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# CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF PEACE AND CONFLICTS RESOLUTION IN THE 21ST CENTURY AFRICA

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**Abstract.**
This paper attempts to examine the challenges and prospects of peace and conflicts resolution in Africa, particularly using the application of the technological revolution of the 21st century. The post-colonial character of Africa has no doubt, imposed some enormous burdens of nation-building on many of the states in aftermaths of the colonial ethno-geographical alterations of the indigenous boundaries and societies in Africa with dire consequences for governance system and the inter-group relations in general. However, it is also apt to remark that, African continent as a recipient of the contemporary technological revolution of the digital age, has been much endeared to the adaptability of the accompanied tools in the digital revolution with that wider embrace of such across states on the continent. Similarly, it is also observed that, violent conflicts in the recent times in Africa are now much instigated and escalated through unhindered access of the cyberspace by the warring parties and actors. This paper therefore, has adopted a literature-based methodology to interrogate the possible use of the digital tools in conflict resolution and peace building efforts in Africa. It is however, in the opinion of this paper that, given the right democratic ambience of good governance and the appropriate deployment of the tools of the digital technology in Africa, the challenges of conflict resolution and peace-building can be adequately confronted in the collective interest and the wellbeing of the Africa continent.
***Keywords:*** Challenges, Prospects, Peace, Conflict Resolution, 21st Century.

## 1.0 Introduction:

Africa remains a continent with crises of varying dimensions. As a post-colonial entity, the continent has continued to contend with some of the collateral effects of its age-long political domination of the colonial rule most especially, the prevailing circumstances of its heterogeneous configurations as deliberately constructed by the rapacious colonial authorities. Imperatively, the many post-independence challenges encountered by the African countries have also been linked to issues arising from the struggles over the control of the socio-political and economic spaces among the contending warring political actors. Arguably too, the increasing access in the usage of information and communication technology has further exacerbated vulnerability of many societies in Africa to conflicts. The era of new media and its wide embrace by citizens across African countries have equally had its own fair share of the blames particularly, in its negative deployment and for the instigation of conflicts in many African societies. The phenomenal cases of fake news and its other variants as hate speech, misinformation and disinformation as major drivers of conflicts are some of the worrisome trends that dominate contents on the social media space in the most recent times.

Imperatively, some of the challenges of underdevelopment in Africa have also been traced to these many conflicts in their adverse effects on sustainable development and the inflictions of humanitarian disasters in many African societies. Violent conflicts and disruption to peace have no doubt, been identified as the major drivers of poverty and underdevelopment in African and elsewhere (Ismail& Olonisakin; 2021). However, peace and conflict resolutions could be greatly enhanced, if measures are also put in place by all concerned stakeholders, with

the effective deployment of the tools of technology as necessary mechanisms for realizing such objectives. There is also an increased witness in the numbers of peace-building actors, including international and regional agencies as well as domestic non-state actors and diplomatic missions who have consistently had the enormous operational engagements within the peace-building space in the past few decades (Carothers; 2016).

With the phenomenal increase in the numbers of actors within the peace-building and conflict management space, the deployment of the tools of technology also witnessed some paradigm shifts in the approaches and methodologies adopted by these key actors in their continuous engagements in peace-building and mitigation of conflicts (Larrauri and Kahl, 2013). Though, the nature of conflict today is changing and this has further rendered the practice of peace-building and conflict management somewhat cumbersome. The dynamic nature of conflict in the contemporary world system is also more embracing as with the changing nature of the technological revolution. As quite observed, the nature of conflict is increasingly becoming more susceptible to the vagaries of technology. The rising cases of information leakages and other breaches of confidentiality, monitoring and surveillance, including for targeting purposes; internet shutdown; data breaches, disruptive information flows such as misinformation and disinformation; competition for critical internet resources, and infrastructure sabotage or disruption are some of the common features of conflict today (U.N., 2019).

Obviously, the negative deployment of technology has mostly precipitated tensions among warring parties while at the same time, deepening the many intractable conflicts within territories. The prevailing incidences of dissemination of unverified information and media contents have been on the increase with the resultant consequences for the escalation of violent conflicts. Without any doubt, such tendencies have continued to pose greater limitations to peace-building efforts and constituted inhibitions to conflict management generally. It is however, expected that, peace-building and conflict management experts must come to terms with the realities of these challenges. Part of such compelling efforts for the peace-building and conflict management experts must also include the very need to exploit the many opportunities offered by the digital space most essentially, the adoption of the appropriate technological tools applicable to the peculiar terrain of conflict management.

