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Cavernous gap between rhetoric and reality on the operations of OAU/AU in conflict resolution: Reflections of democratic republic of Congo from the period 1996 to 2008

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Abstract

The study analyses the cavernous gap between rhetoric and reality on the role and effectiveness of the Organization of African (OAU/AU) in conflict resolution in Africa focusing on the case of Democratic Republic of Congo from the period 1996 to 2008. The world in the 20th and 21st century has been mired in a range of conflict. In the case of Africa, the continent has been extremely vulnerable to outbreak of intra and inter-state conflicts, thus in countries such as the DRC there is ongoing conflicts and instability notwithstanding consistent regional and international efforts to consolidate peace. The article utilises Rupensighe's Conflict Transformation Model and neo-liberal institutionalism theory. The major findings of this study include that despite the efforts by the AU for conflict resolution peace has remained unattainable in the DRC. The researchers also finds out that there was a need to analyses the causes of the DRC conflict that is the First Congo Civil Conflict, the Second Congo War and the Kivu Conflict, to come up with sustainable solutions, and suitable approach by the AU in terms of conflict resolution. The study concludes that as far as conflict resolution is concerned, the AU is nothing but a toothless bulldog, its performance can be characterized by modest success in a few cases and dismal failure in most cases. In line with the conclusion, this study recommends that the AU should focus on encouraging its member states to be committed in contributing enough funds to the organisations, so that it will be well equipped to deal with conflicts in the continent. Financial constraints should be addressed so that the AU will be effective in conflict resolution.

Keywords: Organisation of African Union, African Union, Democratic Republic of Congo, conflict

Introduction

African countries have been, and continue to be, haunted by the spectra of lingering conflict that threatens the future of its people. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is no exception. The DRC continued to experience ongoing conflicts and instability notwithstanding consistent regional and international efforts to consolidate peace. DRC is currently, facing humanitarian crisis, violation of human rights, and deep insecurities. It has resulted to about four million people displaced from their homes (more than in any other country in Africa) and two million children at risk of starvation and tens of thousands of refugees in neighboring states. It is important to note that these insecurities lingers on despite the signing of the key peace agreements. These include the six-country ceasefire signed in July 1999 in Lusaka; the July 2002 peace deal between the DRC and Rwanda for the pull out of Rwandan troops and disarmament of Rwandan Hutu militias in Eastern DRC; and the January 2008 accord between the DRC government and rebels.

The failure of the various ceasefires and peace deals to consolidate peace paints a portrait of entangled complexities that perpetuate inter-group antagonism and identity power struggles. Whilst the Southern African Development Committee (SADC) undoubtedly had an important role in the DRC conflict, not much research focuses on the role and effectiveness of the African Union, (formerly called the Organization of African Unity) in the DRC conflict.

2020 marks 57 years of its genesis and yet despite of its core mandate of maintaining peace and security, conflict continues to ravage African states. There are claims that as far as conflict resolution is concerned, the AU is nothing but a toothless bulldog, its performance can be characterized by modest success in a few cases and dismal failure in most others. The study therefore seeks to address the validity of these assumptions and understand whether there is a gap between theory and practice especially with regard to the DRC conflict, from 1996 to 2008.

Understanding of the Problem

The main problem is that the African continent is experiencing continuous conflicts and insecurities. Nhema (2004) ^[41] states that in some parts of Africa, the whole generation has never experienced peace and strife has become a legitimate component of life. Given the fact that the African continent has been mired in wide range of conflicts, the AU is supposed to act effectively in mitigating those conflicts. The dominate view is that the AU has played important role in conflict resolution, through peace keeping operations, peacemaking and peace building. However, the effectiveness of the AU in its role of conflict resolution has been questionable and affected by perception-reality gap. Makinde (2018) ^[34] states that the AU has been ineffective in conflict resolution, as evidenced by its failure in the DRC, Somalia, Sudan and other countries which are still facing ongoing conflicts. This is a problem because from a security point of view the African continent has remained a volatile region. Although, the AU is not a perfect organization, and has faced numerous challenges in conflict management, it has also failed to work harmoniously with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in addressing conflict related issues, this is a problem because it has compromised the effectiveness of the AU. Another problem, associated with AU is lack of capacity in conflict resolution. Indeed, the AU is still lacking financial and technical capacity to deal with emerging conflicts in Africa. The above problems have instigated this study, thus the researchers analyses the yawning gap between rhetoric and reality on the role and effectiveness of the organization of African (OAU/AU) in conflict resolution in Africa focusing on the case of Democratic Republic of Congo from the period 1996 to 2008.

Understanding Conflict

The world in the 21st century has been mired in a range of conflict. "In some parts of the developing world, the whole generation has never experienced peace and strife has become a legitimate component of life" (Nhema 2004: 11) ^[41]. International conflict is an immutable feature of international relations and endemic to all social life. Bercovitch (2010: 104) ^[19] states that "conflict is an inevitable part of living because it is related to situations of scarce resources, division of functions, power relations and role-differentiation". "Because of its ubiquity and pervasive nature, the concept has acquired a multitude of meanings and connotations presenting us with nothing short of a semantic jungle" (ibid: 104). There is no agreement on the precise definition of the term conflict.

Folarin (2015) ^[22] defines conflict as "any situation in which there are incompatible goals, cognitions, or emotions within or between individuals or groups that lead to opposition or antagonistic interaction, clash of interests and struggle

between individuals within states". Coser (1956: 8) ^[16] defines conflict as "a struggle, between individuals or collectivities, over value or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Social conflict is not only 'negative' in the sense of tearing apart; social conflict 'may contribute to the maintenance of group boundaries and prevent the withdrawal of members from a group'".

The Africa continent has been extremely vulnerable to outbreak of intra and inter-state conflicts. Thus Africa has been described as the home of wars and instability. Conflicts arise due to several reasons that are often a combination of multiplicity of factors. According to Gilpin (2015: 21) ^[25] "weak governance, historical animosities, exclusionary politics, contested legitimacy, resource competition, external factors, globalized conflicts and extremist ideologies have combined to create various episodes of violent conflict across the African continent since most countries gained independence in the 1960s". These researchers agrees with Gilpin (2015) ^[25] on his description of the sources of conflict in Africa which are rooted in politics which refers to authoritative allocation of resources and values in which resources are unevenly distributed. It worth to note that basing, on operationalization of key terms, these researchers defines conflict as a vigorous divergence between people with contrasting sentiments or ideologies.

Nature of conflict: Causes and types

By its very nature, conflict is a process of polarization and receding opportunity. The nature of conflict is highly complicated and controversial just like the meaning of conflict itself. This section focuses on providing the causes and types of conflict as will be seen in the following paragraphs.

Causes of Conflict

The history of the African continent is awash with conflict (Alabi 2006: 41). Historically it can be traced that since, African countries started to gain independence there has been a series of conflicts. It is important therefore to analyse causes of conflicts such as unequal distribution of resources, poverty, corruption, external forces in need to exploit African resources, competition over economic resources among others.

These researchers discovered that one of the main causes of intra state conflicts in Africa is the disturbing effect of corruption. Corruption, exhibited in the misappropriation and misallocation of public funds. This situation has resulted in suffering of many Africans at the expense key players who have access to the national purse. Therefore, Africa's resources and capital have been badly managed and used for private gain. This has created animosity among the suffering masses hence creating a breeding ground for conflict formation.

These researchers maintains that there has been growing consensus among scholars about the nexus between the need to exploit African resources and conflict formation especially internationalized conflicts in resource rich countries. Another cause of conflicts in Africa is social constructions by political entrepreneurs. According to Fierk (2007: 56) "to construct something is an act which brings into being a subject or object that would otherwise not exists." This has been a central

feature in identity politics in Africa, whereby political entrepreneurs re-write history, and bring past emotional phases of history which result in hatred among ethnic groups thereby creating ethnic conflicts shaped by identity, symbolic politics, hatred, fear, distrust, suspicion and ethnic violence. Memories of past traumas magnify anxieties and hatred thereby causing ethnic conflicts. The above views can be analysed using the Constructivism Theory. These researchers are of the view that “*ethnic conflicts are constructed*”.

These researchers found out that deep seated conflicts in Africa has been caused by arbitrariness of the boundaries of African countries which were drawn up by the European colonial powers and this has been inherited in post independent Africa (Aderanti 2005) ^[1]. There has been widespread inter- state conflicts in Africa due to boundary disputes. For instance between Senegal and Mauritania, between Ghana and Togo. This uninformed establishment of boundaries by Europeans has exacerbated the long standing enmity among African territories.

Types of conflict

Bercovitch and Fretter (2004) ^[8] identified 4 types of conflicts these include interstate conflicts, internationalized civil conflicts, militarized conflicts and political incidents. Interstate conflicts occur when states go to war when they have competing ideologies, or when they feel insecure. Occasionally, interstate conflicts can escalate and bring in other states, resulting in a regional conflict that affects many countries in a given geographical area (Bercovitch and Fretter 2004) ^[8]. Interstate conflicts may also arise from rivalries in which states feel threatened or intimidated by their opponents. The African continent has been a home of interstate conflicts for instance Nigeria-Cameroon dispute over Bakassi peninsular since the 1970's. These researchers are of the view that although interstate conflicts have been a feature in the African terrain, there is growing evidence of the change of nature and types of conflicts in Africa characterized by intra-state conflicts.

Internationalized civil conflicts have become a prominent feature in the African continent, this research will pay more attention to how civil conflicts are internationalized. According to (Bercovitch and Fretter 2004) ^[8] internationalized civil conflict occurs when another state becomes involved in a violent civil conflict either directly by invasion or indirectly by actively supporting a faction in the other country. Indirect support, on the other hand, takes many forms such as sending arms, providing training and advisers for one faction in the conflict, allowing rebels to use territory from which to launch attacks among others. This study is of the view that in extreme cases, superpower rivals can fight “proxy wars” by supporting opposing factions in a civil conflict. For instance the Libyan Crisis 2011 to present, Rwandan Genocide 1994 and the conflict in DRC 1998. “Civil conflicts became international conflicts when a second or third state intervened in a significant way and threatened international peace and security” (Martin 2019: 5) ^[35].

Another type of conflict is militarised conflict this occurs when two states face off militarily, escalating a crisis or sparking an incident. (Bercovitch and Fretter 2004) ^[8]. such face-offs may not result in all-out wars, but they create the potential for serious conflict. It worthy to note that militarised conflicts, which occur in the context of a tense and hostile relationship, are almost always preceded by a history of

violence and contain a very real risk of escalation into all-out war. Relations between rival states are usually characterized by numerous militarized conflicts for instance Zambia and Zaire 1982, 1983 and 1984.

