JOURNAL OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE
ISSN Print: 2992-2763 – ISSN Online: 2992-4618 | Vol. 2, Issue 1, No. 2 / March 2024
https://www.jopd.com.ng

EXAMINING COUPS, CONFLICTS AND NIGERIAN PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA AND BEYOND

Frederick Omoyoma Odorige
National University of Public Service
Budapest Hungary
E-mail: fodorige@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT
Since 1950, Africa has experienced at least 220 coups and this makes it the highest among other continents. It has been argued that the continent has many of the conditions that are normally associated with coups. Due to various types of conflicts, there is an estimated 40.4 million forcibly displaced Africans either within their respective countries, or as refugees and asylum seekers in other countries. Consequently, many coups and conflicts have led to various interventions through peacekeeping and sanctions. Nigeria has participated in over 40 peacekeeping operations since its first 1960 mission in Congo. Some of the conflicts are caused by coups, alleged marginalization, inequality in the distribution of national wealth, thirst for power or fight for natural resources. The interconnectedness of these causes of conflicts is what this paper set to examine using the systematic qualitative content analysis. The goal is to proffer recommendations that could be used in preventing and addressing such conflicts. Apart from the introductions, it is structured by examining some of the coups and concludes by offering recommendations towards a politically stabilized Africa.
Keywords: Conflicts, Coup, ECOWAS, United Nations, Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Since the first African coup d'état which took place on 13 January 1963 in Togo with the alleged support of the French government, subsequent conflicts which led to peacekeeping, were caused by various factors, including but not limited to coups.

Though no UN peacekeeping has taken place in Nigeria as a result of conflicts from coups or other issues, there has been 8 coup d'états and many conflicts in Nigeria. Such coups led to changes in government.

Foreign interference has also contributed to the instability in several parts of the continent. Some of the conflicts are allegedly empowered by foreign powers who supplied arms and ammunitions in exchange for the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources. For example, though Zamfara state of Nigeria is endowed with gold, it remains one of the poorest states in the country due to frequent terrorist attacks. The violence is reportedly sponsored by those who are involved in illegal gold mining and exportation. It got so bad that it was reported that aircrafts landed and took off in the forests of Zamfara with stolen gold. In awareness of this, the government declared the state a `no fly zone` to ward off such illegal flights and banned all forms of mining (Premium Times, 2021).

Unfortunately, development in the continent is apparently impeded because of the undemocratic actions of those who sit tight in governments for several decades while they stash looted funds in foreign countries. Many of these conflicts have resulted in peacekeeping.

One of the very active contributors to peace making and peacekeeping in Africa and the United Nations is the Federal Republic of Nigeria. She began her first peacekeeping effort in 1960 in the Congo- just the same year that she gained independence from colonial Britain. With an estimated population of 213 million people, it is a country, rich in multi-ethnicity, situated in West Africa. It is surrounded by Niger Republic in the north, the Atlantic Ocean in the south, Cameroon and Chad in the east and Benin Republic in the west.

Nigeria's desire to embark on peacekeeping is hinged on her belief and avowed concern on security issues within and outside the country because she believes that her internal security is connected to regional and global security. This fact is guided by the Constitution of the country as entrenched in

Chapter 2 section 14. 2 (b) *The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.*

The role played by Nigeria in resolving various conflicts and through her participation in peacekeeping in other countries resonates across her national boundaries especially in her activities at the United Nations Operation. Starting in Congo (ONUC) 1960-1964, then West New Guinea (UNSF) 1962-1983, India-Pakistan (UNIPOM) 1965-1966, Lebanon (UNIFIL) 1978-1983, Chad (Operation Harmony I) 1979-1982, Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) 1992 onwards, Rwanda (OAU Monitoring Group) 1992-1993, Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) 1993, Rwanda (UNAMIR) 1993-1995, Liberia (ECOMOG, UNMIL), 1990-1997, Croatia (UNCRO) 1993-1995, Tanzania (TAPKM) 1994, Gambia in 2017, etc. Nigeria has participated in over 45 peacekeeping operations.

Ironically, Nigeria has been faced with various internal ethnic and religious crises since 1960. Most of the conflicts that have led to wars were mostly caused by the silence of the international community in respect of the supposed sovereignty' of countries. Such procrastinations have led to the loss of lives especially against innocent people who were not the root causes of the conflicts.

When Nigeria embarked on the civil war of 1967 against the Biafran uprising, it was focused on the need to preserve the sovereignty of the country. One of the cardinal goals of every government is to ensure the unity and security of the country. The fundamental cause of the Nigerian civil war was that the country was hitherto, divided along ethnic lines through the colonialization by Britain. This created an internally divisive line among Nigerians. Any harm, perceived or real, done against a member of an ethnic group by a member of another ethnic group was easily seen as an ethnic affront with the aim to marginalize and oppress. So, when a coup headed by Major Kaduna Nzeogu occurred in January 1966 and masterminded mainly by soldiers from the eastern part of the country, where Nigeria's Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Northern premier Sir Ahmadu Bello and other notable persons of northern extraction were killed, it was viewed from the ethnic perspective.

In July of that same year, military officers from the northern part of the country staged a countercoup and installed General Yakubu Gowon an officer from central Nigeria as the head of State. It was this counter coup that increased ethnic tensions among Nigerians. In that year, an estimated 30,000 persons of the Igbo-speaking tribe were killed in the north. This was quickly followed by reprisal attacks in the eastern part of the country which witnessed the massacre of many northerners who resided there.

