012–2013*, p. 176.
[492] Kingsbury, *Separatism and the State*, p. 158.

through the porous borders it shares with neighboring Sahelian states like Algeria, Libya, Niger, and Mauritania. After getting weary of the defeat and humiliation they suffered at the hands of the rebels, a cross-section of the army mutinied and staged a coup overthrowing president Ahmadou Toumani Toure in March 2012. The coup weakened the morale of the soldiers who were combatting the insurgent groups in the north. These thoughts gave the rebels the leverage to take over the northern regions, and the MNLA declared the independence of Azawad in April 2012.

The MNLA-led rebellion demonstrated how rebel movements could challenge and disrupt the state apparatus. However, it eventually became clear that though all the armed groups were proficient in fighting the army, their objectives and agendas were not unified nor tied to the mission of the MNLA. While the MNLA had secular aspirations for the state of Azawad, the others like AQIM, Ansar Dine, and MOJ WA were in favor of establishing a sharia governed state.[493] The inability of the MNLA to reconcile its aspirations with those of the Islamist movements caused the collapse of the rebel coalition, and fighting ensued as the Islamist rebel faction took over control of former MNLA-held territories. The town of Gao was taken over from the MNLA on 27 June 2012. The Islamists continued to combat MNLA and finally dispossessed it of all the areas it had control. The disintegration of the rebel alliance forced the MN LA to give up its claims of independence and gravitated toward negotiation with the government. The fruit of this shift in the alliance was the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the MNLA and the government of Mali in 2015.

4.2   Ansar Dine (Defenders of Faith)

Ansar Dine, just like the MNLA, is one of the critical armed actors that played a defining role in shaping the 2012 crisis that launched Mali into a state of instability. This armed group was created in 2011 by Iyad Ag Ghaly.[494]. The creation of Ansar Dine came as a reaction to the MNLA rejecting Ag Ghaly's request to lead the organization. Ghaly had built a political stature through his rebel activities in the 1990s that made him believe that

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[493] Fouad Farhaoui, *The Great Power Struggle for Africa The Crisis in Mali*, Ankara: USAK Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 2013, pp. 28–30.
[494] Daniel, "The Puzzle of JNIM and Militant Islamist Groups in the Sahel," pp. 2–4.

he was due to become a significant leader and stakeholder in the Tuareg rebellion[495]. His failure to achieve this dream within the framework of the MNLA caused him to break away and later founded Ansar Dine. The principal objective of Ansar Dine was to establish an Islamic state in northern Mali. Such a state was going to be governed by the ideological tendencies of sharia. While the MNLA was clamoring to gain territorial control over the country's northern regions, Ansar Dine's agenda, on the other hand, was more ideological than territorial.

The expansionist religious agenda of Ansar Dine is exemplified in the composition of its fighters. Apart from Malian Tuaregs, this rebel group was also made up of Arab fighters from Nigeria and Algeria. Both MNLA and Ansar Dine benefited from the 2012 and the division among the army to take control over the strategic towns of Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu[496]. Before the other armed groups could settle to define the future of Azawad, Ansar Dine was already implementing its religious dictates on certain communities. The influence of Ansar Dine was particularly felt more in Timbuktu and Kidal.

Even though Ansar Dine participated in the armed rebellion against the state alongside MNLA fighters, its allegiance was with AQIM and MOJWA, which shared a similar vision. Ansar Dine and AQIM, and MOJWA fighters teamed up and rooted MNLA out of the territories it was already controlling. This gave the new coalition the latitude to implement its policies and programs in northern Mali. Just like Ag Ghaly had broken away from the MNLA in 2011, large numbers of Ansar Dine fighters equally deserted the movement in 2013 to join another rebel group- the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA)[497]. This movement, by many accounts, was more secularly inclined than Ansar Dine was.

Apart from being an Islamic militant group, the relationship that exists between Ansar Dine, AQIM, and MOJWA is shrouded in much uncertainty. Ansar Dine, however, noted in 2012 that it had separated its operations with both AQIM and MOJWA. By the close

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[495] Whitehouse, Strazzari, "Introduction: Rethinking Challenges to State Sovereignty in Mali and Northwest Africa," p. 221.
[496] Bassou Abdelhak, Ihssane Guennoun, "Le Sahel Face Aux Tendances Al Qaeda et Daech : Quel Dénouement Possible ?," *Pancanaka*, 2017, vol. 17, pp. 6–10.
[497] Whitehouse, Strazzari, "Introduction: Rethinking Challenges to State Sovereignty in Mali and Northwest Africa," p. 221.

of 2012, the leadership of Ansar Dine expressed the willingness to participate in the ongoing state stability negotiations.[498] This, however, did not halt their attacks against the state, as they decidedly launched insurgent attacks in the south in January 2013. The casualties resulting from the insurgent attacks continued to delegitimize the government in the eyes of the population. Consequently, the government sought foreign military assistance to combat the insurgents.[499] This came in the form of French intervention in January 2013. The French military campaign brought serious destruction to the strongholds of rebel groups. The fighters who survived the French military assault eventually abandoned their areas of control. This led to the disintegration of Ansar Dine. The remaining fighters went underground and resurfaced in 2017 under Jama'a Nusrat Al-Islam waal-Muslimin (JNIM). The JNIM is a merger between Ansar Dine, jihadist groups, and Al Qaeda linked groups. The main objective of the merger is to provide a framework of support for Islam and non-Muslims alike. Still, under the leadership of Iyad Ag Ghaly, JNIM continued to perpetrate insurgent attacks from 2017 to 2018, which led to the death of seven people in Gao. They equally launched attacks against the MINUSMA base leading to the death of three UN peacekeepers. The Malian government in 2020 reengaged the group in several rounds of peaceful negotiations.

4.3   Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

The analysis of the crisis in Mali cannot be fully complete without a closer look into the various actors that participated in the conflict. The conflict is a complete crisis that has witnessed the state's involvement, non-state actors, terrorist groups, jihadists, and criminal networks. Classifying armed groups in this conflict has been tricky because it is increasingly difficult to distinguish between the interest that formed their alliances and the diversity that characterizes their rivalries. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb is a prominent non-state actor that has played a primordial role in shaping the conflict in Mali.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb was established in 2006 and was led by Abdelmalek Droukdel until 2020, when he was killed. This armed group was primarily made up of

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[498] Jourde, *Islamism and Social Movements in North Africa: The Sahel and Beyond*.
[499] Tom Lansford (ed.), *Political Handbook of the World 2020-2021*, 1st ed., New York: Sage Publications, 2021.

dissidents who had participated in Algeria's civil war in the 1990s[500]. It thus has its origins in Algeria, but successive Algerian governments have refused to acknowledge the group's origin in their state. During the 1990s, the group was called the Salafist for Preaching on Combat (GSPC). In the 2000s, the GSPC pledged its allegiance to and aligned its operations with Al Qaeda. Consequently, it adopted the name Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in 2007[501]. The literature on the conflicts in Africa is sometimes plagued with gaps that do not adequately address the involvement of non-state armed groups in these complex conflicts. This explains why this research resulted in understanding the emergence of these armed groups and providing context-specific analysis of how these non-state armed groups form their interests and actions in relation to other players in the conflict. Such an approach is vital for mapping out how non-state actors build alliances and shape rivalries.

At the onset of its creation, AQIM had many objectives which it wanted to achieve. These objectives kept evolving as the group expanded its operations within Algeria and the greater Sahel and Sahara region. A central point in its agenda was that all political leaders in northern Africa were infidels and consequently had to be ousted from power. This, according to them, would give AQIM the grounds to establish an Islamic caliphate in northern Africa, which will thrive on the sharia[502]. It equally sought the overthrow of the government in Algeria and maintained that they were totally against the prevalence of American and European interests in the region.[503] It is estimated that AQIM accumulated about $70 million from 2006-to 2011 as a ransom for kidnapping. The group is equally estimated to have received $125 million from kidnapping between 2008-2014[504]. The nebulous operations of this armed group make it increasingly difficult to trace the precise amount of money they made from trafficking weapons, humans, and ransom from kidnappings. Whatever the case, the finances raised from these illicit activities enabled

[500] Dario Cristiani, Riccardo Fabiani, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM): Implications for Algeria's Regional and International Relations," *Iai*, Rome, 2011, pp. 4–15.

[501] Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou, *The Rise and Fall of Al Qaeda Lessons in Post-September 11 Transnational Terrorism*, Geneva: Geneva Centre for Security Policy, 2011, pp. 25–27.

[502] Human Rights Watch, "Mali: Islamist Armed Groups Spread Fear in North," 2012, https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/09/25/mali-islamist-armed-groups-spread-fear-north , accessed on 10.10.2021.

[503] Ricardo Larémont, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel," *African Security*, vol. 4, no. 4 (2011), pp. 242–68.

[504] OECD/SWAC, *Conflict Networks in North and West Africa*, Paris: OECD Publishing, 2021, p. 43.

the groups to strengthen their combat capabilities by purchasing modern weapons and attracting young recruits.

The 2012 Tuareg rebellion in Mali created an atmosphere of instability that AQIM exploited to enter the country and establish its tentacles. Prior to their entrance into northern Mali, the Algerian government had launched a robust counterterrorism measure against AQIM. The military success of the Algerian army caused AQIM to drift away from Algeria into neighboring countries in the Sahel region.[505] Mali thus became a sanctuary for the expansion of its operations. Being a transnational terrorist organization, the leaders of AQIM were conscious that their survival in the north of Mali was contingent upon their acceptance by the local population. To gain the trust of the northern populace, AQIM set up Islamic charities through which it assisted the local population in meeting some of the basic needs which the government in Bamako had neglected to provide for the people. To establish themselves and fully integrate with the northern population, some AQIM leaders like Mokhtar Belmokhtar, Hassan Hattab, Abderrazek al-Bara, and others got married to Tuareg women. This marriage accorded them certain rights and privileges among the northern Malians, which otherwise would not have been possible.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb joined alliances with the Tuareg-led MNLA to combat Mali's soldiers and establish an independent Azawad state.[506] It established alliances with Ansar Dine and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa. The cumulative strength of this rebel alliance revealed the weakness and divisiveness within Mali's security forces. The defeat that the soldiers suffered in the hands of the rebels shed more light on the extent to which rebel alliances can overrun the state military and control government-held territories. This notwithstanding, once the coalition of the armed groups took over the northern region, the alliance soon experienced cracks as Ansar Dine, AQIM, and MOJWA eventually pushed MNLA out of their previously held territories and took over control of the whole northern area. The moderate ideologies of the MNLA could not be reconciled with the expansionist jihadist tendencies of the other armed groups.

[505] Dona J. Stewart, *What Is Next for Mali? The Roots of Conflict and Challenges to Stability*, Pennsylvania: United States Army War College, 2013, pp. 39–40.

[506] Sergei Boeke, and Giliam de Valk, "The Unforeseen 2012 Crisis in Mali: The Diverging Outcomes of Risk and Threat Analyses," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 44, no. 10 (2021), pp. 835–54, doi:10.1080/1057610X.2019.1592356.

Just like the other armed groups in Mali's conflict, AQIM relied on hit and run tactics against government facilities and military posts in Mali. On 24 January 2012, it took over control of Aguelhoc. The battle that ensued led to the death of more than 160 soldiers. By 2 April 2012, AQIM and Ansar Dine leaders joined forces. They took over Timbuktu, which had hitherto been under the control of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad and the National Front for the liberation of Azawad (FLNA). This joint rebel campaign against the MNLA and FLNA was championed by Iyad Ag Ghaly, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, Djama Okacha, and Abou Zaid. The sharia law was immediately enforced after AQIM and Ansar Dine took over Timbuktu on 27 June 2012; renewed fighting occurred between the MNLA and MOJWA in the city of Gao. The MNLA Tuaregs were eventually defeated and driven out of the city of Gao. By the close of 2012, AQIM, Ansar Dine, and MOJWA jihadists were in full control of the northern territory. Iyad Ag Ghaly's Ansar Dine controlled the territories of Kidal and Timbuktu. Gao remained under the control of MOJWA, while the far north of the region of Kidal remained under the charge of AQIM.

The success that AQIM and the other armed groups had achieved in the north motivated them to launch an offensive in the south of Mali in January 2013. The ambition of the jihadists was to launch an attack and take over the capital territory of Bamako. The jihadists' attacks were met with a counteroffensive from French military intervention. The French forces, alongside the Malian military, defeated AQIM fighters and pushed them out of Timbuktu by the end of January 2013. The counteroffensive against the rebel groups led to the death of close to 800 jihadist fighters in the first half of 2013. Fighting between AQIM, Mali's military, and intervention forces continued from 2013. The French interventionist forces finally killed AQIM leader Abdelmalek Droukdel on 3 June 2020.

The operations of Al Qaeda as a group have far-reaching effects on regional and global politics. As a transnational terrorist organization, Al Qaeda has capitalized on the use of force to implement its religio-political agenda. Its ever-expanding characteristics and ability to mutate and adapt in different geographical locations make it increasingly difficult to combat this non-state armed group.

4.4   Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA)

The conflict in Mali came along with serious security challenges for the state of Mali and its people alike. As chaos and instability prevailed, some transnational crime networks exploited the lack of adequate border security to enter Mali. The jihadists, criminals, and gangs came in under the facade of enabling the Tuareg MNLA to secede from the state and achieve independence for the northern territories. The reality, however, was different, as northern Mali eventually became a hub for illicit trafficking, drugs, and kidnappings perpetrated by the various armed groups. The combined activities of these groups spread from Mali to other countries like Algeria, Niger, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso, bringing to the lamplight a surge in insurgency and militancy in the Sahel region. While these armed groups pursued their agenda, many Malians lost their lives. Some became internally displaced, and refugee numbers increased while poverty and disease prevailed.

The Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa is an important non-state actor whose participation in the crisis cannot be ignored. This group was organized and operated on militant Islamist tendencies. Al Qaeda emerged as a breakaway faction in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). They had an anti-French agenda that was premised on the fact that they perceived France as still perpetuating its colonial power over the independent West African nations. They were also driven by a mission to spread jihad throughout the West African sub-region. The Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa can essentially be described as a splinter group of AQIM. MOJWA emerged as a jihadist armed group in 2011[507]. The militant group, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, was essentially comprised of Algerian and Saharan combatants. However, the Saharan fighters felt they were not fairly treated by their Algerian comrades. Consequently, the Saharan rebels in AQIM broke away and founded MOJWA. The founders of MOJWA argued that ransom generated from kidnappings was not equally shared among the Algerian Saharan fighters.[508] Though championed by Malian Arabs, MOJWA was equally comprised of fighters from Mauritania, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Algeria.

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[507] Sergei and Boeke, Antonin Tisseron, "Mali's Long Road Ahead," *RUSI Journal*, vol. 159, no. 5 (2014), pp. 2–10, doi:10.1080/03071847.2014.969942.

[508] Stephen, *Terror, and Insurgency in the Sahara-Sahel Region: Corruption, Contraband, Jihad and the Mali War of 2012–2013*, p. 181.

Though initially posing as a movement to spread jihad across West Africa, the activities of MOJWA eventually made it increasingly difficult to determine its actual modus operandi. The involvement of MOJWA in illicit activities which sustained the rebel economy in West Africa and Mali raised questions about the blurred line between its Islamic ideological tendencies and its motive to raise income from illicit financial transactions. Thus, it becomes imperative to highlight that this militant Islamist group generated its income from kidnapping, ransom-taking, and drug trafficking. The existence of MOJWA became known to the international community when the group kidnapped three Europeans in Algeria on 23 October 2011[509]. The MOJW fighters equally orchestrated the kidnapping of seven Algerian diplomats in the northern Malian city of Gao in April 2012.

The operations and activities of MOJWA were intrinsically linked to those of its mother group AQIM. Even though MOJWA splintered from AQIM, it continued to pay allegiance to and collaborated with AQIM's leadership. The similar patterns of kidnapping and ransom-taking pursued by these armed jihadist groups triggered a further quest for an explanation of how contagion shapes and affects the modus operandi of armed groups. The study and analysis of MOJWA provide ample evidence that its generation of illicit income from kidnapping and drug trafficking is a contagion effect from its mother organization AQIM. The leadership of MOJWA may be different, but the characteristics of AQIM are evident in the operations of the former. The complexity that surrounds the strategies of these armed groups clouds the ability to establish the connection that exists among them. This, however, does not impede our ability to understand these groups in their individuality and as a collective of armed actors.

Furthermore, after having taken up sanctuary in the north of Mali, MOJWA aligned and collaborated with other armed groups like the MNLA, AQIM, and Ansar Dine. Though these armed groups collectively fought against the Malian army, MOJWA, AQIM, and Ansar Dine were closely knitted by a jihadist agenda to which MNLA did not subscribe. While in Mali, MOJWA established its presence in the region of Gao.[510] To lay a strong base for itself, this armed group took decisive steps to win the support of the locals and

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[509] Carlos Echeverria Jesus, "Kidnappings as a Terrorist Instrument of AQIM and the MUJAO," *Paix et Securite Internationales*, no. 1 (2013), pp. 161–66, doi:10.25267/paix_secur_int.2013.i1.11.
[510] International Crisis Group, "Mali: Avoiding Escalation," pp. 16–20.

the trust of the local leaders in Gao. The decision to establish its base in Gao was based on religious, social, and political reasons. This notwithstanding, the economic imperatives of this decision outweighed the other three reasons. Gao was very strategic because its vast interconnection of trading routes provided MOJWA with the opportunity to expand its kidnap and trafficking networks.[511] After having taken effective control of Gao in 2012, MOJWA went ahead to implement sharia in its strictest form. The MOJWA fighters meted corporal punishment on the inhabitants of Gao under the pretext of applying the sharia law. In essence, the arbitrary application of the sharia in Gao was an expression of how fanatical the group had become. The destruction of historical monuments in northern Mali further compounded the fanatism of this armed group.

The fluidity in their interests and temporality of their alliances explains why rebel groups emerge and collapse. In most cases, the state remains even after suffering huge losses because of insurgents' activities. Despite haven collaborated with the MNLA, MOJWA attacked the former on 27 June 2012. The relationship that existed between these armed groups came to an all-time low as the MOJWA militant Islamists fought to push the MNLA secularist out of Gao[512]. The defeat and ouster of MNLA from Gao gave MOJWA the leeway to take control of the territory's administration and the governor's office. With the absence of the state military, MOJWA fighters assumed the responsibility of securing Gao.

On 8 August 2012, the leaders of MOJWA publicly announced the merger of the group with Mokhtar Belmokhtar's Al-Mulathameen. The new armed group that emerged from this merger was known as Al-Murabitun. In pursuit of its expansionist plans, MOJWA launched an attack against the Songhai militia and took over the territory of Douentza on 1 September 2012. On 7 December 2012, the US declared MOJWA a terrorist organization. According to resolution 2085 of the UN Security Council, MOJWA was listed as an affiliate of Al Qaeda on 27 December.

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[511] Luca Raineri, "State, Secession, and Jihad: The Micropolitical Economy of Conflict in Northern Mali," p. 258.

[512] Stephen, *Terror, and Insurgency in the Sahara-Sahel Region: Corruption, Contraband, Jihad and the Mali War of 2012–2013*, p. 182.

Although it had been categorized as a terrorist group by the UN and US, MOJWA did not halt its attack and offensive against the French and the state of Mali. In January 2013, MOJWA launched an insurgent campaign uncaptured Konna. Their next move was to enter central Mali and capture the strategic military base in Sevare. This mission never materialized as it was halted by French military intervention on 11 January 2012. French military intervention stopped the rebels' advancement and enabled Mali to regain control over territory previously under rebel control. The French counterterrorism campaign led to the disintegration of MOJWA.

Both state and non-state actors in Mali have transgressed international humanitarian laws and, by so doing, caused casualties to civilian populations. In so many respects, intrastate conflicts like the one in Mali present a complex situation in which the lines between combatants and noncombatants have been blurred. Such complexities are even made worse by the fact that most armed groups do essentially recruit their fighters based on ethnic or religious affiliations. When the state military could not access the terrain to fight the rebels, the government relied on rival militia groups in the region to combat other insurgent groups. This strategy temporarily served the government's interest but planted the seeds for future rebellions.

CHAPTER FIVE

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PEACEBUILDING IN DRC, CAR, AND MALI: CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1   INTERVENING FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the countries in the world endowed with vast deposits of natural resources, which range from gold, coltan, diamond, zinc, and copper. Its potential to grow has constantly been hindered by continuous episodes of conflict that have continued to stifle its potential. From 1996 to 1992, when Laurent Kabila ousted Mobuto Sese Seko and took overpower through a coup d'état, Congo continued to wallow in the vicious cycle of conflict after more than two decades. The Second Congo War ended on 18 July 2003. The close of the war did not mean the end of violence and hostilities, as actors in the conflict decidedly localized the battle within the country's localities. One thing that remains outstanding is that the war in Congo brought dire consequences for the people of Congo.

The continuous violence in Congo led to the recruitment of child soldiers; about 200,000 women and young girls were raped and severely violated[513]. A vast majority of the population became internally and externally displaced. Such displacement meant the abandoning of their means of livelihood. The loss of the means of livelihood, coupled with the inability to cultivate food to sustain themselves, has led Congo to be described as one of the worst countries facing food insecurity in the world. It is estimated as of 2021 that over 27 million people are in dire need of food security in Congo. More than five million deaths have been recorded since 1998 because of the conflict in Congo. Despite its massive potential for economic advancement, the violence in Congo has kept this country in a continuously disadvantaged financial position, with a large percentage

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[513] Jordi Calvo Rufanges and Josep Maria Royo Aspa, "Democratic Republic of Congo: A Review of 20 Years of War," Pau, 2016, pp. 1–14,
https://escolapau.uab.cat/img/programas/alerta/alerta/RDCongo_20AnosGuerra_I.pdf.

of its population trapped in acute poverty. According to the 2021 UN Human Development Index Report (HDI), Congo ranked 175 of 189 as one of the poorest countries in the world. The above classification is further broken down to indicate that 73% of Congolese live in extreme poverty.

The above discussion simply summarizes the hardship the Congolese suffered since 1997 and have continued to suffer because of the continuous nature of the conflict in that country. Most importantly, the above lays a foundation for one to establish the discourse on why it became imperative for regional and international actors to intervene and resolve the conflict in Congo. The following sections will focus on examining the roles of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN) have played in intervening to resolve the conflict in Congo and restore peace. The table below presents the various institutions that have played critical roles in a bid to restore peace and stability in Congo.

Table 11: Key Peace Actors in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Actors/Leading Institutions	Mission	Mandate	Period of Activity
The Southern African Development Community (SADC)	Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia SADC Intervention Mission	Management and resolution of conflict	1998-2003
African Union	-Endorsement of SADC intervention -Mediation Missions	Management and resolution of conflict	1998-2003
International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)	-Endorsement of SADC intervention -Mediation Missions	Mobilization for peace and stability	1998-Ongoing
National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO)	-Mediation -Negotiation	Mediate peace between opposition and government	1998-Ongoing
The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO)	-UN Peacekeeping Mission -Negotiation -Mediation -Peace Accords	Protect civilians. Stabilize Congo Combat insurgent groups	1999-Ongoing

5.1.1 The Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The Southern African Development Community was established on 12 August 1992. The founding members of SADC included Tanzania, Angola, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Mozambique, Zambia, and Malawi. By 1998, the Democratic Republic of Congo became a member state of the sub-regional organization. Since its creation, the region has continuously been plagued with conflict and insecurity, which threatens its geography's general stability and prosperity. DR Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Angola, and Zimbabwe are only a few examples of instability that has challenged the peace and security of the region[514]. Through its organ on Politics Defense and Security, the SADC has sought to expand its leverage beyond economic and political cooperation to include conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and conflict resolution. Among the conflicts that have challenged peace and security in this region, the war in DRC stands out because of its magnitude of bloodshed and the complexity of its actors.

The Southern African Development Community played a crucial role in intervening to end the conflict that erupted in DRC in 1997. Since then, the impact of this regional organization has been felt in Congo both on the diplomatic and military fronts[515]. In 1998, Rwanda and Uganda, which had previously supported Kabila to oust Mobutu from power, turned against Kabila and joined forces with the RCD and other rebel groups in the Congo to topple Kabila's regime. Considering that the state could not successfully fight against Rwanda-Uganda and the rebel alliance, Kabila quickly called out to SADC for intervention and assistance to push back the rebels and foreign troops. In response to Kabila's plea for help, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia rallied their troops and entered DRC to support Kabila's government[516]. The intervention of these SADC member countries was code-named ''Operation Sovereign Legitimacy''.

According to Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, the 1998 intervention was a peace enforcement mission sanctioned by SADC to restore peace and stability in the region. Worthy of note is that deep divisions prevailed within SADC as to how effectively the

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[514] Yingi Edwin, "When Bullets Replace Ballots:The Role of SADC in Promoting Peace through Democratic Governance in Zimbabwe," *Journal of African Union Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2018), pp. 147–67.

[515] Dorina Bekoe, Joseph Siegle, Godfrey Musila, "The Role of External Actors in the DRC Crisis – Africa Center," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 2017, pp. 1–4.

[516] Katharina P. Coleman, *International Organisation and Peace Enforcement: The Politics of International Legitimacy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 127.

organization was to react to Kabila's plea for assistance. While Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia favored a military approach, South Africa, Zambia, and Botswana were in favor of peaceful diplomacy[517]. Such divisions within the organization caused some commentators on SADC's role in the conflict to argue that the intervention of Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia did not receive the full approval of the SADC and thus was an illegitimate action carried out by the trio. No matter the contradictions that surround the 1998 intervention in DRC, it goes without saying that whether for personal or regional reasons, the stabilization mission was a perfect demonstration of the collective security of an African-based regional organization. President Laurent Kabila was helpless in the face of aggression. In the spirit of collective security, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola rose to the occasion to intervene to restore peace and stability while preventing the further militarization of the Congo by armed and foreign troops from Rwanda and Uganda[518].

The Second Congo conflict ended in 2003, and a transitional government took charge of the country's affairs. In line with following up with its regional security agenda, SADC ensured that a standby force was left in Congo to ensure the continuous peace and stability of the country. In the same light, in 2013, Tanzania, Malawi, and South Africa deployed troops to combat rebels[519]. SADC's role in Congo was further made eminent in 2013 when it deplored the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB). The FIB consisted of forces from Tanzania, Malawi, and South Africa. The principal objective of FIB was to defeat the M23 rebels who had taken control of the eastern region of DRC.

In 2016, the presidents of Zimbabwe, Angola, Swaziland, Tanzania, Botswana, Mozambique, and South Africa converged to deliberate on the security framework of the SADC region. In October of 2016, a team of ministers from SADC countries met to discuss the Democratic Republic of Congo crisis. The ministerial meeting was equally meant to support and strengthen African Union mediation processes. The ministerial

[517] Eric G. Berman, Katie E. Sams, "The Peacekeeping Potential of African Regional Organizations," *Dealing with Conflict in Africa: The United Nations and Regional Organizations.*, ed. by Jane Boulden, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 49.

[518] UNSC, "Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2001/357, April 12, 2001)," New Jersey, 2001, p. 28, https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/report-panel-experts-illegal-exploitation-natural-resources-and.

[519] Gugulethu Linda. Nyathi, Helda Risman, "Africa's Search for Peace and Stability: Defense Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution in the Democratic Republic of Congo," *Jurnal Pertahanan*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2020), pp. 138–50.

meeting was followed by a deal negotiated to ensure the smooth running of elections in 2018 to put in place a transitional government.

The Southern African Development Community interventions aimed to establish an environment to sustain fruitful political dialogue in Congo. The interventions led to a ceasefire in Congo. The intervention of SADC came with a lot of contradictions, both within the organization and from the international community. Despite these seemingly contradictory positions, the military and diplomatic operations of SADC in Congo demonstrated how the organization could resolve the economic, political, and security challenges in the region.

1.1   The African Union

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was established in 1963 to uphold the independence of newly created African States and safeguard their sovereignty from external and internal actors alike. While the OAU discouraged the interference of other states in the internal affairs of its member states, it was equally mindful that resolving local problems and addressing regional challenges of peace and security was no easy business at all. One of the defining characteristics of the OAU was its policy of non-intervention. Critiques of the organization have queried its non-intervention stance as a weakness that gives African dictators and rebels the leverage to flourish. According to Ekwealor and Ozodike, non-interference was responsible for why the organization stood by while Idi Amin slaughtered approximately 300,000 Ugandan citizens. The same policy explains why the organization remained muted about why Nigerians died in the Biafran war[520]. The OAU was eventually transformed, and in 2002, it became the African Union (AU). Article 4 of the AU constitutive act gave the organization the leverage to intervene in the internal affairs of its member states. This, however, is only permissible in instances where evidence of crimes against humanity, war crimes, or genocide exists[521].

When the African Union came into the lamplight in 2002, it signaled a new era by showcasing its readiness and strength as an African organization that fosters peace and

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[520] Chinedu Thomas. Ekwealor, Ufo Okeke-Uzodike, "The African Union Interventions in African Conflicts: Unity and Leadership Conundrum on Libya," *Journal of African Union Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2016), pp. 63–82.

[521] K Kalu, "Resolving African Crises: Leadership Role for African States and the African Union in Darfur," *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2010), p. 23, doi:10.4314/ajcr.v9i1.52164.

security in the continent. The AU, at its inception, was an emblem of the philosophy of ''Africans solving African problems''. Apart from inheriting the assets and liabilities of the Organization of African Unity, the AU came to represent Africa's determination to face the challenges of the 21st century. The interventions of the OAU and AU in the Congo conflict and other conflicts within the continent remain contradictory but worthy of examination.