Bercovitch and Fretter (2004) ^[8] define political incidents as an interstate conflict that escalates beyond the normal day-to-day conflicts between states for example disputes over trade, visas, diplomatic etiquette Political incidents usually involve verbal and political demonstrations, such as denunciations, propaganda, name-calling, diplomatic insults, and maybe accompanied even threats and ultimatums.

Conflict Resolution

This study analyses the role and effectiveness of the African Union in conflict resolution in Africa, thus deep appreciation and understanding the meaning of conflict resolution is very important, so as to provide an analysis of the topic understudy. McCandless and Bangura (2007: 100) state that “conflict resolution aims to address causes of conflict and seeks to build new and lasting relationships between hostile groups”. It is important to note that conflict resolution mainly focuses on relationships more than causes of conflict. Bercovitch and Jackson (2009) ^[7] note that the term conflict resolution is not about suppressing, eliminating or controlling conflicts nor is it about avoiding conflict, it refers to a range of formal and informal activities undertaken by parties to a conflict, or outsiders, designed to limit or reduce the level of understanding of the key issues in conflict.

The responsibilities of handling conflicts in the Africa continent have been overwhelmingly difficult. It is worth to note that the OAU/AU have vexed with fluctuating degree of success, sometimes substantial and most of the time non-significant in resolution of conflicts in Africa. The African Union seeks resolution of conflicts in Africa through various mechanisms, which include mediation, negotiations, and inter-medial, all these are used in line of Article 33 of the United Nations Charter. A close look of the DRC conflict reflects continuous efforts by the AU in terms of the use of mediation and negotiation as conflict resolution mechanisms. These researchers maintain that conflict resolution is a supplementary inclusive method grounded on reciprocated problem sharing between the conflicting parties. International institutions use conflict resolution to address deep-seated roots of conflict mainly dealing with its causes, and mitigate conflict situations by reducing the violent nature and hostilities (Sandole and van de Merwe 1993). Therefore, at the heart of conflict resolution is the concept of the win-win solution without resorting to use of intimidation or coercion (Cornelius and Faire 1989). While intellectuals have provided diverse and a myriad of definitions of conflict resolution, these authors are of the view that conflict resolution covers the whole range of positive conflict handling.

Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

The AU has played an important role in conflict resolution through mediations and peacekeeping operations in the region, peacemaking and peacebuilding. The African continent has been described, as a home of conflict, in some countries strife has been the order of the day hence the AU is mandated to manage those conflicts that are a recurrent feature in Africa.

Table 1: Provides a brief understanding of conflict resolution mechanisms

Peacemaking	It refers “to the use of diplomatic means to persuade parties in conflict to cease hostilities and to negotiate a peaceful settlement of their dispute” (UN Department 2000:72).
Peacekeeping	Refers to “a unique and dynamic instrument developed by the UN as a way to help countries torn by conflict create the conditions for lasting peace” (UN 2010).
Peacebuilding	“Encompasses a variety of procedures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities and capabilities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations and fundamentals for sustainable peace and development” (UN 2016).

Source: UN Report 2018

Peacemaking

It refers “to the use of diplomatic means to persuade parties in conflict to cease hostilities and to negotiate a peaceful settlement of their dispute” (UN Department 2000:72). Deduced from the above definition is the fact that peacemaking comprises of the processes of diplomacy and any diplomatic initiatives, mediation, negotiation or other forms of settlement that organizes an end to a violent disagreement and attempts to resolve the issues that led to it. Various international organizations including the AU, have been engaging in peacemaking processes, for instance in the DRC which has remained a hotbed of violent clashes and conflict.

Mediation has been used as a tool and an approach to conflict resolution by the AU and regional organizations such as the SADC. According to Moore (2003) mediation is an extension of the negotiation process that involves the interference of an acceptable and neutral third party, which has no authoritative decision-making power, to assist contending parties in voluntarily reaching their own mutually acceptable and implementable settlement. In the African continent most conflicts which emanate from electoral related crisis and governance related conflicts are mainly solved through mediation. For instance the intervention of the African Union (AU), through SADC in Zimbabwe from the period 2007 to 2008.

Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping refers to “a unique and dynamic instrument developed by the UN as a way to help countries torn by conflict create the conditions for lasting peace” (UN 2010). It is a form of conflict containment, which includes peacekeeping and war limitation. This researcher defines peacekeeping as “any international effort involving an operational component to promote the termination of armed conflict or the resolution of longstanding disputes”. Williams (2010: 1) states that “Africa has been a hot bed of violent conflicts with increasing civilian casualties and peacekeeping operations are increasingly conceived as the principal international instrument to curb those conflicts”. Deduced from the above observation by Williams (2010) is the fact that the AU should play major role in terms of peacekeeping, given the fact that the continent has been a hot bed of violent conflicts. Against such a backdrop the AU first peacekeeping mission was deployed in Burundi. It is important to note that “in April 2003, the AU dispatched a peacekeeping mission to Burundi with the task to protect, disarm, demobilize and reintegrate combatants” (Oguonu and Ezeibe 2014: 328). These researchers maintains that the AU peacekeeping mission in Burundi was one the AU’s successes in its peacekeeping history.

However, these researchers discovered that although the AU

has recorded some successes in peacekeeping, it is also characterised by long years of failures even when looking at AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB). There were delays in deployment of troops from Ethiopia and Mozambique and this was a major hindrance for the mission (Oguonu and Ezeibe 2014). This researcher is of the view that the AU peacekeeping is characterised by delays and financial constraints, therefore this study labels the AU as always coming *too late and too little*.

Peacebuilding

The concept of Peacebuilding has been a new norm in the AU’s conflict resolution vocabulary. A myriad of definitions have been proffered to define the term. Peacebuilding includes a varied collection of activities that both lead and track formal peace accords. Therefore peacebuilding is basically concerned about the procedures of attaining and realizing peace. The term peacebuilding was coined by Johan Galtung in 1975 with the publication of ‘*Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding*’. Negative peace, positive peace, structural violence, root causes of conflict and sustainable peace inform Galtung’s notion of peacebuilding. For Galtung (1975) ^[24] peacebuilding involves addressing and removing the root causes of violence the structural and a later addition to his work the cultural violence that feeds into and enables direct violence.

Galtung states that “structures must be found that remove causes of wars and offer alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur” (Galtung 1975: 297) ^[24]. Although theoretical debates remain in the academic field in an attempt to provide the meaning of Peacebuilding it is commonly agreed that the construction and building of positive peace, that is, the institutionalization of justice and freedom, and addressing the root causes of conflict is at the heart of Peacebuilding (Miller 2005). In 1992, former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali published *An Agenda for Peace* and the awareness of post-conflict Peacebuilding entered the UN vocabulary. According to the UN, Peacebuilding encompasses a variety of procedures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities and capabilities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations and fundamentals for sustainable peace and development.

This study maintains that, peacebuilding comes on the heels of peacekeeping/peace enforcement and centers on rebuilding the institutions of a conflict ravaged society, often toward a liberal democratic structure. It involves the rebuilding of the institutions of governance, infrastructure and the re-integration of combatants and displaced persons. The AU had been influential in Peacebuilding in the DRC since the year 1996.

Conflict Transformation Model

The role and effectiveness of the African Union in conflict resolution in the DRC can be analysed using Conflict Transformation Model. Lederach (1995) ^[33] states that conflict transformation refers to positive social change that involves the building of good relations and social structures through essential respect for human rights and adherence to non-violence as a way of life. It is important to note that conflicts in the 20th and 21st century presented high level of complexity hence requires one to analyse and understand the correct nature of the conflict at hand. These researchers selected to use Conflict Transformation Model because it unpacks how the African Union may understand the conflict in DRC and how it can resolve the conflict effectively.

Rupensinghe's Conflict Transformation Model

Rupensinghe (1995, 1998) ^[50] argues for a comprehensive, eclectic approach to conflict transformation that embraces multi-track interventions. He proposes building peace constituencies at the grassroots level and across the parties at the civil society level (where it exists), and also creating peace alliances with any groups able to bring about change, such as business groups, the media and the military. He sees conflict transformation as a broad approach incorporating conflict resolution training and Track I interventions including diplomatic interventions and peacekeeping (Miall 2004: 5). The African Union is trying to resolve conflicts following the assumptions raised by Rupensinghe's Conflict Transformation Model. This explains why the researcher selected this model as a theoretical foundation of this study. The theoretical framework of this study is grounded on the Rupensinghe's conflict transformation model because of various factors. The world in the 21st century experienced a lot of unfolding events hence it has transformed and changed dramatically. The African continent has been mired with intra-state conflict characterized by civil conflicts and internationalized civil conflicts. Thus the Rupensinghe's model of conflict transformation is important in analyzing the role and effectiveness of the African Union in conflict resolution in DRC because it focuses on intra-state wars.

There has been a systematic shift in terms of conflicts affecting the African continent. The conflicts currently faced in Africa are mainly intra state conflicts which are internationalized. For instance the Libyan crisis, the Second Congo War. The internationalization of civil conflicts can be analysed using the conflict transformation model. According to Rupensinghe (1995: 65) "civil conflicts are internationalized due to vested interests by other players". The AU therefore was supposed to have deep understanding of interests of each player in the DRC conflict so as to resolve the conflict.

Another important set of assumptions of Rupensinghe's conflict transformation model framework for sustainable peace play a pivotal role in resolving conflict. The framework consist of ten interlinked components which provide the basis of resolving conflicts. The applicability of the Rupensinghe's conflict transformation model framework was be used in this study so as to locate how the AU had approached the DRC conflict.

AU in the context of neo-liberal internationalism

Neo-Liberal Internationalism emphasises the role of international institutions in mitigating conflict. Keohane

(1984) ^[31] and Axelrod (1981) ^[4] argue that institutions such as the AU and the UN have ability to redefine state roles and act as arbitrators in state disputes. These researchers maintains that since the main aim of international institutions is to mitigate conflict they can play an important role in changing the character of an anarchic international environment. This can be done by persuading and influencing state preferences, actions, motives and state behavior through various mechanism such as creating strong incentives for cooperation or by powerful disincentives like trade sanctions. The AU had been using powerful disincentives so as to influence member states to desist from engaging in conflicts. For instance in 2003, the AU imposed sanctions to the Central Africa Republic following unconstitutional change of government via a military coup by General François Bozize. Since then the regime of imposing sanctions by the AU became the order of the day. Constructivist neo-liberal institutionalism theorizes organizations as a gathering of collective norms, regulations, rules and procedures rather than a formal structure. Barnett and Finnemore (1999) ^[6] state that institutions do not simply change the preferences of actors, but can also shape their identity. Neoliberal institutionalists argue that the possibility to attain gains in the future, '*the shadow of the future*', is important and makes states to adhere to frameworks and rules laid down by international organisation.