Meanwhile, there has been ongoing grudges that the nation's wealth came from the southern part of the country due to its rich oil deposits. This awareness instigated the southerners who felt that the northerners were receiving more than a fair share. The aftermath of these developments led to the declaration of the Republic of Biafra on 30 May 1967 led by Major Odumegwu Ojukwu. The Nigerian government forcefully stepped in to maintain the territorial integrity of the country by releasing her war arsenals to quell the uprising. The response by the international community further increased the civil war. There was no international consensus on how to restore peace. While some countries supported the secession, others did not. Those that supported it equally supplied equipment and other machineries of war to increase the tension. Once again, the United Nations as an umbrella body could neither take a decisive action nor speak with one voice. Unilateral actions were taken by its member states which exacerbated the tension. The so-called Republic of Biafran was formally recognized by countries like Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Haiti, Gabon, and Zambia. Among others, surreptitious supports were given by Israel, Norway, Rhodesia, Spain, South Africa, France, Portugal, and the Vatican City. It is note worthy that many years after the civil war had ended, a new unarmed uprising occurred mainly between 2016- 2017 led by one Nnamdi Kanu. He hinged most of his unofficial support on Israel and his grouse was that the marginalization which led to the 1967 was still at work.

If cases of peacekeeping and its huge cost implications must be reduced, coups and other forms of conflicts must be nipped in the bud.

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation is the product of systematic qualitative content analysis, derived from available sources such as existing literature and the open source internet. The qualitative content analysis easily helped in creating discourse analysis. This enabled the analysis to focus not only on the result, but on the processes and shortcomings. Nigerian newspapers and other journals were also used to record current events and updates which hitherto, have not been published as academic materials. Through this, I was able to analyze and record events and how Nigeria and the West African region are interconnected economically, politically and in security. Through the various participation of Nigeria in conjunction with other countries, I ascertained how a country like Nigeria manages her recurring international peacekeeping operations and her conflict resolution efforts with the prevalent domestic insurgencies.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is theoretically hinged on the political postulation of the Italian historian and philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527). Machiavelli`s political theory is embedded in his *Prince* (1513). He suggests that *moral corruption is necessary to achieve stability and security. A ruler must be immoral without concern to religion or what is right. Machiavelli believes that a ruler must not be constrained by law. He must be widely feared than to be greatly loved; A loved ruler retains authority by obligation while a feared leader rules by fear of punishment*. As a political theorist, Machiavelli emphasized the occasional need for the methodical exercise of brute force or deceit including extermination of entire noble families to ward off any chance of a challenge to the prince's authority.

He believes that violence is necessary to ensure success in governance and for the stabilization of power. This is also needed to effectively introduce new legal institutions. *Force may be used to eliminate political rivals, to coerce resistant populations, and to purge the community of other men strong enough of a character to rule, who will inevitably attempt to replace the ruler. Machiavelli has become infamous for such political advice, ensuring that he would be remembered in history through the adjective, `Machiavellian`.*

When causes of conflicts are examined, there are similarities to confirm that most of the conflicts arises because most of the political leaders had imbibed and continue to manifest tendencies akin to *Machiavellian ideology.*

Hans Joachim Morgenthau (1996) in his *Politics Among Nations* believes that *Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe.*

It is this Machiavellian aspect of his position that inform this research. Some of the conflicts in Africa are consequences of either the draconian and immoral approach of government or the nonchalant attitude in responding to critical issues raised by the masses. For example, despite many calls against police brutality, poverty, gender disparity, borrowing, election rigging and insecurity, several governments are usually slow or reluctant to take action. In countries like Nigeria where the citizens are being killed and abducted by terrorists, the nonchalance of government makes it appear as if the aberrations are normal. On the other hand, unharmed citizens have been killed for protesting on the streets. In such a situation, it justifies the position of Morgenthau that *moral aspirations of a particular nation* is in opposition *with the moral laws that govern the universe* (ibid).

JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH

With a continuing rise in various conflicts in several countries in Africa and the consequent refugee outflow, it is important to examine the issues and offer some recommendations that could ameliorate the situation.

On the other hand, this research has become necessary because despite the huge natural resources of Africa, continuing conflicts interfere with its development and security.

Regional blocs such as ECOWAS have spent huge resources in trying to stabilize the region from coups and other conflicts. There has to be an end of the tunnel.

ISSN Print: 2992-2763 – ISSN Online: 2992-4618 | Vol. 2, Issue 1, No. 2 / March 2024
https://www.jopd.com.ng

SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND THEIR COUPS

Nigeria

Nigeria became independent in 1960. Since then, there have been five military coup d'état. Between 1966 and 1999, Nigeria was ruled by a military government without interruption, apart from a short-lived return to democracy under the Second Nigerian Republic of 1979 to 1983 (Metz, 1991).

Many years of military coup affected the country`s growth economically and towards achieving democratic values. On 15-16 January 1966, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was overthrown by Chukuma Kaduna Nzeogwu. This was followed by another coup on 29 July 1966 when Yakubu Gowon overthrew Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi. On 29 July 1975, Yakubu Gowon was overthrown by Murtala Mohammed. There was a failed bloody coup on 13 February 1976 when Buka Suka Dimka attempted to overthrow the Head of state Murtala Mohammed - who was eventually killed. On 31 December 1983, Muhammadu Buhari overthrew the democratically elected President Shehu Shagari. On 27 August 1985, Muhammadu Buhari was overthrown by his Chief of Army Staff, Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. There was a failed coup attempt against Babangida by Gideon Orkar on 22 April 1990. On 17 November 1983, Earnest Shonekan the appointed interim Head of government, was overthrown by Sani Abacha (The New York Times, 1993).

In all of these, the coup of 1966 set the tone for the civil war in Nigeria. During the civil war in Nigeria which lasted between 6 July 1967 and 15 January 1970, instead of helping to restore peace between the Nigerian government and Biafran agitators, some countries decided to take sides. In 1968, Israel began supplying the Federal Military Government with arms. President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt deployed pilots attached to the Egyptian Airforce to fight on the side of Nigeria. Britain backed the Federal Government with the instruction to protect British oil installations in the Eastern part of the country operated by Shell-BP Petroleum Development Company. *In 1967, 30% of the oil being imported into Britain came from Nigeria (*Stremlau, 2015). The Soviet Union also supported Nigeria during the War while the United States of America officially declared neutrality. Biafra received the support of African countries such as Gabon, Zambia, Tanzania, and Côte d'Ivoire. France provided weapons and other assistance to Biafra and used their position to pursue international awareness for the war. China was also reported to have supported Biafra with arms using Tanzanian as a route between 1968 and 1969.

