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IS SEPARATISM A VIABLE SOLUTION FOR THE PRESENT AFRICAN CIVIL WARS?

Christian-Radu CHEREJI

Abstract. *Separatism as a political movement is as old as humanity. In Africa, where state borders are the result of colonial powers' interests and strategies, a huge number of separatist movements have engulfed the continent in a long series of civil wars. This essay examines whether separatism in its most extreme form of secession has led to the establishment of more stable, peaceful, and prosperous countries on the continent, comparing the emergent new nations' political and economic achievements with those of the original countries they left.*

Keywords: *separatism, secession, civil war, Africa, Namibia, South Africa, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Somaliland.*

Separatism is one of the most widely spread political movements across the globe. Generally, it means the advocacy of separation of one group from another, based on political ideology, ethnic, religious, or racial differences between them. There are three elements of this definition that need further analysis, namely advocacy, separation, and the nature of differences.

Advocacy can be either peaceful or done using an entire range of violent measures, from political kidnapping and localized terrorism (as employed by European separatist movements like ETA or IRA) to full scale insurgency and civil war (as in most of the African cases). There is a strong correlation between the type of advocacy used by separatists to promote their cause and the nature of the government they are trying to separate from: peaceful or low intensity violence is usually used against

Christian-Radu CHEREJI, PhD

Director, Conflict Studies Center,

BBU

Senior editor

Email: chereji@fspac.ro

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democratic governments (real, substantive, and working democracies, not the type one can find in Eastern Europe or Africa, where democracy is just a façade) whereas high-intensity violence is used against authoritarian governments. This is the reason why, by and large, European separatist movements, though almost as numerous as the African ones (see maps), employ far more peaceful and non-violent strategies to promote their cause than their African brethren.

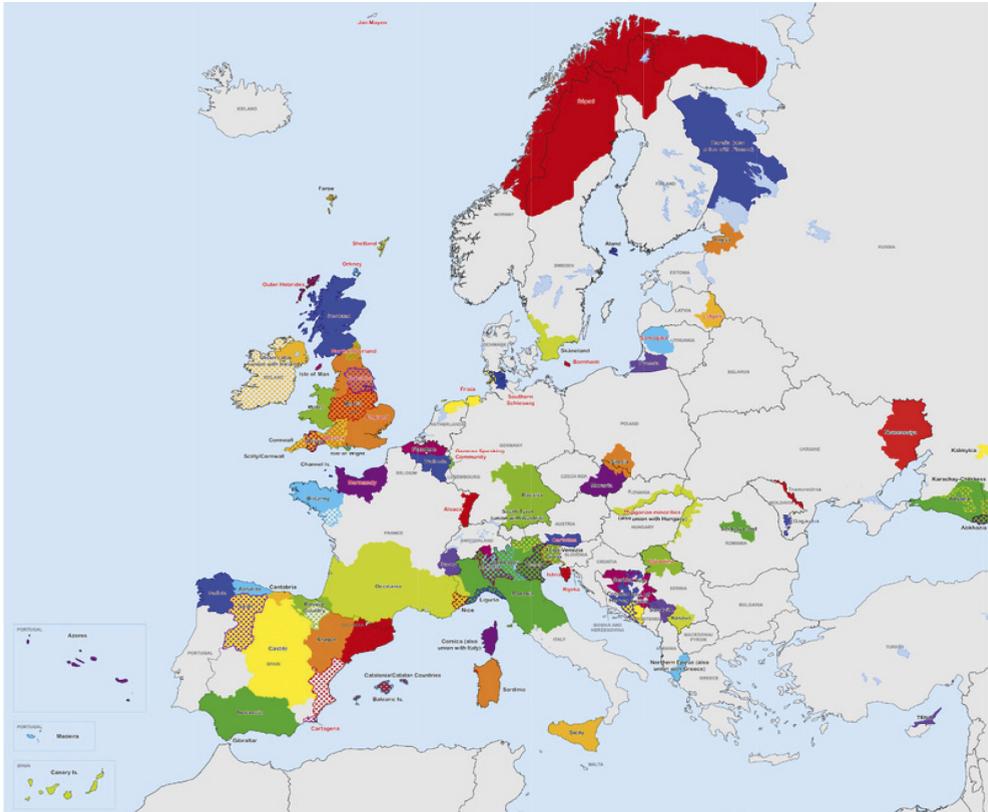


Figure 1. Map of separatist movements in Europe (Source: National and subnational borders: File: NUTS 3 regions EU-27.svg Data: List of active separatist movements in Europe)

Separation is, in itself, a term in need of more clarification. Some movements claim they just want more autonomy within the original political entity, with no contemplation of leaving it entirely. Others want more powers devolved from the central government, in order to turn the state into a confederation, a very loose alliance of territories, each governed separately with only a handful of prerogatives left to the central government. Finally, a lot of separatists want full secession, breaking up with the former state and establishing a state of their own. From Scotland to Congo, the world is full of this kind of separatist movements, employing the whole arsenal of methods and strategies to

Ethiopia

Oromia



The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) has been fighting for autonomy for its southern homeland since 1993. The Oromos are Ethiopia's largest ethnic group but have not held power in modern times.



Figure 2. Map of separatist movements in Africa and their would-be states (interactive map retrieved from <http://gisetc.com/the-separatist-map-of-africa-interactive>)

fulfil their dreams. Our article here deals only with secessionist movements, leaving the autonomist movements outside, as they strive only to get more of a saying within the same political entity. What concerns us in this paper is to find out an answer to the following question: does total separation (i.e. secession) work? Meaning, does building new states encompassing grieving groups represent a viable and sustainable solution to the African ethnic and religious problems that tend to generate so many intractable violent conflicts?

Third, the nature of differences also plays a relevant role in classifying the plethora of separatist movements. The preservation of group identity is one of the major sources of conflict around the world, and has been such for the entire history of mankind. Identity is what makes us what we are and different from the others surrounding us. It is the psychological core of the human being and, consequently, of human groups, so it is no surprise it has such a central place in the drama of human conflicts. All over the world, ethnicity (and language, subsequently) and religion are the defining elements of the individual and group identity. But there are situations when separatism is pursued not because of ethnic or religious differences but for political/ideological reasons – here, the secession of the American colonies in the past and the continuous separation

of Taiwan and, to a certain extent, Hong-Kong are just a few examples for this case. Therefore, separatist movements are classified by political scientists, journalists, and pundits as ethnic or religious or political movements, and the fact that groups assume these identities is generally considered enough to explain why a certain civil war has begun. Most conflicts in Africa fall into this category.

The problem with measuring if secession is the right answer to African civil wars is the fact that few of the secessionist movements succeed. The international establishment and the international culture are biased against secessionism (leaving outside the phenomenon of decolonization, which is deemed natural from both political and moral points of view). Very few would-be states, from Somaliland to Iraqi Kurdistan, have enjoyed any political support worldwide, even if they are the only viable parts of mostly failed states. It is largely accepted that giving way to one secessionist movement and recognizing its success in the form of a new state will only embolden the rest of them, which makes almost all the countries of the world extremely cautious in supporting secessionism for fear of self-inflicted wounds. With all the support from America and EU, Kosovo is still not widely recognized as a sovereign state, not even by all EU member states who reckon that accepting Kosovo's forceful separation from Serbia will only give more wind to the sails of their own separatist movements.

After the advent of decolonization and the creation of the present political borders in Africa, there were a significant number of secessionist movements that used violent means to get their independence. The arbitrariness of the border drawing process in Africa has been common-place in expert literature even from those times. Lines drawn on maps with thick pencils in London and Paris left entire communities on the wrong side of the border – it was only natural for them to try to redress the injustice, even if this meant going to war. From Katanga in Congo to Biafra in Nigeria, some of these secessionist movements came very close to success. But, as we have already said, the world is biased against secession, and huge pressure was exerted to maintain the integrity of the newly created African states, no matter the realities in the field or the right of self-determination advocated by the Europeans and Americans for themselves but denied to others.

The only significant exceptions to-day are Namibia, which gained independence from South Africa in 1990, Eritrea, which seceded Ethiopia in 1993, and South Sudan, the newest member of the African club, born in 2011 after five decades of civil war. There are a number of territories that have successfully seceded from the original polity, but enjoy limited or no international recognition, like the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), proclaimed by the Polisario Front in 1976, a partially recognized state claiming sovereignty over the entire territory of Western Sahara and Somaliland, established in 1991 but not recognized, even though the original polity, Somalia, has long ceased to function as a state. There is also the convoluted recent history of Senegal, Gambia,

and Mali. In January 1959, Senegal and the French Sudan formed the Mali Federation, which became fully independent the following year. The Federation had a short life, as Senegal and Mali broke apart into separate nations. In 1982, Senegal and the Gambia joined together to make Senegambia. It was dismantled in 1989.

Analyzing the evolution of these successful secessionist states after the advent of their independence can be a good tool in getting an answer to our initial question. Basically, if the new state has done better (or, at least, the same) as the original policy it left and peace endured between the former combatants, we can say, roughly, that secession worked. If, contrarily, it has done worse and/or the peace was broken by significant violence, the secession can be deemed as having solved nothing and, consequently, not being the answer to the problem of African civil wars. Of course, generalization is dangerous, as the number of cases taken for analysis is small (made small by the very limited success of the secessionist movements itself) and as conditions differ from one case to another. Nobody can say for sure that British Cameroon, now part of the Republic of Cameroon as Southern Cameroon, would be a viable and successful state if it secedes, as nobody can bet on the future. As Niels Bohr put it, prediction is very difficult, especially about the future. But a number of features common to all cases studied here can lead to a sufficiently solid conclusion about the uses of secession as a solution to civil wars in Africa.

Let's take these cases in chronological order. The first successful secession (if we leave outside the Senegal-Mali-Gambia case, too intricate to be relevant to our study) on the continent was that of Namibia, a country that left South Africa to become independent in 1990, after a guerilla war that went on from 1966 to 1990. It was a war waged against the apartheid regime of South Africa by the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and other smaller organizations. It was closely intertwined with the Angolan Civil War and the South African Border War, all of which involving foreign intervening powers. As a force fighting apartheid, SWAPO certainly held the moral high ground, but its leftist inclinations and the support it received from the Communist bloc (especially from Cuba) left it in the cold from a Western point of view.

After all these wars ended at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, Namibia became fully independent, with a sparsely populated area of 825,615 km² (the 2011 census puts its population at a little over 2 million inhabitants, making it one of the least populated countries in the world). It succeeded to set up a parliamentary democracy and a stable government, not without having to fight and squash a secessionist movement of its own in 1999, in the North-East province of Zambezi. The substance of its democracy is marred by the fact that SWAPO has won all the elections after the independence, though there are several political parties registered. The transition from the long regime of president Sam Nujoma to his successor Hifikepunye Pohamba in 2005 went without trouble, but both belong to the SWAPO political party.

In economic terms, Namibia has done far better. Bloomberg, a global business and financial news provider, named Namibia in 2013 as the top emerging market economy in Africa and the 13th best in the world. There were only four African countries on the Top 20 Emerging Markets list in the March 2013 issue of Bloomberg Markets magazine, and Namibia was rated ahead of Morocco (19th), South Africa (15th) and Zambia (14th). Worldwide, Namibia also fared better than Hungary, Brazil, and Mexico, according to the same magazine. Its economy is still deeply linked to that of South Africa and it is based mainly on manufacturing, mining, agriculture (most surprisingly, given the fact that the country's water resources are considered negligible) and tourism. With an estimated \$8,577 annual GDP per capita at purchased-power parity (PPP), Namibia has passed into the category of middle income countries, a performance that clearly surpasses that of most African countries. It is also in sharp contrast with Zimbabwe, a country with a similar history of secession from the South African realm as British colony, which went all the way from a solid economy at independence to one of the most destitute in the world, with a GDP per capita at only \$837.

Even compared to South Africa, its original political entity, Namibia has not been doing far worse in either economic (South Africa's GDP per capita at PPP is \$11,914) or political terms, and the country has been mostly stable and at peace. A contribution to this stability may be the (relative) ethnic homogeneity of the population, which is 82% Shona. All in all, Namibia seems to be an example of successful secession, providing a positive answer to our question, namely whether separatism can be a viable solution to African civil wars.

The next successful secession was that of Eritrea, in 1993. Eritrea's history is long and complex. It emerged as an Italian colony from territories formerly belonging to the Ottoman and Ethiopian empires in 1890. In 1952, it joined Ethiopia to form the Federation of Ethiopia and Eritrea, but it was dismantled ten years after and Eritrea was absorbed by Ethiopia. The Eritreans resisted and an ensuing civil war that was to endure for 29 years, until May 1991 when the Mengistu regime ended and the United States were able to mediate the peace that granted Eritrea its independence.

Eritrea has emerged as a multi-ethnic country with at least nine recognized ethnic groups, of which the Tigrinya form the majority – 55% of a population of roughly six million. In political terms, Eritrea has remained an authoritarian state, where the present president has been in power since the advent of independence. There is only one legal political party and elections were constantly called and cancelled. Other political parties are banned, even though the Constitution of 1994 calls for a multi-party democracy. In 2004 the U.S. State Department has put Eritrea on the list of Countries of Particular Concern (CPC) for religious persecutions. Opposition and critics of the president are persecuted, freedom of the press is nonexistent and all privately owned media were shut down in September 2011.

Economically, Eritrea ranks among the bottom-of-the list countries of the world, with an annual GDP per capita at \$707 (PPP). It is placed by IMF in the 183rd position out of a total of 187. However, there has been significant growth recently, given the start of operations at the gold and silver mines, but otherwise Eritrea lacks any kind of relevant economic activity outside mining and selling of natural resources. Infrastructure was badly damaged during the war with Ethiopia that followed the independence (1998-2000). The war itself badly served Eritrea, as it spent millions of dollars in a fight for disputed territories that, at the end, were left almost entirely to Ethiopia, while Eritrea was isolated as aggressor.

Compared to Ethiopia, the country it seceded from, Eritrea has fared worse. Even if Ethiopia is still listed as an authoritarian regime and placed 118th out of 167 countries in democratic terms, the country has held elections (Eritrea had none) and the Zenawi government (set up in 2005 in the first free multi-party election) has pursued policies of ethnic federalism, devolving powers to regional authorities. There is limited access to press and information, and journalists that are critical of government are harassed and arrested; the independent press struggles, but still exists, whereas in Eritrea it's been shut down. A poor country even by African standards, at \$1,366 per capita (PPP), Ethiopia's GDP is still almost double than Eritrea's. Before the crisis, Ethiopia has been the fastest growing non-oil country in Africa. The world crisis hit the Ethiopian economy hard and it is still mired by structural problems, with a sub-productive agriculture that accounts for 41% of its GDP and for 80% of its exports. Secession of Eritrea left the country with no direct access to the sea. Nonetheless, it is estimated that Ethiopia can grow rapidly due to its large reserves of mineral resources, including oil and gold, but instability in the area has to subside for investors to gain trust. In conclusion, given the deep poverty and authoritarian tendencies of both countries, it is difficult to ascertain with any measure of clarity if Eritrea's secession has been a successful one. At least, the numbers prove it isn't.

