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Foreword

The International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) is a research and training institution focusing on capacity building at the strategic, operational and tactical levels within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture and has developed to be the regional center of excellence for the African Standby Force (ASF) in Eastern Africa. It addresses the complexities of contemporary UN/AU integrated Peace Support Operations by describing the actors and multi-dimensional nature of these operations. The research conducted covers a broad spectrum of issues ranging from conflict prevention through management to post-conflict reconstruction. The Center has made considerable contribution in training and research on peace support issues in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa through design of training curriculum, field research and publication of Occasional Papers annually and Issue Briefs on a quarterly basis. The issue briefs are an important contribution to the vision and mission of IPSTC.

This Second Quarter Issue Brief No. 2 (2013) presents two titles on peace and conflict in Eastern Africa; **The Role of Media in Peace Support Missions and Democracy at Risk: Electoral Violence in Africa**. The Issue Brief provides insights into pertinent peace and security issues in the region that are useful to policy makers and aims to contribute to the security debate and praxis in the region. The articles in the Issue Brief are also expected to inform the design of the training modules at IPSTC.

The research and publication of this Issue Brief has been made possible by the support of the Government of Japan through UNDP. The European Union also supports some researchers from the region whose papers appear in this publication.

Brig. Robert G Kabage
Director, IPSTC

Acronyms

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ACOTA	African Contingency Operations Training Assistance
AFP	Agence France-Presse
AHSI	African Human Security Initiative
AP	Associated Press
ASF	American Securitization Forum
AMIB	AU Mission in Burundi
AMIS	AU Mission in Sudan
APF	African Peace Forum
APP	Africa Program for Peace
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	African Standby Force
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAR	Central African Republic
CCR	Centre for Conflict Resolution
CDSP	Common African Defence and Security Policy
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation
CNN	Cable News Network

DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DDR	Disarmament Demobilization and Resettlement
DFI	Direct Foreign Investment
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
GIE	Global Information Environment
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
KDF	Kenya Defense Forces
MONUC	United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PBPU	UN Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit
PSO	Peace Support Operations
SLBC	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
SRT	Srpska Radio-Television
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNAMID	African Union/United Nations Mission in Darfur
UNAMSIL	United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOSOM	United Nations Mission in Somalia
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

Introduction to the Issue Briefs

The topics in the second quarter Issue Brief 2013, address diverse issues of peace and security in Eastern Africa. The first paper examines the relationship between media and peace support operations from a global perspective to draw vital lessons for Peace Support Operations (PSO) missions in Eastern Africa. The second paper addresses the challenges of democratic consolidation through free and fair elections in Africa.

The first paper presents a picture of the current trend in media and peace support operations. The paper notes that the media plays a crucial role in facilitating conditions for sustainable peace and can equally be a serious impediment to the peace process through lack of cooperation with the peace support mission. The paper argues that there has been a phenomenal growth in information technology and its application in public information among PSO currently in place. The role of public information structure, strategies and practices in PSO is highlighted as a key component of effective public communication strategy. Through examining public communication practices in the current and past PSO, a case is made for an effective public information component so as to provide direction for local and international media reporting on PSO.

The media should not be left to define PSO communication. Rather, the latter must set the agenda while efficiently and honestly providing what the media requires for accurate reporting. An examination of public communication in United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) provides vital lessons for current PSO operations in the region such as African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO).

In the second issue brief, *Democracy at Risk: Electoral Violence and Conflicts in Africa*, the evolution of electoral management and conflicts is presented. Since the re-introduction of multiparty systems in Africa in the early 1990s, electoral competition for state power has become a norm and most African states have now held more than three successive elections. While the regularity and frequency of elections have generated hope in African populations, recently there has emerged violent conflict relating to elections that has threatened democracy, peace, stability and sustainable human development.

The paper highlights the multi-faceted factors that propel election-related violence, which range from flawed elections or disputed results to structural issues such as poor governance and exclusionary political practices. In many cases elections have either precipitated political disputes or have escalated simmering tensions to violent conflict. Prevention and management of electoral conflicts in Africa will be helpful to promote democracy and socio-economic development of African countries.

ISSUE BRIEFS

Role of Media in Peace Support Missions

Joseph Kioi Mbugua

Introduction

This issue brief examines the nature of communication in peace support operations and its relationship with the media. The issue brief is divided into 5 sections. Section 1 is the introduction where the trajectory of the study is spelt out. Section 2 provides theoretical analysis about relationship between media and peace support missions. Section 3 reviews the nature of media in relation to peace support operations and Section 4 explores avenues of effective media and Peace Support Operations (PSO) partnership drawing from lessons learned in Africa and Section 5 provides the conclusion.

The media, often dubbed the fourth estate in the global power dynamics, exerts significant influence in peace support operations. The media has been described as a double edged sword that can promote the course of peace or fuel conflict. Media also influences people and shapes the perception of the world they live in.

Africa has received a lion share of peace support missions since the creation of the United Nations in 1945. The results of these interventions are varied greatly from the successful transition of Namibia towards independence and partition of Sudan to the largely unsuccessful mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo United Nations Stabilization Mission

in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). The African Union (AU) has also developed capacity in peace and security interventions equally with mixed results in Sudan (UNAMID) and potentially successful mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Since the end of the Cold War, there is an emerging trend in global governance characterized by the shrinking of sovereignty in crisis situations.

The media is a crucial pillar in determining the success or failure of peace support missions. Though the media is expected to be objective and to provide factual and balanced information, this is not always the case. The national and local mass media play an important role in peace processes and in shaping domestic attitudes toward relevant international community projects and actors. With its influence on popular opinion, mass media could play a crucial role in creating the requisite conditions for sustainable peace. Equally, uncooperative behavior of mass media can be a serious impediment to peace support efforts. This paper surveys the role of media in enhancing peace support operations in specific crisis situations in Africa.

The media can hold PSO leaders and officials accountable and monitor human rights. It has been observed that the tendency of the media to ignore conflict when it is not in crisis tend to make development partners shift attention away from long term peace building. Even successful peace support operations are rarely highlighted.¹ The paper argues that for effective peace support operations, there has to be a deliberate PSO strategy of communication that defines the agenda of the mission on which local and international media derive their information. The PSO must have a comprehensive program to engage both local and international media as a way of building capacity for media that respects democracy and human rights. This media strategy should be an ingredient of a broad post conflict stabilization and reconstruction plan for the host country to enhance peace support effectiveness.

1 Tim Dunne (International media and peace support operations,) United Nations Association - Canada, Chapter 2, 2006, P. 3

Statement and significance of the problem

Lack of a well-defined theoretical paradigm defining the relationship between peace support missions' public information role in relationship to the media and to peace building in general is a yawning gap in peace and security praxis. More so, in Africa the much needed information on best practices for peace support operations' effective communication within missions, with the local media and to the host country's audience, is generally skeletal or out rightly lacking.

The study of mass media activities in conflict situations is of great importance given that the success of any mission is highly dependent on media support and consequently public acceptance and support of such missions. The quality of media policy and strategy will inevitably determine the success of a PSO mission. This implies that the nature, technique and efficacy of the adopted communication strategy must be a prime concern of PSO before deployment, during operations and during exit.

The effectiveness of PSO depends on meeting the expectations and desires of the public. Therefore, political and military actors must try to win the hearts and minds of the public. They must explain their objectives and seek public support. The media is the channel through which PSO reaches the public. Sometimes both local and international actors speak past each other without the necessary consultation. Sometimes the public are bombarded with propaganda rather than being given the correct information. All the parties in conflict (ethnic, religious) must receive objective information in crisis situations to prepare them to accept the intervention of the peace support mission.

This study is vital for successful PSO interventions in conflict situations. It is important to know how PSO can engage in effective partnership with the media; how mass media operates on the ground in crisis situation;

their attitudes towards PSO; and how they influence the attitude of the public towards peace keepers.

Although PSO often have positive motives, they are not always welcome by actors in conflict. Sometimes interveners become frustrated when the public fail to support their work. This has serious security implications. Credibility is vital for the success of peace missions. Inversely, when peace keepers lose credibility, they can become legitimate targets of belligerents. The media is critical in determining public perceptions about PSO. This study is vital to the creation of the necessary awareness for PSO to prepare properly before launching missions in crisis torn regions.

Theoretical Analysis

Much research has been done on the role of media in global peace support operations, especially Yugoslavia in 1991.² Writing in 1995, Graham Day noted how reality and fantasy informed the conflict reporting in Yugoslavia. Historical and social facts are often selectively edited, given new context and spread as propaganda by parties in conflict. The media quickly grasps the catchy sound bites often with no critical analysis or reasoned judgment.³ In the *Balkan Odyssey* (1995:1), David Owen notes that there was nothing simple in the Balkans and all historical events had a bearing on public attitudes and behavior. He laments the lack of honour and presence of propaganda in the Balkan conflicts. In his book: *To End a War* (1998: 24), Richard Holbrooke (American Chief Negotiator During the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia, 1995) noted that;

‘...those who argue that ancient Balkan hostilities account for the violence that destroyed Yugoslavia forget the power of television in the hands of

2 Majarn Malesic, Peace Support Operations, Mass Media and the Public in former Yugoslavia, 2000, p. 26

3 Graham Day, Civil Affairs Officer, UNPROFOR, 1995, p.81

*officially sanctioned racism. An entire generation of Serbs, Croats and Muslims were aroused by Television images to hate their neighbours.*⁴

In his book: *Bosnia: A Short History* (1996), Noel Malcolm (an acclaimed British journalist, writer and researcher) observes:

*‘I can understand why simple Bosnian Serbs came to believe that they were under a threat from Fundamentalist jihads...it was as if all television in the USA had been taken over by the Ku Klux Klan.’*⁵

Some section of the media can be independent, supportive or against the government. Media can rally the populace towards a political ideology of war. Media influences the course of peace or fuels violence through its choice of the topics to cover, the time allocated to the issues of the day (selectivity in approach and manipulation) and exclusive interpretation pattern. Media can create trust among ethnic groups and nations and can spread the spirit of tolerance especially after a peace agreement. Media can also drive nationalism and intolerance of other nations. Political and communication culture in a given socio-political context influences the choice of what the media reports or fails to highlight.