Genesis of AU

The genesis of the AU can be traced from the birth of OAU in 1963. Sesay (2008: 9) ^[51] states that "it is incontrovertible that the African Union is a continuation of the major discourse that started in the penultimate days of colonialism in the continent of Africa, and which focused on both the nature and character of future relations between the newly independent African States in the context of the prevailing international system at the time". The discourse and treatise on the formation of the AU was centred on finding suitable and active responses and actions to solve a myriad of security and developmental problems that were threatening the newly independent states.

The formation of the OAU was not that smooth, there were two broad, contradictory, conflicting and uncompromising schools of thought, which emerged within the African continent, Pan-African Movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These groups involves the '*radical school*' which was commonly known as the Casablanca group, which advocated for immediate political union among all newly independent African states, to form a political union which is equivalent to the United States of Africa (Sesay 2008) ^[51]. The Casablanca group was led by Kwame Nkrumah, former president of Ghana. While on the extreme end there was the '*moderate*' or '*conservative*' school, which was known as the 'Monrovia', 'Brazzaville' or the 'Lagos' group. The moderates advocated for a partial union in areas of social, economic, and other areas not in sensitive political issues. This group was mainly led by former President of Tanzania Julius Nyerere. However, despite differences and divergences among Pan-African Movement leader's consensus was reached in 1963. Therefore, on the 25th of May 1963, Pan-Africanist national leaders formed the OAU and adopted its Charter in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital (OAU Report 1963). Thus Haile Selassie stated that "Today, Africa has emerged from this dark colonial, bloody wars and

exploitative passage. Our Armageddon is past. Africa has been reborn as a free continent and Africans have been reborn as free men. The blood that was shed and the sufferings that were endured are today Africa's advocates for freedom and unity" (OAU Report 1963). Sesay (2008: 10) ^[51] states that "the principles enshrined in the OAU Charter understandably, or perhaps unfortunately, emphasised state sovereignty and independence this is because that was the demand of most African states at that time". The changing nature of the problems faced in Africa in the 21st century, the failures of the OAU among others were some of the reasons why the OAU was transformed into the AU which was perceived to be imperative and timely. Kalumbu (2020: 7) states that "given the realities faced, citizens began to ask their leaders to seriously think of reforming the OAU so that it would be more effective in addressing Africa's economic, political and social problems through, promoting greater cooperation and unity among the 54 independent nation-states of Africa". Given the challenges faced by the OAU, scholars, advocates and leaders started to realise the need to create an organization which was effectiveness hence the AU was established in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa. Therefore, these researchers will focus on objectives and principles of the African Union.

Objectives and principles of the African Union

The vision of the African Union is that of "An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena". To realise such a vision, the AU has seventeen objectives. Article 30 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and Article 3 of the Protocol of Constitutive Act contains the following AU's objectives:

- To achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa;
- To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States;
- To accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
- To promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
- To encourage international cooperation
- To promote peace, security, and stability on the continent;
- To promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
- To promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;
- To establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
- To promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
- To promote cooperation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;
- To coordinate and harmonise the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
- To advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science

and technology;

- To work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent;
- To ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making, particularly in the political, economic and socio-cultural areas;
- To develop and promote common policies on trade, defence and foreign relations to ensure the defence of the Continent and the strengthening of its negotiating positions;
- To invite and encourage the full participation of the African Diaspora as an important part of our Continent, in the building of the African Union (AU Website 2021).

Wubie and Tsegawa (2012: 5) argue that "a mere reading of the above stated objectives suggests that the African Union is more comprehensive in its objectives than the OAU". With an understanding and appreciation of achieving the above mention objectives of the AU, the Constitutive Act of the AU outlines eighteen (18) principles which include the following principles:

- Sovereign equality and interdependence among member states of the Union;
- Respect of borders on achievement of independence;
- Participation of the African peoples in the activities of the Union;
- Establishment of a common defense policy for the African continent;
- Peaceful resolution of conflicts among member states of the Union through such appropriate means as may be decided upon by the Assembly;
- Prohibition of use of force or threat to use force among member states of the Union;
- Non- interference by any member state in the internal affairs of another;
- The right of the Union to interfere in a member state pursuant to the decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity as well as a serious threat to legitimate order to restore peace and stability to the member state of the Union upon the recommendation of the Peace and Security Council;
- Peaceful co-existence of member states and their right to live in peace and security;
- The right of member states to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security;
- Promotion of self-reliance within the frame work of the Union;
- Promotion of gender equality;
- Respect for democratic principles, human rights the rule of law and good governance;
- Promotion of social justice to ensure balanced economic development;
- Respect for the sanctity of human life, condemnation and rejection of impunity and political assassination, acts of terrorism and subversive activities;
- Condemnation and rejection of unconstitutional changes of governments;
- Restraint by any member state from entering into any treaty or alliance that is incompatible with the principles and objectives of the Union;
- Prohibition of any member state from allowing the use

of its territory as a base for subversion against member states (AU Website 2021).

Having analyzed the objectives and the principles of the AU, these researchers now provides an analysis of the AU Peace and Security Architecture. This is important to this study as it addresses the key problem of this study.

AU Peace and security architecture

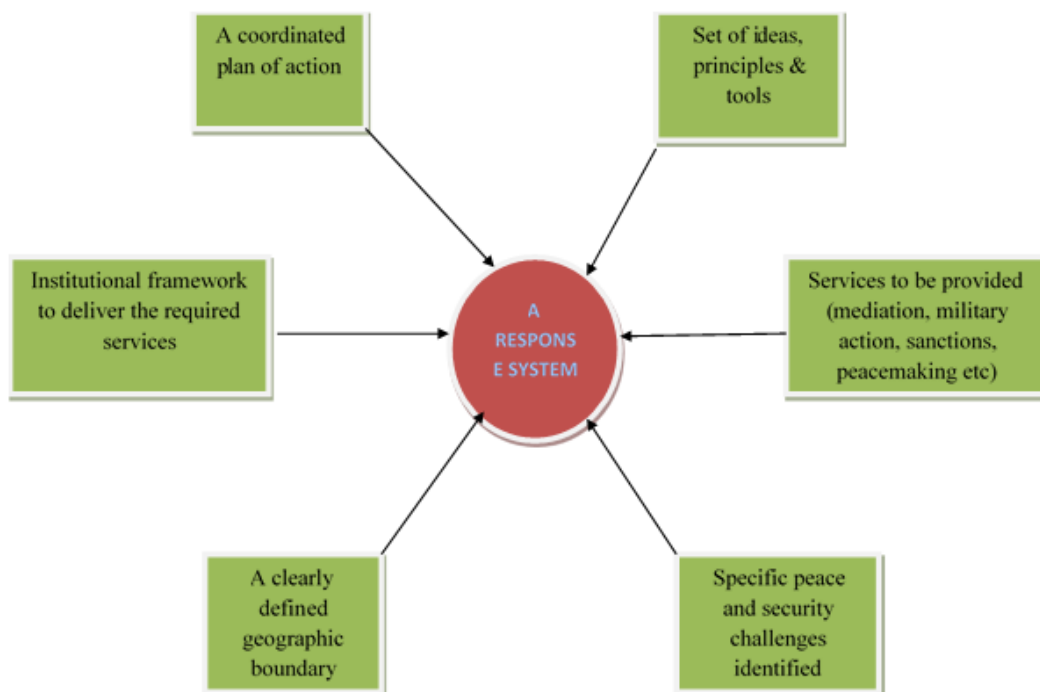
With the transformation of OAU to AU in 2002, the Constitutive Act provided the legal basis for the establishment of a number of key institutions and organs that are to facilitate the realization of the AU vision of a secure, developed and progressive Africa (International Conference, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung Report 2011). It is this vision that led to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) in December 2003 to spearhead the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) concept, the PSC is the head of the APSA. According to Laporte and Mackie (2010: 104) the deputy chairperson of the AU Commission, Erastus Mwencha once remarked that:

Africa has made great progress in establishing the institutional architecture for the promotion of peace and security on the continent through the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). APSA was established by the African Union, in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities. Its role is to deal with prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. The operationalisation of the APSA will be achieved through the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System to monitor the Regional Mechanisms with a view to anticipation of

conflicts, the African Standby Force (ASF) and African Common Defence Policy. Furthermore, the African Union has deployed significant efforts towards addressing some of the root causes of conflict, and thus promoting the prevention of conflicts. These include the adoption of instruments such as the Declaration of Unconstitutional Changes of Government; the African Charter of Elections and Democracy; the Protocol to the African Charter of Human Rights on the rights of women; and the Solemn Declaration on the Gender Equality in Africa.

After the passage of almost a decade since the APSA concept was formulated, there is need for academic reflection on what progress the AU has made in pursuit of its objectives rather than relying on official assessments by diplomats who are bent on securing their careers. These researchers examines how in particular the AU has handled peace and security challenges through the APSA. APSA is evaluated against its mandate focusing on rationale, structure and implementation modalities. This study also attempts to analyse the relative successes and challenges of the APSA and also takes note of what remains aspirational.

These researchers discovered that it is important to first understand what a peace and security architecture is. “This is a peace and security response system that refers to a coordinated plan and set of ideals, principles and tools that describes the services to be provided by the system to meet the peace and security challenges of a community, a state, a sub-region, a region or the world” (Mhandara 2020: 2) [37]. It further describes the institutions that are required to implement the plan and the responsibilities required of each organ to meet the grand objectives.



Source: (International Conference, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung Report 2011)

Fig 1: (a) Peace and Security Architecture

Having defined the peace and security architecture, it is worth to note that APSA is a peace and security response system on the continent that embraces a set of norms to meet the peace

and security challenges of the continent. It identifies the key institutions that are required to implement the norms. It also spells out the responsibilities of the key institutions towards

the coordinated plan.

Kambudzi (2013: 21) ^[30] argues that “the conception of the new peace and security was essentially premised on the necessity to overcome the weaknesses and ineffectiveness of the peace and security mechanisms of the OAU”. These researchers agree with Kambudzi (2013) ^[300] on the basis of the essence of the APSA. The grand objectives of APSA are related to: prevention and containment (management and resolution) of conflict. APSA is based on the liberal peace model of protection and preservation of lives, property and habitats. These researchers are of the view that APSA presents a marked shift from the statist paradigm to the protection discourse, a conscious effort to migrate from issues of survival to issues of dignity.

