

PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE AFRICAN DISPUTES IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps one of the most distressing features of the African continent, which profoundly affected the very existence of some African states and the survival of many societies, has been the seemingly endless capacity for violence, wars, racial hatred and civil disorder that have been the characteristics of the African internal politics in recent years.

Confronting armed conflicts and settling Africa's disputes peacefully is the most urgent problem facing Africa today, at the same time, it represents a critical challenge before the African actors and other parties because of the special peculiarities of the African disputes after the cold war and the complexity added from the internal and external factors that involve and affect these conflicts.

In this paper I shall evaluate the process of peaceful settlement of African disputes, considering these factors:

1. The special characteristics of the African disputes in the 1990s.
2. The African mechanisms for peaceful settlement of disputes.
3. Lessons from selected African disputes.

The Special Characteristics of the African Disputes in the 1990s:

After the cold war, the characteristics of African conflicts differed clearly from those prevailed during the years of national liberation and cold war. The difference seems clear in the form of conflicts, their nature, number, intensity, proliferation and the ability of containing and finding peaceful solutions for them.

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The literature of conflict resolutions divides the African conflicts into number of categories: (1) The conflicts that result from the failure of state - making, especially the failure in achieving the national integration. (2) The legacies of the cold war, specially those which took the form of social revolutions or struggle for the liberation that require intervention and involvement of the warring rival factions under the cold war. (3) The conflicts which result from the legacies of colonialism such as the borders disputes. (4) The traditional wars. (5) The conflicts which result form the ethnic and national conflict. (6) The religious and sectarian conflicts. (7) The political, social and economic crises which accompany the processes of democratization. (Lakidi 1994: 17).

In the Cold War, inter-states conflicts-prevailed in Africa and required a lot of attention and efforts to contain them (categories no. 2,3,4), while other conflicts occupied low priority during the same period. The motives and the reasons lying behind the proliferation of inter - state conflicts were clear and can be summarized in ideology, the cold war competition, decolonization and anti-apartheid movements, external interference, personality and territorial disputes... etc. So, we have seen, for example, the militarization of territorial disputes between Ethiopia and Somalia, the escalation of the Eritrean war of national liberation and the proxy war in Angola and Mozambique, coupled with destabilization efforts on the part of South Africa. In Mozambique, Angola and Namibia, were all directly connected to the cold war competition and the involvement of the superpowers in the continent. The competition might be extended to some major powers, as France which gained many benefits from the cold war period in Africa and intervened in many disputes (in Chad against lybian troops and in zaire's Shaba 1977 - 78 to restore order in that province) protecting its interests in the region. (keller 1996; 5-10).

During the cold war, the superpowers played a major role in managing and containing conflicts and disorder or, as Rothchild notes:

"the two superpowers placed parameters upon Africa's conflicts... remedies for internal conflicts has to be sought through them, giving these external actors considerable leverage to regulate relations within and between states" (Rothchild 1996: 231). In other words, confrontation between the two superpowers, under the bi-polarity, was considered some sort of "Condominium" imposed upon Africa and other parts of the world.

After the cold war, conflicts within states along ethnic, religious, regional, economic and even clan lines have arisen and multiplied. Sixteen of the thirty-five internal wars, currently being waged through the world, taking place in Africa. In other words there have been no less than 20 Full-Fledged civil wars in Africa in the period 1960-1993, currently there are 12 on-going civil conflicts taking place in the same continent (Rothchild 1996: 228; Mazrui, Otannu & Salim 1993: 1).

The sources of this wave have existed in the dramatic changes in the world economic and political order, started at the dawn of 1990s, to which Africa was neither ready nor immune. These sources have, also, its roots in the African political, economic and societal conditions, which are very "sensitive" to the outside effects, particularly that related to the world order. The change wind that blew all over Africa was accompanied by very strong pressures. First, the sudden collapse of the (former) Soviet Union and his eastern European Socialist Block, which caused a strong shock for many African states, especially those who heavily depended on these socialist countries. The second. pressures imposed upon African countries from those who have won the cold war (the western states of the OECD) and from the international financial institutions (World Bank and IMF) by the aim of accelerating political and economic reform, known as "Western Conditionality". The third. a severe economic crisis. The fourth. internal opposition to authoritarian regimes. (Baynham 1994: 38; Mkandawire 1994; 155-161 & Abul-Enein 1996: 279-787).