It has also been observed that the professionalism of journalists and editors can enhance peace. Autonomy and quality of mass media is also vital for peace. Positive changes in media attitudes towards peace support operation can influence the public and stimulate positive behavior toward the peacekeepers, a crucial factor in the success of peace support operations.⁶ Most countries have independent media councils or commissions designed to advance the course of media independence and professionalism. Usually, the functions of such

4 Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War*, Random House, New York, 1998, p. 24

5 Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, New York, New York University Press, 1996

6 Majarn Malesic, *Peace Support Operations, Mass Media and the Public in former Yugoslavia*, 2000, P. 37

councils would include the establishment of a free and open media environment, protection of its freedom, mediation in case of breach of conduct and other disputes affecting actors in the profession, adoption of a press code and making proposals for copyright, law and reforms relating to media and broadcasting.

During armed conflicts, each side has its own territory, troops, political parties and mass media capacity. It is important to understand whether the public trusts the media. It is also important to gauge whether the public has access to objective information about the PSO. Previous experience in Yugoslavia, Liberia and Sierra Leone has demonstrated that media activity is one of the pivotal tools to achieve success in peace support operations.

For effective partnership with local community, PSO must keep the public informed about its activities while establishing cordial and fruitful cooperation with the local communities through public dialogue. This can be achieved through civil military cooperation (CIMIC) activities, patrols and the media. PSO must be cognizant of propaganda from hardliner elements and must have dedicated and well trained press and information officers to counter misinformation. It is advisable to sometimes meet journalists from rival regions separately to enhance media cooperation.

It has been established that radio is an enduring means of communication during conflicts. Message relayed through radio can mitigate uncertainty as a main cause of fear. Radio can enjoy a range of advantages such as speed of reporting, credibility, authenticity and direct transmission. However, it can also be used as a means of spreading propaganda.⁷ People read newspapers less in times of war. The PSO can also become an important source of information together with the international

⁷ Allan Thompson, *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide*, London, Pluto Press, 2007

press and international organizations such as Red Cross, UN, AU or the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). During crisis, people also rely on relatives, friends and neighbours as sources of information. The condition in which the media acts is, however, dynamic and ever changing. Political evolution in relations between political parties in a particular country affects media content. Mass media often becomes the propaganda machinery of the various political and military leaders in given regions.⁸

A common saying among peace keepers is that ‘you cannot win peace unless you win the hearts and minds of the people on the ground’.⁹ In order to be successful, PSO require profound knowledge of the attitude of the people around them as well as a clear analysis of the local media situation they operate in. This analysis is conducted on a regularly basis to accommodate changing dynamics. Most media outlets in armed conflict situations hold significant responsibility for the escalation or de-escalation of conflicts. The trust that the media may lose during conflicts often takes time to restore. PSO cannot afford to miss these dynamics if they are to manage the conflict effectively.

Development of media operations to attain the standards for democratic societies is often a necessary intervention for PSO in cooperation with civil society and international organizations. To understand the nature of the media in a given country is a necessary pre-requisite for effective peace support operations. Different media systems can advance perceptions of different realities and audience. Therefore, the main concern of PSO is that existing media offers impartial, truthful and thorough information to the public. The support of the local population to peace support operations is a vital ingredient in successful post-conflict stabilization. PSOs must seize the window of opportunity

8 Op. Cit, Majarn Malesic, Peace Support Operations, Mass Media and the Public in former Yugoslavia, 2000, P. 66

9 Ibid, P. 62

opened in the initial period of deployment when public perceptions about the peace mission are not yet well ingrained.

The CNN effect theory refers to the emergence of a global media that brings crisis situations or disasters to the sitting room of global citizens in real time. This round the clock coverage of news phenomenon emerged in the 1990s owing to advancement in broadcast technology and multimedia convergence. Jakobsen observes that:

*“Media coverage (printed and televised) of suffering and atrocities lead to journalists opinion leaders demanding that Western governments ‘do something’... the (public) pressure becomes unbearable and thus Western governments must do something.”*¹⁰

Some scholars maintain that the CNN effect linkage to disaster response has not been supported by evidence.¹¹

It has been observed that the new low cost and light weight information transmission technology (mobile phones equipped with video cameras) results in real time reporting.¹² However, it has also been observed that this real time coverage of news can also lead to inaccurate, uninformed and subjective depictions of crisis.¹³

The compassion fatigue theory maintains that the media, just like the public, does not maintain interests in a particular disaster for a long time. This may also contribute to decreased support for crisis response.¹⁴

Social media (twitter, Facebook, text messaging, blogs...) is also emerging as an avenue of reporting the emergence of crisis situations

10 Peter V., J. ‘National Interest, Humanitarianism or CNN: What Triggers, UN Peace Enforcement After the Cold War?’, *Journal of Peace Research* 33(2): 205–215

11 *Ibid.* p. 140

12 Majarn Malesic, *Peace Support Operations, Mass Media and the Public in former Yugoslavia*, 2000, P. 66

13 *Ibid.* p. 80

14 Djorn Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death*, London, Routledge, 1999, p. 9

and the response of different actors. It has been observed that during the Haitian earthquake emergency in 2002 social media raised more than US\$10 million. It is important for PSOs to be more media savvy in order to enhance the goodwill and effectiveness of peace operations. The use of creative multi-media advertising agencies can enhance the quality of messaging design and delivery. Besides examining media influence in peace support operations in Somalia, this paper will also assess the effect of emerging social media in these operations.

Media in Peace Support Operations

Defining media

In this paper media encompasses electronic (Radio, TV, Internet) and print (newspapers and magazines). The content of the media is generated by various reporters, anchors, editors and special correspondents. The main purpose of the media is to create and distribute knowledge in the form of information, ideas and entertainment.¹⁵ The context of the media under review is the local and global media with interest in the particular conflict situation, the population in the country hosting the PSO or the member countries wishing to participate in the peace mission.

Media in crisis situations

Mass media under the control of the ruling Serbian Democratic Party (SDP) became centers of severe nationalistic indoctrination and even racism during and after the war.¹⁶ Bosnian Herzegovinian mass suffered tremendously during the war and the media landscape consisted of some organizations governed by pre-war traditions, others by the war experience while others were established in the post war period. During the times of war, the media landscape is very unstable and changeable. Fluctuation is particularly very high in Print media.¹⁷ Warring communities trust certain media sources often associated with their perceived interests while shunning the ones that are perceived to support their rivals. This implies that PSOs must employ all available instruments, procedures and techniques and use reliable and trustworthy channels to transmit information to the public to avoid the spread of rumours and propaganda.

15 Charles H., Public information as a critical component of PSO in West Africa, p. 9

16 Majarn Malesic, Peace Support Operations, Mass Media and the Public in former Yugoslavia, 2000, p. 63

17 Ibid p. 63

Media freedom and independence

In most developing countries, the media is controlled by the ruling party and regime either directly or indirectly. In Eastern Africa before political liberalization of the early 1990s, the media was controlled by the ruling party. In socialist Yugoslavia, the Communist Party and the ruling regime exercised much influence on the media. When the Cold War ended in 1989, the communist ideology was replaced by nationalism, heralding a new era of internecine conflicts.¹⁸ In most developing countries, media transformation took place after the political liberalization processes of the 1990s. A new private media emerged while in some cases existing state media was privatized. The change in media ownership and operating environment was also accompanied by a relatively independent young generation of journalists eager to push the frontiers of the fourth estate.

Mass media are often dependent on donors, owners of the media companies and foundations. These funders are usually kept secret. It has been observed that there is a close relationship between media control and politicization of the media towards specific directions.¹⁹ Apart from the local media, there are many international media organizations that report on conflict. These come in a myriad of forms ranging from Television, Radio, Print media, journals, brochures and social media. Sometimes PSOs create Joint Task Force for releasing information through video clips on the military part of peace operations devoted to the general public.²⁰

Information technology has opened new doors for a more open communication and removed the information barriers of yester years. This has enhanced transparency in many countries for both citizens and the global community. The modern Global Information Environment (GIE) comprised of individuals, organizations or systems that collect and

18 Ibid, p. 38

19 Majarn M., Peace Support Operations, Mass Media and the Public in former Yugoslavia, 2000, P. 45

20 Ibid, p. 38

disseminate information to national and international citizens.²¹ Virtual information offers enhanced understanding of conflict issues through transparency in the diplomatic, economic and military areas and can be used to prevent conflict. There are many more IT devices at the disposal of PSOs such as electronic mail, computer generated maps and video camera. PSOs must learn to manage or leverage the benefits of information technology which can help to drive the agenda of the mission.

Media just like any other profession is required to adhere to a code of conduct that calls for responsible, accountability and professionalism. In some conflict situations in Africa, the conduct of journalists has often been poor, with their ability to be fair, balanced and objective greatly compromised. Some journalists as witnessed in the Rwandan Genocide (1994) were accused of promoting ethnic hatred and political extremism.

Role of Media in Peace Support Operations

There has been an astronomical growth of information technology with profound effects on media and global information flow. In 1981, 11.7% of the world population had television sets. This figure had risen to 23.4% by 2010. There is more and more worldwide access to certain extra ordinary events which transcend purely national interests. The global electronic network of shared images in real time has produced the ‘Global Village,’ a place where everyone gets to know the same thing almost at the same time.²²

The rapid expansion of the internet and other online services which provide specialized information such as videos has offered an avenue of accessing information that has peace and security implications. The new media is also interactive, empowering media consumers to be part of ‘global citizen journalism.’ This media is largely out of control of

21 Timothy L. T., *Virtual Peacemaking: A Military View of Conflict Prevention through the use of Information Technology*, Stockholm, P. 175

22 Op. Cit, Majarn, p. 140

governments. PSO spokesmen find it difficult to communicate their message diplomatically as the media is more interested in dramatic presentation of news with two sides of the coin.

Television is an excellent medium of communicating crises and extreme forms of human experience. Crisis situations become attractive hunting ground for journalists. For policy makers in peace support missions, these are stressful times. For the media, crises are an opportunity in their trade, providing opportunities for journalists to win international awards such as the Pulitzer Prize.²³

The media is often the first to arrive on the scene thereby setting the agenda and defining the terms and context within which the crisis is henceforth discussed. At this juncture, discussion of a country's foreign affairs is shared with a mass television audience. This has a significant influence on the decision of whether to intervene in the conflict or not to. This power of the media to influence emotional feelings of the people, popularly referred to as the 'CNN factor,' is a powerful tool of mobilizing actors for action. When protests in one area are displayed on TV, they inspire actions in diverse and remote regions.

