# Security Challenges in Africa: The Role of International Community (ECOWAS& AU) in Conflict Resolution in Nigeria

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**Abstract**
Security challenges have been a major problem confronting Africa's countries. Security challenges have poses a great danger to many African's countries. This is however as a result of bad governance. When the electorate is uncomfortable with a particular government they result in violence since violence is the only option for addressing the problem. May African's leaders choose to die than vacating, their seat to someone else. In Egypt and Libya president Hosin Mubarak and Muammar Gadaffi chooses to die than to hand over power to someone else as demanded by the electorate. There is other African country that has a similar case of security challenges like Sudan, where till date the president is not ready to release power to another person. This attitude of I must hold unto power and die there has posse a greater danger and has affected foreign investment in Africa. It is in the light of the above that these paper set to examine security challenges in Africa: The role of international community (ECOWAS & AU) in conflict resolution with particular reference to Nigeria. These paper also adopt Karl Marx theory of political economy as it theoretical framework of analysis. The paper also recommended some major as a panacea for conflict free such like good governance and credible elections, accountability and transparency in governance. All these remedies when applied will help reduce the high level of conflict and security challenges in Africa.

## INTRODUCTION

The colonial state was particularly developed and the development of the colonial state "was essentially to the overwhelming need of the colonizers for repressive force."

Ake (1981:76-77) further explained that "the logic of colonialism compelled the colonizers to make exclusive claim to power and that the exclusive claim of colonial rulers was also dictated by necessity of economic power." This means that the colonial state, which was particularly static, controlled every aspect of the colonial economy tightly to maintain its power and domination and to realize the economic objectives of colonization. In all intents Undoubtedly, Africa is a continent afflicted by social, economic and political woes which manifest in hunger, disease, high infant mortality rate, short life span, corruption, technological slow motion, poor infrastructure, mass poverty, etc. This ugly situation has been compounded by insurrections, civil wars, ethnic, religious and communal violence in almost all the social-economic formations in the continent. The negative impact of the violent conflicts is tremendous loss in human and material resources, which should have been harnessed to improve the living conditions of the people.

Instead of directing efforts toward development, African states are degenerating from underdevelopment to self-destruction in violent strives. According Koffi Annan (1998), former Secretary General of the United National Organization, in 1996 alone fourteen of the fifty three countries in Africa were afflicted by armed conflicts.

The fundamental question is: why is Africa engaged in self-injury with bloody intra-state conflicts in such formations as Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi and Rwanda, Sudan, Liberia, Uganda, Cote d'ivoire, Sierra Leone and others. What is the explanation for these conflicts and how are these conflicts being resolved?

The main thrust of this paper is to explain the fundamental causes or sources of these conflicts, to show how they are being resolved and to suggest the way forward with particular focus on Nigeria. It is our argument that these conflicts are a reflection of the crises of the post-colonial state and the politics associated with it. That is to say that the nature and character of politics is the cause of social discontent, political instability and violent conflicts which in turn are a function of underdevelopment of the African States, including Nigeria.

## THE CONCEPT OF SECURITY

By way of definition Ignac Glob, the head of the Yugoslavian delegation to a symposium organized by Italian non governmental organization 1986 posed that "security is the absence of danger to the fundamental values of any. The absence of the danger of aggression or domination and the absence of threats to sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and self-determination (Onoja, 1996).

Ian 1999 has observed that international or global security around "questions of force:" which include all forms of military activity and analyses the conditions that lead up to or put an end to organized violence. This view was further enhanced by Gwyn Prins who explains security studies as high-politic-state politics and military.

However, contemporary studies have unraveled the contention of global security beyond the military

stand point and examine what is known as threats without enemies" such as pollution and poverty thus, Hugher (2002) explains that global security involves the quest for protection of certain levels of economic and social well being" that is the primary motivating force for participation in protest and social movements.

**The Concept of Conflict**

At this juncture, it is imperative to examine the term conflict. The contemporary world is built around conflict. In fact, conflicts exist in every society. No society, be it traditional or modern, is devoid of conflicts. However, conflicts vary in degree and form of expression which could be verbal, ideological, psychological or physical. These conflicts are sometimes variously branded political, religious, ethnic or economic in nature, depending on the most plausible and favourably used as an explanatory note at the material time. What then is conflict?