This is not only necessary to evolving the appropriate mechanisms for mitigating conflicts in general, but as a potent counter-narrative platform for discouraging the negative use of technology within the communities of the online users. No doubt, technology can help to mitigate conflicts in Africa as elsewhere. The possibilities for that are quite bountiful and immeasurable if necessary institutional and infrastructural measures are also put in place to stimulate the desirable environment required for the realization of such laudable objectives.

## 2.0 Peace and Conflict Resolution in Africa: An Exploration

As argued previously, the post-colonial nature of the Africa continent has been a major pointer to some of the embedded crises of its underdevelopment, including the many conflicts which have continued to re-define its post-colonial character. The aftermaths of the end of the ideological cold-war of the early 1990s had not only made the Africa continent more vulnerable, but the instigation of inter-state conflicts arising from the externally induced factors of the changing dynamics of the emerging international system and its new realities. There is also no doubt that, the emerging realities of the aftermaths of the end of the cold-war have brought upon many states in Africa, some devastating intra-ethnic and culturally defined conflicts within same states. Cases of marginalization in the distribution of the state resources, political arrangements, as well as, in the administrative and bureaucratic positions have been the major combustible factors for conflicts in Africa. More worrisomely, the Africa continent

is reportedly accountable for almost half of the world's violent conflicts (Gilpin; 2016), and as such, its depiction as the global theatre of wars could be somehow well accepted without any equivocation. Though, conflict resolution is not alien to the African societies through the ages as with many other societies in the world. However, methodologies such as conciliation, arbitration, mediation, negotiation, adjudication and extra-judicial approaches have been with the African societies even in their ingenious attempts to mitigate and manage crises within the indigenous and communal systems (Ajayi and Buhari; 2014).

The traditional African methodologies to conflict resolution have not only been designed at the possible mitigation, but also in the preemptive considerations of conflicts as inevitable human actions in any society. Importantly, the African methodologies on conflict resolution have been more profound in ensuring genuine and long lasting resolutions while subjecting warring parties to open and unbiased adjudication system. Beyond that, African methodologies to conflict resolution must have also taken their roots in the communal arrangements of the many traditional African societies whereby, the biases of class systems peculiar with the colonial and post-colonial arrangements are abhorred and not allowed to dictate the procedures.

As argued earlier, the post-colonial African political governance space is still riddled with many collateral effects of the unmindful geopolitical configurations of the colonialist and hence, the attendant ethno-cultural and linguistic alterations of geographical boundaries across Africa. These have resultantly placed the post-colonial African political governance space within the necessity of confronting the many intractable violent conflicts of varying dimensions which also mostly triggered by inter-group desires to gain access or control over resources and other accoutrements of political power. The prevalence of violent conflicts on the continent could however, be explained within the context of both the post-colonial character and the transitional nature of states in Africa considering the growing spates of civil wars, terrorism and insurgences, cross-border crimes, inter-communal and intra-communal strifes, as well as, military coups and mutinies prevailing within the continent. Putting this succinctly, Akinola and Uzodike (2017) aver that, transitional states with prolonged external domination have been more prone to violent conflicts which most incidentally too, have prompted the search for viable methodologies in conflict resolution and peace-building across states in Africa. This contention is also a further affirmation of the peculiar post-colonial nature and character of the African states in terms of their susceptibility to violent conflicts due to inter-group quest for access and the control of state resources.

The peculiarity of the post-colonial African states' responses to conflict resolution and peace-building are however, not only uniquely tailored towards some of the internally-induced crises. For instance, the peculiar methodologies of conflict resolution and peace-building efforts such as military reprisal in state-centric conflicts, elite co-optation and third party intervention have been identified as part of the potent mechanisms to curtail or prevent incidences of violent conflicts, as well as, in peace-building measures in the much of the crisis-prone states in African (Oladipo; 2022). The resort to these mechanisms are also not far-fetched from the existential realities of the post-colonial African political architecture as riddled with many crises of governance. Notwithstanding the validity of the causative factors of some of these violent conflicts or crises within states in Africa, the resort to conflict resolution and peace-building mechanisms are only justified by the interventionist need as could be required to mitigate or prevent conflicts in general.