Those great world changes and the accompanied huge pressures, participated in the national, ethnic and tribal awakening inside Africa.

So the conflicts erupted specially within states - like what have occurred in central and eastern Europe - to challenge, overthrow the authoritarian rule, threaten the unity of the states and may change the borders that drawn by the colonial rule long time ago and have rarely been changed since then.

The O.A.U. has realized the importance of facing that huge wave of internal conflicts, so she has raised this issue to occupy the top of the list of African priorities in the 1990s. While Mr/ Salim Ahmad Salim, the Secretary General of O.A.U. was talking about the priorities of the African work and how to face the challenges, said: "but perhaps above all, the management of that all embracing issue of inter-state conflicts and the establishment and maintenance of peace, security and stability on our continent". (Lakidi 1992: 2).

It is important, when talking about the possibilities of the peaceful settlement of the African conflicts specially, in the 1990s to highlight two important issues. First, the forms of the internal conflicts. Second, the problematics of the internal conflicts and its implications in terms of the possibility of the peaceful settlements.

(1) Forms of internal conflicts :

The typology of internal conflicts is considered very important because it enables us to point out the particular characteristics that facilitate searching the relevant approaches to deal with them using either political tools, legal tools or other forcible measures.

In addition to the importance o distinguishing between the potential and the actual conflicts, we find that it is essential, in the case of the actual conflicts, to identify the relation between the state and the internal conflict. If the state plays the role of an arbiter, there won't be any problems but in the conflicts where the state isn't a neutral arbiter acting as a warring rival faction , at this time there will be a need of other parties to inervene, because the role of the state in this case is commonly accompanied by violence or terrorism.

Also we have to distinguish between the internal conflicts according to the target of the opposition groups to the established governments (a) The following: Lakidi 1992: 8-9/17 & Deegan 1996: 50-63):

A) The democratic struggle: if the majority practises the struggle against the established government to achieve democracy for all, without the need to change the system of the matter doesn't represent a conflict. but in Africa it may be a conflict. But if there is a wide democratic struggle which is directed against the ruling regimes to change the nature of the state (South Africa). the matter here represents a conflict .

B) The ethnic conflict: In this regard we can distinguish between two forms: First when an ethnic group (a minority) - that has a considerable number of population and lives on a specific territory - runs after targets such as getting a suitable political position and a fair share of the economic resources within the frame of the established political system, getting a greater autonomy within the frame of an existing political system (like the case of southern Sudan or the Afars in the north of Djibouti) or getting an independent state (the case of Eritrea). Second, when the conflict has mainly ethnic and internal dimensions, in addition to an international dimension which are represented in country's claims on a part of another country's territory on the ground of irredentism (historical or ethnic), such as Ogaden, between Somalia and Ethiopia .

C) Religious or sectarian conflicts; where some fundamentalist groups fight to confirm its identity or to propagate its beliefs among other groups. This form of conflict in Africa exists mainly in frontier regions between Islam and Christianity, such as in Kenya, Eritria, Ethiopia or Nigeria . . . etc. There are other countries that have been affected by the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism like Algeria for example. This type of conflicts may be mixed with the other forms, the democratic struggle (Algeria) or with the ethnic conflicts (Eritria or Ethiopia) or may be an independent form .

D) The silent warfare..Where a major group of the citizen who live in a state feels alienation. In this case they avoid the political participation and hate the ruling the ruling regime in silent way. This type requires special initiatives to correct the established economic and social conditions .

(2) The internal conflicts: special implications for the possibilities of the peaceful settlement.

The internal conflicts - including all the various types have specific implications concerning the possibilities of the peaceful settlement of these conflicts in Africa, specially in the 1990s. Those implications can be summarized in the following points:

(A) The contradiction between the sovereignty and the internationalization of domestic conflicts. One of the problems which faced the processes of the peaceful settlement of the African problems specially in the field of the internal conflicts was the contradiction between the requirements of the national sovereignty and the demands of the peaceful settlement of conflicts belonging to this type, particularly the intervention of third parties.

The African states were keen on respecting and consolidating the principles of independence, sovereignty of every African state and its territorial integrity. This was clear in the OAU Charter and even in the declaration of establishing the O.A.U. Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

This keenness was understood and has its Justifications such as having recent independence, the large number of expected internal crises, the ethnic divisions and the African sensitivity to the European states which had a colonial history. So, the African states were unable to interact in normal way with other parties, fearing of foreign intervention in their internal affairs or "receiving orders" from them. (Abul Enein 1994 80-81).