The problem is that policy makers who decide on the establishment of PSOs require time to analyse the conflict and design appropriate strategies. In contrast, the media calls for immediate action. While journalists can present biased information or propaganda in a conflict situation, peace missions have to work with objective information. Today the media cannot be kept away from peace support operations unlike in the wars of the past such as Falklands and the Gulf war in Iraq.²⁴

Media provides an avenue for the political elite to communicate with the public. It also informs the elites about the evolving nature of public perception

23 Christian Amanpour won an award during the crisis in Sarajevo and David Halberstam in Vietnam

24 Sharkey, J. Under Fire: U.S Military Restrictions on the Media from Grenada to the Persian Gulf, Washington, D.C., Center for Public Integrity, 1991

about crisis. The elites must listen and analyse what the media is saying in order to get closer to reality. The media presses for quick action and this must be complemented by well thought out political decisions. Leaders, however, cannot afford to have their agenda set by the media. They must chart their own cause. How the media report about casualties and failure of particular commanders is critical. The US experience in Somalia is a classic example of a mission that lost public support due to gruesome television images.²⁵

Media in conflict situation

Local media is usually among the first institutions to suffer from conflict. Media infrastructure is often destroyed by groups that feel aggrieved. Due to insecurity, collection of information becomes difficult and freedom of expression is hampered. Given the discrepancy between foreign and local media, there have been efforts to build local media capacity in conflict zones.²⁶ During conflict, the small population segment that could buy newspapers is more constrained with rising unemployment—in Liberia it rose to as high astronomical levels as 85%.²⁷ This constrains the capacity of the media industry to produce regular news. The printed press may reach as little as 15% of the population during conflict. Oral communication takes significant proportion of media outlets, thus giving precedence to rumours and propaganda over objective reporting. This situation aggravates uncertainty and propensity for conflict.

Due to weak access to information and the consequent proliferation of rumours, the PSO media assumes a much bigger role in conflict situations. Peace keeping operations recognize the role of media in preparing the public to accept intervention.

25 Jamie P. S., *Media, Information Technology and Crisis Management, Dealing with the Media During Crisis and Peace Keeping Missions*, Stockholm, p. 145

26 NGOs such as Journalists for Human Rights and IMPAC have been building capacity of journalists in Sierra Leone, Liberia

27 United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *The World Fact Book*, 2006, website, accessed, April 7, 2013

Peace Support Operations

Defining Peace Support Operations (PSO)

The concept of peace support operations emerged after weaknesses in the traditional peace keeping approach were identified. Championed by Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson and UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold, peacekeeping served international peace and security with mixed success up to the end of the Cold War in 1989. Among the first peace missions were United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in Sinai (1956), United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) 1960-64, United Nations Mission in Western Sahara (known by French acronym MINURSO, 1991), United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) for Namibia (1989-91) and United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM 1 in 1988-91.²⁸ The publication of the UN Secretary General's Report of 1992 titled; 'An Agenda for Peace,' saw peace keeping expanded and redefined to accommodate the peace and security demands of the post-Cold War era and to overcome limitations of the previous approach. In the complex emergency situations that later engulfed Liberia, Sierra Leone, DRC and Sudan among others, the UN required to do more than peace keeping to re-establish authority for good governance and political stability.²⁹

Peace support operations perform important tasks that are highly valued by the public during armed conflicts such as assisting and training local security forces, monitoring ceasefire, mine clearing operations, maintaining safe and secure environment, providing humanitarian and medical assistance, apprehending indicted war criminals and conducting disarmament.

28 Lester B. Pearson and Dag Hammarskjold authored the first UN Mission (UNEF – Sinai) in 1956, www.un/depts/dhl/dag/time1956.htm, accessed April 28, List of United Nations Peacekeeping Missions/Africa

29 Henry A., Political Control and Guidance of Peace Support Operations in Africa: A UN Commanders View, Boundaries of Peace Support Operations, 2000, Monograph. No. 44

Complex emergency situations

PSO are established to respond to complex emergency situations. This phenomenon is defined by a number of features: deterioration or collapse of central government authority, ethnic or religious conflict, widespread human rights abuses, food insecurity and mass starvation, macroeconomic collapse manifested by hyperinflation, mass displacement of people and refugees, low growth national product (GNP) and massive unemployment.³⁰

Purpose of Information in Peace Support Operations

Managing public expectations of the local population is important in order to implement PSO agenda. This implies that PSOs must access all types of information of military and non-military nature. This information varies from strategic information that can be gathered before the operation and operational information that can only be gathered on the ground during action to tactical information required when there is a need for rapid communication.

Information must encompass internal communication, knowledge about different actors, evolving conflict dynamics as well as socio-economic and political context. In practice peace support missions do not engage in gathering information through military means but they rely on information from belligerents and NGOs. This information is limited and parties do not want this information to leak to other parties. PSO must gather vital information that it may not share with other parties, for its security. In Somalia during the United Nations Operation in Somalia II, 1993-95, the United States used national means to gather information and was willing to share with the UN until some information was handled openly by one UN contingent thereby posing security risks.³¹

30 Schull M.J. and Shanks L, Complex Emergencies: Expected and Unexpected Consequences, *Prehosp Disast Med* 2001; 16(4): p. 192–196

31 Jamie P. S., *Media, Information Technology and Crisis Management, Dealing with the Media During Crisis and Peace keeping Missions*, p. 158

The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) provided translated copies of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to enable as many people as possible to understand the nature of transition and the role of the UN mission. Successful military operations must be accompanied by economic and political assistance. This measure fulfills the immediate needs of the population, thereby making the PSO more useful and relevant. The communication policy of the mission becomes one tool in a package of other measures required for successful implementation of its agenda.

Relationship between Media and Peace Support Operations

Usually there are not many journalists who specialize in covering crisis situations. This can result in biased information that often seeks to find fault in peace missions. There has sometimes been a confluence of peace missions and the interests of journalists especially where the latter hail from the countries of origin of peace missions. Journalists in such cases enjoy embedded status where they are protected by the national army in a foreign country. A case in point is Kenyan journalists embedded in Kenya Defence Force (KDF)/AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in Somalia.

The United Nation (UN) through the Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) provides global leadership in peace support operations. Public information experts had become an important component of UN missions since 1992 with the deployment of United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAC) in Cambodia. The first line of action for these experts in a target country is to understand the media environment, main actors as well as political and institutional affiliations. This strategic analysis of the mission context has proved to be very useful for effective PSO communication to the public and relationship with the media. The UN has demonstrated a commitment to maintain integrity with regard to communication with the international community. In a memorandum to all

heads of department in 1999, the then UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, had this to say about the value of media:

*The United Nations is committed to being open and transparent in its dealing with the press. It is in our interests to work with the media quickly and honestly and to develop a coherent communication strategy based on those same principles. We should not only react to events but where appropriate, project the organization's point of view in international development. We should not conceal or mislead but to protect a diplomatic process. Our media policy must, therefore balance the need to be open and the need to protect confidentiality.*³²

Credible and accurate information can be rare in conflict or post conflict environments. People who seek out independent sources of information may risk persecution. Events of Rwanda in 1994 and Yugoslavia in the early 1990s demonstrated how a partisan media can escalate ethnic conflict. The UN media strives to achieve the highest professional and ethical standards and must promote respect for human rights, tolerance and reconciliation. The UN media strategy must promote the existent of a vibrant, free and independent media and the highest journalistic standards and ethics in the host country.

Radio Okapi was a successful venture by MONUC in conjunction with Foundation Hironnelle. It established a number of stations across the country and produced broadcast in more than five local languages. It became a dependable source of news to the extent that other Congolese media made it a source of information for their dissemination.³³ Transparency and credibility are key markers of a respected media.

The media can be used to force the mission to change course or to withdraw. Policy makers must continuously engage with the media to defend their course. Regular media briefing creates confidence and removes doubts and anxiety. Local partisan media must be influenced

32 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Memorandum to all Heads of Department, 1999

33 Handbook on UN Peace Keeping Operations, p. 56

to stop incitement (Radio Mille Collins – Rwanda, SRTV - Bosnia).³⁴ A code of conduct for the media must be part of the agreement for the established of a peace support mission. Relevant UN mandate must also give authority to PSO to act accordingly. Policy makers are usually in a dilemma of whether to shut down offending media; introduce censorship or establish more media houses to provide competition and alternatives. Setting up new media is expensive and takes time to gain public confidence. Some PSO have put pressure on media houses to be objective through carrot and stick approaches. While providing financial assistance and training journalists, they have also shut down the media as a last resort. This was the case in regard to Srpska Radio-Television (SRT) in Bosnia.

The military, police and civilians intervene in conflict situations to provide different forms of assistance and to create the necessary environment for sustainable peace. The media determines whether a PSO will be deployed in specific regions or not through giving prominence to specific attitudes and beliefs. Sometimes misconception of conflict situation lead to non-intervention, delayed intervention or application of inappropriate strategies.

Challenges of Media Relations with Peace Support Operations

Journalists complain that PSO commanders view them as problems rather than opportunities. They experience difficulties in accessing the spokesman, senior commanders, translators or security agents.³⁵

It has also been observed that sometimes journalists lack knowledge in the subject that they endeavour to cover. They may not appreciate the policy, diplomatic and military issues of PSO. To prevent such scenarios, during the Gulf War in 1990, journalists were briefed on the

³⁴ Ibid, p. 145

³⁵ Tim Dunne, United Nations Association, Canada, Chapter 2, p. 6

nature of maritime, land and air operations. ³⁶However there are still many journalists who have little knowledge about the concept of peace support operations.

