Practical pathways to peace
Lessons from Liberia and South Sudan

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Liberia and South Sudan represent important case studies for what sustaining peace means in practice. They provide an opportunity to interrogate how the United Nations (UN) can ensure greater inclusivity in activities carried out across the sustaining peace spectrum, including mediation, security sector reform and institution building. With the current UN focus on sustaining peace, this report provides practical recommendations for more inclusive processes.

Key findings

▶ Liberia's mediation process made provision for power sharing among warring factions, political parties and civil society. Appointees in the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) could not contest the following elections.

▶ South Sudan's mediation process was predominantly focused on the two main parties involved in the conflict and failed to address the incentives of these actors.

▶ Liberia's Armed Forces were completely disbanded as part of the DDR process and communities were engaged in the design. SSR focused on reintegration.

▶ South Sudan's DDR and SSR processes failed to address politics or inclusivity and reintegration was ineffective.

▶ Liberia has made efforts to establish inclusive national frameworks that involve a wide range of actors. It still faces challenges of constitutional reform and state-building.

▶ South Sudan's frameworks have been driven by the government and efforts at decentralisation and constitutional reform have failed.

▶ Despite initial disagreement ECOWAS provided a unified response to Liberia's conflict. It has moved beyond individual member state interests to develop protocols and frameworks that allow for efficient responses to protocol and framework contraventions.

▶ IGAD's response to South Sudan's conflict has been hindered by underlying differences among member states and has been unable to enforce provisions of the peace agreement.

Recommendations

▶ Promote inclusivity in all activities across the sustaining peace spectrum, from mediation to state-building, by ensuring that under-represented groups are part of the process.

▶ Do not rush peace agreements at the expense of inclusivity, address incentives for spoilers and promote inclusivity away from the negotiating table through awareness raising and town hall meetings.

▶ Involve communities in SSR/DDR from inception to implementation, and ensure a developmental approach is taken.

▶ Provide technical and financial support for African sub-regional organisations to institutionalise frameworks on inclusive governance that allow clear and unified responses beyond member state interests and provide resources to ensure compliance.

▶ Ensure that peacebuilding programming develops a framework to engage with civil society in the local context, use indicators that promote inclusivity, developed in consultation with local communities, and involve communities in regular monitoring and evaluation of processes.

▶ Create multi-partner strategies, plans and funding structures based on national priorities and led by national stakeholders, including civil society, with clearly defined goals and timelines.

▶ Support responses by regional/sub-regional organisations that promote democratic best practices by allowing them to lead, and ensure coordination with these responses.

▶ Ensure that technical sustaining peace programming is linked to outcomes that promote inclusivity, based on detailed and regularly updated conflict analysis with a wide range of stakeholders.

Introduction

It is now common wisdom at the United Nations (UN) that inclusivity is vital for sustaining peace. This fundamental point was specified in the 2016 twin resolutions on sustaining peace,[1] and again in the UN's review on sustaining peace in 2018.[2] The notion of inclusivity has been further unpacked in the joint UN and World Bank 'Pathways for peace' report, released in 2018.[3] However, there is still limited understanding of what this means in practice.

This report contributes to the literature on evidence-based peacebuilding by drawing on research conducted in two countries: Liberia and South Sudan. It provides guidance for policymakers on operationalising principles of inclusivity in peacebuilding and sustaining peace programming.

The report is part of a broader project called 'Enhancing African responses to peacebuilding', by a consortium of three partner organisations – the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and New York University's Center on International Cooperation (CIC). It draws on research conducted from 2–10 November 2016 and 20–24 November 2017 in Monrovia, Liberia with 36 stakeholders from 22 institutions, and from 9–17 February 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Juba, South Sudan with 28 institutions. It also draws on academic research and policy-orientated publications by international organisations, as well as national statistics.

This report will first unpack the concept of inclusivity outlined in the peacebuilding and sustaining peace resolutions and the 'Pathways for peace' report. It will then point to differences in approaches for ensuring inclusivity in sustaining peace activities in Liberia and South Sudan. In doing this, the report will also provide a brief overview of the conflicts in both countries. Thereafter, it will look at what inclusivity for sustaining peace processes entails, including by examining mediation efforts, security sector reform (SSR), disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and institution building. It will also consider the role that external actors played in efforts to build inclusive societies in these countries. Finally, it will make recommendations for policy actors wishing to build sustainable peace.

