



## Peace Education in Africa: An Introspective Case from Peace and Conflict Analysts

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### ABSTRACT

*This era in Africa represents a significant political shift, marked by the emergence of two major issues: xenophobia and terrorism, with the most lethal of these periods being the latter one against the backdrop of World War II, when Hitler masterminded a campaign fueled by xenophobia and terrorism, specifically directed at German Jews, which contributed greatly to the outbreak of conflicts. During the Cold War era, which followed World War II, the world witnessed a tensed ideological struggle between the East and the West. Both sides engaged in global actions driven by mutual xenophobia and resorting to terrorist tactics against each other, resulting in catastrophic consequences such as the loss of human lives, financial hardships, and widespread material destruction. Africa endured severe economic damage and rebellion during this tumultuous period. In the early 1990s, the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), driven by Gorbachev's actions, raised hopes for global peace. However, instead of lasting tranquility, as the economic, ideological, and political conflicts between the East and West came to an end, a new chapter emerged, marked by communal, ethnic, and clan disputes. With the previous tensions receding, different communities and groups now found themselves vying for influence and asserting their identities, leading to fresh challenges and complexities on the global stage. Within this vacuum, xenophobia and terrorism found fertile ground in Africa, replacing the earlier damage caused by the rivalry between the East and West. Presently, Africa finds itself at the epicenter of precarious ethnic conflicts, on the brink of devastation and hindering progress towards stability in various areas, such as industry, society, the economy, and education. This article aims to offer a concise and logical understanding of the impact of xenophobia and terrorism on peace in Africa and the international community. It explores potential ways to promote peace in Africa through ongoing peace education with the help of facts and academic discussions. The approach used is qualitative, and the document analysis method was used to obtain and analyze the data.*

**Keywords:** Conflicts, Peace Education, Sovereignty, Terrorism, Xenophobia

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### I. INTRODUCTION

As per the report titled "Still Our Common Interest," authored by the Commission for Africa, fundamental human rights, such as life and security, are of utmost importance. To achieve the desired progress in Africa's development, a significant increase in investment in conflict prevention is necessary. In 2010, the Commission for Africa stressed the crucial role of development investments in promoting peace and security.

However, it is essential to complement these investments with targeted measures aimed at enhancing conflict prevention efforts. An unnamed African philosopher highlighted this strategy and emphasized several important elements that are crucial for bringing about peace in Africa. These factors include social and economic development, effective governance, cultural respect, justice, and truth (Commission for Africa, 2010). The philosopher's viewpoint aligns harmoniously with the principles outlined in "Still Our Common Interest": Report of the Commission for Africa. The report underlines the significance of empowering communities to become economically, morally, and socially capable, and it emphasizes the importance of having a responsible and efficient government (Commission for Africa, 2010).

By focusing on comprehensive development, promoting cultural understanding and respect, upholding justice, and embracing truth, African nations can work towards lasting peace and stability. Complemented by targeted conflict prevention efforts, these measures are essential in fostering an environment conducive to growth, progress, and harmony for the entire continent and effective care for its citizens. When people genuinely respect each other's way of life, impartiality can flourish, leading to the natural emergence of peace. However, the moral desire to reduce suffering in Africa alone cannot achieve peace if the feuding factions are not ready to embrace it (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004).



This article presents a groundbreaking approach that challenges the conventional comprehension of the reasons behind conflicts and uprisings in Africa. Instead, it proposes recommended ways to foster lasting peace on the continent. Throughout history, conflicts have often originated from xenophobic mindsets held by certain groups, resulting in horrifying activities. Instances illustrating this include Hitler's persecution of German Jews and the Apartheid regime in South Africa. These xenophobic actions are often accompanied by terrorism to control the opposing group. Instances such as World War II, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, divisions between Nigerians and Ivorians, Liberians, and Sierra Leoneans, the Hutu-Tutsi revolts in Rwanda and Burundi, and the joint invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan by the United States and the United Kingdom illustrate the inherent relationship between terrorism and xenophobia in conflicts (Jenkins, 1985; Dal Santo & D'Angelo, 2022).

