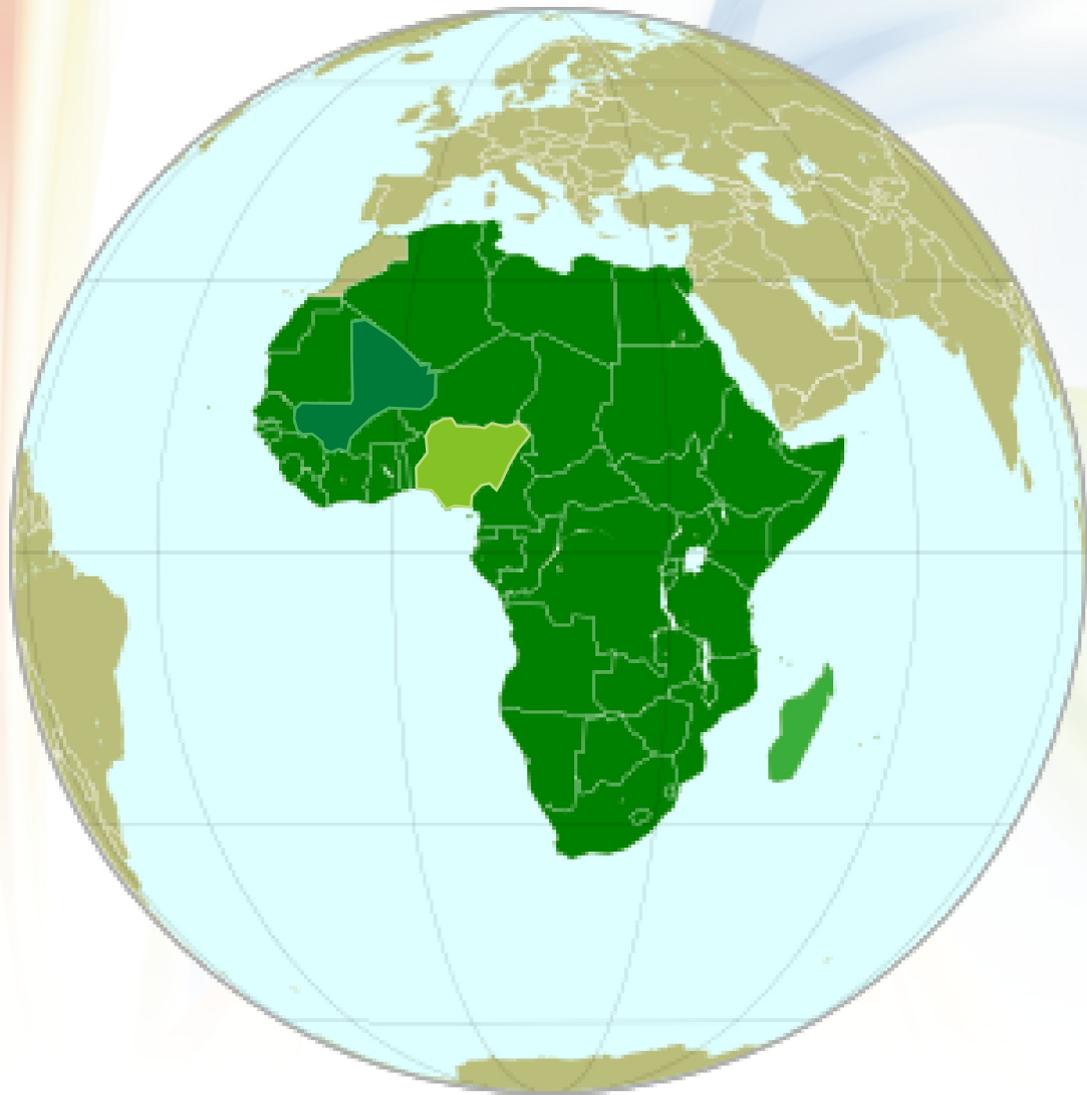


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CONTENTS

LEARNED HELPLESSNESS: A THEORETICAL REVIEW Alex Igundunasse & Johnson Sanmi Ibidapo	1-12
EVALUATION OF ADHERENCE OF JOURNALISTS TO THE CODES OF JOURNALISM PRACTICE IN ENUGU STATE Chima Alexander Onyebuchi, Paul Martins Obayi, Chidera M Udorah & Benjamine Onwukwaluonye	13-37
REFORMING THE NIGERIAN CIVIL SERVICE PERCEPTION SURVEY ON: ISSUES IN SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION Umar Elems Mahmud & Yusuf Abdullahi Ogwuzebe	38-53
OCCUPATIONAL STRESS, TRANSFER AND AGE AS PREDICTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG IMO ANGLICAN CLERGYMEN Ann Ukachi Madukwe, Ethelbert C Njoku & Charles Chidubem Dinneya	54-69
PEACE BUILDING: A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT Samuel Laraba Baba, Shafa A Yunus & Sani A Oshishepo	70-76
THE IMPACT OF WORKFORCE DIVERSITY ON ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF ABIA STATE POLYTECHNIC (2012 - 2017) Michael Chinazam Ihemadu & Chinyere Odiche Atasie	77-95
EXAMINING PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA Ruwan Felix Ignatius Ibrahim & Andrew E Zamani	96-111
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY: AN EXPOSITORY APPROACH Paschal I O Igboeche	113-121
INFLUENCE OF LOCUS OF CONTROL AND FAMILY BACKGROUND ON CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR Hadiza Ibrahim Dahiru & Sani A Oshishepo	122-132
ASSESSING THE PREVALENCE OF CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY AND CULPABLE HOMICIDE IN KADUNA STATE OF NIGERIA FROM 2014-2017 Ruwan Felix Ignatius Ibrahim, Faith Monday Ajodo & Andrew E Zamani	133-149
BORDER SECURITY AND THE OPERATIONS OF BOKO HARAM TERRORISM IN NIGERIA - Emmanuel N Iheanacho & Eudora U Ohazurike	150-160
POVERTY: THE BANE OF WOMEN DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA George I Okoroafor & Chiaka Umoh	161-175
CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL PEACEKEEPING: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF AFRICAN UNION'S ROLES IN BURUNDI AND DARFUR Chidi P Anene, Chinonyerem U Njoku & Dennis U Ashara	176-188
TREASURY SINGLE ACCOUNT POLICY: AN INSTRUMENT OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY OF THE BUHARI'S ADMINISTRATION (2015-PRESENT) George I Okoroafor & Ihuoma C Bernard	189-206

**CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL PEACEKEEPING: A
CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF AFRICAN UNION'S ROLES IN
