



THE INFLUENCE OF ARMED FORCES ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS IN AFRICAN CONFLICTS

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Abstract: Military involvements and peace negotiations in Africa have been subjects of great importance, given the complex history of conflicts and wars in Africa. This paper analysed the intricate interplay between military participation and peace negotiations, using a qualitative research design. It explored how these military interventions have impacted peace and stability in the region, shedding light on the complexities of conflict resolution. These data collection techniques such as document analysis, literature review, and the research captured the nuanced experiences and narratives of those directly involved in military operations and peace processes. Furthermore, the study analyzed the challenges and opportunities presented by peace negotiations in Africa, considering the unique socio-political contexts of different countries. The study concluded that successful peace agreements, such as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan, have led to significant political changes and the cessation of prolonged conflicts. The study recommended that investing in conflict prevention mechanisms and early warning systems to address potential sources of conflict before they escalate into violence is necessary to ensure peace and stability on the continent.

Key words: Military involvement, Peace negotiations, Conflict resolution, Africa

1. Introduction

Military involvement and peace negotiations in Africa have been key elements in addressing conflicts and promoting stability in the region. The presence of military forces in various African countries, whether deployed by the government, international organizations, or regional bodies, plays a crucial role in maintaining peace and security. Military interventions are often seen as necessary to address violent conflicts, protect civilians, and create conditions for successful peace negotiations. Military involvement in Africa has a complex historical context shaped by colonization, decolonization, Cold War dynamics, and post-colonial conflicts. During the colonial period, European powers established military control over African territories to exploit resources and assert dominance (Hobsbawm, 2010). The legacy of colonization left many African nations with weak

institutions, unresolved territorial disputes, and ethnic rivalries, leading to instability and conflicts that often require military intervention. This military presence often involved coercive tactics and suppression of local resistance movements. The process of decolonization in the mid-20th century led to the withdrawal of colonial powers and the emergence of independent African states. However, it also left behind legacies of border disputes, ethnic tensions, and power vacuums that fueled intra-state conflicts (Herbst, 2014). The Cold War further complicated the military landscape in Africa, as superpowers supported rival factions in proxy wars, leading to prolonged conflicts and instability (Mazrui & Tidy, 1984). For example, the United States and the Soviet Union backed opposing sides in conflicts such as the Angolan Civil War and the Ethiopian Civil War. Following the end of the Cold War, the focus shifted to addressing conflicts within African states and promoting peace and stability. Regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). These organizations provide platforms for dialogue, mediation, and conflict resolution, which are essential for ending hostilities and building sustainable peace (Williams & Young, 2015). During the decolonization process in the 20th century, newly independent African countries faced challenges in establishing stable governments and maintaining territorial integrity. As a result, military forces were often used to assert control, suppress dissent, and manage internal conflicts. Military coups and civil wars have been common in Africa, with armed forces playing a significant role in political power struggles. The prevalence of authoritarian regimes and weak governance structures has sometimes necessitated military intervention to restore order or protect civilians from violence. Today, as opined by Williams (2013) military involvement in Africa encompasses a range of activities, including peacekeeping missions, counterterrorism operations, and support for postconflict reconstruction. International actors such as the United Nations and individual countries also play significant roles in providing military assistance and training to African governments. Understanding the historical context of military involvement in Africa is essential for developing effective strategies to address ongoing conflicts and promote peace and development on the continent. Military involvement in Africa is also influenced by external actors, including former colonial powers, the United Nations, and other international organizations. Foreign military assistance and interventions have been a contentious issue, with concerns about sovereignty, human rights abuses, and the potential for neocolonialism. One example of military involvement in Africa is the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Another important example is the United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa. These missions, such as the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), play a crucial role in protecting civilians, supporting peace processes, and facilitating negotiations between conflicting parties. It is important to note that while military involvement can create the conditions for peace negotiations, a comprehensive approach that includes political, economic, and social dimensions is necessary for long-term peace and stability in Africa.

1.1 Historical Context of Military Involvement in Africa

Military involvement in Africa has a long and complex history, shaped by colonialism, Cold War dynamics, post-independence struggles, and contemporary geopolitical interests. This involvement has significantly influenced the political, social, and economic landscape of the continent.

i. Colonial Era

The military involvement in Africa during the colonial era was primarily characterized by European powers using military force to establish and maintain control over African territories. The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 formalized the "Scramble for Africa," leading to the partitioning of the continent among European powers.