The last case, South Sudan, is an utter disaster in any direction we look. South Sudan emerged as an independent country in 2011, by a referendum following the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that put an end to one of the longest periods of civil wars in Africa (there were two civil wars in Sudan, the first from 1955 to 1972 and the second from 1983 to 2005, meaning that the country of Sudan has been marred in violent internal strife for almost all its independent life). A country of a size bigger than France, but with a population of only eight million, it counted on its oil reserves for revenues. Oil reserves and the way the Khartoum government appropriated them without any sharing with the South Sudanese constituted the core of a range of grievances that motivated the latter to fight for five decades to get their freedom (and their right share of the oil revenues). Unfortunately, gaining the independence, instead of uniting the elites in an effort to bring back the country from the depths of poverty were it was thrown by the

wars, only revealed the deep fractures among them. The mistrust between President Salva Kiir, a Dinka, and his vice-president, Riek Machar, a Nuer, slowly evolved into mutual suspicion enforced by their tribal identities and loyalties. The result was the abrupt escalation of violence in December 2013 that quickly evolved into a full scale civil war, fracturing the young nation along ethnic lines, mainly Dinka versus Nuer. To this day, the war has caused more than 10,000 killed and one million internally displaced persons (IDPs in UN terminology), it totally disrupted the fragile economy South Sudan has had, with oil production at zero (before the advent of the civil war, oil revenues counted for 98% of the government budget).

While there were clear reasons for Omar al-Bashir leaving Sudan, with its mountain of human rights abuses and its transparent bias towards the Northerners in terms of redistribution of revenues, the short history of South Sudan is anything but a success story. A poor country, poorer than any in Africa if oil is not taken into account, it has basically no infrastructure, mortality is among the highest in the world and its economy (besides oil) is based only on exporting raw resources (timber mainly) and sub-productive agriculture. After the referendum in 2011, there were hopes that the government could make a deal with Khartoum regarding the transport of oil through the (North) Sudanese pipeline (a plan has been drawn up to build a pipeline through Kenya to Mombasa, but it got nowhere due to lack of investors) and get the economy up and running. Lingering border disputes with the North in the areas of the Upper Blue Nile, Abyei and Jonglei kept brewing violence, but were thought manageable with the help of the international community, especially the US, the main sponsor of South Sudan's independence.

The violent rupture between Kiir and Machar and their main constituencies, the Dinkas and, respectively, the Nuers, put an end to all hopes that the newest country of the world would emerge from the misery left by five decades of civil war. It seems that fifty years were not enough to quench the thirst for more blood in South Sudan.

Data about the SADR and Somaliland is quite scarce and thus leave us little room for analysis. At least, for Somaliland, the case for secession is quite obvious. The end of the Siad Barre regime in 1991 plunged Somalia in one of the most reckless, violent, and enduring civil wars the world has seen in recent times. A fight of all against all, it resisted any attempt of the international community to find a viable solution. One by one, foreign interventions led by the UN, US, or AU failed to stop the fighting. Somaliland, the former British part of Somalia (the government of Somaliland regarded itself as the successor to the British Somaliland protectorate), has succeeded in maintaining a semblance of effective administration and avoided being involved into the fighting in the South (though the massacre perpetrated in Somaliland by the Siad Barre in 1988 was one of the causes of the civil war). The clans of the land managed to find equilibrium between tradition and modernity in setting up the political system, which has worked

effectively and peacefully ever since it has been established (1993). As the rest of the country cannot be deemed, even by the most naïve supporter, as a functional state, Somaliland is a clear success, albeit not a recognized one.

So, what can be the answer to our question? Is secession a viable, sustainable solution for the African civil wars? Will a free Tuareg Northern Mali, a Muslim Northern Nigeria or Central African Republic, or a Southern Cameroon be success stories like Namibia, or utter failures as South Sudan? The answer, mostly, is like beauty: it is located in the eye of the beholder. For the people and politicians promoting secession, there are plenty of arguments for leaving the original country, drawn from history, demography, economy, and foreign examples. The same goes for its opponents. Our brief analysis of the successful secessions (i.e. those that managed to get international recognition) shows that there is no clear-cut answer. Much depends on the local conditions, which are particular to each case and make generalization difficult and risky.

Nonetheless, there are two conclusions that come from our analysis. First, the emergent country tends to be the image of the country it left, meaning that, if the original country was a badly governed one, the emergent tends to also be badly governed and vice-versa, a well governed original country can give birth to a well governed emergent one. As the people of the new country used to be part of the greater society of the original country, it is only natural that, in building their own country, they will carry with them the whole baggage of cultural, economic, and political institutions and customs of the society and country they left, making their own country not much different than the original one. So much for not falling into the kind of mistakes the original country did and which constituted the core motivation for secession.

A second conclusion, strongly related to the first one, is that secession does not solve the underlying problems that generated it. Motivations for secession generally fall into three categories: political, economic, and cultural. People feel they have no saying in the way they are governed, or they do not receive a fair share of the income generated by the economy or they have little or no access to resources, or their identity is threatened by the majority through assimilation and other means. As these motivations usually follow ethnic and/or religious lines of fraction within the society, they become self-enforcing – the more the marginalized act to get their fair share or to protect their identity, the more the majority acts in ways that marginalize them even more, making in the end secession as the only conceivable solution.

Unfortunately, once they become independent, these countries do not become more inclusive, more tolerant and fairer in redistribution of benefits or access to resources. They tend to repeat the same mistakes as the countries they left – they restrict access to resources and state positions and functions to the majority, they deny equal rights and equal access to smaller groups, they try to destroy these groups' identity as dangerous

for the coherence of the new country. They become the oppressors. Secession has solved the problems of one group at the expense of others which, in turn, will try to emulate the former and secede in their turn, in an endless spiral of misery and death, with no clear gain whatsoever. It seems that the only real winners are the people of the original country, as they got rid of the troublesome minority at the price of some territory and resources, but with the prospect of a country more homogenous and stable, if not more democratic, or even richer. The lesson from our cases is that the original country has always remained more prosperous (in relative terms and at those standards) than the splinter.

Although there will always be powerful arguments in favor of secession (especially in some cases, as Somaliland) and the thirst for freedom difficult to quench, the examples we have analyzed hardly make a clear case for breaking away. And the problem is that the international community does not have a consistent vision and policy toward secession either. Some places that deserve their independence and recognition (Somaliland, Iraqi Kurdistan, Palestine) don't get them, while others seemingly not fit for them (South Sudan) have their way with the support of powerful sponsors. The list of examples of inconsistent policy towards secessionist movements is endless.

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PUTTING NIGERIA TOGETHER: THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF BOKO HARAM CONFLICT

Walter GAM NKWI

Abstract. *Post-colonial Africa has been bedeviled with copious conflicts ranging from fratricidal civil wars to boundary crises. The Nigerian civil war in the 1960s, as well as the Congo crisis and more recently the Burundi-Rwanda, now belong to the past but not without their corollary on nation building in Africa. This has made the continent look as if it would crumble back to its pre-colonial shape. Quite recently there has been an upsurge of new conflicts posed by the desire to spread Islamism in North, West and East Africa. There is Al-Qaeda, which has its base in North Africa; AQIM in the northern part of Mali, Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria with its activities covering Southern Niger, Northern Cameroon and Central African Republic, and Southern Chad. All these organisations are fashioned towards abhorring westernization and having separatist tendencies in their various countries. The organisation widely known as Boko Haram appears to have posed one of the greatest challenges which post-independence Nigeria has faced in nation building. Considering that there is already a plethora of literature on Boko Haram, this article argues that although most conflicts in Africa are geared towards separatism, they have been contained over the years by African and international players, taking Boko Haram as a case study. In this light the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), Lake Chad Basin Commission and more recently Britain, France and the United States, and China have join hands together to keep the Boko Haram insurgency in check albeit with little or no success. Unfortunately, this has escaped the attention of scholars and so a lacuna exists that needs to be filled. The article further examines why the regional and international bodies buried their differences and turned to containing the Boko Haram.*

Keywords: *Africa, post-colonialism, conflict, civil war, independence, Boko Haram.*

Introduction

Since the mid 1990s the world has witnessed numerous conflicts which are as varied as their *casus belli*. The rise of ethnic tensions and the escalation of ethnic conflicts in South Eastern Europe now belong to history. The disintegration of Yugoslavia which itself came into being to protect the land and rights of the Slavs in 1919 gave birth to tiny

Walter GAM NKWI, PhD

University of Buea, Cameroon

Email: nkwiwally@yahoo.com

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states such as Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Jovic, 2009; Lemp, 2000; Ramet, 2006; Frucht, 2005; Mesic, 2004; Radan, 1994; Woodward, 1995). This was almost the same fate which befell Czechoslovakia when due to ethnic chauvinism and jingoism it disintegrated into its proponent parts on the New Year's day, 1st January 1993 (see Skalnik, 1997; Innes, 2001; Musil, 1995; Hilde, 1999: 647-665). All these have mapped out new political contours in Central and South Eastern Europe hitherto seen in the 20th Century. The perennial Arab-Israeli conflicts, the Arab Spring and the on-going Syrian crisis have been beamed and continuous to be beamed in many World Television channels unendingly. This has also occupied the headlines of World Newspapers.

The situation in Africa has not been different. Africa and especially post colonial Africa has been characterised with numerous conflicts ranging from fratricidal civil wars to boundary and land crises. The Nigerian civil war in the 1960s as well as the Congo crisis and recently the Burundi-Rwanda now belong to the past but not without due ramifications on nation building in Africa. This has made the continent look as if it would crumble back to its pre-colonial shape. Quite recently there has been an upsurge of new conflicts posed by the desire to spread Islamism in North, West and East Africa. There is Al-Qaeda in North Africa, AQIM in Mali, Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Boko Haram, whose operations cut across Northern Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad, and Northern tip of Central African Republic. All these organisations are fashioned towards abhorring westernization and having separatist tendencies in their various countries. It appears that they have a desire to create an Islamic state constructed on classical Islam, perhaps on the footpath of the old Sokoto caliphate.

That notwithstanding, this article is about Boko Haram, which appears to have posed one of the greatest challenges which post independent Nigerian governments have faced on their nation building agenda. Although there is a plethora of literature on Boko Haram, this article hopes to divert from such conventional and reductionist scholarship. Thus, in this article I will argue that although most conflicts in Africa are geared towards separatism from the central and main government, in Nigeria it has been contained over the years by African and international players, taking Boko Haram as a case study. In this light, I will take the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), the Lake Chad Basin Commission and more recently Britain, France, Israel, United States, and China who joined hands together to handle the Boko Haram conflict. Unfortunately, this has escaped the attention of scholars and so a lacuna exists that needs to be filled. The article tries to clarify how and why, despite its local beginnings, Boko Haram became internationalized in the global scenario. What explains the internationalization of Boko Haram? Can it be simply said that the actors in this internationalism are the good guys? Or that Nigeria has been a good country and needed to be liberated from the claws of Boko Haram? Put in proper perspectives, what are the wider implications of the international actors to the wider understandings of conflict resolution in the

World Order at the dawn of the 21st Century? Is the situation of Nigeria more wobbly than that of other countries like Palestine, Syria, Yemen and the Maghreb countries in the face of the Arab Spring?

There has been an overabundance of literature on Boko Haram. Since the beginning of the 21st Century, when the activities of Boko Haram became more visible in Nigeria, researchers, scholars and journalists, and even 'jacks-of-all trades' have taken a keen interest in it and their conclusions have been as varied as their methodologies and backgrounds. The intensity and gravity of the group's activities require a visit at the literature and also to chart new paths and contribute to the ongoing debate. This will do us good if we take up some snapshots here to appreciate how much of the ground has been covered thus far. Some scholars have focused on the origins of Boko Haram. Loimeier (2012) provides a historical background paying attention to the Yan Izala movement of reforms within Islam. They (2007, 2009 and 2011; International Crisis Group, 2010 and Warner, 2012: 38-40) have all attempted to provide a historical account. Others have defined and sustained their stand that Boko Haram is a terrorist group (see Popoola 2012: 43-66; Omitola, 2012; Onapajo, 2012: 337-357; Musa 2012; Soyinka, 2012; Ojo, 2011: 45-62; Maiangwa *et al.* 2012: 40-57; Barrett, 2012; 719-736; Bagaji, 2012: 33-41). Yet, others have posed the question regarding what Boko Haram is (Rogers, 2012, Adibe, 2012; Adesoji, 2010; Akokegh, 2012; Cook, 2011; Mantzikos, 2010). Others still have concentrated on examining the current happenings surrounding Boko Haram and violence in the south of Nigeria. Watts (2009) offered a nexus between events in the North and the rich oil Delta of South East Nigeria, while Walker (2012) offered an interesting link between real and imagined Boko Haram. Other scholars that belonged to this school include Onuoha, 2010; Ifeka, 2010; Danjibo 2009; Adesoji, 2010). Still others have attempted to trace Boko Haram's relations with al-Shabab of Somalia (Cook, 2011; Akokegh, 2012: 46-55). Some of the works have remained at best skeletal and limited in scope. I have researched on the ramifications of Boko Haram in Central and West Africa from a historical and contemporary perspective (Nkwi, 2013)

This body of literature suggests that much has been written on Boko Haram. Despite the amount of literature, there are still yawning gaps to piece the 'conflicting narratives together' (Adib, 2012: 47-64). Therefore, this article focuses on the role of domestic and international actors in containing Boko Haram within Nigeria and *ipso facto* put Nigeria together. By internationalization I mean the actors found within Africa, like the Economic Community of West African States, and the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and international players like the United Nations and European Union, China, and the United States of America's reaction to contain Boko Haram. Such a study has wider implications and significance. Therefore the significance of such a study cannot be left in doubt. The simmering activities of Boko Haram both inside Nigeria and its neighbours have gotten very serious repercussions not only on the number of people displaced but also on

nation building in general. Of course states cannot be forged into nations when other parts are in fragments. The security concerns of the sub-region put together suggests that it is imperative to document the role of actors and actresses in an attempt to keep Boko Haram in check.

I shall continue with a note on my methodology. The data found here has been drawn from a myriad of sources and methods. First, I have substantially drawn from my previous works on this topic. Second, constant listening to news broadcasted over the Cable News Network (CNN), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and news from local channels has helped me gather some of the data. As I got new items over these channels I kept on updating my diary. This has, interestingly enough, helped me out tremendously, especially on the section of the abduction of the Chibok girls and the dramatic chain of events which followed that abduction. Thirdly, I have largely drawn from internet sources especially the World Wide Web (WWW). I remain grateful to all these channels. The *point d'appui* for this article is ECOWAS and how it has attempted to keep Boko Haram under check.

BOKO HARAM and ECOWAS

This section of the article focuses on ECOWAS, one of the largest regional organisations which is made up of the former British and French colonies of West Africa. One of the distinguishing features of Africa's political chemistry is its many protracted social and political conflicts and constant attempts to resolve the conflicts although scoring very little success. These conflicts do not operate in a vacuum and so their spillover effects have always made it imperative that national and transnational organizations search for ways and means to contain the activities.

ECOWAS: A Brief History

For the readers who might not be familiar with West African politics in the post independent period and economic blocs, it will be relevant to recapitulate a brief history of ECOWAS. ECOWAS was formed on 28th of May 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria. There were fifteen members initially, which included Benin, the Ivory Coast, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome, and Principe. Cape Verde joined later on to make the sixteenth state. The main aim for which this organisation was established was to promote the development of the region through economic, social, and cultural cooperation. The headquarters of ECOWAS is in Lagos while that of the fund is in Lome, the capital of Togo.

The organization has the following aims: to eliminate duties on imports from member countries, removing quantitative and administrative restrictions on trade between member states; establishing common external tariffs, removing all restrictions on the free movement of capital, services, and people among member states, harmonizing

agricultural policies and the promotion of common projects in the member states; harmonizing the economic, social, and cultural policies of member states; creating a fund for cooperation, compensation, and development and evolving a common policy in, and the joint development of transport, communication, energy and infrastructural facilities.