Unpacking inclusivity

Building a trusting relationship between states and citizens in order to prevent future outbreaks of conflict is vital to the pursuit of sustaining peace. Sustaining peace is a 'goal and a process to build a common vision of society'.[4] It supports national efforts to build an inclusive and people-centred vision of peace, to address the root causes of violence and promote the rule of law, good governance and human rights. The concept of sustaining peace is encapsulated in the parallel resolutions on sustaining peace adopted by the UN General Assembly and Security Council in April 2016. Activities include 'preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development'.[5]

Any understanding of the concept of sustaining peace should acknowledge that it is a temporal concept cutting across different phases of a conflict. Implementation can be either delayed or enhanced by critical junctures, such as elections. The concept also has a structural dimension, spanning across (thematic) sectors ranging from economic development to governance. Its social dimension includes issues of class dynamics, empowerment and social cohesion.[6]

> Sustaining peace is a temporal concept cutting across different phases of a conflict

However, the sustaining peace agenda to date has neither defined inclusivity nor unpacked what this looks like at different points of the peace continuum. The 'Pathways for peace' report notes that inclusion is not easy to define or measure. It uses the World Bank definition of 'the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society'.[7] The report also describes horizontal inequalities – 'differences in access and opportunities across culturally defined (or constructed) groups based on identities such as ethnicity, region, and religion' – as being the basis for grievances and the root cause of conflict.[8] It further notes that it is not inequality per se, but the perception of inequality that creates tension.[9]

Arguments in favour of inclusivity are persuasive, as representation and the independence of included actors are assumed to influence the degree to which they can prevent and reduce violence in a sustainable manner.[10] However, evidence from within the peacebuilding community, in particular country case studies, is still lacking.[11]

So what does successful inclusive peacebuilding mean in practice? The following sections examine inclusivity at different points of Liberia and South Sudan's peace processes, outlining both why focusing on inclusivity is so vital and how this inclusivity can be implemented.

Inclusivity: dismantling unequal power structures

ISS research has highlighted that inclusivity should be the primary element in operationalising sustaining peace. As the resolutions emphasise, a focus on sustaining peace should occur during the outbreak, escalation and continuation of conflict. The following sections highlight some activities considered vital to sustaining peace and evaluate efforts at inclusivity in Liberia and South Sudan.

Inclusivity in mediation

The UN has noted that peace agreements are often rushed by external groups with differing levels of legitimacy. As such they end up reflecting the narrow views of the political elite, and the compromise reached among the warring factions does not address the grievances that led to the conflict in the first place.[12] The 'Pathways for peace' report takes this further by noting that:

> the risk of relapse into conflict is elevated where elites have not sought to accommodate or include former opponents in a political settlement, but have instead moved to exclude rivals on the basis of ethnicity, religion, or other dimension of identity … If power is distributed according to group identity, the power-sharing arrangement can reinforce certain identities relative to others and thus can negate the potential of these arrangements to minimize violent conflict.[13]

Moreover, it has been noted that bringing excluded groups into these processes can contribute to longer-lasting outcomes, particularly if women are given leadership roles.[14] These processes are further enhanced if civil society is also allowed to play a meaningful role.[15]

Liberia's civil wars saw military coups, rampant corruption, economic mismanagement, the repression of political opponents and an entrenchment of ethnic divisions that had been visible since independence.[16] The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) played a pivotal role in mediating these conflicts and by 2003 the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed. The UN, which had been present in the country since 1997, extended its mandate to establish the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to help consolidate peace. It finally departed in March 2018 and handed over its remaining duties to the UN Country Team.

The Liberian example demonstrates the dilemma encountered in dismantling unequal power structures. Often when a country is in transition, its stability can only be ensured by allowing warring factions a position of power in the new government and providing amnesties.

It has been argued that the first 13 peace agreements from 1990–1995 failed partly because Nigeria insisted that parties to the conflict should not be represented in the Liberian government. As a result, the warring factions saw little reason to work towards peace. This position changed over time as Nigeria improved its relations with Charles Taylor, and in 1995 Nigeria changed its stance to that of Ghana – that these factions could be eligible for positions in the new government.[17] Yet Taylor continued to act as a spoiler to the peace talks, and no solution was reached.