Colonial armies were often used to suppress resistance and enforce colonial rule. For instance, the British used military campaigns to conquer the Zulu Kingdom in South Africa (1879) and the Ashanti Empire in present-day Ghana (1896) (Hull, 1993).

ii. Cold War Period

During the Cold War, Africa became a significant theater for superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. Both superpowers provided military support to various African governments and rebel movements, seeking to expand their spheres of influence. For example, the U.S. supported the Mobutu regime in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), while the Soviet Union backed the MPLA in Angola (Gleijeses, 2002). This period saw an influx of weapons and military advisors into the continent, which often exacerbated conflicts.

iii. Post-Colonial and Civil Wars

The post-colonial period in Africa was marked by numerous military coups and civil wars. Many African nations inherited fragile political structures from their colonial rulers, leading to instability. Military coups became a common method for seizing power, with notable examples including the coup in Ghana by Lieutenant General Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka in 1966 and the coup in Nigeria by Kaduna Nzeogwu in 1966 (Meredith, 2005). Civil wars also erupted in countries like Nigeria (Biafran War, 1967-1970) and Sudan (First Sudanese Civil War, 1955-1972).

iv. Regional and International Interventions

In recent decades, military involvement in Africa has increasingly included regional and international interventions. The African Union (AU) and sub-regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have conducted peacekeeping missions to stabilize conflict zones. For instance, ECOWAS intervened in Liberia during its civil war in the 1990s (Adebajo, 2002). The United Nations has also played a significant role in peacekeeping efforts across the continent. Missions such as the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) have been critical in addressing prolonged conflicts (UN, 2020).

2. Conceptual Clarifications

2.1 Military Involvements in Politics

Military involvement in politics is a phenomenon where the armed forces exert significant influence over political processes, governance, and policy-making. This can range from direct military rule to subtler forms of influence, such as political lobbying by military elites. Historically, military involvement in politics has had profound implications for state stability, governance, and democratic development. In Latin America, the military coups in countries like Argentina, Brazil, and Chile during the mid-20th century illustrate how military intervention can shape political landscapes. These regimes often justified their rule as necessary to maintain order and national security amidst perceived threats from communism and political instability (Loveman, 1999). In Africa, Post-colonial Africa saw numerous military coups, with leaders like Idi Amin in Uganda and Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire exemplifying how military rulers can dominate political systems. Many African countries experienced cycles of military and civilian rule, often linked to issues of legitimacy, corruption, and state-building (Decalo, cited by Chin & Kirkpatrick, 2023). In Asia, countries such as Pakistan and Thailand, the military has played a significant role in politics. Pakistan has experienced several military coups, with the military justifying their actions as necessary for political stability and economic development (Jalal, 1990).

2.2 Peace Negotiations

Peace negotiations are essential mechanisms for resolving conflicts and establishing lasting peace between conflicting parties. These negotiations involve multiple actors, including states, non-state actors, international organizations, and civil society groups. Effective peace negotiations address the root causes of conflict, ensure fair participation, and create sustainable agreements.

2.2.1 Stages of Peace Negotiations

1. **Pre-Negotiation Phase:** This involves establishing trust through informal dialogues and confidence-building measures is crucial before formal negotiations begin. This phase often involves secret talks and third-party facilitation to reduce tensions. Determining the issues to be negotiated and the structure of the talks is a critical step. Clear agendas help manage expectations and focus discussions.
2. **Negotiation Phase:** Structured dialogues between conflicting parties, often facilitated by mediators, aim to reach a comprehensive agreement. This phase includes bargaining, proposing solutions, and drafting agreements. Third-party mediators can help manage the negotiation process, propose compromises, and ensure that all voices are heard. Effective mediation can bridge gaps between parties and provide neutral ground for discussions.
3. **Agreement Phase:** This involves detailing the terms of the settlement, including political, security, and socio-economic provisions. Clarity and specificity in agreements are vital to prevent future disputes. Establishing frameworks for monitoring and verifying compliance with the agreement is essential for its success. Implementation mechanisms often include timelines, responsibilities, and international oversight (Hampson, 1996).
4. **Post-Agreement Phase:** Promoting reconciliation through truth and reconciliation commissions, reparations, and justice mechanisms helps heal the wounds of conflict and build trust among former adversaries. Strengthening political and social institutions is crucial to prevent the recurrence of conflict. This includes reforms in governance, the judiciary, and security sectors (Paris, 2004).

2.2.2 Major Actors in Peace Negotiations

1. **State Actors:** The State actors includes government and regional organisations. National governments play a central role in peace negotiations, representing state interests and committing to implementing agreements. Likewise, Bodies like the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) often facilitate or support peace negotiations in their respective regions (Adebajo, 2002).
2. **Non-State Actors:** The non-state actors are the Rebel Groups and Militias and Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Intra-state conflicts often require the involvement of non-state armed groups in negotiations to ensure comprehensive settlements. Local and international NGOs contribute to peace processes by providing expertise, advocacy, and grassroots support. Their involvement can enhance the legitimacy and inclusivity of peace negotiations.
3. **International Actors:** Here, there is the United Nations (UN) and Foreign Governments. The UN plays a crucial role in mediating conflicts, providing peacekeeping forces, and supporting post-conflict reconstruction. External states can act as mediators, donors, or guarantors of peace agreements, leveraging their influence to support the negotiation process (Bercovitch & Jackson, 2009).