There is a tendency for media to follow power with more coverage in European and American led interventions. This biased media radar often overlooks conflicts in remote areas of developing countries.³⁷ Beyond the big media establishments such as CNN and BBC, most media organizations have no capacity to hire and train many journalists for international coverage. Local media fair even worse, rely mostly on biased reports from international news agencies covering conflicts in Africa such as Associated Press (AP), Agence France-Presse (AFP) and Reuters.³⁸

There is also concern for the security and impartiality of journalists in conflict situations. According to Reporters without Borders, in 2005 63 journalists and 5 media assistants were killed for doing their job and at least 807 were arrested and over 1,300 attacked or threatened. The Iraq conflict claimed the highest casualties.³⁹ This creates the need for the media to be embedded in peace support operations, thereby, risking their independence. This also limits their understanding of the host country's situation including the views of insurgents and citizens. However, this is one of the most appropriate practical options for their safety given the extreme insecurity faced by independent journalists seeking news in conflict situations.

36 Ibid. p. 7

37 Ibid. p. 8

38 Ibid. p. 9

39 Ibid. p.10

Media and Peace Support Operations in Africa

International media has a short attention span mainly during deployment and when there is a crisis. For peace missions to secure international support, it is important that they meet their needs. Media monitoring is a vital role of PSOs where analysis of local and international media reporting on the PSO is carried out to inform information dissemination strategies and to counter propaganda. Use of the radios of peace missions has proved successful in some cases. Experience with Radio UNAMSIL indicates that there are challenges of overcoming perceptions of the local media towards PSO radio as providing competition for local radio stations. There is a need to convince local actors about the necessity of a PSO radio.

Towards the end of the mission, UNMIL FM radio covered 95% of Liberian territory.⁴⁰ UNMIL radio was successful in providing IDPs and refugees with information about DDR, electoral process, truth, justice and reconciliation process and other important services of the mission. Where radio focuses on mission specific activities, the perception of competition with local radio is reduced. Understanding the local cultural communication dynamics such as use of vernacular languages is vital for effective communication. Training of journalists also boosts the capacity of the local media and provides credibility for PSO media.

Radio is the most popular medium due to high illiteracy in a number of countries as well as poverty that hinders many people from affording a TV set. Due to low purchasing power, the average citizen cannot afford newspapers or magazines. Newspapers are popular but have low circulation. Experience has shown that during conflicts, different media outlets have

40 Charles H. Public Information as a Mission Critical Component of West Africa Peace keeping Operations, 2006, p.39

different loyal audience. Due to market forces most media houses have outreach in cities and urban areas thereby neglecting the rural areas. Many journalists have been targeted for assassination by dissenting groups in conflict situations such as Somalia. When professional journalists go into exile during conflict, the field is inundated with untrained journalists who lower the quality of reports. During conflict, many journalists and media houses exercise high degree of self-censorship to avoid reprisals from belligerents.⁴¹

During crisis, only the media stations with financial support outside the market manage to survive as demonstrated in Liberia in 1999, when war resumed only Radio Veritas supported by the Catholic Church, govern owned Liberian Broadcasting Corporation (ELBC) Radio, STAR radio supported by Foundation Hironnelle and Charles Taylor's KISS FM maintained broadcast capability.⁴²

Successful implementation of PSO will depend on lessons learned from previous missions. This makes it critical to understand the role of media and PSO in selected African countries. The first successful public information system by the UN in Africa was recorded in Namibia in the late 1980s under the umbrella of United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG).⁴³ This created an impetus for consolidating strategic public information system in the missions, a measure that would appear in later missions. Since then, public information management in UNOSOM in Somalia, UNAMIR in Rwanda and UNPROFOR in Bosnia have significantly improved. There have been various types of peace missions in Africa such as UN, AU and hybrid UN/AU missions such as UNAMID. This system has also called for adaptation of public information management within the PSO and in relation with the local media.

41 This was highly experienced during the conflict in Liberia (PI Critical component W/ Africa, p. 21)

42 Op. cit, Charles Hunt, p.22

43 Ibid, p. 28

Lessons from UNAMSIL and UNMIL

West Africa offers better and more vivid lessons of peace support operation missions in Africa due to the success of United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). These missions also provide valuable lessons for the relationship between the media and the mission's public information entity. These lessons are invaluable to the on-going peace mission including the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), the African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and to the entire peace support operations trainers and practitioners.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was established in 1999 to implement the Lome Peace Agreement and to support post conflict stabilization in Sierra Leone. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was established in 2003 to support the implementation of the comprehensive peace agreement and assist Liberia in post conflict stabilization and reconstruction. Both PSOs required a lot of public support in order to bring about ceasefire and implement the peace agreement. Much of the population in both countries was affected by the conflict, making their support necessary for effective implementation of the agreement. Both missions had a herculean task of getting the support of the population, development partners, troop contributing countries, ex combatants, youth, local and international media, women, IDPs and diaspora. UNMIL was a success with Liberia having gone through successful democratic elections, with the latest held in 2011.

UNAMSIL experienced the effects of initial lack of a well-resourced information strategy during the 2000 crisis. Even when the changes were made, they came too late. The Liberian mission learnt vital lessons from this challenge. In Liberia, public information was relayed earlier before the arrival of Special Representative of the Secretary General

(SRS) and the UN radio was relaying information before the arrival of the mission. Though there were technical hitches, the relay of public information was much better than in UNAMSIL.⁴⁴ UNAMSIL established the Office of Spokesperson as the focal point for public information while UNMIL established 'Media and External Relations Unit' as the central information processing unit. Both of these approaches were successful. Journalists had one point of entry for information gathering and sometimes they could enjoy UN transport to access remote areas (vehicles and air craft).⁴⁵

Media infrastructure in both Liberia and Sierra Leone were virtually destroyed by the time these missions were deployed. Vital infrastructure such as electricity that supports information relay and reception had been destroyed. The public information field was left to armatures and rumour mongers.⁴⁶

Radio was the most important source of news in Sierra Leone. There were about 46 national and regional radio stations in Sierra Leone compared to only 7 TV stations. Though there were 58 registered newspapers, most had limited circulation.⁴⁷ During the post-conflict stabilization period, new media laws and institutions were put in place to create a suitable environment for the growth of a vibrant professional and independent media. UNAMSIL handed over its radio station to the revamped Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC).

The lesson to be drawn from these two cases is that prior planning for effective PSO communication strategy backed by conflict sensitive appraisal of the socio-economic and political situation of the host

44 Krasno J., Public Opinion Survey of UNMIL's Work in Liberia, PBPU, 2005, pp. 5-6

45 UNAMSIL and UNMIL websites, accessed April 20, 2013

46 *Opp. Cit.*, Krasno, p. 8, the UN Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit (PBPU) produced lessons learned from both UNAMSIL and UNMIL with vital information on media and peace support operations

47 Facts & Figures, Independent Media Commission, Freetown, Sierra Leone, Accessed April 12, 2013 <http://www.imc-sl.org/FactsFigures/tabid/56/Default.aspx>

country is a pre-requisite for effective implementation of PSO agenda. The PSO must acquire credibility as a source of information and that information must be made readily available to interested parties. International coordination of information sources between the military, police and civilian authorities in a PSO must be aligned to the host country's public demand for information. UNMIL provided financial security to the local media through signing long term advertising contracts. Many of the practitioners returned to work once a reliable source of welcome was established. This was extremely valuable to a financially hard pressed media.⁴⁸ This intervention established the basis for symbiotic relationship between the local media and UNMIL. This strategy proved a huge asset for the mission to gain trust with the Liberian people. It is however, hard to tell whether this patronage relationship had a negative effect on media freedom and content.

Inability to afford radio or batteries prevented radio access to many people whose livelihoods had been shattered. Therefore, UNMIL employed a community outreach strategy to spread the message to the people effectively. Community Liaison and Public Outreach Unit of UNAMSIL used theatre groups, traditional dance troupes and musicians to perform comedies and dramas that proved highly invaluable in relaying vital information about the mission of the PSO and DDR.⁴⁹ Use of mobile phone text messages also gained credence reaching as high as half a million people. The TV and Video Unit of UNMIL and UNAMSIL, through video clubs (discussion forums about films and movies) also proved quite successful. Region-specific newspapers such as BOMI Journal in Northern Liberia (UNMIL) were also effective. Inserting 'UN Forum', section in local newspaper Sentinel in Harper (Liberia) was also quite popular. Use of UNMIL website to supplement the general UN page also

48 Patrick, C. The Role of Media and Public Information , in Mark Malan et al (eds.) Sierra Leone, Building the Road to Recovery, ISS Monograph No. 80, March 2003, p. 86

49 Charles H. (2006), Public Information as a Mission Critical Component of West Africa Peace keeping Operations, p.42

added value to information provision. UNMIL borrowed from MONUC the use of regional-specific public information officers to explain about issues pertaining to that region.⁵⁰

There is a need to build an internal mechanism of gauging the success of each communication strategy. This has been lacking in most peace mission initiatives. There is a challenge of coming up with measurable indicators of behavior change in specific issue based campaigns or socio-economic and political change in a specific context. UNMIL's support to rebuilding of national media institutions, media law reform, Liberian Press Union and Liberian Media Review Board also provided the necessary environment for media revival.⁵¹ To avoid perception of media bias, UNMIL supported all the media stations in Liberia, thereby becoming vulnerable to accusations of supporting anti-peace media. However extreme media such as Charles Taylor's Kiss FM were disbanded.⁵²

UNMIL found it necessary to have a strong exit strategy through capacity building of local partners to continue providing public information for peace building work. These efforts would also be assisted by more permanent UN partner institutions such as UNDP and UNESCO.⁵³ According to opinion surveys carried out in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, the mission radio stations were very popular and the public did not want them to be closed even after the departure of the missions such as UNAMSIL in 2005. UNAMSIL radio was subsequently incorporated in the local UN organizations with a view to placing it under the government, but it did not continue the robust activities it was carrying out before.⁵⁴

50 UNMIL website, accessed April 20, 2013

51 Op. cit, Charles Hunt, p.55

52 UNMIL website, accessed April 20, 2013

53 Op. cit, Charles Hunt, p. 61

54 Krasno J. Public Opinion Survey of UNMIL's Work in Liberia, PBPU, 2005, p. 5-6

Towards Constructive Media and PSO Relations

The case studies examined point to a need for PSOs to collaborate with the media through a regular review of operations reporting and their positive or negative effects in conflict areas. The media partnership is vital to maintaining international development partner's interest and support for peace support operations. Maintaining an online platform for updating the media on operations progress is also important. This was evident on Kenya Defence Forces intervention in South Central Somalia.