> ### No NTGL appointees could stand for election in 2005 – effectively buying them off

By 2003 mediators had come to a further compromise and tried to appease the warring factions with a new model. The Accra Peace Accords created the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), which allowed the warring parties to take up key positions in government (leading to widespread corruption). However, no NTGL appointees could stand for election in 2005 – effectively buying them off and absenting them from the political processes leading up to these elections.[18] In addition, international actors, including US diplomats, put pressure on politicians and businesspeople to cooperate with indictments for human rights violations.[19] Taylor was then indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, leaving his negotiators with less bargaining power and leading to a more successful political settlement.

Critically, no warring faction led the government. A complex configuration of key ministries was allocated among the three warring factions, with eight ministerial positions given to representatives of political parties and seven to 'civil society'.

Although the mediator had intended to give political parties and civil society a leading role in this transitional government, the reality was that power remained concentrated in the hands of the warring factions. As the government lasted only two years, there were few incentives to think long term and develop state structures. As a result, some leaders' rent-seeking continued through the state apparatus.[20]

By the time of the 2011 elections, political violence was again on the increase.[21] Many wartime leaders still had their bases of support, often developed through engagement with criminal enterprises as a means of building patronage networks. This plagued Liberia's post-war state-building efforts.[22]

But it appears as though the mediation efforts in Liberia have paid off – while there are a few indicators that underlying power structures remain, they do not operate to such an extent that Liberia's peace is threatened.

In contrast to Liberia, the neo-patrimonial system of governance found in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) even before independence has not been adequately addressed in either peace agreements or their implementation.[23] The South Sudanese quest for independence was rooted in a history of systematic under-development, political marginalisation and state violence practiced by both colonial and post-1956 independent governments in Sudan.[24]

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2005, ending the civil war and leading to the eventual independence of South Sudan in 2011.[25] However, the CPA had few provisions regarding the new state's governance structure.[26]

In 2015 a peace deal was brokered by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) called the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCISS). The deal set out a new power-sharing arrangement between the ostensible 'two sides' of the conflict. Yet conflict re-ignited between troop factions in Juba in July 2016 and the conflict continues to date, with the opposition fragmented and spread across South Sudan.

The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was established for the newly independent South Sudan in 2011 and continues to be deployed in the country.

The CPA had been founded on the idea of 'making unity attractive' for the people of Sudan.[27] However, political developments during the first few years of the interim period showed that the people of South Sudan would vote for independence in the 2011 referendum.[28] After 2002, the SPLM/A followed a 'big tent' approach – incorporating various groups under its banner through negotiated agreements (which always included amnesties).[29]

> The CPA was founded on the idea of making unity attractive for the people of Sudan

De Waal notes that 'the implementation of the CPA became an exercise in zero sum competitive patronage'.[30] Although the CPA committed to working for unity, secession became the primary aim of the SPLM. The SPLM therefore began building a strong army made up of southern militias who were offered more money than their northern Sudan counterparts. Loyalty was rewarded with a licence to commit fraud, and corrupt practices became commonplace.[31] A March 2006 report by Human Rights Watch claimed that the failure to include other parties and armed groups in the CPA (which only recognised two sides to the conflict) had created further political fragmentation.[32]

At the time of the signing of the ARCISS in 2015, De Waal noted:

> [a] highly unstable situation in which there was no actual bargain among the two main contenders and no resources to make such a bargain operable, even were it to be made. The immediate result was a desperate search for new means for rewarding political clients, including creating a host of new patronage opportunities (creating new states with all the employment and rent-seeking openings entailed), and seizing land and other assets from communities that did not have sufficient political or military protection, notably in Equatoria.[33]

Despite efforts to ensure a multi-stakeholder format in negotiations, mediators ultimately pushed ahead with

peace talks despite violations that prevented civil society and political party leaders from engaging.[34] It was subsequently suggested that mediators develop alternative mechanisms to broaden participation, including town hall meetings and awareness raising via radio.[35] The ARCISS remains largely unimplemented, leading to IGAD's call for a High-level Revitalization Forum of the Parties to the ARCISS.[36]

Inclusivity in SSR/DDR

The peacebuilding and sustaining peace resolutions emphasise the need for reform to build an effective and accountable security sector. 'Pathways for peace' reaffirms this by stating that 'if done effectively, DDR and SSR provide vital support to peace agreements and other transitional agreements by building confidence in institutions and processes'.[37] SSR and DDR efforts are thus seen as fundamental reforms that can enhance longer-term peacebuilding.[38]

It has been noted that 'once violence was used, the voices of security actors became more prominent in decision making, and it was important to promote balance in the structure of power'.[39] The study also found that previous attempts at reforming these institutions often focused more on operational skills than on building inclusive security institutions – to their detriment.[40] SSR and DDR thus require careful consideration on how to ensure that spoilers are accommodated to the greatest extent possible while strengthening inclusive security institutions.

