

THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVILIAN INTEGRATION IN PEACE-KEEPING MISSION FOR POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION: A CASE STUDY OF LIBERIA

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Abstract

Civilian integration in peace-keeping missions is crucial for fostering sustainable peace and stability in post-conflict societies. This paper examines the significance of civilian involvement in peace-keeping efforts, with a focus on Liberia as a case study. The Liberian civil war, which lasted from 1989 to 2003, left the country devastated and deeply divided. Following the conflict, the United Nations deployed peacekeeping forces to help restore peace and facilitate reconstruction efforts. However, it became evident that military intervention alone was insufficient to address the complex challenges facing Liberia. This paper highlights the multifaceted roles civilians play in peacekeeping missions, including political, social, economic, and humanitarian aspects. This research uses a descriptive, analytic and qualitative approaches and collection of information from secondary sources through library research and internet. The results reveal that by engaging with local stakeholders, understanding their needs, and involving them in decision-making processes, peace-keepers can better tailor their strategies to the context and enhance their effectiveness. The study concludes that civilian integration is not just a complement to military intervention but a fundamental component of successful peacekeeping missions.

Keywords: Civilian Integration, Peace-keeping, Conflict, Reconstruction, Liberia

Introduction

Liberia is located in West Africa, a small country many refer to as a sanctuary for freed slaves. After the American independence war with Britain, African slaves that fought on the side of US were set free but returned to Liberia. Liberia has a history of conflict. A comprehensive examination of the origins of the Liberian conflicts lies outside the scope of this study hence a summary of the history of the conflicts will set the stage for contextualizing post conflict reconstruction in Liberia. The researcher having experienced a one-dimensional (militarization) method of peace-keeping in most African countries like Nigeria and other conflict-ridden West African countries, argues that a multidimensional peace-keeping operations that recognizes the potentials of civilian alternatives in current peace operations is much more likely to improve peace than the current peace-keeping operations championed by the UN and regional organizations especially in Liberia. To aid the understanding of the ongoing debate on peace operations and the possibility of civilian inclusion in peace-keeping, it focused on two key questions: How effective are peace-keeping operations in preventing and stopping violence? Is there an alternative to UN and regional peace-keeping operations? Would inclusion of civilian unarmed peace operations be a good strategy and alternative?

It concludes by presenting an analysis of the development of civilian peace-keeping, and its relevance in the field of conflict resolution.

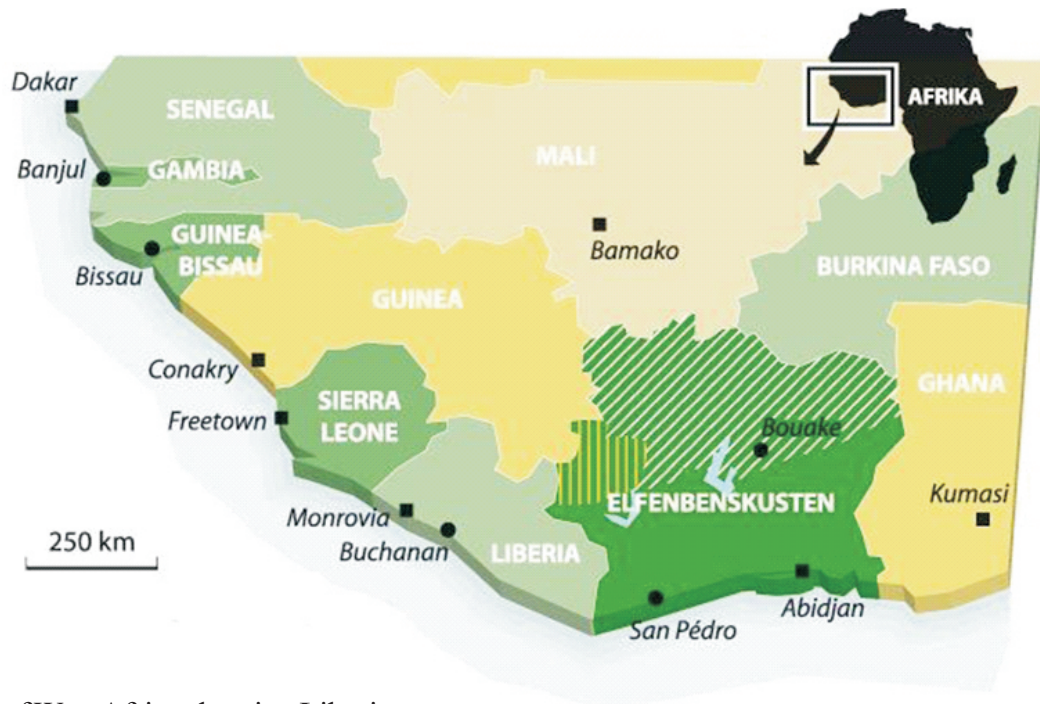


Fig. 1: Map of West Africa showing Liberia.