Mercenaries from German, Wales, the Italian Giorgio Norbiato; the Rhodesian explosive expert Johnny Erasmus; the Scotsman Alexander "Alec" Gay; the Irishman Louis "Paddy" Malrooney; the Corsican Armand Iaranelli who had been able to enlist in the Foreign Legion by pretending to be Italian; and a Jamaican bartender turned mercenary who called himself "Johnny Korea" (Jowett, 2016).

The intervention of Nigeria in the July 16, 2003 coup d'état in São Tomé and Príncipe was very timely. The coup was successfully launched as led by Major Fernando Pereira against the government of President Fradique de Menezes who was on a visit to President Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria. President Obasanjo called and negotiated with the coup plotters to return power to Menezes and the negotiation succeeded with a promise to grant amnesty to the plotters. Power was returned and amnesty was granted to the plotters (News24, 2003). The military held on to power for 7 days. If not for this intervention, the situation would have degenerated into a worse situation. This was the second coup d'état in São Tomé and Príncipe. The first one led by Manuel Quintas de Almeida against the government of Miguel Trovoada on August 15, 1995, lasted for 6 days before power was restored to the President.

Niger Republic

The conflicts were also connected to coup d'états. There were coups in 1974, 1996, 1999 and 2010. There was an attempted coup in 2021. On 18 February 2010 there was coup in Niger Republic led by Squadron Leader Salou Djibo against President Mamadou Tandja who was kidnapped and replaced with the opposition leader. On 26 July 2023, another coup d'état occurred in Niger. The country's presidential guard detained President Mohamed Bazoum, and the commander of the Presidential Guard, General Abdourahamane Tchiani, proclaimed himself the leader of a new military junta, shortly after confirming the coup a success (Aljazeera, 2022). ECOWAS suspended and sanctioned

Niger, Burkina Faso and Gabon for coup-plotting. In response, the three countries opted to leave ECOWAS and to form a new alliance. After a protracted face off, ECOWAS reinstated the three countries and lifted the sanctions (Aljazeera, 2024).

Guinea-Bissau

They experienced coup d'états in 1980, 1999, 2003, 2010, 2012. On 1 April 2022 there was an attempted coup led by Admiral Bubo Na Tchuto and the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army Antonio Ndjai (BBC, 2011). The head of the military was arrested after the failed coup which witnessed the brief arrest of the Prime Minister. The resulting conflict of interest and the monumental corruption by government officials further worsened the instability of the country.

Democratic Republic of Congo

There has been various coup d'états and conflicts which led to peacekeeping in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Five failed coup attempts were made at various times in 1966, 1968, 1972, 1987 and 2011. Three others succeeded. On 14 September 1960 Mobutu Sese Seko overthrew Patrice Lumumber. On 25 November 1965, Mobutu Sese Seko overthrew Joseph Kasa-Vubu and on 16 May 1997, Laurent-Désiré Kabila overthrew Mobutu Sese Seko and this led to the First Congo War (Britannica, 2024). Coup after coup, the country is yet to be stabilized due to conflicts which are mostly centered around self interests.

Mali

Immediately after independence from France in 1960, historical distrust gave rise to four Tuareg and Arab uprisings which took place in 1963, 1991, 2006 and 2012 (CRU Reports, 2015).

External factors also precipitated the conflicts. Northern Mali became an attraction to Libya and Algeria to broaden geopolitical prominence. Colonel Qaddafi of Libya used it as an opportunity to create a League of Grand Sahara Tribes where he hoped to be a continental leader. Algeria considered Mali as the nearest proximity to promote its own national security agenda.

Among others, there are conflicts over the control and management of land especially in agricultural areas.

The country experienced Five coup d'états in 1968, 1991, 2012 (attempted), 2020 and 2021. The aftermath of the 2020 coup which overthrew President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, received global condemnation especially from the African Union, United Nations and the European Union.The United States of America took a step further by cutting off military aid to Mali (Reuters, 2020).

Though there has been no peacekeeping mission in the West African country of Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), the country was witnessed 14 coup d'états between 1966 and 2022. Ten of them succeeded (January 3, 1966; February 8, 1974; November 25, 1980; November 7, 1982; October 15, 1987; September 18, 1989; September 17, 2015; October 30, 2014, January 23, 2022 and 30 October 2022) while four failed (February 28, 1983; October 7, 2003; September 18, 1989; October 8, 2016). Such coups pose security challenges, disrupts developmental agenda of predecessors and derails the socio-political and economic stability of the country. These disruptions account for why Burkina Faso is considered as one of the poorest countries in the world. It ranks 144th among 157 countries in the World Bank`s Human Capital Index. Since 2015, the situation of the country has been worsened by terrorist attacks which has led to population displacements. *There were 50,000 internally displaced persons in the country in January 2019. By January 2022, more than 3,000 schools (13% of educational institutions) were closed because of the insecure environment.* (World Bank, 2023).

Liberia

The crises that rocked Liberia were mostly precipitated by coup d'états. Though there was an historic occurrence when the Liberian people deposed President Edward James Roye on 26 October 1971, the two coups of 1980 and 1990 destabilized the country. On 12 April 1980 Master Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe overthrew President William R. Tolbert, Jr and on 9 September 1990, Prince Johnson overthrew Samuel Kanyon Doe. Charles Taylor`s militia, *overthrew the regime of Samuel Doe in 1989. The upheaval plunged the country into a 14-year bloody civil war. By the end, 200,000 were killed in the fighting and more than half of the population became refugees* (History,2018). On April 26, 2012, the United Nations-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), sitting in The Hague,

found former Liberian president Charles Taylor guilty of abetting horrific war crimes, rape, and mutilation in Sierra Leone.