2.3 Military Involvements in Peace Negotiations in Africa

The military's involvement in peace negotiations in Africa is multifaceted, reflecting the complex nature of conflicts on the continent. The military can play various roles, from being direct participants in the negotiations to acting as peacekeepers and guarantors of peace agreements. This involvement is shaped by the unique political,

social, and historical contexts of each conflict. The various ways in which the military involves in peace negotiations in Africa includes the following. i. Direct Participants in Negotiations

In the direct participants of the Military in Negotiation comes in two ways which could be through Civil Wars and Military Leaders or Military Coups and negotiated settlements.

- **Civil Wars and Military Leaders:** Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002) argued that in many African conflicts, military leaders have been primary actors in peace negotiations. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), military factions, including the government forces and various rebel groups, were integral to the negotiations leading to the Sun City Agreement in 2003.

- **Military Coups and Negotiated Settlements:** Johnson (2011) posits that military regimes that come to power through coups often engage in negotiations to legitimize their rule or transition to civilian governance. In Sudan, the military played a crucial role in the negotiations that led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, which ended the Second Sudanese Civil War. ii. Peacekeepers and Monitors

- **African Union and United Nations Missions:** African militaries often contribute to peacekeeping missions mandated to monitor ceasefires and protect civilians. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), predominantly composed of troops from Uganda, Burundi, and other African countries, has been crucial in maintaining stability and supporting peace processes in Somalia (Murithi, 2008).

- **Regional Peacekeeping Initiatives:** The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has deployed military forces in peacekeeping missions, such as the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which played a significant role in enforcing peace agreements and disarming combatants (Adebajo, 2002).

iii. **Guarantors of Peace Agreements**

- **Guaranteeing Security and Compliance:** Militaries can act as guarantors of peace agreements by providing security guarantees and overseeing the implementation of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs. In Côte d'Ivoire, the French military operation "Operation Licorne" worked alongside the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to ensure the security provisions of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement (2007) were met (Piccolino, 2014).

- **Mediation and Facilitation:** In some instances, military leaders have also served as mediators or facilitators in negotiations. For example, Ugandan military leaders have participated in mediating the conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government, leading to the Juba peace talks (Lundgren, 2015).

2.4 Challenges of Military Involvement and Peace Negotiations in Africa

Military involvement and peace negotiations in Africa present complex challenges shaped by historical, political, and socio-economic factors. The interplay between armed interventions and diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts is multifaceted, often hindered by deep-rooted issues.

a) Historical Context and Colonial Legacies

Many African conflicts have roots in colonial history, where arbitrary borders and exploitative governance structures laid the groundwork for ethnic tensions and power struggles. The legacy of colonialism continues to complicate peace efforts. The division of ethnic groups across borders and the creation of weak state institutions have fostered environments ripe for conflict. For instance, the Rwandan Genocide was exacerbated by ethnic divisions institutionalized during Belgian colonial rule, creating deep-seated mistrust that hinders peace processes (Mamdani, 2001).

b) Regional and International Military Interventions

Military interventions in African conflicts by regional and international actors often lead to mixed outcomes. While interventions can provide necessary security and stability, they can also exacerbate conflicts if not carefully managed. For example, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has been instrumental in combating Al-Shabaab insurgents but has faced criticism for collateral damage and failure to protect civilians effectively. Similarly, international interventions, such as the French Operation Serval in Mali, have temporarily curbed extremist advances but struggled with ensuring long-term stability (Williams, 2013).

c) **Internal Political Dynamics**

Internal political dynamics, including governance issues, corruption, and lack of political will, significantly impede peace negotiations. Governments often manipulate ethnic and regional divisions for political gain, undermining peace efforts. In South Sudan, despite multiple peace agreements, the power struggles between President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar have continued to fuel the conflict, highlighting the challenge of achieving durable peace without genuine political commitment (Charbonneau, 2017).

d) **Resource Management and Economic Factors**

Natural resources play a critical role in many African conflicts. The exploitation of resources like diamonds, oil, and minerals often funds armed groups and corrupt officials, making peace negotiations more complex. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a prime example, where control over resource-rich areas has led to prolonged violence and instability, complicating peace processes. The competition for resources not only finances conflicts but also motivates actors to prolong hostilities (Craze, 2021).

e) **Cultural and Ethnic Dimensions**

Cultural and ethnic dimensions add another layer of complexity to military and peace efforts. Conflicts often involve multiple ethnic groups with historical grievances and competing interests, making consensus difficult. The Central African Republic (CAR) conflict involves numerous ethnic and religious factions, each with distinct agendas, complicating both military interventions and peace negotiations. Building trust among diverse groups requires inclusive approaches that address historical injustices and foster reconciliation (Autesserre, 2010).

f) **International Influence and Geopolitical Interests**

International influence and geopolitical interests further complicate African conflicts. Major Powers often have strategic interests that shape their involvement in African conflicts, sometimes at odds with peace objectives. For example, the rivalry between Western countries and China for influence in Africa affects peacekeeping efforts and military assistance, as seen in the competition for resources and political alliances in countries like Sudan and Angola (Lombard, 2016). Balancing these external influences while focusing on genuine peace-building is a significant challenge.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The relationship between military involvements and peace negotiations in Africa is a complex and multifaceted issue. This theoretical framework aims to explore the dynamics and interactions between military forces and peace processes within the African context. The framework integrates theories of peace building and military sociology to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