Historical context

Liberia is bordered with Sierra Leone to the northwest, Guinea to the north, and Côte d'Ivoire to the east. The country is rich in natural resources and agricultural produce including diamonds, gold and Rubber. Culturally, Liberia is a largely rural country, with the exception of the capital city, Monrovia (Olukoju 2006:3&4) that have strong ties to towns and villages outside the capital. These rural communities are made up of extended family or family networks characterized by respect for elders and patriarchy as councils of male elders generally are decision-makers in a given community (Ibid :61). Their religious affiliations are Christianity, Islam, indigenous religion.



The **first Liberian Civil War** was an internal conflict from 1989 until 1996 led by Samuel Doe. The country experienced a brief period (3years) of peace before returning to war in 1999 with Charles Taylor as the principal actor. Final return to peace was in 2003. Although the causes of the Liberian conflict are complex, on one level it represents an attempt by America-Liberians to re-establish themselves as the dominant political force in Liberia and on the other level, the war, though not about ethnic groups seeking dominance over one another, but as in Bosnia the manipulation of ethnic differences by faction leaders for political purposes led to a conflict increasingly fought along ethnic lines that led to the emergence of warlords whose objectives extended to control of diamond mining and rubber plantations. The Fourteen years of armed conflict in Liberia among other things resulted in the breakdown of the social fabric and the fragmentation of the society. Reports of serious human rights abuses and war crimes committed against civilians and especially against women and girls who constituted the major target of atrocities such as rape, other forms of sexual and gender-based violence were reported. Today, the country is in transition from a war induced complex emergency situation to recovery and development. Liberia's population currently stands at 3,489,072 (Census, 2008) and out of which women account for 49%, providing an overall sex composition ratio result of 102.3 (men to women).¹

AMERICO-LIBERIAN HEGEMONY

Liberia was ruled by a hegemony of Americo-Liberians who were returnees of freed slaves from America and constituted about 5% of the population. The Americo-Liberian hegemony was established, primarily, on the basis of insidious distinctions between "civilized" settlers and "uncivilized" Africans. It was secured by superior weaponry and U.S. intervention, and institutionalized when Liberia declared its independence in 1847. The hegemony ruled the country for about 133 years uninterrupted through various Presidents. In the 1940s, President William V.S. Tubman facilitated a Policy of Integration and Unification which encouraged indigenous participation in all aspects of Liberian life. Although this move earned him the sobriquet 'father of the nation' it was not sufficient to break the continued political, economic, social, and cultural dominance enjoyed by the ruling Americo-Liberian elites over the indigenous people of Liberia. They occupied most of the important political positions in the only existing political party, True Whig Party, as well as the all-powerful freemasonic temples and lay positions in the church hierarchy. For instance, William Tolbert, nineteenth president and successor to William Tubman, was the flag bearer of the country's only political party, the True Whig Party, and could therefore dispense sinecure privileges through patronage networks (Sawyer 1992). At the religious level, President Tolbert was also the Vice President of the World Baptist Convention, a position he held for over a quarter of a century. Expectedly, movement along the political, religious and social ladders in the country was through the support and patronage of the True Whig Party, the Masonic temples and the Baptist and Methodist churches. Without such support and sponsorships, it was impossible for indigenous Liberians, no matter how highly educated, to find a meaningful place in the country's political, economic, religious and social ladder.

THE RICE RIOT

In a country where majority of the population earned less than US\$30 a month at that time, a planned increase in the cost of rice from US\$22 to US\$30 for a 100-pound bag by the government of Tolbert enraged the people. A protest called by an indigenous Liberian, Baccus Mathews on April 14, 1979 precipitated what became widely known as the 'rice riots' (Boley 1983; Sesay 1983). Although the protest was a failure, the heavy-handed manner with which it was suppressed by the government of

¹ CEDAW State Party report supra

Williams Tolbert left hundreds of protesters dead. Baccus Mathew and the entire leadership of the Protest were arrested and charged with sedition and treason. The cavalier manner in which the protest was crushed, as one commentator lamented, 'would probably not have enraged the indigenous Liberian public so much had the President of Liberia and one of his brothers not been connected with the production, importation and sale of rice' (Boley 1983: 101). The hard line approach adopted by the President to address the protest in his national broadcast was supported by the Americo-Liberian elites who also organized political rallies to support the President.