BURUNDI AND DARFUR**

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ABSTRACT: This study assessed the African Union's peacekeeping operations since 2002 with emphases on effectiveness and challenges. Irrespective of the AU's efforts to save the continent from the scourges of violent wars which have long ravaged it through effective peacekeeping operations, socio-ethnic cum political violence continue unabated. The study, through secondary data, assessed the role of the AU in peacekeeping in two case studies of Burundi and Darfur regions of Sudan. The study adopted the content analysis method. Articles, books, periodicals were used for the study. These were later carefully assessed with the different documents for reliable evidence. The study found that the AU achieved minimal success in these cases. The study also found that factors such as poor financing, socio-cultural and political impediments, as well structural problems such as poor administration and intractable conflicts orchestrated by several factors were part of the problems affecting the effectiveness of peacekeeping by the AU. The study subsequently made policy recommendations.

Keywords: African Union, Burundi, Conflicts, Darfur, Peacekeeping, Wars

INTRODUCTION

Since the post-colonial era, Africa has faced the onerous challenge of ensuring peace even in the midst of incessant violent conflicts which have subjected it to excruciating humanitarian catastrophes and retarded growth and development. From the North to South and through the East and West, violent conflicts are recurrent trends in Africa (Aremu, 2010:549). Between the period, 1960 and 2001, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was confronted with devastating violent clashes and warfare which undermined its roles, and questioned its capability and capacity to handle matters regarding peace and security – which are panacea to growth and sustainable development (Ashara, 2013:14).

In 2002, the AU emerged with lots of hope, at least, in handling the continents' security threats which made it the most troubled region in the world. Africa witnessed over a dozen major violent conflicts between the period of 2003 and 2010, compelling the AU to play vital roles in all peacekeeping efforts. In the case studies presented in this study, Darfur and Burundi are clear examples of severe intra-state violent clashes witnessed by the continent.

They also presented significant cases of the AU's involvement in peace peacekeeping in Africa.