Looking at the necessities of military reprisal as one potent mechanism of peace restoration, it is mostly state-centric and propelled by the desire to repel possible anti-state or anti-government violence orchestrated to discredit the government. The #ENDSARS# protests against police brutality and reactions to bad governance in Nigeria, and the controversial

deployment of the military to repel protesters in that circumstances was a very good instance of military reprisal in response to a state-centric violence. However, the use of military reprisal approach is a common phenomenon in many states in Africa possibly, because of the constabulary orientation of the African militaries as part of the colonial governments' instrumentalities of subjugation. The resort to military reprisal could not also be perceived from the immediate post-colonial aberration of the military interregnum in governance across Africa where the use of military repression was the only legitimate monopoly of force against any dissent voice.

As part of the peculiar conflict resolution and peace-building efforts, the adoption of elite co-optation methodology has equally provided another dimension to the post-colonial character of political leadership in Africa as another instrument of suppression against dissent voices. The neo-patrimonial political leadership and the entrenched prebendal hegemonies have continued to lend credence to the use of elite co-optation in many states across Africa. As the name suggests, elite co-optation is often deployed by the elites in the society as a strategy to hoodwink, and possibly placate, enlist, disorganize, destabilize and weaken the agitating elements of the society. It could also adopt the strategy of luring the vocal or leading members of the opposing elements through the offers of public office appointments, award of state contracts and other alluring propositions by the state as baits to surreptitiously enlist the opposing camp or dissenting elements (Mudasiru & Moshood; 2017).

On other hand, the use of third-party in conflict resolution and peace-building is not alien within the precinct of the African political landscape and this methodology also offers its utility in the context of crisis becoming intractable beyond the capabilities of the warring parties. The necessity of engaging the positive intervention of external interveners therefore, remains the only possible alternative to arriving at resolutions. Importantly, the involvement of external interveners such as arbitrators, conciliators, facilitators, peace enforcers and facilitators, and the use of good offices could offer the only avenues for pacific resolutions to conflicts. The utility of the third-party instrument has gained significant acceptance globally and it is widely deployed by both the state and non-state actors within the international system as one veritable methodology because of the enormous skills of diplomacy usually adopted to the benefit of all the parties concerned. As reiterated earlier, the adoption of third-party mechanism to conflict resolution and peace-building can also rely on the effective utilization of the multilateral arrangements which could offer broader and unbiased perspectives to issues of concern to the warring parties at large.

Imperatively, it is also noteworthy to remark that, in spite of the heavy reliance and utilization of these peace-building and conflict resolution mechanisms within those compelling factors which have also made their adoption necessary, much could not have been noted in achieving the mandate of facilitating peace-building and conflict resolution in that particular regard. These submissions are not in vacuum of the realities of the failure of the several multilateral mechanisms put in place either at the global, continental or sub-regional levels for the purpose of achieving the onerous tasks of conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives. However, irrespective of some of the shortcomings identified with the adoption of these conflict mitigating and peace-building mechanisms, their utilities have also proven to be essential in creating harmonious cohabitation and promoting the desired international milieu for favourable socio-economic and political interactions of all actors.

## 3.0 Challenges of Technology and Conflict Resolution in Africa

Technological revolution has no doubt, offered itself in both positive and negative manners as could be necessary to further induce the dynamics of the international system. Going by the recent trajectories of warfare and most specifically, at the turn of the 2nd World War, it is

evident that, technological revolution has redefined warfare and its patterns. Aside the possible devastating effects of warfare in terms of its collateral humanitarian consequences, the continued quest for competitive superiority among states have not only brought about the invention of instruments of mass destruction, but the eruption of violent conflicts within the international system. The emerging realities of the contemporary international system have been compelling and quite embracing to the self-evident assertion of the ubiquitous nature of technology.

The utility of technology is no longer the exclusive preserve of the states, as it is now adopted as instruments of social interactions and citizens' engagement for participatory governance, even beyond the territorial confines of the states. These assertions simply attest to the fact that, technological revolutions as occasioned by the upsurge in information and communication technology have not only enlarged the bandwidth of engagements and the levels of consciousness among citizens across the world. The application of information and communication technology to conflict resolution and peace-building among non-state actors has also been observed to be significant in the enhancement of cohesion and stability within the international system. The application of modern information and communication technology has no doubt, provided the formidable platform for connectivity and the aggregation of opinions among people from far and near on issues of common global concern (Gallagher; 2018).