THE 'GANG OF 14' MILITARY COUP

The scenario filtered through to the rank and file in the Armed Forces of Liberia, then mainly made up of indigenous Liberians. Hence, in a well-timed rescue operation, fourteen non-commissioned officers led by then 28-year-old Master Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe, stormed the Executive Mansion, seat of the Liberian Government in Monrovia and brutally killed President Tolbert on April 12, 1980 (Sesay 1983).

The killing of the president, thirteen top officers of the True Whig Party, and well-known Americo-Liberian elites brutally brought 133 years of Americo-Liberian political and social domination of the indigenous Liberians to a gory and inopportune end. Doe became the first indigenous Liberian to hold the exalted office of the commander in chief of the Republic of Liberia.

There was much euphoria among the indigenous people, following the overthrow of the Americo-Liberian rule in Liberia. It was popularly believed that the first indigenous government in Liberia's long history would quickly reverse the wrongs of years of Americo-Liberian misrule and injustice, and that the new regime would pursue policies that would improve the living conditions of the majority of the Liberian people within the shortest possible time. Samuel Doe at numerous occasions reiterated the army's pledge to return to the barracks. On April 12th 1981, on the anniversary of the coup, he announced the creation of a 25-member constitutional commission under the leadership of a renowned Liberian, Dr Amos Sawyer. A new constitution, he asserted, should pave the road to a genuine democracy. However, within the four years that followed, everything changed. Samuel Doe started to like the taste of power. He increasingly surrounded himself with members of his Krahn-tribe people, proving to be a provincial leader instead of a cosmopolitan leader as anticipated by the people.

His regime became very authoritarian, discriminatory and abusive of human rights in Liberia. Due to Doe's inordinate desire to concentrate power around himself, the civilian members of his government were among the first casualties as many of them were either dropped or forced to resign from the cabinet, less than two years after the coup (Sesay 1983). In addition, all other members of the 'gang of 14' that had toppled Tolbert in April 1980 were either killed or forced into exile in neighbouring countries and afar. What soon became apparent was that having savoured political power and its trappings, Doe was unwilling to relinquish or share it with anyone. To achieve that objective, he unleashed an unparalleled reign of terror on the entire country, by targeting those he suspected of nursing political ambitions that might undermine him.

INVASION BY CHARLES TAYLOR AND CAPTURE OF SAMUEL DOE

In response to the repressive regime of Samuel Doe, an exiled former ally and former member of his cabinet, Charles Taylor invaded the country from the Ivory Coast boarder in late 1989. Liberia was plunged into one of the most devastating civil wars ever witnessed in the West African sub region. A break-away faction from Charles Taylor's rebel group led by Prince Johnson eventually captured Samuel Doe in September, 1990. The war raged on with a proliferation of warring factions and two governments, one in Gbarnga, the other in Monrovia. At the peak of the civil war

in Liberia which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, about a third of the population was either displaced internally or forced to flee to neighbouring countries as refugees. After eight years of war during which several factions of the warring parties emerged, a truce mediated by The ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), a regional peacekeeping group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was reached and Dr Amos Sawyer acted as interim president until the 1997 elections when Charles Taylor was elected as president. Taylor's ascendancy to the presidency however did not end the conflict. His provincial leadership style and the excesses of his administration prompted attacks by his former allies who destabilized the country. On the 1st of August 2003, the United Nations Security Council authorized the establishment of an ECOWAS peacekeeping mission through UN resolution 1497. Under intense pressure from several African countries with support from the US, Taylor was forced to resign. The war lord and his immediate household were forced into exile in Calabar, Nigeria after signing the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) on the 18th of August, 2003. Accompanying Taylor on the flight in a Nigerian government jet were five dignitaries: three African heads of state, President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, then chairman of the newly inaugurated African Union (AU), President John Kuffor of Ghana, the incumbent Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, as well as the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, and finally, the Chairman of the ECOWAS mediation team, former Nigerian military ruler, General Abdulsalami Abubakar. Like a bull in China glass wares shop, Taylor was lured out of Liberia.