2.5.1 Peace building Theory

Peace building theory emphasizes the importance of establishing long-term peace through comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of conflict (Galtung, 2018). This theory highlights the need for inclusive peace processes that involve various stakeholders, including military actors, civil society, and international organizations. The role of military forces in peace building efforts can be critical, as they can provide security,

support disarmament, and assist in the reconstruction of war-torn societies (Paris, 2004). Peace building theory is an essential framework for understanding how sustainable peace can be achieved in post-conflict societies. In the context of Africa, where military involvements often play a significant role in both exacerbating and resolving conflicts, peace building theory provides crucial insights into the processes and strategies needed to establish lasting peace. Peace building theory emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of conflict, including political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions (Galtung, 1969). This approach requires integrating military, political, and civil strategies to create a holistic peace building framework. Effective peace building must involve local actors and ensure that all relevant stakeholders, including marginalized groups, are included in the peace process (Lederach, 1997). Inclusivity helps in building legitimate and durable peace agreements. Peace building is closely linked to development. Sustainable peace requires addressing issues such as poverty, inequality, and lack of access to resources. Military involvements in peace processes should therefore align with broader development goals. Establishing robust institutions that can manage conflicts and promote governance, justice, and the rule of law is a critical component of peace building (Paris, 2004). Military actors can support these efforts by providing security and stability during the institution-building phase.

2.5.2 The Theory of Military Sociology

Military sociology examines the role of military institutions and personnel in society, including their impact on peace and conflict (Moskos, Williams, & Segal, 2000). This theoretical perspective helps to understand the motivations, behaviors, and organizational structures of military forces involved in peace negotiations. It also considers the implications of military culture and ethics on the conduct of peace processes. Military sociology theory provides a framework for understanding the roles, behaviors, and impacts of military forces within society. This field examines the social structures, functions, and dynamics of military organizations and their interactions with civilian entities. In the context of Africa, where military involvements significantly influence peace negotiations, military sociology theory offers valuable insights into how military actors can shape and be shaped by peace processes.

However, in Military Sociology, there are key concepts that are worth noting. They include;

i. Military Influence on Political Processes

The military's influence on political processes can be significant, particularly in post-conflict societies. In Africa, military actors often have substantial political power, and their involvement in peace negotiations can shape the political landscape (Luckham, 1994). Effective civil-military relations are necessary to ensure that military influence supports rather than hinders democratic governance.

ii. Military Integration and DDR

The integration of military forces into civilian life and the implementation of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs are critical components of peace processes. Successful DDR efforts require understanding the social dynamics within military units and how former combatants can be reintegrated into society (Muggah, 2005).

iii. Peacekeeping and Stability Operations

Military sociology examines the role of peacekeeping and stability operations, where military forces provide security, support humanitarian efforts, and assist in rebuilding governance structures (Bellamy & Williams, 2010). These operations are vital in maintaining peace and supporting the implementation of peace agreements.

3 Case Studies of Military Involvement in Africa

3.1 AMISOM

AMISOM was established by the African Union Peace and Security Council in 2007 in response to the ongoing conflict and instability in Somalia. AMISOM's mandate includes tasks such as protecting the Somali government institutions and key infrastructure, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and contributing to the training and mentoring of Somali security forces. The mission was authorized to support peace building efforts, protect civilians, and assist the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in restoring peace and stability (Mundy, 2017). The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) represents a significant peacekeeping effort aimed at stabilizing Somalia and combating insurgent groups, particularly Al-Shabaab. The mission operates under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which allows for the use of force to maintain peace and security. AMISOM's troops comprise soldiers from several African countries, including Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti, among others. These troops work in coordination with Somali security forces and international partners, including the United Nations and the European Union. Despite facing significant challenges, including attacks by insurgent groups and logistical constraints, AMISOM has made notable achievements. It has helped to push Al-Shabaab out of major urban centers and create space for political reconciliation and state-building efforts. Additionally, AMISOM has played a crucial role in providing humanitarian assistance and supporting the delivery of basic services to the Somali population (United Nations Security Council, 2021). However, the mission also faces criticism and calls for reform. Concerns have been raised about allegations of human rights abuses by some AMISOM troops and the need for a clear exit strategy to transition security responsibilities to the Somali government (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Nonetheless, AMISOM remains a critical actor in the ongoing efforts to bring stability and peace to Somalia. AMISOM

The table below shows the current UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa and the rest of the World.