As this paper has indicated, more effective collaboration of media and PSO can lead to efficient and effective implementation of peace support and recovery initiatives.

Contribution of Media in Peace Support Operations (PSO)

This study has indicated that a clear and comprehensive public information strategy is a cardinal requirement for effective PSO media relations. A media policy that percolates into all its activities adds value to effective PSO communication. This enables the PSO to send the message clearly and unequivocally to avoid misinterpretation. Proper communication management emerges where policy makers anticipate events rather than reacting to them. Provision of regular information to the media is important to create confidence. Where PSO is on top of the story it prevents the media from searching for information from other sources which might not advance the objectives of the PSO. Joint press briefings or coordination with other stakeholders is also necessary to avoid unnecessary divergence. Looking at the big picture and not being bogged down by diversions helps PSOs to tell their story.

Just like in mainstream media, timing is essential for PSOs to provide information when it is most needed. PSOs must communicate as much as they can when the public and media interest is high. It is important to organize press briefings to draw attention of the media to important issues for the PSO that media may not cover. Strong PSO media communication leadership compels public support and impresses the media. It is unproductive for PSOs to be subservient to the media; rather they must remain committed to their core communication goal. The media must be aware of PSO's mandate so that they do not blame it for actions that are not within its ambit. Professional media ethics dictate that PSOs should own up to their mistakes rather than attempt to cover them up. The public usually forgives mistakes but not cover-ups. In the media strategy, PSOs must develop master messages or narratives and good sound bites that help to explain their objectives. Repetition is vital and providing the general background of situations help to situate the event in the right context.⁵⁵

A credibly high level PSO spokesman with access to vital information and accessible to the media on a weekly basis during crisis situation is highly required. There must be a balance between positive and defensive messages; the PSO should not appear as if it is under siege. It is unhealthy to use 'No comment' because it implies intention to hide some information. Operational briefing should be differentiated from political briefing to avoid ambiguity. The military information officer is best suited to provide technical information and he may not provide political information. The case studies from West Africa demonstrate that use of information technology enhances PSO communication such as operating a website where information is posted for the media and the public. The spokesman is more effective where there is goodwill from journalists. To build more trust and confidence with the media, occasional appearance

55 Patrick, C., The Role of Media and Public Information, in Mark Malan et al (eds.): Sierra Leone: Building the Road to Recovery, ISS Monograph No. 80, March 2003, p. 90

of the PSO commander to talk to the media is vital. The spokesman or public information officers should write to the local newspapers providing important information about operations to pre-empt public anxiety. Other officers can be invited to provide information on technical issues.

The information officer must be aware of what is newsworthy to the media and provide such information. PSO spokesmen must be innovative and imaginative to lead the media-park or risks playing underdog to them. Maintaining open links and cooperation with the mass media is important in order to provide information during crisis and to convince combatants to stop fighting and engage in peace talks.⁵⁶

The African Union Peace Support Information Framework

The African Union is a role model for PSO and media relations. The AU has press and information officers including officers who deal with the press and media within the command of the African Standby Force (ASF). The AU trains press and information officers in the following aspects: International and local press and professional media practices, procedures for dealing with the media in accordance with the American Securitization Forum (ASF) press and information policy. Other relevant courses include; negotiation and mediation; information collection, collation, processing and dissemination; observation and presentation of reports; civil-military issues and international rules, agreements and standards for telecommunications. This capacity building of PSO personnel provides the necessary preparations for effective cooperation with the media in achieving PSO agenda.

⁵⁶ Jamie P. S., Media, Information Technology and Crisis Management, Dealing with the Media During Crisis and Peace keeping Missions, p. 153

Contributions of the media

As observed in this paper, the media has a significant role to play in enhancing the effectiveness of peace support operations. It is, therefore, important for media practitioners to be well versed in vital areas of PSO in order to report correctly about its activities. A few journalists from selected media houses in the host countries can be trained with the help of the PSO. The media must also be committed to international peace and security and to promote peace journalism. This goal can also be served through media professionalism where a code of conduct is observed and enforced through self-regulatory media framework.

The media should, however, maintain some distance with the PSO in order to play a watchdog role. It is important for the media to inform the PSO when it veers off its agenda or generates negative public perceptions. The local media should also not rely too much on the PSO to avoid losing its independence or sustainability once the PSO exits.

Conclusion

This paper has surveyed the relationship between media and peace support operations drawing lessons from PSO missions that have been implemented since UNCTAD mission in Cambodia in 1992. Vital lessons have emerged on the evolution of media and PSO relations. Avenues of communication for PSO have been widened by the growth of information technology including the social platforms. UNAMSIL and UNMIL offers vital lessons for current PSO missions such as UNMISS, AMISOM and MONUSCO.

The significant points of cooperation and departure between PSO and media have been analyzed in order to find zones of convergence. The local media is a stakeholder in post-conflict peace and security stabilization in the host country. Its fortunes are intertwined with the peace and security condition of the country. It is, therefore, in the broader interests of the media for PSO to succeed. The paper argues that the emergence of a vibrant media industry is vital for the entrenchment and expansion of the democratic space, respect for human rights and for the success of post-peace support activities.

This study has also examined the need for a well-defined communication strategy within a PSO to provide appropriate foundation for effective relationship with the media. This study cannot exhaust the vital ingredients of an effective PSO - media relations. The subject of media and PSO is a vital area of study that requires more and regular research given the potential for contribution towards peace support operations effectiveness.

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Democracy at Risk:

Electoral Conflict and Violence in Africa

Lt. Col. Donatien Nduwimana

Introduction

With increased democratization in Africa, elections have become an ingredient of popular participation in the governance process. At the same time, elections have brought conflicts and violence and polarized ethnic and regional alliances that sometimes threaten the social order, economic development, and efforts to strengthen regional integration. With the steady decline of some of the historic causes of African conflicts, elections have emerged as one of the major recent sources of conflict across Africa. The challenges occasioned by election-related conflicts and political violence underscore the importance of building institutions that balance competition with order, participation with stability, and contestation with consensus.

Several reasons have been stated by institutions and researchers on the subject of electoral violence. Some, indeed, are more objective than others; they range from the argument that democratic systems are relatively new in some countries to the position that there exists inadequate or incorrect conceptions of the electoral game. Electoral violence has also been attributed to the complexity of legal norms and systems governing elections, the social structure of the concerned State, the economic and social difficulties among others.⁵⁷

To address this problem, the paper has been structured in 5 sections. The first section comprises the introduction which provides the general

⁵⁷ African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development, Problematic of Elections in Africa: *How to master the electoral process, news strategies and strengthening electoral capacities*, 2012, p.1

picture of conflicts and violence in African elections; the second section presents the context and main drivers of election-related violence. The third section highlights the consequences of electoral violence while the fourth section analyses different mechanisms of prevention and management of such conflicts and violence. The final section presents the way forward and recommendations that explore innovations, initiatives and strategies that can lead to successful organization, conduct and management of elections in Africa.

Defining electoral conflicts and violence

Electoral conflict and violence are all acts or threats of; coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process in the context of electoral competition.⁵⁸ When perpetrated to affect an electoral process, violence may be employed to influence the process of elections, including efforts to delay, disrupt, or derail a poll and to influence the outcomes: in determining winners in a competitive race for political office or to secure approval or disapproval of referendum questions.

The nature and attributes of electoral conflicts and violence are:

- Electoral violence is a sub-type of political violence in which actors employ coercion as an instrumental way of advancing their interests or achieving specific political ends. Similarly, societies prone to election-related violence are normally vulnerable to broader kinds of political violence. Kosovo, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Kenya, or Colombia are examples of instances where electoral violence is embedded in a broader, often dynamic context of deep-rooted social conflict.
- Electoral violence includes acts such as assassination of opponents, spontaneous fistfights between rival groups of supporters, threats, coercion, and intimidation of opponents, voters, or election officials. Threat and intimidation is a form of coercion that is just as powerful

58 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Elections and Conflict Prevention – A Guide to Analysis, Planning, and Programming*, 2009.

as acts of violence can be. Indeed, one purpose of acts of terrorism such as tossing a grenade into a crowd of rival supporters is an act diabolically designed to induce fear and to intimidate suppress mobilization or voting by rival group).

- Violent acts can be targeted against people or things, such as the targeting of communities or candidates or the deliberate destruction of campaign materials, vehicles, offices, or ballot boxes.⁵⁹

Statement of the problem

Electoral violence in African countries has undermined democratic transition, increased ethnic conflicts and has caused loss of lives and property. The increasing prevalence of electoral violence on the continent highlights the challenges facing those who aim to prevent and manage such conflicts nationally, regionally and continentally.⁶⁰ There is, therefore, a need to understand the root causes of electoral conflict and violence in Africa and suggest some of the solutions that can be applied for rapid responses and mitigation of electoral violence and conflict.

The general literature on elections in Africa shows that electoral gains are not irreversible. Democratic consolidation through elections is not yet well entrenched in the political system and institutions of most African countries as they are susceptible to economic shocks, elite manipulation, religious contestation and ethnic strife.⁶¹

This study is important as it will contribute to the debate on the need to establish legal and regulatory frameworks to develop democratic culture in African countries. African elections can solve many problems and bring about positive economic and political change in Africa, if they are free, fair and transparent.

59 Timothy D. Sisk: *Elections in Fragile States: Between Voice and Violence*, 2008

60 Staffan I. Lindberg: *Democracy and Elections in Africa*, 2006.

61 Issaka.k. Souaré: *Electoral violence and post-electoral arrangements in Africa*, Adonis & Abbey Publishers, London, 2008

Context, state and drivers of electoral violence in Africa

Tension and violence in Africa's new democracies have been observed since the 1990s. Many countries, especially those with strong authoritarian legacies or deep ethnic cleavages find it difficult to tolerate or manage political opposition. According to the 2008 Amnesty International Report, the violent struggle for power, even in states which do not descend into armed conflict, still remain an important component of political life in Africa.⁶² It is important to analyze the context, the state of electoral violence and to identify the drivers of electoral conflicts in African countries.