Statement of the Problem

Since the creation of the AU in 2002, the continent has witnessed continued incidences of violent clashes and devastating wars. The subsequent deployments of troops under the tutelage of the AU to maintain peace and order in flashpoints, has been undermined by myriads of challenges which make the attainment of the goal of peacekeeping a mirage. In Burundi and Darfur just like in other flashpoints, where peacekeeping became a nightmare for the AU, human sufferings continued, as political tensions escalated. For instance, the war in Darfur resulted in loss of almost 2 million lives (Global Coalition, 2004:10); high refugee flows and internal displacements. Between the period under study – 2002 and 2010, Africa witnessed almost a score of violent clashes and civil wars, while also losing vibrant peacekeepers irrespective of the commitment to peacekeeping. In most areas of deployment, the troops were either outrun, and / or depended on assistance from the UN; prompting the controversy over Africa's inability to manage its own problems without external interference. It is based on this backdrop that this study on the assessment of the AU peacekeeping operations has become germane.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess and analyze peacekeeping operations in Africa by the AU between the period 2002 and 2010. The study also has the following specific objectives which include to:

- 1 examine AU's peacekeeping missions in Burundi and Darfur; and
- 2 examine the challenges of peacekeeping in these case studies.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the Content Analysis methodology. This method seeks to explain concepts contained in specific texts; and provides historical introspection over time. In this case, texts are the various books, archival documents, journals, UN, UNHCR and AU documents. Several UN, UNHCR, and AU/OAU publications, documents and archives were critically investigated and assessed for the study. Secondary sources included reliable websites articles, newspapers, magazines, articles from reliable journals, books and also periodicals.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

This study adopted the Burden sharing theory in explaining peacekeeping missions of the AU.

The Burden-sharing principle is in consonance with the principle of common humanity. It

proposes a collective action in situations of a problem to protect the interests' of an individual within a group; when the group lacks the capacity to avail itself of certain needs. Olsen 1965; Hartley and Sandler 1999; Bolks and Stoll, 2000) argue that "cooperation produces positive-sum benefits", and this results in the will to share burdens among certain actors. Thielemann (2003:256) noted that "at the international level, cooperation is thought to produce a level in the provision of valued public goods which an individual state cannot attain on its own; burden-sharing can thus be viewed as a retinal response to the problem of under-provision"

Expanding the principle of burden-sharing, Agaba (2012) noted that the humanitarian crises in Africa required the cooperation of "all" – local and global efforts to address. Human displacements such as refugee flows are associated with burdens which usually overwhelm receiving states, and sending states alike. In explaining what gives rise to refugees crises, Ashara (2015) observed that the lack of, or inability of the African states to manage refugee problems resulted in a crisis situation. Hence, the significance of the burden-sharing principle lies on the global community, especially African states to see the refugee phenomenon as their 'own' problem.

Regional Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping is an aspect of conflict management which is encompassing. Murithi Tim carefully identified conflict management to include: preventive diplomacy which simply means the application of several diplomatic mechanisms to manage a conflict to avoid an escalation (Murithi, 2009; Conteh-Morgan, 2004). The UN (1992) defined peacekeeping as "the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, though with the consent of all the parties concerned in the conflict, normally involving UN Military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992: Para 20). Murithi (2009) also simplified peacekeeping definition as "part of international community's repertoire for consolidating peace in war-ravaged countries". The increasing significance of regional integrations and the call for traditional approaches to managing contemporary challenges have compelled nation-states to draw closer for solutions to myriad of socio-economic and security problems. Dinan (2003) noted that sequel to the successes achieved by the European Union (EU) on economic integration and security and peace, through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), many parts of the world have aimed, and actually taken steps to manage their own problems. For example, the AU embarked on several reforms to maintain peace and security within, between and among its member states.

Case Study I: Burundi Conflict 2003

The Burundian conflict can easily be zeroed to ethnic rivalry between the Hutu, which make up around 85% of the population; and the Tutsi, which has 15% (Global Security, 2015). The clashes had been between Hutu rebels and Tutsi-led government).

After twenty five years of military domination, Burundi witnessed its maiden democratic elections which also later led to the murder of the president, Melchior Ndadaye (a Hutu) by

some Tutsi rebels. This began an unending civil unrest in the country which claimed thousands of lives for close to a decade (Masha, 2008:33). In fact, it was reported that Burundi witnessed a calculated extermination of an ethnic group (the Tutsi) called genocide in 1993 (UN, 2004). The country witnessed long years of conflicts which claimed many lives. Several killings of both ethnic group members continued. In 2002 a ceasefire agreement was signed by the government and the *Conseil National pour la Defense de la Democratie–Forces pour de la Defense de la Democratie* (CNDD-FDD) whose leader was Pierre Nkurunziza in Arusha that recommended power sharing between the Tutsi and Hutu; but two major Hutu-rebel groups reneged on the agreement after the government acceded to it. Violence continued and there were attempts on coups, while many more died, humanitarian crisis climaxed (Masha, 2008).