These objectives did not remain static. They were constantly revised by the member states. During the crisis that rugged Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s, the organisation tugged under their objectives another objective which was to intervene in member countries during periods of conflict and crisis. It was also during those crises that ECOWAS formed a military wing known as ECOMOG. This was because the ECOWAS group had felt the effects of the civil war to a much greater extent than countries outside of the region. In response to both regional instability and a heavy refugee flow, ECOWAS created the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), a force aimed at resolving the conflict, restoring order, and establishing a democratically-elected governments (O'Neill, 1993 The ECOMOG force was the first African sub-regional peacekeeping body to intervene in another state. ECOWAS has, since the Boko Haram crisis, intervened in several ways to bring the insurgency to an end and to give Nigeria the stability it deserves.

Condemnation and resolution in meetings

On Wednesday, 24th February 2014, in one of Boko Harams activities in colleges, it attacked and killed some fifty students at the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi, Yobe State. ECOWAS quickly met at Abuja, the Federal capital of Nigeria and through its Commission strongly condemned the unprovoked attack by a terrorist armed group on a Federal Government College which had resulted in the deaths of some 50 innocent students in the early hours of Wednesday 24th February 2014. Furthermore, on behalf of the Community Institutions, the President of the Commission, His Excellency Désiré Kadré Ouédraogo showed deep concern and expressed his heartfelt condolences to the President of Nigeria, His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the Government and People of Nigeria, as well as the bereaved families.

The ECOWAS set up an on-the-spot commission which was besprinkled over Abuja. The first thing the commission did was to assure the Government and good people of Nigeria that the entire Community stood solidly behind them in that moment of grief and in the collective efforts to rid the country and the region of terrorism, a dangerous cankerworm that had not spared any part of the globe. It added that the latest terrorist attack was a wake-up call, not just on the Nigerian authorities, but on every Member State and all community citizens to remain vigilant and more importantly, to join hands with all relevant agencies in the battle against terrorism, not only in Nigeria but in the entire West Africa. The Commission also reaffirmed its commitment and determination to collaborate with all Member States and other partners in the struggle to make the

region terror-free, and to promote the necessary environment for peace and security towards realizing the overarching goal of regional integration and development thereby keeping states within the brackets of political stability. The ECOWAS members further met on the Ivory Coast in the month of June to reaffirm its commitment and responsibility to keeping Nigeria stable, out of the chaos of Boko Haram.

Thus, at Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, the Economic Community of West African States ECOWAS, urged member states and the international community to assist Nigeria in its efforts to combat the violent Islamic sect Boko Haram. The Pan African News Agency which was formed in the 1960s reported that the call was made in Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, at the 41st Ordinary Summit of ECOWAS held on 28-29 June 2012. The Leaders of the 15-member bloc strongly condemned the terrorist aggression being perpetrated by the sect, and directed the ECOWAS Commission to participate in the efforts to halt the terrorist aggression. The members of ECOWAS also reminded them that Boko Haram, which meant *western education is a sin* in the local Hausa language, had killed over 1,200 since 2009, when it launched its violent campaign aimed at imposing the Islamic Sharia law on the predominantly-Muslim north, among other objectives. The terror attacks by the sect have continued despite the efforts made by the Nigerian government, including the deployment of troops to the affected region and the imposition of an emergency rule on the worst-hit areas. The previous month had witnessed attacks on churches in the northern Kaduna state which also triggered reprisal attacks by Christians and raised the specter of religious warfare in Africa's most populous state, which was almost equally divided between Muslims and Christians. This was therefore enough of a justification for ECOWAS to intervene in Nigeria and keep the Boko Haram under check. To continue in their efforts to accomplish their mission, the ECOWAS committee of chiefs of Defense Staff made their voices to be heard concerning the situation of Boko Haram and the well being of the Nigerian Nations in general.

The Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff (CCDS) Speaks Out

The Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff (CCDS) of the Economic Community of West African States met in Abuja from 18-19 June 2013, with the Boko Haram insurgency in the north eastern Nigeria dominating the agenda and discussions. The Boko Haram sect, since the killing of their leader in police custody, has been detonating explosives in several places, including the police headquarters and the UN building in Abuja. The Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Oluseyi Petinrin said the meeting became necessary following the upsurge in acts of terror in some countries including Nigeria. The meeting attempted to proffer lasting solutions to the terrorist's attack and related crimes. He said threats to national security and regional peace in West Africa were deeply rooted in social, political, and economic factors. "It is on this that our deliberations will seek to vigorously address security issues, in order not only to avert the negative consequences of these threats but rather promote the prospects of socio-economic and

political development.” He said naval chiefs of all member countries were attending the meeting to consider an increase in sea robbery, within the Gulf of Guinea as well as proliferation of small arms within the region. The Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security of the ECOWAS, Mahamane Toure said the meeting would receive reports from the defence chiefs of Nigeria and Niger on the development related to the direct threat on Sahel-Saharan ECOWAS members states, following the AQIM and Boko Haram renewed attacks and the Libyan crisis impact on the region (Igbe & Ndahi, 2014).

The next section will focus on the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Boko Haram.

The Lake Chad Basin Commission and Boko Haram

It will be relevant to have an idea about the short history of the Lake Chad Basin Commission before examining its role in the Boko Haram crisis. The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC or CBLT in French) is an intergovernmental organization of countries near to Lake Chad, which coordinates actions that might affect the waters of the lake. The organization’s secretariat is located in N’Djamena, Chad. The LCBC is Africa’s oldest river or lake-basin organization. In its founding document (the Convention and Statutes relating to the Development of the Chad Basin) the parties commit themselves to a shared use of the basin’s natural resources. It is a member of the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO).

The membership and funding is quite relevant to us here. From a hydrological perspective, the Chad Basin (not all of which feeds Lake Chad) includes eight countries, which in descending area of land included are Chad, Niger, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Sudan, Cameroon, Algeria, and Libya. Amongst these countries, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad (the four countries directly containing parts of Lake Chad and its wetlands) signed the Fort Lamy (today N’Djamena) Convention on 22nd May, 1964, which created the Lake Chad Basin Commission. The Central African Republic joined in 1996, and Libya joined in 2008. Sudan was admitted in July, 2000, but has observer status because it has not ratified the founding convention. Algeria has not participated.

The other countries with observer status are Egypt – in the neighboring Nile Basin – and the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which are fed by the Ubangi River, being considered for its diversion into Lake Chad. The member countries fund the commission’s US\$ 1 million annual budget based on an agreed-upon formula: Nigeria 52%, Cameroon 26%, Chad 11%, Niger 7%, the Central African Republic 4% (Carvenka, 1969).

The activities of the commission are many and varied. The activities are tugged under the Commission’s Basin Committee for Strategic Planning (BCSP), coordinates local activities between the member states. The LCBC controls the hydro-active regions in the Chad Basin called the *Conventional Basin*. The initial Basin consisted of approximately

427,500 km² of the total area of the Chad basin in 1964. The definition says it excluded the majority of the terminal depression consisting of desert that provides little or no effective hydrological contribution to the Basin. This was subsequently expanded to include additional watersheds in northern Nigeria, southern Chad, and northern African Republic with a current total area of 967,000 km² (Carvenka, 1969).

Some projects of the LCBC member countries are linked with the GEF program. In November 2002, the LCBC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. In July 2000, Lake Chad was declared a Transboundary Ramsar Site of International Importance. The aim is to create a network of national and regional conservation areas in the Basin and to set up institutions dedicated to their sustainable management. In this connection the *Chad Wetlands Initiative* (CHADWET) was launched in June 2003, organized by the Bureau and its Mediterranean Coordination Unit. With the support of MEDWET (Mediterranean Wetlands), the Mediterranean branch of the Convention and its Coordination Unit, CHADWET is set to be developed on the model of MEDWET, again in the framework of the GEF program. With a view to obtaining funding, there were plans to present the CHADWET to the Conference in November 2005 as a Ramsar Regional Initiative.

Lake Chad Basin and Boko Haram

Speaking in the organisation's summit, on 30 April 2012, Chad's President Idriss Deby Itno immediately proposed setting up a taskforce to fight the Islamic extremist movement, Boko Haram. The president made the proposal in Libreville, Gabon at the opening of the annual meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). "The time has come to act and we must decide today," said the president. The LCBC was set up to monitor conservation of Lake Chad and its basin and is made up of 16 countries, including Nigeria. "Our basin," said Deby, "is exposed to insecurity because of Boko Haram's permanent threat. If we don't eradicate them, we won't be capable of saving our Lake Chad." (Mc Elroy, 2013). Among those present who signed in to the idea was Francois Bozize, president of the Central African Republic, who offered to supply troops to the multinational contingent.

With all the meetings and commissions set up to contain Boko Haram, it is still a little of a surprise why not a lot has been achieved to bring an end to the insurgency. Perhaps with different cultures and traditions of colonial backgrounds, these organisations are diverse in the way that they felt could solve the problem. ECOWAS, for example, is one block which has countries with Francophone, Anglophone, and Lusophone backgrounds. The Lake Chad commission is another which has members as far as the Maghreb. All these elements suggest that not much could be done. Above all, internal wrangles of most of these countries have been also a stumbling block in their attempt at translating their memoranda effectively into concrete action. One will expect quite little from a

country like Mali or Central African Republic to intervene in Nigeria when both countries have internal squabbles. Intervening in the internal affairs of states needs financial resources, and most of the time most of the member countries are not willing to vote budgets to such effects. The abduction of teen girls in a boarding school was to be one of the events that was to test the international community in checking Boko Haram and also brought Boko Haram into the lamp light of the international community. But to what extent the international condemnation of the act to keep Boko Boko Haram in check was successful is yet to be discussed.

Give us our Girls: The Chibok Girls' Abduction and the International Alliance

On the night of 14–15 April 2014, approximately 276 female students were kidnapped from the Government Secondary School in the town of Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria. It is important to note here that since 2010, Boko Haram had targeted schools and as a consequence killed hundreds of students as well as raping some. It has been estimated by certain scholars that as many as 10,000 children have been unable to attend school as a result of the activities of Boko Haram (Oren, 2014). Boko Haram has also been known to kidnap girls, whom it believes should not be educated, and use them as cooks or sex slaves (Samuel, 2014). It was directly in such a context that the Chibok school girls were kidnapped.

No matter the activities of Boko Haram's attacks, evidence suggests that in 2014 they were seriously intensified. In February, the group killed more than 100 Christian men in the villages of Doron Baga and Izghe. Also in February, 59 boys were killed in the Federal Government College attack in northeastern Nigeria. In March, the group attacked the Giwa military barracks, freeing captured militants. The abduction occurred on the same day as a bombing attack in Abuja in which at least 88 people died. Overall, Boko Haram has been deemed responsible for nearly 4,000 deaths in 2014 alone. Training received from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and in the Arabian Peninsula has helped Boko Haram intensify its attacks (Ann, 2014; Aminu & Josh, 2014)

Back to the Chibok Girls, evidence points to the fact that there were 530 students from multiple villages around Chibok who had registered for the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination, although literature has indicated how many were in attendance at the time of the attack (Macleane, 2014). The ages of the students/ youth were aged 16 to 18 and they were in their final year of school.

Quite surprisingly initial reports said 85 students were kidnapped in the attack. Over the 19-20 April weekend, the military released a statement that said more than 100 of the 129 kidnapped girls had been freed. However, the statement was retracted, and on 21 April, parents said 234 girls were missing (Abubakar, 2014). A number of the students escaped the kidnapers in two groups. (Perkins, 2014). According to the police

approximately 276 youth were taken in the attack of which 53 had escaped as of 2 May. Other reports were that 329 girls were kidnapped, 53 had escaped and 276 were still missing (Abubakar, 2014).

Amnesty International later said it believed the Nigerian military had four hours advanced warning of the kidnapping, but failed to send reinforcements to protect the school. Nigeria's armed forces have confirmed that the Nigerian military had four hour advance notice of the attack but that their over-extended forces were unable to mobilize reinforcements. The focus here is not on whether they were warned or not or whether the figures were not correct but rather the internationalization of that act following the abduction.

The ramifications of the abduction

The abduction of the girls was followed by a dramatic turn of events. After the kidnapping of the girls, the first thing was to force them into Islam and marriage with members of Boko Haram, with a reputed "bride price" of N2,000 each (\$12.50/£7.50). Many of the students were taken to the neighbouring countries of Chad and Cameroon with sightings reported of the students crossing borders with the militants, and sightings of the students by villagers living in the Sambisa Forest. The forest was for a very long time a suspected refuge for Boko Haram militants. Residents have been able to track the movements of the students with the help of contacts across north-eastern Nigeria (Lister, 2014; Hassan, 2014).

On 2 May 2014, the police said they were still unclear as to the exact number of students who were kidnapped, and as a consequence, they asked parents to provide documents so an official count could be made since school records were damaged in the attack. Two days after, that is on the 4th of May 2014, the Nigerian President, His Excellency, Goodluck Jonathan spoke publicly about the kidnapping for the first time, saying the government was doing everything it could to find the missing girls. At the same time, he blamed parents for not supplying enough information about their missing children to the police (Howard, 2014). On 5th May, a video in which Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau claimed responsibility for the kidnappings emerged. Shekau claimed that "Allah instructed me to sell them ... I will carry out his instructions." and "Slavery is allowed in my religion, and I shall capture people and make them slaves." (Howard, 2014). He said the girls should not have been in the school, and instead they should be married since girls as young as nine are suitable for marriage. Following the kidnapping incident, Boko Haram again abducted eight girls aged 12-15 from northeast Nigeria, a number later raised to eleven. Chibok is primarily a Christian village and Shekau acknowledged that many of the girls seized were not Muslims: "The girls that have not accepted Islam, they are now gathered in numbers ... and we treat them well, the way the Prophet Muhammad treated the infidels he seized." (Howard, 2014)

On 5 May, at least 300 residents of the nearby town of Gamboru Ngala were killed in an attack by Boko Haram militants after Nigerian security forces had left the town to search for the kidnapped students. On 9 May, former Boko Haram negotiator, Shehu Sani stated that the group wanted to swap the abducted girls for its jailed members. On 11 May, Kashim Shettima, Governor of Borno State in Nigeria, said that he sighted the abducted girls and that the girls were not taken across the borders of Cameroon or Chad. On 12 May, Boko Haram released a video showing about 130 kidnapped girls, each clad in a hijab and a long Islamic chador while it demanded prisoner exchange (Aronson, 2014).

A journalist-brokered deal to secure the release of the girls in exchange for prisoners held in Nigerian jails was scrapped at a late stage on 24 May 2014 after President Goodluck Jonathan consulted with U.S., Israeli, French and British foreign ministers in Paris, where the consensus was that no deals should be struck with terrorists, and that a solution involving force was required (Aronso, 2014). On 26 May 2014 the Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff announced that the Nigerian security forces had located the kidnapped girls, but ruled out a forceful rescue attempt for fear of collateral damage. On 30 May, it was reported that a civilian militia in the Baale region of Northeastern Nigeria found two of the kidnapped girls raped and “half-dead”, and tied to a tree. Villagers said the Boko Haram group had left the two girls, killed four other disobedient girls, and buried them. 223 were still missing (Dorell, 2014). This built of events following the abduction had an immediate reaction from the international community.

Immediate Reaction

A lorry truck in Nigeria propagated the #Bring BackOurGirls hashtag launched to spread awareness of the kidnapping, thus “Bring Back Our Girls” became the watchword not only to bring back the girls, but also to get Boko Haram placed under control. That signal was first given by the highest first lady in the world, the wife of United States President, Her Excellency, Michelle Obama, who personally carried a sign with the #BringBackOurGirls hashtag. This was posted to her official Twitter account. The overall involvement of Michelle was to help in raising awareness of the kidnappings of the school girls. Secondly, the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UNICEF condemned the abduction, as did former Nigerian military ruler Muhammadu Buhari. The UN Security Council also condemned the attack and warned action against Boko Haram militants for abducting girls. Parents and others took to social media to complain about the government’s perceived slow and inadequate response. On 30 April and 1 May, protests demanding more government action were held in several Nigerian cities. Most parents, however, were afraid to speak publicly for fear their daughters would be targeted for reprisal.