Mission	Established	Military Observers	Troops	Staff Officer	Police	International Civilians	Local Civilians	UN Volunteers	Total	Fatalities	Budget (US\$)
UNTSO	May 1948	154				72	139		365	52	36.50 million (2021) *
UNMOGIP	January 1949	44				23	43		110	13	10.52 million (2021) *
UNDOF	May 1974		1,201	60		51	81		1,393	58	65.5 million
UNIFIL	March 1978		9,535	209		249	553		10,546	334	510.25 million
MINURSO	April 1991	202	20	7	2	80	153	15	479	20	60.9 million
UNMIK	June 1999	9			9	100	206	20	344	56	44.19 million
UNISFA	June 2011	122	2,856	124	43	176	117	36	3,474	55	280.58 million
UNFICYP	March 1964		748	54	69	43	115		1,029	183	57.56 million
UNMISS	July 2011	225	13,247	429	1,539	890	1,396	429	18,155	138	1.2 billion
MONUSCO	January 2010	139	12,407	343	1,607	582	1,444	314	16,836	277	1.12 billion
MINUSCA	April 2014	152	13,535	417	3,011	688	591	292	18,686	191	1.11 billion
Total		1,047	53,549	1,643	6,280	2,954	4,838	1,106	71,417	1,377	

Source: Prepared by the Peace and Security Section of the United Nations Department of Global receives support from international partners, including the United Nations, European Union, and individual countries. This support includes funding, logistical assistance, and capacity-building efforts to enhance the mission's effectiveness.

Overall, AMISOM represents a significant African-led peacekeeping initiative aimed at addressing the complex security challenges in Somalia and supporting efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability in the country.

3.2 The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was established by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on July 9, 2011, the same day South Sudan became an independent nation. The primary mandate of UNMISS is to support the government in consolidating peace and security and help establish conditions for

development in the world's newest country. The initial mandate of UNMISS focused on supporting the peace process and fostering long-term statebuilding and economic development. Key tasks included protecting civilians, monitoring and investigating human rights, and creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian aid. Over time, the mission's mandate has evolved in response to the changing situation on the ground. The UNSC resolution 2459 (2019) emphasized the need for a comprehensive political solution and underscored the importance of protecting civilians, especially in conflict-affected areas (UNSC, 2019). Communications, in consultation with the Department of Peace Operations, Department of Operational Support — DGC/1634/Rev. 274.1 March 2024

UNTSO - UN Truce Supervision Organization

UNMOGIP - UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan

UNFICYP - UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

UNDOF - UN Disengagement Observer Force

UNIFIL - UN Interim Force in Lebanon

MINURSO - UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

MONUSCO - United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

UNISFA - United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

UNMISS - United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan

MINUSCA - United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

UNMIK - UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

3.3 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The conflict in the DRC has seen various military involvements, including local militias, national armies, and international peacekeeping forces. The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and subsequent peace negotiations have been heavily influenced by the presence and actions of these military actors. Effective mediation and peacekeeping efforts by the UN have been crucial in managing the conflict and supporting disarmament and demobilization processes (Prunier, 2009).

3.4 Liberia

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2003, which ended Liberia's civil war, involved substantial military components, including peacekeeping forces from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and later the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). These forces played a crucial role in disarming fighters, ensuring security, and supporting the transitional government in implementing peace building measures (Sawyer, 2008).

3.5 Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso, a landlocked country in West Africa, has been grappling with escalating violence and political instability over the past decade. The roots of the conflict are complex, involving jihadist insurgencies, communal violence, and deep-seated socio-economic issues. The military's role and efforts towards peace negotiations are critical in understanding the dynamics and prospects for stability in the region. Since gaining independence from France in 1960, Burkina Faso has experienced numerous coups and political upheavals (Sawo, 2017).

One of the significant military involvement in politics was the ousting of President Blaise Compaoré in 2014 after a popular uprising. This led to a transitional government, which eventually saw the election of President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré in 2015. The security situation began to deteriorate significantly around 2015 with the emergence of jihadist groups linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. These groups exploited local grievances,

particularly in the northern and eastern regions, leading to increased attacks on civilians, security forces, and infrastructure (Counter Extremism Project, 2024). The Burkinabe military has been at the forefront of counterinsurgency operations, often with support from international partners such as France's Operation Barkhane, and the G5 Sahel Joint Force, a regional security initiative involving Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Despite these efforts, the military has faced significant challenges, including inadequate training, poor equipment, and low morale. There have been instances of alleged human rights abuses by security forces, which have further complicated the security landscape (Olech, 2023). Efforts to initiate peace negotiations have been complex and multifaceted. The government has shown a willingness to engage in dialogue with armed groups. In 2020, President Kaboré hinted at the possibility of negotiating with jihadist groups, a move that was both controversial and seen as a pragmatic step towards reducing violence. Local peace initiatives have also been significant. Traditional and community leaders have played crucial roles in mediating between conflicting parties. For example, in the northern town of Djibo, local leaders have facilitated dialogues that have led to temporary ceasefires and the opening of humanitarian corridors (Al Jazeera, 2020).