After the Second Congo War outbreak, the Secretary-General of the OAU Salim Ahmed Salim released an official statement. He urged all belligerents in the conflict to cease hostilities and pursue the path of peaceful means to resolve the dispute. In 1998, Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, under the auspices of SADC, intervened in the Congo conflict in support of President Laurent Kabila against the rebels. International and regional organizations exist to support each other in peace and distress. The OAU thus felt that SADC was a viable organization to intervene not just in the Congolese conflict but also in other crises within the region[522]. The recognition of the intervention by the OAU gave Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola the morale not only to help a fellow member state of their regional bloc but to boost their national interest and prestige.

In as much as the intervention by the SADC trio (Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe) was a response to help from Lauren Kabila, other schools of thought were more concerned that the invasion and the proliferation of rebel groups further complicated the dynamics of the conflict[523]. To resolve this impasse and seek a solution to the war, AU representatives participated in the July 1999 Lusaka agreement, bringing Laurent Kabila, the intervening countries, and the rebel groups. The parties to the crisis agreed to sign a ceasefire as a preliminary step towards ensuring the stability and security of Congo and the region. This notwithstanding, the truce did not last for long as belligerents in the conflict did not respect the terms of the agreement.

The OAU did not stop crafting efforts to end the conflict and stabilize Congo. By July 2000, the OAU began diversifying its efforts by engaging with representatives of the

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[522] Coleman, *International Organisation and Peace Enforcement: The Politics of International Legitimacy*, p. 148.

[523] Chika Njideka Oguonu, Christian Chukwuebuka Ezeibe, "African Union and Conflict Resolution in Africa," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 5, no. 27 (2014), p. 329, doi:10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n27p325.

United Nations. During the UN Security Council on the Congo earlier in January, the OAU was able to play a frontline role in designing a peace process for the troubled Congo[524]. In its resolution 1291, the United Nations Security Council adopted the motion to send a peacekeeping mission to stabilize Congo.

Even though Lauren Kabila collaborated with regional and international organizations to restore peace in Congo, he was reticent to let these organizations operate to the full potential of their capabilities. The assassination of Kabila in January 2001 ushered in another phase in the political and peace processes of the Congo. By October 2002, his son Joseph Kabila had fully taken over as president of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Unlike his father, he was more open and committed to peace negotiations. Joseph Kabila was swift to lobby the regional and international community to his side. He successfully negotiated with Rwanda to withdraw the forces it had stationed in the eastern region of Congo. In December of 2002, Kabila was able to sign the Pretoria Accords with other belligerents of the Congo war. This 2002 peace deal signaled an end to the conflict and laid the foundations for establishing a transitional government[525]. The transitional government effectively took over operations of the country by July 2003. The main objective of this government was to foster national unity among Congolese. It is worthy to note that despite having the peace deal in place, pockets of violence against the civilian population in the eastern region continued.

The continuous support that the transitional government enjoyed from the AU permitted it in 2005 to organize presidential elections and in 2006 to organize provincial and legislative elections. The presence of these initiatives to democratize and stabilize the country did not deter the armed groups from pursuing their agendas. The eastern region of the Congo continued to witness widespread violence and instability. To end the conflict, the government signed a peace deal with the CNDP. One of these peace agreement terms was the reintegration of former fighters of CNDP into the state army. Unfortunately, the integration process did not go through successfully. Former CNDP combatants who had been integrated into the state military accused the government of not

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[524] Margaret Vogt, Monde Muyangwa, "An Assesment of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Resolution 1993-2000," New York: International Peace Institute, 2000, pp. 10–16.
[525] Global Conflict Tracker, "Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo," 2019, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo., accessed on 04.02.2022.

honoring the terms of the 2009 peace deal. While some of them moved into neighboring countries, others stayed back in Congo and became a part of a new rebel movement, the M23. The internally and externally displaced are running away from the rebels.

The emergence of M23 and the brutality of its fighters caused the African Union to champion a new regional peace process. In so doing, The AU engaged the International Conference of the Great Lakes (ICGLR) and the UN, and the EU[526]. The collaboration among these organizations led to the Nairobi Declaration. This declaration which came into effect in December 2013, had a process to disarm and demobilize the M23 fighters. Like other peace processes before, these measures failed in establishing the much-needed peace in the Congo. In 2013, in coordination with the UN peacekeepers, the Congolese military joined forces and conquered the M23 armed group.

Attempts by Joseph Kabila to revise the constitution to stay in power beyond 2016 met with stiff resistance from opposition parties and the population. The tension and chaos that these disagreements against constitutional change brought pushed the Kabila government to seek help from the African Union. In January 2016, the African Union commissioned Edem Kojo to reconcile the Congo's warring factions and negotiate for peace to reign. The African Union, the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO), SADC, and the ICGLR joined forces to negotiate peace between the opposition and the government of Kabila on 31 December 2016. The 31 December Agreement barred Joseph Kabila from seeking another mandate. It eventually laid down the modalities on which a national transition council will work to ensure the strict follow-up and implementation of the agreement. Elections for a new government finally took place in December 2018, and Felix Tshisekedi of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) emerged as the winner. On 24 January 2019, he took over office as Congo's president. This was the first event of peaceful transfer of power in Congo since the country gained independence in 1960.

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[526] Harish Venugopalan, "Understanding the Conflict in Congo," *ORF Issue Brief*, vol. 139, no. 139 (2016), pp. 2–12.

1.2 The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)

The First and Second Congo Wars are among the bloodiest conflicts that Africa has experienced in the post-Cold War era. The second war, which began in 1998 to 2003, has come to be described as Africa's 'World War' because of the multitude of internal, regional, and international actors that came to be part of the conflict. The chaos, rape, murder, instability, and insecurity that the Second Congo war unleashed were so grievous that the international community could no longer stay mute. Negotiations to end the conflict culminated in the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of 1999. The warring parties agreed to end all acts of hostilities and adhered to the undisrupted provision of humanitarian assistance to affected communities and refugees. They equally agreed to collaborate with the Joint Military Commission (JMC) and work with the United Nations peacekeeping mission to oversee the enforcement of the Lusaka agreement[527].

To restore peace in the Congo and ensure the regional stability of the Great Lakes Region, the UN Security Council, in its resolution 1279 of September 1999, created the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). The UN Security Council draws its strength from the UN charter in establishing its peace operations worldwide. The maintenance of universal peace and security is among the many reasons why the UN was established in the first place. MONUC's mandate in Congo was guided by chapter six of the UN charter, which focuses on the peaceful settlement of disputes. This mandate thus ruled out the use of force.

Consequently, MONUC's mandate as of 1999 was confined to the implementation of the Lusaka agreement. By the end of 1990, MONUC had about 5037 soldiers whose duty was to ensure that the ceasefire agreement was implemented[528]. The organization further had an additional 500 observers who, together with the military force, monitored the process of ceasefire in the Congo.

By February 2000, the UN Security Council revised and expanded the mission of MONUC. In recognition of the hostilities which had engulfed Congo, the UNSC realized

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[527] Jakkie Cilliers, Mark Malan, "Peacekeeping in the DRC : MONUC and the Road to Peace," *ISS Monograph*, Pretoria, 2001, pp. 14–20, http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/fy0604/2002403031.html.
[528] Barrera, "The Congo Trap: MONUSCO Islands of Stability in the Sea of Instability," pp. 15–16.

that MONUC couldn't function under chapter 6 and ensure the safety of its personnel[529]. The expansion of MONUC's mandate was authorized to protect its personnel, those of the Joint Military Commission, and its equipment and facilities. It was equally charged with protecting civilians from any violence threatening their survival.

Despite the establishment of the Lusaka peace agreement and the presence of MONUC to enforce the implementation of the deal, parties to the conflict abrogated the terms of the accord and fighting continued. Laurent Desire Kabila was eventually killed in 2001. He was subsequently replaced by his son Joseph Kabila. Unlike his father, Joseph Kabila was more open to the international community. This flexible disposition explains why he agreed to participate in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, which took place in Sun City from 25 February to 12 April 2002[530]. The United Nations was represented in these negotiations by Moustafa Niasse. The above peace negotiations stagnated because of differences among the parties on how the integration of former combatants into the army would be. The peace negotiations and the political processes of transition in DRC later continued in Pretoria between July to September 2002. The Global and All-Inclusive Agreement signed in Pretoria on 16 December 2002 laid the framework for a transitional government in Congo.

Hostilities and violence did not immediately go away after the Pretoria agreement. To mitigate the further spread of violence, the United Nations Security Council in July 2003 passed an arms embargo prohibiting the supply and illegal movement of arms in the eastern region of the DRC. The arms embargo was further expanded in 2005 to cover the rest of the country. MONUC's mandate was revised and extended to fall under chapter VII of the UN charter in the same year. MONUC's troop capacity equally rose to 16,000. This gave the organization the adequate strength to foster its peace enforcement mission through military operations.

With an enhanced capacity and the prerogatives which chapter VII of the charter gave MONUC, the organization was ready to engage fully in the territory of Congo. Consequently, in stabilizing the Congo, MONUC's DDR program was meant to dry up

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[529] UNSC, "Resolution 1291 (S/Res/1291)," 2000, pp. 1–6, https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1291(2000), accessed on 17.03.2022.
[530] Terence McNamee, Monde Muyangwa (eds.), *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa:Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, p. 301.

the supply of human resources for armed groups, as they felt such forces could be retrained and empowered to sustain the collective strength of the state. The DDR program was a vital step in bringing the conflict in DRC to an end. MONUC also worked hard to ensure that foreign troops who entered the Congo were disarmed, demobilized, repatriated and resettled in their countries of origin.

MONUC equally continued to play a significant role in stabilizing Congo. Protecting civilians and preserving human rights occupied a central position in MONUC's mandate and operations in Congo. This explains why before the 2006 elections, MONUC established a Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC)[531]. Through JMAC, MONUC systematically established a network of information gathering which relied on collaboration with civilian and military sources. This enabled the organization to assess the level of threats in the territory constantly. Such threat assessments guided the mission's strategy to deploy its troops. During the 2006 elections, MONUC provided the much-needed security necessary to stabilize the country throughout the electoral process. The 2006 elections were crucial for the stability and future of the Congo because it was the first time Congolese went to the polls to participate in a democratic election since the country gained its independence[532]. Joseph Kabila Kabange emerged as the winner of the 2006 presidential elections.

The next phase of governing the Congo proved difficult even after the 2006 elections. The increased number of armed groups became directly proportional to the magnitude of human rights abuses. Even UN peacekeepers became victims of such human rights abuses. By 2008, armed groups like the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) ignited violence in North Kivu. MONUC troops teamed up with the Congolese army to counter the CNDP. This notwithstanding, the CNDP was not easy not to crack. The government of Congo finally reached a peace agreement with the CNDP on 23 March 2009. While this agreement ushered in some form of peace and stability, it became

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[531] Christian R. Manahl, "Protection of Civilians in a Peacekeeping Context: Challenges and Dilemmas of MONUC/MONUSCO," *Regions and Cohesion*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2011), pp. 122–23, doi:10.3167/reco.2011.010207.

[532] Denis M. Tull, "Peacekeeping in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Waging Peace and Fighting War," *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 16, no. 2 (2009), pp. 215–30, doi:10.1080/13533310802685729.

abundantly clear that the proliferation of armed groups had become a significant challenge to the mandate of MONUC.

Consequently, the mandate of MONUC was revised by the United Nations, expanding it from chapter 6 to Chapter 7. The revision of MONUC's mandate as contained in UN resolution 1925 of 2010 authorized MONUC to use all means necessary within its capabilities to execute its mandate. Under this revised mandate, MONUC was renamed the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

Since the outbreak of the conflict in DRC, MONUC and its rebranded organization MONUSCO have played crucial roles in building peace in the country. Their activities and interventions have ranged from protecting civilians, combating insurgent groups, and working with the government of Congo to stabilize the country and develop infrastructures. All these initiatives and more that MONUSCO has carried out in the Congo explain the relevance of its presence in the troubled country. These notwithstanding, other schools of thought have queried the effectiveness of MONUSCO. After two decades of peace operations, the Congo remains a classic example of an unstable state. Those who have criticized the effectiveness of MONUSCO do so since this has been the UN's most extensive and most expensive peace operation[533]. As of November 2021, MONUSCO's civilian personnel stood at 17,783, while police, military observers, and military personnel were 16,316.

MONUSCO's annual budget over the years has consistently been above $1,000,000. Its current approved budget for July 2021 to June 2022 stands at $1.123.346000 million. With such substantial financial inputs and the time MONUSCO has spent in DRC, it would be justified to understand why its relevance has been criticized by those who now see the mission as a white elephant project. If one were to be fair enough, the absence of MONUSCO in the DRC would have brought far more catastrophic consequences for the country and region. Without MONUSCO, armed groups would have probably taken control of the government in DRC, rape cases and violence against women would have

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[533] Roberto Miguel Rodriguez, *UNAMID and MONUSCO - the Two Most Expensive UN Peacekeeping Operations*, North Carolina: Lulu Press, 2015.

increased, armed groups would have continued to flourish, and instability in the region would have reached astronomical heights.

The rebranding of MONUC in 2010 as MONUSCO and the expanded mandate that came with the new organization were relevant in enabling it to meet the security challenges in Congo. MONUSCO's mandate shifted from the mere protection of civilians and monitoring peace agreements to stabilization. This new mandate gave the organization the leeway to protect civilians and UN personnel and help the government of Congo to stabilize the country. To this effect, MONUSCO was given the go-ahead to use all means necessary to accomplish its mandate. This also included the use of force whenever needed. As a multinational peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO's assignment in the Congo has been complicated because of the complexity of Congo's conflict environment.

While MONUSCO was engaged in developing its stabilization plan for the Congo, armed groups in the eastern region of the country were bent on causing chaos and disrupting the peace of the East region. By the close of 2011, DRC had an estimated 1.7 million internally displaced persons[534]. On 28 November 2011, Congolese went to the polls once more in what could be described as the second general elections after independence. The highly contested presidential and legislative elections were not without their fair share of challenges. However, MONUSCO was well ahead of these hiccups. MONUSCO, in collaboration with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, was swift to release a 188-page document that detailed pre-elections abuses of human rights[535]. The report exposed violations leading up to the period of the elections. Such violations stemmed from arbitrary arrests, intimidation, incitement, and threats to voters. The report noted that the national intelligence service and the state police were perpetrators of some of these violations of the human rights of the Congolese people. MONUSCO called the government's attention to take steps to stop such incidences. This was to ensure free and fair elections. The pre-election report on acts of violations was an early warning signal to the Congolese government that inaction to address the situation was preparing the country for post-electoral violence. After the elections, Joseph Kabila was declared the winner.

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[534] Emily Paddon, Guillaume Lacaille, "Stabilising the Congo," *Refugees Study Center*, Oxford, 2011, p. 14.
[535] United Nations, "UN Report Sounds Alarm over Pre-Election Rights Abuses in DR Congo," 2011, https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/11/394422-un-report-sounds-alarm-over-pre-election-rights-abuses-dr-congo,accessed on 06.11.2021.

Some actors in the Congolese political system did not receive Kabila's victory well. The opposition, as well as armed groups, refused to accept the outcome of the elections. In 2012, another armed group, the 23 March Movement (M23), emerged. The rebel group justified its rebellion against Kabila's government because the latter had failed to abide by the March 2009 peace agreement, which it signed with the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP)[536]. The M23 fought fiercely against the Democratic Republic of Congo FARDC. The rebels of M23 succeeded in taking over Goma. The instability these fighting caused led to severe acts of human rights abuses and violence against women. These rebel atrocities were damaging to the reputation of MONUSCO as many began to see it as weak and not capable enough to provide adequate protection to civilians. The fact that M23 was able to fight both FARDC and MONUSCO troops and seized Goma was enough to cause concern that something was not right with the security mechanisms of both the FARDC and MONUSCO. Other armed groups could exploit this vacuum to increase their operation in Congo. Rwanda and Uganda backed the M23.

In response to the horrors caused by the M23 and its allied group Mai Mai, the UN Security Council took a decisive step in 2013 to expand and strengthen the mandate of MONUC. In opting for more forceful measures to counter violence, consolidate state authority, and implement robust security sector reforms, the UNSC, in its resolution 2098, authorized the deployment of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB)[537]. This 400-man multidimensional peacekeeping brigade was mandated to eliminate all armed groups in Congo and restore state authority. FIB had the clearance to launch offensive operations against rebel groups wherever they were within the territorial confines of the DRC. The Congolese armed forces jointly carried out targeted military operations against the 23 March Movement in collaboration with FIB. The M23 rebel group was eventually defeated in January 2013.

The defeat of M23 was a significant step toward state stability. However, the actors in the conflict knew the triggers of instability were not all gone. Before the defeat of M23, some UN groups of experts indicated in a report that the rebel group had received

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[536] Jason Stearns, "Congo's Weak Peace Process," 2012, https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/congos-weak-peace-process , accessed on 07.02.2022.

[537] McNamee, Muyangwa, *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa:Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners*, p. 306.

significant support from both Rwanda and Uganda. To strengthen the peace process and prevent the outbreak of a regional conflict, the UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon led the Initiative for a Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework for the DRC. The framework agreement was premised on the fact that instability had taken over Congo, and the situation at hand was not in favor of its neighbors. It was thus crucial for stakeholders in the conflict to put in place an agreed mechanism that will work to preserve the peace in Congo and prevent the escalation of the violence to other countries in the region. The parties to the framework agreement consisted of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, CAR, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, Rwanda, Congo, South Sudan, The International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, UN, AU, and SADC[538]. The above parties signed the framework agreement on 24 February 2013 in Addis Ababa.

In keeping with its commitment to end violence and restore state authority and legitimacy in Congo, MONUSCO took decisive measures and invested heavily in its disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes. In doing this, local communities became their first place of call, where MONUSCO put projects that impacted the people's lives to dissuade them from joining or providing support to armed groups. The multidimensional peacekeeping force equally protected camps that hosted internally displaced persons. In addition to the above, MONUSCO also collaborated with the Congolese National Police Force (PNC) to reestablish government presence and authority in the country's eastern region. MONUSCO initiated and implemented capacity-building programs for the PNC units[539]. The stabilization mission equally played an active role in the protection of civilians. The empowered PNC units monitored and ensured that the law was thoroughly enforced, investigated incidents of sexual harassment, and fought against transnational crime networks.

On 2 July 2014, a joint meeting grouping ministers of the ICGLR and the SADC took place in Luanda, Angola. During the meeting, the leaders issued a timeframe for the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) to disarm and surrender voluntarily. The period of voluntary surrender was scheduled between 2 July 2014 to 2

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[538] United Nations, "Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region," 2013, https://peacemaker.un.org/drc-framework-agreement2013 , accessed on 12.01.2022.

[539] Robert U Nagel, Kate Fin, Julia Maenza, "United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," Washington D.C, 2021, pp. 4–10.

January 2015. The FDLR was an active armed group that fueled the conflict and instability in the eastern region of the Congo. By the due date of 2 January 2015, the FDLR had not complied with surrendering.

Consequently, MONUSCO, FIB, and the Congolese armed force were left with adopting the military option against the FDLR. On 29 January 2015, MONUSCO and the Congolese troops launched a military offensive against the FDLR. The FDLR is noted to have committed grievous crimes against humanity, ranging from rape and looting to terrorizing the people of the eastern region.

According to the prescriptions of the constitution of the DRC, Joseph Kabila was supposed to step down and leave office in December 2016, at the end of his term of office. This meant that elections were due in November of the same year to elect a new president. However, this did not go as scheduled because Kabila wanted to amend the constitution and electoral code to go for another term of office despite coming to the end of his presidential mandate. Kabila's ambition to extend his stay in office was not well received by Congolese in Goma, Kinshasa, and other parts of the country, which felt it was time for the president to leave the seat of power. As early as December 2015, agitations and protests began erupting in various parts of the country.

In September 2016, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) declared the postponement of the elections, which were due in November 2016. The Electoral Commission blamed the delay on low voter registration and insufficient funds to manage the polls. On the other hand, opposition parties and other dissenting voices in the country interpreted the announcement as a ploy by Kabila's government to remain in power beyond the expiration of his constitutionally mandated term of office. Clashes between protesters and the police immediately followed this. Close to 100 people were estimated to have died from such violence.

The national Episcopal conference of Congo CENCO recognized that it was expedient for it to step in and play a pivotal role in the country's political transition. The growing violence and protests were only symptoms of a far more dangerous humanitarian crisis. To ensure a peaceful political transition, CENCO took a decisive step and championed the mediation between the government of Kabila and opposition parties. These efforts received massive support from MONUSCO as well. The discussions of this transition led

to a political agreement signed on 31 December 2016[540]. The above arrangement was meant to end the violence in the country and govern the period of transition up to the holding of elections. According to the agreement, Joseph Kabila was permitted to remain in office until the next president was elected. He was, however, barred from presenting his candidacy for the election. The agreement equally stated that the provincial, legislative, and presidential elections would occur by December 2017. Elections may not be the only solution to a crisis as complex as that of Congo. However, it remains a viable and peaceful way to achieve stable political transitions. In July 2017, the head of MONUSCO, Mahan Sidikon, called on the parties that signed the 31 December 2016 agreement to maintain their commitment toward the full implementation of the accord's terms.

The presidential elections finally took place on 23 December 2018, and Felix Tshisekedi of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress was elected as the president of DR Congo. He officially took office on 24 January 2019. His election was very significant because it marked the first peaceful transfer of power in the history of Congo after gaining its independence in 1960. MONUSCO continued to play an important role before, during, and after the 2018 elections in Congo. Per UN Security Council resolutions 2277, 2348, and 2409, MONUSCO made its presence felt by providing support and aiding the government of Congo as well as CENI throughout the electoral process.

The UN multidimensional peace mission is noted to have provided capacity-building sessions for more than 1530 members of the civil society. These civil society actors received training in educating the local population about the importance of democratic governance and free and fair elections. The civil society actors were equally equipped with knowledge on how to best support and ensure that the electoral processes were peaceful and hitch-free. Electoral materials were also provided to the CENI. MONUSCO also took decisive steps to provide fuel to the Electoral Commission and brought in experts to advise the Electoral Commission on logistical and technical issues.

Before the elections, MONUSCO deployed its peacekeepers to Kinshasa, North and South Kivu, Tanganyika, and Kasai. Peacekeepers were equally deployed to Kisangani, Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, and Goma. The deployment of these troops was meant to ensure

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[540] MONUSCO, "MONUSCO At A Glance," Kinshasa, 2019, p. 7.

rapid response in the event of electoral violence. In addition to the above, MONUSCO trained close to 5000 DRC police forces on the technicalities of controlling crowds and responding to situations of human rights violations[541]. The Congolese troops equally received formation on how the excessive use of force could be minimized during public protests.

In fulfilling its peacekeeping and peacebuilding mission in Congo, the UNSC, in its resolution 2463 of 29 March 2019, extended the mandate of MONUSCO. In the same light, on 18 December 2020, the UN further extended the mandate of MONUSCO by the adoption of resolution 2556. Both resolutions 2463 and 2556 were centered around MONUSCO's mission to protect civilians, support the stabilization and strengthening of state institutions, develop mechanisms for good governance, and ensure the implementation of security sector reforms. In recognition that Congo has not fully recovered from the violence and instability that has robbed the resource-rich country, the UNSC went further on 20 December 2021 to adopt resolution 2612, which extended MONUSCO's mandate to 20 December 2022. Resolution 2612 reaffirmed the 2019 and 2020 mandates. It charged MONUSCO with the responsibility to engage vigorously in child protection and gender issues and ensure that resolution 2293 (2016) pertains to the arms embargo implementation effectively monitored.

In addition to the above, MONUSCO has significantly engaged local communities in its peacebuilding mission. The use of force may have diminished the capacity and danger of armed groups, but what keeps the communities together are strong bonds of social cohesion backed by tangible assurances of peace and stability. Through its Office for Civil Affairs (OCA) and its Community Liaison Assistance (CLA), the mission has established strong links with local communities. Such engagements with local stakeholders have afforded it the ability to get information from the grassroots. Still, they have also given the mission the ability to use such local connections as entry points in its mediation and reconciliation strategies toward achieving effective conflict resolution. Furthermore, MONUSCO has also constructed facilities such as schools and bridges. The mission has equally participated in constructing and enhancing the transport network in the country.

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[541] Chandrima Das, "MONUSCO and DRC Elections," Kinshasa, 2018, p. 4.

2 THE CHALLENGES TO PEACEBUILDING IN DR CONGO AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The conflict in DRC has been of primary importance to politicians, civil society, and academicians alike. Apart from the internal consequences of death and displacement that the war caused, its implications for regional and international relations cannot be ignored. This explains why Congo witnessed an influx of national, regional, and international peacebuilding efforts since the outbreak of the conflict. The quest for peacebuilding in Congo has seen several initiatives developed by different actors, either separately or with other peace stakeholders. Despite such tremendous progress made to stabilize the country, sometimes the constraints that come with the complexity of the conflict have limited the ability of peacebuilders to effectively build the kind of peace that will lift Congo from the category of failing states. At other times the actions and inactions of these peacebuilders have been the same factors that limit the progress of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. In addition to the above, other actors perceived as actors in the peace process have turned out to be the very 'spoilers' of such peace initiatives. Our understanding of peacekeeping and peacemaking challenges and their implications for conflict resolutions is a pointer to why peace has continued to be elusive in DRC.

The sizeable geographic expanse of the Congo and the porosity of its borders have made it difficult for peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts to succeed. With a surface area of 2345 million km2, Congo can be the largest country in sub–Saharan Africa. While this vastness is a credit to the geopolitical and geostrategic interest of the country, such largeness has not been favorable to peacekeeping missions. Both FARDC and MONUSCO forces have faced enormous challenges navigating the Congo to combat armed groups. The reality, however, is that the vastness of the Congo has made it difficult sometimes for these peacekeeping forces to reach the hideouts of armed groups, which in some ways master the terrain more than the peacekeepers do.

2.1 Challenges Posed by the Host Government

The various governments of Congo, beginning with Laurent Kabila, have consistently shown reluctance towards MONUC/MONUSCO. Even though MONUSCO has the express consent of Congolese authorities to be in the country, successive Congolese governments have often called for the evacuation of MONUSCO from the country.

Although Laurent Kabila was still facing threats from Uganda and Rwanda, he was quick to present himself as a nationalist and strong leader fully in charge of his country. Consequently, he made calls for the United Nations, US, and French forces to leave the country.

After his father's death, Joseph Kabila took overpower as president in 2001. He continued to urge MONUSCO to leave the country. During the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly in 2018, Joseph Kabila reiterated the need for MONUSCO to leave the Congo. He argued that after 20 years, many parts of the country, including Beni were still to experience what peace means. He justified his call for the mission's withdrawal based on mixed operational results, which was not satisfactory to Kabila. Such rhetoric has tainted the functional capacity and legitimacy of MONUSCO in the eyes of the Congolese. In places like Butembo, Goma, and Kinshasa, Congolese have joined the call for the mission to exit Congo. Drawing inspiration from their leader Kabila, some Congolese maintained that MONUSCO has not lived up to its task of providing peace and security in the country. This problematic relationship between the government and MONUSCO has hampered the mission's peacebuilding operations. It is, however, essential to note that without MONUSCO, Congo would have been a conflict hub with devastating implications for its neighbors and the region at large.

Rebel governance and collaboration with FARDC and local administrators have harmed the peacebuilding processes in DRC. According to McNamee and Muyungwa, FARDC forces and local administrative authorities have collaborated and provided finance and weapons to rebel groups like the ADF and the Mai Mai group[542]. These armed groups have leveraged such support to perpetrate killings and even attacks on MONUSCO forces. MONUSCO's attempt to build peace by supporting the establishment of administrative and security forces in conflict-ridden areas was compromised by the collaboration of these very state agents with rebel groups. This same collaboration between FARDC and ADF was responsible for why a MONUSCO/FARDC joint counter-insurgency operation to combat the ADF failed.

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[542] McNamee, Muyangwa, *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa:Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners*, p. 308.

Sexual abuse and violation of human rights have been common atrocities committed by the FARDC. Soldiers of the Congolese army have committed sexual violence against women in various places where they were deployed throughout the Congo. Such acts have greatly affected the public image and legitimacy of FARDC as a force capable of building peace in the Congo. Sexual violence in conflict is categorized as a war crime punishable under international humanitarian law. According to Kippenberg, FARDC forces constitute the largest group of sexual predators in Congo[543]. The problem, however, remains that despite overwhelming available statistics on the sexual crimes of FARDC forces, the Congolese government has remained reluctant and ineffective in opening an investigation and prosecuting the culprits. They can never really be any effective transition to peace when victims that have suffered sexual and gender-based violence have not received adequate justice. The UN mission in Congo documented 1053 conflict-related abuse cases. The rape crimes were said to have been committed by FARDC and armed groups[544].

2.2   *Regional Challenges to Peace*

The proliferation of armed groups in the eastern region of Congo has been a significant challenge to peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts. Armed groups in Kivus, Kasai, and Katanga have continuously attacked the government. The sectarian violence these militia groups perpetuate has contributed to undermining the peacebuilding processes in the country. While, on many occasions, the government has failed to respect the terms of peace agreements, armed groups on their part have not adhered to such ceasefire agreements either. The violation of peace agreements by both armed groups and the government has diminished the prospects of achieving sustainable peace in Congo. Armed groups like the CNDP, M23, ADF, Lord's Resistance Army, and FDLR had persistently thwarted the peace process, especially when such agreements deprived the rebels of enormous access to raw materials and economic incentives. The government's reliance on some of these armed groups to combat fellow militias explains why peace has

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[543] Human Rights Watch, "Soldiers Who Rape, Commanders Who Condone: Sexual Violence and Military Reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo," New York, 2009, pp. 19–21, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/drc0709web.pdf.

[544] Nagel, Fin, Maenza, "United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," p. 9.

remained elusive in Congo, as such alliances only weaken the government and negatively affect its credibility and legitimacy.