There is no doubt that this direction represented a restriction on the third party during the process of settlement specially since 1960s till 1980s. But this effect decreased - to some extent - in the 1990s. Where the world direction increased towards internationalizing domestic conflicts because of two major factors: first - the change in the world order and its specially concerning the world order's support to the strong wave of consolidating the pillars of human and minorities rights and democratization on one hand, and the nature of conflicts in the new phase which became very connected with regional stability and conflict resolution in general on the other. Conflicts of this type often start as internal but its side effects and consequences extend to neighbouring states. For instance civil war in the Sudan has its effects on central Africa, Chad, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda and Kenya. The civil war on (Congo - Zaire) also has its effects on central Africa, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania, the matter which attract foreign powers to intervene. Under the pressure of this wave - we witnessed an increasing intervention by international organizations in internal conflicts. In the cold war era, the UN Security Council has intervened in many cases (Indonesian Question 1946, the Congo Crisis 1960, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. But in the 1990s, the Issues of Somalia, Liberia, Angola, Rwanda and Burundi were among various cases that have been under the mandate of the Security Council (Brokker & Kleiboer 1996: 733). The role of the OAU has also increased in the field of internal conflicts in Africa rather than before. This shift represents in general a positive attitude in the processes of peaceful settlement of African conflicts after the cold war.

(B) Difficulties of intervening in / or controlling internal conflicts: The increasing number of internal conflicts in Africa imposed serious difficulties which hindered the prospects of peaceful settlements compared with interstate conflicts.

We could point out some of those difficulties in the following:

1. The type of intervention in civil wars; the cases of intervention by the international community or by third parties in civil wars the common form in Africa. Conflicts, are usually accompanied by many difficulties and the possibility of success is very Low. Intervention in civil wars requires more facilities and more efforts to Guarantee the consensus of the conflicting parties and their supporters to enable the mediators, or the peace keeping forces, to perform their mission. (Abul-Enein 1994: 50). The success of diplomatic efforts during the civil war can't be obtained unless the two warring rivals feel the "hurting stalemate" which enforce them to welcome the role of the mediator. One of the most important conditions which is necessary to settle conflicts, lies in reaching the phase of "ripeness" of the conflict. (Zartman 1995: 236-39 & Gomes 1996: 39-42). Reaching this phase in civil wars is often rare, costly and usually has its negative effects on the process of peaceful settlement. So, in the Liberian civil war, international and internal parties (The Liberian Council of Churches and ECOWAS) couldn't reach a ceasefire until 1993, when all parties agreed to support the efforts of the United Nation, the O.A.U. and ECOWAS, after three years from starting war. (Abul-Enein 1994: 60-67).

In the Case of Southern Sudan the chance of reaching an agreement or a peaceful settlement in 1972 has been obtained through the mediation of Hailasylasy and the support of the World Council of Churches and the All African Council of Churches. This chance hasn't been available again, since president Gaafar Numairy intervened imposing some unacceptable measures in 1983. During the continuous war, the warring rival factions haven't reached the phase of hurting stalemate so far. So all the different efforts of mediation haven't Succeeded in ending the civil war in the south. (Spear & Keller 1996: 121-122).