> SSR is often erroneously reduced to functional capacity building in the security forces – but should go beyond this to address the root causes of violence

DDR is seen as a means of 're-establishing the state's monopoly of violence and control of force in the post-conflict phase' and is therefore a fundamental part of rebuilding the state.[41] DDR has progressed as a concept over the last few decades, from a narrow focus on enhancing security to a broader focus on development. In this way, it has become less combatant-focused and more community-orientated. As such, it has expanded to provide longer-term incentives rather than limited training packages.[42] Reintegration is now increasingly seen as an economic and identity-changing process – one that pushes for employment and economic livelihoods.[43]

SSR is often erroneously reduced to functional capacity building in the security forces. However, SSR should go beyond this to address the root causes of violence – it should not just reduce existing security risks for the population but also establish democratic security governance within society. In other words, SSR is not primarily a technical operation but belongs in the realm of politics. However, it is often criticised by governments in the South as a form of Western intervention in a country's internal affairs.[44] This is because it seeks to address core issues of divisions of power, demands close cooperation with local elites, and might require flanking incentives and conditionalities.[45]

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Liberia's DDR programme was developed as a result of the 2003 peace agreement. Led by the United States (US), the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) was completely restructured. All applicants were vetted. Those with previous human rights violations were not allowed to take part, and the entire AFL was disbanded – a total of 13 500 members. It has been argued that this approach was successful in 'retiring' soldiers with state recognition, diminishing grounds for grievance. There were some teething problems – initially, the US attempted to give soldiers severance pay but was unable to do so as the country lacked a democratically elected government. There were also some elements in the army who inflated the severance packages.[46] The role of women was also not considered, especially since they were not armed combatants but participated in the conflict through other means.

Despite these issues, between December 2003 and October 2004 over 101 000 people were demobilised, including 22 300 women and 11 700 children.[47] It has been argued that this approach was possible because Liberia's threats were predominantly internal rather than external, allowing for the army to be scaled down without too much resistance.[48]

The number demobilised was much higher than originally envisaged, primarily owing to the criteria being relaxed, especially through using a gender-sensitive approach, but this posed problems for implementation. Former combatants were expected to spend up to three weeks in cantonment sites before they could participate in reintegration activities such as vocational training, income generation and education.[49] Approximately 98 000 of the disarmed combatants participated in reintegration programmes, with an additional 5 000 in a final push in 2008, before the programme closed in 2009.[50]

However, a high rate of unemployment (roughly 75%) meant that vocational training did not necessarily translate into jobs and ex-combatants instead found ways of obtaining money through illegal activities.[51] There were also accountability challenges, as demobilisation cards were passed to families and friends.[52] In addition, the admittance criteria were criticised for possibly inflating registration numbers. For example, only 28 222 serviceable weapons had been collected by January 2005 – approximately one weapon for every four registered combatants.[53]

The identification and verification of combatants is critical to DDR, as are the incentives for actors to engage in such programmes. However, in Liberia the programme was criticised for allowing broader admission criteria that opened an avenue to 'patrimonial politics and mismanagement'.[54] Youth who had not been combatants were given incentives to be seen as such, and commanders were made the gatekeepers of the screening process, allowing them to reinforce power politics. Moreover, without employment opportunities the DDR programme may have produced a large group of young people who were frustrated and had unfulfilled expectations.[55]

> The Liberian DDR process demonstrates the importance of engaging communities from its inception

DDR should be considered in the broader developmental context, and the Liberian DDR process demonstrates the importance of engaging communities from its inception.

Liberia also underwent additional SSR, including in the Liberian National Police, the immigration and customs services, and the Special Security Service. Even so, this approach has not been without problems. There are claims that the complete exclusion of some power brokers has resulted in an incomplete hierarchical structure, and as such the force continues to be led by foreign officers. Moreover, it has been suggested that former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had formed political alliances with a number of former warlords. Any true SSR must take cognisance of the numerous actors involved in the civil war and find strategies to address all of their respective roles in a new society.[56] The programme was also accused of lacking state ownership and failing to sequence with DDR.[57]

While Liberia encountered problems with DDR and SSR, it did try to address underlying power dynamics and inequalities. South Sudan, on the other hand, has not done so. As mentioned previously, the 'big tent' approach taken to attract potential spoilers through promises of financial and material gain created an enormous army that was difficult to control or reform.[58] The proliferation of new actors has also made any DDR and SSR processes unwieldy.