This article presents a series of temporary arguments based on various perspectives, aiming to shed light on the complex nature of conflicts and the pursuit of peace in Africa. The arguments include: Advocating for a broader scope of guiding principles for peace in Africa, involving sustained peace education for all African inhabitants, emphasizing the need to address the root causes of conflicts in African countries to effectively prevent and manage them, and recognizing that ethnic conflicts and armed operations have no relevance when it comes to achieving peacemaking objectives. According to Chopra and Weiss (1992), urgent pleas are being made to amend the "sovereignty clause" to empower the United Nations Security Council to intervene militarily in conflict-affected regions, even in the absence of governments' consent. The Council's capacity may also include proposing measures to enhance the effectiveness of aid in establishing the groundwork for enduring peace, effective management of natural resources and revenues, as well as a thorough review of the arms trade and conflict-related assets. Others include emphasizing the importance of bolstering the United Nations' capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts by enhancing early warning systems, fostering improved mediation techniques, and adopting more proactive peacemaking endeavors; highlighting the importance of prioritizing harmonization and investing in post-conflict peace building and development to avert the reoccurrence of conflicts in countries emerging from tumultuous periods.

These perspectives draw on Africa's comparative advantages, rooted in its long-established mutual past before colonialism, rather than solely relying on military prowess. The article draws on concepts mentioned in entities that encompass diverse stakeholders, including Africa, the global community, and local actors, as well as issues relating to xenophobia and terrorism, to distinguish crucial nuances within each category of impressions. It also advocates for a thorough examination of countries and actors involved in shaping appropriate approaches for specific situations (International Review of the Red Cross, 2012). Apart from the section on armed actions, this article represents the combined wisdom of conflict resolution practitioners and their associated organizations in Africa, aligning seamlessly with the conclusions presented in the Commission for Africa's report (Commission for Africa, 2010).

## II. METHODOLOGY

The method used to gather information and evidence on the various aspects of this article in order to produce a true and comprehensive result is document analysis. Document analysis is a method that requires reading, analyzing, evaluating, and summarizing books, documents, and other written and published works that contain knowledge and information that is relevant to your study. This method was used to make room for available secondary data to understand the current situation in the study: issues that were related to the impact of xenophobia and terrorism on peace in Africa.

Secondary data relevant to the study was gathered from a variety of sources, including articles, journals, newspapers, publications, textbooks, theses (both published and unpublished), as well as online resources. Among the collected data are references such as "African Union (2003) on Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution," "Bujra, A. (2002) on African Conflicts," "Yabi, G. O. (2010) on The Role of ECOWAS in Managing Political Crises and Conflict," and "United States Institute of Peace (2003) on Zimbabwe and the Prospects for Nonviolent Political Change," and more.

The analysis of the data was mainly qualitative. Qualitative analysis uses subjective judgment based on non-quantifiable information. Though qualitative analysis explores data from interviews, observation, etc., this paper was based on only textual analysis or analysis based on information from secondary sources already mentioned above. The data obtained was first sorted and edited. The data was described and analyzed by the group members according to the research objective, which is to offer a concise and logical understanding of the impact of xenophobia and terrorism on peace in Africa and the international community. All ethics, such as wrong reporting, plagiarism, etc., of research were observed.



### III. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

#### 3.1 Analysis of Conflicts in Africa

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the conflicts and crises that have impacted Africa, it is appropriate to take a broader perspective. This entails exploring traditional African society before the interference of colonial powers, which disrupted their culture and traditions. The implementation of indirect rule, which came with the partitioning of Africa, has led to the establishment of enduring artificial borders. These divisions have contributed to the growth of terrorism and xenophobia, posing obstacles to industrial and economic development efforts (Christopher, 1988; Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2011).