2. Arms-smuggling, violence and the difficulties of controlling the fighters.

Place of asylum	Mostly From	Number
Total Africa		5.220.000
Algeria	Western Sahara, Mali, Nigher	120.000
Burundi	Rwanda	140.000
Cote d'Ivire	Leberia	290.000
Ethiopia	Somalia, Sudan, Djibout, kenya	308.000
Ghana	Togo, Liberia	85.000
Guinea	Liberia, sierralcone	640.000
Kenya	Soalia, Sudan, Ethiopia	225.000
Liberia	Sierraleone	120.000
Senegal	Mauritania	68.000
South Africa	Mozambique	90.000
Sudan	Eritrea, Ethiopia, Chad	450.000
Tanzani	Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Mozambique	703.000
Uganda	Sudan, Zaire, Rwanda	230.000
Zaire	Rwanda, Angola, Burundi, Sudan, Uganda	1.332.000
Congo, Fornals		
Zambia	Angola, Zaire, Somalia	125.400
Total Americas and	the Caribbean	256.000
United States	Cuba, various other	152.220
Total East Asia a' and	the Paciffc	453.000
China	Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos	294.100
Thailand	Myanmar, Laos	39.200
Total Europe and	Frmer USSR	2.521.000
Armenia	Azerbaijan	304.000
Azerbaijan	Armenia, Uzbekistan, Russia	238.000
Croatia	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yugoslavia	189.500
Germany	Bosnia and Herzegovina	442.700
Italy	Former Yugoslavia	60.700
Russia	Former USSR	500.000
Yugoslavia	Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina	40.000
Total Middle East		5.499.000
Gaza Strip	Palestinians	683.600
Iran	Afghanistan, Iraq	2.075.500
Iraq	Palestinians, Irad, Turkey	115.200
Jordan	Palestinians, Irad	1.294.800
Lebanon	Palestinians	348.300
Syria	Palestinians	342.300
West Bank	Palestinians	517.400
Total Sourth and	Cntral Asia	1.386.000
India	Tibet, Sir Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Afghanistan,	319.200
	Myanmar	
Nepal	Bhutan, Tibet	106.600
Pakistan	Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia	867.500
Total Refugees		15.337.000

Source: The world Almanac and Book of Facts 1997, (New Jersey; K111 Reference Corporation, 1997) P. 840.

The majority of political organizations have a contact with military groups and have its own militias. The Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) is considered the military wing of the Rwandese patriotic Front (PRF). In the Sudan, the National Islamic Front (NIF) has established the Popular Defence Forces and the SPLM has established SPLA.. etc. (Deegan 1996:185).

Those militias have got their arms from many regional and international parties across the long open unguarded borders. The Commission of Inquiry which belongs to the Security Council said in its report in September 1995 that almost 20 African and non-African states involved in arming the Rwandese Hutu Rebels. (Africa Research Bulletin 1996: 174). Under these circumstances it's difficult to reach an agreement or a long life settlement because controlling the militias is considered a complicated matter, and disarming them is more complicated. The U.N. experience in Somalia represents an example of the inability of the leaders of wings to control the fighters and this was,

partly, responsible for the inability of the UN forces to reach a ceasefire or distribute the food stuff in Mogadishu. (Spear & Meller 1996: 125-126). Also, difficulties such as disarming the militias and controlling the arms were behind spoiling many agreements that have been reached in civil war in Liberia.

3. Refugees: the problem of refugees is one of the most important problems which results from African internal conflicts. It is considered, at the same time, one of the reasons that can lead to the resumption and the eruption of those conflicts. The number of refugees expresses the dangerousness of the problem in Africa. At the end of 1995 the refugees in Africa reached almost 5.220.000 refugees while the number in the world is about 15.337.500. The majority of the African refugees is concentrated in some countries such as Zaire, Tanzania, Guinea, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Cote d'Ivoire. The source of the majority of those numbers came from the neighbouring countries as it is clear in the following table:

The problem of refugees adds a heavy burden to the possibilities of peaceful settlement of the African conflicts specially related to the financial resources for affording food to the refugees or efforts needed for protecting and looking after those large numbers in the place of asylum. All those demanded efforts are now over the ability of the African countries and represent a hard task, before the international community, particularly, the U.N. relief efforts. Thus, the internal conflicts, specially the ethnic ones, move towards the military settlement at the expense of peaceful settlement. The military force is often the decisive element in ethnic wars, where foreign Aids to the warring rival factions are very needed, and don't represent negative effects on the legitimacy of the receivers (on the contrary of the ideological wars for instance). So, if there was no winner, foreign intervention would continue and the prolonged war became easily, expected, at the expense of peaceful settlement.

The African Mechanisms of Settling the African Conflicts Peacefully in the 1990s:

Those who put the OAU charter concentrated on the principle of peaceful settlement of African disputes within the African context. A Mechanism has been created to implement this principle, the Mechanism was the Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration which is considered one of the major four branches of the OAU institutional structure.

But in practice it was proved that mechanism was unable to work and the African states didn't send my conflict to that Commission, on contrary they dealt with other alternatives, (within the OAU itself) such as solitary diplomacy, commissions of conciliation which were formed by member states, ad-hoc committees which were empowered permanently to settle the conflicts such as ad-hoc committee on inter African states disputes... etc. For 30 years, in practice, and success of the OAU has not been encouraging in general in the field of peace making or peace keeping. Generally the African states preferred the

political settlements to the legal or judicial ones. (Maluwa 1989: 304-313).