Although the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed by President Taylor and leaders of all warring factions and political parties ended the conflict, the greater task of reconstruction laid ahead. By the powers of resolution 1509 adopted by United Nations Security Council, UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was established and authorized to take over power from ECOMOG. UNMIL was established to support the implementation of the CPA and peace process to protect civilians and UN staff, assist in the training of a new police force and restructure the military, support human rights and humanitarian activities.

ELECTION AND RECONSTRUCTION POLICY OF ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF

The exit of Taylor paved way for his Deputy, Gyude Bryant who acted as interim president until January, 2005 when Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president in an election supervised by the United Nations and adjudged as free and fair by both local and international observers. UNMIL provided the logistics, including helicopters that moved election materials, security and voters' education materials. In her inauguration speech, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf committed her administration to vigorously pursuing the daunting tasks of post-war reconstruction and accelerated national reconciliation and development. She anchored her efforts on an agenda to set the country on a new course, putting accountability, transparency, good governance, and economic opportunities for all Liberians at the centre of her administration. According to World Bank report, 1998, post-war reconstruction involves the rebuilding of the socio-economic framework of society, and reconfiguring the enabling conditions for a better functioning peacetime society, using the framework of transparent governance and the rule of law. While Addison (2003) contends post-war reconstruction as physical rebuilding of infrastructure, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as encapsulated in her inauguration speech looked beyond physical rebuilding of infrastructure to include social re-engineering which Putnam classified as positive social capital. Being the first woman to be elected president in Africa, she was determined to turn her country around for good. Notwithstanding that Ellen Johnson was of the stock of the Americo-Liberian, she pursued a program of equal opportunities for all Liberians. She enjoyed the support of the international community which enabled her to secure about 90% of the country's total foreign debt (nearly \$5 billion) in debt relief

from the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, African Development Bank and other creditors. She successfully led the country for 12 years and transferred power to George Weah through a free and fair general election in December 2017.

OVERVIEW OF LIBERIA'S RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS

The Liberian peace and reconstruction process follows the pattern of the UN's modus operandi which has been emerging since the end of the Cold War. It is characterised by a sequence of activities in the order of peace agreement, followed by deployment of peacekeepers, a disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programme, security sector reform, and ending with elections.¹⁴ According to the CPA, an 'all inclusive' transition government to be known as the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) was to be formed (Article XXII), while a unicameral National Transitional Legislative Assembly was to be created, with representation on the basis of an agreed formula, and having a total of 76 members.¹⁵ The CPA defined the terms of a two-year transition period (2003-2005) to be administered by the NTGL. The NTGL was inaugurated on 14 October 2003. Article IX(2) provides that elections would be held not later than October 2005. A major conditioning factor for reconstruction in Liberia is the challenge and opportunity of starting from scratch. Such a broad reconstruction space (created by the complete destruction of virtually all state institutions, including and especially security institutions) represents an opportunity to 'factor in' all necessary inputs and establish new democratic structures for good governance. There is a general recognition that Liberia should not recover into its pre-war, or even pre-1980, conditions, but should be transformed into a democratically governed coherent and cohesive socio-economic and political system which would form the basis for stability. The Liberian post-conflict reconstruction agenda is set out in the 'Liberia Joint Needs Assessment. It was within this paradox of challenge and opportunity that the United Nations committed itself to the reconstruction of Liberia with the passing of Resolution 1509 of 19 September 2003 which established the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), with a mandate to support implementation of the ceasefire agreement; protect UN staff, facilities, and civilians; support humanitarian and human rights assistance; provide support for security sector reform; and provide support for the implementation of the peace process.¹⁷ UNMIL focus areas include security; national governance; disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of former combatants; and the rule of law.¹⁸ There can be little doubt that UNMIL, which started operations on 1 October 2003, has made a positive difference to the state of security in Liberia. By no means is the security situation comparable to the anarchy which was widespread in the conflict and immediate post-conflict periods: On the streets of Monrovia and its suburbs, there was a general atmosphere of confidence with full resumption of commercial and social activities. The presence of the UN appears to have created a general sense of security and confidence among ordinary Liberians...¹⁹ Any objective analysis of the peacebuilding process in Liberia would need to recognise that security, though still fragile, has been fairly stable – sufficiently to allow elections to take place as scheduled by the CPA (October 2005). UNMIL's complement as of 30 April 2005 stood at 15,786 total uniformed personnel, including 14,530 troops, 196 military observers, 1,060 civilian police, supported by 493 international civilian personnel, 717 local staff, and 437 UN volunteers.²⁰ With increased commercial activities even beyond Monrovia, resumption of schooling, and increased vehicular activity, there is increasing confidence that life is returning to normal in Liberia. The deployment in June 2004 of Ethiopian, Pakistani and Senegalese components of UNMIL significantly enhanced its capacity to monitor the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border, and the Liberia-Guinea border, in the latter case dislodging LURD elements who were previously controlling the area. However, while the general state of security has improved somewhat, the Liberian reconstruction process continues to be challenged by various factors, the net result of which is a reminder that the country is far from transcending those

cleavages and conditions which were in the first instance the root causes of conflict. Specifically, these challenges include, but may not be necessarily limited to:

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

Post-war reconstruction agenda in Africa is hinged on four pillars as follows:

- A) Security sector reforms:** which guarantees personal (human) and territorial security, indexed by targeted activities such as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants; rebuilding and retraining the armed forces and the police; reviewing and formulating a new national defence doctrine and policy; and improving civil and democratic oversight and control of security institutions and personnel.
- B) Justice and reconciliation:** promotes social healing, limit dissent and enhance recourse to non-violent means in the resolution of conflicts. These aspects are signposted by reform of the judicial and penal systems, and the setting up of a truth commission, and perhaps, a war crimes tribunal.
- C) Socio-economic reforms:** addresses fundamental needs such as employment, emergency relief, restoring essential services, and re-laying the economic foundation for growth and development. This phase could also witness the liberalization and privatization of state-owned assets.
- D) Political reform:** promotes good governance, rule of law and political participation through elections after the peace accords, the rebuilding of political institutions, the creation of legitimate and effective political and administrative systems and the involvement of civil society in governance processes (Ibid.).

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in collaboration with UNMIL pursued post-conflict reconstruction of Liberia along the line of these four pillars. Post-war reconstruction in Liberia involved both physical infrastructure and hearts-and-minds activities, psychological operations, rule of law activities, development programmes, assistance provided by governmental and inter-governmental agencies, projects run by local and international NGOs. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) had three distinct sections: peacekeeping troops, a section for the rule of law and a section that coordinated humanitarian activities. These sections worked in tandem with Ellen Johnson's vision of post-conflict reconstruction.

Addison (2003) highlighted three actors in post war reconstruction — local communities, the private sector and the state under reconstruction. Foreman identified other undeniable key players in post-war reconstruction efforts as the international community, comprising international organizations (United Nations, European Union, African Union and sub-regional groupings), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international aid and financial agencies. Forman's position agrees with the different sections of the United Nations mission in Liberia. Accordingly, post war reconstruction is implemented by a consortium of agencies: international organizations, international aid agencies, international and local NGOs and favoured or cooperative political elites. A successful peace keeping mission must therefore have this consortium of agencies operating in their specialized fields.

THE MILITARY IN POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION:

The military are key in establishing security and sharing security information. They have expertise for strengthening the local army, police, and judiciary as well as in disarming former combatants. They have airlifting capacity and medical facilities, both of which may benefit aid agencies. The military and police forces have strong hierarchical structure, regular funding and logistics capabilities and are therefore able to be involved in the four pillars of post-war reconstruction. This

is partly what gives military establishments a clear advantage in configuring civil-military relations. The question however is: Can the military alone successfully operate post-war reconstruction in a peace keeping mission? The military has the capacity to engage successfully in physical reconstruction of infrastructure and provision of diverse logistics. Patrick Coker, a senior public information officer who joined United Nations mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in October 2003 has this to say: “When I arrived in Liberia, a thick cloud of uncertainty and insecurity hung over the country; there was no electricity, no water, fighters carried weapons around, thousands of internally displaced persons, hopelessness, poverty, anguish—we were on edge.”

The military engaged in roads, electricity, water and other social amenities reconstruction in Liberia to facilitate the 2005 general election. In other words, the military can engage in both physical infrastructure and humanitarian services. Antonio Donini posited that military personnel are clearly capable of performing humanitarian tasks. But that the military establishments can do it well without political interests and infringement on the principles that govern humanitarian services (neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanity) cannot be guaranteed. Mike Aaronson of 'Save the Children' remarked that military logistical support to humanitarian operations 'is fine' and military co-ordination of a humanitarian operation 'is not fine'. It is therefore difficult to accept that the military alone can successfully carry out post-conflict reconstruction.