On 3 and 4 May, protests were held in major Western cities including Los Angeles, New York, Washington and London condemning the action of Boko Haram. At the same time,

the hash tag #BringBackOurGirls trended globally on Twitter as the story continued to spread like wild fire in the harmattans. By 11 May it was estimated that it had attracted 2.3 million tweets. A woman who helped organise protests was detained by the police, apparently because the First Lady of Nigeria, Patience Jonathan felt slighted when the woman showed up for a meeting instead of the mothers of victims. The woman was released soon after. Reports said the First Lady had further incensed protestors by suggesting some abduction reports were faked by Boko Haram supporters. Several online petitions were created to pressure the Nigerian government to act against the kidnapping. On 30 April, hundreds marched on the National Assembly to demand government and military action against the kidnappers (Lister, 2014; Hassan, 2014; Heaton, 2014; Howard, 2014).

The President of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria called on Muslims to fast and pray “in order to seek Allah’s intervention in this precarious time.” Sa’ad Abubakar III the Sultan of Sokoto also called for prayers and intensified efforts to rescue the students. On 9 May, Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno State called on all Muslims and Christians to join in “three days of prayers and fasting.” (Adamu, 2014). On the same day, Muslims in Cameroon called on fellow believers not to marry any of those girls should they be offered to them. On the same day, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia Sheikh Abdulaziz Al al-Sheikh joined other religious leaders in the Muslim world to condemn the kidnappings, describing Boko Haram as misguided and intent on smearing the name of Islam. He stated that Islam is against kidnapping and that marrying kidnapped girls was not permitted.

The scale of the kidnapping was unprecedented. This led the former United States Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency John Campbell to declare that Boko Haram’s strength “appears to be increasing. The government’s ability to provide security to its citizens appears to be decreasing.” Director of the Atlantic Council Africa Center, J. Peter Pham said “The failure of the government to even get a clear count further reinforces a perception of systemic governmental failure” (Pham, 2014). *The Economist* “labeled President Goodluck Jonathan as incompetent,” saying that Jonathan and the Nigerian military “cannot be trusted any longer to guarantee security for Nigerians,” adding that “the worst aspect of the Nigerian government’s handling of the abduction is its seeming indifference to the plight of the girls’ families. It took more than two weeks before Jonathan addressed the matter in public” (Aronso, 2014).

International governmental response

The internationalization of Boko Haram reached its apogee with the intervention of various European powers as well as China and the United States of America. The fact that various powers put aside their differences and gave out a helping hand to Nigeria needs to be put in proper perspective, their differences notwithstanding. These powers

included the United Kingdom, United States, France, China, and France. These powers pledged to help Nigeria in various ways. It will be relevant to examine the ways in which they offered to help and then analyze whether their help was effective, or just due to diplomatic maneuvers.

The United Kingdom sent experts to Nigeria to assist in the search for the Chibok students. The British experts were drawn from various governmental departments including the Foreign Office, the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Defense. They were to concentrate on planning, co-ordination and advice to local authorities. The United States agreed to send experts to Nigeria to assist in the search for the students as well. The American team consisted of military and law enforcement officers, specializing in "intelligence, investigations, hostage negotiation, and information-sharing and victim assistance." However, the US never considered sending armed forces. Former Nigerian Vice President, Atiku Abubakar and Dr. Babangida Aliyu who was the chairman of the Northern Governor's Forum, "welcomed the US government's offer of military assistance." The American armed forces were not to be part of the operational command. On 12 May, 16 military personnel from US African Command joined the Search and Rescue Operations. On 22 May, the Department of Defense announced that it was deploying an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle and 80 United States Air Force personnel to nearby Chad. Chad was chosen as a base for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance flights because of its access to northern Nigeria. France offered a specialist team. French President François Hollande also offered to hold a summit in Paris with Nigeria and its neighbours to tackle the issue. Earlier on, there had been a meeting of six heads of states at the Elysee Palace, Paris concerning the Boko- Haram crisis. These heads of states were François Hollande of France, Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria, Boni Yayi of Benin, Paul Biya of Cameroon, Mohamadu Issoufou of Niger and Idris Derby of Tchad. China announced its intention to make available "any useful information acquired by its satellites and intelligence services." (Dorell, 2014; Lister, 2014).

The intervention of the above powers in Nigeria to fight Boko Haram cannot be taken uncritically. It appears that, while giving the impression that their main aim was to fight Boko Haram, they were by the same token protecting their interest. Their interest would have been found in different trajectories. Nigeria is one of the largest producers of petroleum and logic will hold true that the intervention of countries like China with little or no crude oil would have been to get the oil in reward. Others like France have invested in Nigeria over the years especially in the Northern region which is the bastion of Boko Haram. The Peugeot assembly plant at Kaduna would have been in peril if Boko Haram had resorted to attacking western investments. Not quite surprisingly, the French President, François Hollande convened a meeting for the security question of the Central and West Africa with Boko Haram top on the agenda. This meeting neither took place in Abuja, Lagos, nor Yaounde but in Paris. The various heads of states who

were in attendance at the meeting with the Nigerian President were to foot their own bills. The United Kingdom was protecting her former colony. The intervention of the powers at different layers was double prong. The first was to keep Nigeria in order by extension, offering a helping hand to thrash out Boko Haram. The second was personal interest. Of course, it is often said that diplomacy is a game of interest. The intervention of these powers was not an exemption.

In Conclusion

I began this article by situating how ethnic conflict and ethnicity has led to the disintegration of states the world over. I then proceeded to Africa where countries have been facing a lot of conflicts and Nigeria, which has faced one of its greatest challenges from the activities of Boko Haram in its nation building mechanisms. Boko Haram, which started off as a local insurgent group fighting against the western civilization, gradually grew to attract attention not only within Nigeria but from Africa and beyond. This was because of its activities, which included bombings, kidnappings, and abductions. The group appeared to commit the worst by kidnapping school girls from their dorm rooms at Chibok. That action led to the internationalization of the group. This article has examined the various players in the internationalization of Boko Haram. Whether it was ECOWAS, LCBC, or countries like the US, the UK, France, China, their aim was to stop Nigeria from disintegrating. Their intervention appeared to have gotten little success as the girls were not found, and Boko Haram even intensified its operations and might even continue longer than expected.

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ANTI-BALAKA/SÉLÉKA, 'RELIGIONISATION' AND SEPARATISM IN THE HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Henry KAM KAH

Abstract. *This paper examines the employment of religious differences in escalating political crises in the Central African Republic (CAR) with threats of separatism in the country based on this. When Michel Am Nondroko Djotodia seized power through the Séléka rebellion in March 2013 and then abdicated the 'hot potato,' the crises during and after his abdication became intensely religious and on a scale unknown in the history of the country. From then on, there have been repeated threats of separation of Muslims from the predominantly Christian population. The Séléka rebels and fighters who also have some non-Muslims have been associated with Islam, and the anti-balaka is constituted of mainly Christian and non-Christian militias. The tussle for leadership and control of the CAR between the Séléka and anti-balaka rival movements has been motivated by religion. This has contributed in making the CAR a failed state with recurrent scenes of violence, killings, and displacements. Through a content analysis of the literature on the religious dimension of the crisis, we will examine the reasons for and threats of a split in a country with xenophobic religious differences and political volatility.*

Keywords: *central Africa, religion, separatism, partition, conflict, Central African Republic.*

Introduction

Religion is a form of identity for millions of people in the developing world; differences over religion have contributed to the current conflicts. Individuals may be uncomfortable when they perceive that others who share a similar religious identity with them are unfairly treated. Conflicts resulting from such ill-feeling are considered to be identity clashes and involve self-identified, often polarised groups within and between countries. Religious fanaticism and ideo-logical differences based on religion have contributed to conflicts worldwide. The Al-Qaeda

Henry KAM KAH, PhD

University of Buea, Cameroon

Email: henry.kah@ubuea.cm

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and Al-Shabbab terrorist groups in Afghanistan and Somali including other groups like the Boko Haram in Nigeria and AQIM in Mali and North Africa claim religious justification for their activities. Boko Haram in particular is against western education and policies championed by the United States of America (West Africa Insight, 2014; Mantzikos, 2013; Bamidele, 2012: 32-44; Haynes, 2009: 53). While religion contributes to conflict, it has also contributed to the resolution of conflicts (Haynes, 2009: 52 and 56).

Three forms of religious conflicts have been examined in the contemporary period. These include religious fundamentalisms, religious terrorism especially involving failed states and controversies surrounding 'the clash of civilisations'. (Huntington, 1996; Appleby, 2000; Gopin, 2000; Juergensmeyer, 2000, 2005; Haynes, 2003; 2007a, 2007b). These categories of conflicts are pronounced in several African countries with a multiplicity of religious groups such as Cameroon, CAR, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda. In as much as these conflicts have resulted from religious differences or extremism, efforts have also been made in several parts of Africa and the world to promote peace by religious organisations. In Mozambique, for example, the *Sant' Egidio*, a prominent religious group and a Catholic Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) has contributed to peace-making like elsewhere in the world. This international NGO was extremely influential in resolving the civil war that ravaged Mozambique since the mid-1970s (Haynes, 2009: 58-9 and 63-4). Similarly, the Dhammayietra religious group in Cambodia has played a prominent role in the revival of Buddhism, following the Khmer Rouge's years of depredation and consequent political instability, but also to the possibility of the country developing a post-conflict harmony as well as a shared sense of purpose and direction (Haynes, 2009: 71).

Religious competition between Muslims and Christians seems to be the single most significant political issue in Nigeria, like in other countries, and responsible for political and ethno-religious conflagration (Aleyomi, 2012: 133; Uhumwuango and Epelle, 2011: 111). In the early political history of Nigeria, religion was used for political mobilisation, legitimacy, and to determine the voting behaviour of the people. Given the philosophy of Islam as a complete way of life for a Muslim, Islam has always been closely attached to politics especially in the Muslim dominated northern part of the country. The implementation of the *Sharia* or '*Shariacracy*' in Zamfara and other northern states of Nigeria generated a widespread uproar across Nigeria. Christians opposed this through mobilisation all over Nigeria (Onapajo, 2012: 42-52; Familusi, 2010: 160). In early 1987 and May and October 1991 there were anti-Christian riots in Northern Nigeria with serious consequences on Christians (Korieh, 2005; Maier, 2001). These conflicts that were based on religious differences have continued to be a challenge to the nation-building process in Nigeria from independence to the second decade of the 21st century.

Similarly, following the departure of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, there was a surge in violence between the Sunni Muslim majority and the Coptic Christian minority. Prior to this,

there had been occasional confrontations between these two religious groups, which posed a security threat to the unity of Egypt. Likewise, the Assad government in Syria has been engaged in sectarian rhetoric and has mobilised the Syrian Alawite, Druze and Christian minorities against the mainly Sunni protesters. His government argues that the emergence of a regime with a Sunni majority would endanger the other minorities in the country. The religious policy of the government has made many Sunni volunteers to join the struggle against the Bashar al Assad's regime from outside. They see it as a religious obligation to the Sunnis of Syria. To further infuriate the Sunni Muslims in Syria, the Russian government is supporting the Christian minority community (Aoun, *et al.* 2012: 2). The Indian government has also expressed grave concern about Islamic extremism. In spite of this, radical Hindu groups in the country are an even greater threat to peace and stability than Islamic radicals (Ibid: 25). In Sudan on the other hand, Islam is the only religion and all other religious groups should be fought against until they convert; in Ethiopia the Orthodox Church is the dominant religion, opposed to the presence of the Catholics in that country (Kasomo, 2010: 24). Apart from Sudan and Ethiopia, other African countries with conflicts that have their roots in religious differences include Eritrea, Somalia, and Uganda (Basedu, 2011: 6).

In spite of the intense competition between Muslims and Christians in some African countries, Senegal is a perfect example of a society that upholds peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. Over 90% of its population is Muslim, and 5% are Christians with the rest of the population representing traditional religions (Francophone West and Central Africa, 2013: 13). In other countries like Mali, Islamists have confronted traditional Islam in the northern part of the country by destroying Sufi Islamic artefacts (Ibid: 16). The unfolding melodrama in Mali is an attempt by the jihadists to militarily take over the country and establish a kind of terrorist state based on the *Sharia* law (Francis, 2013: 2). The example of the religious conflict in Mali clearly shows how members of the same religious group are different in terms of ideology and doctrine. This has led to negative consequences on the people and the religion they claim to defend.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban have tried for years to genuinely establish a religious state and formally institutionalize religious values through the re-establishment of the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" (Aoun, 2012: 25). The United States is deeply involved in the country fighting against the Taliban and supporting the Afghan effort to defeat the Taliban fighters. This is not without costs on both the Afghan and American governments. The general upsurge in religious fundamentalism in Afghanistan and elsewhere needs to be understood against a background of global forces and the struggle to sell competing ideologies with the intention of undermining the other.

Although religion has been presented to have played a negative role in the politics and socio-economic life of the African people and others elsewhere in the world, it has also

contributed to peace and stability (Basedu *et al.*, 2011: 7). In Senegal, for example, the *marabouts*, or Islamic holy men who belong to the main Sufi brotherhoods, have been recognised as a source of political influence for decades. Their influence has a stabilising role and promotes dialogue and peace in the country. Politicians too from different countries of the world have from time to time visited places of worship, especially during election campaigns for the purpose of winning elections (Ellis, 1998: 188). When they won these elections, this is among other factors was attributed to the positive role of these places of worship. Unfortunately, in the CAR a political crisis has been given a religious connotation, not for the unity but rather for the disunity and partition of the country into different spheres of influence (Policy Briefing, 2013: 1).

Objectives and Relevance of Study

The objective of this paper is to examine the roots of the present religious-political crises in the CAR and the ramifications on separatism and disunity of this country. The on-going crisis in the CAR is not a new phenomenon because prior to and after independence in August 1960, this country faced various forms of sectarian crisis which included the crisis of leadership, ethnic tensions and military rule. Even after the 1993 elections when, Ange Félix Patassé defeated General André Kolingba, the economic, military and political crises that followed his ten-year rule did not unite the country. Many more cracks developed to challenge the peace and stability of the country culminating in his overthrow from the former Army Chief of Staff General François Bozizé with the backing of Chad and other foreign forces (Kah, 2014).

Nation-building in Africa after independence has remained a serious problem and explains the importance of the study of religion in exacerbating conflict in the CAR. Many governments have been put in place and have functioned on the basis of exclusion, ethnic jingoism and religious differences. A government that excludes others, like the one in the CAR since independence, has only fuelled sectarian conflicts between different ethnic and religious groups, with long-term negative consequences on unity, peace, and stability. Some of those who either seized power or were elected into office in the CAR like Ange Félix Patassé, André Kolingba, Jean Bedel Bokassa and François Bozizé have failed the population. They worked to enrich themselves, their political cronies, and religious groups, and left office without being brought to book. There is need for those who govern in this country and in other African countries to recognise the importance of de-emphasising ethnic jingoism and other sectarian interests to reach out to the population for an inclusive society where people can aspire to positions based on merit and develop a sense of belonging to the country.