AFRICAN-LED PEACE OPERATIONS SINCE 2000

Mission	Countries	Year(s)	Authorized Personnel	Authorizing Entities
ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)	Liberia/Sierra Leone	1990–2000	7,000	ECOWAS
OAU's Joint Monitoring Commission (OAU JMC) to the Democratic Republic of the Congo	DRC	1999–2000	43	OAU
OAU/AU Liaison Mission in Ethiopia-Eritrea (OLMEE/AULMEE)	Ethiopia-Eritrea	2000–2008	43	OAU/AU
OAU Observer Mission in the Comoros (OMIC 2)	Comoros	2000–2001	14	OAU
OAU Observer Mission in the Comoros (OMIC 3)	Comoros	2001–2002	39	OAU
CEN-SAD Force	CAR	2001–2002	300	CEN-SAD
ECCAS Central African Multinational Force (FOMUC)	CAR	2002–2008	380	ECCAS
ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL)	Liberia	2003	3,600	UN, ECOWAS
ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI)	Côte d'Ivoire	2003	1,500	UN, ECOWAS
AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB)	Burundi	2003–4	3,250	AU
AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS I)	Sudan	2004–2005	4,400	AU
AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS II)	Sudan	2005–2007	7,700	AU
AU Observer Mission in the Comoros (MIOC)	Comoros	2004	41	AU
AU Mission for Support to the Elections in the Comoros (AMISEC)	Comoros	2006	1,260	AU
Operation Democracy in the Comoros	Comoros	2008	1,800	AU
AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)	Somalia	2007–22	22,000	AU
AU Electoral and Security Assistance Mission in the Comoros (MAES)	Comoros	2007–8	356	AU
ECCAS Peace Consolidation Mission in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX)	CAR	2008–2013	2,000	ECCAS
AU-UN Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)	Sudan	2008–21	21,600	AU, UN
AU Regional Coordination Initiative for Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA)	CAR, DRC, South Sudan, Uganda	2011–2018	5,000	AU
ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB)	Guinea-Bissau	2012–2020	629	ECOWAS
African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA)	Mali	2012–13	9,620	AU, UN
African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA)	CAR	2013–14	5,700	AU, UN
AU Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA) Mission	Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone	2014–2015	800	AU
AU Human Rights Observers and Military Experts Mission in Burundi	Burundi	2015–2021	200	AU
Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)	Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria	2015–	10,000	AU
ECOWAS Intervention in The Gambia (ECOMIG)	The Gambia	2017–	8,000	ECOWAS
G5 Sahel Joint Force	Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger	2017–	5,600	AU
Accra Initiative	Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, and Togo	2017–	10,000	Accra Initiative
AU Technical Support Team to The Gambia (AUTSTG)	The Gambia	2017–2021	8	AU
SADC Prevention Mission to Lesotho (SAPMIL)	Lesotho	2018	269	SADC
AU Support to the Ebola Outbreak in the DRC (ASEDCO) Mission	DRC	2019	850	AU
AU Military Observer Mission to the Central African Republic (MOUACA)	CAR	2020–	34	AU
SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM)	Mozambique	2021–	2,000	SADC
AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)	Somalia	2022–	22,000	AU
EAC Intervention in the DRC	DRC	2022–	12,000	EAC
ECOWAS Stabilization Support Mission in Guinea-Bissau (SSMGB)	Guinea-Bissau	2022–	630	ECOWAS
AU Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mission (AU-MVCM)	Ethiopia	2022–	10	AU

Source: Nate (2023). Africa Center for Strategic Studies

4. Pitfalls and implications of Military involvement in peace negotiations in Africa Military involvement in peace negotiations in Africa often comes with significant pitfalls and negative influences, impacting both the peace process and the prospects for long-term stability. Here are several key issues, illustrated with examples and supported by citations:

i. Lack of Impartiality

Military forces are often seen as partial actors, especially when they have a stake in the conflict. This lack of impartiality can undermine the credibility of peace negotiations. In Mali for instance, the military junta that took power in 2020 has influenced the peace process in ways that primarily serve its interests. This has led to tensions with international peacekeeping forces and skepticism among local populations about the junta's commitment to genuine peace and reconciliation (Claire & Mariel, 2023). ii. Exacerbation of Conflicts Military involvement can sometimes exacerbate rather than resolve conflicts, as military strategies may prioritize immediate security concerns over long-term peacebuilding. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), UN peacekeeping missions have sometimes been perceived as taking sides in the conflict. The mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has involved engaging in combat operations against rebel groups, which has led to accusations of bias and has sometimes worsened local conflicts (Claire & Mariel, 2023). iii. Focus on Military Solutions Over Political and Social Issues Military actors tend to focus on short-term security measures rather than addressing the underlying political, social, and economic causes of conflicts. This approach can lead to a cycle of violence, with temporary stability achieved through force rather than sustainable peace. In the Sahel region, military interventions by foreign powers, including France's Operation Barkhane, have focused heavily on counter-terrorism. While these efforts have had some success in reducing terrorist activities, they have not addressed the root causes of instability, such as poverty, corruption, and lack of governance, leading to ongoing violence and instability (Claire & Mariel, 2023; Omar; 2020).