In the 1990s the O.A.U. has been openly attacked and criticized sharply because of the inability of its mechanisms to face the numerous and various conflicts which spreaded all over Africa. So the O.A.U which was established to achieve colonial liquidation and to build the African solidarity, has to promote and activate its mechanisms to face the hard task of settling the African disputes and to work mainly in the field of preventive diplomacy in cooperation with the African sub-regional organizations on one hand, and the U.N. on the other

At the same context, mechanisms have been emerged, through other channels such as NGO's African traditional mechanisms and other initiatives to participate more effectively, in conflict resolution in many cases. (Foltz 1991: 347).

The OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution: The 29th OAU Summit in Cairo (June 1993) issued the declaration of establishing the O.A.U Mechanism. Its structural and financial bodies have been built in later meetings, the final organizational structure Of the Mechanism constitutes of 3 integral parts: **First**, the Central Organ which includes three levels: 1- Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of African states and Governments that is elected annually, in addition to the former president of the O.A.U and the next president if he is known, also it may include number of African countries invited for being interested in the conflict. The Central Organ at this level holds its meetings at the request of the Secretary General or at any African country's request, once annually at least. 2- The foreign ministers level that has meetings at least twice a year. 3- Ambassadors accredited to the OAU. They hold a meeting once a month. **Second**, the Secretary - General has been considered one of the two operational arms of the Mechanism. Also he has been granted - with all states support - more effective political role within the frame

of the Mechanism so as to activate his role in peace making, management and conflict resolution. **Third.** the General Secretariat has been considered the second operational arms of the Mechanism. There is a consensus among African states on the necessity of promoting its efficiency to be able to help the Secretary General and the Central Organ in conflict prevention, management and resolution. In this regard the Secretariat General will make researches, watch the areas of conflicts and its development, collect and analyse the available information concerning those conflicts and offer advices to the Secretary General concerning measures needed at any case. Conflict Management Department has been established in March 1992, within the General Secretariat, as an important step on the way of facing the increasing burdens of conflicts and problems. "Peace fund" was established to be the financial body of the Mechanism. This fund get resources in many ways: 1- Fixed percentage of the budget of O.A.U (5% per year, not less than one million dollar). 2- The voluntary participation, by the African countries and non governmental organizations in Africa. 3- The voluntary participation by non African states, but under the full supervision of the Secretary-General and the Central Organ (Abul-Enein 1994: 76-87).

The Evaluation of the O.A.U Mechanism in Peaceful Settlement of African Conflicts:

The Mechanism, in its institutional structure became more active and more flexible - in tackling African conflicts than the traditional organs of the OAU. It looks like an "African Security Council" but without permanent memberships or veto. It constitutes a promoting of the Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments to be more effective in many aspects: 1- The expansion of the Central Organ membership in the way that permits the continuity in tracing crises and conflicts, in addition to intensifying representing interested states or that located in the area of conflict. 20 The mandate given to the Central Organ, by which it has become full authorized in conflict

prevention, management and resolution in Africa. The new Mechanism, accordingly, has turned to be as "MiniAfrican Summit "or" Permanent Exclusive Committee "for the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments. 3Activating the role of the Secretary - General, Strengthening the departments and the offices of the General Secretariat and promoting the skills of the officers These among other steps, turned the O.A.U, in general, to be more active under its new system.

In addition to the above mentioned aspects, the OAU has adopted, in fact, a new approach moving from ad-hoc approach to a more systematic effort to tackle the continent's conflicts, including particularly internal conflicts. This new approach reflects a wide acceptance in Africa that national sovereignty is not absolute and that the O.A.U has a positive role to play in helping to resolve even internal conflicts (Lakidi 1994: 19).

After nearly 4 years in practice, the role of OAU Mechanism concentrated on the area of peace making which is, defined to include both preventive action and mediation. Nevertheless, the area of peace keeping has been left mainly for the responsibility of the UN, despite the fact that the OAU Mechanism has discussed proposals concerning its involvement in peace keeping and the issue of forming an African Peace Keeping Force to support its efforts in peaceful settlement of African conflicts. (The Cairo Consultation 1994: 3. & Lakidi 1994: 23).