Five coup d'états took place in Sierra Leone on 21 March, 1967; 19 April 1968; 29 April 1992; 16 January 1996 and 25 May 1997. From the coup of 1992, Sierra Leone was already in chaos. However, the Jonny Paul Koroma coup of May 25, 1997 launched on the platform of the Sierra Leone Army, SLA, overthrew President Ahmed Tejan Kabba and set the tone for the bloody war which lasted 11 years and reportedly left over 50,000 persons dead.

Somalia

In Somalia, two coup d'états took place. The first one was on 21 October 1969 in which Muhammad Siad Barre overthrew Sheikh Mukhtar Mohamed Hussein. The second one which took place on 26 January 1991 led to the Somali Civil War. In that coup, Mohammed Farrah Aidid and the United Somali Congress overthrew Muhammad Siad Barre. The country became a failed state as law and order gave way to fighting between Somali Armed Forces and different rebel groups - including the Somali Salvation Democratic Front, United Somali

Congress and Somali National Movement, who competed for supremacy. This led to the peacekeeping intervention by the United Nations known as the United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) in 1992. *Somalia topped the annual Fragile States Index for six years from 2008 up to and including 2013 (*Messner, 2014).

Sudan

Nine coup d'états have taken place in Sudan. Three of them failed. In October 1964, a revolution of the people forced President Ibrahim Abboud to resign and hand over power to a transitional civilian government. The failed coups occurred between 19-22 July 1971; 2 February 1977 and 21 September 2021. The successful coups that led to the overthrow of government took place on November 16, 1958; April 6, 1985; June 30, 1989; April 10, 2019 and October 25, 2021. These coups formed the bedrock of the several conflicts that took place in the country. The basis of the conflicts were *fought over resources, power, the role of religion in the state, and self-determination (UN, n.d).* Based on resolution 1547 of 11 June 2004, a special political mission—the United Nations Advance Mission in the Sudan (UNAMIS). UNAMIS was mandated to facilitate reconciliation, stability and restoration in Sudan.

Chad

In Chad, three successful coups took place on 13 April 1975; June 7, 1982 and December 1, 1990. Three failed coup d'états occurred on 16 May 2004; 14 March 2006 and 1 May 2013.

Several rebel factions waged the 1965–1979 Civil War in Chad against two governments. There were outcries against high level corruption, authoritarianism and nepotism. The renewed war that began on December 18, 2005 was also as a result of the same agitations especially by Muslim northerners and Christian southerners who attacked each other whenever the other is in power.

Central African Republic

Out of the 13 coup d'états that took place in the Central African Republic, five succeeded and eight failed. The ones that succeeded mostly had foreign support especially from France the colonialists. For example, the coup of 21 September 1979 succeeded because French military supported the David Dacko-led coup against the overthrow of Jean-Bedel Bokassa (US Dept, 2009). The failed coups took place in 1974, 1975, 1976, 1982, 1996, 2001, 2002 and 2020. The successful coups took place on 1 January 1966, 21 September 1979, 1 September 1981, 15 March 2003 and 24 March 2013.

The war in Central African Republic began in 2012 into 2013 when the Muslim rebel coalition known as the Seleka, went riot by attacking various cities in the country with the goal of overthrowing the government of President Francoise Bozizé whom they accused of not following the peace agreements of 2007. This led to various regime changes and continuing conflicts. In the midst of this chaos and the huge humanitarian challenges, the Security Council authorized on 10 April 2014, the deployment of a multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping operation – MINUSCA with the goal of protecting civilians.

Apart from coups, three factors have common characteristics in some of the conflicts which led to the participation of Nigeria in peacekeeping in Africa. Firstly, they were caused by power tussle at a period immediately after gaining independence. Secondly, the conflicts were worsened because foreign countries supported them with the supply of ammunitions. Thirdly, the quest for resource control played a major factor which caused the conflicts and attracted foreign countries. The wars in Africa had backings from either colonialists or other super powers who saw such conflicts as proxy wars between super powers who had economic interest in harvesting the natural resources of conflicting countries.

Angola

The war began in Angola between the forces of the People`s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola UNITA) due to power tussle after gaining independence from Portugal in 1975. Cuban soldiers, Brazilian airmen and Soviet support backed the People`s Movement for the Liberation of Angola while the U.S. and South Africa-backed National Union for the Total Independence of Angola while the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA) was supported by the People's Republic of China supported.

During the war in Angola, diamond was sold to fund ammunition and logistics. Diamond and Petroleum were major attractions to both the causes and the support by foreign countries. Angola`s natural resources include diamond, petroleum, iron ore in copper, manganese, gold, phosphates, uranium, feldspar, and platinum

Congo

In Congo, the war began after the country became independent from Belgium in 1960. The U.S. And the Soviet Union backed opposing factions while Belgium supported the secessionist states of Katanga in order to fuel the crises in their former colony. In 1960 Mobutu Sese Seko, who was serving as Chief of Staff of the Army, was supported by Belgium and the United States, to depose the democratically elected government of Patrice Lumumba.

In 1967, China helped Laurent-Desire Kabila and his supporters to form the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP). The party failed and he escaped. In 1996, he reappeared and led Tutsi soldiers to attack Hutu troops in South Kivu which was the base of his former party. This started the First War of Congo. Again, he enjoyed the support of other countries such as Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda and he succeeded in removing Mobutu Sese Seko from office on 17 May 1997 on the platform of his new organization known as the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL). Kabila suspended the constitution, and changed the name of the country from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In 1998 Uganda and Rwanda invaded Congo with the goal of toppling Congo's President Laurent-Desire Kabila who they accused of harboring rebel forces in the eastern part Congo with the aim of destabilizing their governments.