When two or more persons converge, they must interact to meet certain needs. In the course of the interactions, conflict usually creeps in. It therefore follows that when two or more persons, groups, communities or nation seek to take possession or dominate a particular object of value at the exclusion of others, conflict ensues. Conceptually, conflict is "a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals" (Coser, 1965:8). Conflicts in this paper refer to physical violence, which Jinadu [1984:44) contends "involves somatic injury inflicted on human beings, the most radical manifestation of which is the killing of an individual." Otite (1999:1) notes that "conflicts arise from pursuit of divergent interests, goals and aspirations by individuals, and or groups in a defined social and physical environment." Viewing conflicts as natural in social existence, Adesanya (2000) notes that intolerance; conflict and war are inevitable social phenomena.

From the foregoing, it is clear that conflict is a condition of disharmony within an interaction process. This usually comes about as a result of clash of interests between the parties involved in some form of relationship. Conflict is therefore an inevitable outcome of human dynamic s and diversity. Conflict is a social phenomenon but it is important to note that it is not every conflict that is violent and destructive. Some conflicts are mere disagreements or disputations over issues or interests, which may pave ways for amicable solutions that may bring the parties involved to closer relations. This paper is concerned with violent conflicts as defined by Coser (1965) and situated by Otite (1999) above.

**Conflict Resolution**

Although conflict resolution has been part of human experience for centuries, Burton (1993) argued that the concept is comparatively recent in academic discourse. He draws attention to the term "dispute" which some scholars interchange with conflict. For him, "settlement refers to negotiated or arbitrated outcomes of disputes, while resolution refers to outcomes of a conflict situation (Burton, 1999:55). We thus have "dispute settlement" and conflict resolution." However, dispute and conflict operate on the same principles and although they may refer to different conditions and scope of social relationships, they may, like the concept of settlement and resolution, be used interchangeably.

Conflict resolution is essentially aimed at intervention to change or facilitate the course of a conflict. Other problem-solving techniques are known generally as "problem-solving workshops," "interactive problem solving" "third party consultation," or collaborative analytical problem-solving" (Mitchell, 1993:78). In general, conflict resolution provides an opportunity to interact with the parties concerned, with the hope of at least reducing the scope, intensity and effects of conflicts. During informal and formal meetings, conflict resolution exercises permit a re-assessment of views and claims as a basis for finding options to crises and to divergent points of view.

According to Otite (1999:8) conflict resolution performs a healing function in societies. It provides opportunity for the examinations of alternative pay-offs in a situation of positioned disagreements, and resolves normalcy in societies by facilitating discussions and placing parties in conflict, in situations in which they can choose alternative positive decisions to resolve differences.

Failure to resolve conflicts over access to commonly valued scarce resources, and over divergent perceptions of socio-political situations, has the high potential of degenerating into genocide or fratricide as it occurred among the Ife-Modakeke Yoruba and the Tiv-Jukun of Nigeria, and the Hutu-Tutsi of Burundi and Rwanda (Lemarchand, 1989). Conflict resolution promotes consensus – building, socio-bridge reconstructions, and the re-enactment of order in society. As we noted in the preceding segment of this discourse conflict hardly breakup societies. On the other hand, they function ultimately to educate people on how different actors and social units play or should play their roles to reconcile society.

**THEORETICAL NEXUS**

In analyzing conflict in society, scholars and researchers usually apply explanatory and analytical tools to facilitate the understanding of the phenomena. Within the context of this paper, the concept of politics of exclusion, or exclusivity for short, is taken as very useful and illuminating for an understanding of the social, economic and political problems in Africa generally and Nigeria in particular. In order to understand the salience of exclusivity in the political and economic life or conditions in Africa, which gives rise to violence, it is

necessary to locate the root of the Africa's condition in the colonial legacy. This is because Africa is a creation of colonialism.

As noted by Fanon (1968) colonialism was "not a thinking machine for endowed with reasoning faculties; it was violence in its natural state." Collaborating this nature of the colonial rule, Jinadu (1980) notes that "colonial rule was essentially preceded, inaugurated and maintained by violence, particularly, physical violence (Jinadu 1980:24). Ake (1981:128) has stated that and purposes, the colonial state was undemocratic, authoritarian phenomenon. Thus, colonial state was the agent for the furtherance of the interests of the metropolitan bourgeoisie.