Within the realm of conflicts, the terms "conflict" and "conflict prevention" commonly pertain to situations characterized by actual or potential widespread violence. It is essential to recognize that in many instances of conflicts, there exists a certain degree of xenophobia and terrorism intertwined with them, as exemplified by Hitler's apprehension of Jewish dominance in the German business sector (Du Bois, 1941; Finkelstein, 2000). However, this perspective, though understandable, makes the analysis of the destruction caused by conflicts in African countries analytically limited and misleading if viewed in isolation. To comprehend the full picture, it is crucial to consider the deep-rooted tribal sentiments in African communities. The roots of these conflicts can be traced back to historical colonial partitioning and the implementation of divide-and-rule strategies. Additionally, the presence of authoritarian regimes across the continent, as exemplified by leaders like Siad Barre in Somalia, Jerry John Rawlings in Ghana, Idi Amin in Uganda, and others in countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Darfur region of Sudan, often receives backing or acquiescence from various quarters, such as Western powers. Addressing conflicts should involve efforts to eradicate tribal sentiments and promote negotiation strategies, as exemplified by the positive example of South Africa (Chloubá et al., 2022).

Implicitly, viewing conflict as a normal and inevitable occurrence presents the challenge of managing it constructively. The conflicts in Africa stem from a web of interconnected and deeply rooted causes and triggers. These include the lack of strong cultural identification between nation and state, persistent ethnic tensions, and the oppression of minority groups. The prevalence of corrupt and dictatorial regimes further exacerbates the situation, often sustained by support from Western powers through arms supplies and technical assistance. Promptly ending such support is crucial to addressing the root issues or causes and promoting peace and stability in the region (Easterly, 2001).

Unfortunately, both within and beyond Africa, there is a tendency to give primarily rhetorical attention to significant problems, especially in developed countries. The international community's attention is often focused on addressing the visible symptoms when conflicts, genocide, and mass starvation escalate to catastrophic levels in regions like Darfur and Somalia. It is crucial to recognize that xenophobia and terrorism play significant roles in exacerbating conflicts in Africa. However, foreign interventions in African crises sometimes fail to fully comprehend or appreciate these factors, resulting in potential shortcomings in their response efforts. When good intentions are combined with ethnocentric perspectives and a preference for quick-fix solutions, there is a risk of superficial analysis and a lack of respect for local actors. Africans are sometimes perceived merely as villains or victims, rather than being recognized as active agents in development and peace initiatives. Consequently, these interventions frequently prove ineffective (Mani, 2003).

#### 3.2 Concept of the Culture of Peace

Understanding conflict shapes how we approach peace and define it significantly. In stable Western democracies, peace is commonly associated with the absence of overt physical violence and is valued for its contribution to maintaining orderly politics and preserving the sanctity of human life. However, in Africa, where civil conflicts lead to the loss of countless lives, the primary objective is to put an end to hostilities before meaningful development can be achieved (Bujra, 2002).

Furthermore, the lack of justice poses a major obstacle to achieving peace in Africa. The power elite frequently respond to popular uprisings with systematic authoritarianism. A case in point is Somalia, where Siad Barre's unjust rule sparked opposition from the people. However, following the overthrow of the tyrant, confusion ensued, and a leadership vacuum emerged, as evident in the current situation in Somalia. The primary goal of both local and external endeavors to tackle African issues should revolve around establishing a framework for peace and justice. Especially during the transition from undemocratic to democratic rule, the pursuit of peace and justice remains crucial, and we sometimes encounter clashes, especially when dealing with former tyrants and their supporters in the new order, leading to apprehensions and challenges (Colletta & Cullen, 2000; Kynoch, 2005).



### 3.3 Framework for Cultivating a Culture of Peace in Africa

Differentiating between crises and conflicts is vital, highlighting the need to address the root causes of conflicts while effectively managing crises. Conflicts are complex and pervasive, demanding persistent and methodical approaches. Quick-fix or simplistic solutions won't suffice for resolving them. Instead of viewing peace operations as short-term fixes, they should be regarded as integral components of a long-term strategy (Harvey, Boris, & Alan, 2002). Boutros-Boutros Ghali's concept of preventive diplomacy aims to avert crises, while post-conflict peace building concentrates on preventing their reoccurrence. Peace-building involves establishing respect for human rights, promoting political pluralism, accommodating diversity, enhancing the capacity of state institutions, and fostering economic growth and equity. These measures prove to be the most effective means of preventing crises, as they address the underlying factors that can potentially lead to conflicts (United States Institute of Peace, 2003).