During the conflict in Congo under Kabila, Uganda and Rwanda, pitched their troops around river Congo to loot the diamond of Congo. Though both countries do not have diamond, they became exporters as they flew diamonds, gold, and palm oil from Congo. Kigali's Kanombe airport in Rwanda received these products daily from Congo. *Most of the stuff they carry, diamonds, gold, and palm oil, doesn't even leave the airport. It gets loaded on planes for Europe and shipped right out* (Monitor, 1999). Rwanda reportedly used some of the proceeds of the sales to finance the war against Kabila and his allies - Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

Sierra Leone

During the war in Sierra Leone, diamond was also sold to fund ammunition for the war. *By the war's end, the Revolutionary United Front, RUF was generating an annual $ 25 million to $ 125 million this way* (Miesen, 2012). People were hungry for power because they were hungry for resource control. Under the leadership of Charles Taylor, he used blood diamond and illegal timber to fund the war in Sierra Leone.

In April 2012 when the UN Special Court in The Hague, found the former Liberian President Charles Taylor guilty, it was mainly as a result of the role he played when he supported RUF to take

over the mines of Sierra Leone in order to have enough diamond to fight the war against the government of President Joseph Saidu Momoh. Taylor supported RUF against the regime of President Momoh because Momoh supported Samuel Doe against Charles Taylor during the Liberian war. Other mineral resources in Sierra Leone include chromite, bauxite, gold, iron ore, rutile, limonite, columbite, coltan, platinum, tantalite and zircon. Nigeria played a huge role to bring peace to this country. Such efforts were successful through peacekeeping and negotiations. At the end, Sierra Leone installed an elected civilian government in March 1996 to Ahmed Tejan-Kabba, and the retreating RUF signed the Abidjan Peace Accord (Zack-Williams. p. 57-75).

Namibia

The struggle for independence from South Africa caused the conflict in Namibia as South Africa did not want to let go after their legal mandate for their occupation expired. The mandate was later dissolved by the UN due to the apparent misuse of power which sidelined the participation of the indigenes in the policies of government. The ensuing insurgency by the People`s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) showed that South Africa desired to hold on to Namibia as an extended province because of his huge mineral resources which was often exploited.

Namibia is naturally endowed with diamonds, uranium, copper, magnesium, zinc, silver, gold, lead, semi-precious stones and industrial minerals. Diamonds and uranium remain the country's most dependable export for revenue.

Western Sahara

After freeing itself from the stronghold of Spain, a second quest for independence ignites another crises with Morocco (Magid, 2020).

In 2020, the United States recognized Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara. The condition for the recognition was that Morocco would normalize relations with Israel. This meant that the US was willing to sacrifice the sovereignty of Western Sahara on the platter of diplomacy. France also supported Morocco over Western Sahara. On the other hand, Algeria supported West Sahara while Russia remained neutral. These instances show the level of foreign interference in the politics of Africa. This should not be allowed to continue.

Aouzou Strip

In 1973, Libya forcefully intended to use its military might to take control of the Aouzou Strip from Chad especially because it is rich in uranium deposit. This led to the war between Libya and Chad which called for the intervention of the United Nations. The area is a strip of
land located in northern Chad sharing boundary with Libya. It took the intervention of the International Court of Justice in 1994 before the matter was resolved in favour of Chad.

Somalia

France and Italy were colonial masters of Somali. They played roles in the conflict after independence. The main causes of the Somali conflict are competition for power, unbridled desire for resource control (uranium, iron ore, tin, gypsum, bauxite, copper, salt and natural gas), aftermath of the colonial legacy and the violent repression by the military administration against the two opposition groups - the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and the Somali National Movement (SNM).

Foreign involvement was also related to the involvement of the Kenyan government which was initially neutral in the crises. However, when Al-Shabbab began to recruit Kenyan youths into their violent expeditions, Kenya changed its behavior towards the Somali conflict by sending the Kenyan defense forces (KDF) into Somalia to fight Al-Shabbab and prevent their attacks against Kenya (Internal Crises Group, 2012). On the other hand, Ethiopian forces joined in the war in Somalia, while rebels used Somaliland as bases to launch attacks in Somalia.

Liberia

Robert Finley founded the American Colonization Society in 1816 at the south of Sierra Leone to return formerly enslaved African Americans to Africa. Liberia was founded as a country in 1821 and

in 1847, got independence from America (History Editors, 2010). Over the years, Liberia developed foreign partners in trade especially in timber and diamond.

The First war began between 1989 and 1996 as a consequence of ethnic divisions, predatory elites, abuse of power, economic injustice and corrupt political system. The second Liberian civil war which took place between 1999 and 2003 was caused by the failure of the post-first civil war transitional mechanism in the areas of rehabilitation, demobilization, disarmament and re-integration.

The quest for resource control in rubber, timber, iron ore, diamonds, gold, lead, water, palm oil, and wildlife were also part of the causes. Charles Taylor became notorious for his illegal arms-for-diamonds trafficking which precipitated the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. France supported sanctions against Liberia with the condition that the sanctions must excluded the timber and the logging industry. Reports showed that France was the largest importer of Liberian timber with an importation of 37.7%. *"Despite the instability in the region, year 2000 saw a significant increase in the timber imported from Liberia. France increased imports of Liberian timber by 11% in the first six months of 2000 (Perspective, 2001).*Taylor received medical checkups in France and it was possible that it also provided a safe haven for Taylor's ill-gotten wealth. The International Justice Monitor (2009) reports that during the 1997 elections, the *Taiwanese government provided Taylor with two ambulances and $1million for election campaign in 1997 while the government of Libya donated $500,000.*

Mozambique

After fighting guerilla War of independence between 1964 and 1975, the country gained independence from Portugal in 1975. Thereafter, War broke out in Mozambique in 1977

between Mozambique's ruling Marxist party known as Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), the anti-communist forces called the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and other smaller factions. RENAMO challenged FRELIMO's attempts to establish a socialist-one-party state. RENAMO received foreign support from Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), South Africa West Germany (Conciliation Resources, n.d). FRELIMO received military and development aid from the Soviet Union (now Russia) and East Germany, France, UK, the U.S, Tanzania, and North Korea.