Putting this succinctly, the accessibility to the social media windows, and most importantly, through the Facebook, Twitters, Instagram, WhatsApp, among such platforms of social engagement have increasingly fostered interactions, as they are also daily deployed as effective instruments of social mobilization despite their sometimes negative usage as instruments for disseminating fake news, disinformation and misinformation. The cyberspace as a platform for social cohesion and interactions, has also provided the alternative democratic windows against bad governance and authoritarian rules, which sometimes too, instigate violent conflicts within the polity. Many recent cases of violent conflicts including incidences of insurgences and democratic reversals via coup d'états and other violent conflicts on the Africa continent can be mostly traced to the unhindered accessibility of the cyberspace and its misapplications. It could be remarked that the Egyptian mayhem which later erupted into the Arab Spring in 2011, to the #ENDSARS# protests in Nigeria of 2020, and several other violent conflicts including cases of insurgences and terrorisms have also received much momentum due to the increasing use of the social media spaces as the tools of mobilization and the propagation of the nefarious activities of the insurgent and terrorist groups in creating the atmosphere of violent conflicts across many states in Africa.

It is however noted that, states with authoritarian tendencies in Africa have often reacted in most spontaneous and brutal manners in response to any form of possible violence against the state. With the imposition of restrictive regulations amidst other drastic measures of censorship by governments in limiting the negative use of the social media, such efforts can only continue to generate condemnations against any government as undemocratic. Arising from such imposition of restrictive regulations in the use of the social media, African states as Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Togo, Zimbabwe, and Togo have been identified and continued to be condemned for their undemocratic measures and restrictive regulations in the use of the social media by the citizens (BBC Africa News; 2021).

Beyond the imposition of restrictive regulations against the usage of the social media, it is also observed that, some states in Africa have gone far with the total restrictive access to the social media space in the efforts to curtail possible reactions against the government of the day. The total ban on the use of the Facebook and some other restrictive regulations

particularly, the imposition of higher taxes and tariffs on mobile data usage have equally been observed in some African states. The trend of the reported social media blackout as noted in some African states as Burkina Faso, Senegal and South Sudan could not only been seen as undemocratic measures, but in the calculated attempts to curbing citizens possible reactions against the government due to the potency of the social media space as an effective platform for citizens mobilization.

The increasing accessibility to the social media space have no doubt, altered the African governance landscape. The citizens' accessibility to the social media have not only served as a potent tool of political empowerment with the rising consciousness among the African citizens. It must also be emphasized that, the increasing access to the social media space has equally subjected the African leaders to self-censorship and critical self-assessment particularly, on policy actions of the government due to the agenda-setting opportunities being offered with accessibility of the citizens to the social media. The application of technology in the modern day political governance system and the use of the social media should be seen beyond the perceived threat to the status-quo governance frameworks in Africa. The potentials inherent in its positive application for resolving many violent conflicts and peace-building efforts are more than what it portends in the face of its misapplication.

## 4.0 Africa and the Prospects for Peace and Conflict Resolution in the Digital Age

The digital age is no doubt, an evolving epoch in its infinitesimal dynamics. Though, the digital age is also a social construct of the man while it continues to determine the changing dynamics of human society, including man's engagement with conflict and the need to resolve same in ensuring peace and stability. However, the utility of digital technology could be better established beyond the regulatory role of the African policy makers towards the need for its adoption as a veritable instrument for peace building and conflict resolution. As argued by Okolie-Osemene (2012), efforts at peace education need not always be formal, as it can be rightly achieved through other informal arrangements, relying on the effective deployment of the digital technologies. In fact, contrary to misgivings of the African leaders, the adoption of technology posits enormous benefits and the potentials for mitigating conflict situations and in peace building efforts on the continent.

It is quite disturbing to observe the restriction on the use of the social media in most African countries on the account of the possible anti-government contents on the social media platforms and the unregulated accessibility of the citizens. As reported by Ovurie (2022), the African continent is responsible for 53% of the global restrictions on the use of the social media space while, 34 of the 54 that is, 60% of the countries in Africa have placed total shutdown on the use of the social media. The restrictive regulatory measures of the social media have also been reported not to be too far from the peculiar crises-induced nature of governance in Africa, most especially, in the aftermaths of the social discontents of uprisings, post-electoral crises, intergroup violence and the contending disputes of devastating humanitarian magnitudes. Nevertheless, the imposition of heavy restrictive regulations as regard citizens' accessibility to the cyberspace has not in any way achieved the aim of regulating citizens' conducts nor reduce the intended objectives of clamping down on the possible anti-government contents and postures on the cyberspace.