The driving force behind APSA is the self-constructed philosophy that it is within Africa that solutions to security challenges must be sought this has translated into the now popular maxim *African Solutions to African Problems* that is consistent not only with the Pan-African ideals but also with the basic organising principles of statehood such as sovereignty, non-interference among others championed by seasoned politicians like former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and former South African President Thabo Mbeki among others. Mbeki once noted that

“Many things have gone wrong in Africa since a long time ago. If we do not rise to reverse this trend, this would create the impression that we are not capable of solving our problems and we cannot accept it”. (Extract from Mbeki’s address at the Economic Forum of Southern Africa in Durban in June 2001).

The same axiom has been repeated by prominent diplomats on the continent including Jean Ping who stated that “the solutions to African problems are found on the continent and

nowhere else” The obstacles that undermined the OAU’s capacity to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and crises as already highlighted provided the objective basis for the formation of the APSA. According to a study instituted by the OAU Secretariat between 1994 and 2001, the OAU’s efforts were dented by a number of factors such as rigid adherence to the traditional model of security this means that there was lack of collective commitment to prioritize individuals hence it is unsurprising that the APSA is neo-liberal in orientation but it is still debatable whether this culture has been eroded given the challenges to the AU vision. Another factor which affected the OAU in terms of conflict resolution is the fact that Pan-African institutions had restricted powers and mandates that precluded intervention in the affairs of an equal sovereign hence the non-interference principle was followed.

Structure and modus operandi of APSA

APSA was established as the structure that offers essential peace and security on the African continent. It includes a political decision-making body the Peace and Security Council (PSC) which is a key organ in terms of any peace and security decisions, also there is an analysis centre which is the (Continental Early Warning System-CEWS), then a military element that is the African Standby Force (ASF) and Military Staff Committee (MSC), then an external mediation and advisory body the Panel of the Wise (POW) and a special fund to cover costs the Africa Peace Fund (APF) (Brune 2011). The different elements are intended to provide a comprehensive set of tools with which African actors can address the security concerns of the continent. The PSC receives advice and information from the POW, CEWS and MSC, and then instructs the ASF on the actions it deems necessary. The above structure of the APSA is illustrated by Fig 2.



Source: Kambudzi 2013 ^[30]

Fig 2: The APSA structure and operational philosophy

The PSC as the centre engine of the APSA was established in July 2002. Its mandate is patently spelt and regulated by the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSC Protocol) (African Union Report 2002). The PSC, in combination with the chairperson of the AU Commission, is responsible for all areas of peace and security policy and action. "The PSC is composed of 15 members, 10 of whom are elected for a two-year term and five for a three-year term" (Kambudzi 2013: 24) ^[30].

Another element of the APSA is the MSC and is important since it is meant to provide advice to the PSC on military and security issues and is made up of representatives from the same countries as the PSC. This is in line with Article 2 (2) of the PSC Protocol which states that "The Peace and Security Council shall be supported by the Commission, a Panel of the Wise, a Continental Early Warning System, an African Standby Force, a special Fund". The MSC and the African Standby Force (ASF) are both military element designed to provide military capability to the AU for peace interventions and other emergencies as authorized by the PSC.

An external mediation and advisory body the Panel of the Wise (PoW). The Panel of the Wise is made up of five greatly respected individuals, who focuses and works primarily in critical area of conflict prevention. The task of the (PoW) is mainly diplomatic initiatives focusing on conflict prevention. A Continental Early Warning System (CEW) is another element of the structure of APSA which assists in detecting the causes and signs of emerging conflict in order to provide timely action (it is based in the situation room at AU headquarters). The CEWS also receives information and analysis from the regional early warning systems. The information and analysis from CEWS help inform decisions reached by the PSC and guide the deployment of the ASF (Engel and Porto 2010). However, the ongoing conflict in South Sudan has exposed the inefficiency of the institution: The crisis started way back when Kiir dismissed his opponents from cabinet. Then it was a subdued power struggle which escalated on 13 December 2013 but is now gradually coalescing into a sectarian confrontation pitting the Dinka majority against the Nuer minority.

Regional cooperation in conflict resolution

The need to create peaceful and secure African continent has led to analysis of the role and interrelationships between the AU and REC's/RM. Regional organizations play a complimentary and supplementary role in terms of conflict resolution and also serve as strong institutions to address peace and security related issues in their regions. Having provided an insight on AU's regional cooperation in conflict resolution, this researcher now focuses on efforts by REC's in assisting the AU in conflict resolution. The researcher picks two REC's to analyse the cooperation between the AU and its RECs.

Yabi (2011) reviewed the continuous efforts and role played by Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the conflicts in the Republic of Guinea Bissau and the Republic of Guinea. The political history of Guinea-Bissau is synonymous to presence of violent succession conflicts, turmoil and civil wars. Yabi (2011) state that Guinea-Bissau experienced a civil war in the year 1997 to 1998, and following 6 years of peace the country also

experienced internal conflict from the year 2004. In 2005 and 2009 there were electoral related conflicts. This researcher maintains that to prevent and manage these conflicts have been one of the most difficult task. However, ECOWAS started various initiatives aimed at stabilising both countries in Guinea-Bissau from 2005 to 2010 and in Guinea from 2007 to 2010 and implementing the values and political principles laid down in the Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security adopted in 1999, and complemented by the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001 (Yabi 2011). These efforts have been partially successful.

Cawthra (2010) ^[12] examined the role by the South African Development Community (SADC) basing on its reaction to the political crisis in two of its member states, Madagascar and Zimbabwe. The crisis in Madagascar took place in 2009, when the former Madagascar President Marc Ravalomanana was toppled out of power by Andry Rajoelina who was helped by the military. The SADC reacted unconstitutional change of power, hence condemning the coup publicly, and suspends Madagascar from its membership. SADC also threatened to impose sanctions on Madagascar (Haas 2009). However, SADC toned down its approach, and launched a mediation missions, which lead to an agreement for a transitional government (Cawthra 2010) ^[12].

Zimbabwe's political landscape changed during the last few years of the 1990s, culminating in the formation of the Movement of Democratic Change in 1999. The MDC was formed during time in which Zimbabwe started to experience economic and political demise, thus the MDC sought to democratically challenge ZANU-PF government. Since then the political environment had been characterised by violence especially pre, during and post-election periods. In 2008 there was massive violence following the first run up elections in March 2008, the following months leading to the 27 June runoff election were characterised by political violence. A special SADC summit to deliberate on the governance crisis was subsequently held in Tanzania on 27 March. The summit expressed displeasure at the turn of events in Zimbabwe and took a decision to mandate South Africa to facilitate dialogue among the key political players to find a solution to the governance question. The SADC mediation resulted in a peaceful agreement, the Global Political Agreement which necessitated the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009.

Historical Background to the Conflict

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has continued to make headlines on conflicts and atrocities over the past three decades. Pindukaa and Nhema (2020: 330) ^[45] argue that "DRC is unfortunately synonymous with its dreadful past and present conflicts, despite its beauty, complex history and unachieved potential". Possibly, the term '*nightmare in heaven*' best describes the DRC when one examines the country's vast natural endowments and events that have transpired primarily in the country, especially in the eastern province and Katanga province. It is worth to note that to fully address and understand the DRC conflict there is need to have a deep appreciation of the history of the DRC.

The DRC, was formerly called the Republic of Zaire, and is located in Central Africa, in Great Lakes region; it is one of the largest countries in Africa. It shares boundaries with nine

countries, these are Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Congo Brazzaville, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The DRC is strategically located in terms of geopolitical position hence it pertinent on the political economy of the Central African region and in the African continent (Kadima and Tshiyoyo 2009: 101). Civil conflict in the DRC and its neighbouring countries has always been a permanent feature. According to Namangale (2016: 74) “the DRC has a long history of colonization, exploitation and slave labour that goes back well before its independence in 1960”. Colonization and the impact of the role of Belgian administrators has been one of the main sources of conflict in the DRC. Vogel (2011: 6) ^[55] states that “between 1850 and 1900, Europeans and Arabs undertook several exploratory missions”. In 1885, Léopold II, King of Belgium, managed to become sovereign of a territory whose borders have been defined by political negotiations rather than regional logics (Dominic 2008). Under the leadership of Léopold II, King of Belgium, the Congo Free State was established and there was massive exploitation economically and politically, there was also excessive extraction of resources, force and brutality was backed by the ‘*Force Publique*’ which was a structured in military fashion under Belgian control.

Dominic (2008: 28) posits that “the end of the Congo Free State and its transformation into a public Belgian colony was a starting point for some minor changes such as the introduction of Congolese citizenship”. There were notable changes in the economic structure of the Belgian colony, although deep-seated capitalistic tendencies of a predatory state remained in place. The Belgian administrators denied access to education for the native Africans, despite lack of knowledge, the year 1958 marked the beginning of political consciousness of the natives Africans in the Belgian colony, the so-called *évolués* emerged and was the first group to pose direct challenge and political action against ruthless colonial rule. “Upheavals spread across Léopoldville later Kinshasa and finally provoked Belgium to release its colony to independence on the 30th of June 1960 much earlier than planned” (Vogel 2011: 7) ^[55]. However, after gaining independence in 1960, the impact of colonization followed the new African political elites, as they were not equipped to manage the state and to govern. Given this backdrop of lack of governance skills, the newly independent state degenerated into anarchy, abuse of power, and continuous struggles for power and competition to control areas with strategic resources.

These researchers discovered since the year 1960 there has been a series of events including the assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, military coups, ethnic tension and continuous strife. In 1965 General Mobutu Sese Seko took over government control, and the country was remained Zaire, since then the DRC has been a volatile nation, filled with widespread tensions, and the following wars; First Congo War, the Second Congo War and the Kivu conflict. Insecurity became the order of the day in the DRC; in 1997, Laurent Kabila ousted General Mobutu Sese Seko; in 2001, Laurent Kabila was assassinated by one of his bodyguard, following this incident his son Joseph Kabila became President. Having discussed the historical context of the DRC, these researchers will now analyse the root causes of conflicts.

Root Causes of Conflicts

The complexity of the DRC conflict has created multiplicity of interpretations based on subjectivity in trying to explain to the root causes of conflicts that took place in the DRC. Understanding the roots of African conflicts remain an important factor for the AU, SADC, academics, research institutions. As such, broad swathe of literature available exploring the DRC debacle offers a multitude of causes of conflicts behind the phenomenon of the DRC conflict.