CIVILIANS IN POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION

While the military is available to provide security and logistics, the civilians operating as non-governmental organizations, donor agencies, etc focus purely on humanitarian services. Important humanitarian and development actors, however, have raised concerns about compromising the humanitarian imperative and the associated humanitarian principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality in civilian-military cooperation at peace keeping missions. They also fear that aid will become subordinate to political and military objectives and logic. It has also been argued that integrating military, humanitarian and development work will lead to a blurring of distinctions and thus endanger the safety of aid workers. Michael Pugh et al (1996) divided aid agencies into three positions with regard to civil-military relations. These are who try to stay away from the military as much as possible. The principled The Principled Neutralists, neutralists believe that humanitarian principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality will be sacrificed at the altar of Collaboration with the military and increase security risks of civilians. The pragmatists acknowledge the principles of humanitarian services, collaborate with the military and deal with the issues of principles contextually. The third group - The supporters - welcome wholesale collaboration with the military. Most aid agencies take a rather pragmatic approach, weighing up context-specific opportunities and risks. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has noted that: 'all partners currently face the challenge of trying to define the increasingly blurred boundaries and limits of humanitarian action, in an environment that is subject to political and military imperatives which are outside their respective mandates'. Although the boundary lines are blurred between the military and the civilians, it is not contestable that the military has better equipment and funding to tackle the issues of security and logistics while the civilians (aid workers) have better training to handle the issues of humanitarian services. To advocate that the military be trained to handle humanitarian services or that the civilians be equipped and funded to handle security and logistics will be stretching either party. A middle point therefore will be full integration of the civilians into the peace keeping mission for effective performance of humanitarian services. In order not to make the civilians major targets by rebels, distinction in field operations must be made in terms of uniforms, colour of cars, location and colour of offices etc.

At this juncture, we note that the military and civilians have different roles in any peace keeping mission. Although the boundary lines may be blurred, the effectiveness and accuracy of delivery emanating from training are distinct. While the military will deliver security and logistics services with precision, civilians will deliver humanitarian services with utmost professionalism and in keeping with humanitarian principles. Accordingly, civilian-military cooperation is unavoidable if peace keeping mission will be successful. In areas where civilian and military expertise are required at the same time, the mission must be as civilian as possible and as military as necessary - e.g. with the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) of ex-combatants. In this regard, we advocate joint training of the military and civilians for the common good of the mission. Post-conflict reconstruction and community resilience will continue to be eluded until a seamless cooperation is achieved between the military and civilians in any peace keeping mission.

ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF NON-INCLUSION OR LIMITED INCLUSION OF CIVILIANS IN PEACEKEEPING EFFORTS IN LIBERIA

Liberia as a case study demonstrates the stark reality that peace operations without civilians cannot generate only positive and beneficial outcomes but could generate unintended outcome especially with limited participation of civilians. A peacekeeping operation is referred to as multidimensional when its scope of operations goes beyond the military to include police and civilians, working together but each having specific functions. Although peacekeeping is time- limited, it paves the way to address deeper issues related to the conflict (CARRIÈRE, R. 2010). Civilian Peacekeeping, also referred to as unarmed peacekeeping (Schirch, 2006), is a new term, and involves unarmed individuals placing themselves in conflict situations in an attempt to reduce inter-group violence (Ibid). Civilian peacekeeping works at the grassroots level, offering the possibility of reducing conflict and preventing violence through engagement with communities (Wallis, 2010). The work is undertaken by communities themselves rather than by international peacekeepers, self-proclaimed leaders or government authorities. The aim is to provide open space for local civil society to act (Schirch, 2006). One of the key principles is the 'primacy of those involved'. This principle relegates the role of the international civilian peacekeeper to a supportive one while the lead is taken by communities. It also opens the door to empowerment and building capability of local communities and civil society activists, to enable them to take their destiny in their own hands.

During the 2005 UN World Summit, the two examples that were the most frequently used to criticize and ridicule the United Nations peacekeeping operations , were the Unintended consequences of peacekeeping operations, (Aoi, de Coning and Thakur (eds), 2007) in Iraq "oil-for-food scandal" and the sexual abuses perpetrated by UN peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Both of these examples were especially shocking precisely because of their unintended and counterintuitive nature. However, no scholarly attempt has been made to shed light on the consequences of non-inclusion of civilians in peacekeeping. An attempt is made here, not to further de-legitimize peace operations but to encourage lessons learned from Liberia with the aim at improving the ability of peacekeeping operations in a more effective and inclusive approach in other countries operations.