iv. Undermining Civilian Authority

The involvement of military forces in peace processes can undermine civilian governance and democratic institutions. Military actors may use peace negotiations to legitimize their rule, sidelining civilian leaders and institutions. In Sudan, the military's dominance in the Transitional Military Council (TMC) following the ouster of President Omar al-Bashir led to significant unrest and violence, including the brutal crackdown on protesters in June 2019. Although a power-sharing agreement was eventually reached, the military's influence has continued to challenge the civilianled transitional government's authority (Omar, 2020).

v. Geopolitical Agendas and External Influence

External military interventions often come with geopolitical agendas that can conflict with local peacebuilding efforts. These interventions can lead to biased outcomes that favor the strategic interests of the intervening powers rather than the needs of the local population. In the Horn of Africa, interventions by Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE have often been driven by their strategic interests. For instance, their involvement in the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea was influenced by their desire to secure military bases and expand their influence in the region. This geopolitical competition has sometimes exacerbated local tensions and undermined the peace process (Omar, 2020). Peace processes should prioritize political dialogue, address the root causes of conflicts, and involve a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society and local communities, to ensure sustainable peace and stability. Military forces, if involved, should play a supporting role that respects the primacy of civilian authority and the principles of impartiality and neutrality.

5. Achievements of Military Involvement and Peace Negotiations in Africa

Despite the numerous challenges, military involvement and peace negotiations in Africa have led to significant achievements in resolving conflicts and promoting stability. Some of these numerous achievements are discussed below.

i. Successful Peace Agreements and Political Settlements

One of the notable achievements in African peace negotiations is the resolution of the longstanding civil war in Sudan, leading to the creation of South Sudan. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in 2005 between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), ended decades of conflict and paved the way for South Sudan's independence in 2011. The CPA is a landmark example of successful negotiation leading to significant political change and conflict resolution (Rolandsen, 2011).

ii. Effective Peacekeeping Missions

Several African Union (AU) and United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions have made substantial contributions to stabilizing conflict zones and protecting civilians. The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) is widely regarded as a success, helping to end the Second Liberian Civil War and supporting the country's transition to peace. UNMIL facilitated disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs, and helped organize democratic elections, significantly contributing to Liberia's post-conflict recovery (Johnson, 2011).

Similarly, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has been instrumental in reclaiming territories from Al-Shabaab militants and supporting the establishment of a functional Somali government. While challenges remain, AMISOM's efforts have provided a measure of stability and enabled humanitarian aid to reach affected populations (Williams, 2018).

iii. Regional Cooperation and Mediation

Regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have played crucial roles in mediating conflicts and supporting peace processes. ECOWAS's intervention in the Sierra Leone Civil War through the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was pivotal in restoring peace. ECOMOG's military intervention, coupled with diplomatic efforts, helped to disarm rebel groups and stabilize the country, leading to the eventual conclusion of the conflict (Adebajo, 2002).

iv. Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development

Post-conflict reconstruction efforts have yielded significant achievements in rebuilding war-torn societies. Rwanda, after the 1994 genocide, has made remarkable progress in terms of economic development, social reconciliation, and political stability. The government's focus on inclusive development, coupled with community-based justice mechanisms like Gacaca courts, has fostered national healing and reconstruction (Clark & Kaufman, 2008).

v. Reduction of Armed Violence through DDR Programs

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs have been effective in reducing armed violence and integrating former combatants into civilian life. In Mozambique, the successful implementation of DDR programs following the civil war in 1992 helped to disarm tens of thousands of combatants and reintegrate them into society, contributing to long-term peace and stability (Alden, 2002).

vi. Improved Regional Security Architectures

The development of regional security architectures has strengthened Africa's capacity to manage and resolve conflicts. The establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) by the AU, which includes mechanisms like the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the African Standby Force (ASF), has enhanced the

continent's ability to respond to crises swiftly and effectively. These structures have facilitated coordinated responses to conflicts, promoting regional peace and security (Williams, 2011).

6. Conclusions

The achievements of military involvement and peace negotiations in Africa underscore the potential for effective conflict resolution and stabilization across the continent. Successful peace agreements, such as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan, have led to significant political changes and the cessation of prolonged conflicts. Peacekeeping missions by the United Nations and African Union, particularly in Liberia and Somalia, have provided vital security and support for fragile states transitioning from war to peace. Regional cooperation, exemplified by the efforts of ECOWAS in Sierra Leone, highlights the importance of collective regional action in mediating and resolving conflicts. Post-conflict reconstruction efforts, notably in Rwanda, demonstrate the potential for economic development, social reconciliation, and political stability following periods of intense violence. Furthermore, Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs, as seen in Mozambique, have effectively reduced armed violence and facilitated the reintegration of former combatants into society. These successes illustrate that, despite the significant challenges, coordinated military involvement and comprehensive peace negotiations can lead to sustainable peace and development. Continued commitment from African nations, regional organizations, and the international community is essential to build on these achievements and address the root causes of conflict to ensure lasting stability and prosperity in Africa.