Namangale (2016: 77) states that “many experts have rightly stated that one root cause of conflicts in Africa can be traced to the arbitrary carving of states during the colonial era that was done without due regard to the then existing nations and tribes, which were subsumed within the newly-created colonial states”. The creation of boundaries in Africa has created a system of heterogeneous states, with identity crisis hence creating ground for civil conflicts. African countries have been unstable due to multi ethnicity. However, some scholars such as Barry Buzan criticized the argument that imposition of boundaries in Africa by colonial masters following the Berlin arrangement is the prime source of conflict in Africa. His arguments revolves around the fact that some African countries are peaceful but there also created following the same Berlin arrangement. Thus, peace and security are simply derivatives of power, and as long as there is a desire to dominate others, conflict will always be inevitable.

Di Piazza (2008) ^[18] examines the nexus between refugees’ inflow and conflict formation. According to Di Piazza, there is evidence that the First Congo War was caused by the influx of refugees from Rwanda following the Rwandan Genocide in 1994. This outflow amplified ethnic conflict amongst diverse groups in the country, and between locals and the refugees, leading to the eruption of the First Congo war in 1996. The conflict became internationalized, since Rwanda and Uganda backed a coalition of rebels that was led by Laurent Kabila aiming at deposing Mobutu. Given the pressure posed on the then Zaire President, Mobutu Sese Seko, he fled the country in May 1997. Following those events, Kabila named himself President hence; this marked the new dispensation in DRC and the end of the First Congo War (1996-1997).

Another important cause of the DRC conflict is the issue of presence of strategic resources. The Democratic Republic of Congo is blessed with vast resources, plenty of arable land, a great wildlife and vegetation, however, there is continuous struggle to control those resources hence the state has experienced a series of conflicts. The uneven distribution of these resources in the DRC has been the main cause and drivers of conflicts mainly in the Kivus, Katanga, Kasai and Maniema, which have remained hotbed of conflicts in the DRC. The need to control those resources has remained on the main source of the conflict in the DRC as best explained by the greed versus grievance theory.

First Civil War 1996-1997

Escalating insecurities in DRC since independence were purely a sample of the unknown terrible conflict that was to come; the First Civil War (1996-1997). Vogel (2011) ^[55] states that the 1994 Rwandan genocide was a catalyst in the First Civil War or the *war of liberation* or ‘*war of resources*’.

This can be best explained by the fact that “the first consequences emerging from the refugee influx to the Kivu provinces occurred in April 1995 and became known as the Kibeho massacre” (Prunier 2009: 28) ^[46]. “The Kibeho tragedy stood as a kind of rehearsal for much bigger things” (ibid: 28). Deduced from the above is the fact that these incidents have been precursor of what was to be known as the First Congo War, which affected a state, which was in its Lazarus stage of political decay.

Stearns (2008: 29) ^[52] states that “in October 1996, North Kivu was invaded by Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL). The AFDL was a Congolese rebel group, which was an amalgamation of four groups fighting to depose Mobutu. Laurent-Désiré Kabila led the AFDL and was backed by governments of various African countries including Rwanda, Uganda, and later on by Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Tanzania and Zimbabwe (ibid). The civil conflicts took a regional dimension and there was growing insecurities from an ethnic dimension, political struggles and violence to have access to vast natural resources. It is worth to note that although the AFDL gained popularity and support it was affected by identity politics and symbolic politics, which then created a source and series of violence in DRC. Vogel (2011) ^[55] argues that the late 1996 was characterised by growing insecurity for the local populations in the Kivu provinces that had to get along with attacks from both the RPA and Zairian Banyamulenge squads and the ex-FAR with remaining *Interahamwe* segments. “This period was also marked by the public emergence of Laurent Kabila’s AFDL forces that unveiled themselves after the capture of Uvira” (Johnson 2008: 73) ^[29].

In the second week of November 1996, massive violence broke out around the Mugunga camp (Johnson 2008) ^[29]. Mugunga, was located in the north of Goma, and was the last big camp at that time and a classic military sanctuary too. Given the strategic importance of the Mugunga camp there was fierce battle between the ex-FAR/interahamwe and the AFDL that was assisted by the Ugandan forces. Around, the 23rd of December 1996, some elements of the AFDL and Rwandan Patriotic Army (APR) killed over 460 Hutu Banyarwanda civilians, mostly men, in the village of Kausa, near the Nyamitaba locality. The situation created a situation of what these researchers can call a *breeding ground of deadly conflict*.

In 1997, the civil war in the DRC led to the involvement of many actors and players. The AFDL continued to gain ground in strategic areas and maintained control in areas such as in Kisangani, Mbuji Mayi and Lubumbashi. After establishing dominance, the AFDL increased pressure to ouster Mobutu, on 17 May 1997 he fled the country, hence creating the vacuum of power, Kabila then entered Kinshasa and took over power as President. Prunier (2009: 134) ^[46] states that “for the AFDL rebels, the war was a success, on 17 May 1997 just a day after an ailing Mobutu fled the country, they entered Kinshasa and Kabila declared himself president”. Zaire was renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Second Congo War, 1998-2003

This section presents an analysis of the Second Congo War. The presidency of former Congolese President Laurent Kabila was characterized little changes in terms of creating peace and stability in the DRC. The post 1997 era was still an

arena of humanitarian crises in the DRC. Laurent Kabila quickly displayed himself as a dictator more brutal than his predecessor Mobutu. Vogel (2011: 16) ^[55] states that “Kabila’s regime turned out to follow the same patterns that had shaped the Mobutist system of clientelism”. There was economic stagnation and rapid decline, the situation pushed the citizens to an edge, as there was widespread suffering and dissatisfaction from the Kivu to Katanga.

It is worth to note that Kabila became increasingly unpopular due to a myriad of factors. Sadiki (2007: 32) shows that “Kabila’s internal political influence had severely decreased before the second war began”. The first area of conflict was based on divergence between Kabila and the opposition leaders who were affected by authoritarian rule. Externally, the Kabila government lost its Rwandan and Ugandan due to various factors, chief among them is the fact that Kabila was no longer saving interests of its form allies in Rwandan and Ugandan government. After the sour relations between Kabila and his former allies, the Rwandan government attacked Congo hence leading to the deadliest and violent conflict in modern history, the Africa World War. Stearns (2008: 32) ^[52] states that “this war had a different face than the previous one. Rwandan officials, led by officers within the security forces, realized it would be difficult to secure their western border as long the Congolese Hutu community continued to collaborate with the ex-FAR and allied militia men who had participated in the genocide”. The rebels and the Rwandan government managed to provide serious challenge to Kabila.

Given the losses suffered by Kabila, some SADC member states joined the war in support of Kabila. Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe joined the army in support of Kabila. Karbo and Mutisi (2012: 396) argue that “a broader regional war, now known as the Second Congo War from 1998 to 2003 but also referred to by many as *Africa’s world war*, broke out”. This resulted to death of about 5.4 million and millions more displaced hence, creating a complex climate of conflict. Joseph Kabila, a general in the Congolese army, rose to power after his father was assassinated by one of his bodyguard on the 16th of January 2001. With the rise to power of Joseph Kabila, there were expectations and high hopes for maintenance of peace and security. Joseph Kabila managed to gain support from international supporters, and at a domestic level there was the *Sun City agreement* where the international community, more specifically South Africa that wanted to induce a solution to *Africa’s World war*. Following years of trying to make peace, in December 2002, the Sun City agreement was signed, thus paving way for a transitional government. Joseph Kabila held presidency but was now accompanied by the four vice-presidents Azarias Ruberwa (RCD-G), Jean-Pierre Bemba (MLC), Yerodia Ndombasi (Kabila faction) and Arthur Zahidi-Ngoma (ex-RCD, political opposition).

Kivu Conflict, 2004-2008

Peace remained a myth in the DRC, since the year 2004 witnessed another civil conflict in the Kivus. “The formal name given to the last and most successful bout of negotiations, which lasted 19 months, was the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD)” (Stearns 2008: 35) ^[52]. It was the 2002 agreement, signed by all major belligerents that formed the blueprint for a transition to real and lasting national unification (ibid). The ongoing violence in the rich eastern

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) can be incomprehensible in its intricacy in the plethora of armed factions, the glut of abbreviations, and the swarm of complaints that caused the Kivu conflict had been explained from socio, economic and political dimensions. At the center of the discourse is the fact that, the province of North Kivu has been the fulcrum of the DRC War hence becoming the battleground of all dissatisfied parties?

Politically, there were governance related problems in the Kivu, since the end of the Second Congo War. Indeed, this researcher is of the view that societies are divided into between those who rule and those who try not to be ruled (Rift Valley Institute 2012) ^[49, 53]. The Joseph Kabila administration have continuously involved itself in influencing politics in the Kivu. Stearns (2008: 36) ^[52] argues that “the three-year transition process culminating in the 2006 national elections provoked deep divisions within the RCD, as its leaders clashed over whether to continue to participate given the perceived bad faith of Joseph Kabila’s government”. It is worth to note that Former RCD members resisted an integration since they felt that it would erode their closeness to political and economic power. This resulted in defection by top military officers in August 2003. One of the military boss who deserted was General Laurent Nkunda, a Tutsi from Rutshuru territory who then formed a rebel political movement. He was supported the Rwandan government.

In May 2004, Nkunda launched an assault on the capital of South Kivu. Johnson (2009) ^[29] states that Nkunda justified that he needed to provide protect to his fellow Banyamulenge from ethnic cleansing attacks from the Hutu that re-emerged a political grouping under the umbrella of the FDLR. Violence, disorder and anarchy created conditions which were not conducive to holding of the 2005 elections which were then postponed to 2006. Vogel (2011: 20) ^[55] states that “under the auspices of MONUC, now counting almost 20 000 troops and the EUFOR RD Congo securitisation mission the poll was prepared for the 30th of July 2006. Joseph Kabila took the first place with a 44 per cent share, but had to enter run-off against Bemba”. Given, the electoral irregularities witnessed during the 2006 elections there was systematic violence in Kinshasa, characterized by political assaults and assassination attempts.