In order to do so, a highlight of the impact of non-inclusion of civilians in peacekeeping in Liberia is made here to understand how it has created unintended consequences and explore ways to improve the ability to anticipate and counter potential negative unintended consequences. Drawing examples from key sectors-

Security sector reforms:

This section examines post conflict reconstruction in Liberia, with particular focus on the security sector. **Opportunities for SSR in Liberia** are conditioned by the mutually reinforcing relationship between the state of security on the one hand, and the security of the state on the other. A major source of the dysfunctionality of the security sector in Liberia is that the armed and security forces have all through the country's history functioned as instruments for regime interests as opposed to the interests of the citizens (B. J. Samukai, Jr., 2005). As such, their role has essentially been repressive, given the wide gap between regime interests and popular interests (J. Peter Pham (2006). In his study, Ryan Nichols (2005) argued that the first elements of security forces in Liberia were the created in the 'home guards' which were set up to protect the settlers from the indigenous communities and to secure the compliance of the indigenous population with the authority and orders of the settler state. By 1908, the 'home guards' evolved into the Liberian Frontier Force (LFF), which was later to transform into the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). Apart from police and customs functions in the hinterland, the LFF became necessary to ward off challenges over the indigenous populations from France and Britain (Ibid). With forced recruitment methods, the LFF was used as an instrument for promoting the expansionist policies of the settler state essentially referred to as a colonial construct by Martin Lowenkopf (1995).

When it comes to post conflict reconstruction, Liberia presents one of the most challenging contexts. In such context, the prospects for stability and peacebuilding are enhanced by the extent to which SSR is predicated on the state of security broadly defined (human security), as opposed to the narrower focus on the security of the state (protection of the State). The core of SSR lies in this twin imperatives of operational efficiency and democratic governance. From a governance perspective, therefore, the objective of improving the ability of security institutions to deliver security services to citizens in a cost effective and operationally efficient manner is necessary but not sufficient. Operational efficiency, without effective democratic governance of the security sector is a recipe for brutalisation and oppression of the population by the armed and security forces, particularly of the poor and vulnerable. SSR therefore seeks to achieve, not only the efficacy of security institutions, but also to ensure that they are consistent with democratic norms of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. This is particularly relevant in the case of Liberia where there has been repeated personalization of the security sector by “all-powerful” presidency (Charles Taylor, Sir Elleen Johnson in particular). In this regard, the UN backed Liberian reconstruction process paid little attention to the governance aspects of reform, that involves citizens engagement and participation. This in part, has contributed to a non-inclusive national security policy with lack of a coherent and comprehensive framework for the reconstruction of the security sector. Rather, there has been a compartmentalisation of reform and of the reform process. For example, despite the emphasis on reforming the police, there has been no corresponding effort on the reforming the judiciary and correctional services, or recognition of the informal police sector. The Liberian peace process follows the pattern of the UN's modus operandi which has been emerging since the end of the Cold War, characterized by a sequence of activities in the order of a peace agreement, followed by deployment of peacekeepers, a DDR programme, SSR, and ending with elections. In the case of Liberia a Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed in Accra in August 2003, provided for the formation of a transitional government (National Transitional Government of Liberia), including a transitional parliament (National Transitional Legislative Assembly). However, the challenge and opportunity of starting reconstruction from scratch have been hampered by various factors including a non- inclusive and participatory security governance reform. Several studies have listed factors impeding the prospects for democratic governance of the security sector in Liberia all point to one main factor-civilian inclusion. Examples include.

- Lack of adequate constitutional framework (Anicia Lala and Ann Fitz-Gerald (2003), Heiner Hänggi, (2003)Thomas Jaye 2006),
- Conceptual and implementation gaps between SSR and the broader governance framework; Amos Sawyer, *Beyond Plunder* (2005), Albrecht Schnabel and Hans Born (2011) and Sarah Detzner (2017)
- Lack of mechanisms for making the reform process accountable to citizens; Adedeji Ebo (2005), Aboagye, Festus B. and Martin R Rupiya (2005) and Daniel Bendix and Ruth Stanley (2008)
- Inadequate civilian oversight; Bernard B. Fyanka (2014), Karen Barnes Robinson Et Al (2015) and Steffen Eckhard (2016)
- Lack of genuine and effective civilian leadership and management capacity in the Ministry of Defence (MoD); International Crisis Group (2009), Mark Sedra (2010), DECAF (2018)
- Inadequate civil society involvement in the reform process; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) (2004), Alexander Loden (2007), SFCG (2011) and Sarah Detzner (2017)
- And most recently, a of gap between the Liberian population and the leadership of UNMIL: Smith, Charles Anthony and Heather M. Smith.(2011), Sirleaf, Ellen Johnson. (2013), Snyder, Michael R (2014), Roby, Christin. (2018) and DECAF (2018), Hariri, Alicia Y (2019)

Overall, a coherent and accountable framework for SSR in Liberia needs to be articulated, based a comprehensive and inclusive national security policy.