The coups in Niger Republic (26 July 2023), Burkina Faso (30 September 2022) and Gabon (30 August 2023), shook the unity of the ECOWAS states. Thereafter, various threats and political-economic sanctions were imposed on the three countries. In response, the three countries "decided in complete sovereignty on the immediate withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)," alleging that the bloc has "moved away from the ideals of its founding fathers and pan-Africanism" (PBS News, 2024). In addition, the military government of Niger Republic requested the French troops to leave their country. However, when ECOWAS realized that the three countries did not succumb to threats and sanctions, the bans were lifted on 24 February 2024 (ChannelsTV, 2024).

It is also believed that the huge resources of commercially important deposits such as coal, copper, rubies, graphite, bauxite, titanium, apatite, iron ore, marble, kaolin, gold, bentonite and tantalum are attractions to foreign interventions. It is also believed that foreign countries mastermind conflicts in some parts of Africa in order to use the ensuing chaos to steal natural resources. For example, in Zamfara state of Nigeria, illegal gold mining takes place to the point where foreigners reportedly arm terrorists to secure illegal mining sites and to wards off any form of opposition. Foreign air crafts enter the bushes of Zamfara from and cart away gold. It was in awareness of this that the government of Nigeria (2021) declared Zamfara a no-flight zone and suspended all forms of mining in the state. In most cases, when the illegal miners are arrested, they are not prosecuted because there are compromises between them and local authorities. For example, in 2020, Premium Times (2020) reported the arrest of 17 illegal Chinese miners in Osun state. Though they culprits were paraded before the media and handed over to the police, they were never prosecuted.

The characteristics of conflicts in non-African countries where Nigeria participated in peace operations, shows that the nature of their conflicts were different but varied. They mostly center around agitations for power sharing or secession. For example, in former Yugoslavia, the causes of

the conflict were mostly based on the desire to secede as a consequence of marginalization. In Lebanon, factions of religious agitators who fought for recognition and supremacy catapulted the conflicts. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait which led to the Gulf war was caused by Iraqi`s unbridled desire to forcefully annex the rich oil resources of Kuwait.

The circumstances that led to peacekeeping in Kosovo was the result of a self declaration of independence and successful secession from Serbia. In Croatia, the desire to secede from the former Yugoslavia was the main reason that led to the war. In Tajikistan, the quest for power was the driving force towards the conflict because some regions felt marginalized in the power representation. The crises in East Timor began during a struggle for independence.

In Haiti, the people wanted independence and self-governance. In general, there is a need to apply Preventive Diplomacy in countries that are tending towards crises. These actions are needed by regional bodies and the United Nations as a way of promoting global peace. When this method was deployed by the United Nations at the Former Yogoslav Republic of Macedonia for the first time between 1995 and 2000, it prevented the war from spreading. Prevention is far less costly than cure if there are constructive engagements and a fair political will. Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1996) states that *preventive diplomacy is action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur... Preventive measures include conflict early warning, fact-finding, by UN missions or other bodies, confidence-building measures, early deployment, humanitarian assistance and demilitarized zones* (ibid). When actions that could prevent conflicts are delayed, disaster is equally postponed. He further stated that *if we are to have any hope of ending human suffering and material destruction, preventive diplomacy must remain a prime objective of the United Nations* (ibid). If this must succeed, it must be with the full awareness of the fact that apart from peacekeeping after conflicts, we are in a world beclouded by economic disparity, social stratification and climate change. Since international peace and security is not only guaranteed in the absence of violent conflicts and wars, governments must put the people first by creating egalitarian societies.

Nigeria participated in all the conflicts that took place in the listed countries above. Its participation were mostly in the provision of personnel. However, within the West African region, Nigeria provides a lot of funding. The cases of Liberia and Sierra Leone are ready examples.

ANALYZING NIGERIAN PEACEKEEPING IN BRIEF

Despite huge security challenges back home, Nigeria has participate in at least 40 peacekeeping missions and six have been commanded by Nigerian senior military officers (Congo, Angola, Lebanon, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Chad. The financial cost of peacekeeping in Chad (1979-82) was borne by Nigeria under the auspices of the OAU. The cost was later written off. Nigeria also bore the main cost of the operations of ECOMOG. On the other hand, Nigeria has occupied the chair position of the UN Special Committee on Peace Keeping Operations since 1972. In 2020 Nigeria was re-elected, for the 48th time, to chair the United Nations Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, regarded as UN's most strategic committee which is also known as C-34. This Special committee which consists of 147 Member States, focuses on Peacekeeping Operations was established in 1965 by the General Assembly and it reviews and provides crucial recommendations on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

Nigeria`s role in peacekeeping has become consistent and exemplary due to its commitment to burden sharing, ability to navigate difficult paths from conflict to peace, and the ability to swiftly deploy troops and police officers to any part of the world amongst the countries serving in various operations. Data from the UN Peacekeeping Department classified Nigeria as among the world's 15th largest troop contributor to UN Peacekeeping operations and the eighth in Africa (United Nations, 2018). For example, in 2016, Nigeria contributed 2,170 peacekeeping personnel composed of 403 policemen, 46 military experts and 1, 721 troops, out of which 232 were females. In all of these, there are huge internal conflicts in Nigeria which the world seem not to be concerned about. Between 2015 and 2023, when retired army general Buhari was president, 63,111 Nigerians were killed by non-state actors (Vanguard, 2023). No tangible support was received from the international communities.

In the face of many conflicts, it is possible that with international cooperation and the instrumentality of the United Nations and respect for the rule of law, more civil wars could be ended through negotiation and diplomacy.

However, some of the conflicts in Africa - especially the coups - had backings from foreign countries who have economic interest in such countries. If this is so, it could be argued that their aim is to have their stooges in positions of authority so that they could easily exploit the resources of such countries (Ngima, 2023). Having at least 13 countries having military presence in Africa, with about 11 foreign military bases in the Horn of Africa, does not help matters (Isilow, 2023). Africa must decide her future through an AU standing force, while Nigeria must focus more on solving her internal crises before participating in peacekeeping operations in foreign countries.