The sustainability of peace-making and peace-building efforts relies on shaping their form and content in collaboration with involved parties. The role of global society should shift from mere assistance provision to facilitating action. Peacemaking should prioritize supporting local negotiations and problem-solving, avoiding the imposition of Western perspectives on the outcomes (Yabi, 2010).

Global society plays a crucial role in acknowledging and addressing how foreign powers and institutions unintentionally or deliberately worsen conflicts in Africa. This includes practices such as excessive and reckless arms sales, backing authoritarian regimes, debt crises, structural adjustment programs, and international trade relations. When it comes to development aid and humanitarian relief, the utmost priority should be to do no harm and prevent any detrimental repercussions. In the following sections, we delve into the significance of peace education, mediation, and the engagement of the United Nations and African nations in armed operations to foster peace and lay the foundation for a stable future in Africa (Commission for Africa, 2010; Franks, 2005).

### 3.4 Perceptive for a Culture of Peace Education

Education plays a pivotal role in achieving a culture of peace. By bringing people together and encouraging discussions on topics that impact their well-being, it lays the foundation for development, strengthens governance, and eradicates ignorance and dictatorship. Without a fundamental understanding of the culture of peace and its potential to foster harmony, promoting peace becomes both theoretically and practically challenging. Education serves as a liberating force, particularly in the context of peace, necessitating continuous learning to comprehend, recognize, implement, and embody its principles (Langholtz et al., 2021).

### 3.5 Objectives of Education in a Temporary Context

The fundamental and indispensable purpose of education, irrespective of its nature—whether nascent, formal, or informal—is to shape individuals into responsible and rational beings. Through responsible education, individuals undergo a significant transformation in their attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills. They exhibit elevated behavior and actively participate in critical reflection on events, issues, people, places, and phenomena (Savolainen, 2010). These attributes are crucial in fostering peace and ensuring continuous growth, development, and progress over time.

### 3.6 Promoting Peace in Africa through Geographical Education

Geography holds immense significance in the pursuit of peace in Africa. Geographical literacy plays a pivotal role in strengthening peace efforts. For humanity, nature's refining process shapes the geographical characteristics of various regions. This refining process leads to excellence, which in turn paves the way for perfection. Geographical education becomes instrumental in achieving a state of perfect peace by replacing ignorance with informed knowledge (Cawagas, 2007; International Charter on Geographical Education, 2009; Stoltman, 1987). As a result, individuals and groups who receive geographical education can grasp and appreciate diversity from a broader perspective. This understanding fosters unity in diversity, leading to increased tolerance and ultimately promoting peace.

### 3.7 Reflections on Peace Education

After the end of World War I, eminent minds worldwide joined forces to create the League of Nations with the crucial objective of preventing another global conflict. However, the provisions within the organization lacked effective mechanisms, leading to the outbreak of World War II and the tragic Holocaust that saw millions of innocent Jews suffer under Hitler's regime. In response to the shortcomings of the League of Nations, the United Nations (UN) was formed to address the inadequacies of the League of Nations to promote world peace and avert the occurrences of a third World War. However, as of today, the United Nations still faces significant obstacles to fully addressing the



escalating conflicts in various regions worldwide, particularly in Africa. One major challenge stems from the sovereignty clause, which hampers effective intervention and resolution efforts (Page, 2008; Kester, 2013).

### 3.8 The Sovereignty Clause in the UN Charter and the Achievement of International Peace

While the principle of respecting countries' sovereign rights is of great importance, there have been situations where adherence to this principle has resulted in delays in taking timely action to save countless lives. This was evident in the cases of Burundi, Rwanda, Darfur in Africa, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. To address these challenges and foster world peace effectively in the global landscape, member countries of the United Nations need to reconsider and reframe the sovereignty clause. By allowing for the surrender of some sovereignty, the UN can intervene swiftly when conflicts are on the verge of occurring. This adjustment is necessary to enhance the UN's capacity to prevent and manage conflicts, thereby contributing to a more peaceful world (Simma, 1995; UNESCO, 2010).