South Sudan's DDR programme was initially mandated by the CPA, with the aim of reducing the size of the SPLA and the other organised services and assisting ex-combatants to return to civilian life and create sustainable livelihoods.[59] However, stakeholders were unable to agree on the objectives and only 13% of combatants entered the programme. A significant proportion of those who did enter were technically ineligible (having joined the SPLA either too early or too late), reintegration was ineffective, and the SPLA instead grew even larger as a result of amnesty packages to militias and continued recruitment because of fears of a further border war with Sudan.[60]

DDR benefits were considered insufficient compensation, the determination of the DDR caseload did not relate to the genuine needs of the SPLA, and the government did not take concrete steps to downsize the army before 2011.[61] Moreover, the SPLA remains focused on rewarding soldiers for their service, rather than making real efforts to enhance human security.[62] There was also uncertainty over the concept of DDR itself and DDR activities, and a lack of linkages to the private sector and civil society.[63] The National DDR Commission is now almost entirely inoperative.

Following the deployment of UNMISS after independence in 2006, the UN also began an SSR programme, which loosely coordinated a whole range of bi- and multilateral implementing organisations from countries such as Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom.[64] However, it has been argued that donors paid too little attention to ethnic tensions in both the political arena and the security forces.[65]

Indeed, the programmes demonstrated, as Dudouet et al. put it:

> [t]he optimism of donors about the SLPM's inclusive vision for the new country, accompanied by a widespread notion that problems like corruption and human rights abuses were mostly products of weak capacity and inexperience. This resulted in a working culture in which donors required little accountability and few results from their South Sudanese counterparts, while the growing symptoms of a deeply rooted crisis of governance were left obscured. Few foreign actors dared to raise sensitive political topics around the legitimacy and inclusivity of the new government, as efforts to (re-) establish central state institutions tended to take centre stage.[66]

Inclusivity in state-building

State-building is a primary means of sustaining peace and involves a focus on supporting national actors to build institutions and structures.[67] Yet, as shown above, state-building fails where efforts do not expand beyond the inclusion of relevant elites. As such, 'the question remains of how inclusion may actually result in more meaningful and substantial transformation of the underlying political settlement and rules of the game'.[68] Beyond a technical focus on state-building, constitutional reform is another opportunity to challenge inequalities. In practice, however, such reform often neglects the underlying politics, and it has been noted that constitutionalism appears to call for legal rather than political judgements.[69]

Decentralisation is thought to be another means of achieving inclusivity if it moves beyond service delivery to governance. This is because governance then becomes more localised and attuned to the needs of the population outside of the capital.[70] It also enables more representative ownership in decision-making structures.[71]

Liberia has made some headway in addressing constitutional reform, but this has not received enough focus. In 2012 Sirleaf initiated a Constitution Review Committee, but apparently the committee was not representative and did not create enough awareness among the general population. The constitutional review process has still not been finalised and some important government reforms, such as on land issues, rely on this first taking place.[72]

> The SPLA remains focused on rewarding soldiers for their service, rather than making real efforts to enhance human security

Liberia did benefit from having inclusive national frameworks, including Liberia Rising 2030 (a post-conflict vision for an equitable, diverse and democratically stable country),[73] the Agenda for Transformation and, most recently, the Peacebuilding Plan. The Peacebuilding Plan was designed by the government and the UN to detail peacebuilding priorities, and includes civil society, and regional and sub-regional organisations.[74] Headway has been made in terms of decentralisation, but this is still focused on service delivery rather than governance.