Context of election violence in Africa

The problem of electoral violence in Africa cannot be fully understood without situating it within the political history of the continent. The colonial African state offers a useful point of entry. It was under colonialism that electoral system was introduced to Africa. This was particularly the case in British colonies with the introduction of the elective principle in 1922 (in Nigeria), although electoral politics during this period was to a large extent non-violent. The democratic substance of the elective principle was too limited with income and residential qualifications and could, therefore, be a potential basis for violence. Possibly as a result of its narrow political base, political discourses about democracy and good governance were essentially elite-driven while the people occupied a very marginal space, if any.⁶³

Actually the states in Africa are all, to varying degrees, relatively new democracies. Democratic institutions and procedures, including

62 Norris, Pippa, *Electoral Engineering—Voting Rules and Political Behavior*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

63 Adebayo, Paul F. and J. Shola Omotola . *Public perception of the 2007 Nigeria's generalelections*. Journal of African Elections,2007

elections, have been introduced or reinforced, while the structures of power in society and the norms governing the political system have not been transformed. The continent has a long history of one-party and dominant political party states where politics and economics are often conflated. As a result, politics is often exclusive, intolerant of opposition and sometimes militarized. Furthermore, many of the socio-economic and political benefits of democracy have yet to be fully realized among large parts of the population.

Under such structural circumstances, the stakes of elections in Africa have become high and the electoral contest tends to be perceived as a zero sum game. Winning an election may be a life-and-death matter for the competing parties as well as for entire communities within the state. The risk of electoral violence may, therefore, be higher in situations where there is real political competition between various parties and genuine possibilities to change existing power relations. All elections involve elements of uncertainty, but if the winner takes it all, the uncertainties of democracy come with a high price. Consequently, many politicians resort to illicit electoral strategies and make use of militant youth wings, militias or the state security forces to either win the election or strengthen their post-election bargaining positions.⁶⁴ In this context, competitive elections become conflictual processes aimed at mobilizing divergent interests in society and stimulating political competition between political actors and groups. In societies where the nonviolent norms of mature democracies are not fully developed, there is a risk that the electoral contest will contribute to intensifying and polarizing existing socio-economic cleavages and other divisions in society. This is especially so in societies where historically, political or socio-economic inequalities have formed the root causes of violent conflicts. In such cases, elections may mean the return, or a turn, to violence.

⁶⁴ Eldridge Vigil Adolfo, *Multi-Party Politics and Elections violence: Structural and Proximate Challenges Found outside the Electoral Cycle*, The Nordic Africa Institute, 2012.

In societies where the structural conditions of elections create high incentives for violence, the institutional and administrative arrangements in place for regulating the electoral contest can play a key role in either mitigating or instigating election-related violence. The design of the electoral system, for example, is one which encourages strategies for mobilizing voters across existing cleavages in society which is more likely to alleviate the risk for political polarization. Conversely, systems that are more exclusive, such as the first-past-the-post and winner-takes-all systems, are more likely to encourage violent behavior, especially, in divided societies. The current trend of establishing post-election power-sharing governments in Africa is a direct consequence of these exclusive systems. While power sharing agreements are sometimes deemed temporarily necessary to prevent (more) violence, they may set a dangerous precedent for the continent in the sense that every election, legitimate or otherwise, may be violently contested in order to force a power-sharing agreement.

State and manifestation of electoral violence in Africa

As a category of political violence, electoral violence and conflict is primarily distinguished by its timing and motive. It may take place in all parts of the electoral cycle: in the run up to elections, on the day of elections, and in the immediate post-election period. Election related violence is not limited to physical violence but includes other coercive means, such as the threat of violence, intimidation and harassment.

Elections are periods during which the stability and security of African states hang in the balance. They are events that compromise the political fragility of a majority of African states, even those that have been considered stable for a long time. Studies indicate that violence in Africa's elections affects between 19 and 25 percent of elections.⁶⁵

65 Dorina Bekoe, *Trends in Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa*, United State Institute of Peace, 2010

From 2005 to 2010, violent elections have occurred in countries such as Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe. In 2011, eighteen African countries held presidential, primary, or legislative elections. In eleven of these countries, elections were marked by violence that ranged from low-level intimidation and harassment to violence, displacement and death. A more common scenario has been that of low-intensity violence, widespread coercive intimidation of both candidates and voters including harassment, imprisonment and assassinations; violent riots and clashes between supporters or security elements of the competing political parties; and attacks on local party headquarters and party symbols. Countries that have displayed such characteristics during elections include Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guinea, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Uganda. The coup d'états staged during and prior to the elections in both Guinea Bissau and Mali are other examples of election-related incidents.

Drivers of electoral violence and conflict in Africa

The causes of electoral violence are multifaceted, and can be divided into two broad categories. First, structural factors related to the power structures prevalent in new and emerging democracies, such as informal patronage systems, poor governance, exclusionary politics, and the socio-economic uncertainties of losing political power in states where almost all power is concentrated at the center. Second, factors related to the electoral process and the electoral contest itself, such as failed or flawed elections, election fraud and weak or manipulated institutions and institutional rules governing the electoral process.

The other underlying causes of electoral violence in African countries are poverty and ignorance. Poverty in Africa is at a high level and this gives the window for the unemployed majority to be manipulated to perpetuate all forms of electoral violence. When persons are not able to meet the basic necessities of life, they are more likely to engage in

electoral violence than well-to-do persons in society. When the economic hardship becomes too unbearable, the propensity for violence increases. Unemployed youth then become a tool for electoral violence. This has been the case for Burundi where the youth have been used to disrupt opposition activities in almost all the electoral periods from 1993 to date. In Ivory Coast, the youth were manipulated by political parties.

Again, electoral violence is also fuelled by the culture of impunity. Where the justice system cannot be impartial, election violence may not be monitored and perpetrators may not be punished. The ineffectiveness and malfunctioning of the security forces and the justice system in many countries give people the impetus to stage electoral violence. The ineffectiveness especially on the part of the police is a major factor encouraging electoral violence. Pre-electoral violence is often associated with killings especially when the police service always fails to get to the root of those killings. This failure seems to be creating a culture of impunity and motivation for recurrence of crimes and violence in the society. Weak penalties or punishment for violators of electoral process also give room for more crimes to be committed. Penalties or punishment should be directed to achieve correction, retribution and deterrence. Again, most countries in Africa lack legislation against perpetrators of certain electoral offences. This exposes African elections to all forms of crimes and violence.

Weak governance and corruption can also instigate electoral violence. Corruption can set the stage for structural violence. Weak governance and corruption make people desperate enough to seek alternative means of revenge against political authority including violence. Proliferation of small arms in African countries is on the increase. Possession of arms leads to the perpetuation of violent conflict and the creation of new cycles of violence and crime.

Briefly, two important elements that should be noted are the factors that cause electoral violence and those that contribute to such violence

(and its gradual progression). The main causes of electoral conflict and violence are:

- A monopoly of state power residing in small but influential groups.
- Inequitable distribution of state resources, which invariably leads to fierce contestation.
- The politicization of identities (ethnic, religious and cultural).
- The general lack of well-defined and predictable political succession mechanisms.⁶⁶

Where the power of the state is monopolized to serve the interests of the ruling elite, there is an inequitable distribution of resources. This often leads to fierce competition for political power, politicization of identities and, eventually, to violent conflict. Ruling elites are likely to reject an electoral outcome where they have lost. Where a political settlement follows an impasse, the settlement tends to become a permanent structure rather than a temporary transitional arrangement. Even where there is the political will to democratize, if underlying socio-economic challenges are not addressed, they will increase tensions during election periods.⁶⁷

African political elite exploit the social diversity of their countries for personal political gain by politicizing ethnic identities. While ethnic diversity is not a problem in itself, deliberate politicization of differences in order to gain power and control state resources is a major problem in Africa. The factors contributing to electoral violence are specific to each country. In both Lesotho and Zimbabwe, the violence did not stem from the elections, but emanated from structural societal factors, the control of the political elite over the state and its resources and the amenability of state institutions to manipulation. In the case of both

66 Kristine Höglund, *Electoral Violence in Conflict-Ridden Societies: Concepts, Causes, and Consequences. Terrorism and Political Violence*, volume 21, issue3,2009

67 Khabele Matlosa, Victor Shale and Dimpho Motsamai, *Preventing and managing Violent election-related conflicts In Africa: exploring good practices*, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2010.

countries, issues related to the institutional and legal framework, political actors and their relationships, and the way elections were conducted.⁶⁸

In some countries, elections are not violent. But violence results when the state is unable to address some or all of the above mentioned factors. Judicial and security mechanisms are usually concerned with addressing all conflict issues, including those relating to elections. However, in many instances, both the security and judicial apparatuses have failed to prevent or manage electoral violence. In many African countries security forces and judiciary are considered to be part of the conflict. Security and defense forces are directly involved in, or, in some cases, cause electoral violence.

Normally, the role of the judicial system in the administration of justice, particularly in relation to election matters, is important. The problem is that in most of African countries, the system is confronted with serious challenges, including the way in which it is structured, managed and supported. In addition, the general population frequently has a negative perception of the judicial system, which is often perceived as not being impartial and subject to manipulation.

Consequences of electoral violence in Africa

Elections are conflict-prone in nature. In Africa, elections make social conflicts more visible and thus have great potential for triggering violence. If such violence is caused by the electoral process, or perceived to have been, the effects may have grave implications for human rights, local economies, and may create an inherent distrust in the credibility of democracy. This is particularly critical in fragile contexts, most notably where violence is protracted or in post-conflict situations. The consequences and implications of electoral violence differ from one country to another. But in a general way, election violence may have a

⁶⁸ Gabriel Kuris and Amy Mawson, *Innovations for Successful Societies, Managing a New Model for Elections*, Princeton University, Lesotho, 1998-2011

critical impact on the electoral process, the outcome of the elections and their perceived legitimacy.

Socio-political consequences

After the 2010 presidential elections in Burundi for example, tension suddenly increased. Acts of violence were reported while the main opposition members opted for exile. The lack of the opposition participation undermined the democratic process in Burundi and had a negative effect on the prospects of democratic consolidation and perceptions among the population on democracy as a political system.

Electoral violence can also create a humanitarian crisis and halt or reverse socio-economic development programs. In extreme situations, it may increase the risk of armed conflict or civil war as has been the case with Congo Brazzaville and Ivory Coast. Election-violence can also go beyond the societies where it occurs and affect neighboring states. Election violence has displaced large border populations, generated humanitarian emergencies, and increased the flow of illicit arms as well as the spread of armed violence, often contributing to instability in the already volatile regions.