The consequence of the colonial situation was the development of a consciousness of domination, oppression repression and exploitation among the colonized people in the different socio – economic formations and the consciousness which subsequently translated into nationalist activities against colonialism. The indigenous people wanted political power and freedom from colonial domination. In short, political power was everything: it was not only the access to wealth but also the means to security and the only guarantor of general well being. The struggle of the indigenous petit bourgeoisie against colonial rule is described as one exclusive claim to power confronted with another (Ake, 1981) – the colonizers confronted by the colonized. Therefore, politics was sought by all means and maintained by all means. That is to say that political competition became zero – sum game. This was the tone of politics in the colonial era. The colonial legacy of exclusive politics has been retained and reinforced in the post – colonial Africa.

It is also to be noted that the exclusive claim of the colonizers was not limited to political power; it was extended to economic power, which was used for the reproduction of the colonial system of dominations. The colonizers monopolized both political and economic power. Also colonialism, by its very nature, had no intention or interest to develop African economics or improve the general living conditions of the people and had no compelling moral reason to be accountable to the people other than to be authoritarian. The petit – bourgeoisie who inherited power from colonizers internalized the features or inclinations of the colonizers and this has remained the situation in Africa today.

The salience of exclusivity in political and economic interest and struggle are expressed in the tendency to monopolize political and economic power for the promotion of personal, family, clan, ethnic or religious well – being and domination to the exclusion of the other entities. This is why political competition and conflicts manifest as ethnic or religious or communal.

Colonial politics of exclusion was sustained by not only physical violence but also by structural violence. Jinadu (1980: 46) explained that structural violence is a condition of social injustice which reflects the fact of exploitation and reduce the colonized to abject poverty.

The implication of structural violence is that it engenders counter – violence from the oppressed or exploited. This is because, structural violence as a condition of social injustice invariably drives men to desperate ends and to the conviction that one way to redress or remove the condition is to resort to the use of physical violence. Thus, structural violence and physical violence are linked. Structural violence involves deprivation. Thus, Gurr (1970) notes that, deprivation has potential for explaining collective action, which may be in form of violence.

The post – colonial rulers in Africa today are using physical and structural violence on the ordinary people to promote and maintain their politics of exclusion while those outside state power are incline to use counter – violence so as to have access to state power. In sum, politics of exclusion which out lined colonialism is responsible for the authoritarianism, political repression, monopolization of economic power, lack of accountability and transparency, corruption and public maladministration – all of which produce social discontent and violence in African states today.

The theoretical consideration sketched above is an attempt to understand and explain the fundamental cause of violent conflicts in African socio – economic formations whether such conflicts manifests in political, economic, ethnic, religious or communal.

## SOURCES OF CONFLICT IN AFRICA

Konteh (2004 : 275) has pointed out how the last two decades in African continent have been plagued by conflicts ranging from ethnic and religious clashes, with some escalating to full civil wars, citing Liberia, Sierra – Leon and Cote d' Ivoire as case studies. He stated further on the sources of conflict in Africa that:

> *Even though there is no consensus on the root causes of these conflicts, and despite the fact that the causes do vary from one country to another, most of the conflicts in Africa are generally believed to have been caused by either one of the factors listed below, or a combination of several factors. These factors include, but are not limited to: generalized poverty, ethnic tensions, corrupt and incompetent governments, mass unemployment, social exclusion, population explosion and competition for scarce resources.* Konteh (2004:275)

Annan (1998 : 10), in a Report to United Nations Security Council has this to say on the root causes of conflicts in Africa:

> *The sources of conflict in Africa reflect the diversity and complexity of Africa ....*
> *Colonial rule bequeathed to Africa not only arbitrary boundaries which contributed to*
> *conflicts between states and made national unity within states more difficult, but it also*
> *left a legacy of authoritarian governance ... in many African countries, the leaders of*
> *the newly independent states pursued a heavy centralization of political and economic*
> *power and suppressed political pluralism. This led to corruption, nepotism,*
> *complacency and the abuse of power, in many countries, the winner – takes – all form*
> *of political power has raised the stakes of political control to dangerously high levels.*

The above quotation by Annan (1998) has raised a number of sources of conflict in Africa, drifty being the diversity of the people. Given the diversity of ethnic groups in various African states with cultural differences, inter – ethnic cultural competitions will result to violence. In Nigeria, various ethnic groups are involved in conflict with one another, a lot engage in sporadic fighting. Example of ethnic groups that are involved in conflict include: Ijaws and Itsekiris and Ijaws in South – South Nigeria, Yoruba and the Hausas, Tiv and Jukuns, Fulani and Kuteb etc, these groups engage in armed conflict. (Otite and Albert, (eds) 1999).