The non-inclusion of smaller rebel groups – the FDD and *Forces pour de la National Liberationale* (FNL) – from the peace process led to a protraction of the conflict (Boshoff, 2003). The ceasefire did not succeed in settling the rift between the Burundian army and the rebels too though the Arusha Peace plan recommended a three-year transitional government to be shared into – 18 months intervals, and which started with the ascension of Buyoya as President in April 2003; mutual suspicion and distrust from both parties resulted in heavy mortar fire which threatened the capital – Bujumbura (Boshoff, 2003:1). Henri Boshoff, a military Analyst at the African Security Analysis Programme noted that the continued violence, humanitarian crisis and overall nature of the Burundian situation compelled the AU's deployment of troops to ensure technical assistance to the disarmament and demobilization process" (2003:1).

African Union Peacekeeping Mission in Burundi (AMIB)

On April 2, 2003, the AU, through its central organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (Boshoff, 2003:1), had mandated the deployment of the first military force in any country in Burundi which was to last for one year. The 'inexperience' or unpreparedness of the AU in peacekeeping missions may explain the reason for the replacement of the AMIB by the United Nations Operations in Burundi (ONUB) in just a little over one year AMIB was deployed. Nonetheless, over 2, 860 troops (Masha, 2008:29; Global Security, 2007; Boshoff, 2003) were drawn from mainly South Africa (with the largest force contribution and leader), Ethiopia and Mozambique. At a strategic preliminary briefing of the Mission, the signatories to the ceasefire agreement (except CNDD-FDD-led Nkuruziza) were present. With the take-over of operation by ONUB, the South African forces were stationed in Burundi as African Union Special Task Force (AU STF). AMIB mission was to display within 60 days, a mandate to supervise, observe and monitor the implementation of the ceasefire agreement in Burundi (Boshoff, 2003:3). The mandate is summarized as follow:

1. to create and sustain communication network among the various parties to the conflict;
2. to ensure and provide required technical assistance for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and humanitarian support to victims of the conflicts,

3. to monitor and ensure the implementation of the ceasefire agreement by the parties;
4. to provide security for cantonments or assembly and disengagement areas, and designated returning leaders (Buoshoff, 2003:3).

To facilitate and achieve its mission and prosecute its mandate effectively, troops were contributed from the South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique. Funds were to be raised by these countries (for the first two months of the mission), and funds from AU member-States' donations. The estimated cost for the AMIB was US\$165,000,000. After the initial one year proposed for AMIB, a two-month extension was granted. In June, 2004, the UN replaced AMIB with ONUB after declaring that the Burundian conflict amounted to a threat to international peace and security through a unanimous resolution 1545 of 21 May, 2004 (UN, 2009). The ONUB completed its mission in 2006.

The CNDD-FDD led by Nkuruziza had objected to any agreement and continued to attack government forces. In 2005, the President (Domitien Ndayizeye, a Hutu) signed a new law expanding the armed forces to include Tutsi armed forces and other Hutu rebel groups. Burundi experienced relative peace which gave room' for a democratic election in 2005 after several years, leading to the emergence of Pierre Nkurunziza as President. In 2008, the Forces of National Liberation (FNL) accented to a ceasefire agreement which marked the end of over a year of wars in Burundi (Masha, 2008; New York Times, 2010). But by April of that year, the FNL had attacked Bujumbura with heavy and deadly shelling, creating further humanitarian concerns.

Case Study II: Sudan (Darfur Crisis)

The Darfur conflict is an all-out armed conflict being fought in the region of Darfur (Western Sudan) between insurgent groups – the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and the government of Sudan since February 2003 (Global Security, 2007). The non-Arabs accused the government of marginalization and favouritism over their Arab counterparts in the region (BBC February 8 2010). According to Al-Jahid (2006:6), “the long-term mutual suspicion between the non-Arab Muslims and Arabs in Darfur gradually led to series of conflicts; “many Furs thought the government armed the Arabs, and subsequently hated the Sudanese government led by Omar Al-Bashir” (Temple, 2009:22).