Apart from being belligerents in the Congo crisis, Rwanda and Uganda have acted as spoilers to the peacebuilding processes in Congo in various ways. During the Second Congo War, Uganda and Rwanda fought fiercely to gain control over resource-rich zones in the Congo. The economic incentives which drove their involvement in the conflict caused them to frustrate the efforts of the UN to secure a ceasefire. In 1998, both countries supported the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) to oust Laurent Kabila from power. In 2012, The United Nations produced evidence showing how Rwanda provided support to the M23 rebel group in violation of the arms embargo that was in place. The rebels' support from Rwanda enabled them to seize Goma, humiliated the Congolese armed forces, and pushed the United Nations peacekeeping force out of Goma. The achievement of meaningful peace remained a farfetched dream in Congo. When Rwanda and Uganda were not involved directly, they provided military-grade logistics to proxy armed groups to advance the protection of their interests in Congo, even to the detriment of the UN peace efforts.

The Southern African Development Community played a significant role in the peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Congo. However, judging from the organization's capacity, membership, and strength, SADC could have done more than it did were it not for internal rivalries fueled by its members' divergent views and interests. When Laurent Kabila called for assistance at the outbreak of the Second Congo War, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia marched into Congo with troops and ammunition to rescue Kabila's government against rebel attacks. However, other SADC states like South Africa were opposed to the military option of Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola. While Nelson Mandela of South Africa preferred the pacifist mode of mediation, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe was all out for military intervention. This lack of coherence negatively impacted the organization's image as other schools of thought dubbed the trio's intervention illegitimate. The inability of SADC to collaborate with other non-state actors in designing and implementing its political, military, and diplomatic strategies limited its capacity for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

2.3   Challenges Faced by International Peace Missions

The United Nations has played a very pivotal role in responding to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo has, through its Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), championed mediation efforts to provide development assistance and contributed significantly to addressing armed conflict in Congo for more than two decades. The UN mission has persistently worked hard to bring peace to Congo by stabilizing and strengthening state institutions, supporting electoral processes, providing human rights oversight, and combating armed groups[545]. Despite these efforts to prevent conflict and build peace, MONUSCO's peace operations have been challenged by factors that have limited the mission's effectiveness.

The UN mission in Congo finds itself in a complex conflict with a government that has often resisted the presence of MONUSCO in the country. The mission had been prompted severally to leave the country by both Laurent Kabila and Joseph Kabila. In 2015 the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General Martin Kobler attempted to negotiate a deal between the opposition and the ruling coalition. He was, however, turned away[546]. In December 2017, MONUSCO found itself again at odds with the Congolese government when it criticized the government's heavy use of force on protesters. Such strained relations have challenged the ability of MONUSCO to carry out its mandate effectively.

In addition to the above, MONUSCO has been faulted for not effectively living up to its mandate to protect civilians. According to UNSC resolution 1291, MONUSCO was empowered to take every action necessary to shield and protect civilians from the threats and violence of armed groups. The mission failed the litmus test to implement the above resolution when in 2004, civilians in Bukavu were ambushed by more than 1500 armed insurgents[547]. The plunder and pillage of rebel incursion went on opposed by UN

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[545] Amani Labda, "Joint Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in the Democratic Republic of Congo," Brussels, 2011, vol. 1, pp. 24–26, www.channelresearch.com1.

[546] Jaïr van der et al Lijn, "Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)," Oslo, 2019, vol. 4, pp. 75–80, doi:10.14452/mr-008-08-1956-12_1.

[547] Ayodeji Bayo Ogunrotifa, "The Factors Behind Successes and Failures of United Nations Peacekeeping Missions : A Case of the Democratic Republic of Congo," *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 4 (2012), pp. 914–32.

peacekeepers. The result was that more than 2000 people got displaced, and a civil protest ensued in front of the MONUC building.

After more than 20 years of peacekeeping, the continuous violence in the country has caused Congolese to become weary of the presence of MONUSCO in their country. The mission has not been able to wipe out all armed groups in the country. While the incomplete disarming of armed groups can be regarded as a failure on the part of MONUSCO to bring lasting peace, it goes without saying that the issue of armed groups in Congo remains a complex factor in the analysis of the conflict. Armed groups in DRC have constantly changed their names, forged new alliances, and reemerged with varying agendas. The conspiracy of local communities and Congo armed forces with armed groups have further frustrated the peacekeeping efforts of MONUSCO.

Sometimes there is a lack of understanding of the peacekeeper's mandate, both from the UN, Troop Contributing Countries (TCC), and the civilians they are meant to protect. The misconceptions and contradictions surrounding the protection of civilians have been a significant challenge to the overall effectiveness of MONUSCO. In essence, the expectations placed on peacekeepers by the local population to act come contrary to the principles of peacekeeping, which informs and directs the mandate on the protection of civilians. In practical terms, peacekeepers have focused their attention on prevention and mitigation. This approach differs from physical protection, which shapes the expectations of many in certain instances. The protection of civilians is complicated by the layered processes between the troop-contributing countries and the United Nations. The limited resources to sustain peacekeepers in conflict zones have not made matters straightforward.

Furthermore, MONUSCO's peacebuilding efforts in DRC have been challenged by relying on the use of force. The fact remains that whether limited or excessive, MONUSCO must rely on force to counter the growing insecurity and instability in the Congo. Reconciling its military operations and its humanitarian activities is a dilemma that has challenged MONUCO's capability to effectively engage local communities and rebel groups in a trust-based dialogue[548]. This difficulty is further explained by the fact

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[548] McNamee, Muyangwa, *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa:Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners*, pp. 267–69.

that the same MONUSCO forces that provide and secure the delivery of humanitarian assistance may well be the same who combat armed groups. The contradictions surrounding which UN forces execute the peaceful mandate of the mission, and those that carry out military aspects of the mission have thrown the local population and armed groups into a state of distrust towards MONUSCO, thereby limiting the mission's ability to engage with them.

The top-down approach to peacebuilding has perhaps been one of the most grievous failures of international peacebuilding failures in Congo, Africa, and the Middle East. It is worth noting that MONUSCO and other international organizations that entered the Congo with the hope of bringing peace all fell to this flawed approach. The top-down approach to peacebuilding reflects a methodology where the perceived solutions to end the conflict of designed solely out of the prescriptions and understanding of the intervening parties. The greatest pitfall of this approach is that most times, the realities of the host country are not factored in the peace designs of the intervenors. Contrary to the above, the bottom-top approach to peacebuilding takes the traditional and social context of the conflict environment. This approach, in many ways, legitimizes and fosters peacebuilding efforts because the population tends to participate and become owners of the peace processes themselves.

The top-down approach primarily focuses on addressing the national and international causes of conflict[549]. This notwithstanding, the instability and violence that characterizes many civil wars equally emanate from the local and sub-national levels. According to Autessere (2017), interveners are motivated mainly by the flawed thinking that the conflict-ridden territories do not have the necessary resources, knowledge, abilities, and skills to effectively resolved the crisis[550]. Consequently, foreign interveners tend to see themselves as 'messiahs' coming in to save the local people from the scourge of war and provide what they lack and need. The fact, however, remains that sustainable peacebuilding must rely on both the top-down and bottom-top approaches.

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[549] Oliver Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 149–80.
[550] Séverine Autesserre, "International Peacebuilding and Local Success: Assumptions and Effectiveness," *International Studies Review*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2017), pp. 1–19, doi:10.1093/isr/viw054.

The moral capacity and legitimacy of MONUSCO to act as a force for good have significantly been damaged by acts of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by UN peacekeepers and Congolese armed forces alike. The prevalence of sexual abuses committed by these forces meant to protect the civilians only adds to the sexual atrocities of armed groups in the Congo. The huge statistics of sexual violence in Congo have caused the country to be conceptualized as the 'rape capital of the world[551]. The issue of sexual violence perpetrated by FDR forces further constraints on MONUSCO's abilities for peacebuilding because MONUSCO still finds it increasingly difficult to hold these forces fully accountable. It must still rely on the national army while collaborating with Congo's government to stabilize the country.

2.4   *Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic*

When Seleka launched an attack to overthrow Francoise Bozize in 2012, few people expected the conflict to go beyond 2013. However, the coming into the war of the Anti-Balaka armed group further complicated an already fragile situation. Other armed groups and militias have since emerged as actors in the conflict in CAR. The activities of these armed groups established a culture of violence that has brought grave consequences for the people and government of CAR. The country has witnessed the change of power from one transitional government to another up until the election of Archange Touadera. Despite these measures, peace and stability have remained elusive in CAR. According to the Global Conflict Tracker, the constant instability in the country has led to close to 2.9 million people becoming victims of a humanitarian crisis. An estimated 581,362 Central African have become internally displaced because of the conflict[552]. The successive governments of CAR have tried to end the war and stabilize the country. However, such efforts have proven insufficient, as demonstrated by the constant rise in violence that tore the country apart. The conflict and instability in CAR have led to the destruction of state institutions and have also affected schools, the health care system, and even access to clean water has become a significant challenge over the years.

[551] Chloé Lewis, "The Making and Re-Making of the 'Rape Capital of the World': On Colonial Durabilities and the Politics of Sexual Violence Statistics in DRC," *Critical African Studies*, 2021, pp. 6–15, doi:10.1080/21681392.2021.1902831.

[552] Global Conflict Tracker, "Violence in the Central African Republic," 2022, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-central-african-republic , accessed on 31.03.2022.

The border blockade between Cameroon and CAR has prevented importing food from neighboring countries. This has led to a significant increase in the prices of essential commodities, further making life exceedingly difficult for CAR inhabitants. Given the above, regional, and international organizations have intervened to halt the conflict and rebuild peace in CAR. In this regard, the African Union and United Nations have contributed to stabilizing the country and putting it back on the rails of development and growth.

After the election of Touadera in 2016, his government designed a National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, which aimed to address the instability in the country and provide solutions to the problems that have plagued the nation's growth. The government's peacebuilding plan had three priority components[553]. The first one had to support peace, security, and reconciliation. The second pillar focused on renewing the social contract between the state and the people. The third component aimed to promote economic recovery and boost the country's productive sectors. This national peacebuilding strategy which began in 2017, is still ongoing. The table an illustration of the major peacebuilding institutions in the CAR. The table presents the peace missions, their mandates, and their period of activity in brief.

Table 12: Principal Peace Actors in the Central African Republic

Actors/Leading Institution	Mission	Mandate	Period of Activity
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)	Peacebuilding Mission in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX)	To restore peace and consolidate stability in CAR	2008-2013
African Union	The African-led International Support Mission for the Central African Republic (MISCA)	To stabiles CAR Protect Civilians Assist the process of Political transition	2013-2014
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA)	UN Peacekeeping Mission	Protection of civilians Facilitate political transition	2014-Present

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[553] World Bank Group, "Central African Republic: Natonal Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan 2017-21," New York, 2017, pp. 11–13, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/car_main_report-a4-english-web.pdf.

		Stabilize and extend state authority	
France	Operation Sangaris	To disarm the militia and terrorist groups	2013-2016

2.4.1 The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

The emergence of intrastate conflicts in Africa has matched an increased number of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and security complexes to provide solutions to conflicts plaguing the continent. In the case of CAR, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) played a significant role in consolidating peace and restoring stability in the country. The peace operations of ECCAS in CAR began in 2008 and lasted until 2013 when the regional mission was handed over to an African-led peace operation mission MISCA. ECCAS implored diplomatic mediation and military security strategies to bring stability and security to CAR.

At the onset of the Seleka attack on Bozize in 2012, the latter called for international support to prevent the rebels from toppling his government. ECCAS was one of the first responders to intervene in the crisis and called for mediation[554]. Through the instrumentality of its Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX), the regional bloc sent in troops to CAR to assist the government of Bozize and prevent the rebels from taking over Bangui[555]. Other countries like South Africa, DRC, Cameroon, Gabon, and Congo equally sent in troops to reinforce ECCAS's troops. As a multinational force, MICOPAX's mandate was to help consolidate a climate of peace, stability, and security. The regional peacekeeping force was charged with protecting human rights in CAR. The mission also had to facilitate bringing humanitarian aid to the population.

To prevent the escalation of the conflict, ECCAS persuaded Francois Bozize to enter negotiations with the rebels. Denis Sassou Nguesso served as ECCAS's mediator between

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[554] Nathalia Dukhan, *The Central African Republic Crisis*, Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham, 2016, pp. 11–15.

[555] Andrea De Guttry, "Developing Effective Partnerships in Peacekeeping Operations between the UN and Regional Organizations. A Recent Report of the UN Secretary General on the Transition in Mali and in the Central African Republic," *Paix et Securite Internationales*, vol. 5, no. 3 (2015), p. 18, doi:10.25267/paix_secur_int.2015.i3.01.

Bozize and the insurgents[556]. The talks led to a power-sharing peace agreement signed in Libreville in January 2013. According to the Libreville agreement, Francois Bozize accepted to organize legislative elections. Meanwhile, the leader of Seleka, Michel Djotodia, became the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of defense. Meantime one of the strong opposition figures, Nicholas Tiangaye, became Prime Minister[557].

Two months after signing the Libreville Agreement, Seleka staged an attack on Bozize and took power on 24 March 2013. Michel Djotodia suspended the constitution and the parliament and declared himself president. Seleka and its leadership maintained that Bozize's reluctance to implement the provisions of the Libreville Agreement led to their attack and ouster of Bozize from power. Despite efforts by MICOPAX to prevent the rebels from taking over Bangui, it failed to do so as the rebels finally seized power. Many reasons account for the failures of M ICOPAX. Despite this, ECCAS continued to be a force to reckon with as far as peace and security in CAR were concerned. The mission of MICOPAX ended in December 2013. The mission was eventually transformed from ECCAS to an African Union-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA).

The African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) was established on 19 July 2013. The transformation process from MICOPAX to MISCA lasted from 1 August to 5 December 2013. Despite the efforts aimed at stabilizing CAR, violence and insecurity continued. Michel Djotodia, the leader of the Seleka, had taken power but did not have control over the various factions of the rebel group. By July 2013, the International Federation for Human Rights had compiled more than four hundred cases of murder perpetrated by the Seleka armed group. Djotodia's inability to call his fighters to order meant that he could no longer control their activities. On 13 September 2013, Djotodia officially disbanded and dissolved the Seleka armed coalition. As violence and rebel atrocities continued, the leaders of ECCAS met with Michel Djotodia and Prime Minister Nicholas Tiangaye on 10 January 2014 in N'Djamena. The regional bloc pressured Djotodia and Tiangaye to resign. A national transitional government was

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[556] Marie-Joelle Zahar, Delphine Mechoulan, "Peace by Pieces? Local Mediation and Sustainable Peace in the Central African Republic," New York, 2017, p. 12, doi:10.2139/ssrn.3260848.
[557] Tatiana Carayannis, Mignonne Fowlis, "Lessons from African Union–United Nations Cooperation in Peace Operations in the Central African Republic," *African Security Review*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2017), pp. 220–36, doi:10.1080/10246029.2017.1302707.

eventually set up with Catherine Samba Panza serving as the transition president, with no right to contest elections.

2.4.2 The African Union

At the onset of the conflict in 2012- 2013, the first responder to intervene in a security and stabilization mission was the Economic Community of Central African States. The African Union did not make any spectacular moves to intervene in the crisis. However, through its chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the AU recognized the efforts of ECCAS and gave its backing to the regional economic bloc. The inability of ECCAS's MICOPAX to restore peace and stability in the country prompted the entrance of the African Union's involvement and eventual takeover of the peace operation in CAR.

In a bid to restructure and provide a more robust peace operation for CAR, the AU, through its Peace and Security Council, sought and received the authorization of the UN Security Council. Following the UNSC's resolution 2127 of 5 December 2013, the council authorized establishing and deploying an AU-led International Support Mission for CAR (MISCA)[558]. The same resolution equally authorized the French Operation Sangaris in CAR. The mandate of MISCA under the auspices of the African Union was to ensure the stabilization of the country, foster the protection of civilians, restore public order, and create a conducive environment for humanitarian assistance while facilitating and providing support for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process.

The African Union has, over the years, engaged rigorously in the construction and restoration of peace on the stability of its member states. The African continent has been the hot spot of conflicts that have caused massive civilian casualties, breakdown of governments, destruction of infrastructure, and stalled development[559]. Amid all this, the peace operation efforts of the AU have come under criticism from those who see the organization's strides to end conflicts as weak and insufficient. Such objections have not hindered the efforts of the AU. In hindsight, the organization has sought to strengthen its peacekeeping initiatives by engaging with regional and international stakeholders.

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[558] De Guttry, "Developing Effective Partnerships in Peacekeeping Operations between the UN and Regional Organizations. A Recent Report of the UN Secretary General on the Transition in Mali and in the Central African Republic," p. 18.

[559] Jude Cocodia, *Peacekeeping and the African Union: Building Negative Peace*, 1st ed., New York: Routledge, 2018, pp. 3–10.

The AU took decisive steps in CAR to stabilize the country and put it back on the rails of good governance. After the coup which ousted Bozize from power, the AU took a firm stand against such an unconstitutional change of government and suspended CAR. The organization equally imposed travel bans and froze the assets of those it deemed as spoilers of the January 2013 Libreville Agreement. The Economic Community of Central African States opted for a more conciliatory approach that will engage the Seleka government in political dialogue. On the other hand, the AU was all in for stricter measures towards the crisis.

By March of 2014, MISCA was able to boast 6000 troops. Some of the soldiers came from Rwanda and Burundi. At the same time, the rest were elements of the defunct MICOPAX and armies from other African states such as Senegal, Cameroon, Gabon, DRC, Madagascar, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire[560]. General Jean Marie Mokoko headed these forces. As a multidimensional peacekeeping mission, MISCA was very instrumental in protecting civilians and displaced persons and supporting the process of transition in CAR.

Moreover, MISCA collaborated with French Sangaris forces to stabilize the country in executing its mandate. MISCA also engaged civil society organizations and religious bodies to further peace and stability. Through the dynamism of its efforts, MISCA was able to play a crucial role in the events that led to the signing of the Brazzaville Agreement on 23 July 2014, which among other things, bordered on the cessation of hostilities by armed groups in the country. The multidimensional mission lost 31 soldiers and police during its operation. The peacebuilding operation of the AU in CAR was brief, and though it made progress towards fulfilling its mandate, it did no more than MICOPAX did. Many factors ranging from the country's financial, institutional, and internal dynamics stalled the progress of the AU mission. One of the critical issues that hindered the capabilities of the AU was the power tussle between ECCAS's leaders and AU on who oversaw the situation in CAR.

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[560] Tatiana Carayannis and Louisa Lombard (ed.), *Making Sense of the Central African Republic*, London: Zed Books, 2015, pp. 213–20.

2.4.3 United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)

The increase in violence and instability that characterized the first part of 2014 in CAR once more necessitated the reappraisal of the peacekeeping infrastructure in the country. Consequently, through resolution 2149 of 10 April 2014, the UN Security Council transformed the African Union's MISCA into The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The chairperson of the African Union, Dlamini Zuma, officially transferred the units of MISCA to MINUSCA on 15 September 2014. The UN mission kickstarted with 12,000 personnel[561]. In the same light of peacefully resolving the conflict in CAR, the UN hard to readjust its priorities and peace operations. In transitioning the African-led MISCA into MINUSCA, the UN also brought an end to the operations of its Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA). Both MISCA and BINUCA units merged into MINUSCA.

The original mandate of MINUSCA centered on protecting civilians and facilitating political transition while operating in total capacity to extend the state's authority[562]. During the transitional process, the mission provided technical and logistical assistance to ensure a credible electoral process in the country. The UN mission in CAR operates within a complex and fragile environment, where economic opportunism has merged with political grievances. Amid these dynamics, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish combatants from civilians. Conflict analysts have come to describe MINUSCA as one of the most complex UN missions over the years. According to Sieff (2017), MINUSCA represents the most difficult UN peacekeeping mission[563]. The assertion rests on the fact that bad governance and the absence of effective government presence around the country have given armed groups the ability to thrive freely. Armed groups have exploited this freedom to orchestrate full sectarian and ethnic conflicts.

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[561] Dukhan, *The Central African Republic Crisis*, p. 13.

[562] Lise Morjé Howard et al., *Assessing the Effectiveness of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic / MINUSCA*, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2020, p. 7.

[563] Kevin Sieff, "The World's Most Dangerous U.N. Mission," *The Washington Post*, (02/17/2017), https://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/2017/02/17/the-worlds-deadliest-u-n-peacekeeping-mission/.

Many people have died due to such conflicts. About 70 to 80% of the country remains under the control of rebels[564]. The continuation of violence perpetrated by these armed groups raised concerns among skeptics who saw MNUSCA as incapable of solving the issues of insecurity in the country. No matter how many challenges MINUSCA has faced in CAR, the fact remains that its activities have enhanced a lot of stability and fostered social cohesion, which otherwise would not have happened.

The operations of MINUSCA have prevented wanton killings by armed groups. In the area of peace, women, and security, sexual violence has been mitigated while monitoring human rights in the country has increased. The participation of women in the state-building process in CAR has significantly increased since the deployment of the UN mission in 2014. Barely three months after its deployment, MINUSCA played a significant role in securing a ceasefire between Seleka and Anti-Balaka armed groups. MINUSCA's mediation efforts led to the signing of a ceasefire agreement on 23 July 2014 in Brazzaville[565]. The Brazzaville agreement was well received on the international stage as a step towards the right direction to finding peace for CAR. As agreed in Brazzaville, the cessation of hostilities was short-lived, as clashes soon erupted between the armed groups. This notwithstanding, the UN's participation in the above ceasefire process was a hallmark that heralded its presence in CAR as a critical actor of peace and stability.

To foster peace and stability through national dialogue, MINUSCA played an instrumental role by providing political and logistical assistance towards the convening of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation[566]. About 700 participants attended the Bangui Forum, which ran from 4th to 11 May 2015. The primary objective of the Bangui Forum was to promote reconciliation and national cohesion by bringing together all factions in the country to deliberate on the challenges facing the country. The participants at the forum were drawn from the government, local traditional and religious groups, armed groups, representatives of civil society, MINUSCA, and other stakeholders from

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[564] Howard et al., *Assessing the Effectiveness of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic / MINUSCA*, p. 7.

[565] "Central African Republic: New UN Mission," *Strategic Comments*, vol. 20, no. 6 (2014), pp. 1–3, doi:10.1080/13567888.2014.973146.

[566] Pamela Aall, Chester A. Crocker (eds.), *The Fabric of Peace in Africa: Looking beyond the State*, Ontario: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2017.

the international community. The forum, which focused on issues of peacebuilding and state-building, culminated in several resolutions.

Both Seleka and Anti-Balaka signed and committed to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate into the state security system during the forum. The leaders of the armed groups equally agreed to release child soldiers under their control. A National Truth and Reconciliation Commission was put in place while elections were scheduled for October 2015. The inclusive citizen participation in the forum gave it a lot of credibility and raised hopes for future peace in CAR[567]. MINUSCA continued its support for CAR's peacebuilding and state-building initiatives through assistance to rebuild the country's institutions and security structures. The mission assisted in the arrest of 365 criminals who were believed to have perpetrated grievous acts of human rights violation. Investigative magistrates, judicial police, and prosecutors equally benefited from MINUSCA's technical advice in executing their functions while following due process[568]. Despite the efforts of MINUSCA and other stakeholders of the Bangui Forum, the forum's recommendations remained largely unimplemented. This contributed to stalling the national reconciliation process initiated at the forum. The agreements on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and the envisaged elections were crucial steps in the political advancement of the country. However, the inadequate implementation of the DDR and the Security Sector Reform hindered the full accomplishment of the forum's recommendations. Both the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for 18 October 2015 were eventually postponed because of the violence and instability that erupted in the country at the close of September of the same year.

Furthermore, MNUSCA took measures to address and deescalate local conflicts. Through its bottom-top approach to peace, 29 peace and reconciliation committees were established at the community level[569]. The establishment of these local peace committees was very relevant in advancing sustainable peace and stability. Over time, local conflicts have proven to be spoilers in constructing durable peace and harmony. At the close of

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[567] Carayannis, Fowlis, "Lessons from African Union–United Nations Cooperation in Peace Operations in the Central African Republic," 2017, p. 227.
[568] cited, p. 6.
[569] Howard et al., *Assessing the Effectiveness of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic / MINUSCA*, pp. 7–8.

2018, some NGOs linked the growth in CAR's security to the military operations of MINUSCA and its local disarmament and peacebuilding efforts[570].

The mission's initiative to establish links with local peace actors is inherently tied to the accomplishment of its mandate of extending state authority and ensuring civilian protection. If the state in CAR had to survive, then it was crucial for a sense of belonging to be established from the grassroots to the national level. Once the people could identify with the state-building process, social cohesion could be achieved, and the strategies for civilian protection could be executed effectively. Through its Community Violence Reduction (CVR) program, MINUSCA designed strategies to curb violence at the community level. It equally contributed to ensuring the stabilization of these communities. Through the CVR program, communities were strengthened to stand against local and external triggers and actors of conflicts. The program did not only create space for dialogue, but it also provided alternatives to violence. All these led to the signing of inter-community local peace agreements.

In addition to the above, MINUSCA played an essential role in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants and contributed significantly to the security sector reform processes in the Central African Republic. In fostering its strategic objective of reducing violence and stabilizing CAR, MINUSCA collaborated with other interveners and external organizations such as the African Union, the EU, ECCAS, and ICGLR. The design and implementation of DDR programs are vital because it is one of the nonmilitary peacebuilding measures. In line with the above, the DDR and SSR are inherently linked. This is explained by the fact that DDR programs prepare an enabling environment for the effective implementation of Security Sector Reforms[571]. Without a thriving DDR program in place, post-conflict agreements are likely to collapse, and the probability of SSR success cannot be guaranteed in a chaotic environment.

The disarming of combatants and reintegrating them into society has proven to be a complex issue in the Central African Republic. This notwithstanding, MINUSCA began

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[570] Congressional Research Service, "U.N Peacekeeping Operations in Africa," Washington DC, 2019, pp. 11–12.

[571] Sarah Detzner, "Modern Post-Conflict Security Sector Reform in Africa: Patterns of Success and Failure," *African Security Review*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2017), pp. 116–42, doi:10.1080/10246029.2017.1302706.

laying the foundations of the DDR program in CAR with Catherine Samba Panza's transitional government. Under MINUSCA's DDR program, some combatants voluntarily laid down their arms. In return, MINUSCA encouraged and supported their participation in alternative income-generating activities[572]. From October 2015 to June 2017, measures were taken within the framework of the pre-DDR program to provide alternative means of livelihood to former combatants. The cash for work program and its income-generating component was implemented in nine Central African Republic municipalities. Apart from fostering the local economy of these communities, the program was equally aimed at ensuring that the environment was conducive enough for the 2016 elections. As a result of the DDR program, an estimated 4979 combatants from Anti-Balaka and ex-Seleka abandoned their arms and engaged in alternative means of income generation[573].

Moreover, the program allowed the ex-combatants to be reintegrated into their communities. The local communities of the DDR program facilitated the reintegration of the former combatants in a way that made them find trust and acceptance within their localities. The pre-DDR program equally covered about 737 female ex-combatants. Some of the areas where the pre-DDR program took place included Bangui, Birao, Kaga-Bandoro, Ndele, Bambari, and Bouar[574].

Within the framework of MINUSCA's operations in CAR, its personnel had to deal with the complex dynamics of reducing the possibility of youths being recruited into armed groups while supporting the technicalities of the political processes, which among many things, included mediation at several levels[575]. Despite the challenges of the DDR program in CAR, these programs have created suitable environments for peace agreements at both local and national levels. These contributed significantly to the trust

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[572] MINUSCA, "Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration," 2020, https://minusca.unmissions.org/en/DDR_En , accessed on 16.03.2022.
[573] Adriana Erthal. Abdenur, Giovanna Kuele, "Glimmer of Hope in the Central African Republic (CAR)? The UN's Pre-DDR Experiment," *Instituto Igarapé*, 2017, https://igarape.org.br/en/glimmer-of-hope-in-the-central-african-republic-car/.
[574] ibid.
[575] World Bank, "The Changing Landscape of Armed Groups: Doing DDR in New Contexts," Washington D.C, 2018.

and confidence among belligerents in the conflict, leading to long-term sustainable political engagement[576].

As far as security sector reform is concerned, the government of CAR has benefited from MINUSCA's technical assistance and strategic guidance in redesigning the country's security architecture. MINUSCA has played an essential role in guiding governance and issues about the integration of former combatants into the state defense structure. From December 2014 to July 2015, MINUSCA actively participated in vetting and restructuring CAR's defense and security forces. The mission aided the defense ministry in a simplified verification process that involved 2368 personnel of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA)[577]. The verification process relied on specific criteria: non-affiliation to active armed groups, non-violation of human rights, and strict respect for humanitarian law. Such a vetting procedure was a necessary step in the security sector reform of FACA, which among other things, was relevant in redesigning a security and defense force that was not only responsive to the people but that could effectively support the peacebuilding process in the country.

In addition to the above, the Human Rights Division (HRD) of MINUSCA laid down a complete road map to reinforce the capacity of CAR's defense and security forces. The HRD organized a total of 21 pre-deployment training sessions. In addition to this, the HRD sensitized and trained FACA on issues of human rights and international humanitarian laws. Post-deployment training and workshops on issues bordering on conflict-related sexual violence and violation of child rights were equally organized for the defense forces.

On 2 February 2017, the Council of Ministers in the Central African Republic adopted the National Security Policy (NSP)[578]. With technical and strategic support from MINUSCA, the NSP was eventually converted into a national security sector reform strategy. The national SSR strategy was expected to run from 2017 to 2022. The national

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[576] Thomas Kontogeorgos, "The Evolving Nature of DDR: Engaging Armed Groups Across the Peace Continuum," Washington D.C: UN Department of Peace Operations/Bonn International Center for Conversion, 2021, pp. 15–17.