Outside Nigeria, the two most prominent of such conflicts are wars in Burundi and Rwanda, both featuring struggles for ascendancy between the culturally similar Tutsi and Hutu groups (Akaakuma, 2004:21).

Another strand of the colonial rule that brought conflict as seen in Annan's view was the issue of arbitrary boundaries created by the colonial administration. As can be observed, disputes over the precise location of colonial frontier emerged in Africa after the incorporation of the continent into the world's capitalist system, some of which have assumed military dimension as can be seen in the case between Nigeria and Cameroon, Eritrea and its neighbours (Annan, 1998). Cameroon contested Nigeria's oil – rich Bakassi Peninsula and subsequently won at the International court of Justice (ICJ). Relatedly, the state of Eritrea has aggressively contested the boundaries with South yemen, and Djibouti and most recently with Ethiopia. In May 1998, large – scale tank and artillery battles between Eritrea and Ethiopia followed the Eritrean military occupation of the Yigra triangle, a barren 400 square kilometers region of desert (Annan, 1998).

To Dzurgba ( 2006 ), the following would be attributed to sources of conflicts in Africa: Economic resources, power, leadership, human nature, environmental pollution, racial prejudice, suspicion, distrust, hatred, discrimination, religious, and ideology etc. He stressed that among the sources, economic resources constitute the major source of conflict in Africa as he observed:

> *Economic resources constitute a major source of conflict in human societies. Resources include human*
> *resources and material resources. Societies require people or population for economic purpose such as*
> *taxation in revenue collection and labour force for employment in business, trade as well as production*
> *and distribution of goods and services... Material resources include petroleum – oil, agricultural*
> *produce and solid minerals such as gold, silver etc. All these together make a society wealthy, powerful*
> *and prestigious in the eyes of other societies. These are the resources from which various types of*
> *conflict originate (Dzurgba 2006 : 3).*

To Nabudere (2000), the role of Africa states in economic management results to conflict, as he stated;

> *The capacity of state for social provisioning to the people and the defined role of state in developmental*
> *terms ..., the interplay of economic crisis, social upheavals and political instability exposed the*
> *inadequacies of the African state and exacerbated the economic condition of the people who full further*
> *into deprivation and desperation. In this situation, social and political misunderstanding could*
> *degenerate into conflicts (Nabudere, 2000 : 35).*

Alli (2004) had a similar view to Nabudere as he observed that:

> *The structures and institution of the state have remained relatively underdeveloped through 1960s, the*
> *focus being on building those institutions that allowed for the exploitation and management of*
> *resources .... African states have been described as rentier states because they survive largely on rents*
> *from naturally occurring resources like petroleum ... or other mineral resources. They are also*
> *characterized as corrupt, repressive and irresponsive to the needs of the people. The African states thus*
> *contribute to these conflicts through its greed and biased approach to the distribution of scarce*
> *resources and other patronages. A good example is Nigeria, where government cannot be exonerated*
> *from the spate of communal and ethnic conflicts ravaging the nation (Alli 2004 : 331).*

Alli further stressed that, since economic crises deepened, there has been a proliferation of ethnic, regional and religious movements and organizations with pronounced political agendas all over Africa. He gave the examples of such organizations to include Sudan peoples Liberation Army (SPLA), and the National Democratic Alliance in Eastern Sudan, Congolese Rally for Democracy (CRD), Demoncratic Republic of Congo; National Liberation Forces (NLF) in Burundi, the Patriotic Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB) in Nigeria, etc. All these associations make claims that have far reaching implications for the state. In most cases, the demands are measured and promoted by well – aroused militia in a manner that inevitably leads to violent conflicts (Alli 2004:333).

The above constitute, but not all the sources of violent conflicts in Africa. It remains to add that these conflicts have monumental effects on the continent from destruction of properties to loss of human lives.

## A BRIEF SURVEY OF CONFLICTS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES IN AFRICA
### Sudan (Darfur)
The Sudanese conflict which began in 1983 is between government and the insurgent Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) and has cost the country over 2. 9 million lives with more than four million people displaced from their homes. In the 27 year civil war whose objective is the succession of Southern Sudan from the Sudan anchored on longstanding struggles over resources.

Attempt by African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) has not yielded positive effort as this is being hampered by lack of strategic security intelligence, limitation of mandate, lack of financial resources, inadequate troops, the activities of the government of Sudan, lack of logistics and lack of accommodation facilities.