Trade and prosperity could occur through the interdependence of countries in international trade without setting up military bases in African countries. However, there must be individual liberty which forms a strong ingredient for peace and security. Unlike some African countries, there is no foreign military base in Nigeria but the country has bilateral investment agreements with 31 countries, 15 of which are in force as of 2023. Nigeria also has double tax treaties with 13 countries and is a signatory to 21 investment-related instruments (International Trade Administration, 2023).

Apart from strategic prevention of conflicts, post-conflict peace-building must be robust and encompassing of all actions that could clearly *identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict* (ibid).

When conflicts have been prevented or peacekeeping operations successfully completed, the imperative need for sustainable peace must not be undermined. This could be achieved through *nurturing, empowerment, and communications*. It is through nurturing that psychological stability and emotional maturity are encouraged. Empowerment entails well founded inner security built on functional social structures and protection. Effective and reliable communication is necessary to surmount ignorance and establish mutual communal existence.

CHARITY BEGINNING FROM ABROAD?

Though it is said that charity begins at home, charity seem to begin from abroad when Nigeria addresses the problem of conflicts. While serious security challenges were mostly left unaddressed by the Nigerian government, she spent so much resources in securing and stabilizing other countries. When insecurity enmeshed all parts of Somalia, Nigeria participated in peacekeeping there while terrorism was also widely spread in Nigeria at that period.

A recorded number of 6,895 Nigerians were reportedly killed in 2021 (Amnesty International: Nigeria, 2022). Out of this number, 844 of persons killed were state security officers and 6051 were civilians. While at least 2002 persons were abducted in 2020, at least 5,663 were abducted in 2021 (Vanguard, 2022). Analysis of the demographic spread of terrorism in Nigeria, shows that in 2021 when a Nigerian troop was sent to Somalia, five states in the northern part of Nigeria was experiencing over 57.3 percent of abductions. 4 of the 5 occurrences were in the North-West and the last was in the North-Central. Of the 5,663 abductions, at least 3,246 were recorded in the North West in 2021. 1,225 of these had occurred in Kaduna state, just barely more than the at least 1,169 abductions that took place in Zamfara State. Around 1,522 abductions occurred in the North Central. Within this number, Niger state had the highest number of 1,127 abductions.

Zamfara, Kaduna and Niger jointly experienced 62.1 percent of the abductions that occurred.

Students were not spared. Over 1,000 Nigerian students were kidnapped between December 2020 and September 2021 in northern Nigeria (Asadu, 2021), particularly in the mass kidnaps that took place in Kaduna, Kebbi, Niger, Zamfara, and Katsina state - which is the home state of Muhammadu Buhari, the President who, as a retired army general, was expected to have the professional experience to secure the country. His failure became ridiculous because during his campaign for election in 2015, he promised to end terrorism within six months of resuming office!

Death by ritual killings showed that more than 180 persons were killed. Other recorded isolated attacks included 186 killings, secessionist attacks saw 223 being killed. Political attacks witnessed 34 killed, mob attacks had 41 persons killed. During communal clashes 530 persons were killed; cult clash reckoned 252 killed by secessionists, while Herdsmen and Boko-haram/ISWAP attacks recorded 589 and 313 persons killed respectively (Vanguard, 2021). With such deaths that ought to have been prevented, it was ironic that the country which needed to beef up security within her territory, was sending her troops to secure another country.

Peacekeeping experiences by Nigeria opened many sad situations in countries of conflicts. For example, warring parties such as the Congolese Army, Rwandan Hutu rebels, Congolese Tutsi rebels and members of the community used rape as an expression of violence in eastern Congo. The weaponization of female and male bodies in times of war is a war within a war. Sexual violence in the war in Congo took humanity to abysmal level. *Medecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) has reported that 75 percent of all the rape cases it dealt with worldwide were in the eastern Congo. A census by UNICEF and related medical centers reported treatment of 18,505 persons for sexual violence in the first 10 months of 2008, 30 percent of whom were children* (International Group, 2009). On the other hand, it was reported that an estimated 90 percent of minors detained in correctional centers in eastern Congo were convicted of rape. Women who were victims of rape were quickly discharged from the hospitals before healing, to make way for new cases for lack of bed space.

In another instance, in September 2021, the UN reportedly withdrew some 450 Gabonese peacekeepers from its peacekeeping force in the Central African Republic. This was after several accusations and report of sexual exploitation and abuse (United Nations, 2021).

Beyond the lethal impact of bullets, it is imperative that the International Criminal Court (ICC) begin to arrest perpetrators and treat cases of rape and sexual violence during war. Apart from being crime against humanity, the act should be considered as war of genocidal proportion. How else could perpetrators be treated when they gang rape and go to the extent of tearing the vaginas of women apart by the insertion of metal weapons?

This could be followed with long years of imprisonment to act as deterrent to would- be perpetrators. Doctors, educators and civil societies must be fully encouraged and equipped in attending to cases of sexual violence. For his work of treating over 50,000 victims of sexual violence and wartime rape in his Panzi Hospital, that Congolese Dr Denis Mukwege, world-renowned gynecologist, human rights activist won the 2018 Nobel peace prize for his *efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict* (Nobel, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Apart from other factors that lead to conflicts, coups play a major role in the destabilization of countries. Under such circumstances, law and order are broken, constitutions are suspended, borders are closed and violent fighting occurs. Such conflicts usually take time to heal. Coups usually occur for two reasons. Either the army is hungry for power or the democratic governments have failed to keep up with their elections campaign promises.

Most African leaders operates governance based on Machiavellian principles where they regularly apply the methodical exercise of brute force or deceit including extermination of opposition to ward off any chance of a challenge to their authority. They believe that violence is necessary to ensure success in governance and for the stabilization of power.