In February 2003, reluctance of the Sudanese government to protect the civilian populations and address economic challenges led the SLM Army and JEM to launch a violent attack on government troops in protest (Amnesty International, 2008). The Human Rights Watch (2004), Amnesty International (2008), and Global Security (2007) reports indicated that the government in retaliation supported the Arab-militant group in the region – the *Janjaweed* (meaning a man with a horse and a gun) which had engaged with the non-Arab rebel groups like the SLM/A, through supply of logistics and finance. The SLM and JEM believed it was a strategy to divide the region along ethnic and religious lines (Global Security, 2007). The JEM and SLM/A fighters were recruited mainly from the non-Arab Muslims who originated from the *Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit* tribes.

AU Peacekeeping Mission in Sudan (AMIS)

In July 2004, the AU deployed 150 troops to Darfur to ensure the implementation of ceasefire agreements; and also for “peacekeeping operations” (Temple, 2009:25). By the middle of 2005, this number had increased to 7, 000 (AU, 2005). Until the UN/AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) came into force in December, 2007, AMIS remained the sole internal peacekeeping force in Darfur. The necessity for the UNAMID (a hybrid mission by the AU and UN) in Darfur was consequent upon the obvious overwhelming influence of the crisis on the AMIS. The AMIS was confronted with many challenges which made UNAMID inevitable.

While the AMIS mandate is vast in practice, the process can for brevity, be summarized in the following:

1. to monitor and observe compliance to a ceasefire agreements by the belligerents;
2. to ensure peace true assistance in confidence building measures;
3. to ensure the security of all parties; and
4. to see to the facilitation of humanitarian assistance to all affected by the violence (HRW, 2005; Global Security, 2007).

At first, 150 troops from Rwanda to protect those mandated to monitor the ceasefire; this was supplemented by another 150 troops from Nigeria when the initial deployment became unable to contain the challenges. With the incessant challenges, the AMIS force was increased to 7,000 at over 45 million dollars (Boshoff, 2003).

Those agreements were reached at the AU-sponsored peaceful negotiations in Abuja, Nigeria on 25th October, 2004. By January 2005, the UN had declared situations in Darfur “a threat to peace and global security” (UN, 2009); this compelled it (UN) to offer support to the AMIS and the January 9, 2005 CPA between the Sudanese government and the SPLM in order to ensure humanitarian assistance, protection of civilians, and extension of protection to civilians, the UN adopted the resolution 1590 on March 24, 2005 (Setting up the UN Mission in Sudan). These efforts reduced tensions, as fighting subsided (Global Security, 2007).

The AU also, twice extended the AMIS mandate due to expirations, and the unending conflict. By May 2007, the AU (AMIS) had been overwhelmed by the Crisis in Darfur. Incessant attacks on peacekeepers, kidnappings and financial/donor setbacks/fatigue had created enough problems for the AU. Major attacks were targeted at foreign peace-keepers. According to Mash (2008:28-29)”, 10 peacekeepers were killed; over 20 wounded in an attack by SLA rebels; others could have been kidnapped or held hostage; they were alleged to be partisan, and sympathetic’ to the government. Rwanda and Senegal threatened to withdraw their troops (Global Security, 2007; Masha, 2008). The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1769 in July 2007 to c joint create a peacekeeping force, expected to replace AMIS in December 2007.

In December, 2007, a hybrid mission (UNAMID) was authorized for Darfur, implying an undermining of the efficacy of the AMIS in the managing peacekeeping operations.

Challenges of Peacekeeping Operations by the AU

Peacekeeping is a costly engagement, irrespective of the aims and goals, and whether initiated by the UN, or regional institutions and organizations. The study divided the challenges faced by the AU in Burundi and Darfur into four: Financial, Political, Socio-Cultural and Structural challenges. These are discussed below.

Financial Challenge

Economic consideration is a significant factor in peacekeeping missions by the AU. Temple (2009:35) reported that many AU troops deployed to Darfur were confronted with no payment. Masha (2008) opined that a major cause of the AU's failure to contain violence single-handedly without external interference was the lack of funds which continuously stalled activities. In Burundi, AU established a special fund to carry out the mission; and indicated that troops-sending states of South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique should provide funding for their contingent in the first 2 months. Ethiopia objected to this arrangement due to lack of funds. The AU had also estimated just \$165,000,000 US for one year (Boshoff, 2003:5). But Bradley (2009) asserts that the AU still depended on the international organizations (EU and UN) for execute its mandate in Burundi. The AU drew up a \$62 million annual budget for Peacekeeping operations in Africa while its institutional budget is put at US \$160 million (Murithi, 2009:16). The report of the AU Commission on conflict situation in Africa indicated that the AU was undoubtedly underfunded in its mission in Darfur (AU, 2005: vii).