Importantly, there appears to be some possible alternative measures towards the prospects for resolving conflict and building peace on the African continent particularly, in the era of new media and digital age. These alternative options are also in consonance with the need by the African countries and their resolution for building a more democratic and robust governance space. While leveraging on the existing mechanism for promoting good governance on the continent such as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), African

leaders could initiate and integrate digital policies capable of enriching the democratic profiles of the African countries in such an ambience for effective citizens' engagements. Such policy measures, for the sake of eliminating the tendencies of the rising spate of fake news, misinformation and disinformation and their devastating consequences, should be adequately built around regulatory frameworks which also allow for unhindered free-flow of information among citizens but with some limited restrictions that prohibit the flagrant misuse of the cyberspace in any manner which could ignite conflicts.

Conversations on peace building and conflict resolution have in many instances, been leveraged on the structural platforms of the digital technology and the cyberspace. As earlier noted, the opportunities offered by the various social media platforms are enormous. The virtual space as an embodiment of the social media has much influenced digital democracy (Indiato, Nurasih, & Witro; 2021). This contention is also self-evident to the realities of the many unfolding events on the African continent. The social media platforms such as Instagram, Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Line, blogs, Websites among others have lately become easy tools in promoting digital democracy while providing the citizens with the voice to air opinions, acquire information, and as platforms of mobilization on germane issues of democratic values (Waluyo, 2019).

The era of digital democracy as enunciated above has also given rise to the emergence of global civil society groups and democratic movements whose focus are on peace building and conflict resolution agenda. Such democratic movements and the civil society groups have not only heavily deployed the social media platforms but have consistently engaged their target audiences, relying on the virtual space as neutral ground for information dissemination and interactions, as well as, in resolutions of conflicts and peace building mandates. However, we should also not be unmindful of some of the negative tendencies which could be generated through digital democracy. The Arab spring of 2011 which necessitated the instigation of political revolutions against authoritarian regimes in some African-Arab nations and the youth dominated uprisings of the ENDSARS crises of 2020 in Nigeria was noted to have been promoted by the unfettered accessibility of the citizens to the virtual space.

Aside these, the tendencies for the negative use of the virtual space in promoting hateful conducts among citizens have constituted limitations to digital democracy. The tendencies for hateful conducts as regard the promotion of fake news, misinformation and disinformation which are also associated with the politics of identity have often orchestrated crises in many multiple societies in Africa. For instance, general elections in Nigeria, like in some African states, have been heavily noted to be characterized by politics of identity. Quite agreeable, the 2015, 2019 and 2023 general elections in Nigeria witnessed the polarization of the political landscape alongside ethnic and religious divides while, the cyberspace became the battlefield for political warfare among the numerous followers of political parties and their candidates. The point here is that, with adequate regulatory frameworks on digital policies and other early warning signals, government is also empowered to checkmate conflicts arising from the misapplication of the virtual space by the citizens.

On the other hand too, stimulating citizens' responses in the adoption of self-help approach to mitigating conflict with the use of the digital technology is a plausible measure in this era of the new media. With citizens' accessibility to the social media platforms, awareness can easily be initiated to resolve conflict before it becomes escalated. Perhaps, such approaches can be adopted by state and non-state actors in their efforts towards supporting peace building initiatives across societies. Citizens as the catalysts and victims of conflicts are also best suited to be actively engaged as "warners" and "responders" in conflict management and peace-building initiatives, and more reliably in the deployment of the available social media tools at their disposal (Nwogu, 2018).

State actors in Africa can also rely more on the use of the social media for peace-building and conflict resolution initiatives. For instance, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) in Nigeria and other state bureaucratic mechanisms saddled with peace-building mandate can utilize the instrumentality of the social media space in their various engagements with the citizens. Similarly, as part of peace education initiatives, state actors could further establish synergy with mobile network providers on peace-building and conflict resolution contents, using the various mobile networks as platforms for ceaseless public education and value reorientation messages. Though, state actor like the National Orientation Agency (NOA) has over the years deployed similar approaches in its many engagements with the Nigerian citizens, and it has continuously utilized the social media platforms in its feedback mechanism mandate in supporting governments' policy-making direction most especially, as regard conflict management and peace-building initiatives.