### The Democratic Republic of Congo
The conflict in the DRC broke out in October, 1996 when the Alliance of Democratic forces for the liberation of Congo (AFDI) led by Lurant Kabila started a war against President Mobutu Seseseko (Mimiko, 1999: 16). The conflict was very complex as there was a plurality of insurgent groups backed by a variety of foreign soldiers and insurgents and has cost 2.5 millions lives (Akpaekong, 1998: 29). The complexity of the conflict has created problems in the efforts of resolving it. (Akaakuma, 2004).

The conflict in the DRC can be explained as a crisis of the state and of political leadership. The country is rich in mineral resources such as industrial diamonds and copper. Yet when Mobutu was in power, all his interest was to monopolize power and use it to accommodate personal wealth instead of transforming the state. This precipitated into a situation that the insurgent forces rose against the Mobutu regime to redress their deprivation.

### Burundi and Rwanda
The conflicts in Burundi and Rwanda have their root manifestly in ethnicity and broke out in 1993 between the Tutsi – dominated government and the Hutus in Burundi and Rwanda respectively. The Burundi conflict is between the government dominated by the minority Tutsi and the two Hutu insurgent groups, the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD) and the National Liberation Front (FNL) and has cost 250,000 lives (The punch 22/8/2002:50, 26/8/2002:13).

## CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA
Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a population of over 140 million (2006 census) and endowed with vast human and natural resources, which include oil, solid minerals, forest resources and agricultural potentials. Yet Nigeria is one of the least developed countries in the world. To compound the situation, the country has continued to experience all kinds of conflicts – a civil war (1967 – 1970), (Anifowose, 1982) and political violence, ethnic, religious and communal clashes. There are also conflicts between some communities and business organization operating in such communities as the conflicts between the communities and the oil companies in the Niger Delta area (Edoh, 2001:85).

Some of the conflicts in the recent past include the prominently ethnic Jukun-Tiv crisis in Taraba State in 1990 and 2000; the Ife – Modakeke conflicts in Osun State; the Nassarawa – Tiv Crisis; the ethnic and religious conflicts in Kano, Kaduna and Jos and in so many other locations around Nigeria. (Otite and Albert 1999).

Unlike the insurrections already treated in the paper, the conflicts in Nigeria are not aimed at taking state power in the country but are expressions by divergent interests who are manifestly or latently economic. For instance, the recurrent Tiv – Alago crisis in Nassarawa State and the Jukun – Tiv crises in Taraba state have as their roots land and political potentials. Land is used for agricultural production and other uses and therefore it is a critical means of production in an agrarian formation like Nigeria.  According to Best, et al (1999:103) who have carried a research on the Jukun – Tiv crises of 1990 – 1993;

> *The argument was that land only served a vent for political and other forms of*
> *conflict. It was suggested that all forms of disagreement between the Tiv and*
> *Jukun found expression in farmlands. Most Jukuns insisted that the conflict*
> *was about land, and that other factors were secondary.*

From the above, it can be submitted that the Jukun – Tiv conflicts is the struggle for political power to control economic resources available including land.

Like the Jukun – Tiv conflicts, the Ife - Modakeke crisis in Osun state is a recurring phenomenon even though the latter has a longer history, (Albert, 1999). And like the Jukun who assert that the Tiv in Wukari are setters, so the  Ife claim that the Modakeke are settlers. The implication of the claim that the Tiv and the Modakeke are settlers in Wukari and Ife respectively, is the denial of economic and political rights such as land ownership and political participation. These have been the roots of the violent conflicts that have continued to break out between these groups because of exclusive claims.

Kano is also unique in its religious conflict, as it has experienced both intra – religious and inters – religious crises. The first serious intra – religious conflict in Kano was the Maitatsine violence in 1980. Trouble broke out when Mohamed Marwa (Maitatsine) the leader of Muslim fundamentalists who did not recognize other Muslims as true Muslims, defined the government order to remove the structure set up by his followers to promote their activities and instead ordered them to attack the "Infidels" – government functionaries such as the police as well as orthodox Muslims. This conflict cost over 500 lives including the Maitatsines and property worth millions of Naira was destroyed (Albert, 1999).

The other conflict that had an ethnic – religious dimension was the 1991 riot in which both Christians and non – Hausa Muslims were attacked by the Hausa – Muslim. The ostensible and immediate cause of the conflict was the arrival of the Evangelist Reinhard Bonke in Kano on October 13, 1991 to conduct a crusade, (Albert, 1999).