This study is also important in the sense that the manipulation of young people for private interests of politicians has often resulted in consequences unforeseen in African countries. This was the case in Liberia, the Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone during their

respective civil wars. Young people were instigated to destroy property, maim, kill, and abduct others. Others have been forcefully recruited as child soldiers on the pretext of fighting a religious war like in the CAR. Some have often taken matters into their own hands to the extent that the destruction that has often resulted has made it difficult to preach peace and reconciliation to people determined to seek revenge. The present religious and political fracas in the CAR is due to the manipulation of young people in the rural and poor areas of the country. They have wreaked havoc destroying property and brutally killing children and women. There is a need to educate young people during times of peace to be wary of the dangers of war and conflict.

Religious extremism and fundamentalism are on the rise in different parts of the world and are a threat to peace and stability. Some of the hot spots of religious intolerance in the world include Ireland, Somalia, Mali, Nigeria, Afghanistan, and Egypt. This has been expressed in the form of bombings, hostage takings, and destruction of homes. The more the fight against these forms of extremism extends, the more such cases like the Islamic state (ISIS) in Iraq arise, which is threatening the peace of the entire Middle East. The present scuffle between the *Séléka*¹ and anti-*balaka*, with a religious hue, is a manifestation of such extremist views. This study emphasises the importance of religious tolerance and moderation so that the world can become a safe place for human habitation, and disunity be discouraged.

Religious Configuration of the CAR

The CAR, like other African countries, has a plethora of religious groups, many of whom are foreign, and others are indigenous to the people of this country. Among the missionary groups evangelising the country, there are the Catholic Church with Nine dioceses, the Association des *Eglises Baptist Evangelique Centrafricaines*, the Baptist Committee, the Baptist Churches of West Central African Republic, the Baptist Churches of the Central African Republic, the Central African Evangelical Church, the *Eglise Evangelique des Freres*, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic, the Evangelical Mission, the Evangelical Revival Church, the Protestant Church of King Christ, Seventh Day Adventists, the *Union des Eglises Evangelique Elim*, the *Union Federation Eglise Baptiste* and Islam (Pastoor, Open Doors International: 21-22). Generally speaking, indigenous religious groups account for roughly 35% of the population, Protestants represent 25%, the same as the Catholics, while Muslims represent 15% of the population of the CAR (Arieff, 2014: 2). It has also been argued that

1 The term *Séléka* is used throughout this paper to refer to the coalition of forces that seized power in the CAR on 24 March 2013 and that was disbanded in September 2013 by transitional president Michel Djotodia and became ex-*Séléka*. When this group was banned, their leaders rejected the ban and continued to operate as if this were a legally recognised group.

the total percentage of the Christian groups in the CAR is 76.3 and the Muslims 13. Whatever percentage is attributed to indigenous religion, it is important to note that indigenous religious beliefs and practices have a great influence on the population who usually incorporate these in their Christian and Islamic practices (Pastoor n.d.: Open Doors International: 20).

The estimates of the United Nations indicate that 80% of the population of the CAR are Christians. Among these are 51% representing Protestant churches and 29% Catholics. The Muslims represent 10% and 'animists' 10%. There is often a misleading expression that Africans who do not belong to either of the foreign religions are animists. This somehow implies that they not believe in the existence of a supreme being. African people believe in the existence and works of God in their lives (Mbiti, 1989). The conflicting figures representing the different religious groups in the CAR given by the United Nations, Pastoor and Arieff may be an indication of the difficulty of getting clear statistics on the religious configuration and re-configuration of this central African country. These religious groups lived relatively at peace with one another until the coming to power of General François Bozizé in 2003 after toppling Ange Félix Patassé. In the course of his administration, Bozizé started using religion as a political weapon to chastise the Muslims. When the Muslim dominated *Séléka* swept through the country from December 2012 and overthrew him on 24 March 2013, they started paying back Christians in the same coin through killings, abductions, destruction of churches, homes, and crops, among others. The religious crisis between the *Séléka* and anti-*balaka* movements can be understood through their origins and composition.

Origins and Composition of the *Séléka* and Anti-*Balaka* Movement

Séléka is a sango word for union or coalition. It was a coalition of about five separate rebel groups and these were the *Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement* (UFDR), the *Convention des patriots pour la justice et la paix* (CPJP), the *Convention patriotique pour le salut Wa Kodro* (CSPK), the *Front démocratique du peuple Centrafricain* (FDPC), and *Front populaire pour le redressement* (FPR) which was a Chadian group. This rebel movement consists of about 90% Muslims, and the local population is about 80% Christian who are fighting against them. They are composed of kith and kin from Sudan and Chad with the aim of gaining political power by subduing infidels and kafirs or Christians. It has been stressed that only 10% of the *Séléka* rebels were actually citizens of the CAR. The leadership of the *Séléka* includes many people from the Vakaga and Bamingui Bangoran prefectures, which are two Muslim-majority regions of the North East of the CAR (Pastoor n.d.: Open Doors International: 5; *Le Démocrate* No. 3017, 17 September 2013). The *Séléka* also included many non-religious rebels, other bandits and opportunists who joined in the looting and vandalism that followed their control of different parts of the country. This composition of the *Séléka* is a clear indication that reducing the conflict in the CAR to a religious conflict is simplistic (Marima,

2014). It is political and also economic considering the enormous natural resources that the country has.

The name anti-*balaka* is anti-sword or anti-machete in the local languages of Mandja and Sango. This was often used to describe self-defence units set up by communities to fight against bandits, cattle raiders, rebels and poachers (Marima, 2014). It also alludes to the French word for bullets of an automatic rifle (“balle AK”) because the people of the CAR were against the bullets of the AK 47 or the Kalashnikov assault rifle which were often used on them. Anti-*balaka* is also a generic term for those resisting the brutal *Séléka* insurrection. Anti-*balaka* roughly means “invincible” which is a kind of power purportedly bestowed by the charms that hang around the necks of most members. This term gained currency some five or six years ago when it was applied to self-defence units set up in the absence of effective state security forces to protect communities from attacks by highway bandits or cattle raiders in different communities of the CAR (Muellenmeister, 2014). A self-styled spokesman for the anti-*balaka*, Sebastien Wénézoui, pointed out that most of its members are from Christian or ‘animist’ communities. Following the coup of 24 March 2013, many members of the former government army, *Forces armées centrafricaines* (FACA) joined the ranks of the anti-*balaka* to attack, kill and force the *Séléka* insurgents out of the country. In the Lobaye district of Bangui, all the commanders of the anti-*balaka* are former members of the FACA. Two former members of the Bozizé government, namely Patrice Edouard Ngaïssona and Joachin Kokate, claim to be the anti-*balaka*’s national-level political and military coordinators and that it is committed to ‘pacification and normalisation in the CAR’ (Muellenmeister, 2014).

The Anti-*balaka* groups have a long history in the CAR. Originally it was composed of local self-defence groups and every village had its own militia. During the Bush War of 2004-2007 the anti-*balaka* was composed of vigilante groups that resisted the abuses of the main rebel formation, that is, the *Armée Populaire pour la Restauration de la Démocratie* (APRD) (Marima, 2014). This is today manipulated by politicians for their egoistic reasons. One of the spokespersons of the Anti-*balaka* Emotion Gomez said of the Anti-*balaka* that:

Our movement has a long history, anti-*balaka* have traditionally hunted down bandits and arrested them. That was before Bozizé came to power. But once Djotodia had taken over and the Seleka started shooting and ill-treating us, we decided to regroup and fight them (Deutsche Welle website, 2014).

If we were to take the statement of Gomez as gospel truth, then the Anti-*balaka* group did not start as a religious group but emerged out of the need to provide security to the population against bandits or highway robbers. Today, the majority of anti-*balaka* fighters are youths without any schooling, sometimes children as young as ten. They are motivated by their thirst for revenge. Thousands of the young men and women were

given knives and machetes. Drugs and mystical charms or fetishes were administered to convince the young that they were immune to the bullets of the *Séléka* rebels (www.dw.de/anti-balaka-thirst-for-revenge-in-central.../a-17486273). The politico-religious dimension of the anti-*balaka* was somehow triggered by the atrocious activities of the *Séléka* when they seized power from Bozizé on 24 March 2013 (Kah, 2013). This coalition of mostly Muslim recruits, some of whom came from Chad and Sudan, became a target of attack by Christians and non-Muslim groups. There is a basis for the religious differences in the CAR.

Bases of Intense Religious Differences

The religious differences between the *Séléka* and anti-*balaka* today in the CAR have their roots in the past. The relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in what was then CAR in the pre-colonial times forms the basis of the crisis that is today not only political, but also religious. Muslim groups during this period raided for slaves among the people of the South and other non-Muslim groups. Non-Muslims during this period suffered from the pangs of the Muslim slave dealers and this left scars which are still in social memory today. French colonisation also encouraged a hostile view of Islam to avoid anti-colonial uprisings and also to create a bulwark against its enemies in Senoussia and Ouadai areas (Societies Caught in the Conflict Trap, 2013: 43). While the French encouraged a hostile attitude towards Islam, they also gave priority to Muslim pastoralists. From 1931, they assigned farmland in Bouar region in the West of the CAR to Peul to graze their cattle. This made the Gbaya, who represent about 29% of the population of the CAR, develop ill-feeling against these Muslims (Deiros, 2014: 4). It was only logical for this to be used to good effect following the overthrow of Bozizé and the conflicts that have followed his downfall.

This crisis in the distant past was however economic and not religious as it has been branded today. After independence, southerners and Christians dominated politics in the CAR, and this led to resentment or disenchantment among many northerners, mostly Muslims. They felt that their region was neglected, marginalised, discriminated against, and they were also denied full citizenship. The frustration of Christians in the control of prices and access to capital has been compounded by the fact that Muslim communities have used their cross-border mobility and family ties to dominate commercial and trade networks in many areas of the country. Besides, the counter-insurgency of the FACA between 2005 and 2008 in the North of the CAR seemed to have laid the foundation for the subsequent mobilisation of the *Séléka* in 2012 which led to the overthrow of President François Bozizé and the consequences on Christian groups that followed the *coup d'état* of March 24 2013 (Arieff, 2014: 6-9; Pastoor n.d: Open Doors International, 20).

In the 1990s, some citizens of the CAR who felt neglected by the state organised themselves into self-defence committees to fight against those who erected roadblocks to extort from the population. What has become anti-*balaka* today were partly groups

mobilised by Bozizé in 2003 after seizing power from Patassé to protect rural communities from machete-wielding bandits from Chad and Cameroon. They became part of a national programme and brought some security to rural areas (Central African Republic Troubles, Briefing 28 July 2014). These groups were reactivated by Bozizé in 2012 and 2013 to confront the Séléka and help keep him in power until general elections in 2016. When he observed that the Séléka were not relenting in their resolve to overthrow him, in December 2012, Bozizé began to play the card of religious hatred and called young people of the outskirts of Bangui to fight the “foreigners.” His children namely Socrate and Jean-François, distributed knives to civilians, and one of his aides Levy Yakete, created the Citizens Coalition of Opposition to Armed Rebellions (COCORA as French acronym) with the aim of protecting his regime (Deiros, 2014: 11).

From 2011, the government of General François Bozizé carefully orchestrated a phobia for Muslims and encouraged a national discourse to chastise them. There was constant reference made to the presence of Sudanese *Janjaweed*s and other Chadian Islamists in rebel movements and the Séléka coalition. There was also the persistence of a fundamentalist discourse by churches in the CAR against Islam for over thirty years. In attendance in these churches were many of the cadres of the Bozizé administration. Some members of the Bozizé government even made allusion rightly or wrongly to a supposed “Wahhabi” Séléka funding and to the presence of elements of *Boko Haram* in Séléka. These accusations were probably meant to provoke western intervention in the CAR in order to preserve the collapsing regime of Bozizé but this did not work out well for him and his egoistic and gullible supporters (Deiros, 2014: 6; Societies Caught in the Conflict Trap, 2013: 43).

The anti-Muslim rhetoric did not help to unite the people of the CAR. It rather widened the hiatus that already existed in the country, especially between the government and the several armed groups that emerged to defend the interests of their leaders, as well as countries like Chad and Sudan that were involved in the crisis directly and indirectly. How could Bozizé’s government play the game of developing hatred for the Muslims when it was a Muslim dominated Chad that aided him to overthrow the government of Ange Félix Patassé in 2013? It was an error which only resulted in the resolve of the marginalised and neglected Muslim area of the North East and their leaders to seek to overthrow the government. This overthrow was violent and was quickly followed by reprisals on the innocent non-Muslim population of Bangui and other major towns of the CAR like Bouar, Bangassou, among others (BBC News, 2013, 21 March; BBC News Africa, 2013; Azikiwe, 2013; Besseling, 2013; Global Times, 2013, 16 April; Ngoupana, 2013a, 2013b; Vatican Radio, 2013, 16 May; Vatican News, 2013; Vircoulon, 2013; and VOA News, 2013).

The emergence and seizure of power, accompanied by war crimes committed by the Séléka through the killing of many civilians mostly non-Muslim, contributed to the eventual emergence of the anti-*balaka* to fight back the predominantly Muslim-led

Séléka group. When Djotodia became the first Muslim leader of the CAR in March 2013, the peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims began to wane because religious-motivated attacks committed against civilians became a regular occurrence. *Séléka* commanders supervised the systematic attack on Christian communities which was partly a response to the actions of the Christian-led militia, the anti-*balaka* on the *Séléka*. In retaliation Christian militia groups were formed which increased sectarian violence in the country (Arieff, 2014: 1; BBC Central African Militia 'Killed' Children, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2013; Testimony from "Pre-genocide" to Genocide; Sawyer, 2014; Marima, 2014; Upholding the Responsibility to Protect, 2014: 2; Central African Republic Red Cross Reuters, 21 August 2014). The Christian militia group stepped up attacks on Muslim civilians aided by supporters of ousted president Bozizé (BBC Central African Republic Religious Tinderbox, 2013). It is important to understand that religious differences were not at the origin of the present crisis in the CAR. The crisis reflects a struggle for political power and also complex tensions over the access to resources, control over trade and national identity (Arieff, 2014: 1).

Following the *Séléka* seizure of power and governance in the CAR, there were accusations of Muslims for leading a religious war by several religious groups. Christian churches were desecrated and Christians raped, robbed, kidnapped, tortured and murdered. Some Muslims, including some ethnic Peuls, directly participated in *Séléka* violence. In some cases, when Christian homes were looted, Muslim homes were left untouched (Amnesty International, 2014: 7). In what became the Bangui Declaration of 6 October 2013, barely two months after Michel Djotodia was sworn in as president of the CAR, prominent Christian leaders described events in the CAR "of a jihadist nature" and the *Séléka* as a coalition as "90% consisting of Muslim extremists from Chad and Sudan." The *Catholic Herald* had earlier quoted that inter-religious unity was "harshly tested by the deplorable complicity shown by some Muslims towards atrocities by *Séléka* fighters, who continue to kill, rape, pillage and ransack with impunity" (*Le Démocrate* No. 3017, 17 September 2013; *Catholic Herald*, 15 August 2013; Pastoor n.d.: Open Doors International, 15 and 17). The intensity of fighting has consequences on the unity of the CAR.

Scuffles and Separatism

Since the overthrow of Bozizé by the Djotodia led *Séléka* coalition on March 24, 2013, the political crisis turned religious has faced dangerous scenes of scuffles for control of different regions of the country, natural resources like timber and minerals and also the exile of Muslims. Some of these scuffles have not been between the *Séléka* and anti-*balaka* but against the civilian population (Weber and Kaim, 2014: 2). Among the scuffles that were unleashed in September 2013 was the attack on Christians and churches in the Western region of the CAR. There has also been serious fighting in the North West, which is the home region of former President François Bozizé. Bangui has

turned out to be a melting pot of ethnic groups and tensions. There have also been large-scale cases of killings, looting, torture, and destruction of homes and places of worship in different parts of the CAR (Arieff, 2014: 4-5), which have strengthened the determination of each side to inflict pain on the other.