[577] MINUSCA, "Security Sector Reform," 2015, https://minusca.unmissions.org/en/security-sector-reform , accessed on 05.03.2022.

[578] United Nations, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic," 2017, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1288176?ln=EN , accessed on 16.03.2022.

SSR strategy aimed to ensure the restoration of state authority in a way that would foster the security of individuals and their properties[579]. It was equally geared towards the furtherance of good governance and upholding the rule of law. CAR's strategic committee for DDR, SSR on national reconciliation, later adopted the strategy on 10 March 2017.

Apart from the DDR and SSR programs, MINUSCA played a vital role in the 2016 elections in the Central African Republic. After two years of transition, Central Africans went to the polls in 2016 to vote for their president. The outcome of that election was crucial for both Central Africans and the intervening agencies alike. In line with its peace and security mandate, MINUSCA collaborated with the EU. Through the collaborative efforts of these two organizations, the National Elections Authority (ANE) received technical support in the run-up to the presidential elections. To prevent post-electoral violence, MINUSCA spearheaded the establishment of a code of conduct to which candidates for the elections had to commit and adhere[580]. MINUSCA took the initiative to keep the candidates in close contact through the organization of informal meetings. On 6 January 2016, the head of MINUSCA Parfait Onanga-Anyanga had a meeting with 28 of the 30 presidential candidates in Bangui[581]. MINUSCA persisted in regular contact with the presidential candidates to ensure that the code of conduct was respected. Because of their commitment to nonviolence during and after the elections, the candidate's preference for peace was eventually passed unto their supporters, who came to understand the position of their political or party leaders. In collaboration with the French Sangaris, MINUSCA stationed about 11,000 mixed units of soldiers and police across CAR to provide security at polling stations.

The 2016 elections CAR was historic and hotly contested but relatively peaceful. With 63% of the votes cast in his favor, Faustin Archange Touadera emerged as the winner. Other candidates and political parties contested Touadera's victory. What, however, remained significant is the fact that despite the reservations of the other candidates, they

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[579] Adedeji Ebo, Heiner Hänggi (eds.), *The United Nations and Security Sector Reform: Policy and Practice*, Zürich: LIT VERLAG GmbH & Co., 2020, pp. 120–22.

[580] Elizabeth Murray, Fiona Mangan, "The 2015–2016 CAR Elections, A Look Back: Peaceful Process Belies Serious Risks," Washington D.C, 2017, pp. 6–10.

[581] United Nations, "UN Envoy in Central African Republic Meets with Presidential Candidates Following First Election Round," 2016, https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/01/519442-un-envoy-central-african-republic-meets-presidential-candidates-following-first , accessed on 17.02.2022.

all preferred peace to violence and hence conceded defeat. The 2016 presidential elections in CAR represented the first time since independence in 1960 that power was peacefully and democratically transferred. The largely peaceful electoral process was thus seen as a foundation on which sustainable peace could be built.

In continuation of support to the peace process in the Central African Republic, the African Union championed the course of an African Initiative for Peace and National Reconciliation. MINUSCA greatly supported this initiative alongside other bodies like ECCAS and the ICGLR. In the same light, Gabon, Angola, the Republic of Congo, and Chad equally threw their weight behind the initiative, which was adopted on 17 July 2017 in Libreville[582]. The initiative developed a road map for peace and reconciliation and emphasized the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants. The road map equally reechoed and highlighted the relevance of committing to the 2015 Bangui Forum[583]. The United Nations offered its unabridged support to the road map for peace and reconciliation by pledging to assist with logistics and technical support to strengthen the mediation capacity of the initiative further.

The crisis in CAR is as complex as the peacebuilding initiatives that have evolved to stabilize the country. Nevertheless, one thing that remains clear is that the responsibility to protect has driven peace efforts in the country, both locally and nationally. In February 2019, the government of CAR came together with 14 armed groups to sign a peace deal[584]. This peace deal became known as the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR) . This deal was the first of its kind in the political processes of peacebuilding in CAR because it witnessed many armed groups' participation. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic participated in the peace arrangements. According to the nitty-gritty of the agreement, the government agreed to reexamine the causes of insecurity in the country. The UN mission also committed to strengthening good governance mechanisms, fostering decentralization, continuing security sector reforms, and promoting social justice and inclusiveness. The armed groups, on their part, committed to cease all

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[582] Ebo, Hänggi, *The United Nations and Security Sector Reform: Policy and Practice*, p. 122.

[583] Zahar, Mechoulan, "Peace by Pieces? Local Mediation and Sustainable Peace in the Central African Republic," p. 14.

[584] Aditi Gorur, "The Political Strategy of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Mali," Tokyo, 2020, pp. 107–9.

hostilities against state institutions, respect international humanitarian laws, refrain from sexually violating women, and respect the rights of children by not recruiting them into rebel groups. Article 16 of the agreement stipulated that MINUSCA would provide technical support to the defense forces of the Central African Republic.

The inclusive government that president Faustin Touadera appointed included position allocations such as ministerial and military advisers to leaders of armed groups at both national and local levels. Most citizens criticized the peace agreement for rewarding perpetrators of violence and hostilities. Whatever their reservations about the deal may be, the fact remains that just bringing the armed groups to the negotiation table was an achievement. However, this is not to say that the agreement was fully implemented as expected. Despite haven signed the agreement, fighting between armed groups and the government forces still ensued in certain places.

After seven months of signing the peace deal, some leaders of armed groups who had been appointed to the power-sharing government decided to break away from the peace agreement. The Central African Patriotic Movement (MPC) leader, Mahamat al-Khatim and Abbas Siddiki of Return, Reclamation, Rehabilitation (3R), who served in the power-sharing government as special military advisers, resigned from their positions[585]. According to the rebel leaders, the functions of special military advisers at the office of the Prime Minister gave them no absolute authority nor financial means to run their offices. In addition to the above, the Union for Peace in CAR (UPC) leader, Ali Darassa, who served equally as a military adviser, did not back out from his position. He, however, exploited whatever authority he had to facilitate the activities of rebel groups, gained control over certain territories, and fostered the trafficking of weapons.

Before holding the presidential and legislative elections on 27 December 2020, various armed groups attacked Touadera's government. The armed attacks generated violence in the country and raised fears that the elections would not hold. Rebel groups such as the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) and Unity for Peace in Central Africa (UPC) carried out spontaneous attacks and violence. They argued that Touadera was preparing to rig the elections in his favor. The objectives of these armed groups were to launch an

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[585] Aaron Pangburn, "One Year After CAR Peace Agreement, Looming Elections Distract from Current Dangers," New York, 2020, pp. 1–5.

attack and take over Bangui. However, both the government of CAR and its backers like MINUSCA insisted that the security tensions in the country would not deter the elections from taking place. After all, neither the government of CAR nor MINUSCA was ready for another transition. In response to the rebel attack, MINUSCA peacekeeping forces held the line of defense and repelled the rebels. The elections finally took place on 27 December 2020, and Faustin Archange Touadera was re-elected for another five-year term. During the 2020 elections, MINUSCA successfully supported the electoral process with operational, technical, and logistical assistance[586]. Since 2015, MINUSCA has extensively collaborated with other stakeholders in CAR to draft a new electoral code. These endeavors led to developing a computerized electoral roster that is reliable enough to encourage voter turnout in elections.

Due to pre-electoral violence staged by the Coalition of Patriots for Change armed group, in 2020, elections did not hold in 118 constituencies. The elections later took place on 14 March 2021[587]. To ensure a hitch-free election, an integrated security plan was designed. MINUSCA provided about 8000 troops, while the National Defense force contributed 2000 troops. Despite these security measures, the CPC still succeeded in disrupting elections in three constituencies. Looking at the above statistics and the fact that the elections were held in many constituencies, one would say that the elections were successfully carried out thanks to the integrated security plan.

3   THE CHALLENGES OF PEACEBUILDING IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The Central African Republic has been a hotbed of conflict in Africa. Since the Seleka armed group ousted President Francois Bozize in January 2013, the country has been constantly unstable and violent. Armed groups in the country exploited the issue of state weakness to capture territories and loot various communities. Rebel activities and the insecurities that came with them have greatly devastated all aspects of life in CAR. The country's political, economic, and social fabric has been torn apart by years of conflict. Without an effective political system and limited revenue from the economy, the

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[586] IPI, "Prioritization and Sequencing of Security Council Mandates : The Case of MINUSCA," New York, 2021.

[587] UNSC, "Central African Republic Report of the Secretary-General S/2021/571," Washington DC, 2021.

government was left incapacitated to respond and quell down the country's armed insurgencies. As a country emerging out of conflict, the Central African Republic faces many social, economic, and security challenges.

3.1   Challenges of the State

Moreover, in the Human Development Index (HDI) report of 2020, CAR is ranked 188 out of 189. This indicates that the country is at the lowest rank in the human development category. This, however, is not to say the country has been entirely left on its own. Several peacebuilding processes have been initiated in the country. Peace interventions in the country have come from neighboring states and regional and international organizations. It is worthy to note that the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), CEMAC, the African Union, and the UN have all made significant inputs toward the peace processes in CAR. Despite their various endeavors over the years, the challenge is to peacebuilding in the Central African Republic is still enormous. There is ample evidence to show that mediated political dialogues and peace agreements between the government and armed groups have formed part of the political process of peace. Despite the good intention of these peacebuilding initiatives, such efforts have rarely lasted long enough to achieve the desired results. The peacebuilding process in the CAR presents a complex dynamic where the peace actors have been challenged by their inadequacies or competition from other intervenors. The dissenting armed groups themselves have, most often than not, disrupted the peacebuilding processes in the country. The challenge of peacebuilding in CAR is inherently linked to why conflict resolution in the country has not been achieved.

The lack of government commitment to peace agreements explains why the peace process in the Central African Republic has been a complex one. One of the reasons the Seleka rebels advanced on overthrowing president Francois Bozize in January 2013 was that the latter failed to adhere to the 2017 Biroa Agreement and the 2008 Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement. According to the above agreement, Bozize's government had agreed to grant amnesty to the rebel forces and establish a DDR program. Unfortunately, the government failed to adequately implement what it had committed to do. The rebels who later joined to form Seleka argued that spoils from rebel activity were

more beneficial to them than a failed reintegration program. They teamed up, abandoned the above peace agreement, and overthrew Bozize in January 2013.

Other peace agreements between the government and armed groups included the Libreville Agreement of 2013, the Brazzaville Agreement of 2014, the Bangui Forum of 2015, the Rome Agreement of 2017, and the Bangui Agreement of 2019[588]. Peace agreements are appropriate steps towards the achievement of successful peace processes. The above agreements were thus necessary measures toward the establishment of sustainable peacebuilding. However, the terms of the agreements were not respected, hence the continuous relapse into violence and insecurity.

Moreover, limited state presence and inadequate institutional capacity are significant issues that have challenged the government's ability and capacity to drive the peace plan in the Central African Republic effectively. Despite having an elected government in Bangui, armed groups still control about 2/3 of the country. By the social contract between the government and the people, the former is saddled with the responsibility to protect its citizens. The fact remains that the governments in CAR have been unable to do so. The lack of effective government presence and the failure to enforce law and order has left many areas of the country at the mercy of armed groups. These armed groups have thus come up with alternative means of administering the people, which in no way contributes to establishing peace and stability. This has caused the government to lose legitimacy among the people. An administration that is not perceived as legitimate by its people will face the daunting task of making those same people follow and accept its prescriptions for any peacebuilding initiative[589].

Furthermore, the Central African armed forces have played mixed roles in the peacebuilding process in CAR. Since it has served as a force for good in disarming armed groups, FACA has equally committed atrocities that constitute war crimes according to Article 8 of the Rome Statute. These include plunder, pillage, murder, and torture[590]. An

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[588] Mario Azou-Passonda et al., "The Failure of Peace Processes: The Specific Case of the Central African Republic," *Open Journal of Political Science*, vol. 09, no. 03 (2019), pp. 472–89, doi:10.4236/ojps.2019.93026.

[589] Veronique Barbelet, "Central African Republic: Addressing the Protection Crisis," *HPG Working Paper*, no. November (2015), p. 7.

[590] ICC, "Situation in the Central African Republic II: Article 53(1) Report," The Hague, 2014, vol. 53, p. 43.

army that perpetrates such acts contributes to fueling the conflict rather than resolving it. The armed forces of the Central African Republic have proven over the years to be a weak and divisive force. FACA comprises former rebels who have been reintegrated into the armed forces. Paradoxically some of these former rebels have continued to maintain links with armed groups. While a faction of FACA pays allegiance to defend the state, some of its elements have preferred to place their loyalties on armed groups. With such a divisive army in place, it becomes increasingly difficult to plan out and implement military strategies that will effectively disband armed groups and bring stability to the country[591]. To prevent the CPC rebel group from disrupting the 27 December 2020 elections, FACA, in collaboration with its Russian instructors, staged a counteroffensive and reclaimed major towns from the armed group. It was, however, noted that some civilians eventually became victims of the counterattack. This ipso facto means that FACA violated international humanitarian laws by not ensuring to minimize or avoid civilian casualties in its counter-insurgency operation. The CAR government later declared in May 2021 that it had created a special commission of inquiry. The mission of this commission was to investigate human rights violations committed by FACA soldiers[592].

3.2 Regional Challenges of ECCAS/MICOPAX/AU

Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have emerged to become critical players in their regions' peace and security dynamics. In the CAR's case, the Economic Community of Central African States made its debut in the country in the early 2000s. Between 2008 and 2013, ECCAS played a significant role by deploying its Peace Consolidation Mission (MICOPAX) in CAR[593]. The regional bloc was one of the first external actors to enter CAR to solve the issues of insecurity that had grabbed the country. It would be fair to say it left its mark in the Central African Republic. However, it would have done more if not for the challenges and inadequacies that hindered its peace mission in the country.

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[591] Beninga Paul-Crescent, Manga Essama Déf lorine Grâce, Mogba Zéphirin Jean Raymond, *Persistence of the Crisis in the Central African Republic : Understanding in Order To Act*, Yaounde: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2018, p. 10.

[592] Alexandra Lamarche, "Addressing Atrocities and Displacement : A Path Forward for the Central African Republic," Washington DC, 2021, p. 6.

[593] Gustavo De Carvalho, Amanda Lucey, "Fractured Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic Lessons for African Union Engagement," *ISS Policy Brief*, vol. 87 (2016), pp. 3–4.

As the processes of restoring and rebuilding peace in CAR unfolded, ECCAS and AU got entangled in a battle of control. Both organizations struggled to maintain dominance and visibility over the conflict management process in the Central African Republic. Both ECCAS and AU held parallel views on how they wanted to run and manage the peacekeeping operation in the country[594]. Because of its regional proximity to the crisis in CAR, ECCAS maintained that it was in an advantageous position to address and resolve the conflict[595]. On the other hand, the African Union felt that the regional body could not manage and resolve the dispute. The African Union thus went ahead to set up and deploy the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA).

The lack of collaboration and the complex dynamics that characterized ECCAS-AU relations in CAR had dire consequences, especially in the domain of civilian protection. The battle for authority between ECCAS and AU stalled the transformation process from MICOPAX to MISCA. Such rivalry had adverse effects on the general security situation of the country. While their strained relations prevailed, an estimated 2000 people were killed, and more than one million were displaced[596]. Instead of harnessing their resources to address the crisis in CAR, both ECCAS and AU focused on who will take control of command. This was a considerable challenge to the peacebuilding process because tense relations only contributed to deepening the crisis in the country.

At the onset of its intervention, CAR, ECCAS appointed President Denis Sassou Nguesso as its mediator in the crisis. Developments in CAR soon proved that Nguesso acted more in his capacity as a regional power broker and peace crusader than as a mediator under the aegis of ECCAS[597]. The activities of Nguesso and his mediation politics led to tense relations between himself and the transitional president Catherine Samba Panza. According to Dukhan (2016), Nguesso's interest was mainly to project himself as a peace crusader, which will, in turn, give him greater recognition within the international

[594] ISS, "The AU Re-Takes the Lead in Central Africa," Pretoria, 2019, pp. 2–4.

[595] Olumide Adetokunbo Fafore, "The African Union and Peace and Security in Central Africa," *Journal of African Union Studies (JoAUS)*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2016), p. 59.

[596] Martin Welz, "Multi-Actor Peace Operations and Inter-Organizational Relations: Insights from the Central African Republic," *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 23, no. 4 (2016), p. 580, doi:10.1080/13533312.2016.1178070.

[597] Gabriella. Ingerstad, Magdalena Tham Lindell, "Challenges to Peace and Security in Eastern Africa: The Role of ECCAS," *Studies in African Security*, A15104, Kista, 2015, pp. 2–4, www.foi.se.

community[598]. Nguesso's real plan was to establish an image to permit him to amend his country's constitution to stand again for the 2016 presidential election without much criticism from the international community.

Similarly, another major challenge that hindered the peacebuilding process in CAR was that, unlike other regional blocs like ECOWAS and SADC, ECCAS had no regional hegemon. In the case of ECOWAS, Nigeria has played a very significant role as the regional hegemon in West Africa. Likewise, South Africa has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that it is the regional hegemon of the southern bloc. It has been argued by Deng et al. (1996) that regional organizations are key actors in the institutionalization of norms and procedures, which contribute significantly to conflict management as well as the reduction of internal conflicts[599]. In the same light, Soremekun (2006) maintained that regional hegemons are very instrumental in the successful outcomes of conflict management and effective peacekeeping within their regional blocs[600]. The lack of mutual trust and neighborly cooperation among ECCAS states partly explains why the regional bloc has remained over time without a hegemon that could foster collaboration and galvanize support for a robust regional security framework.

3.3 The Challenges of MINUSCA

The United Nations Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic began its peace operations in CAR in April 2014. Under UNSC resolution 2149, the mission was given a clear-cut mandate to intervene and stabilize CAR. The mandate of the mission has been consistently renewed and revised since 2014. However, MINUSCA's mandate principally centered on protecting civilians, supporting the political transition process, the extension of state authority, facilitation, and delivery of humanitarian aid, protecting human rights, and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants. In carrying out its operations to fulfill the terms of its mandate, MINUSCA collaborated with state, regional and international organizations like

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[598] Dukhan, *The Central African Republic Crisis*, pp. 11–12.
[599] Francis M. Deng et al., *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa*, Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1996, pp. 131–67.
[600] K Soremekun, "Contemporary African Responses to Existing Security Scenarios: Challenges, Opportunities of Engagement for West African States.," *Rethinking Global Security: An African Perspective?*, ed. by Mwagiru Makumi, Oculli Okello, Berlin: Heinrich-Böll Foundation, 2006, pp. 182–201.

the government of CAR, France, Chad, ECCAS, African Union, and European Union. The mission's collaboration with this diversity of actors came with opportunities and challenges. Besides the above, MINUSCA has contributed significantly toward CAR's stabilization and peacebuilding process. In evaluating the effectiveness of the mission's peace operations, it is worthwhile to look at the challenges that have hampered the capacity and ability of the mission to fully protect civilians, extend state authority and build sustainable peace.

The extension of state authority in CAR meant that the host state, together with its military, had at least some capacity to maintain law and order. This was not the case, and MINUSCA had to come to terms with the fact that the government in CAR had neither the political legitimacy nor the military authority to function fully. This made the process of state-building a very complex and challenging one for MINUSCA. Gorur maintained that even when the mission substituted for the state by carrying out certain activities like arrests, the state's weak criminal justice system limited the ability of the mission to exercise its powers fully[601].

The mandate to extend state authority further faced the challenge of the proliferation of armed groups. When MINUSCA began its peace operations in 2014, there were only two main armed groups- Seleka and Anti-Balaka. By 2019, the armed groups had risen to 14. The emergence of these numerous armed groups meant the creation of more conflict hotspots in the country, which posed a challenge to MINUSCA and the government in CAR. The UN mission thus found itself in a conflicted position where it had to focus on achieving state extension and civilian protection through political processes on the one hand and or resorting to force to consolidate the gains it had made. In adopting a robust posture against armed groups and spoilers of peace, MINUSCA had to rely on the use of force.

Additionally, MINUSCA has faced severe challenges in achieving its mandate to facilitate humanitarian aid delivery. Insecurity and poor road infrastructure have hindered the ability of MINUSCA to access communities that are in dire need of humanitarian assistance[602]. The rebel takeover of power in 2013 left more than 1,000,000 people

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[601] Gorur, "The Political Strategy of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Mali," pp. 133–41.

[602] IPI, "Prioritization and Sequencing of Security Council Mandates : The Case of MINUSCA," p. 4.

displaced. The coup d'état left about 2.3 million people in need of humanitarian aid[603]. As the fighting in the country continued, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increased. As of January 2022, 3.1 million people are in dire need of humanitarian aid in the Central African Republic. The constant fighting between different armed groups of the ex-Seleka, the 3R, and Anti-Balaka has limited access to areas like the Ouaka prefecture[604]. Providing aid to affected communities in conflict is a practical step toward peacebuilding. However, when aid falls in the hands of armed groups, this can fuel the conflict even more as such groups will use the resources to continue fighting. Therefore, the lack of access to people in need of humanitarian assistance has been a real challenge to MINUSCA.

Apart from the difficulties surrounding the protection of civilians and the extension of state authority, MINUSCA has also faced considerable challenges in protecting UN staff and its freedom of movement. From 2003 to the present, UN peacekeepers have been attacked by armed groups. Attacks against peacekeepers have hindered the mission's ability to provide security and effectively facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

After taking over from MISCA in 2014, MINUSCA took crucial measures to implement its mandate and stabilize CAR. However, the mission struggled to achieve its objectives as it faced both internal and external challenges. The mission was mandated to protect civilians and promote respect for human rights. This meant that MINUSCA was saddled with the responsibility to monitor and investigate cases of abuse while supporting and collaborating with the national and international justice systems to bring justice to victims of abuse. It, however, turned out that MINUSCA did not effectively achieve the above mandate as its efforts were greatly challenged.

The mission's ability to protect civilians was greatly hampered by its lack of adequate capacity to swiftly respond to protect civilians in situations where the people were under attack from armed groups. The challenges that MINUSCA faced in its bid to protect

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[603] Welz, "Briefing: Crisis in the Central African Republic and the International Response," pp. 601–10.
[604] Center for Civilians in Conflict, *The Primacy of Protection - Delivering on the MINUSCA Mandate in the Central African Republic*, Washington DC: Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2017, p. 26.

civilians stemmed from both personnel and logistical shortcomings[605]. The lack of capability and inadequate preparedness of the mission to protect civilians is explained by the fact that the CAR is a vast and extensive country and cases of violence or attack on civilians happen sporadically. In the face of all this, the mission's authorized military personnel were only 11,650. Another 480 military observers, 2880 police personnel, and 108 correctional officers were added[606]. This number of personnel could in no way effectively be present or respond to every attack against civilians all over the country. Moreover, 11,650 was the troop ceiling of the mission. It is worthy to note that as attacks against civilians increased, so too did the number of internally displaced persons and deaths increase.

In as much as the protection of civilians remained a significant challenge in the general performance of MINUSCA's peace operations in CAR, it will be worthwhile to recall that MINUSCA's challenges only go a long way to expose the weakness and absence of the state of CAR. The duty to protect civilians is the responsibility and sovereign mandate of the state, as enshrined in the social contract. The lack of state authority and state presence is evidence of a failed state. The weakness of the state is mirrored through the Central African Armed Forces (FACA), which is under-equipped, weak, divided, and sometimes acts in violation of international humanitarian laws.

Furthermore, MINUSCA was equally mandated to extend state authority in the Central African Republic to achieve this mandate. The UN mission collaborated with the government of CAR and supported it with technical assistance and mediation efforts. Even though MINUSCA had received the state's consent to be in CAR, the execution of its mandate to extend state authority was hindered by a weak state army that had low morale, was poorly paid, and lacked the motivation to consolidate the gains which

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[605] Evan Cinq-Mars, "Too Little, Too Late: Failing to Prevent Atrocities in the Central African Republic," September, New York, 2015, p. 17, http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/occasionalpaper_car_final.pdf.
[606] Elijah Mwasi Mwanyika, "Challenges to the Execution of the UN Mandate in Central African Republic," *International Journal of Advances in Scientific Research and Engineering*, vol. 07, no. 03 (2021), p. 10, doi:10.31695/ijasre.2021.33978.

MINUSCA had made[607]. Armed groups later retook territories that MINUSCA had captured because FACA could not secure and maintain control over such territories[608].

It is prohibited under international humanitarian law Rule 33 to attack peacekeepers and objects involved in a peacekeeping mission[609]. Moreover, the ICC Rome Statute Article 8(2) holds that direct attacks against the personnel or objects of a peacekeeping mission in a non-international armed conflict setting like the situation in CAR constitute a war crime[610]. For such acts of aggression against peacekeepers to be classified as war crimes, the peacekeeping mission would have to maintain its status as civilians under international humanitarian law. Linked to the above is equally the fact that the peacekeeper's freedom of movement and ability to respond to security threats have been significantly reduced. This is because armed groups have often planted Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) on roads frequently used by peacekeepers and civilians. The threats that these IEDs pose to peacekeepers and civilians are enormous[611]. When peacekeepers become the objects of attack by armed groups, their rapidity to intervene in conflict hotspots is negatively affected. In as much as peacekeepers are charged with the responsibility to protect civilians and facilitate the transportation and delivery of humanitarian aid, they are also aware that their mandate equally includes the protection of UN personnel.

The image and legitimacy of MINUSCA have significantly been marred by acts of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by its peacekeepers. Before the deployment of MINUSCA in 2014, sexual abuse by peacekeepers was already an issue of concern in CAR. Reports of sexual abuse have been levied against troops from the French Sangaris mission, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Chad[612]. From 2008 to 2018, the office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) reported 480 cases of sexual abuse perpetrated by

[607] cited, pp. 4–7.

[608] Howard et al., *Assessing the Effectiveness of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic / MINUSCA*, p. 122.

[609] Jean Marie Henckaerts, Louise Doswald-Beck, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, vol. 1, pp. 112–14.

[610] ICC, *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, *An Introduction to the International Criminal Court*, The Hague: International Criminal Court, 2011, p. 9.

[611] IPI, "Prioritization and Sequencing of Security Council Mandates : The Case of MINUSCA," p. 4.

[612] Alexander Gilder, "United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)/African-Led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA)," Tufts, 2021, doi:10.4324/9781003131199-7.

peacekeepers[613]. In 2014, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in collaboration with United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), investigated sexual abuse committed by French troops. The report found out that French soldiers had been involved in numerous acts of sexual abuse in the Central African Republic[614]. The UN has carried out many peacekeeping operations around the world. However, MINUSCA and MONUSCO have recorded the most cases of abuse committed by peacekeepers. In 2015, MINUCA's personnel were reported to have committed 22 cases of sexual abuse. The field operations director of OHCHR, Anders Kompass, informed MINUSCA of the above cases. Despite that, MINUSCA took no decisive action to investigate the matter further. When New York Times eventually published the story of peacekeepers' abuse in CAR, this sent shockwaves along the corridors of the UN as it amplified the damage done to its reputation and image by the peacekeepers who were implicated in the sexual exploitation and abuse cases. Due to the failure of MINUSCA to effectively investigate and handle the allegations of its peacekeepers' sexual misconduct, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon dismissed the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) at the head of MINUSCA Babacar Gaye on 12 August 2015.

The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse remains a complex issue in CAR because the same peacekeepers who were supposed to protect civilians and promote their human rights became the first violators of the same rights. Carayannis and Fowlis have argued that sexual exploitation and abuse are a fallout of the UN and AU's failure to effectively vet the troops they inherited from MISCA and MICOPAX[615]. The matter of sexual abuse is further complicated because only troop-contributing countries have the power and jurisdiction to hold offending peacekeepers accountable. Consequently, neither the United Nations nor the government authorities in CAR can punish and hold the defaulting peacekeepers accountable. Since the burden to investigate and punish is left with the

[613] UN OIOS, "Evaluation of the Enforcement and Remedial Assistance Efforts for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by the United Nations and Related Personnel in Peacekeeping Operations," New York, 2015, pp. 8–9.

[614] CRIN, "Sexual Violence by Peacekeepers against Children and Other Civilians," London, 2016, pp. 5–15, https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/guide_download/guide_-_peacekeeper_sexual_violence_final_0.pdf.

[615] Tatiana Carayannis, Mignonne Fowlis, "Lessons from African Union–United Nations Cooperation in Peace Operations in the Central African Republic," *African Security Review*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2017), p. 228, doi:10.1080/10246029.2017.1302707.

country of origin of the peacekeepers, the probability of victims of abuse getting justice is narrowed because the TCCs have rarely made available the report of their investigations on their troops accused of sexual misconduct and abuse. The UN mission in CAR will continue for the foreseeable future, and the organization will have to reinvent itself to surmount the challenges that stifle its performance in the country.

4 THE PEACE ARCHITECTURE IN MALI

The activities and agitations of militant groups in Mali created a situation of instability that not only challenged the sovereignty of the state but opened a window of insecurity that had the potential to make the Sahel a thriving ground for armed groups. In March 2012, the breakaway section of the Malian army exploited this instability and government weakness to stage a coup. The coup d'état led by Amadou Haya Sanogo led to the deposition of President Amadou Toumani Toure from power on 22 March 2012. The anarchy that ensued led to the death of hundreds of civilians. Poverty and malnutrition increased as a dark cloud of insecurity and violence were cast over the country. In response to the crisis, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union (AU), France, and the United Nations all threw in their weight to resolve the conflict and restore peace in Mali. The strategies these regional and international interveners adopted were geared towards supporting the government of Mali by preserving the state's territorial integrity, protecting civilians, upholding human rights, promoting democratic governance, and combating terrorism. The table below presents a clear picture of the critical peace actors in Mali.