In South Sudan, one of donors' biggest mistakes was labelling the country a post-conflict environment, which meant that:

> donors adopted an approach that prioritised state-building, which translated into a predominantly technical exercise aiming to enhance the capacity of central state institutions, with efforts focused mostly on Juba … A more political narrative for donor engagement with the region could have better addressed some of these risk factors and avoided donors being taken by surprise following the outbreak of violence in December 2013.[75]

There has been little to no distinction between the SPLM ruling party and state institutions, and no separation of powers (e.g. an independent judiciary).[76] Moreover, after independence the South Sudan Development Plan (SSDP) 2011–13 was ratified but, despite being the government's first strategic plan, it lacked ownership and was seen an international box-ticking exercise to secure future funding.[77] This excerpt from the SSDP is telling: 'This is a government-led process that draws on neither the nascent private sector of Southern Sudan nor the nascent domestic civil society organisations.'[78]

In South Sudan, the ARCISS peace agreement of 2015 made provisions for setting up a National Constitutional Amendment Committee, but this has been delayed. A draft was presented to the minister for justice and constitutional affairs, but the government claimed that inclusive consultations with broader civil society stakeholders were not possible owing to the ongoing conflict.[79] The decentralisation process has failed dismally, as mentioned earlier.[80]

Role of regional actors in ensuring inclusivity

The UN has noted that a supportive regional environment is crucial to building a sustainable peace.[81] Regional economic communities (RECs) such as ECOWAS and IGAD increasingly play a major role in peace and security matters on the African continent but, as the Liberian and South Sudanese case studies show, they are much more effective if they act as a unified body rather than one composed of member states with differing views. The involvement of regional actors has also ensured the greater inclusivity of peace processes when they are cognisant of how to mitigate the impact of rights and representation to distribute a range of peace dividends.[82]

Sufficient attention must also be paid to the interests and incentives of the member states that make up these regional bodies.[83] Differing regional interests allow warring factions in a country to play member states off against each other, further prolonging conflict.

ECOWAS's role in Liberia is a good example of how regional bodies can be effective in promoting political settlements and successful transitions if they are unified. Indeed, it has been suggested that the effectiveness of a regional organisation depends on the extent to which member states have developed common foreign and security policies.[84]

Initially, ECOWAS did not have a unified approach to Liberia, and this detracted from its efforts. The rift between Nigerian-led anglophone member states and the Ivorian-led francophone bloc undermined the implementation of Liberia's 12 peace agreements.[85]
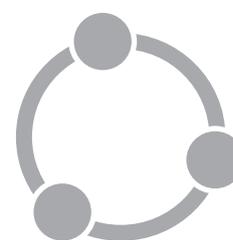
SUFFICIENT ATTENTION MUST BE PAID TO THE INTERESTS AND INCENTIVES OF THE MEMBER STATES THAT MAKE UP RECS

This was also related to the fact that the member states of ECOWAS supported different warring factions. For example, it is claimed that Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso supported the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and Taylor due to personal relationships,[86] while Nigeria's president Ibrahim Babangida had a close relationship with Samuel Doe, the former Liberian president.[87]

Guinea and Senegal supported ECOWAS, while Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire were said to be sceptical of Nigeria's intentions.[88] Sierra Leone is said to have sided with Nigeria owing to a close relationship between Babangida and Sierra Leonean president Joseph Saidu Momoh, which included economic assistance.[89]

However, circumstances changed over time, which arguably led to the Abuja II Peace Accord that finally ended Liberia's first civil war. When General Sani Abacha became president of Nigeria (November 1993), relationships with the NPFL changed, as Abacha was more willing to accommodate Taylor's presidential ambitions, which in turn made his faction more cooperative.[90]

Taylor's indictment by the International Criminal Court (ICC) also changed the negotiating stakes. In addition, it is claimed that Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso became concerned about the NPFL's lack of commitment, with the result that they exerted increasing pressure on it to comply, leaving the party less room to play off the two opposing sides in ECOWAS. ECOWAS also changed its strategy to no longer trying to appease the NPFL but rather threatening the warlords with prosecution for war crimes.[91]

Following its experiences in Sierra Leone and Liberia, ECOWAS adopted the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security in 1999 and the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001. These developments allowed it to institutionalise its response to peace, democracy and human rights.[92]

In contrast to ECOWAS, which was driven by Nigeria during the Liberian crisis,[93] IGAD is an organisation that:

> functions through ad hoc processes, with frequent, personalised involvement of Heads of State, and few systematic, institutionalised approaches to addressing regional common interests … Ethiopia and Ethiopian interests shape IGAD's actions – it is the only country bordering all other IGAD member states except

Uganda, is an 'emerging hegemon', and has its own clear development strategy of slow and controlled economic opening.[94]

From the start, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni was a tacit supporter of South Sudan's independence.[95] Uganda has benefited economically from cross-border trade and South Sudanese building homes in Kampala.[96] Uganda also has a long-standing relationship with South Sudan's President Salva Kiir.