Another conflict that needs mention here is that of Niger Delta region which is anchored on marginalization of the communities where oil is being exploited from benefiting the wealth derived from oil. The crisis in the Niger Delta has become very intractable since the killing of Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other members of the movement for the survival of Ogoni people (Mosop) on November 10, 1995. Various groups and organizations have sprung up claiming responsibilities for one sabotage action or the other against the oil multinationals, including the kidnapping of their hostage taking of their staff. Some of these groups are South South liberation movement; federated Niger Delta Ijaw communities; movement for the sovereign state of the Niger Delta; Niger Delta people's volunteer force; movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta; Reformed Grand Alliance of Niger Delta; Matyres Brigade; Niger Delta Vigilante; Niger Delta Patriotic Force; etc. These groups and others operate secretly and openly in the Niger Delta causing great security challenge to the Nigerian State. Suffice it, to say that the cycle of violence and militant agitation for a fair deal by these groups is causing serious ripples to the Nigerian economy which so much depends on oil rents. (Okonta, 2000).Recently 2011/2012 boko haram took another dimension by bombing of churches and destroying of lives

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFRICA: THE CASE OF NIGERIA

Conflict resolution is aimed at minimizing or preventing or removing conflicts in the society. The various approaches to conflict management and resolution include top – down, middle range and grass – root or bottom – up approaches.

The top – down approach means that those involved in managing or resolving a particular conflict reach out to the leaders of the warring parties with hope that if the leaders of the conflict come to agreement for peace, their respective followers would abide, by it. This approach was applied by South Africa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – Rwanda conflict and also between the DRC and Congolese Liberation Movement as well as the conflict between the Burundian governments and the insurgent forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD) and the National Liberation front (FNL) (Akaakuma, 2004: 25).

In Nigeria, traditional rulers and other leading actors in the warring communities are usually approached by the government to resolve community clashes in their domain whenever they occur. Some times the government sanctions these leading actors as a way of resolving the conflict. The important thing to note is that those approached must be the real leaders in a conflict other wise the approach may not be successful.

The middle range approach emphasizes getting the real conflict leaders to the peace – building table while the grass – root approach involves the ordinary people in a conflict situation who might have become wary of a conflict. This approach can really bring solution to a conflict if the conflict leaders find themselves almost alone of their followers' unwillingness to continue with the conflict.

One can therefore observe here that attempt to resolve conflict in Nigeria through the use of military forces usually heightens the problem of insecurity and indeed it suggests a failure of the state structure in resolving conflicts. The case in Jos crisis is obvious. In the Niger Delta region until the Yar A' dua regime implemented the Amnesty programme the use of military led to more loss of lives in the area.

## SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN NIGERIA

Conflict is part of human existence as long as man is a social being and resources for existence continue to be scarce and inequitably distributed among members of society. Conflict may be antagonistic or non – antagonistic. But conflicts must exist with cooperation and a good measure of peace for social transformation to take place in society. What follow are suggestions for resolving conflicts in Nigeria, particularly the antagonistic and violent aspects of conflict:

- Firstly, there is need for democratization of politics so that there is level playing ground for all citizens to have opportunities for participating in political and decision making process. Democracy must guarantee human rights, freedom of expression and choice of those to rule and the rule of law must be institutionalized.
- Secondly, good governance must be promoted such that there is accountability transparency, equitable distribution of resources to ensure the development of human or social capital, drastic reduction of

poverty, hunger, ignorance, disease, etc. through enhanced industrialization and economic development.
- Thirdly, the state should always take prompt action to de-escalate conflicts in communal clashes and make sure that the root causes of such conflicts are identified and treated appropriately to forestall future recurrence. The situation in which reports of panels, which have investigated certain conflicts, are left unimplemented does not help matters.
- Finally government should set up institutions charged with the responsibility of identifying and monitoring conflict – prone zones or issues and managing conflict situations to prevent them from developing into violence. Non – governmental organizations (NGOs) specializing in conflict management and resolution should also do the same.

## SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

Conflicts are fast becoming a culture, a destructive culture at that, in the midst of mass poverty, hunger disease, ignorance, etc. These conflicts cannot be explained outside the nature and character of the state and politics in the post-colonial Africa. The conflicts are a crisis of the state, which have been caused by the one exclusive claim to state power and economic resources by forces or social classes to unleash deprivation repression, exploitations and neglect on the subordinate groups.

These conflicts are, therefore, the expression of frustrations arising from denied opportunities and the need to fight back or attack perceived enemies in manifest ethnic, religious, political or command clashes. This is to say that politics of exclusion is responsible for the violent conflicts in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular.

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