Table 13: Prominent Peace Actors in Mali

Actors/Leading Institution	Mission	Mandate	Period of Activity
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	The African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA)	Maintain security and consolidate state authority	2012-2013
African Union	AFISMA	Maintain security and consolidate state authority	2012-2013
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)	UN Peacekeeping Mission	The extension and stabilization of state authority. Protect civilians. Facilitate transitional process.	2013-Ongoing
France	-Operation Serval -Operation	To disarm and drive away armed groups from northern Mali	2013-2014
	Barkhane	To assist the government of Mali and preserve control over its territory. Combat terrorist groups in Mali and Sahel.	2014-Ongoing

The counterterrorism measures that the interveners and the government authorities of Mali adopted moderately contributed to advancing the state-building process of the country. The diplomatic and mediation efforts pursued by regional and international actors produced different degrees of success.

4.1   ECOWAS and AU Peace Efforts in Mali

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was founded in 1975 by 15 African states. The primary objective of ECOWAS was to foster integration and

enlarge economic cooperation among its members. However, the rapid increase in conflicts and armed groups within the sub-region caused the organization to review its original objectives, restructure its organs, and confront security challenges. Before the conflict in Mali, ECOWAS had intervened in intrastate conflicts in Liberia, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Ghana, and Northern Nigeria.[616]. Despite the challenges inherent in peacebuilding, ECOWAS has continuously remained a vital actor because of its superior knowledge and proximity to the conflicts in West Africa. The regional bloc has systematically embarked on peacebuilding through its normative framework to ensure that regional security is preserved. Since the foundation of the African Union in 1963, the continental bloc has played an essential role in the general peace and security of the continent. The peace efforts of the organization range from preventive diplomacy, conflict management, and conflict resolution to counterterrorism and counterinsurgency in various parts of the continent. African states have proven that they are willing and committed to managing the mandates of peace support operations in the complex conflicts that have emerged within the continent.

The ousting of Amadou Toumani Toure in 2012 and the crisis of insecurity that followed were further exacerbated by a severe humanitarian emergency. Apart from destabilizing the government and raising fears of regional insecurity, the crisis ushered in a food security problem that only worsened the condition of a country already suffering from drought and environmental constraints. As of January 2013, about 155,000 Malian citizens had fled the country and taken refuge in neighboring ECOWAS countries, while 200,000 were internally displaced within Mali. An estimated 747,000 people became in need of dire food assistance. As of July 2021, more than 400,000 people were internally displaced in Mali. Women accounted for about 68% of the above number[617]. About 510,000 were in the northern regions of Mali[618]. It thus became clear that the military

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[616] Thomas. Jaye, Dauda. Garuba, Stella Amadi, *ECOWAS and the Dynamics of Conflict and Peace-Building*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 2011, pp. 2–7.

[617] CARE, "Mali See's Highest Levels of Displacement in Its Recent History Due to a Dangerous Combination of Conflict and Climate Change," 2021, https://www.care-international.org/news/press-releases/mali-sees-highest-levels-of-displacement-in-its-recent-history-due-to-a-dangerous-combination-of-conflict-and-climate-change , accessed on 09.03.2022.

[618] Alexis Arieff, "Crisis in Mali," Washington DC, 2013, pp. 12–13.

juntas that had taken overpower were not viable to handle the crisis in the country. The need for international intervention thus became imperative.

The first external response to provide a solution to the Malian crisis came from the Economic Community of the West African States and the African Union. From the onset of the crisis, ECOWAS and AU showed their commitment to restoring peace in Mali. The first decisive step ECOWAS took sanctioned Mali diplomatically and economically. The African Union followed suit by suspending Mali from the continental body.[619] The sanctions targeted the leaders of the military junta, Captain Amadou Sanogo, and other members of his regime. It equally targeted the Tuareg rebels and other insurgent groups in Mali. The sanctions aimed to pressure the above actors to seize hostilities and restore constitutional order in the country. The practicality of ECOWAS and the African Union to react towards the coup was a demonstration of their commitment to ensure that peace reigned in Mali because the instability in the country had the potential of engulfing other neighboring countries.

Furthermore, ECOWAS and the African Union embarked on diplomatic measures to resolve the conflict through mediation.[620] The objective of these organizations was to engage the insurgent group leaders to stabilize the country by introducing democratic reforms and possibly a power-sharing government in Mali. President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso led the ECOWAS mediation efforts, culminating in establishing the Framework Agreement of 6 April 2012[621]. As a result of the mediation, the embattled Amadou Toure formally resigned as head of state, and the re-establishment of constitutional order followed on 25 April 2012. A transitional government was set up with Dioncounda Traore-speaker of the National Assembly, entrusted with the position of interim president. The mediation process recorded another milestone in the tripartite meeting from 3rd to 4th December 2012. The mediators succeeded in bringing together

[619] Thomas G. Weiss, Martin Welz, "The UN and the African Union in Mali and Beyond: A Shotgun Wedding?," *International Affairs*, vol. 90, no. 4 (2014), pp. 896–98, doi:10.1111/1468-2346.12146.
[620] Seun Bamidele, "Regional Approaches to Crisis Response, the African Union (AU) Intervention in African States: How Viable Is It?," *India Quarterly*, vol. 73, no. 1 (2017), pp. 122–23, doi:10.1177/0974928417690085.
[621] Marco. Wyss, Thierry Tardy, *Peacekeeping in Africa The Evolving Security Architecture*, London: Routledge, 2014.

officials have the government of Mali and armed groups Ansar Dine and MNLA[622]. The parties in this meeting agreed on creating a framework for inter-Malian dialogue that will foster national unity, reject extremism, support religious freedom, and safeguard the country's territorial integrity.

Even though ECOWAS pursued mediation, it did not eschew the military option to solve the crisis. Drawing inspiration from the framework agreement, the Mediation and Security Council of ECOWAS gave the latter the green light to establish a standby force. The function of this force was to reestablish constitutional order and restore the territorial integrity of the country. This standby force was subsequently codenamed ECOWAS mission in Mali (MICEMA)[623]. The plan of ECOWAS to implement its military option through MICEMA did not materialize because both the transitional government and stakeholders like Algeria and Mauritania rejected the military approach to resolve the conflict.[624] To begin with, Algeria and Mauritania were distrustful of ECOWAS because they felt the regional bloc was trying to use the conflict in Mali to project its image and power in the continent and internationally.

Moreover, Algeria was reluctant to accept ECOWAS' military intervention because Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) originated from Algeria. Algeria thus feared that the military intervention could cause a situation where AQIM would return to Algeria with its terrorist agenda. Consequently, MICEMA never saw the light of day as it remained only a plan by ECOWAS. Besides, ECOWAS was not financially buoyant to finance the standby force.

4.2 AFISMA

On 19 October 2012, a strategic concept for resolving the crisis in Mali was developed by ECOWAS, AU, and other stakeholders in the Malian conflict. The strategic concept was eventually adopted by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on 24 October 2012. The document was subsequently endorsed by ECOWAS and AU leaders

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[622] Elizabeth Sköns, "The Implementation of the Peace Process in Mali : A Complex Case of Peacebuilding," *SIPRI Yearbook 2016*, 2016, p. 163.

[623] Moussa ; Djiré et al., "Assessing the EU's Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Interventions in Mali," Bamako, 2017, p. 15, https://www.woscap.eu/documents/131298403/131299900/Mali%2B-%2BUSJPB.pdf/Mali - USJPB/index.pdf.

[624] Francis, "The Regional Impact of Armed Conflict and French Intervention in Mali," p. 7.

in November 2012. The strategic concept thus formed the basis of an African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA)[625]. In November 2012, ECOWAS and AU requested the UNSC to authorize AFISMA[626]. AFISMA was thus approved by UNSC resolution 2085 of 20 December 2012. The African Union, ECOWAS, and its chief mediator Blaise Compaore played a significant role in the authorization of AFISMA. The African-led International Support Mission in Mali was approved and given a Chapter VII peace mandate. The peacekeeping mission was authorized with a troop size of 3.300 and was expected to begin deployment by September 2013. As of February 2013, FISMA troops had increased to 9620. Despite the authorization for AFISMA to operate, it did not immediately begin its peace operations in Mali as the forces from the troop-contributing countries still had to receive adequate training.

According to the terms of its mandate, the peacekeeping mission was charged with collaborating with the EU and other stakeholders in rebuilding and reforming Mali's Defense and Security Forces (MDSF), which had been weakened and divided by the coup d'état[627]. A viable and disciplined Malian military was necessary to combat armed groups like AQIM and MUJWA to recover territories lost to these insurgent groups in the country's northern region. In addition to the above, AFISMA was saddled with the responsibility of building peace by facilitating the transitional political process in the country through the maintenance of security and consolidation of state authority. Maru, however, argues that the interest of regional actors may not always be compatible with those of other international stakeholders in the conflict.[628] This is explained by the fact that international forces prefer criminal prosecution, while their regional counterparts may want to rely on military action. A classic example is that Algeria preferred the path of dialogue and mediation with the armed groups, while the ECOWAS bloc was in favor

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[625] Joachim Alexander. Koops et al., *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 858.
[626] Abiodun Joseph Oluwadare, "The African Union and the Conflict in Mali: Extra-Regional Influence and the Limitations of a Regional Actor," *African Journal of Governance and Development |*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2014), pp. 15–16,
http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=100604043&site=ehost-live.
[627] Gamawa, *The Tuaregs and the 2012 Rebellion in Mali*.
[628] Mehari Taddele Maru, "African-Led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA): Military Ahead of Politics," Doha, 2013, pp. 1–6.

of military action. Such differences in the approach of security stakeholders only magnify the complexities of the peace process.

Inferable to the delay in the deployment of AFISMA's African standby forces, armed groups took advantage of this window period and began capturing territories. They succeeded in capturing the strategic town of Kona in the north. Apart from being the gateway into the north, Kona is strategic because it hosts military barracks and the airport. After capturing Kona, MOJWA and its Al Qaeda-linked rebels were headed to enter the south to capture Bamako. Neither AFISMA nor the Malian army was in any position to counter the insurgency. To prevent the insurgents from taking over Bamako, France intervened and launched Operation Serval.[629] Chadian forces joined the French elite commandos in repelling the jihadists. Operation Serval succeeded in pushing the jihadists away from northern Mali. The success of Operation Serval was hailed by citizens of Mali, regional actors, and the international community. There were, however, those within Mali who felt that Operation Serval was a disguise tactic by France to exploit the country's natural resources.

On the contrary, Malians had a strong affinity toward AFISMA[630]. When AFISMA was eventually deployed on 17 January 2013, the differences between ideological legitimacy and pragmatic legitimacy were laid bare[631]. Malians realized that AFISMA was legitimate but not as effective as expected. After its deployment, AFISMA performed significantly well in providing security and protecting civilians AFSIMA succeeded in resurrecting the Ouagadougou negotiations, which facilitated the holding of presidential elections. It equally brought the government and rebel groups to hold peace talks.

4.3 French Intervention in Mali

Toward the end of the Cold War, Africa began experiencing intrastate conflicts that challenged states' stability and elected governments. The inability of these young African

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[629] Emmanuel Tronc, Rob Grace, Anaïde Nahikian, "Realities and Myths of the 'Triple Nexus': Local Perspectives on Peacebuilding, Development, and Humanitarian Action in Mali," *Humanitarian Action at the Frontlines: Field Analysis Series Realities*, Cambridge, MA, 2019, pp. 16–20, doi:10.2139/ssrn.3404351.

[630] Sophia Sabrow, "Local Perceptions of the Legitimacy of Peace Operations by the UN, Regional Organizations and Individual States–A Case Study of the Mali Conflict," *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 24, no. 1 (2017), pp. 159–86, doi:10.1080/13533312.2016.1249365.

[631] Francis, "The Regional Impact of Armed Conflict and French Intervention in Mali."

states to deal with the crisis of their homeland ushered in an era of external intervention to help resolve the conflicts and rebuild peace. The advent of military and humanitarian intervention came with a complex mix of issues that welcomed intervention on the one hand and questioned its effectiveness, motive, and usefulness on the other. In every conflict situation that has occurred in Africa, there have always been two opposing sides on the issue of intervention. As Schmidt has argued, there is no simple formula for intervention because every intervention is case-specific.[632] Interventions can either be carried out in a conflict-ridden country by another outside country's military unilaterally or in collaboration with other countries within a multilateral framework. International, continental, and regional organizations like the UN, AU, and ECOWAS have equally been known to support interventions in cases of conflict.

Interveners draw their rationale from the tenets of the just war theory and the concept of the responsibility to protect. For the most part, interventions are aimed at combating terrorism, protecting civilians, safeguarding human rights, and reestablishing constitutional order within a state. In a nutshell, interveners usually seek to affect or control the host state's political outcomes.[633]. Anecdotal evidence shows that France has had the highest intervening missions in its former colonies in Africa. This stems from the fact that even after haven granted independence to these African states in the 1960s, France maintained close relations with them through political, economic, and military agreements it signed with most of its former colonies. One of the terms of these military accords states that France can militarily intervene to keep peace and rebuild the state if the legitimate authorities come under insurgent or foreign attack. Thus, French military intervention in Africa is justified from this standpoint. Besides the above, the intervention enabled France to secure French investments in times of crisis and enabled them to continue to extract natural resources from Africa's backyard. This explains why France had to intervene in Mali in 2012 militarily.

However, the issue of French intervention in Africa is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it comes in to restore stability and build peace, but on the other hand, critics of French

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[632] Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. xv.

[633] Emizet F. Kisangani, Jeffrey Pickering, *African Interventions: State Militaries, Foreign Powers, and Rebel Forces*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, pp. 8–20.

intervention have persistently questioned their motives. France's initial approach to intervention in African conflicts was unilateral. This caused many critics of French intervention to argue that France uses such interventions to project its power and control over such states as an extension of securing its neocolonialist interests. However, France has recently redesigned its intervention strategies from purely unilateral standpoints to multilateral initiatives that include AU and sometimes EU forces. France's Operation Serval and Barkhane were relevant in combating terrorist groups and restoring some order in Mali.

4.3.1   Operation Serval

The failures of the Ouagadougou and Algiers negotiation process gave armed groups the impetus to launch an attack on Bamako. After capturing territories in the country's north, the rebels' fighters from AQIM, MNLA, Ansar Dine, and MOJWA began a quest to capture Bamako and take over the government. The capture of Kona and attempt on Sevare sent a wrong signal to the government in Bamako, who were all too aware that the Malian army was incapable of halting the militants. The fears of the transitional government in Bamako were further exacerbated because AFISMA had not been deployed.

In the face of a possible rebel takeover of Bamako, Dioncounda, the transitional president, called for assistance from France to prevent the rebels from overthrowing his government.[634] President Francois Hollande responded to the distress call from his Malian counterpart and ordered the launch of airstrikes against the militants. France thus launched a military intervention in Mali on 11 January 2013. This military intervention was codenamed Operation Serval[635]. France justified the legality of its military operation in Mali because it came into the country at the request and consent of the government.

Moreover, it pinned its decision to intervene on UN Security Council resolution 2085, which approved the deployment of AFISMA.[636] According to the above resolution, The

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[634] Oluwadare, "The African Union and the Conflict in Mali: Extra-Regional Influence and the Limitations of a Regional Actor," pp. 16–20.

[635] Sköns, "The Implementation of the Peace Process in Mali : A Complex Case of Peacebuilding," pp. 164–66.

[636] Stewart, *What Is Next for Mali? The Roots of Conflict and Challenges to Stability*, p. vii.

United Nations Security Council had authorized AFISMA to use all necessary measures to counter the operations of extremist groups in Mali. The resolution equally urged all member states to provide military assistance to the Malian defense and security forces to fight against terrorist groups. France's military intervention was thus premised on the above resolution.

Operation Serval began with 4000 troops. By February 2013, the troop number had risen to 4500[637]. The Republic of Chad collaborated with France by contributing about 2000 troops. In the same light former French colonies of Niger, Guinea, and Senegal equally contributed troops to operation survival. It is worthwhile to note that France is the only former colonial power that plays a central role in the affairs of its former colonies. Therefore, apart from supporting Serval as a preventive measure to shield their countries from insecurity, the above countries are all former French colonies, which were in some way lending support to their former colonial master. The military operation had an approximate budget of $94 million.[638]

The primary objective of Operation Serval was to protect and secure the territorial integrity of the state of Mali, collaborate with the Malian defense forces to repel the jihadist from entering Bamako, and equally provide protection to the 6000 French citizens who were in the country. The military operation began by targeting rebel hotspots with airstrikes and land assaults. The African Union and ECOWAS eventually deployed AFISMA to join Operation Serval on 18 January 2013. By March 2013, AFISMA had an estimated 6288 troops to its credit. These troops fought bravely alongside the French soldiers in Mali's northern and central regions. Operation Serval succeeded in regaining the Northern territory from the rebel groups.

During the initial stage of the operation, the rebels did not show any sign of weakness. However, as the combat progressed, the militants began retreating. The Franco-African peace operation succeeded in pushing out the rebels and recovered territory previously captured by the insurgents. The success of Operation Serval was highly applauded by Malians, the EU, the UN, and other stakeholders within the international community.

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[637] Benedikt Erforth, *Contemporary French Security Policy in Africa*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, pp. 1–20.

[638] Weiss, Welz, "The UN and the African Union in Mali and Beyond: A Shotgun Wedding?" p. 897.

Operation Serval brought stability to the north and secured the central region, hence preventing the overthrow of the transitional government that was in place. The operation has equally received criticisms, but the truth remains that Mali would have been in a far more chaotic situation had France not militarily intervened through Operation Serval. Besides, the collapse of Mali was going to open a free zone for terrorists and armed groups to thrive. This presented a threat to regional stability as well as to international security. After consultations with ECOWAS, AU, and UN, SC resolution 2100 transformed AFISM to MINUSMA on 25 April 2013. MINUSMA was authorized under a Chapter VII mandate. It was charged with the extension of state authority, stabilization of the country, and deterrence of armed groups from retaking territories, especially in northern Mali. Operation Serval came to an end on 15 July 2014.

4.3.2   Operation Barkhane

The successes of Operation Serval cannot be underestimated. While its victory projected France's national pride and international prestige, it, however, exposed the limits and weaknesses of ECOWAS on AU to address the crisis in Mali. These notwithstanding, there was hardly any other option besides the military intervention that France had to offer. Besides, AFISMA did not have the financial and logistical support that Operation Serval enjoyed. At the end of Operation Serval on 15 July 2014, it became clear to France and its African security collaborators that the stabilization of Mali and the entire Sahel region could only be sustainably achieved through preventive counterterrorism measures.

The Libyan crisis and the execution of Muammar Gaddafi had opened a corridor of insecurity in the Sahel, which favored the proliferation of terrorists and jihadist groups. In this regard, Operation Barkhane was launched by France on 1 August 2014[639]. The scope of the operation went beyond Mali to cover the Sahel region. Operation Barkhane was simply an extension of Operation Serval. Barkhane was different from Serval because while the latter focused on stabilizing Mali, the former had a broader regional counterterrorism agenda throughout the Sahel. In both cases, France stepped in as an intervenor to fill in the cap of state capacity that was visibly absent in both senior scenarios.

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[639] Michael Shurkin, "France's War in the Sahel and the Evolution of Counter-Insurgency Doctrine," *Texas National Security Review*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2020), pp. 12–26.

The French counterterrorism mission in the Sahel began with about 3500 French soldiers. The mission was equipped with six fighter aircraft, 20 helicopters, and ten support aircraft for reinforcement. The operation equally boosted 200 armored vehicles and 200 light vehicles.[640]. The French forces were equally joined by G5 Sahel forces drawn from Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Chad, and Burkina Faso. By jointly carrying out military operations with the G5 Sahel forces, it became clear that France had abandoned its unilateral peacekeeping approach, which it had adopted in other military interventions before Operation Barkhane. In January 2020, French President Emmanuel Macron held a summit with Sahelian leaders In Pau, located in the south of France. The summit was aimed at reviewing French intervention in the Sahel and mapping out a path for its future operations in the region. Deliberations at the summit led to an increase in the number of Operation Barkhane troops from 4500 to 5100[641]. Following the Pau summit, some EU countries decided to join France in fostering the effectiveness of Operation Barkhane and providing support to Mali's armed forces in Gao and Menaka. Consequently, by November 2021, Romania, Estonia, Sweden, and the Czech Republic sent in their soldiers to shore up the forces of Operation Barkhane.

The military contribution of the European Union became known as the Takuba Task Force (TTF)[642]. The TTF played a central role in providing security to the state of Mali by securing its Gao-Menaka stretch, which had become a porous route for drug trafficking, arms proliferation, and rebel movement. The absence of the Malian armed forces along this border made it a hub of insecurity, where transnational crime operations prevailed. The headquarters of Operation Barkhane is in N'Djamena-Chad. The operation equally had bases in Mali and Niger. The Takuba task force significantly increased the military capability of Operation Barkhane. Since its deployment in August 2014, the French-led counterterrorism operation has been managed with an estimated yearly budget of 600 million euros.

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[640] Bruno Charbonneau, *The Dilemmas of International Intervention in Mali*, *Projet Stabiliser Le Mali*, 2017, pp. 18–25.

[641] The International Institute for Strategic Studies (ed.), *Armed Conflict Survey 2021*, 1st ed., Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2021.

[642] OECD/SWAC, *Borders and Conflicts in North and West Africa*, Paris: West African Studies, OECD Publishing, 2022, p. 121.

One of the primary objectives of Operation Barkhane was to partner with and provide support and training to the armed forces of the G5 Sahel countries. This collaboration came in the form of jointly planning operations while coordinating and sharing intelligence during border operations. The absence of government authorities and Malian forces in its border towns had created a free zone for terrorist groups. Operation Barkhane was meant to build the capacity of the Sahelian armed forces to eradicate the impending terrorist threats that were lingering around their borders.

France justified Operation Barkhane by arguing that the mission's objective to establish peace and stability went far beyond the territorial boundaries of Mali.[643]. By establishing the presence of regional and transnational threats, France, in essence, saw Operation Barkhane as a counter preventive measure to halt the domino effect of collapsed state in the Sahel. The regionalized counterterrorism posture adopted by France demonstrated its engagement in safeguarding the security of the Sahel.[644].

In establishing Operation Barkhane, the French were not only thinking about stabilizing their former colony Mali or how to keep Sahel terror-free. It is worth noting that France's security interests and those of larger Europe were at risk because of the operations of terrorists and jihadist groups in the Sahel. The geographical proximity of this region to France and Europe cannot be overemphasized.[645]. Consequently, Operation Barkhane was a preemptive military strategy to destroy militant Islamist groups like the Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) as well as Al Qaeda linked terror groups. France did not want a situation where ISIS, JNIM, or ISGS could take advantage of a security vacuum in the Sahel to launch an attack on its territory or Europe.[646]. The security and stability of the Sahelian states are inherently tied to the national security interest of France and other neighboring European countries. The

[643] Bruno Charbonneau, "Intervention in Mali: Building Peace between Peacekeeping and Counterterrorism," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol. 35, no. 4 (2017), pp. 8–10, doi:10.1080/02589001.2017.1363383.

[644] Hugo. Meijer, Marco Wyss (eds.), *The Handbook of European Defence Policies and Armed Forces*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 620.

[645] Michael Shurkin, Sarah Grand-Clément, Paola Fusaro, *What If France Ended Operation Barkhane ?*, Cambridge: RAND Corporation, 2021, p. 5.

[646] Meijer, Wyss, *The Handbook of European Defence Policies and Armed Forces*, p. 620.

mission and objectives of Operation Barkhane thus reveal a tangible connection between domestic and international security.

Generally, Barkhane was a Franco- African regionalized counterterrorism operation whose objective was to beef up the security of Sahelian countries and France.[647] Operation Barkhane has been likened to the American War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan by its mission and objectives. No matter how well-intentioned its goals were, the fact remains that Barkhane came with risks and opportunities.

Through tactical military operations, Barkhane registered some significant levels of success in the Sahel. The counter-terror operation improved the security of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger by strengthening their border control. Through collaboration and joint military drills, the capacity of the G5 Sahelian forces has equally been reinforced to meet the security challenges in the region. France began using reaper drones in December 2019 to launch airstrikes on terrorist hotspots.[648] The use of drones has significantly reduced soldier casualties and increased the readiness and capacity of the Franco-African force to strike terrorist targets with speed and precision. Operation Barkhane forces have carried out effective military campaigns to combat terrorism in the Sahel. From 2014 to 2019, the force was able to kill more than 600 terrorists.[649]

The Franco-African counterterrorism operation achieved many victories in the Sahel. The strategic and tactical success of the operation has equally been seen in its ability to target and kill the ringleaders of terrorist groups effectively. Prominent jihadist leaders like Abdelmalek Droukdel of AQIM have been neutralized. Forces of Operation Barkhane have equally killed other significant and critical figures of JNIM. Despite the notable successes the operation has registered, it has similarly suffered some setbacks. As of 4 April 2021, Operation Barkhane had lost 49 French soldiers. This notwithstanding, the

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[647] Carmen Cuesta Roca, "From Operation Serval to Barkhane: Understanding France's Increased Involvement in Africa in the Context of Françafrique and Post-Colonialism," *The Journal of Political Inquiry*, no. Spring Issue (2015), pp. 6–10, http://jpinyu.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/3-Hollande.pdf.

[648] Denis M.Tull, "Operation Barkhane and the Future of Intervention in the Sahel: The Shape of Things to Come," *SWP Comment*, vol. 5, no. 5 (2021), p. 14, www.ssoar.info.

[649] Tronc, Grace, Nahikian, "Realities and Myths of the 'Triple Nexus': Local Perspectives on Peacebuilding, Development, and Humanitarian Action in Mali," p. 18.

operation has received criticism from the Sahel and out of the region. However, its general performance indicates that it has been a successful mission so far.

4.4 *The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)*

In most situations where intrastate conflicts have erupted in Africa, the government in place has often found itself caught up in a dilemma where they find it difficult, if not impossible, to ensure the protection and security of their citizens. Amid wanton violence and insecurity, external intervention has often been commonly considered a solution for these conflicts. In the case of Mali, the situation was not different at all. After considering the relative weakness of the ECOWAS-led AFISMA and the eventual counterinsurgent success of the French Operation Serval, France began clamoring for an even more comprehensive international intervention support mechanism for Mali.

The need for sustainable peace and stability led to the transformation of AFISMA to MINUSMA. To consolidate the gains that Operation Serval had achieved in northern Mali, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali was established on 25 April 2013 through UNSC resolution 2100[650]. The above resolution was a concrete demonstration of the UN's commitment to Mali's territorial integrity and sovereignty. AFIMA forces were later rehatted, and on 1 July 2013, MINUSMA officially took over from AFISMA[651]. Both AU and ECOWAS continued to maintain their presence in Mali. The authorization of MINUSMA was based on a UN Chapter VII mandate. The mission was to ensure the extension of state authority and state stability, facilitate the transitional road map, provide support for national dialogue and the electoral process, and protect civilians. The mission's mandate equally included promoting human rights, creating a conducive environment for delivering humanitarian assistance, and supporting national and international justice.[652]

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[650] United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2100," *UN DOC S/Res/2100*, no. April (2013), pp. 1–11.
[651] African Union, "AFISMA Transfers Its Authority to MINUSMA," 2013,
https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/afisma-transfers-it-authority-to-minusma-01-july-2013.pdf ,
accessed on 26.03.2022.
[652] United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2100."

The UN mission was deployed with an initial troop strength of 12,640 personnel and an accompanying 2014-2015 budget of $830.701.700million[653]. Despite the number of troops deployed, the authorization of MINUSMA was clear from the beginning as it adhered to the three principles of peacekeeping which involve state consent, impartiality, and the non-use of force. The only time the mission was permitted to use force was in self-defense situations. Counterterrorism was not part of the mission's operations. The task of eliminating extremists and terrorist groups was thus left in the hands of the French Operation Serval and subsequently Operation Barkhane. The French enforced the peace while MINUSMA focused on peacekeeping. The line between peace enforcement and peacekeeping is blurred, especially in volatile situations like that of Mali. The mandate thus limited MINUSMA troops from directly engaging terrorist groups, except in situations where the troops had to embark on self-defense. Despite the contributions that it has made to stabilize Mali and restore peace, the mission has equally incurred some losses. As of 31 January 2021, the fatalities of the peace operation stood at 237 deaths.

After taking over from AFISMA, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali was mandated, among other things, to secure, stabilize, and reestablish state authority in Mali. Since its deployment, MINUSMA has taken decisive measures to improve northern and central Mali's stability. Such stabilization operations have taken place in the northern territories of Gao, Kidal, Timbuktu, Tessellit, and Aguelhok. In the same light, southern areas of Bamako, Mopti, and Segou equally witnessed improvements in instability. The stabilization efforts of MINUSMA significantly contributed to curbing the violence in Mali and hence reduced the number of human casualties in the conflict.

With relative calm restored, many Malians who had fled their homes because of the violence were able to return. Apart from providing support to the transitional government, MINUSMA equally ensured the stabilization of key population centers.[654] The mission actively engaged in deterring threats to stop terrorist groups from returning to areas where civilians could be at significant risk. MINUSMA troops actively collaborated with the Malian defense forces and carried out patrol operations in the country. At the

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[653] Mathieu Bere, "Armed Rebellion, Violent Extremism, and the Challenges of International Intervention in Mali," *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2017), pp. 66–68, doi:10.2979/africonfpeacrevi.7.2.03.