Political instability often arises due to inability of opposition and relevant actors in governance to resolve perceived or real grievances amicably. Electoral violence is both causative and symptomatic of political instability. It is symptomatic as it reflects a rudimentary political system. It is also causative because it feeds the political crises that manifest regularly. Electoral violence, if not properly addressed, could ultimately escalate violence. Political violence hampers the building of a strong, efficient and viable democratic nations. It is anti-people because issues of human rights, gender equality, cultural rights and identities are often ignored or trampled upon. These adversely affect the human security and social development of the country.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Upeace Foundation Course Lecture on “*Sustainable Development*” by Prof Miriam Vilela to students of 2009/2010 Session on 3 September 2009 at UPEACE

Electoral violence also breeds insecurity. It is often characterized by loss of lives and properties as was the case during the 2007-2008 political violence in Kenya. Over 1300 people were killed, thousands displaced and properties worth billions of shillings burnt, looted or destroyed.⁷⁰ In most instances, election-related conflict has devastating effects on governance and development. When such violence occurs, it often impairs the function of governmental institutions emerging from processes where violence has tainted the fairness of the process and the legitimacy of election outcome.

Economic consequences

Electoral violence drives away prospective investors due to the lack of adequate security for their investments. Private domestic investors will also lose confidence in their respective countries. In addition to insecurity; there are attendant costs like increased security expenditure and the resources spent on repairs of damaged infrastructures. These resources could have been better spent on human and social development and such trends adversely affect the social and economic wellbeing of the country.

It is well-known that development cannot occur in the absence of peace and security. The economy suffers in an atmosphere of insecurity and political instability. This is because investors are scared due to lack of security for their investment. Direct foreign investment is thus often lost in such circumstances which have contributed to the state of underdevelopment in countries such as Nigeria. According to Clare Short, the former UK Secretary of State for International Development; businesses have a strong interest in peace and security in the countries in which they are operating or might wish to operate.⁷¹

Another effect of electoral violence is to help propagate the ongoing cycle of violence in a country. Acts of violence impact negatively on the children living in such societies. In line with the social learning

⁷⁰ [Http://www.monitor.upeace.org/archive.cfm?id_article=657](http://www.monitor.upeace.org/archive.cfm?id_article=657), accessed?

⁷¹ Nikasalveti, *Building positive peace: The role economics plays both influencing conflict and building peace* (a lecture to UPEACE 2009/2010)

theory, such children would likely end up being violent. Moreover, acts of electoral violence are likely to result in hostile goals like the desire for revenge, often leading to escalation of conflict (Pruitt and Kim, 2004:109). Election violence, like other forms of violent conflict, can mean reversing development. Incidents of violence undermine government legitimacy, scare away domestic foreign investors, and result in low levels of social trust.

Prevention and management of electoral conflicts and violence in Africa

For several reasons, violence can be an attractive option to influence the electoral process and outcome. In transitional and war-torn countries, incumbents are often manipulating or believed to be tampering with the electoral processes. Opposition parties also have incentives to increase their strength through the use of violence. Spoilers keen on disrupting elections may use violence to prevent the election from taking place or to make sure that election outcomes are declared invalid. Such violence is potentially damaging for democratic processes and can undermine progress towards democratization. As such, African countries must develop viable mechanisms and strategies to prevent or manage electoral conflicts for the general interest of their populations.

Prevention of electoral violence

It is imperative that African countries build strong institutions, which would increase the level of public trust and confidence in the electoral process. International and domestic actors have major roles in the prevention and management of electoral conflicts. The election violence prevention mechanisms must factor the pre-positioning of all actors to prevent related violence. Two types of actors have been identified who could play positive roles in preventing and managing electoral and conflict violence in Africa: Domestic and external actors.

Domestic actors

Domestic actors are all stakeholders that are permanent in the country and must be concerned by the organization and follow up issues related to elections in a country. Among domestic actors are players in justice mechanisms, electoral commissions, political actors, security forces and civil society.

Justice

Electoral disputes are inherent in any electoral process and electoral law is the most political of all disciplines of law. As guardians of the constitutions and the rights of individuals in their countries, judges must uphold the rule of law at all time. The doctrine of the separation of powers must be understood by all partners in politics. Under this doctrine, the legislative, the executive and the judiciary are required to be autonomous, independent and impartial. Judicial independence is particularly important. Without such independence, it would be very difficult for the people to be assured of the protection of their rights.

In many of African countries, it is argued that judicial institutions not only suffer from a lack of financial support and personnel, but some are still embedded in colonial mindsets and, consequently, fail to be part of the broader democratization process. Judicial institutions are very important in the management of electoral and conflict management as it has been seen in recent election in Kenya in 2013.

Another example is India, where the paradox between electoral violence and democracy has been apparent. India is frequently referred to as the world's largest democracy and the question arises as to why persistent electoral violence does not appear to compromise the sustainability of its political and democratic system. The success of democracy in India, despite recurrent electoral violence, seems to defy prevailing theories that stipulate preconditions for democracy. There is a need to further examine this conundrum.

Electoral commissions

It is ultimate the responsibility of all Africans to promote dialogue and fight dictatorship. Political competition must not be based on personal issues or individual actors, but on programs and ideas which are important to the African people. African electoral bodies are in charge of many activities during the electoral process: The registration of voters, balloting, counting of the ballots, declaration of results, the selection and training of electoral officials, voter education and, in some cases, registration of political parties and supervision of party nomination congresses. It is then very important that the nomination of the members of the national electoral commission is discussed between the political stakeholders and civil society actors to build independence and autonomy.

The independence and autonomy of electoral bodies should help empower the Commission regarding due processes, actions and initiatives it undertakes. This can be achieved through a clear and specific legal framework about the procedures at all stages of the electoral process (for both the organization and functioning of the Commission). The same level of clarity and precision of the legal framework is needed for all levels of responsibility of members of the Commission as well as other actors involved in the electoral process and at each major stage of organization and management of the elections. The autonomy of the Electoral Commission must be guaranteed.

Security forces

The neutrality of the security forces is a key precondition for peaceful elections. In elections, security forces play a critical role in establishing security as well as enforcing law and order. When security forces are held accountable, are given proper oversight, and are impartial actors in the election process, their role is a positive one. However, when security forces are used to intimidate segments of the population or inject themselves politically into the elections and back a certain candidate,

their role can be extremely dangerous. For this reason, there is a range of recommendations, including strengthening the national legal frameworks regulating the security forces, establishing an ad hoc election security force, and teaching security forces about respect for international norms and standards for public order in advance of elections.

Security forces are an important actor during electoral processes in Africa. Charged with establishing a safe environment where candidates and citizens can express themselves and vote without fear of retribution, security forces play a critical role in the conduct of peaceful and credible elections. Achieving this goal requires that security forces remain neutral throughout the election process.

The politicization of the military in some countries of Africa, however, has often proven to be at odds with this precondition for free and fair elections. This was illustrated in recent military coups in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, and during the election standoff in Côte d'Ivoire, when former president Laurent Gbagbo refused to give up power despite his defeat in the 2010 presidential election.

In many countries, programs of teaching, promoting, and respecting the international norms and standards for public order during electoral periods, including human rights norms are a necessity for security forces. Such training, for example, in international human rights standards could be an entry point for regional organizations, NGOs, and other governments to assist with security reform which will enhance the level of democracy practices within the country.

In countries where security forces are professional and neutral, their contribution in prevention and management of electoral violence is highly recommended. Deployments before, during and after elections can remove from everybody's mind the idea of violent behavior. Certainly, the importance of the security forces' actions in securing

electoral environment must be seen as part of the cooperation and collaboration between all the stakeholders. Such collaboration involving different political leaders in competition, civil society and justice mechanisms is important in identifying areas especially at risk so as to provide additional, targeted security and trying to shift the incentives structures for politicians so as to change their motives for using violence.

Civil society

Civil society players have had a long history of pushing for peace and democratic reforms in African countries. Women groups, media organizations, labor unions, and human rights groups have played, and continue to play, an important role in strengthening the electoral process by monitoring the elections and ensuring their credibility. In the 2010 presidential elections in Guinea for example, civil society and women groups in particular, stepped up efforts to educate the electorate about the democratic process and to facilitate women's participation in the elections after decades of authoritarian rule.

In other countries, civil society organizations have also been pivotal in fostering democratic, tolerant societies that are less susceptible to recruitment for violent actions by candidates or other groups during the election process. Conversely, civil society can also be divided by ethnic, religious, or other social cleavages, making them susceptible to getting involved in mobilizing groups and fomenting violence.

International actors

Election observation emerged as a significant mechanism for supporting democratic development in the post-Cold War period. International actors are very important especially in election observation. The 1989 elections in Sandinista Nicaragua and the referendum on self-determination in Namibia were early examples. On both occasions, the United Nations (UN) deployed observers jointly with regional

organizations to report on the democratic quality of electoral practices⁷². In this regard, international actors, led by UN and AU have to understand that managing risks of election related violence are an important part of supporting democracy and protecting the electoral process in Africa.

Election observation can act as an inhibitor to violence. In highly polarized settings, observation can be crucial for the results to be accepted both internally and externally. It should provide a balanced assessment without playing down the flaws of the process. Observers should call on stakeholders to channel grievances through peaceful and legal complaint and appeal mechanisms. The very presence of international observers may deter violence or electoral fraud. Observation can increase the electorate's confidence in the process by adding transparency and pressuring stakeholders to follow rules. Moreover, it can defuse tensions between parties by encouraging them and candidates to accept results, if they are credible.⁷³

To succeed in the work of observing, the international officials must be very well briefed about the political history of the countries where they are posted and not merely focused on the immediate observations. They therefore need time to study the country and should be kept longer before to take the advantage of their knowledge.

Management of electoral violence in Africa

There is need for African countries to analyze and learn from experiences of nations that have hosted elections and dealt with the real challenge of electoral violence. The management of electoral violence needs to highlight the importance of Electoral Management Bodies (EMB), the assessment of possible risks for election-related violence, to implement early warning mechanisms and a good electoral administration and governance.