Justice and reconciliation:

For a hopeful population, George Weah's victory in the December 2017 elections in Liberia promised the start of a new era. Another important transition the Liberia underwent during this period was drawdowns of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions and a growing peacebuilding agenda. Liberia's peacebuilding experiences are also linked to changes at the UN, namely a re-focus on sustaining peace practices and long-awaited institutional changes. This section looks at Liberia to examine what civilian inclusion in peacekeeping means in practice, and the implication this has for UN missions and their transitions.

Sustaining peace is defined as a 'goal and a process to build a common vision of society'(UN, 2017). In April 2016 the UN General Assembly and Security Council adopted parallel resolutions on sustaining peace, which emphasized the need to support national efforts to build an inclusive and people-centered vision of peace – one that addresses the root causes of violence and promotes rule of law, good governance and human rights (IBID). Between 202-2015, Liberia undergone a number of transitions but demonstrated resilience to challenges such as Ebola and controversial election. After 13 failed peace agreements and a destructive civil war, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2003. Following this, Liberia had a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), but never held anyone accountable for atrocities committed during the war. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) led the peace talks and has continued to play a significant role in the country. The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), which began in 2003, came to a close in March 2018 (UNMIL 2018). According to reports, it worked hard to ensure a smooth transition, as it made a shift from the peacekeeping mission to the UN Country Team (UNCT) rather than civilian peacekeepers like local communities, whose ownership to the process is key to successful transition. Prior it is closure; it developed a phased peacebuilding plan. The first is adoption of the plan, which has been adopted by the government and the international community as the focus for continued intervention without a deep attempt for

adoption by communities or citizens most of whom have no knowledge of the plan. The second phase of the plan was implementation under the Weah's administration. Despite efforts by UNMIL, it can be argued that the UN transitions have not addressed the root causes of conflict effectively. Failure to address root causes can remain a cause of concern in terms of sustaining peace. C. Obi (2019) argued that the Liberian Peacebuilding Plan indicates some major concerns with short-term priorities such as

Access to justice to which he argued that Liberia's outdated legal framework lacks capacity, unless the government harmonise statutory and customary court systems.

Security sector reform (SSR) – while significant progress has been made in police reform, civilian oversight remains a challenge,.

Reconciliation – most of the TRC's recommendations, such as prosecutions, remain unimplemented.

Inclusive economic diversification and reduction of donor dependency – the government is busy costing the new Agenda for Transformation and will establish a macroeconomic research and policy unit, but still relies on exports of primary commodities.

Governance – the constitutional review process was shabby with limited participation of citizens, primary beneficiary of the process. It is worthy to note that as at the time of writing this paper, the Local Government Bill and Land Rights Bill have been passed as part of implementation of the peacebuilding plan. Decentralisation however remains a major issue as it is yet to go beyond service delivery to local governance and allow decision-making at local levels.

In the long term, the plan stresses accountability and anti-corruption. Yet ISS research (2019) reveals that the government has not been transparent regarding its budget, most of which is spent on recurring costs, especially the salaries of legislative members. The peacebuilding plan notes that inclusive dialogues will be at the heart of agreements with international partners but lacks in approach and strategy for achieving this,

Justice and SSR – There is yet to be a conscious focus on legislative and policy changes or , decentralization of justice and security. This may be a wishful thinking as in most countries in Africa, justice and security remains under the control of regimes. CSOs are playing active role in strengthening traditional mechanisms of justice and security, unless the government plays an active role, sustainability of such efforts is questioned. .

Governance – constitutional reform remains a concern. E.g. addressing human rights instruments and laws, transitional issues addressed in the TRC report, youth employment, civic education, gender affirmative action and the climate-sensitive management of resources remains a concern.

The above shows that there is a need for a strong focus on capacity development in various areas, including civil society and local communities. It also showed that the plan has merit in terms of strategy but not in approach. For example, outlining engagements with partners such as ECOWAS, engagement with civil society and capacity building of local communities for sustainable peace.

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