1. Preventive Diplomacy: Preventive diplomacy measures are those steps that can be undertaken in advance of an open conflict, either to stop it from breaking out at all or to facilitate more effective management and better prospects for its resolution should it in fact break out (Lakidi 1994: 23)

In other words, the concept of preventive diplomacy constitutes a framework, which among other things, includes: Early Warning, timely fact finding, confidence building, and preventive deployment of military units and troops to avert outbreak of hostilities.

In the area of early warning, the General Secretariat offered report to the Central Organ at its request in its 12th meeting at ambassadorial level held on 21 February 1995. The report revealed that the OAU has envisaged to embark on a process of establishing an early warning network to cover the entire continent to help the organization in its need for timely information on potential conflict situations. This network could have member states as the key focal points. It could also include sub regional organizations, the UN and its specialized agencies, Academic Institutions and research centres, the media and N.G.O.'s, with a coordinating facilities located at the proposed OAU Conflict Management Centre which will be fully equipped with a Crisis Management Room (OAU Central Organ 1995 : 25).

The principal work of the officers in this network will be receiving, synthesizing and analyzing the relevant information and data and making recommendations to the Secretary-General and, of course, to the Central Organ on the options open for early political action, which could be based on the following options (OAU Central Organ 1995: 5).

- a) Dispatching a secretariat fact finding mission.
- b) The Secretary-General himself undertaking in assessment mission to the member state in distress.
- c) Dispatching a fact-finding mission from the Central Organ.
- d) Appointing a special envoy or special representative for the purpose.

The O.A.U has established a data base covering all member states having information on OAU involvement in election observing and situations of refugees etc.

Mediation: Mediation, as a part of preventive diplomacy has two goals: First, to achieve an agreement between the parties to settle their dispute by peaceful means. Secondly, to reduce the underlying conflict. The OAU Mechanism did a lot of efforts of mediation in number

of African countries such as Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Lesotho, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan. Mediations took different forms, including eminent persons, special envoys and representatives of the Secretary General, direct contacts between the Secretary General and the governments of some countries and sending missions by the General Secretariat. These forms of efforts aimed at facilitating the process of mediation and conciliation or assessing the situations on the ground to report the Secretary General or / and the Central Organ (Hefny 1997: 8 & Bercovitch 1985: 738-739). The OAU efforts of mediation haven't led to the expected results yet, but they led to achieve peace agreement between the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (R.P.F) and succeeded, to some extent, in Liberia through sending the Secretary-General special envoy "Canaan Banana" (the former president of Zimbabwe) - who supported the ECOWAS initiative to consolidate peace and stability in Liberia (Hefny 1997: 8-9).

The OAU Mechanism, in cooperation with other organizations observed many elections and referenda in 25 member states and there's an increasing trend in Africa calling on the OAU for not only observing the elections but also supervising them (Hefny 1997: 8). In this regard, the OAU's role should be intensified or activated on the ground that the electoral operations are considered conflict areas in the process of democratization in Africa on one hand, and the OAU is well known as a neutral mediator on the other.

2. The Mechanism and peace keeping: peace keeping and peace making really form a continuum, therefore peacekeepers should always be actively involved during the mediation phase of conflict management. The African countries realised the importance of establishing an African peace keeping force to support the processes of conflict peaceful settlement and realized at the same time the importance of building Peace Operations Doctrine for Africa which should determine the conditions for intervention and the relevant

forms of it in different conflicts, specially the internal ones and the countries expected to be area of a humanitarian disaster. The Doctrine should be agreed upon by member states of the OAU (Lakidi 1994: 23). So the subject still being under discussion inside the OAU Mechanism and Council of Ministers, the African chiefs - of staff of the members of Mechanism held their first meeting to discuss the technical sides of the African Peace Keeping Force and Council of Ministers welcomed the results of this meeting which is considered remarkable progress in this regard (OAU 1996(b)) Despite of the participation of African states in the UN Congo operation in the early 1960s and the formation of an African peace keeping force in Chad 1981-1982, the African experience is still considered very limited in this field (Abul-Enein 1994: 41-51).

Indeed, peace keeping is not only an expensive undertaking but also a difficult and complex exercise involving military and civilian components, requiring heavy financial, logistical as well as technical inputs.