72 Shumbana Karume and Eleonora Mura, *Reflections on African Union Electoral Assistance and observation*, 2012, p22

73 European Commission, *Elections, Violence and Conflict Prevention, summary report*, Barcelona International Peace Centre, Montjuic Castle, Barcelona, Spain, Spain, June 20-24 ,2011

Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs)

It is also evident that electoral violence is not restricted to the election day alone. It can happen before, during and after the elections. Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) have very important roles to play in the management of electoral violence in a country.

Pre-election violence may include acts or threats against electoral stakeholders during voters' registration or electioneering campaigns. Election day violence includes the snatching of ballot papers or boxes, assaults on opposition agents or parties and harassment or intimidation by security agents. In the aftermath of an election, electoral violence may take the form of violent protests against electoral rigging, whether real or imagined and of the state's deploying its apparatus of force in response to the protest, thereby further fuelling the violence.⁷⁴

Electoral Management as an area of critical focus seeks to bring together the knowledge and expertise that has been gathered worldwide about EMBs, their roles and functions, organization, financing, and management of election administration. It also focuses on the institutional structure of EMBs, their administrative infrastructure, the work they do and their external environment. Three types of EMBs have been identified: the Independent Model EMB, the Governmental Model EMB and the Mixed Model EMB.

Different models may be appropriate in different contexts and do not in general seek to be normative or prescriptive beyond the basic characteristics sought in good electoral processes: freedom, fairness, and equity, integrity, voting secrecy, transparency, effectiveness, sustainability, service-orientation, efficiency, impartiality and accountability.

74 Abdul Karim BANGURA, *Post-Elections Conflicts Resolution in Africa Peace Paradigms*, Cornell University, 2012a

By highlighting key principles and good practices from different parts of the world, the aim is to promote professional, impartial, accountable, and sustainable electoral management and EMBs that operate in the best interest of the voters.

Assessing and mapping risks for election-related violence: early warning mechanisms

African countries must understand that democracy is a long process which must be implemented in each country with a minimum of conditions in regard to the nature of conflict and violence that can occur in each country. An early warning mechanism to assess risks to election violence has to be adopted in each country when the period of election is envisaged. This will allow all the stakeholders to be aware of what can happen and to take adequate measures early enough for prevention instead of reactive measures when incidents have already caused damages.

Electoral administration and governance

The quality of election administration, especially in emerging or new democracies significantly determines the credibility of electoral processes. Unfortunately, the issues of how election administration is structured, where, when, and why, have not been the subject of widespread rigorous research in the fields of political science or public administration. Where attention has been given, it has concentrated on the legal issues of electoral systems or the allocation of seats, the socio-cultural issues of election campaigns, the mechanics of voter registration, voting and vote-counting, and the use of technology in elections.⁷⁵ All stakeholders, such as the political parties, observers, and the general public have to ensure that the election management body is properly protected from the political control and influence of the governing party and that its actions are motivated by impartiality and professionalism.

⁷⁵ Robert March, Giovanni Buttigieg, *Electoral management design, The international IDEA hand book*, 2006

While the concept of universal suffrage is relatively new in Africa, election administration and management is an essential part of any democratic process and has existed in some manner for a long time. Someone was responsible for counting the hands and reporting the results in the Athenian assemblies. Throughout the centuries, whilst great importance has been placed on the outcome of elections because of the ability of the result to legitimize government activity, election management has received little attention, few staff, and only scarce resources at best.⁷⁶ This needs to be corrected.

⁷⁶ Bruce E. Cain, Todd Donovan, Caroline J. Tolbert, Democracy in the States, *Experiments in Election Reform*, Brooking Institutions Press, Washington, 2011

The Way Forward

Anti-Corruption, Economic and Social Development

Corruption affects every facet of life in many countries. Any meaningful developmental effort in elections must incorporate anti-corruption measures. This could be achieved by emphasizing on accountability and prosecuting corrupt political office holders to serve as deterrence. It may be important to remove the immunity clause for political office holders from the Constitution, especially in countries where office holder use it abusively. Equally, the International community could pressure governments of Africa to intensify the anti-corruption fight by assisting and cooperating in the fight against all kind of corruption. There must be concerted efforts towards creating a peaceful and secure atmosphere for free and fair elections. The problems of poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment could be addressed by pragmatic steps by governments towards national economic revival. This would encourage more direct foreign investment (DFI) which will boost the economy, create employment and empower the population, hence reducing corrupt tendencies.

Security Sector Reforms

The Police components and the armies have a crucial role in ensuring law and order in any society. To do this effectively, however, they must be well trained, structured, equipped and motivated. African countries, especially those prone to electoral violence, need to restructure, re-equip and motivate their security forces to play their role in ensuring the consolidation of democracy.

In addition to continuous training and capacity building, the control of the security forces would be more effective if it is decentralized to reach the people it serves. This would help promote individual and corporate responsibility. There is need to build the capacity of security forces in the area of small arms proliferation to enable effective performance of their

functions. Increased cooperation between the police and other security agencies like customs and immigration services would be also necessary. Equally, it is important to educate and enlighten citizens to shun violence and embrace a culture of peace. These changes would help curtail the insecurity and cycles of electoral violence prevailing in Africa.

Good Governance and Electoral Laws Reforms

The underlying problem of political instability and related election conflicts and violence is the lack of good governance. Hence, to resolve political instability, accountability, social justice, transparency, rule of law, gender equality and due process must guide governance and leadership in African countries. The media and civil society groups have a role in this regard to advocate for these qualities until a desirable state is achieved.

Permanence of education for democracy

One of the major tasks of National Electoral Commissions should be to participate, with other partners, in organizing sensitization sessions on democracy, freedom and elections. This should involve political parties, governmental bodies and civil society organizations as well as the general public. These activities should be held not only when there is election, but also between elections. The objective should be to preserve their freedom and to enhance democratic practices and behavior.

Role of AU and regional organizations

Many countries have signed the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), created by the African Union (AU) in 2007 as a roadmap to encourage better governance across the continent. It sets out international standards of good governance and democracy in such areas as rule of law, free and fair elections, and condemning unconstitutional changes of government. This policy has to be supported and well implemented as some countries are using the charter as a guide during difficult transitions.

Conclusion

Electoral violence in Africa is occasioned by a number of factors which include poverty, unemployment, and ineffectiveness of security forces, culture of Impunity, weak penalties, bad governance and corruption, as well as small arms proliferation. Unemployed youth have been used as tools for electoral violence. The culture of impunity occasioned by the ineffectiveness of security agencies justifies the need for security sector reforms in many countries. The problem of electoral violence is compounded by the weak provisions of the penal code on electoral offences which demand a review of existent laws. Amongst other effects, political instability, insecurity, underdevelopment and cycle of violence were identified and their impacts on human security, social and economic development highlighted.

Recommendations

In attempting to address the problem of election violence in Africa, the following suggestions should be considered by regional and international actors and organizations:

- First, there is a need to address the weaknesses in election management, by building the capacity of election management bodies to deliver on their constitutional mandate. In most cases, it may be beyond the capacity of national governments to meet the technical and financial commitments required to build the capacity of election management bodies, and the support of regional and international organizations is therefore required. The establishment of an apex body to manage elections at the sub-regional and regional levels should also be explored. Such a body, apart from helping to enhance the capacity of national election management bodies in organizing elections more professionally, can also be useful in ensuring the independence of electoral bodies and warding off undue influence from undemocratic governments.
- Second, the problem of gaps in election observation and reporting can also be addressed by regional bodies, through the establishment of common standards for election observation. This will help to reduce the tensions created by conflicting reports from different observer groups. In most cases, elections declared as free and fair by some observer groups are called as sham by other observer groups.⁷⁷ The creation of common standards for election observation at the regional level should eventually lead to the creation of common election observation standards for the continent, under the leadership of the AU.

⁷⁷ Goswin B,Ulf Engel,Telse D, *The struggle for Independence: Recent development of Zimbabwe (1975-1990)*, Institut fur Afrikakunde, Dokumentations-IIeitselle Afrika,1984, volume 5,p 848

- Third, there is a need for greater awareness of factors, internal to the electoral process, that tend to trigger violence in conflict prone societies, and other external factors likely to set up a violent and volatile context. This is an area that needs further research.
- Finally, African countries need to begin revising the winner-takes-all electoral system, and adopt more inclusive electoral systems that take into account diversities. This is important for Democracies that are still young in Africa. Multiparty democracy and electoral politics have indeed taken root in Africa, and have proven to be better than dictatorships and one-man rule. While election-related violence threatens the consolidation of democracy, it should be viewed as one of the problems that needs to be addressed as part of democratic transition in Africa. Addressing election-related violence is, however, a combined responsibility, including the regional and continental organizations.

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Highlights of the Key Messages in the Issue Briefs

The Role of Media in Peace Support Missions

- The media is a double-edged sword meaning that it can be used to promote peace or conflict and it has a significant influence in the work of PSOs
- For effective peace support operations, there has to be a deliberate PSO strategy of communication that defines the agenda of the mission on which local and international media derive their information
- This media strategy should be an ingredient of a broad post conflict stabilization and reconstruction plan for the host country, to enhance peace support effectiveness.
- The PSO must have a comprehensive program to engage the local media in a bid to build capacity for a democratic and human rights respecting media.
- The emergence of a vibrant media industry is vital for entrenchment and expansion of the democratic space, respects for human rights and for the success of post conflict peace support activities.

Democracy at Risk: Electoral Violence and Conflicts in Africa

- The problem of electoral violence is compounded by the weak provisions of the penal code on electoral offences which demand a review of extant laws. Electoral violence is further fuelled by the issues of bad governance and corruption as well as small arms proliferation

- African political elite exploits the social diversity of their countries for personal political gain by politicizing ethnic identities. While ethnic diversity is not itself a problem, the elite deliberately politicize it in order to gain power and control state resources.
- There is a need to address the weaknesses in election management by building the capacity of election management bodies to deliver on their constitutional mandate.
- It is time to begin revising the winner-takes-all electoral system, and adopt more inclusive electoral systems that take into account identity diversities in Africa for the survival of Democracy.
- The police and the armies have a crucial role of ensuring law and order in any society. To do this effectively however, they must be well trained, structured, equipped and motivated. The police therefore need to be restructured, re-equipped and motivated to play its role in ensuring the consolidation of nation's democracy.

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