Following the first round of elections, Joseph Kabila formed a coalition and got 58 per cent of the votes in the run off. Vogel (2011: 20) ^[55] argues that “the aftermath of the elections was characterised by the cleavages between the ruling coalition under the lead of Kabila and Gizenga and the opposition, consisting of Bemba and people like former vice-president Ruberwa, but the clashes occurring in Kinshasa were rapidly outshined by new disorder in the Kivus”. Laurent Nkunda’s CNDP took over control in the area of Masisi where his forces managed to establish a quasi-state stronghold. Johnson (2008: 158) ^[29] states that “in reaction, Kinshasa tried to reach an agreement with the renegade general-mixed brigades were constituted in order to jointly fight the FDLR militia”. Johnson (2008: 160) ^[29] states that “the CNDP repulsed, erased a large number of government troops, and consequently made large acquisitions of arms and ammunition”. The tactics and victories gained by Nkunda’s made Kabila to change his strategies and focus on peace oriented approaches. In the late 2007, a peace conference was launched, and on the 23rd of January 2008 a peace agreement

was signed between all parties involved in the Kivu conflict and those who operated in the Kivu provinces during that period.

Actors and their Interests in the Congolese Conflict

This section provides an analysis of the most influential actors and their interest in the Congolese conflict during the First and Second Congo War and the Kivu Conflict. It is worth to note that the Congolese conflict attracted multiple players with divergent interests based on rational calculus of the spoils of those continuous struggles. Some of the players include; Angola, Chad, the DRC, Namibia, Sudan, Zimbabwe and the Mai Mai aligned forces, the RCD, the MLC, Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda aligned forces, regional and international organisations, state and non-state actors.

It is evident that the internal parties to the DRC conflicts have a created a network allies from outside Congo. During the Congo Civil War, the Forces Armees Zairoises (FAZ) was a national army, which was fighting for Mubutu’s government its main interest, was to hold grip of power and to maintain peace and security. The FAZ consisted of Mubutu’s loyalists, and included certain elite units thus the army was a branch of politics and an extension of Mubutu’s private tuckshop. Walloping inside the migrants and refugees in the camps near the eastern border of Congo were the *Interhamwe* and the ex-Forces Armées Rwandaises (ex-FAR), which consisted of about 50000 fighters, they also supported Mobutu.

The utmost main actor opposing the Zairian/Congolese government was the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo (AFDL). Historically, the origins of the AFDL can be traced to the early days of the First Congo War; it was founded in October 1996 and was an amalgamation of Congolese Tutsis, Rwandans, and Ugandans, whose main aim was to oust president Mobutu from power. Some scholars such as Smith (2010) argue that the AFDL was a rebel cluster/group which was created to cover Rwandan and Ugandan incursions into Zaire. However, some scholars argue that Rwanda and Uganda only assisted the AFDL after the uprisings and they took an opportunity to deal with dissidents in their respective countries. It is worth to note that Uganda and Burundi also joined in the First Congo war against the opposing forces due to security considerations just like Rwanda. “These three nation states formed the Kigali-Kampala-Bujumbura axis” (Reyntjens 2009: 19).

Other pertinent actor in the Congolese conflict was Angolan national army the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola; UNITA). Its interests was based on the fact Mobutu once provided sanctuary for UNITA during their fight with the Angolan government in Angola. On the other side there was the South Sudanese rebel army Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) that sided with the opposition (AFDL). The SPLA helped the AFDL and provided financial and moral support, while the Sudanese government supported Mobutu’s force. The conflict web of the DRC conflict was highly complicated since it involved various actors with divergent interests.

Having analyzed key actors during the first civil conflict in Congo, this researcher will now focus on multiple actors during the Africa’s Word War. The main actor was the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD). The RCD was a rebel group whose chief interest was to ouster, former Congolese President Laurent Kabila (Morris 2018). It

was masterminded in Rwanda, after Kabila fall out of favour with his former Rwandan allies. Thus when the Rwandan attacked Congo and all events which led to the outbreak of the Second Congo War, all was crafted in Kigali and the RCD was used to cover for Rwanda, hence there was a proxy war (ibid). Scholars such as Zucher (2017) states that the RCD's main aim was to bring sanity in the DRC, end Kabila's dictatorship and promote peace and stability

In the same vein, after facing opposition forces Laurent Kabila formed a new national army, *Forces Armées Congolaises* (FAC) that consisted of members of the original AFDL and the previous national army, FAZ. The FAC's interests revolves around the issue of maintain peace and stability and to protect Kabila's presidency. However, Martin and Makinde (2016: 5) states that "the FAC was a weak army which was not adequately trained hence faced mainly challenges to fight the rebels. Some of the factors which include low salaries and lack of food resulted in massive desertion by soldiers who were demotivated and demoralized.

Given the weaknesses of the FAC and Kabila's government, his allies joined the war to support his rule. Angola became the first country to rescue Kabila's government followed by SADC countries including Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia. All these actors had diverse economic, political and security interests. According to Hamauswa (2017: 3) ^[17] "Angola's vested interests in the DRC was based on security considerations since it wanted a stable neighbour so as to neutralize the Savimbi-led rebel UNITA, thus instability in DRC was going to create more avenues for UNITA to destabilise Angola". Deduced from the above is the fact that Angola wanted a peaceful DRC for its own survival. Economically, Angola also sought to protect its petroleum and diamond resources especially in the oil rich enclave of Cabinda.

On the case of Zimbabwe, the Mugabe Administration was driven by collective security mandate since it got involved in DRC as part of the SADC Allied Forces together with two SADC countries, Namibia and Angola. It worth to note that although Zimbabwe do not share a boarder with DRC, thus certain political and economic interests were at play in its involvement in the DRC. A thorough research by the Helen Suzman Foundation (2000) noted that Mugabe had been a key ally of Laurent Kabila and he assisted him financially to ouster Mobutu, research and information from the intelligence community revealed that Mugabe once gave Kabila US\$5million in 1996. Since then Zimbabwe had been interested in the ongoing politics in DRC. In 1997 when Laurent Kabila became President, the Zimbabwe Defence Industries gained a tender to supply Kabila's army with food, uniforms and mortar bombs. Thus economic motives have been at the fore front in terms of Zimbabwe's participation in the DRC conflict. "These economic interests resulted in some quick returns. The Zimbabwe Defense Industries secured a \$53 million deal to supply food, uniforms, boots and ammunition to Kabila. Zimbabwe's leaders also benefited from the Congo's natural resources" (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2004: 116). Angola and Zimbabwe requested Namibia to support L D Kabila, a long-time friend of the then Namibian president, Sam Nujoma, and a close ally of both Angola and Zimbabwe.

This section provided an analysis of the most influential actors and their interest in the Congolese conflict during the

First and Second Congo War and the Kivu Conflict. One noticeable feature in the Congolese conflict is the fact that actors had conflicting interests and alliances shifted due to national interests considerations and selfish interests as best explained by the classical realism school of thought.

The AU peace and security mandate

The African continent has been one of the most unstable continent in the World, with minimum peace, presence of conflict and insecurity. Cocodia (2020: 17) ^[13] "the African Union (AU) was borne out of the need to foster unity among Africa's states and peoples, but over the years, its major function has been to cater to the security needs of citizens on the continent". While in some quarters the AU has struggled to live up to this mandate, in other quarters, the organisation has done well. Given the prevailing unpeaceful and insecurity atmosphere, the AU has developed and advance its peace and security apparatus. The AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) is the sole authority for mandating and terminating AU peace operations, in accordance with chapters VII and VIII of the UN Charter, mandatorily seeks the support of the UNSC for all missions (Cocodia 2020) ^[13]. This procedure is mainly to obtain legitimacy for AU mandates, while opening channels for resources from the UN and EU.

A major reason for the establishment of the AU was to provide peace and security, and this is evident from Article 4b of its constitution which provides the organization with the mandate to intervene in countries ravaged by war or other violent conflicts to avert the suffering of inhabitants. Cocodia (2020) ^[13] states that major strategy of AU intervention is peacekeeping and this can also be done in collaboration in regional organisations. Since no two conflicts are the same, the strategies applied in peacekeeping operations differ. Of much importance is the fact that "armed conflicts have regional contagion or diffusion effects" (Doyle and Sambanis, 2005: 3), this strategy of collaboration of the AU and regional organisations have paid dividends. As observed by Olonisakin (2010: 62) "the large-scale armed conflicts of the last two decades have gradually mutated and have been largely contained within national spaces".

Prior to the formation of the AU, its predecessor the Organisation African Unity (OAU) had passed the responsibility of addressing conflict to its regions. While the first of any such regional peacekeeping operations in Africa was undertaken by ECOMOG in Liberia in 1990, the list goes on to include ECOMOG's foray into Sierra Leone in 1997, in 1998, SDC intervened in Lesotho, also in the same year 1998 the SADC intervened in the DRC. "These operations set a precedent for conceiving of African regional peacekeeping as sub-regional, robust and controversial" (Coleman 2011: 520) ^[14]. It is therefore, important to note that AU's effort for achieving peace and security has been characterised with success, failures, aspirations and challenges.

There has been a drastic change since the coming of the AU in 2002 which has elicited cooperation on security (and other issues) on a wider platform. This cooperation extends beyond the reaches of the sub-regions and so enjoys considerable international legitimacy and also support from the international community at a global. For example, the AU mission in Sudan (AMIS) had twenty five participating sub-Saharan countries. This recognition of the AU is categorised in the UN Security Council resolution 1809 on strengthening security in Africa, where major attention was given the AU,

over and above its sub-regions.

Cocodia (2020) ^[13] argues that the great powers in the UNSC have not given the UN special focus to respond effectively to emerging conflicts and wars in Africa. They have made it clear that they will not put their troops in harmful to mitigate excessive violation of human rights and mass killing in Africa. This argument is based of classical realist school of thought vies on self-help. In this context therefore, African countries, continental and regional bodies have no choice but to take up the challenge (Blocq 2010) ^[10]. Therefore, the AU has been working closely with Regional Economic Communities like the SADC, for instance AU-SADC cooperation in DRC conflict. The AU also work with UN in maintaining peace and security.

The AU peace and security mandate also focus on various conflict resolution mechanisms such as mediation. According to Sahika (2007) the Congolese conflict presented a complicated and complex situation, but regional actors, the SADC, OAU, among other internal actors worked with the AU to end conflict. Mediation processes have been part and parcel of AU's peace and security mandate in the DRC. However, there are important lessons which can be deduced from the DRC conflict such as the fact that complexity of mediation stems from the involvement of many actors in a conflict. This has complicated and weakened the AU role in brokering agreements between contending parties in the DRC. On several times the AU through The AU Panel of the Wise has regularly tried to intervene and mediate in the DRC. The AU has undertaken quite a number of operations. Scholars have observed that "the first phase of peacekeeping missions in Africa which revolves around conflict cessation and resolution is largely carried out by soldiers from member states" (Feldman 2008: 268). On this issue the AU has been lauded on its ability to bring its sub-regions into cooperation in contrast to the OAU era (Coleman 2011) ^[14]. Such collective experience has made the AU a skilled negotiator and compensates in-part for the shortfall of AU military machinery (Feldman 2008: 269). This move has positively impacted on the Union's approach to human security issues.