So, Cairo declaration of establishing the Mechanism stipulates "... in the event the conflicts degenerate to the OAU extent of requiring collective international intervention and policing, the assistance or where appropriate the services of the United Nations" (OAU Central Organ 1995: 9).

factions, if a credible and operational peacekeeping force can be deployed (OAU Central Organ 1996. MEC/MIN/3(IV) 1920).

C- Lessons from Selected African Conflicts:

(1) Lessons From Burundi: The people of Burundi are divided into two ethnic groups, 85 percent of an estimated population of perhaps 6 million is said to be Hutu, 14 percent Tutsi and 1 percent Twa. After the coup d'etat, that had been done by Tutsi officers, where they overthrew the elected president Nadadaye (64.8%) on 21 October, 1993, bloody ethnic clashes took place between the Tutsi and Hutu.

(Lemarchand 1995: 127-130, 160-177). Immediately the chief of the OAU (then president Mubarak) briefed the Security Council on the dangerous situation in Burundi, but the Council didn't take any response. Nothing had been done except freezing the aids to Burundi by Germany and U.S.A (Abul-Enein 1994: 91-94).

In this context, the OAU Mechanism moved on the level of Heads of States and Governments so quickly. The Central Organ of OAU Mechanism condemned the coup as it was directed against an elected government and decided to deploy an international monitoring mission in Burundi. The first estimation was 200 civil and military, but on the ground of fact the Mechanism deployed a substantial military contingent (OMIB) (67 officers + civilians), mainly from Burkina and Mali, the mandate of that mission was establishing peace and facilitating the national conciliation. At the same time, communications had been made with the government, and the opposition, and fact-finding mission had been sent by the chief of the OAU (Hefny 1997: 9 & OAU Central Organ 1995: 9).

These measures led, in cooperation with the U.N, to some sort of permanent stability specially reaching a conciliation accord on the 10th of September 1994. But another coup took place on the 25th of July 1996 led by Major Buyoya.

The Mechanism Central Organ held a meeting on the level of ambassadors and called on all the member states and the international community for taking the necessary measures to impose a blockade and sanctions against Burndi. The second regional summit held in Arusha-Tanzania decided to impose economic sanctions and practicing pressures against the new regime.

Under these pressures, Buyoya held talks with the leaders of political parties in January 1997 and offered some concessions concerning the negotiations about the country's future. However the recent report of the Secretary-General confirms that the deterrent regional measures haven't reached its target where the security situation is still danger-

ous, the civil war is almost continuous and the problems of refugees and displaced are still serious (OAU 1997 (b)).

The role of the OAU Mechanism in Burundi is considered a good example of the preventive diplomacy practiced by the organization, there were also a good follow up to the situation, but the poor facilities available for OAU on the hand, and the complexity of the situation in Burundi, on the other, reduced the possibilities of achieving peace in Burundi.

Lessons from: Democratic Congo (formerly Zaire):

The conflict in Zaire started to be tragic since October, 1996 because of the erupt of war between the governmental army on one hand, the Banyamulenge groups and the Zairean rebeles who gathered under the Alliane of Democratic Liberation Forces of Zaire and congo (AFDL) on the other. The conflict witnessed acceleration for many reasons, including the existence of hundred thousands of Rwandese refugees, the former Rwandan armed forces, some of them were responsible for the massacres in Rwanda. This conflict has led to the deterioration of the situation in eastern Zaire and the involvement of many regional and international parties in the conflict, known as "Great lakes Region Conflict".

Africa, tackled the conflict at several levels, including the OAU Mechanism, regional initiatives and we shouldn't forget the coordination with other international parties.

The Secretary - General of the OAU held a lot of talks with the conflicting parties including former president Mubutu, other African and non-African parties, the ambassadors of Belgium, U.S.A., France, Italy, the representatives of the E.U and the special envoy of the U.N Raymond Chretien. The Secretary-General sent also two enquiry missions during the period from October to November, 1996 (OAU: 1997(a)).

On 11 November, 1996, the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism, met in Addis Ababa at the level of ministers in its fourth extraordinary session and adopted some far - reaching decisions, including the launching of strong appeal for cessation of hostilities, consistent with the decisions of the Nairobi regional summit of 5, November, 1996. The Central Organ also expressed its commitment to the unity, cohesion and respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Zaire, as well as re-affirmed the inalienable rights of all peoples within internationally recognized territorial boundaries as stipulated in the OAU Charter on Human and People's Rights and other international conventions relevant to the right of citizenship and nationality (OAU 1997 (a)).