Further to the efforts of the state actors in mitigating conflicts and peace-building initiatives in the digital age for the African countries, security agencies can also leverage on the growing accessibility of the virtual space not only for tracking conflicts in their pre-emptive mechanism, but also for the engagement of the citizens in the prevention of violent conflicts. Efforts at responding to the early warning signals can be achieved through the social media space while relying on same for possible tracking of conflicts and perpetrators of conflicts. Security agencies in Africa should not remain only as the praetorian instruments of the state. Security agencies must move with the technological realities and the opportunities offered by the digital age in the realization of the objectives of preventing violent conflict. The need to strengthen the citizen-security agencies engagements through the social media can also serve as a platform for peace-building and conflict resolution. The citizen-security agencies engagements in the era of the new media is capable of realizing the objective of conflict resolution and peace-building through the measure of the early warning and the actual resolution of conflict. For instance, the Nigerian citizen-security agencies' engagement platforms as the Police-Community Relations Committees (PCRC) can be further enhanced to incorporate the virtual space and other digital tools for conflict management and peace-building.

More significantly, efforts at conflict resolution and peace-building should not be limited to the state and its agencies. This submission could be supported by the emerging realities of the digital age. These realities are also self-evident in their utility as part of human efforts towards resolving the many embedded social problems as with the digital revolution and its many possibilities. Non-state actors as civil society groups in African societies are also capable of lending their supports to peace-building and conflict resolution initiatives in their operational mandate for the wellbeing of the society (Carothers; 2016). Besides that, civil society groups in Africa have enormous tasks on their hands towards peace-building and conflict resolution beyond advocacy and peace education. They could also devote greater attentions to the use of the social media space and other digital platforms in furtherance of their mandate on peace education. Digital platforms for tracking conflicts can be developed in that direction in assisting the security agencies for managing and resolving conflicts aside the sustained collaborative measures with the security apparatuses of the state. The African continent must also tap into these possibilities of the digital age in addressing the many contending crises of governance including the challenges of conflict resolution and peace-building efforts. After all, the African continent remains within the orbit of globalization, and nothing should also preclude it from the many benefits and the opportunities laying within that globalized arrangement.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATIONS

Conversations around conflict resolution and peace-building have not been fair towards the African continent. This is not a further debate on the age-long divides between the post-colonial African continent and the Western world. The realities of the African continent have been variously explained within the context of the many conflict crises as being symptomatic of its post-colonial nature within the contemporary international system. However, the focus of this paper is aimed at interrogating the place of the African continent within the emerging realities of the digital revolution and its many possibilities for Africa particularly, as regard conflict resolution and peace-building efforts. The need by the African political leadership to act within those possibilities offered by the digital revolution towards enriching governance should not also be restricted within the bureaucratic and political governance mechanisms. More so, bureaucratic machinery within the African political space should be more encompassing, taking into cognizance, the inherent challenges of governance on the continent, including the security apparatuses of the state and hence, the need to also enrich the Africa's security architecture while embracing the revolutionary trends of the digital technology.

Beyond that, efforts at liberalizing the African political system and the resolve to tackling the many crises of governance on the continent must be addressed frontally with the appropriate policy measures that also take into cognizance the critical place of the citizens' engagement and effective collaboration with the relevant non-state actors within states in Africa. Such proffered measures as the liberalization of the cyberspace and the removal of the obnoxious and restrictive regulations on the accessibility of the citizens to the social media should be considered as part of the policy actions for mitigating conflicts and improving peace-building efforts in Africa. Citizens' engagement no doubt, remains a plausible approach to resolving conflict and ensuring peace-building, particularly when such efforts are properly initiated with the involvement of other credible non-state actors. In the final remarks of this paper, the need to change the post-colonial African narratives is expedient and such cannot be realized in the aloofness of the compelling ecological realities of the unfolding digital revolution as currently being experienced.

Consequently, this paper recommends the need for the adequate regulation of the cyberspace by means of effective legal framework in preventing the continuous abuse of the social media. This does not however, call for the imposition of heavy restriction on citizens' accessibility to the social media, as doing so will be negating the citizens' rights of expression. Similarly, state actors such as National Orientation Agency (NOA) in Nigeria are also required to enhance their civic engagement mandates through the social media contents for continuous sensitization and the adequate promotion of peace education among the citizenry. Non-state actors and the civil society groups as formidable forces for social mobilization and consciousness must equally embrace the era of digital democracy while keeping faith with their traditional mandate of citizens' engagement in the creation of awareness using the social media for promoting peace education and preventing violent conflicts. In the same vein, security agencies in Africa must also be proactive by embracing the social media platforms for tracking possible violent conflicts and their perpetrators.

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