Addressing the root causes of conflicts

Understanding and addressing the root causes of conflicts that have ravaged the African continent and more specifically the DRC is important in an attempt to locate sustainable solutions of how to deal with DRC conflict. It is worth to note that, before trying to mitigate a conflict there is need to understand its underlying causes because any settlements which disregard the root causes of a conflict can result to further escalation of conflict and violent confrontation. Rupesinghe (1996:166) claimed that "it is abundantly apparent from recent experiences in Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka and elsewhere that there is a need for a clear conceptual and theoretical understanding of the root causes and the sources of intractability of a given conflict". Thus, it is convincing that AU's conflict resolution architects ought to grasps the origin of conflicts at hand.

Namangale (2016: 82) states that "many experts warn that stability in the DRC must be looked at with guarded optimism because of the root causes of the war". According to Mills (2018) the continuous conflict in the DRC since the year 1996 is a sample of types of wars that never ended, these are popularly known as "*the forever wars*". The '*forever wars*' are mostly brawled not because of clashes of interest or over

national interests, or even over unequal distribution of resources, nonetheless they maintained their particular repetition in which groups fight as a way of life surely because there will be no state. Consequently, they become conflict entrepreneurs, making large sums of money rather than aiming to seek power from fighting (Namangale 2016). Given such circumstances, caution ought to be taken to ensure that well-meaning players do not unconsciously become part of the problem.

The continuation of the DRC conflict can best explained by the competition to control and exploit vast natural resources in the DRC. Conrad (1899) described events in the DRC as the "vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience". Since then the story of the DRC is one of untold suffering and spectacular plunder. The need to exploit and access vast natural resources in DRC is one of the main cause of conflict. During the First and Second Congo War, the UN claimed that several companies had participated and contributed in the war both directly and indirectly through various ways and some business entities facilitated access to finances to buy armament (UN Report 2005). It is worth to note that all actors who participated in the Congolese conflict benefited from the illegal exploitation of vast natural resources of the East of the DRC.

There is evidence that conflicts in Africa have their roots from colonial marginalization which resulted to inequality. This was inherited by post-independence states hence creating seeds of conflict. Marginalization result to politics of exclusion. According to Makinde (2018) ^[34] most conflicts in Africa result from marginalization of a certain region or ethnic group. Given the multiplicity of interpretations on the causes of conflicts in Africa, it is pertinent to interrogate and understand the root causes of conflicts.

The peace process, why is peace so elusive?

The conflicts that took place in the DRC have been well recorded and received academic and international attention. The persistence and continuous continuation of conflicts in the DRC have compiled an examination of the question; why is peace so elusive in the DRC? Ahere (2012: 4) ^[2] "there are various reasons which explain why the DRC has failed to consolidate peace, despite the different peace processes and efforts made to secure sustainable amity". This researcher unpacks the following reasons which explains why is peace so elusive in the DRC these include; the complexity of the conflict since it involved lot of players in the continent; the involvement of Rwanda; Uganda's military presence; the involvement of Burundi; the need to lure natural vast natural resources; and challenges of state consolidation.

This section focuses on providing reasons on why is peace so elusive, before dealing with that equation this researcher presents conceptual considerations of the concept of peace. The concept is normative and loaded with emotions. For instance, Howard (1971) observes that the concept of peace is used as a tool of propaganda. Barash (1991) ^[5] notes that in its narrow sense, it can imply passivity and acceptance of injustice. Cortright (1999) ^[15] notes that during the Cold War, it had a subversive connotation, and in the West, it was associated with communism. Yet a comprehensive deployment of the concept divulges that although it is normally associated with the absence of war, it means more than that. Peace may mean the preservation of a just society where there is order and adherence of law. For Howard

(1971), orderly means being protected against violence, exploitation and abuse by the powerful in society. Other scholars like Cousins (1946)^[17] distinguish between negative peace, which is simply the absence of war, and positive peace, which is the presence of justice. In this way, peace implies a freer and just world. Structural and originating violence covers a myriad of issues which disturb peace: human rights violations, poverty, political repression and denial of self-determination. Yet the presence of peace does not mean the absence of conflict in society as conflict is intrinsic in human interaction. The challenge for states is to find mechanisms of resolving differences without resorting to hard power. Peace should be understood as a dynamic process rather than as an absolute end game.

One of main reason why peace is so elusive in the DRC is the complexity of the conflict since there is the involvement of many actors mainly DRC's neighbours. Ahere (2012: 4)^[2] argues that "almost all stages of the DRC peace process have been characterised by the involvement of external actors who have played critical roles which have at times been helpful and at times destructive". This researcher found out that the multiplicity of actors in the DRC conflict especially the Second Congo War (1998-2003) had comprised the achievement of peace since the actors had divergent, complex, complicated and conflicting interests. This is supported by Ahere (2012: 4)^[2] who further states that "all countries involved in the DRC were motivated to be part of the war by particular interests, which necessitated their follow-up to ensure that the ensuing peace accords reflected these". These vested interests of actors in the DRC were mainly grounded on the need to confirm that the DRC did not continue to serve as rear bases for rebel groups that operated against mainly Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and Angola. With the involvement of many players with divergent interests it has been difficult to negotiate a representative settlement. This explains why it was difficult to have last peace during and after the Second Congo. Therefore, peace continues to be so elusive in DRC, due to involvement of many actors.

These researchers discovered that the involvement of Rwanda in the DRC contributed to a greater extent in complicating the conflict. Indeed, the involvement of Kigali was more complex than that of the other actors. Ahere (2012)^[2] states that the Rwandan army had been battling the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a political-military movement which is active in the North and South Kivu provinces of the DRC. This movement consisted of ex-Rwandan Armed Forces, ex-*Interahamwe* militia, and some Hutu civilians who fled to eastern DRC after the 1994 Rwandan genocide and other young Hutu directly recruited from Rwanda (Dagne 2008). During that time the Hutu civilians made up the majority of the FDLR. The most disturbing factor is the fact that the FDLR operated from Rwanda and carried out several violent attacks against Congolese civilians. Given the above scenario, Reynaert (2011) states that the operation and existence of the FDLR in North and South Kivu was problematic since gave the Rwandan government a reason to continuously intervene in the DRC. The Rwandan government firstly managed to tackle the FDLR threat in December 2006. However, this led to deaths of Congolese civilians since the Rwandan government attacked the FDLR offensively triggering a humanitarian crisis. The Rwandan government also supported the M23. The UN Security Council (2012) states that the M23 posed

serious renewed threats to peace and security in the DRC. This means that the involvement of Rwanda in the DRC became a prime hurdle for the AU to solve the long standing conflict in DRC.

Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo remains thinkable, the DRC is likely to emerge as a cockpit of internationalized conflict hence complicating the prospects of peace. The military presence of Uganda in the DRC presents a complicated scenario in terms of creating a peaceful environment in the DRC. Ahere (2012)^[2] states that the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF) had been present in the northern Uganda to get rid of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group accused of systematic widespread human rights violations. After the LRA was confronted by the formidable forces of the UPDF, it often retreated to the DRC. These circumstances has provided opportunities for the Ugandan government to invade the eastern DRC in pursuit of the rebels. Thus, the clashes between the LRA and the Ugandan government had caused the eastern DRC to be an unstable region. Since the year 1998 to 2003, there was also a threat of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) which was another rebel group that the Ugandan government had been in constant pursuit of inside the DRC. The ADF consist of fundamentalist Tabliq Muslim rebels and some residual forces of another rebel group, the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda. The ADF is being suspected to be responsible for dozens of bombings in public areas in Uganda and use of violence, kidnappings and violent murder of civilians hence creating fear among the local population (Global Security 2011). While in search of the ADF in the DRC, the Ugandan army has been accused of committing atrocities such as massacres of civilians, torture and destruction of critical civilian infrastructure. Therefore, compromising prospects of peace and security in the DRC.

The need to exploit vast natural resources by both domestic and external players present another reason why peace is so elusive in DRC. Throughout recent history, domestic and international cooperations, state and non-state actors have had keen interest in the DRC so as to have access to tap natural resources. The geostrategic location of the DRC has been the main reason why many actors are present in the resource rich country hence creating a battleground for competition to have access to those resources. Montague (2002) argues that several mining companies from European countries fund military operations in the DRC in exchange for lucrative contracts. The failure of the DRC government to regulate mining operations and to come up with stiff laws is probably one of the biggest obstacles to peace in the country. Ahere (2012)^[2] argues that for as long as these mining companies operate in the prevailing conflict-laden environment that allows them to trade arms for minerals, peace in the DRC will remain a pipe dream.

Another reason why is peace so elusive in the DRC is because of the challenges of state consolidation. Ahere (2012)^[2] states that the DRC is one of the biggest countries in Africa and it's about the size of Western Europe. The erudite network of external interventions and insurrections after the Second Congo War has reduced the DRC to be fundamentally ungovernable. Bratton (2005) argue that since independence, the central government in DRC has failed to maintain grip and to establish political order backed by adherence of the rule of law. The first and second Congo wars created a political vacuum in many parts of the DRC, most notably in

the east. Hence creating disconnections between various regions and the capital Kinshasa were political power resides. Against such a backdrop a substantial percentage of the general populace feel disenfranchised and marginalized hence creating disorder as they try to be recognised (Kibasomba and Lombe 2011). These disaffected citizens have formed rebel groups so that they can shape their own destinies parallel to those of the DRC state which has neglected them. Hence peace has been hard to come by since there is constant struggles.

The involvement and role played by external actors in the DRC contributed in complicating the peace process. Several international state and non-state actors have tried to assist, but their efforts have ended as merely tragic twists in the tale (Monde 2014). Mistrust has been at the center of the role of played by external actors in the peace process and the locals. As Mills (2014) states that “foreigners must not be seen to love the country more than the citizens themselves”. Deduced from the above is the fact that the locals tend to shift their

loyalties based on identity politics and tribal lineage at the expense of any initiative by external forces hence the DRC conflict remain complicated and complex to solve.

Assessing success, failures and challenges of au in conflict resolution (yawning gap between reality and rhetoric)

Africa may be on the right path towards achieving the objective of a peaceful and secure continent. In 2004 when the APSA was inaugurated, there were more than 20 violent conflicts and crises in different parts of the continent but this is no longer the case major wars are disappearing but internal crises are on the ascendancy especially those related to political power contests in South Sudan, Somalia, Egypt, CAR and DRC. However according to Kambudzi (2013) ^[30] despite the on-going challenges the space for peace has become larger and is ever-expanding in Africa. The following table provides some of areas in which the AU has acted to resolve conflicts.