[654] John Karlsrud, "Towards UN Counter-Terrorism Operations?," *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 6 (2017), pp. 1219–1120, doi:10.1080/01436597.2016.1268907.

commencing stage of its deployment, the mission greatly assisted the Malian government in restoring state authority and establishing new institutional infrastructures in the troubled northern regions.[655] Scars 2017 has argued that international and national stakeholders see the establishment of state authority as a critical step toward conflict resolution.[656]

The mandate to support the state and extend its authority comes with complexities. Wire Operation Barkhane drew its legitimacy and support from MINUSMA. The UN mission, on its part, could not carry out counterterrorism operations. Though the mission has been described as one of the deadliest UN operations, the principles of peacekeeping-impartiality, state consent, and non-use of force except in instances of self-defense prevent MINUSMA from directly engaging terrorist groups.[657] In a country where the government and peacekeepers have constantly been under terrorist attack, these principles make the stabilization of Mali even more difficult.

In addition to the above, MINUSMA has played a critical role in supporting the transitional road map. It equally lent support to the national political dialogue and aided the electoral process in Mali. On 29 January 2013, the Malian parliament adopted the road map as part of the political process to guide the transition government in the country. The unanimous parliamentary approval highlighted the need for free and fair elections and for restoring the state's territorial integrity. The road map equally stated the relevance of reestablishing state authority in the northern regions and dialogue with groups that laid down their arms. It also highlighted the need for legislative and presidential elections before the close of 20 July 2013.

MINUSMA showed active support for the Ouagadougou peace agreement in line with its mandate. The above agreement was signed between the government of Mali, the MNLA, and the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA)[658]. The parties to the accord

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[655] Dennis M. Tull, "UN Peacekeeping in Mali: Time to Adjust Minusma's Mandate," *SWP Comment*, vol. 23 (2019), p. 2.

[656] Jonathan M. Sears, *Unmet Hopes to Govern Mali's Persistent Crisis*, Montréal: Centre FrancoPaix de la Chaire Raoul-Dandurand, 2017.

[657] John Karlsrud, *The UN at War: Peace Operations in a New Era*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 1–10.

[658] Arthur Boutellis, "Can the UN Stabilize Mali? Towards a UN Stabilization Doctrine?," *Stability*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2015), pp. 1–16, doi:10.5334/sta.fz.

agreed on an immediate ceasefire as a condition necessary for the organization of national presidential elections. The agreement equally highlighted the commitment of the parties to engage each other through inclusive dialogue as a path toward establishing sustainable peace in the country. The signing of the Ouagadougou agreement supported by MINUSMA facilitated the organization of presidential and parliamentary elections on 28 July 2014. The United Nations and the European Commission supported the electoral process with an estimated €14.8 million.

Moreover, MINUSMA provided technical, logistical assistance and supervised the elections, which took place on 28 July and 11 August 2013[659]. Despite some organizational challenges, the elections went on hitch-free. Consequently, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita got elected with about 77% of the total votes. As indicated by the agreements of the Ouagadougou deal, the elected government was supposed to carry on with a comprehensive and final peace agreement within two months of taking overpower. The failure of Keita's government to make progress with the political process led to renewed violence in May 2014 between the Malian defense and security forces and the armed groups.

The continuation of violence demonstrated a weak government's capacity to address its security challenges. The extension of state authority cannot be possible without credible elections, and effective stabilization requires a robust reconciliation process. In June 2015, the government of Mali, the Platform, and the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) signed the agreement for peace and reconciliation.[660] The accord called for a ceasefire, reconciliation, and institutional reform in the north. The deal's aim was geared toward the restoration of peace in Mali. The accord aimed to achieve these through institutional reforms focused on decentralization, dialogue, economic growth, and regionalism.[661] This peace accord came to be referred to as the Algiers Agreement because Algeria played a critical role during the negotiation process. Apart from Algeria, the ECOWAS, AU, EU, and MINUSMA played essential roles in mediating between the

[659] Isaline Bergamaschi, "MINUSMA: Initial Steps, Achievements, and Challenges," Oslo, 2013, p. 2.

[660] Naffet Keita, "Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali Resulting From the Algiers Process. Between Euphoria and Scepticism: Traces of Peace," Bamako, 2018, pp. 1–15.

[661] Mathieu Pellerin, "Mali's Algiers Peace Agreement Five Years On," Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2020, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali/laccord-dalger-cinq-ans-apres-un-calme-precaire-dont-il-ne-faut-pas-se-satisfaire.

parties. The agreement, however, has been criticized for not taking the insecurity concerns of the central region into consideration. Its critics have faulted it for predominantly focusing on the northern areas.[662] The 2015 peace arrangement between the Malian government and Tuareg separatists laid a conducive environment for the July to August 2018 presidential elections. The incumbent Ibrahim Boubacar Keita defeated the prominent opposition leader Somalia Cisse and emerged the winner of the polls.

In 2020, Mali organized its parliamentary elections. The first round took place on 29 March 2020 and the second on 19 April 2020. What remains of paramount importance is that MINUSMA continuously supported the electoral process in Mali. Besides the technical and logistical support that the mission provided, it equally fostered the inclusiveness of Mali's political process by promoting gender equality in the process.[663] Because of MINUSMA's gender sensitization campaigns, many more women began participating in national politics and the process of peace and reconciliation in the country.

The protection of civilians has been a critical feature of MINUSMA's operations in Mali. The UN mission was authorized to use all means necessary to protect civilians in situations of grave violence. In 2019, the UNSC highlighted the protection of civilians as a strategic priority of MINUSMA's mandate.[664] The lack of government presence and the failure of state institutions created a security situation where armed groups like JNIM and ISGS thrived and perpetrated violence against civilians. In response to the above, MINUSMA took the task of protecting civilians very seriously.[665] The civilian staff of the mission has embarked on countless trips to remote areas to connect with the people and foster social cohesion. The missions' personnel have equally gone into violence-affected areas to support political dialogue and probe into human rights violations.

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[662] Alix Boucher, Dorina Bekoe, "Presidential Elections in Mali : A Step toward Stabilizing a Weak State Why Are These Elections So Significant ?," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2018), pp. 1–6.

[663] IPI, "Prioritization and Sequencing of Peacekeeping Mandates : The Case of MINUSMA," Vienna, 2020, pp. 1–8.

[664] Seán Smith, "Protecting Civilians in Mali: Why Air Assets Matter for MINUSMA," Washington DC, 2020, pp. 6–12, doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198716389.001.0001.

[665] Smith, "Protecting Civilians in Mali: Why Air Assets Matter for MINUSMA."

Furthermore, the protection of civilians is very relevant because it is inherently linked to the protection of human rights in conflict situations, such as the scenario in Mali. The protection and defense of human rights have been a critical priority in MINUSMA's operations. The above is linked to the fact that the protection of civilians is inherently connected to the process of reconciliation and extension of state authority.[666] The protection of citizens is the essential obligation of any government. Hence MINUSMA's efforts to build capacity for human rights in Mali come only as necessary assistance because of state weakness. Civilians in the northern regions of Timbuktu, Menaka, and Gao have persistently suffered a violation of their human rights. Widespread violation of human rights has equally taken place in the center regions how Segou, Bandiara, Mopti, and Douetza.

Similarly, civilians in the southern regions of Sikasso, San, and Kontiala have been victims of abuses and violations. Human rights violations remain a complex topic in the general structure of conflict and peacekeeping. Armed groups and peacekeepers alike have been perpetrators of abuse and human rights violations. According to MINUSMA records, 258 cases of rights abuses were registered from January to July 2021. Between January to June 2021, 435 cases of abductions were registered. These adoptions have been mainly carried out by the armed group JNIM. On a somewhat paradoxical note, the Malian forces perpetrated 43 extrajudicial, arbitrary, or summary executions from 1 April to 10 June 2021[667].

Humanitarian disasters and conflicts are issues that have challenged both national governments and international responders alike. The conflict in Mali did not only cause displacement of people but equally exposed them to hunger and diseases. Timely access to victims of conflict is a humanitarian principle that aid agencies master and prioritize. In responding to the humanitarian crisis in Mali, MINUSMA established a joint mission with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), Oxfam, Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCRC) and the Danish Refugee Council. MINUSMA supplied the troops that

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[666] Alexander Gilder, *Stabilization and Human Security in UN Peace Operations*, Oxon: Routledge, 2022.
[667] UN Human Rights Council, "Weak State Protection of Civilians Threatens Mali's Existence," 2021, https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/weak-state-protection-civilians-threatens-mali-s-existence-un-expert , accessed on 12.03.2022.

accompanied the personnel of these agencies in their delivery of humanitarian assistance to remote areas.

Since its deployment in 2013, MINUSMA has constantly made efforts to support both the national and international justice systems. It has been established in conflict situations that drugs, crimes, and violence are interrelated. In its bid to fight against the impunity that drugs and crime unleash on communities, MINUSMA has actively engaged the state authorities of Mali and collaborated with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime**[668]**. Bamako is known for being the transit hub of cocaine from South America. The sale of drugs is precarious to stability and security because armed groups generate capital from such illicit business operations to sponsor their insurgency. This explains why conflicts like the one in Mali have become protracted, taking different form and shape over the years. The International Criminal Court has equally charged Malian warlords with crimes against humanity. On 27 March 2018, the ICC released a warrant of arrest for Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohammed Ag Mahmoud. On 30 September 2019, he was charged with war crimes, rape, crimes against humanity, and sexual slavery.[669]

5   THE CHALLENGES OF PEACEBUILDING IN MALI

When conflicts erupt, it is sometimes easy to identify the belligerents and their primary motives. However, when the war becomes protracted like the one in Mali, the actors' motives, posture, and reactions change in ways that complicate any attempts at finding sustainable peace. The conflict in Mali has led to the death of many, causing thousands to be internally and externally displaced while development and security have stagnated in the country. It thus became clear that Mali was nose-diving into a state of collapse. In the face of this dire security and humanitarian crisis, the government of Mali, France, ECOWAS, the EU, and the UN weighed in to address the problem and resolve the situation. It would be fair to say international intervention registered some significant levels of success at the initial stage. Despite the enormous effort made in peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, the situation of peace in Mali remains a fragile one. The

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[668] UNSC, "Situation in Mali Report: Report of the Secretary-General S/2020/476," New York, 2020, doi:10.1017/S0020818300020154.
[669] ICC, Situation in Mali: The Prosecutor v. Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud, (2020).

challenges to sustainable peace in Mali have emanated from both internal and external factors.

5.1   *Challenges of Malian Government*

The limited presence of state institutions and security structures in the north and many other parts of the country is a critical challenge to the peace process in Mali. Under the social contract, the government's responsibility is to provide social amenities and security to its citizens. Nevertheless, the Malian government has not lived up to its responsibilities. While the capital Bamako is fully functional with state presence and social amenities, other areas cannot boast of good hospitals, government offices, educational facilities, police stations, and courts.[670] The limited government presence and the lack of sufficient social amenities in the northern and central regions have caused civil servants to regard their transfer to such places as a punitive measure. Armed groups have thus exploited the limited presence of state authorities in these regions to craft and implement their version of rebel governance. According to Lankoande, only about 23% of civil administrators were present at their duty post in northern Mali. At the same time, only about 27% of administrators were present on duty in central Mali between January to March 2020[671]. In reaction to the limited presence of government, traditional local authorities have taken it upon themselves to mediate conflicts and disputes that arise in their communities.

Secondly, the failure of peace agreements is a significant challenge to why peace has continued to be elusive in Mali. The signing of peace accords is essential to achieving a successful peace process. In the case of Mali, there are no shortages of peace accords that have been signed. These include the Tamanrasset Accord signed on 6 January 1999 between the government of Mali, the MPA, and the FIAA. The National Pact of 11 April 1992 was signed between the government and the MFUA. The Algiers Accord of 4 July 2006 was signed between the government of Mali and the ADC. The Ouagadougou Accord of 18 June 2013 was signed between the government of Mali, MNLA, HCUA, and the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, signed between the government

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[670] Richard Reeve, "Mali on the Brink: Insights from Local Peacebuilders on the Causes of Violent Conflict and the Prospects for Peace," *Peace Direct*, London, 2018, pp. 20–26.

[671] Wendyam Hervé Lankoandé, "Five Years after the Bamako Peace Agreement : Where Is Mali Heading ?," *Policy Brief*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2020), pp. 2–7.

Platform, the CMA[672]. These various agreements were signed to establish peace in the country. However, their implementation never fully saw the light of day. The 2015 peace agreement stands out as one of Mali's most comprehensive peace accords. The agreement did not grant autonomy to the northern regions as had been envisaged by the armed groups [673]. It, however, laid down five pillars which included decentralization as a process to restore peace in the country, revamping the economy, the inclusion of former combatants into the national army, support of political dialogue and justice as well as fostering national reconciliation. As lofty as the pillars of the agreement may look, none of them has been sufficiently implemented.

Moreover, the weakness of the Malian armed forces remains a real challenge to peace. The armed forces are not just weak in terms of confronting rebel groups; it is an equally divided and disorganized force. The Aguelhok massacre of 24 January 2012 and the ouster of President Amadou Toure exposed how weak and divided the army was[674]. On 17 January 2008, rebels from MNLA, Ansar Dine, and AQIM launched an attack on the army military base of Aguelhok. That Tuareg rebels overpowered the soldiers and captured 100 of them, who were later summarily executed. In 2012, Amado Sanogo led the military coup that ousted President Toure.[675]

Similarly, a military alliance ousted President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita from power in August 2020. On 24 May 2021, another military coup was staged by Assimi Goita, who ousted the transitional president Bah Ndaw. With the military constantly intervening and orchestrating coups in a country experiencing widespread instability, the prospect of building sustainable peace has become very slim. Watling and Reynolds have contended that the Malian armed force lacks an efficient human resource management system in terms of organization. They argue that Malian soldiers receive training, but it is

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[672] Pezard, Shurkin, "A Brief History of Mali's Rebellions and the Implementation of Peace Accords," pp. 6–15. See also Emmanuel De Groof, *State Renaissance for Peace: Transitional Governance Under International Law*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, p. 83.

[673] Michelle Harris, "Why Mali Needs a New Peace Deal," 2020, https://www.csis.org/analysis/why-mali-needs-new-peace-dea , accessed on 13.02.2022.

[674] Stephen A. Harmon, *Terror and Insurgency in the Sahara-Sahel Region: Corruption, Contraband, Jihad and the Mali War of 2012-2013*, Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2014, p. 188.

[675] Kamari M. Clarke, Abel S. Knottnerus, Eefje de Volder (eds.), *Africa and the ICC: Perceptions of Justice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 140–45.

increasingly difficult to know who has been trained in what aspect of military combat.[676] In the same vein, Shurkin et al. agree with Watling and Reynolds and added that the Malian armed forces could not carry out complex operations.[677]

Apart from the general weaknesses of the Malian armed forces, they have equally been involved in the violation and abuse of citizens whom they were supposed to protect. In February 2019, 19 people were killed in the village of Ouro-Diam. By June of the same year, soldiers were responsible for the death of 14 civilians in Niangassadou and 29 people in Binidama.[678] From December 2019 to August 2020, more than 250 civilians and suspects were unlawfully killed by Malian security forces. The killings were orchestrated in the Mopti and Segou regions within counterterrorism operations. The UN equally noted that soldiers perpetrated 50 extrajudicial killings from Burkina Faso between 26 to 28 May 2020[679]. From 1 April to 3 June 2021, Malian defense forces were implicated in 43 extrajudicial and summary executions.

Another aspect that has posed severe challenges to the peace process in Mali has been the matter of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). The Malian state initiated the DDR process and was supported mainly by MINUSMA. The chiefs of the Malian security staff have not developed a robust framework for the integration of former combatants into the national defense and security forces, nor have they attributed ranks and defined roles for the former rebels within the military chain of command.[680] There has been difficulty designing a reintegration approach that will provide socio-economic support to former combatants who have chosen to carry on with their lives as civilians[681]. The inadequacies of fully implementing the DDR have continued to negatively affect the peacebuilding process in Mali.

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[676] Jack. Watling, Nick Reynolds, *War by Others' Means: Delivering Effective Partner Force Capacity Building*, Oxon: Routledge, 2020.
[677] Michael. Shurkin, Rebecca S. Zimmerman, Stephanie Pezard, *Mali's Next Battle: Improving Counterterrorism Capabilities*, Calif: RAND Corporation, 2017.
[678] Human Rights Watch, "Mali: Events of 2020," 2021, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/mali , accessed on 13.03.2022 .
[679] ibid.
[680] Pellerin, "Mali's Algiers Peace Agreement Five Years On," p. 4.
[681] The Carter Center, "Observations on the Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, Resulting from the Algiers Process," Atlanta, 2020, pp. 12–15.

5.2   Regional Challenges of ECOWAS/AU

The Economic Community of West African states and the African Union played a significant role in the 2012-2013 Malian conflict. These two organizations have continued to support and foster the conduct of peacebuilding in Mali. Their interventions to stabilize Mali have gone from mediation, negotiation, and military operations to support for electoral processes, counterterrorism, and economic sanctions. As African-based organizations, their proximity to the conflict in Mali gives them the advantage of understanding the complex dynamics surrounding the war in the country. Despite their efforts to restore state stability and protect civilians, these organizations have had to grapple with challenges that have hampered their ability to build peace in Mali effectively.

One of the critical factors that bedeviled the African peace process in Mali was the tension that characterized ECOWAS and AU over issues of authority and control. The African Union often has difficulties with regional organizations because of divergent views and approaches to critical issues.[682]. The transition from MICEMA to MINUSMA was not smooth as leadership tussles raged between the two organizations. The battle for who would lead AFISMA showed the lack of coordination and negatively affected the peace process.

In addition to the above, AFISMA did not have the necessary financial resources to fund its peace operations.[683] Although haven been authorized by UNSC resolution 2085 of 20 December 2012, the resolution did not make provision for the finance and logistics which AFISMA needed to carry out its operations. AFISMA was thus left with sourcing its funds from willing donors[684]. On 29 January 2013, the African Union organized a donor conference in Addis Ababa, where it mobilized pledges. The funds were to be used as financial support for AFISMA and MDSF operations.[685] Despite repeated requests made to the UN by ECOWAS and AU to fund and deploy AFISMA, Secretary-General Ban

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[682] Wyss, Tardy, *Peacekeeping in Africa The Evolving Security Architecture*.
[683] World Peace Foundation, "Mali Mission Brief," 2017, https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/files/2017/07/Mali-brief.pdf , accessed on 31.03.2022.
[684] cited, p. 8.
[685] African Union, "Progress Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the African-Led International Support Mission in Mali at the Peace and Security Council 358th Meeting," Addis Ababa, 2013, https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/25051-pr-358th-psc-meeting-progress-report-afisma.pdf.

Ki-Moon remained reluctant to fulfill the request of the African bloc because he did not feel that AFISMA could restore peace and stability in Mali. The projected budget for AFISMA was $368 million. However, by March 2013, only $26.7 million had been raised from donors through the UN trust fund to support the AFISMA operation in Mali.[686] The lack of financial and logistical resources delayed the deployment of AFISMA. Rebel groups capitalized on this delay to expand their operation and capture more territories.

In the face of increasing armed group atrocities and the non-readiness of AFISMA, a French-led Operation Serval was launched to combat terrorists and jihadists. The town of Kona was overtaken by Ansar Dine, AQIM, and MOJWA.[687] The French-led Operation Serval succeeded in recapturing Kona, Timbuktu, and Gao in the northern region. The swift intervention of France prevented the rebels from heading into Bamako. These notwithstanding, Operation Serval demonstrated that both ECOWAS and the African Union were not ready enough to provide solutions to issues plaguing their member state.[688] Besides being a humiliation to ECOWAS and AU, Serval equally revealed the weakness of these two organizations and their lack of capacity to respond speedily to security threats in Mali and the continent at large.

The initial success of Operation Serval came as a wake-up call to ECOWAS and AU that there was an urgent need for African actors in the conflict management process in Mali. Consequently, the overdue deployment of AFISMA began in February 2013. ECOWAS had to fast-track the deployment to meet up with Operation Serval. AFISMA had more than 6000 troops drawn from some West African countries by March[689]. The countries which contributed troops to AFISMA were Ghana, Senegal, Togo, Benin, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Major General Abdulkadir Shehu from Nigeria was the first commander that led the AFISMA troops.

It has been laid out that the lack of financial and logistical resources hampered the performance of African peace operations. Another issue that has significantly challenged

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[686] Francois. VreA, Thomas Mandrup (eds.), *African Standby Force: Quo Vadis?*, Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2017, p. 15.

[687] VreA, Mandrup, *African Standby Force: Quo Vadis?*

[688] Maru, "African-Led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA): Military Ahead of Politics," pp. 3–5.

[689] Israel Nyaburi. Nyadera et al., *Reimagining Security Communities: Systems Thinking Approach for Africa*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, p. 232.

the effectiveness of Africa-led peace operations is the lack of troop capacity and lack of preparedness to respond to crises like the one in Mali. Both ECOWAS and the African Union rely on member states to contribute troops and fund peace missions.[690] One of the reasons Malian political and military leadership requested France to intervene in January 2013 was that ECOWAS and AU had no standing force that could be rapidly deployed. Nevertheless, the financing and deployment of an African standby force are shrouded in political complexities that do not favor rapid deployments to conflict zones as member states would have loved to see.

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has been criticized for not putting a functional African standby force in place. The primary function of the ASF is to provide an immediate response to dire circumstances. Their ASF has hardly lived up to its responsibilities. In the case of Mali, the West African Standby Brigade (WASB) could not respond to the 2012 Malian crisis because it needed six months to mobilize effectively.[691] Despite the challenges faced by AU and ECOWAS, their contributions toward peace and stability as African actors managing African conflicts cannot be downplayed. In defense of AFISMA, Tar argued that the French Operation Serval had enormous funding, training, and logistics from the European Union, Canada, the USA, and the UK, unlike the African peace mission.[692] Unlike AFISMA, the French-led mission also received the support and backing of the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. France had the latitude to operate a counterterrorism operation with a robust mandate that AFISMA did not have.

5.3   The Challenges of MINUSMA

The conflict in Mali came with severe consequences for the government's stability and the security and well-being of the civilian population. The conflict environment in Mali has continued to remain one of the deadliest in the world. When the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali took over the peace operations from AFISMA, hopes were high that peace would return to Mali in no distant time. This

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[690] Cedric De. Coning, Linnéa. Gelot, John Karlsrud (eds.), *The Future of African Peace Operations: From the Janjaweed to Boko Haram*, London: Zed Books, 2017.
[691] World Peace Foundation, "Mali Mission Brief," pp. 1–9.
[692] Usman A. Tar (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Africa*, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2021.

enthusiasm was because UN peacekeeping missions have proven to be practical tools in addressing the challenges of insecurity and global peace. From July 2013, when MINUSMA effectively began its operations in Mali, the mission registered some considerable success. Through the instrumentality of MINUSMA, stability was restored in the northern regions of Mali. The mission's dedication to protecting civilians led to decreased civilian deaths in the crisis. The government of Mali equally enjoyed significant support from MINUSMA, which prevented the rebels from taking over the state. Apart from supporting the 2013 Malian elections, MINUSMA equally played a critical role in the country's peace process, eventually leading to the landmark Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation between the government and armed groups in 2015. Despite these successes, MINUSMA has faced severe challenges that have hampered its ability to implement its mandate and build peace in Mali. Some of these challenges range from the complex working relationships between MINUSMA and Mali's government, increased insecurity in the country, the proliferation of armed groups, citizens' mistrust, and misconception of the mission's mandate, and MINUSMA's internal inadequacies.

When MINUSMA was deployed, one of its primary objectives was to restore state stability in Mali, support constitutional governance, and extend state authority. However, the achievement of the above has been stalled by the nature of the Malian authorities and the complex relationship between the government and MINUSMA. The UN mission has only achieved mixed results in reestablishing state authority and governance in Mali. This is because MINUSMA is dealing with Malian authorities that are corrupt, unstable, weak, and lack the capacity or political will to uphold peace agreements.

MINUSMA's support for the government of Mali and its defense and security forces was seen as a perfect strategy for overcoming instability and strengthening state capacity. The restoration and extension of state authority depended on this strategy[693]. However, MINUSMA's peace operations have often come under criticism for its collaboration with the government by civilians who have come to perceive MINUSMA through the tainted image they hold of the Malian authorities. This situation was made more complex because some top officials in the government and the security sector who were once rebels still

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[693] by Jaïr van der Lijn, "The UN Peace Operation in Mali: A Troubled Yet Needed Mission," 2019, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2019/11/un-peace-operation-mali-troubled-yet-needed-mission/ , accessed on 17.02.2022.

maintain ties with rebel groups and share government intelligence with the insurgents. A weak and divided military makes the mission of extending state authority very difficult. The inability of the Malian security forces to maintain a presence in the northern and central regions calls to question MINUSMA's mandate to keep the peace. What peace is there to keep if the host government and its defense forces cannot maintain a cohesive and influential presence in the troubled areas.

The lack of government commitment as a precursor to the success of MINUSMA is equally explained by the fact that the development, humanitarian, and security initiatives of MINUSMA have made the government too comfortable to the point where they relinquished the provision of these services to the former.[694]. The assignment of MINUSMA is to support the government to meet the needs of its people and not to substitute or replace the government. The independent functioning of the state apparatus is inherently linked to the amount of legitimacy that it generates and how that legitimacy translates into stability remains crucial to the success of the peace process in Mali.

In addition to the above, Mali's government and armed groups have shown limited commitment to peace agreements. Without belligerents adhering to established frameworks for political dialogue and peace, MINUSMA's ability has been dramatically reduced.[695] The failure of the peace agreement in Mali, like the 1999, 2006, and 2015 peace agreements, has challenged MINUSMA's capacity to build peace in Mali.[696] In August 2020, insecurity skyrocketed in Mali because of failures in implementing the 2015 peace and reconciliation agreement. The deteriorated security situation led to a coup d'etat on 18 August 2020, which saw the overthrow of President Boubacar Keita alongside his Prime Minister Boubou Cisse.[697] Military officers executed the coup from the Malian armed forces. Colonel Assimi Goita orchestrated another coup on 24 May 2021. The transitional president of the 2020 coup Bah Ndaw was ousted from power in the 2021 coup. Assimi Goita has, since May 2021, assumed the function of interim president of

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[694] Tronc, Grace, Nahikian, "Realities and Myths of the 'Triple Nexus': Local Perspectives on Peacebuilding, Development, and Humanitarian Action in Mali," pp. 17–18.
[695] Lotte Vermeij, "MINUSMA : Challenges on the Ground," Oslo: Norwegian Institute for International Affairs, 2015, p. 4.
[696] Caroline. Varin, Dauda Abubakar (eds.), *Violent Non-State Actors in Africa: Terrorists, Rebels, and Warlords*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, p. 61.
[697] Alexander Gilder, *Stabilization and Human Security in UN Peace Operations*, Oxon: Routledge, 2022.

Mali. Such instabilities have significantly hindered the peace operations of MINUSMA. The measures adopted by MINUSMA to achieve state stability and extend state authority in northern and central Mali continue to be challenged by successive Malian state authorities' characteristics and evolving nature.

The protection of civilians was part of MINUSMA's initial 2013 deployment mandate. However, in June 2019, the UNSC elevated the protection of civilians as a second strategic priority of MINUSMA's mandate in Mali. From its inception, MINUSMA embarked on strategic measures to protect civilians and limit non-combatant casualties in the conflict. Nevertheless, these, too, like other mission objectives, have faced severe challenges. The conflict led to the displacement of close to 500,000 people by 14 January 2021. According to the UN Refugee Agency mid-2013 records, approximately 182,780 were refugees. The International Crisis Group estimated that about 496 people died because of the conflict in 2013 alone. Senegalese, French, and Chadian forces accounted for 116 soldiers killed, with about 700 rebels killed by March 2013[698]. According to the 2014 reports of the International Crisis Group, 189 deaths were recorded, with 121 wounded. The casualties included 26 peacekeepers, 100 militants, 14 soldiers, nine hostages, and 34 civilians. According to the 2015-Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) report of 2015, 411 conflict casualties were reported. ACLED's 2016 reports indicated 288 conflict-related deaths, 31 of which were peacekeepers[699]. Extremist groups have killed more than 300 civilians by June 2018. The above statistics show that MINUSMA, with its 15,000-troop presence, still faces significant challenges in effectively protecting civilians and personnel. This has been an enormous setback to the mission's peacebuilding efforts.

Another aspect that explains MINUSMA's inability to build sustainable peace in Mali is that the mission, its mandate, and personnel do not have sufficient connection with the local people. MINUSMA personnel live in fortified United Nations compounds with tall and highly secured fences which protect them from terrorist threats. While these security measures are essential for the safety of the missions' personnel, it limits their connection

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[698] Project Ploughshare, "Mali (2012 – First Combat Deaths)," 2016,
https://ploughshares.ca/pl_armedconflict/mali-2012-first-combat-deaths/# , accessed on 20.03.2022.
[699] ibid.

with the local people.[700]. The limited engagement with locals deprived MINUSMA staffers of grasping a complete understanding of their host state's socio-political and economic context. Ordinary Malians thus have a mixed view about the mission, which taints the mission's legitimacy and limits its peace efforts.[701]. The limited connection with the population is further complicated because these locals perceive MINUSMA as a mission to protect foreign interests and not to protect them. Because many of them do not even understand or know the mission's mandate, their perception of MINUSMA is clouded by suspicion and mistrust. Sometimes the local population expects MINUSMA to go after terrorists, but the mission's mandate does not fully permit it to engage in counterterrorism. MINUSMA's hesitance to attack terrorists and extremist groups has sometimes been misinterpreted as support for the armed groups.