When François Bozizé was overthrown in March 2013, the Borab District of Bangui, the constituency of Bozizé, came under rebel attack. Many of his body guards and political allies living here were ferociously attacked by the *Séléka* and this resulted in a lot of looting, while women became victims of rape and many other people were shot and killed. The district is today a stronghold of the anti-*balaka* militia as they launch counter-attacks against the *Séléka* and Muslim population in the capital city Bangui. Anti-*balaka* militia in Borab are adorned with such objects as bullets, tin cans, locks and chains which they believe are charms or fetishes with special power that will keep them safe from the bullets of the enemy.

The anti-*balaka* Christian militias have been ruthless in their attacks on the Muslim population. Amnesty International has documented large-scale and repeated attacks of the anti-*balaka* on the Muslim population in places like Bouali, Boyali, Bossembélé, Bossemptélé, Baoro, Bawi and the capital Bangui. Other areas that have been ransacked by the anti-*balaka* include Yaloke, Boda and Bocaranga. Some of these attacks have been a revenge for previous killings of Christian civilians by the *Séléka* forces and other armed Muslims (Amnesty International, 2014: 5). In December 2013, clashes erupted between militants associated with the now-dissolved *Séléka* alliance and anti-*balaka* groups composed of armed fighters that opposed the *Séléka* forces. This resulted in the death of about 1,000 people in Bangui alone. Most recently, Muslims, many with no connection to the rebels, have been targeted in reprisals by anti-*balaka* and civilians and these attacks have led to a mass exodus of Muslims in their thousands from the CAR. The PK 12, PK 13 Miskine and Kilo 5, all former Muslim strongholds in Bangui, capital of the CAR are now ghost towns without Muslim residents. In Mbaiki, one anti-*balaka* told IRIN reporters that people with appropriate skills would be selected to take over the shops that were abandoned by fleeing Muslims (Central African Republic Complex Emergency, 2014: 5; Muellenmeister, 2014).

Several bands of young men, some of them armed with everything from machetes and homemade firearms to military-grade equipment continue to roam the country. They call themselves the anti-*balaka*. They are accused of slaughtering Muslim civilians as revenge for atrocities committed by the Muslim *Séléka* rebel coalition during its nine months in power (VOA News, 18 February 2014). The anti-*balaka* also carried out attacks on the African Union peace-keeping forces known as MISCA in Bangui, Boali, Berberati, Kaga-Bandoro and other places in the country. Tensions and confrontations have also taken place between anti-*balaka* and *Séléka* forces in the interior of the CAR particularly in the central prefectures of Nana-Grebizi and Kémo. There is also a grow-

ing threat which is directed at Muslims in West and central parts of the CAR especially by self-proclaimed representatives of Christian and Muslim communities. The result is that towns which used to have people of diverse religions have been emptied of their Muslim communities, (Central African Republic Crisis and its Regional Humanitarian Impact, 2014: 7; Upholding the Responsibility to Protect, 2014: 3) a clear example of separate existence of the Christian and Muslim population.

The intense scuffles or fighting across the CAR between militia groups of the anti-*balaka* and *Séléka* have in fact created a separatist scenario between and within the Christians and Muslims unprecedented in the history of the CAR until 2013 and 2014. Due to continuous fighting, the religious militias are increasingly fragmented into small autonomous units obeying no higher command. The anti-*balakas*, for example, are divided into several groups and one of the 'Bozizistes leaders,' the self-proclaimed political coordinator of the anti-*balaka* movement, is Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona and former Minister of Sports. Following the summit of the *Séléka* in N'dele in May 2014, the anti-*balaka* also held theirs and appointed Sebastien Wénézoui, an engineer and a former civil servant as their new coordinator. Ngaïssona refused to recognise Wénézoui who threatened to kill him (Deiros, 2014: 12). This separatist tendency is not very healthy for the unity of the CAR because it will need a full-scale reconciliation within these militia groups claiming to represent Islam and Christianity before reconciliation between the Christian and Muslim militia groups (Weber and Kaim, 2014: 2). These episodes show how far the present religio-political crisis has gone and how complicated it is to have the problem solved. Force against force is only making matters worse for the peace, unity, and stability of this natural resource rich country.

Besides, the *Séléka* rebels, many of whom come from neighbouring Chad and Sudan, have been seeking to establish an Islamic State and impose a leader as president of the Republic. Nourreddine Adam, leader of the *Convention des patriots pour la justice et la paix* (CPJP), the second in command to the *Séléka* coalition, for example, was seen to be the man of Chad and promoter of the secessionist project of the CAR northern regions (Francophone West and Central Africa, 2013: 12; Smith, 2014; Deiros, 2014: 7). This craving for an Islamic State was given a boost by the letter of Michel Djotodia addressed to the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) requesting support to institute the *Sharia* Law. Although he refused to admit to having written a letter to the OIC, he is quoted to have said that "Even if we fail to hunt Bozizé, we will transform a part of the Central African Republic, Chad and Darfur into a new Islamic Republic" (Pastoor n.d.: Open Doors International, 16). It has also been reported that former president and ex-*Séléka* leader Michel Djotodia was reported to have declared northern CAR an independent secular state called "Dar el Kouti." The declaration was made on 17 August 2014 in Birao, Vakaga province in the north central region of the CAR (Jane's Intelligence Review, 19 August 2014). Other hardliners like General Abakar Sabone who controls

the far north Vakaga region has said partition is inevitable if Muslims are denied a role in the government of the CAR (Braun, 2014).

Whatever the arguments for a separate Islamic State, one thing is certain: the belt that stretches from northern Nigeria through Cameroon, Chad, Sudan and South Sudan is rife with religious and other forms of sectarian conflicts which only lend credence to the craving for the establishment of a Muslim free state. This is the all the more so considering that since independence, the CAR has been governed, and very badly too, by Christians to the disadvantage of the Muslims. Once Michel Djotodia came to power in March 2013, the Muslims thought rightly and/or wrongly that everything should be done to give the country an Islamic orientation, meaning that a separate territory could be carved out of the present country for a Muslim state. Islamic leaders, during the *Séléka* insurrection, were honoured while Christian leaders were not. This was a kind of separatism through selective treatment of people based on their religious affiliation. Human Rights Watch reported that the *Séléka* evicted and looted Christian rural populations in a bid to “create space” for certain nomadic communities and their cattle. This was separating the country according to cattle grazing and non-cattle grazing groups (Pastoor n.d.: Open Doors International). It turned out that a majority of the cattle grazing communities were Muslims, and non-cattle grazing communities were Christians.

There is a form of separatism promoted by the anti-*balaka* in the CAR today. This separation is the forceful eviction of Muslims or their escape out of the country for their own safety. Repeated attacks and threats on Muslims by the anti-*balaka* and their supporters have forced the Muslim minority out of the country. Many of them have escaped to Chad for fear of being exterminated in the CAR. Those who, for one reason or another, have not been able to make it out of the country have been sheltered in churches and mosques, but they are still desperate for evacuation because they remain insecure in these churches and mosques (Amnesty International, 2014: 6). Others have escaped to the northern and eastern parts of the country. Due to the escalating crisis, these two regions of the CAR are virtually cut off from the rest of the country (Message des Eveques, 2014: 5). For many years, the government has had little presence or control beyond the capital Bangui. This alone has separated the capital city from many other administrative regions of the country and made administration to be limited to some parts of the country only.

Generally speaking, the Muslims who are fleeing Christian mobs say a new state is needed. They are overwhelmingly calling for the establishment of a new country as a radical solution to the worsening sectarian conflict. The *Séléka*, who retreated to their northern fiefdom on May 10, 2014, held a summit in N’dele. The final statement of the summit announced a “parallel administration” which included all the structures and positions that composed the military and security structure of a state. They appointed

an Army Chief of Staff, one for the Police and a chief of the Gendarmerie. In the final statement, the *Séléka* leaders even asked the international community to facilitate the partition of the country. The sentence was only recently crossed out in the copies that some journalists received. The international community is, however, opposed to the creation of a state for the Muslims, fearing that it might become a safe haven for mercenaries, armed groups and terrorists from neighbouring conflicts, including members of the *Boko Haram* in northern Nigeria (Deiros, 2014: 9-10) and AQIM in northern Mali.

The name which has been suggested for the new country of the Muslims is the Republic of Northern-Central Africa. In 2014, a design for a national flag has been circulating by mobile phone in the dusty town of Bambari. This town is highly strategic because it divides the CAR's largely Christian south from a northern region now controlled by the mostly Muslim *Séléka* rebels (Smith, 2014). The mass evacuation of Muslims from the South, especially Bangui to Bambari and other parts of the north of the CAR is like accepting a partition of the CAR. This was conceded to by the CAR's Minister for Reconciliation and Communications, Antoinette Moutagne. She argued that the evacuation of Muslims from Bangui to the north was tantamount to accepting the partition of the CAR (Braun, 2014; Smith, 2014). When the anti-*balaka* militia groups drive Muslims away from the south and destroy their mosques, this is a call for the separation of the country. While in Bambari, the Muslims have called for a partition of the CAR due to threats of religious violence from Christian militias, the anti-*balaka* (Braun, 2014).

There has also been an international outcry on the separatist tendencies in the CAR based on religious differences. The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon warned in 2014 that the religious violence in the country between Muslims and Christians risked a "de-facto partition" in the CAR. This is because Christian militias are "waving a revenge cycle of bloodshed" largely in response to abuses by previously ruling Muslim *Séléka* rebels. The persistence of revengeful acts of the anti-*balaka* groups have hardened the hearts of the *Séléka* who while retreating to the north have also inflicted pains on the Christian and non-Muslim populations.

There is also a language suggestive of separatism in the CAR. Human Rights Watch argued "the anti-balaka militias are increasingly organised and using language that suggests the intent to eliminate Muslim residents from the Central African Republic" (Muellenmeister, 2014). The term "foreigner" is often used by southerners and non-Muslims in the CAR to refer derogatorily to north eastern ethnic groups which have cross-border family ties. Many of them more or less have been stripped of their national identity (Arieff, 2014: 6; Deiros, 2014: 5). Such language of describing Muslims as foreigners is provocative and invites to retaliatory moves on their part. By referring to them as foreigners, they are treated with disdain to the extent that their collective existence in the country is in jeopardy. Again, since the launch of the *Séléka's* insurgency in December, 2012, the north-west region of the CAR has been besieged with continuous

raids, kidnappings, and killings. This has led numerous militias made up of Christian vigilante farmers to combine their disparate units against a common and largely Muslim enemy (Marima, 2014).

Conclusion

We have examined the objectives and justification of this study pointing out the negative and positive role that religion has played in different parts of the world. Some religious wars have been more ideological and fundamentalist rather than simply being religious. While religion was used to build peace in countries with religious diversity, it has also led to war and instability with greater consequences on the population and property. The CAR has a variety of religious denominations, but the different Christian denominations form the majority while Islam is practised by a minority of the population of the country. There is, however, religious syncretism because people still adhere to their traditional religious practices.

In this paper, we have demonstrated that the present religio-political conflict has its roots in the history of slavery, when Muslims enslaved non-Muslim communities. After independence, the policies of the different administrations led by non-Muslims created rifts in the population through their socio-economic and political reforms. The insecurity that became part and parcel of the administration of this country from 1993 onwards led to the emergence of armed groups to defend the community and egoistic interests. Other groups were formed to fight highway banditry and farmer-herder conflicts in some parts of the country. The government of François Bozizé armed some of these groups to maintain his hold on power, and there were utterances which were divisive on religious terms. Matters were compounded when the *Séléka* coalition seized power, essentially not on religious grounds, but to participate in the plunder of state resources. Unfortunately, the reprisals mostly targeted Christians, in some cases with the support of Muslims. The mass killings, rape, torture, and abductions, as well as massive destruction of homes and crops by these *Séléka* insurgents, met with a determined resolve of the non-Muslim population and Christians to counter this. Within their ranks were former members of the FACA and other discontented former members of government.

The ouster of transitional president Michel Am Nondroko Djotodia on 10 January 2014 through pressure from the Economic Community of the Central African States (ECCAS) led to an intensification of the counter-insurgency of the anti-*balaka* formed to fight the brutal *Séléka* administration. Both armed movements are now locked in a war that has led to threats of a partition of the CAR into two; the northern part for the Muslims and the south for the Christians and non-Muslims. The presence of the African Union, French, and the United Nations peace-keeping forces is still to prevent the carnage associated with attacks and the separatist tendencies between the *Séléka* and anti-*balaka*. They each held conferences starting with the *Séléka* and then the anti-*balaka* to declare

that they did not need the other. Religious differences, it should be noted, were not the primary origin of the crisis in the CAR.

Although local religious leaders across sectarian lines have been vocal proponents of peace and reconciliation (Arieff, 2014: 8-9; Message des Eveques, 2012), this is still not yielding the required results because there is a rift between the Muslim and Christian populations, due to their respective war of reprisal. Deiros (2014: 1) argued that in the CAR, religion and more broadly, national identity, have been manipulated by elites behind the *Séléka* and anti-*balaka* to further political and economic goals, taking advantage of the failure of the state. Such is what is taking place in the CAR resulting in the emergence of separatist tendencies and the culture of exclusion of the other. What is embarrassing today, as rightly pointed out by Stein (2014), is that Muslims who once lived freely among the Christian majority have now fled Bangui which has more or less been declared a no-fly zone for them by the Christians and other people who are neither Christians nor Muslims.

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WAS SEPARATISM A VIABLE SOLUTION FOR THE SUDAN – SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT?

Ciprian SANDU

Abstract. *The following article is part of our special issue concerning the separatism solution for the African conflicts. This article is focused on the prolonged conflict between North and South Sudan in order to prove that, at least for this particular conflict, separatism was a viable solution in order to stop the conflict. At the same time, this article links the prolonged violence to the bad governance of the central authorities in Sudan after the independence, rather than accusing the British colonial legacy.*

Keywords: *separatism, Sudan, South Sudan, independence, self-determination, federalism, autonomy, state partitioning, SPLM/A, CPA.*

State partitioning has been employed as a remedy to intractable conflicts over territory and statehood since the emergence of nationalist ideology as a dominant force in world politics. Over the last two hundred years, some 70 de jure and de facto states have been created through secession (Gebreluel & Tronvoll, 2014). After the advent of decolonization and the creation of the present political borders in Africa, there were a significant number of secessionist movements that used violent means to get their independence. From Katanga in Congo to Biafra in Nigeria, some of them came very close to success (Chereji, 2014, manuscript). Considering the unique history of colonialism in Africa, the incidences of secession have been surprisingly few. All cases of state-partitioning are, furthermore, geographically concentrated in North Eastern Africa, which is home to the only de jure

Ciprian SANDU

Mediator, Transylvanian

Institute of Mediation

Email: sandu@ultrasilvam.ro

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secessionist states in post-colonial Africa – Eritrea and South Sudan – as well as the unrecognized but de facto secessionist state of Somaliland.

Separatism refers to the advocacy of separation or secession by a group of people from a larger political unit to which they belong. In modern times, separatism is often inter-linked with self-determination, which is the act of a particular people or an ethnic group attempting to exercise their sovereign right to become an independent state and to decide on the form of state they wish to be under, including on its government system (Matsuno, 2014). Even if inter-linked, secession must be understood as a more far-reaching act of separation than the demand for self-determination that doesn't alter and modify the boundaries of the state such as federalism, decentralization or regional autonomy. The two concepts are interlinked and analyzed together because much of the expert literature tends to be normative rather than positive, focusing on the theoretical and legal foundations of the rights of groups to secede (Buchheit, 1978; Horowitz, 2003).