Table 2

Sanctionee	Reasons for Sanctions
Central African Republic	In 2003, the CAR became the first country to be imposed under sanctions by the AU, these sanctions were based on unconstitutional changes of government. After a military coup by General François Bozize, the AU decided to impose sanctions on the CAR. However, the Regional Economic Community (CEMAC) supported Bozize. Thus in 2005, following an election the AU lifted its sanctions. Further sanctions were imposed in April 2012 following the ouster of Bozize by the Seleka rebels led by Michel Djotodia.
Togo	In 2005, the AU imposed sanctions on Togo. These were meant to inspire the Togolese to hold free, fair and credible elections following the death of General Eyadema who was President since 1967 to 2005.
The Comoros	In October 2007, the AU also imposed sanctions on the separatists Anjouan and Abdourahim Said Bacar. The sanctions included economic and travel sanctions and the freezing of assets. More on the 25 th of March 2008 the AU intervened militarily in the Comoros this led to elections in June 2008.
Madagascar	On the 27 th of March 2010, the AU targeted measures against the Indian Ocean island came into force. This was following an incident when Madagascar's former exiled leader Marc Ravalomana was toppled by Andry Rajoelina.
Côte d'Ivoire	On the 27 th of December 2010, the AU suspended Côte d'Ivoire from its membership following unconstitutional change of government. On the 22 nd of April 2011 those sanctions were lifted after a constitutionally elected government was in place.
Mali	On the 3 rd of April 2012 the AU endorsed ECOWAS sanctions against Mali which were imposed on the 26 th of March 2012. The AU further decided to impose their own sanctions against the top military personnel's who architecture of the military coup were. The AU also suspended Mali and pressured the military junta to return to democracy and constitutional rule. The AU readmitted Mali on 26 th of October 2012.
Guinea-Bissau	On the 17 th of April 2012, the AU suspended Guinea-Bissau, after a military coup. The AU also threatened to impose more sanctions if the military who had seized power failed to respond positively by returning to constitutional order and restoration of constitutional order.

Source: Adapted from Vines 2013: 92

Notable success of the AU can also be noticed in peacekeeping and peacemaking operations. The intervention of the AU in Somalia and Sudan has shown that the AU is able to implement its vision and norms. Since, its formation the has been influential in deployed missions to conflict ridden countries such as in Burundi (AMIB), Sudan/Darfur (AMIS), Somalia (AMISOM), the CAR (FOMUC) and Comoros (AMISEC). Makinde (2018: 34) ^[34] states that “through such missions the AU has sought to operationalize its peace and security norms”. However, these missions were funded by the EU.

One of the conflict resolution mechanism used by the AU is mediation, this has been used in the DRC, Burundi, among other countries. However in DRC since the year 2003 to present there has been challenges with these AU mediation efforts, this indicate that the AU's coordinating role is still problematic. The need for a strategic approach to mediation therefore still exists (Nathan 2009). The supporting structures

of the PSC that is the Panel of the Wise was formed in 2008 to support the mediation and conflict prevention effort.

It is also important to note that with almost a decade of implementation of conflict resolution mechanisms in Africa, a number of challenges can be gleaned. Funding for peace effort is predominantly funded by external sources. Hence the AU is financially incapacitated to fund its own peacekeeping missions and any peacemaking initiative without a helping hand, thus delays in funding means failure of the AU to deal with any conflict at hand. This makes mockery of the idea of African solutions to African problems as the aid is not devoid of conditions, much time is spent on meeting donor's requirements than addressing the material issues. Makinde (2018: 5) ^[34] states that “between 2008 and 2011, African states provided only 2 per cent of the AU's Peace Fund to cover peace and security efforts; the rest came from international donors”. The current AU mission in Somalia remains completely dependent on the EU and UN. African

funding for the AU has come traditionally from the big five: Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria, Libya and Egypt. Following the Arab Spring in 2011, there was growing fears that some of the African key funders such as Algeria, Libya and Egypt might reduce their financial support. Thus, the AU staff have sought increased support from states like Angola and Equatorial Guinea, as they are with petrodollars.

Another challenge faced by the Africa Union in its endeavor for effective conflict resolution is absence of proper coordination between AU and RECs. Mhandara (2020: 7) ^[37] argue that “the PSC protocol as the legal backbone of the APSA does not yet adequately provide for coordination between the PSC and RECs/RMs themselves, there are no clear guidelines on institutional coordination”. This state of affairs has resulted to situations in which the AU and RECs/RMs have conducted themselves in a way that demonstrates lack of a shared understanding of the principle of subsidiarity in conflict prevention, management and resolution. This researcher maintains that in reality there is no shared understanding as to how the principle of subsidiarity should be applied. There is lack of clarity on mandates and roles and who is best placed to do what in the process of responding to threats and breaches of peace and security. Still, it is unquestionable that APSA provides the AU with a sound vision but the PSC and the Commission has not been equipped with a coherent mandate or significant power or resources.

Sporadic institutional rivalry and continuous competition for frontal leadership on conflict resolution between the AU and RECs/RMs is also another challenge. According to Makinde (2018) ^[34] there is a strong feeling at the AU that the RECs are not constantly dedicated to AU leadership. Equally, RECs also feel that the AU occasionally oversteps itself hence affecting the operations of RECs; this has led to sporadic institutional rivalry. Taking APSA as a point of analysis, it is worth to note that its effectiveness in conflict management and resolution relies on the cooperation of RECs. Therefore, the rivalry between the AU and RECs is a clear testimony of one of the challenges of the AU in conflict resolution. In reality states are have proved to be more loyal and committed to their RECs at the expense of the AU hence creating an obstacle for the AU in its endeavor for maintaining peace and security.

More so, it is worth to scrutinize the internal aspects of the African regions, especially the role played by key states. For instance, in ECOWAS, Nigeria has been a key and influential payer on conflict resolution, and peace and security related issues. This is because it is the largest country in ECOWAS region; hence, this seems to be a natural position. However, it is important to note that although Nigeria claims to be interested in a stable neighbourhood, other West African states see Nigeria as trying to position itself as a regional hegemon (Haas 2018). One of the key country which oppose the role of Nigeria in West Africa is Côte d'Ivoire, and their sour relations date back from the dating back to the Nigerian civil war, hence this have made difficult times for military cooperation between the two states. Therefore, disunity within regions is also a challenge for the AU in conflict resolution. Another challenge faced by the AU is competing regionalisms. The five regions designated by the AU for the purposes of APSA do not correspond directly with the existing eight RECs. For example, East Africa has the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA)

and the East African Community (EAC); neither organization has a security element or a comprehensive regional membership. Responsibility for coordinating the East Africa Brigade (EASBRIG), drawn from Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sudan, Seychelles and Uganda, was given to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); but Seychelles, Madagascar and Rwanda are not members of IGAD, so a new EASBRIG mechanism has had to be established (Franke 2007). SADC and ECOWAS both have a security arm within their structure. Tanzania, which is a member of the EAC and SADC, is listed as a member of EASBRIG, yet is also a signatory of the memorandum establishing the SADC Brigade. Angola, another member of SADC and signatory of the SADC Brigade memorandum, is seen as a key state in the Central African Brigade. It may be some time before the exact make-up of the brigades becomes clear.

The African continent is facing new and complex challenges. Straus (2019) notes that new threats are coming from terrorist organisations and mobile insurgent groups that move back and forth across national borders such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab (Westgate incident in Kenya). The AU has been failing to curb terrorism. The difficulties in managing the Mali situation amply demonstrated this. There is need for fresh thinking and learning for the AU to deal with the changing nature of conflict in Africa. The intervention of French forces saved the day for AU and ECOWAS, which hitherto has no capacity to conduct war in Northern Malian terrain.

The AU, is also under-staffed hence a small workforce is affected by an ever-growing workload, since the African continent has proved to be home of wars and un-ending conflicts. Even though the AU looks superficially like an African version of the EU, they are built on different foundations and operates in a radically different, and more difficult, environment especially in terms of staffing. The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Report (2012) states that in 2012, the AU employed 669 people, compared with the EU's 33 000 employees. In 2004, when AMIS first deployed to Darfur, its headquarters personnel numbered just two dozen. In 2007, the Strategic Management Unit for AMISOM had only eight of 35 proposed staff (Pirozzi 2009). This researcher concludes that the above-mentioned challenges have affected the AU severely its endeavor for effective conflict resolution.

Recommendations

Given the failures and challenges faced by the AU in conflict resolution, this researcher is concerned with what needs to be done? This is a Leninist type question which may appear to exaggerate the gravity of the challenges at AU. Admittedly, it is a truism that although the AU is not in a *Lazarus Moment*, there are cardinal policy fundamentals that need to be adopted in order to avoid the pitfalls of two crises, namely legitimacy and efficacy.

- This study recommends that the AU should focus on encouraging its member states to be committed in contributing enough funds to the organisations, so that it will be well equipped to deal with conflicts in the continent. Financial constraints should be addressed so that the AU will be effective in conflict resolution. Thus, the AU need to explore new resource mobilization strategies, such as imposing taxation on international

financial transactions and sales of armaments is necessary. There could also be African levy whereby 0.5 per cent of taxes levied by member states on all imports entering the continent might automatically credited to the Peace Fund (the AU can take a leaf from ECOWAS were the system is already in place). This needs to be explored vigorously.

- These researchers recommends that the AU need to work closely with REC's and there is a need to have clear division of labour between RECs and the AU. There should be complementarity not competition between the two and respect of the principle of subsidiarity; this will allow the AU to be effective in conflict resolution since its successes are based on commitment and cooperation by REC's.
- This study also recommends that the APSA is a well-thought out blue-print which has the potential to subdue Africa's peace and security ills. It is also consistent with the reputation of Africans being good at policy formulation but poor at implementation. Member states must express unreserved political commitment to the successful implementation of APSA (political will is crucial).

Conclusion

This study concludes that as far as conflict resolution is concerned, the AU is nothing but a toothless bulldog, its performance can be characterized by modest success in a few cases and dismal failure in most cases. This study concludes that although the AU is not a perfect institution liberal institutionalism is at play as evidenced by the continuous role played by the AU in conflict resolution in the DRC. The study comes to a conclusion that peace has remained unattainable in the DRC and the country is still facing deep seated conflict. Thus the DRC presents an arena in which the AU can show case its effectiveness in conflict resolution, however this is being compromised by the fact that the AU is facing financial and technical challenges, hence the AU has been ineffective in conflict resolution.

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