As Nigeria continue to participate in peacekeeping in other countries, there are rising insecurity in the country that need urgent priority. Sexual violence in times of conflicts is both a threat to international peace and a degradation of humanity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The African Union should establish a standing army which could act as a quick response team to arrest conflicts before they are blown out of proportion.

Illegal mining of natural resources must attract very severe legal consequences. This will put an end to the proliferation of arms and conflicts incited by such miners.

Foreign military forces must not be allowed to establish bases in Africa. It is believed that such forces mastermind coups and siphon natural resources. However, training and joint military actions could be done in cooperation whenever the need arises.

In order to stop the epidemic of sexual violence in times of war or peace,
Governments must institutionalize practical mechanisms that prevents the urge for rape through training of officers, campaigns and proper education in schools and public places. Practical legal assistance, psychological and socio-economic support must also be given to victims.

REFERENCES

AlJazeera, (28 July, 2023), Niger general Tchiani named head of transitional government after coup,https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/28/niger-general-tchiani-named-head-of-transitional-government-after-coup

Al Jazeera, (24 February, 2024), ECOWAS lifts sanctions on Niger amid tensions in West Africa, bloc,https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/24/ecowas-lifts-sanctions-on-niger-amid-tensions-in-west-africa-bloc

Amnesty International: Nigeria. 2022, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/west-and-central-africa/nigeria/report-nigeria/#:~:text=Nigeria%202022,military%20in%20north%2Deastern%20Nigeria.

Asadu, Chinedu, (1 September, 2021), AP News, Gunmen kidnap 73 students in latest attack on Nigeria school, https://apnews.com/article/africa-education-nigeria-9408a6c2d1895d1a465cc3045c004cbd

BBC, (27 December, 2011), Guinea-Bissau coup attempt: Navy chief arrested, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-16339626.

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (1 January, 2024). *Laurent Kabila*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Laurent-Kabila

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, UN Secretary-General, in a message to the International Workshop "An Agenda for Preventive Diplomacy: Theory and Practice" Skopje, 16-19 October 1996.

ChannelsTV, (24 February, 2024), UPDATED: ECOWAS Lifts Some Sanctions On Niger, Mali, Guinea, https://www.channelstv.com/2024/02/24/breaking-ecowas-lifts- economic-sanctions-on-niger-burkina-faso-mali-guinea/

Conciliation Resources, (n.d), https://web.archive.org/web/20111229195859/http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/mozambique/key-actors.php.

CRU Reports, (March 2015), The root of Mali`s conflicts, i's conflict

https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2015/the_roots_of_malis_conflict/executive_summary/

History, (18 May, 2018), Former Liberian president Charles Taylor found guilty of war crimes, https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/former-liberian-president- charles-taylor-found-guilty-of-war-crimes.

History Editors, (21 July, 2010) Liberian independence proclaimed, A&E Television Networks https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/liberian-independence- proclaimed.

International Crises Group, (11 June, 2009), Rape as a Weapon of War in Congo, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/democratic-republic-congo/rape-weapon-war-congo.

International Justice Monitor, (1 December, 2009), Charles Taylor Received Money From Taiwan and Libya, https://www.ijmonitor.org/2009/12/charles-taylor-received- money-from-taiwan-and-libya-for-his-presidential-campaign-he-says/.

International Crises Group. (2012), The Kenyan Military Intervention in Somalia. International Crises Group. African Report. Feb. 15-2012. No.184. http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-ofafrica/kenya/184-the-kenyan-military-intervention-in-somalia.aspx.

Isilow Hassan, (27 July, 2023), Chains of Colonialism.... https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/-chains-of-colonialism-western-powers-in-africa-vying-for-control-geopolitical-edge/2956190.

Machiavelli, Niccolò (1532), *The Prince*. Italy. pp. 120–21

Murray, A. J. H. "The Moral Politics of Hans Morgenthau." The Review of Politics 58, no. 1 (1996): 81–107.

Helen Chapin Metz, ed. (1991), *Nigeria: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress.

Messner, J.J. (June 24, 2014). "Failed States Index 2014: Somalia Displaced as Most-Fragile State".

Miesen, F. (21 May, 2012), Development and Cooperation, *Blood Diamonds,*

Monitor, (16 August, 1999), Behind the Congo war: diamonds, https://www.csmonitor.com/1999/0816/p1s4.html

News24, (24 July, 2003), Coup leaders get amnesty

https://www.news24.com/news24/coup-leaders-get-amnesty-20030724

Ngima, Igor, (12 October, 2023). A Surge of Military Coups in Africa Threatens Human Rights and the Rule of Law, https://freedomhouse.org/article/surge-military-coups- africa-threatens-human-rights-and-rule-law

Premium Times, (2 March, 2021), Insecurity: Buhari declares Zamfara 'no fly zone', restates ban on mining activities, https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/446350- insecurity-buhari-declares-zamfara-no-fly-zone-restates-ban-on-mining- activities.html?tztc=1.

The Nobel Peace Prize, (2018), https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2018/press-release/

The New York Times, (18 November, 1993), Nigerian Military Leader Ousts Interim President, https://www.nytimes.com/1993/11/18/world/nigerian-military-leader-ousts- interim-president.html

United Nations, (16 February, 2018), Peace and Security, https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/02/1002901

US Dept of State, (20 January, 2009), Central Africa Republic, https://2009-2017.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/centralafricanrepublic/49616.htm

Vanguard, (20 May, 2023), Insecurity: 63,111 persons killed in Buhari's eight years, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/05/insecurity-63111-persons-killed-in-buharis-eight-years/

Vanguard, (28 May, 2022), Insecurity: 6,895 persons killed in one year, 1,000 students kidnapped — Report, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/05/insecurity-6895- persons-killed-in-one-year-1000-students-kidnapped-report/

· Zack-Williams, Alfred. (2018) The state and accumulation in Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*, 45. DOI: 10.1080/03056244.2018.1591076