Moreover, MINUSMA's mandate to promote and protect human rights has not always been successful. The protection of human rights remains a real challenge for MINUSMA. The very actors like the Malian armed forces and UN peacekeepers who were supposed to protect and uphold the rights of civilians have been at the center of abuse against the very civilians they were meant to protect. This has raised questions about MINUSMA's capacity to promote and uphold the rights of ordinary defenseless Malians adequately.[702] Armed violent groups like the MNLA, Ansar Dine, MOJWA, and AQIM have equally perpetrated attacks and abuse on civilians. The atrocities of these armed groups range from torture, extortion, beating, rape, and murder.[703]. MINUSMA still finds it increasingly difficult to eradicate these armed groups persistently prying on the local population. Apart from MINUSMA's limited capacity to respond and prevent massacres against civilians speedily, peacekeepers have been involved in sexual abuse and exploitation, which sometimes have resulted in pregnancies. Between January to July 2021, MINUSMA registered 258 cases of human rights abuses. According to data collected by MNUSMA, In 2020, Malian defense and security forces committed 530

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[700] Cedric de Coning, Mateja Peter (eds.), *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, pp. 161–62.

[701] Fabien Offner, "New Sahel Anti-Terror Force: Risks and Opportunities," (10/30/2017), https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/2017/10/30/new-sahel-anti-terror-force-risks-and-opportunities.

[702] Rida Lyammouri, "After Five Years, Challenges Facing MINUSMA Persist," Rabat, 2018, vol. 18, pp. 3–6.

[703] Andrew H. Campbell (ed.), *Global Leadership Initiatives for Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding*, Pennsylvania: IGI GLOBAL, 2018, pp. 98–100.

human rights violations and abuses.[704] The perpetuation of human rights abuses by peacekeepers and Malian security forces poses a significant challenge to the overall integrity and image of MINUSMA, which for all intent and purposes, is supposed to be the protector and guarantor of civilian protection and rights in the conflict environment in Mali.

The effectiveness of the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali has further been stifled by the lack of adequate infrastructure in the country. This has led to significant delays in distributing and delivering materials and supplies needed to construct camps for troops.[705] The lack of military air assets like helicopters and planes hindered the mission's capacity to airlift its personnel and materials in a way that could speedily intervene and halt the activities of armed groups. Terrorists and extremist groups exploited the lack of such vital assets to attack civilians and perpetrate violence.

The ability of MINUSMA to facilitate the movement of its troops and provide security assistance towards the smooth flow of humanitarian aid has been dramatically hampered due to frequent attacks against MINUSMA's convoys and humanitarian organizations alike. The transportation of water, fuel, food, and other logistics to MINUSMA camps in the north has been a daunting task.[706]. The UN mission in Mali has constantly been described as one of the deadliest peace operations in the world. This is due to the dangerous environment in which it operates, where armed groups do not only operate locally but maintain strong ties with Al Qaeda and ISIS. In 2012, the UN lost 17 peacekeepers on 20 civilian personnel. In 2013, about 60 personnel were killed by targeted attacks. The UN continued to suffer a significant loss of its personnel in 2014 as 33 peacekeepers, nine contractors, three consultants, and 16 civilians were killed.[707]

On 15 January 2016, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb attacked soldiers who were protecting returning refugees in a humanitarian convoy. The refugees were returning to

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[704] Smith, "Protecting Civilians in Mali: Why Air Assets Matter for MINUSMA," pp. 1–6.

[705] Vermeij, "MINUSMA : Challenges on the Ground," p. 2.

[706] Signe Cold-Ravnkilde, Peter Albrecht, Rikke Haugegaard, "Friction and Inequality among Peacekeepers in Mali," *RUSI Journal*, vol. 162, no. 2 (2017), pp. 38–40, doi:10.1080/03071847.2017.1328810.

[707] United Nations, "Press Release: With Increased Number of United Nations Personnel Deliberately Killed in 2014, Staff Unions Calls on Organization to Do More towards Protecting Lives," New York, 2015, https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/org1593.doc.htm.

Mali from Mauritania. Two soldiers were killed while two others were wounded. The United Nations camp in Kidal was shelled by the Ansar Dine terrorist group on 12 February 2016[708]. In the same light, armed militias attacked the Nord-Sud hotel. The hotel is noted to have been hosting 600 EU military personnel who had come into the country to train Mali's defense and security forces. The rebels ambushed a UN convoy on 29 May in central Mali and killed five Togolese peacekeepers. The security base of the UN in Gao suffered from rocket fire and two explosions on 31 May 2016[709]. United Nations peacekeepers have been victims of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). In 2013, 91 peacekeepers were killed because of IEDs, while 19 peacekeepers died from the same in 2014. In 2017, the number of peacekeepers killed by IEDs tremendously decreased. However, in 2021 14 peacekeepers died from IEDs. The UN has since embarked on a mission to provide training to its peacekeepers on detecting landmines, IEDs and how to mitigate such threats.

According to Human Rights Watch, armed attacks were orchestrated against 13 vehicles of humanitarian aid organizations between November 2014 to April 2015[710]. On 30 March 2015, a convoy of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was attacked by the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA). One employee of the aid organization was killed, while another was wounded.[711]. Under international humanitarian law, aid organizations are not conflict actors because of their neutrality. However, we see in this situation that armed attacks against peacekeepers and humanitarian organizations have hindered the delivery of critical aid to the starving and suffering civilian population who have become victims of the crisis in Mali.

The harsh climatic conditions of Mali's weather have been a considerable obstacle to MINUSMA's peace operations and mobility. Unlike the rebel fighters who master fighting in the desert terrain, UN peacekeepers and French counterterrorism forces and not akin to combat on desert terrain. This has overwhelmed the capacity of the counter-

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[708] Edward Mickolus, *Terrorism Worldwide*, North Carolina: McFarland and Company Publishers, 2016, pp. 7–20.
[709] Michael Amoah, *The New Pan-Africanism: Globalism and the Nation-State in Africa*, London: I.B.Tauris & Co., 2019, pp. 163–72.
[710] Human Rights Watch, "Mali: Lawlessness, Abuses Imperil Population," 2013, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/14/mali-lawlessness-abuses-imperil-population#:~:text=(Bamako) – The Malian government,Human Rights Watch said today. , accessed on 25.03.2022.
[711] Shurkin, Zimmerman, Pezard, *Mali's Next Battle: Improving Counterterrorism Capabilities*, pp. 35–40.

terror unit to pursue and defeat terrorist groups in the area effectively. The European weather from which most French forces and UN peacekeepers come is nothing like Mali's. The extreme hot desert weather has negatively impacted the peacekeepers' ability to protect civilians and respond to situations of violence against communities. The UN peace operation in Mali and French counterterrorism operations have made significant strides towards stabilizing the country and restoring peace and stability. Nonetheless, such initiatives have been stifled by the challenges discussed above. This notwithstanding, steps are still underground in Mali to ensure that terrorism and jihadist extremist groups are effectively taken off the territorial confines of Mali.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, FINDINGS AND RESULTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The conflict in Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and CAR have been examined because of their impact on the African continent and shaping regional and international politics and security. These conflicts all have their specificities, based on the internal dynamics that caused and sustained them. In as much as these conflicts remain peculiar because they have distinct individual features, they also share common characteristics that are traceable across all three case studies. This comparative analysis is a deliberate attempt to synchronize the data on the three case studies to provide answers to the research questions and accept or reject the hypothesis of the study. At the onset of this study, three questions and three hypotheses were outlined.

Research Questions

1. Does the political economy of the state leadership and ethnoreligious aspirations constitute significant drivers of conflict?

2. How do Nonstate Armed Actors influence the dynamics of intrastate conflicts?

3. What are the successes and challenges faced by peacebuilders in Congo, CAR, and Mali?

 Research Hypotheses

1. The political economy of the state leadership and ethnoreligious aspirations are significant drivers of conflict.

2. Non-state Armed Actors influence the dynamics of intrastate conflicts in complex and contradictory ways.

3. The successes and challenges encountered by peacebuilding missions significantly affect conflict resolution in Congo, CAR, and Mali.

Using qualitative data generated throughout the study, this section seeks to provide answers to the research questions and validate the research hypotheses of the study.

1 VALIDATING RESEARCH QUESTION ONE AND HYPOTHESIS ONE (Q1, H1)

Q1: Does the quest for political power, control of economic resources and ethnoreligious aspirations constitute significant drivers of conflict?

H1: The quest for political power, control of economic resources and ethnoreligious aspirations are significant drivers of conflict.

In order to provide answers to research question 1 and validate hypothesis 1, it is relevant to understand how the political economy of African political elites and ethnoreligious aspirations have contributed to a culture of conflict and instability in the Congo, CAR, and Mali. It is worthy to note that all the above countries experienced colonial rule. Congo was colonized by Belgium, while France colonized CAR and Mali. Colonialism brought limited benefit to these African countries and did little to prepare the political elite, who later on took over the affairs of these states.[712]. In the absence of tangible leadership preparations that were to transition power from the colonizers to the new African political elites, the latter was left only with the nostalgic choice to copy the grandeur and dictatorship of their colonial masters. After independence, the new indigenous political elite in DR Congo, CAR, and Mali became perpetrators of the ills they had fought to conquer. Belgian colonialism in the Congo imposed forced labor on native Congolese to work on rubber plantations in deplorable conditions.[713] Belgian colonialism and the atrocities that accompanied it led to the death of thousands of native Congolese. It would be fair to say that colonial rule brought some form of education, enlightenment, infrastructural development, and exposure to Africans. However, and more significantly, colonial rule exploited human and material resources in Mali, CAR, and Congo.

Belgian colonialism in Congo exposed the brutality of the colonial enterprise in that country. In the same light, the French colonial policy in Mali and the Central African Republic was based on the direct rule.[714] The direct rule meant that the colonial masters

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[712] Rosina Beckman (ed.), *Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, New York: Britannica Educational Publishing, 2017, pp. 277–81.

[713] William J. Samarin, *The Black Man's Burden: African Colonial Labor On The Congo And Ubangi River 1880-1900*, New York: Routledge, 2019, pp. 1–20.

[714] Victor-Manuel Vallin, "France as the Gendarme of Africa, 1960-2014," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 130, no. 1 (2015), pp. 79–101.

maintained a highly supervised and centralized administration which gave the indigenes only little opportunity into how the colonial machinery functioned. While King Leopold ruled Congo through his proxies, the French relied on directly administering the day-to-day affairs of their colonial enterprise in CAR and Mali. However, what is relevant is that colonial administration in these countries was highly centralized.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, and Mali achieved their independence in 1960. On 30 June 1960, DR Congo became an independent state with Joseph Kasavubu as its first president and Patrice Lumumba as Prime Minister. In the same light, CAR gained its independence from France on 13 August 1960, and David Dacko became the first president. Similarly, Mali achieved its independence on 22 September 1960, and Modibo Keita became its first president. Even though indigenous African leaders took over the affairs of their countries and people, the only leadership style that provided them with a template for governance was the authoritarian and centralized rule that they had inadvertently inherited from their colonial masters. This explains why these African leaders had little tolerance for democracy at independence as they opted for one-party states accompanied by highly centralized governments.

The premise advanced by the proponents of the one-party state is that it was cheaper to manage and relevant in ensuring cohesion across the national territory.[715] Going by this reasoning, therefore, the one-party state was a means to reconcile and bring together a people who had been divided by colonial rule. At face value, the one-party rule and the centralization of power that sustained it seemed a viable option for state-building and state stability. However, in Congo, the Central African Republic, like in Mali, this centralization of power later transformed into corrupt dictatorships that did not serve the common good and development of the people. A classic example is Jean-Bedel Bokassa of CAR, whose appetite for power led him to crown himself as Emperor of the CAR.[716] In the same thing, the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko of Congo was equally a classic case of dictatorship, corruption, and brutality.

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[715] Heidi Leigh Matisonn, "Beyond Party Politics: Unexpected Democracy-Deepening Consequences of One-Party Dominance in South Africa," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, vol. 105 (2004), pp. 1–30.

[716] Gunter Frankenberg, *Authoritarianism: Constitutional Perspectives*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020, pp. 135–40.

The flawed legacy of colonialism and the centralization of power that characterized the early independent days of Congo, CAR, and Mali laid the foundation for conflict in these countries. Most of the leaders that ruled these countries from independence to the present failed to craft a political economy that could ensure their citizens' general welfare and the growth and development of their nations. The conflicts in Congo, CAR, and Mali are intrinsically tied to injustice and the unequal distribution of resources. The political elites in these countries politicized ethnicity and built personality cults around them to maintain their continuous stay in power.

In our analysis of Congo, CAR, and Mali, it has been established that almost every leader that has led these countries allocated substantial state resources to the region of their ethnicity and gave strategic government appointments to their cronies. When Mobutu took overpower in Congo, he nationalized the Zairian economy, and foreign-owned businesses were transferred to Zairians.[717] However, the country's economy collapsed because most of its citizens neither had the skill nor the experience to manage such businesses. Mobutu appointed persons from his Ngbandi ethnic group to key government and military positions. His presidential security-the, Special Presidential Division (DSP), was predominantly made of soldiers from the Ngbandi ethnic extraction.[718]

In the same way, leaders in the Central African Republic like David Dacko, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, Ange Felix Patasse, and Francois Bozize all relied heavily on staffing their presidential security units with soldiers from their ethnic groups. Meanwhile, Amadou Toure embarked on a divide and rule strategy in Mali that constantly pitted northern groups against each other. While the Tuaregs and Arabs clamored for regional autonomy, Toure's government used the Fulanis and Songhai groups to counter the claims of the Tuaregs and Arabs.

The ethnic factor is a central theme that runs across African politics and conflict. Caution must, however, be paid to the fact that ethnicity is not bad. The politicization of ethnicity is what corrupts ethnicity and weaponizes it as a force of evil against democracy and good

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[717] Michael G. Schatzberg, "The State and the Economy: The 'Radicalization of the Revolution' in Mobutu's Zaire," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1980), pp. 239–57.
[718] UNHCR, "Assessment for Ngbandi in the Dem. Rep. of the Congo," *Minorities at Risk Project*, 2003, https://www.refworld.org/docid/469f3a701f.html.

governance.[719] Politicized ethnicity forms a system of government where citizens vote for leaders not based on their political philosophies or agenda for development but on how ethnically attached the political office seeker is closer to them. This, therefore, accounts for why bad and unaccountable leaders continue to remain in power. As much as democracy fosters good governance, politicized ethnicity forms the foundation of bad governance. There is thus a significant link between politicized ethnicity, bad governance, nepotism, corruption, and the onset of conflict. The above combination is responsible for why conflicts erupted in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali. The above analysis positively responds to research question 1 and hypothesis 1 that ethnoreligious aspirations constitute a significant cause of conflict. When state resources tend to be allocated on ethnic lines, those deprived of such resources tend to become aggrieved. With limited avenues for expressing their grievances, they resort to armed rebellion as a final option.

The insufficiency of democracy is a common feature that is common in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali. After gaining independence, these states projected themselves as democratic entities that could translate the democratic philosophy into concrete development and inclusive growth. However, what has been observed in these countries is democracy without its culture. The issues of free and fair elections in Congo, Mali, and the Central African Republic have remained hotly contested issues over the years. Even when the governments in these countries talk about democracy, they are only referring to periodic elections. There is insufficient democracy in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali. There is still insufficient freedom of speech, human rights, inclusiveness, and equality in all three cases. Freedom of assembly, the rights to life and liberty, is significantly constrained. This weak democracy is further exacerbated by the fact that there is hardly any separation of powers between the executive, judiciary, and legislature in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali. The precept of separation of powers is an integral part of the constitution of these countries.

Nevertheless, the proper implementation of these concepts remains troublesome democratic virtues are only extolled in principle and never in practice. The reason why

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[719] Hubert Kabangula Ngoy-Kangoy, "The Political Role of the Ethnic Factor around Elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2007), pp. 219–38.

conflicts continued to rage across Congo, Central African Republic, and Mali is that the three arms of governments are trapped in the web of complicity and nonchalance that inhibit the strength of any one of them to hold the other arm accountable. Without effective democracy and respect for the rule of law, post-electoral violence became a standard feature that defined instability in Congo, Mali, and the Central African Republic.

Beyond the differences that underline the political evolution of the states of Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali, coup d'états are inherently standard features that have accompanied state evolution in these countries.[720] The coups in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali differ in number and magnitude; however, the destabilizing effects of these coups have been felt in all spheres of these countries' development process. After gaining their independence in the 1960s, the process of political evolution and state-building in Congo, Mali, and the CAR has been marred by coups. The Central African Republic tops the chart with the highest coups among these countries. Followed by Congo and then Mali. From 1965 to 2021, the Central African Republic registered a total of 7 coups that have significantly altered the political history and development of the country.

Similarly, from 1960 to 2004, the Democratic Republic of Congo registered a total of 6 coups. From 1968 two 2021, Mali has had a record number of 6 coups. Compared to the Central African Republic, both Congo and Mali have had lesser incidents of coups. However, the difference between one coups incident is insignificant to ascertain that the situation in the Central African Republic is distant from the scenario in Mali and Congo. The above analysis will be apt to say that the coups in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali may have different actors, motives, and outcomes. However, the number of coup d'états registered in the three case studies is almost the same. Coups have been a significant source of instability in many African countries. The violence and instability accompanying military takeovers have contributed to negatively retarding Africa's democratic process and good governance. Based on the above analysis, one can

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[720] Habiba Ben Barka, Mthuli Ncube, "Political Fragility in Africa : Are Military Coups d ' Etat a Never-Ending Phenomenon ?," *African Development Bank*, no. September (2012), pp. 1–16, http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/fileadmin/uploads/aeo/PDF/Papers/Political Fragility in Africa.pdf.

therefore accept hypothesis 1, which stated that 'the political economy of the state leadership coupled with ethnoreligious aspirations are major drivers of conflict.'

2 VALIDATING RESEARCH QUESTION TWO AND HYPOTHESIS TWO (Q2, H2)

Q2: How do Nonstate Armed Actors influence the dynamics of intrastate conflicts?

H2: Non-state Armed Actors influence the dynamics of intrastate conflicts in complex and contradictory ways

The advent of intrastate conflicts in Africa is intrinsically linked to the emergence of non-state armed groups. Rebel groups have thus become critical actors in the discourse on armed conflicts in Africa and specifically in Congo, Mali, and the Central African Republic. The analysis of any conflict situation in the above countries or any other country within the African continent cannot be complete without a critical investigation into the roles played by these rebel movements.[721] The fact remains that armed groups in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali have played a critical role in orchestrating the onset of conflicts and influencing how violence and instability are shaped.

Among the many reasons armed groups exist, one of their key objectives is overthrowing governments and taking overpower. The capabilities of armed groups to stage incursions against constitutional state authorities have further been strengthened by the growth of technology and social media. Armed groups have come to rely on the advancement of technology to recruit new members into their ranks.[722] Social media have equally provided them with the ability to network with other armed groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda that have global agendas.

Armed groups may have found the strength and opportunity to operate within the territorial confines of states. Nevertheless, armed groups differ from states because states have jurisdiction over defined territorial boundaries that armed groups do not have. States equally have sovereignty that armed groups do not possess. States may be challenged by armed groups and may sometimes collapse or fail. This notwithstanding, unlike armed

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[721] Clionadh Raleigh, "Pragmatic and Promiscuous: Explaining the Rise of Competitive Political Militias across Africa," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 60, no. 2 (2016), pp. 283–310.

[722] Elise Vermeersch et al., *The Role of Social Media in Mali and Its Relation To Violent Extremism: A Youth Perspective*, Turin: United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, 2019, pp. 1–14.

groups, states still have the advantage of being permanent entities that cannot be easily disbanded or wiped away.

Contrary to states, armed groups always rise to achieve a particular political or economic objective. Once that objective is reached or not achieved, the probability of these armed groups disintegrating is very high. The static and sovereign nature of the state puts it on a pedestal of survival no matter what happens. On the contrary, armed groups are mostly ephemeral.

This study relied on the theory of greed and grievance to explain the complex and contradictory roles that non-state armed groups have played in the conflicts in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali. According to Collier and Hoeffler, greed and grievance are two contrasting reasons for rebellion. They opine that

'*Grievance begets conflict, which begets grievance, which begets further conflict.'[723].'*

The conflict in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali began with legitimate grievances to agitate for equitable distribution of state resources and better country governance. However, the actual events in these countries showed how the legitimate grievances eventually got blurred as armed groups began putting forward their greed to partake in the illicit exploitation and sale of natural resources. The illicit exploitation and sale of natural resources gave armed groups the impetus and financial clout to further their rebellion and coexist alongside legitimate state structures.[724] The establishment of rebel economies in the Central African Republic by groups like the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity, Seleka, and Anti-balaka stand alike in comparison with groups in Congo like the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo, Allied Democratic Forces, Lord Resistance Army, Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda and the M23 Movement. Unlike the quest for resource control by armed groups in the Central African Republic and Congo, those in Mali were mainly involved in the illicit trafficking and sale of weapons and drugs.

Throughout the First and Second Congo Wars, the primary objective of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) was to depose the autocratic

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[723] Collier, P., and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War in A Frica," p. 26.
[724] International Alert, *The Role Of The Exploitation Of Natural Resources In Fuelling And Prolonging Crises In The Eastern DRC*, London: International Alert, 2010, pp. 24–49.

Mobuto Seko.[725] With backing from Rwanda, they succeeded in overthrowing Mobutu, and Laurent Desire Kabila became the president of Congo. In the same way, during the 2012 crisis in the Central African Republic, the Seleka rebel group succeeded in its mission to overthrow Francois Bozize.[726] Though the Seleka rebellion was successful, it plunged the country into further violence as the rebellion led to human casualties and material damage across the country. In response to the atrocities of the predominantly Muslim Seleka, a Christian rebel group Anti-balaka emerged to counter the activities of Seleka. As fighting between the two groups persisted, both the Christian and Muslim populations became victims of a sectarian conflict that led to the deaths of many civilians and combatants alike.

Contrary to the motive of Congolese and the Central African Republic armed groups to take over the state's authority, the armed groups in Mali had diverse objectives. To begin with, the objective of the MNLA was to achieve self-determination for the neglected northern regions of Mali by seceding and forming a separate state known as Azawad.[727] For MOJWA, the motive was to spread jihad across West Africa. The other Malian armed groups like AQIM and Ansar Dine shared similar agendas with MOJWA.[728] Their agenda, however, was different from that of the MN LA. While AQIM sought to take over the government of Algeria and establish an Islamic state, Ansar Dine's motivation was to fight for the establishment of an Islamic state in Mali ruled by Sharia.

Apart from challenging the state's authority and its leaders, armed groups, whether in Congo, the Central African Republic, or Mali, have committed grievous crimes and human rights violations against civilians. The examined armed groups in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali show that these groups have raped women, plundered communities, and murdered them. Their atrocities committed by these groups raises the question 'for who are they fighting? Armed groups have always justified their fight against the state as a just cause to seek justice and ensure the reversal of discriminatory

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[725] Mukenge, *Zones of Conflict in Africa: Theories and Cases*, pp. 45–49.
[726] Henry Kam Kah, "The Séléka Insurgency and Insecurity in the Central African Republic, 2012 - 2014," *Brazilian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2016), pp. 40–66.
[727] David Zounmenou, "The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad Factor in the Mali Crisis," *African Security Review*, vol. 22, no. 3 (2013), pp. 167–74.
[728] James Cockayne, *Hidden Power: The Strategic Logic of Organized Crime*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

or exclusive state practices or policies. On the other hand, the state armed forces argued that counterinsurgency or counter-terrorism operations aim to secure the state's territorial integrity and protect its citizens. However, evidence from our analysis in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali show that state security forces have sometimes colluded with armed groups.

Such collaboration, as seen above, brings mutual benefit to the colluding parties but, on the other hand, remains detrimental to the general protection and security of the ordinary citizens in these countries. The complex and contradictory role of rebel groups is underscored by the fact that they claimed to fight for a population they raped, killed, and plundered. In whose interest do these armed groups fight? For whose interests do they speak? These thought-provoking questions are relevant to understanding the complex and contradictory rules these groups play in conflict situations. The above comparative analysis thus provides one with significant evidence to answer research question two (Q2) in the affirmative and accept hypothesis Two (H2) that non-state armed groups influence the dynamics of intrastate conflicts in complex and contradictory ways.

3 VALIDATING RESEARCH QUESTION THREE AND HYPOTHESIS THREE (Q3, H3)

Q3: What are the successes and challenges faced by peace missions in Congo, CAR, and Mali?

H3: The successes and challenges encountered by peace missions significantly affect peacebuilding in Congo, CAR, and Mali.

When conflicts break out as they did in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali, the consequences are hardly ever commensurate to the intended objective of the perpetrators of the violence. In all three cases examined, the conflict in these countries led to death, destruction, poverty, hunger, and displacement of people. Qualitative data gathered on the three cases show that the governments in these countries and their armed forces could not resolve the insurgency and violence that engulfed their state. Amid the violence and instability, regional, continental and international peacebuilders stepped into Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali to stabilize the states and build peace.

Analytical evidence from the conflict and peacebuilding in Congo showed that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was the first agency to intervene in

the Congo crisis. It would be recalled that SADC's intervention came at the behest of Laurent Desire Kabila, who was facing attacks from Rwanda-Ugandan-backed rebel groups.[729] The peacebuilding role of SADC in Congo could be understood from three perspectives-military, mediation and support for elections. Since Congo was a member of the regional bloc, SADC's intervention was based on the premise of collective security. The intervention by SADC succeeded in stopping the conflict, but his bodyguard later assassinated Kabila.

Similar to SADC's intervention to restore peace and stability in Congo, The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) equally intervened in the 2012 crisis in Mali.[730]The ECOWAS began its intervention by rolling out diplomatic and economic sanctions against the coup leader Amado Sanogo and the military junta that took over power from President Amadou Toumani Toure. ECOWAS's intervention in Mali aimed to prevent a spillover of the conflict into other countries. Through mediation, ECOWAS and African Union succeeded in bringing the government of Amadou Toure and armed groups like Ansar Dine and MNLA together in December 2012 to negotiate a peace settlement.

In the same light, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) played a critical role in the crisis in the CAR.[731]. The regional bloc engaged in diplomatic mediation and military security strategies to bring stability to CAR. Through the instrumentality of its mission for the Consolidation of Peace in CAR (MICOPAX), ECCAS sent troops into CAR to prevent the government of Francois Bozize from falling into rebel hands. MICOPAX was eventually transformed into the African Union-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA)[732]. Both the AUand ECCAS may not have succeeded in preventing Seleka from toppling Francois Bozize; however, their presence and operations in CAR significantly limited the rebel atrocities that would have occurred in the absence of such regional security intervention.

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[729] Daniel Companion, *A Predictable Tragedy: Robert Mugabe and the Collapse of Zimbabwe*, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011, p. 213.

[730] Enoch Ndem Okon, "Mali: Ecowas Responses To the Conflict in Mali (2012-2021)," *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, no. 37 (2021), pp. 36–53, doi:10.24193/csq.37.3.

[731] Camilla Elowson, Cecilia Hull Wiklund, "ECCAS Capabilities in Peace and Security," Kista, 1942.

[732] Ibrahim Abdullahi, "Intrastate Conflict and International Peacekeeping Operations in the Central African Republic (CAR)," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, vol. 04, no. 11 (2020), pp. 265–74, doi:10.47772/ijriss.2020.41106.

Worthy of note is that the African Union extensively collaborated and supported the regional peace initiatives to bring peace to Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali. The African Union collaborated with ECCAS in CAR, SADC in Congo, and ECOWAS in Mali. Apart from the fact that SADC, ECCAS, and ECOWAS intervened militarily in the conflicts in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali, the regional blocs equally engaged the belligerents in mediation efforts. Mediation has remained an essential pathway to peace and security in Africa. In the case of CAR, Denis Sassou Nguesso was the chief mediator of ECCAS in CAR. Likewise, Blaise Compaore was the chief mediator of ECOWAS in Mali. Meanwhile, Robert Mugabe led the trio military coalition of Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia that intervened in the Congo conflict.

Nevertheless, it has been argued by certain schools of thought that the above mediation leaders had hidden agendas that they sought to achieve. It has been argued that Denis Sassou Nguesso used his position to pursue his ambitions of trying to woo the international community to pave the way to change his country's constitution to stand for another term of office. In like manner, Algeria and Mauritania accused ECOWAS of using the MICEMA mission in Mali to project its image as a powerful regional organization.[733] Like Nguesso and MICEMA, Robert Mugabe was equally accused of intervening in Congo because Zimbabwe had provided loans to Congo and had military security agreements with the country.[734] Consequently, critics of Mugabe's role in the Congo crisis maintained that his choice of military intervention was to secure his interests in the Congo. Nevertheless, the culture of using presidents and politicians to lead mediation efforts has continued to be a common feature in resolving conflicts in Africa.

4   COMPARING AND EXPLAINING SHARED CHALLENGES TO PEACEBUILDING

Qualitative literature in our analysis of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Union shows that these organizations play vital roles as critical peacebuilders in conflict situations in the continent. Despite the enormous efforts that these regional and

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[733] Peter Tinti, "Algeria's Stance on Northern Mali Remains Ambiguous," 2012, https://www.voanews.com/a/algerias_stance_on_northern_mali_remains_ambigious/1509747.html.
[734] Boaz Atzili, *Good Fences, Bad Neighbors: Border Fixity and International Conflict*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012, p. 190.

continental blocks have put into the peace architecture of the continent, their ability to function at total capacity has been challenged by several factors. Whether in Congo, the Central African Republic, or Mali, RECs, and the African Union have all faced challenges that have hampered the implementation of their peace agenda. Some of these challenges are peculiar to specific countries, while others cut across the three case studies of this research.

In examining the conflicts in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali, we realized that the host governments of these troubled states share almost the same challenges to restore peace and ensure the stability of the state. Some of the common challenges these states share include limited government presence, failure to keep peace agreements, weakness of the state armed forces, and sexual abuse perpetrated by the armed forces against civilians. At the regional level, the challenges faced by RECs and the African Union seem to be specific to the countries and the nature of the conflict.