The birth of self-determination as a concept in international relations can be traced back to the "Fourteen Points" of Woodrow Wilson. Wilson had in mind to allow independence to the separate nations in the Balkans which had been victims of the politics of balance of power that dominated the European international relations; however, the concept extended further (Matsuno, 2014). For example, in the case of Aaland Island, the Commission of Rapoteurs in the League of Nations found that "separation of a minority from the state of which it forms part ... may only be considered as an altogether exceptional solution, a last resort when the state lacks either the will or the power to enact and apply just and effective guarantees" (The Aaland Islands Question: Report Submitted to the Council of the League of Nations by the Commission of Rapoteurs in 1921, cited in Matsuno, 2014). After World War II, the notion of self-determination developed into a right with the two international covenants on human rights in 1966, namely the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of which declared in Article 1 that all peoples have the right of self-determination.

The final step towards the conceptualization of self-determination in the area of international relations was the UN World Conference on Human Rights in 1993. The Declaration contains a provision, referred to as a "safeguard clause," that reiterates the principle of the territorial integrity of states, but places a number of conditions on that affirmation. The Declaration authorizes the violation of territorial integrity if states are not "in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples as described and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without any kind of distinction". An elaborate interpretation of this provision suggests that if peoples cannot exercise their right to self-determination internally because their government oppresses them, or does not represent them, then they may exercise that right externally through secession (Roethke, 2011).

In order to prevent the proliferation of demands for secession, Article 6 of the “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples” stipulate that “any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations”. Together with principles of non-interference between sovereign states in each other’s internal affairs and respect for (former) colonial borders, this article gave a strong foundation for not granting the right to self-determination to groups seeking to break away within already independent states; therefore, this was the way with which self-determination became limited to decolonizing states after World War II and paths to independence became foreclosed to groups within these newly independent states (Roethke, 2011).

There are a lot of theories about self-determination and separatism to discuss, but this is not the purpose or the subject of this article. Shortly, in order to better understand the drivers of a secessionist movement and, broadly, the secession of South Sudan, it must be said that most theories of separatism focus on the behavior of groups or, occasionally, of their leaders. They typically identify conditions which would either hamper or fuel the desire of sub-national groups to leave the country, whereby groups and their leaders weigh the costs and benefits of exit against those of remaining within the state (Bartkus 1999; Sorens, 2005). This decision is influenced by several important drivers, like political, economic, and cultural factors.

Among the political factors that influence the secessionist movement, Boyle & Englebert discuss about the level of democratization, discrimination, state failure and changes in the international environment (Boyle & Englebert, 2008). The politics of neighboring states and their willingness to support insurgencies would also alter the costs and benefits of separatist activism. Finally, having once had a separate existence as a state, or currently being a separate administrative unit (state, province, etc.), may well promote a distinct identity and a desire to secede.

Democracy can theoretically affect separatism in two ways. On the one hand, democratic regimes offer minorities the possibility to make their voice heard through vote and presumably some protection, thereby generating loyalty, and making it less likely that they will seek to secede (Hirschman 1970). On the other hand, democratic transitions can exacerbate existing ethnic dynamics and tensions and favor state disintegration as happened in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, or former Yugoslavia (Saideman 1998). Rather than the nature of the regime, the extent and intensity of political change may matter a lot for separatism. Political transitions often make states vulnerable and can create climates that fuel the separatist movements (Laitin 2001). Saideman observed that periods of democratization and economic transition led to intensified ethnic identities and security dilemmas, which ultimately triggered secessionism (Saideman, 1998).

Groups will also seek to secede when they face eradication or they fear they would be “culturally annihilated” (Bartkus 1999). Furthermore, when the central state is weakened, overthrown or collapsed, its ability to resist and prevent a secessionist drive is of course greatly reduced. Saideman notes, for example, that periods of democratization and economic transition impact internal ethnic dynamics, leading to intensified ethnic identities and security dilemmas which ultimately “drive” secessionism (Saideman, 1995).

Ethnic Diasporas may also contribute to a secessionist sentiment as they tend to keep grievances alive, offer rebel support and provide funding to local organizations (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). Similarly, Laitin argues that the existence of a new state with a rebellious ethnic minority which has a national homeland elsewhere may provide sufficient conditions for this minority to seek independence (Laitin, 2001).

Although the ethnic factors are the most commonly cited causes and drivers of secessionist movements, more recent studies highlighted the impact of economy and other variables like per capita income and availability of natural resources for a separatist movement (Boyle & Englebert, 2008). As an intrinsic part of the recent literature on civil conflicts, many theories of separatism have a substantial economic component (Englebert, 2003). Separatist regions are usually believed to differ from the rest of the country in terms of wealth or available natural resources. Discriminatory economic policies from the central state toward its regions may also affect the costs and benefits of allegiance or exit.

There seems to be no consensus, however, on what aspects of income may be most strongly associated with secessionist tendencies, with some authors stressing that poorer regions are more likely to break up (Bookman, 1992) and others that secessionist sentiments develop in regions that are wealthier than the rest of the state (Hale, 2000). No matter the inequality, secessions seem to arise from a perception of economic injustice, which leads a region to re-evaluate the costs or benefits of belonging to a national union (Bookman, 1992). The question of the relationship between separatism and gross income levels is somewhat more complex as Collier and Hoeffler provide empirical evidence that overall low per capita income and slow growth rates are major secessionist risk factors, because they exacerbate the grievances of various groups and reduce the opportunity costs of warfare (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002). Similarly, they linked the risk of secession to the lack of education, as lesser educated citizens tend more likely to embrace the nationalist ideas and to be recruited into secessionist movements for lack of better lifestyle alternatives, like the case of Anya Nya and SPLA in South Sudan.

The availability of natural resources, mainly oil, also appears to be an important factor in separatist conflicts. Collier and Hoeffler suggested that oil is particularly prevalent in secessionist civil wars (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002) and Michael Ross identified several case studies linking oil and other minerals to separatist conflicts, including Cabinda in

Angola, the Burma independence movements, Katanga in Congo, Aceh and West Papua in Indonesia, Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, and South Sudan (Ross, 2003). Ross drew a line between natural resources for which foreign investment was needed, and those that required little or no foreign investments. In the former case, he argued that the likelihood of secession is bigger “since locals can only attract this investment if their territory achieves recognition as a sovereign state”, this being the case of South Sudan (Ross, 2003). This statement looks very sharp and correct if we look at the foreign investments that were made before and after South Sudan’s independence, investments which will be presented during the second part of this article.

The last of the three major factors which can influence separatist movements, and the most perceived as main source of civil conflicts, is represented by the cultural issues. Ethnic, linguistic, and religious heterogeneity are frequently invoked to promote secessions. Government repression of certain cultural groups, even in relatively homogeneous national environments, is also believed to encourage them to seek their own political fortunes (Boyle & Englebert, 2008). Whether ethnic, linguistic, or religious, numerous scholars have posited that cultural pluralism within a country will increase the number of secessionist claims. But heterogeneity is not the only dimension of identity that may matter. Sambanis suggested that the size of the ethnic groups also mattered, as larger ethnic groups may be better able to overcome the problems associated with mounting a rebellion and better able to defend their territory (Sambanis, 2000). “The presence of a few large groups, rather than one dominant one or a multitude of small ones, may also increase the level of social polarization and competition for political control, encouraging some groups to opt out of the system”. Horowitz offered a more complex approach to the effects of ethnicity on secessionism, focusing primarily on the relationship between ethnic groups and regions, and looking at the different combinations of backward or advanced groups in backward or advanced regions. For him, the “relative group position” combined with the “relative regional position” determines the conditions for secessionist movements (Horowitz, 1985). For him it is the issue of ethnic polarization in relation to territorial dynamics that provides the context for secessionist tensions, with ethnic anxieties as the key drivers. Horowitz argues that secessionist movements are triggered by the regional dynamics of different groups in relation to the state, and that backward groups in backward regions are the most prone to secessionist movements (Horowitz, 1985).

Another important theory on conflict and conflict management is John Burton’s human needs theory. This approach claims that ethnic groups fight because they are denied both their biological and psychological needs in relation to growth and development. These include people’s need for identity, security, recognition, participation, and autonomy. This theory provides a plausible explanation of ethnic conflicts in Africa, where such needs are not easily met by undemocratic regimes (Burton, 1997).

Those were the three major factors that can influence a group desire to secede, but there are some others as important, like the structure of a country, meaning age, size, and geographical features. African states are very young to begin with. With newly independent countries less integrated than their predecessors, youth may be a factor predisposing to separatism. Intuitively, the younger a country, the less likely it is to have already passed through the growing pains of nation-building and national integration and the more vulnerable it may be to dismemberment (Boyle & Englebert, 2006).

Regarding the size of the country, Sambanis, for example, found a positive correlation between population size multiplied by ethnic heterogeneity and state partitions. He concluded that the larger a country and its population, the greater its potential for breakup. Also, following Collier and Hoeffler's argument, the greater a country's population, the more young men it will have (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002). Finally, Laitin suggested that rough terrain, and particularly hills or mountains at the perimeter of the state should favor all types of insurgencies by improving rebels' military prospects (again a statement which can be verified in Sudan with the rebels in the Nuba Mountains).

After this short literature review about secessionism and its drivers, I want to answer the question of this article. The answer is a clear YES. Why? The answer is quite simple: because all the other methods failed or were not implemented by the central government (like federalism, autonomy) and all the factors presented above were present before the eruption of the two civil wars.

North-South tensions go back decades, even before Sudan's independence in 1956, with deep roots in the ancient and medieval history of the zone. Missionaries converted the region to Christianity in the 6th century, but the influx of Muslim Arabs eventually controlled the area and replaced Christianity with Islam. During the 16th century, a people called the Funj conquered much of Sudan, and several other black African groups settled in the South, including the Dinka, Nuer, and Azande. The historical contact between the North and the South incidentally happened to be a racial contact between Arabs and the Africans. It also happened to be a bitter and bloody contact for the southerners. In 1821 -81, the Arab North was conquered and ruled by Egypt until it was overthrown by Mahdi. It was during this era (1821-98) that the North came into direct contact with the South. The North was in search of ivory and slaves. There was no government to control law and order so every slave trader from the North was free to do whatever they wanted. They raided villages for slaves, stole and raided cattle, and imposed their customs on the Southern tribes. It was during this period when the British administration was established in Sudan with its seat of Government in Khartoum. Egyptians conquered Sudan in 1874, and after Britain occupied Egypt in 1882, it took over Sudan in 1898, ruling the country in conjunction with Egypt.

Britain and Egypt jointly administered Sudan from 1899 until its independence in 1956. The British found an overwhelmingly Muslim society in the North. Wealth, power, and

high social status were concentrated in the hands of the Arabs, who were primarily located around the Nile Valley and centered in Khartoum, and whose identity was marked not only by the fluency in Arabic and immersion in Arab culture, but also by their affiliation to Arab lineages, clans, and tribes. British authorities treated the south provinces as a separate region, and barred northern Sudanese from entering or working in the South. In the early 1920's, the British passed the Closed Districts Ordinances, which stipulated that passports were required for travel between the two zones, and permits were required to conduct business from one area into the other. In the South, English, Dinka, Bari, Nuer, and Azande were official languages, while in the north, Arabic and English were used as official languages. The British justified this „closed door” policy by claiming that the South was not ready for exposure to the modern world, but in fact the plan was to create a buffer zone in Southern Sudan against any Islamic expansion into Africa's inland. As a result, the South remained isolated under British rule (Deng, 1994). In 1930 they introduced what they named the Southern Policy aimed at erecting and enforcing barriers to the penetration of Northerners into the South not only through religion but also through commerce. This condominium policy for Southern Sudan in 1930 stated that „[...] the approved policy is to act upon the fact that the peoples of the Southern Sudan are distinctively African and Negroid, and that our obvious duty is therefore to push ahead as fast as we can with their economic and educational development on African and Negroid line and not upon the Middle-eastern and Arab lines of progress which are suitable for the Northern Sudan. It is only by economic and educational development that these people can be equipped to stand up for themselves in the future, whether their lot can be eventually cast with the Northern Sudan or with East Africa or partly with each” (Deng, 1994).

In the South, the administration aimed to build up a series of self-contained tribal units with structure and organization based upon indigenous customs, traditional practices, and beliefs, by isolating the South from Northern economic development and cultural influence, with the intention of integrating the South with British East Africa. The vast majority of infrastructure developments, such as the „Gezira” irrigation scheme, the cotton industry, and most of the modern railways, were all built in the North. Consequently, the preponderance of commercial activity was concentrated in the Northern region. By contrast, the South remained in total poverty. The South had only one role to play: that of producer of raw materials. They became the workers, and even slaves, of the Northerners. As a result, the South remained isolated under British rule.

The situation was the same even after 1946, when North and South Sudan were merged, the majority of political and administrative power was allocated to the North, leaving many in the South resentful. Southern Sudanese believed they were not part of the North. It was only unfortunate for them that the colonizing powers reversed this policy in 1945 as follows: „[...] The policy of the Sudanese government regarding Southern Sudan is to

act upon the fact that the peoples of the Southern Sudan are distinctively African and Negroid, but that geography and economics combine (so far as can be foreseen at the present time) to render them inextricably bound for future development to the Middle Eastern and Arabized Northern Sudan, and therefore to ensure that their educational and economic development will equip them to stand up for themselves in the future as socially and economically the equals of their partners of Northern Sudan in the Sudan of the future” (Deng, 1994). A lot of people say that the most important reason for which ethnic groups want and try to secede in Africa is due to the colonial legacy left by the European powers. Until this point of Sudan’s history I am inclined to say this is true because, as shown above, the entire situation was created by the British authorities, leading to a single result – the South remained isolated under British rule. But in the following pages we will see that all the policies implemented in the area after the end of the British rule failed to improve the situation in the South. Agreements were signed and broken by the North, Islam was imposed on the Christian and Animist South, different arrangements on autonomy or federalism failed from the start, all in all leading to a prolonged war of nearly half a century.

In the lead up to independence, in 1956, the South initiated a rebellion motivated by fears of further marginalization. The civil war began in 1955 before the Sudan became officially independent, while the transfer of power from the British to the Northern administrators was in transit. Due to the political uncertainty, Southern insurgents from the Equatoria Corps mutinied at Torit (a district in East Equator) and this sparked off the separatist movement Land Freedom Army, or better known as the Anya-Nya guerrilla movement, which later emerged to form the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SSLM/A) (Poggo, 2009). When the Anya-Nya escalated their attacks, a low intensity civil war started against the newly formed Government of Sudan, with the aim of achieving autonomy for the South. The guerrillas began to burn villages and arrest and torture Northern administrators in the South, as a symbol of increased opposition to the government. This was met with further repressive action by the North, which only added fuel to the conflict (Johnson, 2003; DeRouen, 2007). Regarding this timing, right before and after the independence, Horowitz presented empirical evidence that suggested that the largest number of secessionist movements emerged from backward groups in backward areas. Such movements mostly developed shortly after independence due to the fact that members of the group or region felt that they would not benefit from the post-independence political and economic arrangements. In relation to the position of advanced groups or/and parts, backward groups in backward regions perceive themselves to be at a severe disadvantage and that their best chance for being able to pursue a secure and decent quality of life would be to secede (Horowitz, 1985).