Sudan lost out – particularly in terms of oil revenues – from its break from the south. As a result, it and South Sudan are still mutually dependent, as the CPA agreed that the north and south would share oil revenues since most of the oil fields were in the south but the oil could only be exported via the north.[97] Both countries also rely on the Nile for transport and hydropower.[98]

> From mediation to specific reforms there is always a need to address the incentives that drive elites

An alliance between South Sudan and Uganda would thus hinder Sudan's foreign policy objectives.[99] Although Uganda and Sudan's relationship has changed over time, the divide between the two countries is clear.

Ethiopia, while initially a neutral broker, has become increasingly inward looking. This has been further complicated by Egypt's involvement in South Sudan, where Egypt is seeking to increase White Nile River flow while opposing Ethiopia's construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Blue Nile. Ethiopia is therefore opposed to a South Sudan/Egypt alliance in case developments reduce the river's downstream flow to Ethiopia.[100]

Meanwhile, Kenya has invested in a number of sectors in South Sudan, including banking, insurance and hospitality.[101]

As such, the differing positions among IGAD countries have led to its being unable to send a strong unified message to the South Sudanese government, or to ensure the enforcement of peace agreement provisions.

Because of the political nature of sustaining peace, African peers and African regional and sub-regional organisations such as RECs can play an important role in promoting inclusive governance. Yet this only

works if these organisations are themselves unbiased and inclusive.

Lessons learnt and way forward

The examples of Liberia and South Sudan demonstrate that, as current UN thinking suggests, there must be a focus on inclusivity in all peacebuilding and sustaining peacebuilding activities, meaning that consideration of politics must be a central feature. From mediation to specific reforms such as DDR to nation building, there is always a need to address the incentives that drive elites. The examples reaffirm that sustaining peace is non-linear, and they suggest that a unified approach by external actors is always needed. These are integral elements of building an efficient and effective peace.

If sustaining peace is to be made more effective, its political aspects cannot be ignored. There have been instances where external actors have misread situations and ultimately either had little impact or even made things worse. As such – and as mentioned in the UN secretary-general's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and the 'Pathways for peace' report – there is a need to invest more in and implement the findings of better joint analysis and mapping. This involves engaging extensively with a wide variety of local and national stakeholders.

Such a process must be driven by a joint approach from the UN side, drawing on actors in peacebuilding, peace operations, mediation and development, as well as regional actors, but driven by national and local stakeholders. Communities must be widely consulted on indicators of success, and initiatives should draw on what is already working in a society, thus building on existing resiliencies. Moreover, communities should be involved in a continuous monitoring and evaluation process to ensure their needs are met.

Organisations such as the UN, African Union (AU) and RECs must continue to focus on inclusivity and prioritise internal political issues to ensure that technical programming is linked to inclusive political aims, in a coordinated 'whole of system' approach. As the case of Liberia has shown, regional organisations can be highly effective, but this depends on their being inclusive themselves.

Recommendations for implementing sustained peace for the UN

- Promote inclusivity in all activities throughout the sustaining peace spectrum, from mediation to state-building, by ensuring that underrepresented groups are part of the process.

- Do not rush peace agreements at the expense of inclusivity. Instead address incentives for spoilers and promote inclusivity away from the negotiating table through awareness raising and town hall meetings.

- Involve communities in SSR/DDR from inception to implementation, and ensure a developmental approach is taken.

- Ensure that technical sustaining peace programming is linked to outcomes that promote inclusivity, based on detailed and regularly updated conflict analysis with a wide range of stakeholders.

- Ensure peacebuilding programming develops a framework to engage with civil society in the local context; use indicators that promote inclusivity, developed in consultation with local communities; and involve communities in regular monitoring and evaluation of processes.

- Create multi-partner strategies, plans and funding structures based on national priorities and led by national stakeholders, including civil society, with clearly defined goals and timelines.

- Support responses by regional/sub-regional organisations that promote democratic best practices by allowing them to lead, and ensure coordination with these responses.

- Provide technical and financial support to African sub-regional organisations to institutionalise frameworks on inclusive governance that allow for clear and unified responses that go beyond member state interests, and provide resources to ensure compliance.

Notes

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