4.1 Comparing and Contrasting State Contribution Toward Peacebuilding in DR Congo, CAR, and Mali

From the perspective of host governments, our research discovered that in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali, the issue of limited government seems to be a recurrent theme. Limited government means that state institutions and administrative and security authorities are conspicuously absent in certain parts. Evidence from analyzing the conflict and peace process in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali point to the fact that negotiations made or peace secured cannot be guaranteed in areas with limited government presence. In the case of Congo, limited government presence in the country's eastern regions made it significantly tricky for lasting peace to prevail. Armed groups always capitalize on the absence or limited government presence to foster their agency of insecurity and violence. When the government and state security forces are not present to secure the peace achieved, even those community leaders who participated in peace talks or mediation quickly become targets of the armed groups. Like eastern Congo, the northern regions of Mali and the Central African Republic have remained bereft of sufficient government presence over the years. The neglect of these regions explains why conflicts broke out in the first place in these countries. Like the Tuaregs from northern

Mali, the Seleka was predominantly dominated by Muslims from the north of the Central African Republic. Hence, limited government presence is a cause of conflict and a significant challenge to peacebuilding in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali.

Moreover, peacebuilding efforts have continued to stagnate because host governments and rebel groups in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali hardly ever keep to the terms of peace agreements. The inability of host governments or armed groups to adhere to peace agreements always translates into renewed cycles of violence and instability. Peace processes have been truncated by the failure to keep peace agreements. In the Central African Republic, the Seleka rebel group justified their overthrow of Francois Bozize in 2012 as the latter's failure to respect the terms of the 2007 Birao Agreement and the 2008 Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In the same way, Mali has had a history of failed peace Agreements. These agreements include; the Tamanreset Accord signed in January 1996 between the government of Mali, the MPA, and FIAA. The National Pact of 11 April 1992 was signed between the government of Mali and the MFUA. The Algiers Accords of 4 July 2006 between the government of Mali and the ADC. The Ouagadougou Accord of 18 June 2013 was signed between the government of Mali, MNLA, and HCUA. The Accord for Peace and Reconciliation was signed between the government of Mali, the Platform, and the CMA. These agreements were signed with the hope of establishing peace in the country. Even the 2015 Peace Agreement, which stood out as the most comprehensive of all peace accords in Mali, equally failed. The failure of peace agreements hinders peacebuilding processes, as has been seen in the case of Mali, Congo, and CAR.

The weakness of the state defense and security forces in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali has been a significant challenge to peacebuilding. The weak armed forces in these states are intrinsically tied to the challenge of limited government presence. The inability of the state military to effectively keep peace and maintain order in these countries is because the armed forces are not sufficiently trained, lack motivation, and are sometimes divided over ethnic or political lines. Besides the logistical and ideological inadequacies that have kept these armies weak, the issue of sexual abuse has highlighted how undisciplined these armies are. The undisciplined army cannot be relied on to keep peace in conflict or post-conflict situations. The armed forces of the D R Congo (FARDC), the Central African Armed Forces (FACA), and the Malian Armed Forces

(MAF) have been forces of good in fighting against rebels and terrorists. This notwithstanding, Human Rights Watch and other international NGOs operating in these countries have documented damaging reports of how FARDC, FACA, and MAF troops have been involved in sexual violence and abuse of civilians. When civilians get violated by the very forces to whom they look up for protection, the legitimacy of the former gets watered down, and trust in them fades away. It thus becomes increasingly challenging to achieve meaningful peace when state armed forces who were supposed to play a protective role instead take on the role of predators.

4.2   African Regional Peace Operations Compared

At the regional level, SADC, ECCAS, and ECOWAS all faced daunting challenges that have limited their ability to achieve sustainable peace in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali. The proliferation and movement of armed groups across state borders have been a significant challenge to peace and stability in all three case studies. In the case of Congo, SADC's efforts at restoring peace in the country were challenged by armed groups such as the CNDP, ADF, Lord Resistance Army, and FDLR. At the same time, armed groups in the Central African Republic, such as Seleka and Anti-balaka, did not make the work of ECCAS easier. In negotiating for Seleka rebels to lay down their arms, Anti-balaka forces attacked communities deemed to be supporters of Seleka rebels. The Selaka and subsequently ex-Selaka forces attacked communities deemed loyal to Anti-balaka. The situation in Mali was even more precarious because apart from the MNLA, the other armed groups like AQIM, MOJWA, and Ansar Dine had transnational connections with groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda. The military might and combat operations of these armed groups have severely challenged the peace efforts of regional blocks like SADC, ECCAS, and ECOWAS.

The issue of insufficient troop capacity and lack of preparedness to respond swiftly has been a significant challenge for regional peacebuilding efforts. The troops of MICOPAX and MISCA, like those of AFISMA, did not have adequate training like their western counterparts.[735] This was further exacerbated because they did not understand the intricacies and implications of being peacekeepers responsible for maintaining

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[735] Ebo, Hänggi, *The United Nations and Security Sector Reform: Policy and Practice*, pp. 117–18.

international humanitarian law principles. This generated much friction among the regional forces. The ECOWAS/AU-led AFISMA mission in Mali failed because it lacked the necessary funding, training, and logistics to keep peace in the country.[736] However, the French Operation Serval that came in to salvage the government of Mali had UN backing, enough funding, and logistics.

Another significant challenge to peacebuilding faced by RECs is the rivalry between the regional organizations and the African Union. In the case of CAR, ECCAS and the AU were divided over whom to manage the peace process in the country.[737] ECCAS argued that it was in the best position to take the lead because of its proximity to the conflict. However, the African Union was not convinced that ECCAS could lead and manage the peace process in CAR. The battle for authority and control had dire consequences for civilian protection. While the rivalry prevailed, 2000 civilians were killed, and more than one million were displaced. Likewise, tensions between ECOWAS and AU over issues of authority and control in Mali spiraled into an unhealthy competition over which organization was to take charge of leading AFISMA.[738] The armed groups in Mali exploited this wrangling between the AU and ECOWAS to expand their reach to other parts of the country.

Contrary to the AU-ECCAS and AU-ECOWAS rivalry over control, the case in Congo with SADC was different. In the case of Congo, the rivalry was within the regional organization itself. While Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe favored a military approach to resolving the conflict, Nelson Mandela of South Africa preferred the path of dialogue and mediation. Mauritania and Algeria backed Mandela's non-military approach. The disagreements between Mugabe and Mandela negatively affected the legitimacy of SADC as a force of peace in the Congo crisis. However, this explains that regional and continental interveners may want to end conflicts and build peace. However, their approaches to resolving conflicts are not always unanimous, as seen in the above analysis.

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[736] Tar, *Routledge Handbook of Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Africa*.

[737] Pamela Aall, Chester A. Crocker (eds.), *Minding the Gap: African Conflict Management in a Time of Change*, Waterloo: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2016, p. 150.

[738] Francis Onditi, *Conflictology: Systems, Institutions, and Mechanisms in Africa*, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2020, p. 185.

Regional hegemons can be a formidable force in the process of achieving sustainable peace and security in conflict situations. In the case of Congo, South Africa and Zimbabwe played a crucial role as regional hegemons in stirring the affairs of SADC to resolve the Congolese conflict. Compared to Congo, Nigeria equally took the lead as a West African hegemon in directing the peace efforts of ECOWAS in Mali. Prior to the intervention in Mali, Nigeria had led peace efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Contrasted with Congo and Mali, CAR had no regional hegemon that championed the course of peace in ECCAS to stabilize the country.

4.3 A Comparative Analysis of the Successes and Challenges of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA

The emergence of intrastate conflicts in various parts of the world and Africa after the Cold War raised concerns in the international community. The wave of multiparty politics that swept across Africa in the early 1990s caused many leaders in these countries to adjust their political compass to the tenets of multiparty democracy. This notwithstanding, the phenomenon of intrastate conflicts soon became a severe problem that necessitated global attention as most African states began failing due to the lack of capacity to solve the issues of violence and insecurity within their territories.[739] Western and developed states have come to see failed or collapsed states as threats to international security, as such states harbor terrorists and displace people, which produces refugees.

In a bid to prevent and deescalate conflict, the United Nations, through its Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), has designed and implemented many peace missions across the globe. In keeping true to the opening lines of its charter;

''to save succeeding generations from the scorch of war.''[740].

The UN intervened in Congo through MONUSCO, CAR through MINUSCA, and Mali through MINUSMA. Among the many conflicts that have ravaged Africa, the conflicts in Congo, CAR, and Mali stand out because of their devastating effects. More importantly, a comparative analysis of the various UN peace operations in these conflicts is worthy of our understanding of the dynamics that informed and shaped peacekeeping

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[739] George Klay Kieh, Kelechi A. Kalu, *Democratization and Military Coups in Africa: Post-1990 Political Conflicts*, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2021, pp. 25–79.
[740] United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, San Francisco: United Nations Publication, 1945, p. 1.

in the above conflict scenarios. MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA had specific tasks that characterized their mandates. However, the three missions shared state-building mandates, protecting civilians, neutralizing armed groups, and facilitating and delivering humanitarian aid to affected communities.

The UN peacebuilding operations in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali have been described as the most dangerous and most expensive missions that the UN has ever had. It has been established that UN peacekeepers in MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA operated under very hostile conflict environments in Congo, CAR, and Mali. This is explained by the ever-changing nature of armed groups that tend to form fluid alliances to achieve their objectives. UN peacekeeping missions have equally come under heavily armed attacks from rebel groups, apart from attacking state institutions. In Congo, MONUSCO had to grapple with armed groups like the ADF, LRA, and M23 on the FDLR, among others.[741] In the CAR, MINUSCA had to deal with the atrocities of Seleka and later ex-Seleka rebel groups. It also had to embark on a mission to neutralize Seleka, Anti-balaka, and other armed groups causing violence. In Mali, MINUSMA worked hard to combat jihadist armed groups like AQIM, Ansa Dine, and MOJWA.

Moreover, MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA all had the mandate of state-building and the extension of state authority. The doctrine of UN peacekeeping has demonstrated over the years that state building is an important phase of the entire peacebuilding process. Once the state is stable, every other aspect of state development can be achieved. In this regard, the UN has spent a fortune in funding the operations of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA. The annual budget of these peace operation missions exceeds $1 billion per year.[742] This explains why such missions have been tagged as the most expensive UN missions. In stabilizing the state, MONUSCO played a critical role in providing financial and logistical support for the organization of the November 2011 general elections in Congo. After the elections, Joseph Kabila emerged as the winner. In furthering its mandate for state-building and state authority, MONUSCO

[741] Lindsay Scorgie, *Conflict at the Edge of the African State: The ADF Rebel Group in the Congo*, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2022, pp. 101–201.

[742] Adam Day, *States of Disorder: Ecosystems of Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022, pp. 12–20.

invested heavily in the country's disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. The UN mission in the Congo equally rebuilt the capacity of the national police force to reestablish government presence and authority in the eastern region of the country.[743] The empowered police units monitored law enforcement and fought against local and transnational crimes. Civil society organizations in Congo equally benefited from capacity-building training on democratic governance. A total of 1530 members drawn from several civil societies across the country benefited from such training organized by MONUSCO.

In the same way, MINUSCA, like MONUSCO, provided technical and logistical assistance to ensure a credible electoral process in the Central African Republic during the transition.[744] A fully functional government with electoral legitimacy was necessary for the state-building process in CR. To foster peace and stability through national dialogue, MINUSCA played an essential role in assisting in the convening of the Bangui Forum. Like MONUSCO and MINUSCA, MINUSMA played a vital role in stabilizing key population centers in Mali.[745] It actively collaborated with the Malian defense forces to carry out patrols in the northern and central regions of the country. This greatly fostered the extension of state authority and the establishment of new institutional infrastructures in the troubled northern regions.[746] The still may be incidences of violence and chaos in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali. However, on the whole, MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA have performed exceptionally well in keeping the states of Congo, CAR, and Mali from collapsing.

Another strategic aspect of peacebuilding in Congo, CAR, and Mali is the protection of civilians. The UN peacekeeping operations of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA all share the strategic mandate to protect civilians in armed conflicts. In justifying the strategic goal of civilian protection, Wilmot et al. maintained that;

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[743] Nagel, Fin, Maenza, "United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," pp. 4–10.

[744] Howard et al., *Assessing the Effectiveness of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic / MINUSCA*, p. 7.

[745] Karlsrud, "Towards UN Counter-Terrorism Operations?," pp. 1119–20.

[746] Dennis M. Tull, "UN Peacekeeping in Mali: Time to Adjust Minusma's Mandate," *SWP Comment*, vol. 23 (2019), pp. 2–3.

'the UN's rationale for being engaged in protecting civilians is primarily direct. It is an end in itself. First, the UN acknowledges that civilians are the main victims of war. Second, a moral duty at the core of the UN charter is saving future generations from the scourge of war.'[747].

The peacekeeping missions of MONUSCO in Congo, MINUSCA in CAR, and MINUSMA in Mali have all made significant efforts to protect civilians. The United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) reported in 2018 that MONUSCO had a civilian protection response rate of 56%, MINUSCA 73%, and MINUSMA 54%[748]. The above statistics show that MINUSCA scored the highest percentage regarding their responsiveness to civilian protection.

In carrying out its mission of protecting civilians, the United Nations adopted a relatively robust posture. In 2013, the UNSC authorized the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) as an attachment to the peace operation of MONUSCO. The FIB was mandated to eliminate all armed groups in Congo, protect civilians, and restore state stability. This was the first time in UN peacekeeping operations that the issue of force was specifically authorized against rebel groups. Contrary to the case in Congo, the UN did not authorize a Force Intervention Brigade to MINUSCA in the Central African Republic. Instead, it gave France the backing to launch the famous French Operation Sangaris in the Central African Republic. In the same light, France relied on the UN authorization of AFISMA to launch a counterinsurgency operation against armed groups and jihadists in Mali and the greater Sahel region. In Mali, France launched Operation Serval with the blessings of MINUSMA. After the success of Serval, France went ahead to champion a multidimensional force and launched a counter-terrorist operation to sanitize the Sahel region of armed groups. This operation became known as Operation Barkhane.

The above offensive peace operations did, in many ways, provide protection and security to civilians, as armed groups were increasingly disbanded and driven out of population centers. However, pundits on UN peacekeeping like Karlsrud (2015) have questioned the peacekeeping mission of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MNUSMA and their reliance on

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[747] Haidi Willmot et al. (eds.), *Protection of Civilians*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
[748] Howard et al., *Assessing the Effectiveness of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic / MINUSCA*, p. 61.

peace enforcement rather than on peacekeeping which is their original mandate. He argued that peace enforcement missions drift away from the original core UN peacekeeping principles of consent, impartiality, and the non-use of force- other than responding in self-defense.[749] The protection of civilians and the stabilization of states remains a complex issue as far as UN peacekeeping is concerned. The lines between practice and principle are increasingly becoming blurred, as the realities on the ground sometimes do not match the bureaucratic thinking of those who draft peacekeeping mandates in UN headquarters.

Furthermore, MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MNUSMA have all played significant roles in facilitating the process of aid delivery to communities in need. In this regard, the troops of these various missions have accompanied the convoys of humanitarian organizations to hard-to-reach communities to provide basic amenities such as medicine, food, and other supplies critical for the well-being of the conflict-affected population. Humanitarian assistance plays a crucial role in the general scheme of peacebuilding because it prepares the ground for negotiations and mediation. Through the provision of aid, the UN and other aid agencies have empowered local community peace support groups and, in the process, resolved disputes among warring communities.

Despite the shared successes of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA, these peacekeeping missions have been faced with some challenges that have hampered the smooth implementation of their mandates. A prevalent challenge has been friction with their host governments. In Congo, Laurent Desire Kabila constantly called for the withdrawal of MONUSCO. This was not based on any factual evidence that violence had subsided but on his pride in demonstrating ownership and control over the sovereignty of his own country. The nationalistic posture that Kabila, as well as his son Joseph later adopted towards MONUSCO, did not in any way help the image and legitimacy of the peacekeeping mission. In the Central African Republic and Mali, the antagonism towards MINUSCA and MINUSMA was generated by the citizens themselves, who had queried

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[749] John Karlsrud, "The UN at War: Examining the Consequences of Peace-Enforcement Mandates for the UN Peacekeeping Operations in the CAR, the DRC, and Mali," *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 1 (2015), pp. 40–54, doi:10.1080/01436597.2015.976016.

the continuous presence of these peacekeeping missions when violence and instability remained a reality in their countries.

Similarly, MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MNUSMA have faced the challenge of their reputation being tainted by acts of sexual violence and abuse committed by peacekeepers and state military forces alike. These peacekeeping missions have continuously found themselves in a difficult position because of sexual abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers. The same peacekeepers who were supposed to protect civilians and uphold their human rights became violators of such rights. The sexual misconduct of peacekeepers and state security forces alike have put the legitimacy and image of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA in awkward positions. This setback is amplified because neither of these peace missions has the jurisdiction to sanction the defaulting peacekeepers. According to the guidelines that sanction the relationship between UN peacekeeping missions and troop-contributing countries, in the event where misconduct has been established, the jurisdiction to judge and punish peacekeepers rest only with the troop-contributing countries. This means the victims of sexual abuse in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali seldom gets justice. It has been rare for troop-contributing counties to send back reports of judgments or punishments against peacekeepers who were defeated and sent back to their home countries.

The above analysis provides one with satisfactory evidence to accept hypothesis 3. The successes of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA significantly advance their peacebuilding mission. On the other hand, the challenges encountered have served as stumbling blocks in fully implementing their mandates. These peace missions have received serious criticisms from many within and out of their host states. This notwithstanding, the truth remains that the contributions of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA towards peacebuilding in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali cannot be underestimated. In the absence of these peace missions, violence and instability could have degenerated into genocide or ethnic cleansing. Worst steal, there would not be any effective government or governance in Congo, the Central African Republic, or Mali. The contributions of these stabilization missions go beyond Congo, CAR, and Mali. The peacebuilding initiatives of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA have significantly reduced violence within the above states and prevented instability from engulfing the Central African and the Sahel subregion.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of intrastate conflicts in various parts of the world and Africa after the Cold War raised concerns in the international community. The wave of multiparty politics that swept across Africa in the early 1990s caused many leaders in these countries to adjust their political compass to the tenets of multiparty democracy. This notwithstanding, the phenomenon of intrastate conflicts soon became a severe problem that necessitated global attention as most African states began failing due to the lack of capacity to solve the issues of violence and insecurity within their territories. African Regional Economic Communities and Western developed states have seen failed or collapsed states as threats to international security. Such states harbor terrorists and displace people, leading to refugees seeking survival.

The survival and development of any human society are dependent on the level of peace and stability that the society enjoys. Peace and security are even more crucial for state development, regional stability, and international security. In the absence of the above, what states are usually left with is a situation of continuous chaos and violence that destabilizes communities and leave citizens in agony. By relying on various theories, this study has demonstrated that the causes of conflict in Africa are as myriad as the actors. Among the many causes of conflict in Africa, the study revealed that the quest for power, weak democracies, corruption, bad governance, resource curse, inequality, poverty, unemployment, and climate change are the foremost reasons conflicts occur. While the nebulous political economy and bad governance of African leaders have always been labeled as the causes of conflict, in Congo, Mali, and CAR, the quest for power, resource control, identity politics, and ethnoreligious motives took center stage. As conflict surged on over the continent, non-state actors, militia groups, jihadists, transnational terrorists, and ethnoreligious rebel movements have risen to prominence.

The rationale for examining conflict and peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo, CAR, and Mali is based on the fact that these countries have vast deposits of natural resources which could have been harnessed to fuel growth and development. Paradoxically this has not been the case. Congo, for instance, could be said to be one of the richest naturally endowed countries in Africa; the civil wars that have rocked this nation have seen its natural resources clandestinely carted away by militias in complicity

with multinational corporations. Congo's coltan, diamond, gold, copper, and cobalt are vital for technological and automotive industries in the West. The Central African Republic is home to timber, diamond, oil, uranium, and gold. Mali also has enormous deposits of uranium, gold, and phosphate. Despite being rich with such vast deposits of natural resources, these countries have remained plagued with violence and strife within their borders. The crisis in these countries has had significant implications for the welfare of the citizens and the survival of the state.

In the case of Congo, Laurent Desire Kabila launched an attack and ousted the despotic ruler Mobutu Sese Seko in what became known as the First Congo War. Later, Kabila was attacked by a rebel coalition backed by Rwanda and Uganda. Other neighboring countries like Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, South Africa, and Burundi became engulfed in the conflict. This Second War has been described as 'Africa's World War .'Since then, the Democratic Republic of Congo has witnessed violence and instability.

In the CAR, the Seleka rebel group launched an attack on President Francois Bozize in 2012 and ousted him from power. However, Bozize being a Christian, evoked ethnic and religious sentiments by calling on Christians in CAR to rise against the predominantly Muslim Seleka group. This led to the rise of Anti-balaka, a Christian inclined rebel group. The objective of Anti-balaka was to counter the Seleka armed group. This led to a sectarian conflict that brought a dire humanitarian crisis in CAR. In an attempt to maliciously maintain his stay in power, Bozize failed to recognize that the Seleka rebellion was a response to governance that had failed under his stewardship as president of the nation.

In Mali, the Tuaregs staged an insurgency on government authorities and infrastructure in the country's northern regions in 2012. Through the MNLA armed group, the Tuareg rebels agitated the neglect of the country's northern regions by the successive governments that have ruled Mali since independence. The MNLA was joined by other jihadist armed groups like AQIM, Ansar Dine, and MOJWA. Their mission was to establish a separate state in northern Mali known as Azawad. The Tuareg rebellion succeeded in declaring the north's independence, but their victory was short-lived as they were eventually driven out by French counterinsurgency missions- Operation Serval and Operation Barkhane.

The conflicts in Congo, CAR, and Mali created an atmosphere that gave rebel groups the impetus to thrive. Our research findings show that in all three cases, the state authorities were overwhelmed beyond their ability and capacity to end the conflicts. This thus necessitated the entrance of external peacekeeping actors. The African Union and Regional Economic Communities played critical roles in designing and implementing peacekeeping missions in Congo, CAR, and Mali. In the case of Congo, SADC's efforts at restoring peace in the country were challenged by armed groups such as the CNDP, ADF, Lord Resistance Army, and FDLR. At the same time, armed groups in the Central African Republic, such as Seleka and Anti-balaka, did not make the work of ECCAS easier. In negotiating for Seleka rebels to lay down their arms, Anti-balaka forces attacked communities deemed to be supporters of Seleka rebels. The Selaka and subsequently ex-Selaka forces attacked communities deemed loyal to Anti-balaka. The situation in Mali was even more precarious because apart from the MNLA, the other armed groups like AQIM, MOJWA, and Ansar Dine had transnational connections with groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda. The military might and combat operations of these armed groups severely challenged the peace efforts of regional blocks like SADC, ECCAS, and ECOWAS.

Nevertheless, the African Union and these regional bodies were very instrumental in championing the course for peace through negotiation and mediation. The peacekeeping missions of these RECs and their mediations did not bring an immediate end to the conflicts. However, such peace efforts were significant steps toward restoring peace and stability.

In a bid to prevent conflicts and build peace, the United Nations, through its Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), has designed and implemented many peace missions across the globe. The UN intervened in Congo through MONUSCO, CAR through MINUSCA, and Mali through MINUSMA. Among the many conflicts that have ravaged Africa, the conflicts in Congo, CAR, and Mali stand out because of their devastating effects. More importantly, a comparative analysis of the various UN peace operations in these conflicts is worthy of our understanding of the dynamics that informed and shaped peacekeeping in the above conflict scenarios. MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA had specific tasks that characterized their mandates. However, the three missions shared state-building mandates, protecting civilians, neutralizing armed groups, and facilitating and delivering humanitarian aid to affected communities.

The UN peacebuilding operations in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali have been described as the most dangerous and most expensive missions that the UN has ever had. It has been established that UN peacekeepers in MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA operated under very hostile conflict environments in Congo, CAR, and Mali. This is explained by the ever-changing nature of armed groups that tend to form fluid alliances to achieve their objectives. UN peacekeeping missions have equally come under heavily armed attacks from rebel groups. In Congo, MONUSCO had to grapple with armed groups like the ADF, LRA, and M23 on the FDLR, among others. In the CAR, MINUSCA had to deal with the atrocities of Seleka and later ex-Seleka rebel groups. It also had to embark on a mission to neutralize Seleka, Anti-balaka, and other armed groups causing violence. In Mali, MINUSMA worked hard to combat jihadist armed groups like AQIM, Ansa Dine, and MOJWA.

To achieve sustainable peace, governments, the African Union, regional economic communities, and UN peacekeeping missions are highly recommended to learn from their failures and challenges and redesign their strategies to achieve their goals more effectively. This study thus recommends that the government of Congo, CAR, and Mali continue to do more to expand government presence to all parts of their territories. This will, in many ways, limit the expansion of armed groups and equally guarantee the security and safety of local populations. In the absence of government administrative authorities, armed groups tend to establish their rebel administration, which in many ways does not serve the peace processes in these countries. Host states should equally be committed to respecting and implementing peace agreements.

It is equally recommended that state authorities in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali rigorously promote democracy beyond regular elections. When there is sufficient democracy within a state, citizens will be free to express their grievances through legitimate institutions. The practical implementation of democratic principles will enable a conducive environment for government to thrive.

When resources are not equitably distributed, conflicts are bound to occur because aggrieved groups often compete with state authorities over the control of such resources. Consequently, the Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali governments should ensure that the dividends from national resources are equitably distributed to other parts

of the country. This will spur development, inclusion, and prosperity and limit the outbreak of violence or rebellion against the state.

This study equally recommends that the governments of Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali invest more efforts in designing and implementing successful Demobilization, Disintegration, and Reintegration (DDR) and putting up effective security sector reforms. The DDR programs must provide alternative means of livelihood that will prevent former combatants from rejoining armed groups. DDR centers are often constructed to host former combatants and give them a new lease on life within civilian communities. However, the proper implementation of the DDR programs has proven to be problematic in many cases. When DDR programs fail, it is unlikely that security sector reforms will succeed.

The government in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali needs to invest more resources in training their military forces so that they can be able to effectively combat rebel and terrorist groups without necessarily relying on external military assistance. Trained and disciplined armed forces will decrease the occurrence of coup d'états. The state security forces equally need to be trained on the principles of international humanitarian law and how to apply such principles in combat situations. For sustainable peace to be achieved, effective justice mechanisms must be implemented. Consequently, this study recommends that the government in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali should prosecute and punish state armed forces that have committed sexual abuses against civilians. There is bound to be social cohesion and peace when abuse victims get justice. Effective peacebuilding can only be achieved when truth and reconciliation are backed by effective justice.

This study highly recommends that the African Union and regional economic communities take more decisive steps toward implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The effective follow-up and implementation of the APRM will promote political stability, sustainable development, and economic growth. The APRM has the potential to serve as an effective tool for conflict prevention if governments and heads of state adhere to its strict implementation.

It is equally recommended that the AU and REC continue to adopt stringent measures to sanction coup leaders. Military takeovers breed violence and instability. To discourage

such methods of accessing political power, the African Union and regional economic communities must continue to pass and implement stiff economic and diplomatic sanctions against the perpetrators of coups.

It is recommended that the African Standby Force (ASF) continue to be trained to match its capability with armies in Western states like France, Russia, and the USA. A trained and fully equipped ASF will play a more vital role in intervening to restore peace, and stability, prevent conflict and build peace.

The regional economic communities like SADC, ECOWAS, and ECCAS should engage their member states in collaboration and intelligence sharing to strengthen state borders. The effective securitization of state borders with regional security backings would drastically reduce the proliferation of arms and trafficking of illicit weapons across Africa's porous borders.

The UN's missions of MONUSCO, MINUSCA, and MINUSMA should continue to carry out strategic reviews and develop effective partnerships with host governments. Such a strategy will be a significant step towards achieving state stability and the extension of state authority. Increased consultations between UN peacekeeping missions and host states will enable both parties to align their visions and priorities toward peace and stability.

As far as the protection of civilians is concerned, UN peacekeeping missions should strengthen and develop early warning mechanisms. Such mechanisms will monitor and rapidly report human rights violations or abuse cases in vulnerable communities. In addition to the above, UN peacekeeping missions should pressure troop-contributing countries to sanction peacekeepers who have committed sexual abuse against civilians. The protection of civilians remains sacrosanct to the success of UN peacekeeping missions.

Moreover, UN peacekeeping missions should adequately engage with their host populations by fully explaining the terms and conditions of their mandates. Most of the population in Congo, the Central African Republic, and Mali believe that UN peacekeeping missions are not interested in combating and defeating armed groups. However, the reality remains that these missions are being misjudged because most

civilians do not understand that UN peace missions are there for peacekeeping and not peace enforcement.

The UN peace missions show equally strengthen their collaboration with regional peace operations. Such collaboration will enable the peace missions to effectively curb the proliferation of armed groups and disrupt the trafficking of illicit drugs and natural resources, which serve as sources of finance to the rebels.

In conclusion, through a comparative analysis of conflict and peacebuilding in Congo, CAR, and Mali, this research shows that all three countries had specific conflict triggers. However, the study equally established certain common factors that explained the occurrence of conflict across the three countries examined. In the same vein, the study examined and revealed that state authorities in the above conflict scenarios all shared common characteristics that defined and shaped the magnitude of the conflict. Apart from evaluating the effectiveness of regional, continental and international peacekeeping operations, the study also highlighted the challenges that such peace missions encountered. It would be said that conflicts, as analyzed in the Congo, CAR, and Mali cases, brought devasting effects on governments and civilians alike. The African Union, RECs, and UN missions have continued to intervene to resolve the crisis and build peace in these states. The challenges are eminent, but peace missions, whether regional, continental or international, have registered significant successes and made enormous progress toward stabilizing Congo, CAR, and Mali.

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