In November, 1958, the political leaders of the North decided to hand over power to a military junta after a bloodless army coup led by General Ibrahim Abboud. On his as-

suming power, General Abboud declared that he would rule through a thirteen member army junta and that democracy was being suspended in Sudan in the name of “honesty and integrity”. It was intended and hoped that military brutality would silence the South. Instead of doing this, it hardened the determination of the South to fight tooth and nail for their self-determination. Between 1960-1964, the Arabization and Islamization programs took shape in the South. Over thirty missionaries were expelled from the South and their centers turned into government schools where Arabic became the main subject of learning: Arab history books and religious books were introduced into the schools. Arab teachers from the North were brought to the southern schools to teach Arabic and other subjects including Islamic religion. Many more Islamic schools known as “Khalwas” were built in the south to Arabize and Islamize the southern children.

Similarly, the southern workers in the government institutions were forced to either become Muslims or lose their jobs. They were given Islamic names and jallabia gowns (Yokwe, 1997). Mosques built by the government sprang up here and there throughout the southern towns for Islamic prayers and conversion of southerners into Islam. Friday was declared the public holiday of the week instead of Sunday. Nyombe explains that General Abboud’s great sense of nationalism, religious, and ethnic prejudice blinded him with regard to Sudan’s religious and ethnic diversities, and to the strong psychological barriers that had long existed between North and South. He perceived that the way to achieving national cohesion was by clearing Sudan from any colonial footprints and creating a homogeneous Arab nation; a nation with one language (Arabic), one religion (Islam), one culture (Arab-Muslim culture), and most importantly, one race (Arab).

Unfortunately for the North, the reaction of the southerners has always been contrary. The southerners became more hardened and more determined in their resistance against the Arabization and Islamization program (Nyombe, 1994). Muhammad Gaafar al-Numeri, who came to power through a bloodless military coup d’état in 1969, ended the war by granting the South a degree of local autonomy which often was considered a compromise between a minority aiming at self-determination and a state protecting its territorial integrity. In February 1972, The Addis Ababa Agreement was signed between the North and the South after Numeri had declared openly after taking over government that the South is indeed different from the North geographically, historically, socio culturally and economically. The Addis Ababa Agreement represented a series of compromises aimed at appeasing the SSLM/A leaders after the first civil war proved costly to the Government of Sudan. The SSLM/A wanted a full federal structure; however, after long lasting negotiations, the South were pleased that the government granted them autonomy for their Southern region composed of the three provinces of Equatoria, Bahr al Ghazal, and Upper Nile. This autonomy was under a regional president, appointed by the national president who would be responsible for all aspects of the government in the area except areas of significant importance such as defense,

foreign affairs, currency and finance, economic and social planning, and interregional concerns which remained under the Government of Sudan control (Collins, 2008).

The agreement also recognized Arabic as Sudan's official language, and English as the South's principal language, which would be used in administration and would be taught in schools. However, the agreement did not reach an effective compromise between North and South for long-term stable peace. After a decade of relative peace, in 1983 the agreement was cut-off by the then-president of Sudan, Gaafar Nimeriy, who imposed the Sharia law in the South as part of his commitment to the spread of Islam. A variety of factors, the most important one being the discovery of oil in the Upper Nile region of Sudan, led Numeiri to dissolve the Southern Regional Government in 1981 and to abandon many of the principles of the Ababa agreement. The South's economic significance to the North was the main drive that led Nimeiri to infringe the Addis Ababa agreement causing civil war to escalate once again but on a larger scale. Ismail al-Azhari made it clear as early as 1940 that the South's agricultural land was of great importance to the economic prosperity of the North, upon which they needed to build and maintain their regime power, identity and prosperity. This therefore could be sufficient reason to the North's long resistance the South secession and their determination to create a united state. Furthermore, with the oil development in the South and linking this to the fact that the Southern government was entitled to funds received from its natural resources under the Addis Agreement, they quickly let foreign oil companies to explore the region. Indeed United States oil company Chevron Incorporated agreed to explore Southern Sudan in 1974 and in 1978 and discovered significant oil reserves, especially in Heglig area, that would generate high revenues for the development of the Southern region (Amnesty International, 2000) and maybe forge a threat to the prosperity of the North. The Heglig find created an especially dangerous situation, because it was located in an area where the boundary was particularly ill-defined and was thus claimed, then and now, by both North and South.

Numeri decreed the country to be an Islamic country to be ruled by the Islamic Sharia Law. He suspended the Southern Executive Council, divided the Southern provinces into separate regions, tampered with the political boundaries to annex the oil rich Bentiu southern county to the North, transferred the Southern military command to the North without prior consultation with the Southern Sudanese Government and the senior officers. Such actions from a Northern leader like Numeri meant a lot to the southerners. They took it as a betrayal and violation of the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972.

The second war then broke out again in 1983 with the SPLM/A as a main actor to affirm the right to self-determination of the South. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) adopted a revolutionary discourse, proclaiming as its primary goal the building of a new united Sudan, which would ensure justice and equality for all regions and citizens (Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2006). The South's grievances were

treated within a national framework of underdevelopment and un-equal development, though the marginalization of the South was singled out as comparatively more intense in degree and form. This speech appealed to non-Arab population groups of other marginalized areas in the North and became yet more appealing after the Nimeiri regime took repressive Islamization policies in September 1983. Therefore, the SPLM/A found fertile ground for its revolutionary actions and pushed its military operations into the Southern Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan, and the Nuba Mountains. Instability in the North increased after Nimeiri was overthrown in 1985. His deposition was followed by a period of civilian rule and another coup d'état in 1993 that brought to power an alliance of military leaders and Islamist extremists under the presidency of Omar al-Bashir. Under al-Bashir's leadership, the new military government suspended political parties and introduced the Sharia code at a national level. Sudan had a difficult relationship with many of its neighbors and with much of the international community, because of its radical Islamic position. Consequently, the majority of Sudan's neighbors accused President Bashir for supporting Islamic rebels in Egypt (the assassination attempt against Hosni Mubarak), Eritrea, Uganda or Chad (on December 23, 2005, Chad declared war on Sudan and accused the country of being the „common enemy of the nation“). As it considered it a safe haven for terrorism, the U.S. began to list Sudan on its famous list of State Sponsors of Terrorism (Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2006).

The signing of the CPA in 2005 put an end to open North-South warfare, but all the other problems continued to exist. The CPA proposed some major changes like democratization of government, de-centralization of decision-making, wealth-sharing between different regions and the recognition of Sudan's socio-cultural diversity (Copnall, 2014). In the same time, the CPA offered a „Plan B“, in case these transformations would fail. Southern Sudan was given a final option: at the end of a six-year interim period, a referendum would be held over the question of self-determination. The fact that an overwhelming majority of southerners opted for independence in 2011 vote was testament both to the failure of the CPA in fundamentally changing the nature of the Sudanese state and to the festering wounds caused by the decades of injustice and violence that had preceded the peace agreement.

Part of the challenge posed by the CPA implementation stems from the way in which the agreement has been structured as a tool for achieving conditional unity on the basis of certain tasks to be fulfilled to enable the building of trust between the two parts of the country. The CPA was envisaged as a tool for the democratic transformation of the system of governance in the country (Deng & El-Affendy, 2010). It was also seen as providing a framework and basic principles for resolving other regional conflicts. While compromises have been made by the parties that have introduced notable changes to the national governance system, the CPA has not yet fulfilled its promise of radical democratic change (Idris, 2006).

While the agreement devolves responsibilities and offers opportunities to all parties, it also poses immense risks, precisely because it is an open arrangement, having left many things contingent on the development of mutual trust (Deng & El-Affendi, 2010). Although the CPA stipulates that unity is a priority, it has indirectly favored separation as a possible easy solution if and when it proves too difficult to reconcile the two contrasting systems for the North and the South. The “One Country, Two Systems” formula (which endorsed the NCP Islamic-oriented system in the North while enshrining a secular system for the South) was intended to combine the two systems in a framework of unity in diversity. Paradoxically, however, it entrenched the differences, with an asymmetrical form of unity at the national level that is inherently unattractive to the South (Deng & El-Affendi, 2010). It is now fair to say, after almost ten years since the signing of the CPA that all parties, including the international community, have underestimated the magnitude of the tasks that needed to be tackled and overestimated the existing capacities to deal with them. The CPA has set all parties monumental tasks of legal, political and economic transformation which would have taxed the most advanced and harmonious political system, even if the political will and a spirit of cooperation existed (Deng & El-Affendi, 2010).

On top of that, all parties did not reckon with the “Darfur Factor”. The severe and complicated Darfur crisis sapped the energy of the central government and distracted the international community, with the result that the CPA was almost entirely neglected. Related to this, and more important, the Darfur crisis and its aftermath meant that the peace dividend was slow to materialize, given that the international community continues to hold back on the massive reconstruction aid promised (Esposito & Crocker, 2004).

In spite of its obvious strengths of offering unprecedented opportunities for the Sudanese people to attain a lasting peace, the CPA also has several weaknesses, which must be resolved in order to achieve the long awaited goal. The most important strong point is that the CPA brought an end to the war. The agreement attempted to deal with the root causes of the conflict, especially those related to the system of governance by ensuring the right of self-determination for the South. By agreement on equitable sharing of power and wealth, the CPA has been a catalyst for other marginalized regions to continue their armed struggle to achieve their long denied rights. On the other hand, the most important CPA weakness is that it leaves all the doors open for a power struggle, not only between the two signatories, but also among all the political factions all over the country, possibly by a polarization along an Arab – Islamic axis as opposed to a national – secular one.

As the CPA was mainly an accord between the two parties at war, it neither considered other actors in the political sphere, nor attempted to deal with all the major issues in the special areas at the border. Very few people in North, as yet, feel that the CPA is really owned by the Sudanese nation as a whole because it mainly addresses the issues

pertaining to South Sudan, with little, if any, reference to those of North Sudan (Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2006). The vote, however, failed to address many issues which remain unresolved even today. Border demarcation is particularly problematic, as 20% of the new border has not yet been agreed upon. Tens of thousands of refugees have fled conflict areas, and post-independence citizenship complications have become a major issue with an estimated 2 million South Sudanese living in the North. Moreover, the logistics of splitting oil revenues and the 38 billion dollars national debt have yet to be worked out.

In the same time, the state failing in dealing with its own internal problems is shown in the political, economic, and cultural problems arisen after the independence in 1956. As revealed at the beginning of the article, these problems represent drivers for the secessionist movements. Sudan inherited a highly centralized authoritarian governance system and a pattern of uneven development from colonialism. These structural elements shaped the later development of the modern Sudanese state and contributed to the economic, social, and cultural marginalization of the regions. The operating principle of this structure is exploitative centre-periphery relations, expressed in urban biased economic policies, which have instigated conflicts that threaten national unity.

The emergence of the national level conflicts was closely related to the creation of the modern Sudanese nation-state after the independence. The political elite to whom the British-Egyptian colonial rule left control of the state came from a narrow elite, which mobilized political support along sectarian lines. This elite institutionalized traditional racism against black people and confronted the issues of Sudan's diversity and unequal development by attempting to build a national identity based on the principles of Arab culture and the religion of Islam. The centralized authoritarian governance system is constituted of two components or sub-systems, which interact and reinforce each other. They are, firstly, the centralized hereditary religious sectarian political parties; secondly, the vertically and horizontally highly-centralized state power in the executive branch dominates the legislature and judiciary. In this system, the localities are completely marginalized. The religious-sectarian parties lack democratic structures and representatives of women, youth, and marginalized groups in their leadership. The centrism of the government structure and power characterizes all the three types of government system, with which Sudan has experimented, namely the local government system, the regional government system, and a federal system in the whole of Sudan.

Since the regional and federal systems were established by authoritarian military regimes under one party rule and the domination of the security organs, the autonomy of the regions was null (Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2006).

No subunits were able to execute their duties because of the lack of funding and the fact that governors, administrators, and political decision-makers in the subunits were in practice imposed by the central government and the ruling party. In this order, the

President combines the offices of Head of State and Leader of the Ruling Party. In this top-down governance system, lower government units can be instituted, overridden, have their powers withdrawn, or even abolished by the central government. Periodic promises of federalism to the South have never been honored by the Northern ruling elites.

Internal and external interests in Sudan's natural resources (especially oil, water, land, gold, timber, and livestock) are a core issue of the conflict in Sudan. Both access to, and control over these resources, have been key motivational factors for actors at all levels to stay involved in the violent conflicts. Northern Sudan is dependent on the more fertile areas of the South. Furthermore, internal and external interests in Sudan's oil resources and Egypt's dependence on water from the Nile (running through Southern Sudan) are key factors influencing national level politics. This dependence on natural resources from the Southern parts of Sudan is the main reason why the centre has always opposed Southern self-governance and independence. Land is a central issue to all rural peoples in Sudan. It is a source of basic survival, as well as a source of individual and tribal pride. The government's policies of land expropriation for substantial investment in mechanized schemes and oil areas took place in the name of development, but had devastating consequences for the agrarian and pastoral population in the affected areas in places like Renk in Northern Upper Nile, Unity state in Western Upper Nile region, and the Nuba Mountains (Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2006).

The racial and religious distinctions between Arabs and Africans or Blacks and between Muslims and Christians or non-Muslims are perceived as synonymous with the distinction between friend and enemy in the overall civil war. The radical positions and racism experienced on all sides today are the results of the deliberate exploitation and manipulations of communal loyalties by those who have an interest in promoting conflict. This has been evident in the national level conflicts, in the factional warfare within the South and the conflicts at grass-root level. The Government of Sudan (GoS) and the SPLM/A have assembled along communal lines and have contributed to strengthening communal antagonisms. For instance, the GoS mobilized Northern Muslims for the jihad against the Dinka, Nuba and others who have been portrayed as threats to Islam.

At the beginning of this article, I said that the South secession was the only way to end the conflict with the North. All the history presented in the past pages and all the factors which influenced the partition show that the South secession was inevitable, but the most important aspect of my answer is the present situation between the two countries. The two nations agreed, in March 2013, to resume cross-border oil flows and take steps to defuse tension that has plagued them since South Sudan seceded from Sudan in July. The two sides subsequently agreed to restart oil shipments, grant each other's citizens residency, increase border trade, and encourage close cooperation between their central banks. Both nations also withdrew their troops from border areas as agreed in a

deal brokered by the African Union in September. And most importantly, the fighting stop and there are no more victims due to the armed conflict between the two nations.

However, even with this good news about the improved relationship with Sudan, the South's secession raises a lot of internal problems in the world's newest state. On December 15, 2013, fighting broke out in the capital city of Juba between soldiers loyal to President Salva Kiir on the one hand and former Vice-President Riek Machar on the other. The conflict quickly spread across the country and has now displaced approximately 800,000 people and claimed more than ten thousand lives (Gebreluel & Tronvoll, 2014). Independent South Sudan furthermore came to existence through international diplomacy, and has so far mostly operated through petrodollars. The experiences of Eritrea and Somaliland, presented by Gebreluel & Tronvoll illustrated that state-building is a national political exercise, a process where less external interference might be better. Access to foreign money created few incentives to deal with the lack of organizational cohesion or create accountable relationships with the local population – thus paving the way for the break-out of conflict between the two factions in the SPLA (Gebreluel & Tronvoll, 2014).

I started this article with the question if separatism was the right solution for the SudanSouth Sudan conflict, and the answer was „yes”. I used the bloody history between the two nations in order to continue with my answer, in trying to find out if the source of the problem was the British colonial legacy, which separated the North from the South, or if it was more a problem of internal affairs and the failure of the central government to address and resolve the problems that drove the conflict forward. Again, the answer was simple because of the local realities. Even if the British rule and its condominium with Egypt shaped different identities and ideologies between North and South, after 1956, the central government from Kartoum had the power to change things. But most importantly, after this article we can conclude that tribes or religions are not our real problems. The real problem in Sudan was corruption and bad governance, which led the central authorities to see that the only way for peace to endure was to make sure that there was sense of belonging, fairness, and justice for all.

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