### 3.9 Mediation

In times of conflict, parties may come to realize that the costs of aggression outweigh the benefits, leading them to consider a political agreement as a better option. Skilled mediators or experts can play a crucial role in creating a positive atmosphere, facilitating dialogue, and guiding the factions through the challenges of the negotiation process. Mediators need to remain neutral and act as referees rather than players, ensuring they assist the parties in reaching a mutually satisfactory settlement (Euwema et al., 2019; Igbeaka, 2018).

Several examples demonstrate the effectiveness of peace agreements through mediation:

1. A comprehensive peace agreement was successfully reached between the opposing forces and the government of Liberia, effectively bringing an end to a devastating fourteen-year-long civil war in Liberia in 2003 (United States Institute of Peace, 2003; African Union, 2003).
2. Catholic non-government organization, an Italian politician, and a Bishop from Mozambique successfully mediated a peace agreement, bringing an end to more than twenty years of conflict in 1992 in Mozambique (Christopher et al., 2011).
3. In Cairo's Tahrir Square, peaceful and non-violent demonstrations reached a turning point in the spring of 2011, leading to the fall of the Mubarak regime. This event marked the commencement of a transformative process towards democracy and the advancement of human rights in Egypt (Arab Awakening, 201). These instances exemplify the positive impact of skilled mediation in resolving conflicts and fostering peace and stability in different regions.

In times of escalating conflicts, the international community may consider the option of military intervention. Examples of such interventions in Africa include peacekeeping operations carried out by the United Nations and the African Union in countries like Rwanda, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, and Sudan's Darfur region which have been subject to intervention efforts. These interventions commonly aim to suppress hostilities, create safe zones, safeguard refugees, and facilitate the distribution of emergency aid. However, to enable the United Nations to respond swiftly and effectively, member countries may need to consider relinquishing a portion of their sovereignty (Chopra & Weiss, 1992; Harper, 1992).

Military interventions in Africa have been a recurring theme throughout the continent's history, with various regions witnessing instances of external military forces intervening in local conflicts or crises. These interventions often involve foreign powers or international organizations stepping in to address security threats, protect civilians, and restore stability (Powell, 2017). However, military interventions in Africa have been subject to criticism and debate. Concerns about sovereignty, neocolonialism, and the impact on local governance and stability have been raised. While some interventions have been successful in preventing further bloodshed and supporting peace processes, others have faced challenges and complexities in achieving lasting peace and security. Balancing the need for external assistance with respecting the autonomy and agency of African nations remains a delicate and crucial task. As conflicts continue to arise and evolve across the continent, the question of when and how to intervene militarily remains a contentious issue in the pursuit of peace and stability in Africa.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Conclusions

This paper offers a comprehensive analysis of the quest for peace in Africa and the international context, delving into the root causes of conflicts on the continent. It places particular emphasis on examining conflicts through different lenses, notably spotlighting xenophobia and terrorism. The article presents an inclusive roadmap for conflict



resolution, encompassing sustained peace education, the significance of geographical knowledge, the imperative to transform the mindset of African leaders concerning violence and conflicts, the notion of countries ceding some sovereignty to the United Nations, the role of mediation, and the potential for armed interventions. By exploring these multifaceted approaches, the article aims to foster a deeper understanding of the complex nature of conflicts and chart a new course towards lasting peace in Africa and beyond.

#### 4.2 Recommendations

The article underscores the significance of Africans taking the lead in managing conflicts on their continent, as they possess a profound understanding of the underlying causes and dynamics. Their dedication and commitment are vital in effectively addressing these conflicts, emphasizing the importance of internal efforts over external assistance. Nonetheless, the document acknowledges that external interventions are valuable and should be based on a partial surrender of sovereignty to the United Nations to enable prompt action without the delay of seeking permission. This balanced approach aims to empower African nations while also recognizing the potential benefits of international cooperation in achieving lasting peace and stability in the region.

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