7. WAY FORWARD

As Africa continues to address complex conflicts, the way forward lies in combining military efforts with inclusive peace negotiations, political reform, socioeconomic development, and regional cooperation.

i. Aligning Military Operations with Local Peacebuilding Initiatives

While military action can establish a level of security, enduring peace requires aligning these efforts with local peacebuilding strategies. This means integrating local communities into peace processes and addressing local tensions that may otherwise reignite conflict. In Somalia, for instance, AMISOM has succeeded in reclaiming cities from Al-Shabaab, yet the rural areas remain unstable due to clan rivalries and poverty. A more effective approach would involve working with local leaders and communities to address these underlying issues while AMISOM continues to provide security. This alignment would increase community buy-in and create stronger foundations for peace (Williams, 2018).

ii. Implementing Robust Political Reforms and Inclusive Governance

Military intervention can temporarily stabilize a conflict, but sustainable peace requires strong political reforms and inclusive governance. Peace missions must focus not only on enforcing ceasefires but also on promoting political frameworks that address the grievances fueling conflict. In South Sudan, UNMISS has provided a security buffer; however, ethnic and political divisions between the government and opposition groups have persisted, often undermining peace efforts.

To foster long-term stability, South Sudan's political system must prioritize inclusivity and develop governance structures that genuinely represent its diverse population (Blindheim, 2020). The way forward includes diplomatic efforts that pressure political actors to commit to reforms and create structures that can manage diversity and conflict.

iii. Promoting Economic Development to Address Root Causes of Conflict

Economic inequality and poverty are often root causes of conflicts in Africa. Military interventions need to be complemented by investments in development to address the socioeconomic conditions that lead to violence. In

Nigeria, for instance, the fight against Boko Haram has shown that military action alone is insufficient. Poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment in the northeast region create an environment where insurgency thrives. A way forward would be to complement military efforts with investment in infrastructure, job creation, and educational opportunities to weaken Boko Haram's recruitment base and strengthen local resilience (Agbibo, 2014).

iv. **Enhancing Regional Collaboration and Multinational Efforts**

Conflicts in Africa often transcend borders, requiring multinational cooperation to address them effectively. Regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and sub-regional groups like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) play crucial roles in coordinating responses to transnational threats. In Burkina Faso and across the Sahel, extremist groups operate across borders, making it challenging for individual countries to counter these threats alone. Collaborative security initiatives, such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force, which includes Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, represent a way forward in tackling cross-border conflicts. However, more support from the international community and better coordination with African-led missions are essential to strengthening these efforts (Harsch, 2017).

v. **Transitioning from Military to Civilian Peacebuilding Missions**

While military intervention is crucial in the initial stages of conflict, transitioning to civilian-led peacebuilding missions can better support long-term stability. Civilian missions are often more adept at handling reconciliation, reconstruction, and development. Liberia serves as a strong example of this approach. Following the civil wars in the 1990s, ECOWAS deployed ECOMOG, a military mission that helped secure the country. Later, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), a civilian-led mission, oversaw disarmament, democratic reforms, and election organization. This transition from military to civilian intervention allowed Liberia to rebuild, emphasizing the importance of creating a stable environment for post-conflict recovery (Sawyer, 2005). vi. **Ensuring Accountability and Protecting Civilian Rights to maintain legitimacy, military missions must prioritize accountability and minimize harm to civilians. Allegations of human rights abuses can undermine peace efforts and erode public support, so a focus on accountability and transparency is critical. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), MONUSCO has been criticized for alleged abuses and insufficient protection of civilians, undermining trust with local communities. A way forward for MONUSCO and similar missions includes establishing strict accountability mechanisms, conducting thorough investigations into allegations of misconduct, and providing training to ensure that peacekeepers understand and respect local cultures. Clear standards and community feedback mechanisms can help missions remain responsive to the needs of civilians (Autesserre, 2019).**

vii. **Engaging International Support for Sustainable Peacebuilding**

While African-led initiatives are crucial, international support is often necessary to provide funding, expertise, and logistical resources. Partnerships with organizations like the United Nations, the European Union, and international NGOs can strengthen African missions and contribute to a more holistic approach. In Burkina Faso and the Sahel, the French military's presence has been instrumental in combating extremism. However, African nations and international partners must go beyond military assistance to address economic, social, and governance issues, which are critical for building peace. Coordinated support from international allies could help achieve a balance between immediate security needs and long-term development (Harsch, 2017).

viii. **Creating Flexible, Adaptive Mandates for Peace Missions**

Conditions on the ground can shift quickly in conflict zones, so peace missions must have the flexibility to adapt their mandates as new challenges arise. Static mandates can become ineffective if they cannot respond to evolving threats and changing political landscapes. For instance, in the DRC, MONUSCO has been forced to evolve its mandate multiple times to address emerging threats. However, more adaptive and responsive mandates could improve MONUSCO's effectiveness, allowing it to deploy resources where they are most needed. Regular reviews and evaluations of peacekeeping mandates based on ground realities could strengthen the missions' responsiveness and ensure that they remain effective in the long term (Autesserre, 2019).

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