The Central Organ also has given a mandate for the minister of external relations of Cameroon (current chairman representative), the foreign minister of Ethiopia, representative of the past chairman and the minister of the foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe (a representative of the next chairman) in cooperation with the Secretary - General of the OAU, to follow the implementation of the outcome of the session, with particular reference to the issue of setting up a neutral force as recommended by the Nairobi regional summit, to facilitate the creation of safe corridors and temporary sanctuaries for rendering of humanitarian assistance to those in need in Zaire (OAU 1997 (c): 1-2).

On the regional level, there were some regional summits (1) The first Nairobi summit on 5, November, 1996, Uganda, Zambia, Rwanda and Eritrea, the Ethiopian prime minister, the minister of foreign relations of Cameroon as a representative of the current chief of OAU and also the Secretary-General of OAU.

2- The second Nairobi summit, was held on 16 December 1996. It was attended by president Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Mandela of South Africa in addition to the parties which attended the first summit. The member states called for the establishment of a mechanism

for following up the decisions and urged Zaire to grant citizenship and the nationality to all those who stay inside its international borders. The presidents of Kenya, Zimbabwe and Cameroon were given a mandate to take the necessary initiatives for settling the crisis (OAU 1997(c): 2-4).

(3) The third Nairobi summit, on 20, March to follow up to the situation as a part of the continuous efforts by African leaders to find a peaceful solutions to the crisis, the Heads of States and Governments of the member countries of the UN Standing Consultative Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, met in Brazavill on 3, December 1996. Presidents of Congo. Angola, Eauatorial Guinea and Gabon, Burundi in addition to representatives of Chad, Zaire, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic and Saotome & Pyincipe also a representative of the OAU and UN attended the meeting. The leaders issued a declaration, including the reaffirmation of the principle of inviolability of the borders of Zaire, the establishment of a regional Early Warning Mechanism, calling for lifting the sanctions against Burundi and the convening ministerial conference on the problem of "Democratic Institutions and peace in Central Africa" (OAU 1997 (c): 6-7).

Despite these African efforts and various initiatives, the international parties were about to move in the diplomatic field, specially after the Security Council had issued a resolution 1080 (1996) concerning the deployment of multinational forces in the east of Zaire for relief purpose. But the above mentioned force hadn't been deployed because of the sudden return off refugees to their country. The matter was completely called of on 20 December. The efforts of president Mandela started where he attended the second Nairobi summit and also met the UN special envoy and expressed his will to play a role to facilitate the meeting between president Bizimungu of Rwanda and

the former prime minister of Zaire, "if the leaders of the sub-region, as well as the SADC Countries wanted him to do so" (OAU 1996(a) Africa Research Pulletin 1996: 12472-12478).

But, ulithen about six monthes, The Alliance of Democratic Liberation Forces of Zaire and Congo (AFDL), defeated the Governmental army and overthrew Mubutu and his regime.

In General, the lesson of Zaire pointed out the serious difficulties hindering containing the internal conflicts, where the determinant element in ending it is often the military action.

CONCLUSION

Under the scourge of internal conflicts the peaceful settlement of African conflicts, in the post cold war era would no longer be an easy task, the concept of African peaceful settlement has been changed, to be an integral part of conflict management. Most efforts offered in this area, particularly in domestic conflicts, don't reach its target. It often participates only in minimizing the dangerous phases of conflicts or, at least, determining announcing the rules and restrictions concerning the future resolutions. Some import points should be taken into consideration.

(1) At the national level, efforts must be afforded to encourage governments and the opposition groups to adopt the approach of managing ethnic differences, in stead of eliminating them. In this area of preventive diplomacy, African parties, especially in potential conflicts cases, should go ahead in adopting democratic politics such as ethnic federalism and consociational democracy or power sharing both south African and Ethiopian models of democracy represent two important models in Africa in general.

(2) At the international and regional levels, meetings, summits and taking decisions are not enough. The OAU and the African governments should prove better understanding of internal conflicts by having connection with the opposition armed groups in early stages. The OAU must also provide the necessary leadership needed to coordinate the initiatives offereol from Africa's external partners, especially in the area of peacekeeping.

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