In Darfur, obstacles such as untrained personnel, inadequate deployment and poor equipment, and other logistics affected the AU's operations (Masha, 2008). Murithi (2009:16) added that "the operational capacity of the AU and its financial and logistical limitations which are major impediments to success in Burundi, Somalia and Darfur require adequate funding for attainment of objectives". While the AU received commendations for achieving the DPA in 2006, it still depended on external support for funding; and Temple (2009) opined that this external dependence on funding undermines the AU's reputation of dealing effectively with its internal issues, especially security. External funding of AU mission in Darfur for instance is distributed as follows:

- US \$466 million for training of personal from Great Britain (Global Security, 2005)
- €40 million from the EU (Global Security, 2007; Masha, 2008).
- €19 million to support Darfur mission in 2015 from the EU (Temple, 2009).

Contributing to the financial impediments, AU peacekeeping missions is the lack of commitment of member-States to peace operations. Gabriel (2010:18) has argued that the AU member-States are usually unable to contribute financially to peacekeeping missions due to domestic economic woes. Gabriel (2010) and Masha (2008) identified differences in

economic strength of AU member-States – poverty of majority of African States; and indifference in contributions; and commitment to make dues payments, and raise adequate funds for peacekeeping operations. Colonel Emmanuel Kotia of the Kennessaw State University notes that “between 1993 and 2005, the AU Peace Fund had less than \$70 million, with \$45 million provided by non-African actors” (Kotia, 2013). Masha (2008) concluded by affirming that the effectiveness of any peacekeeping is dependent on the availability of adequate funding to provide logistics, adequate equipment, sophisticated hospital facilities, training and retraining of staff, and many other exigencies associated with the task of peacekeeping in Africa.

Political Challenge

Politics is another influence on the effectiveness of AU’s peace-keeping missions. International, regional and national politics affect the AU’s peacekeeping missions. The existence of differences in ideologies, philosophies and practical approaches towards peacekeeping contributed to making it a frustrated effort. For example, the interests of various groups or states in a conflict can affect the effectiveness of such missions. In the Darfur crisis, the state’s role in the conflict affected the peacekeeping mission. Temple (2009:40) noted that “the use of oil revenues by political officials to exploit the religious and ethnic cleavages aggravated the escalation of conflicts, thereby suppressing peacekeeping efforts”.

Also, the interest of super-powers such as China and Russia affected the conflict (Global Security, 2007). Omar Al-Bashir’s continued support to the *Janjaweed*, and the earnings from China’s purchase of Sudan’s oil affected the implementation of the DPA (Temple, 2009). Also, the support of the *Janjaweed* by the Sudanese government intensified the violence which made a ceasefire difficult to reach; this also exacerbated the humanitarian situation in the conflict. Al-Bashir also embarked on the dismissal of some humanitarian agencies in Darfur in reaction to the International Criminal Courts’ indictment of him and his government on grounds of genocide against civilian population; Global security (2007) asserts that this resulted in intense hostilities, and undermining of peacekeeping objectives.

Chad also had an influence on the conflict. Between the period of 2003 and 2005, Chad was a supporter of government against the rebels (Global Security, 2007). Between 2005 and 2010, Chad supported the SLA, JEM and other groups in Darfur against the government. Other countries which supported the rebels were Eritrea, South Sudan (while still part of Sudan), Libya and Uganda. The US declared an equivocal support for Darfur and its people (www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/02). “Over the past decade, the US provided over \$7.5 billion in funding to Darfur; the US remains a committed partner to the people of Darfur” (Ten Years of War in Darfur; official government statement by Patrick Ventrel, Deputy Spokesman for the National Security Council, February 2013). According to Masha (2008), the role of international and local parties affected the efforts of the AU in reaching ceasefire agreements from both parties.

In Burundi, the political interests of the CNDD-FDD of Pierre Nkurunziza primarily

contributed to the failure of a ceasefire agreement; this also culminated in the unending nature of the violence until the UN displaced the AU in 2004. In an analysis by Henri Boshoff, Military Analyst at the African Security Analysis Programme, Institute for Security Studies, “The CNDD-FDD has not yet made contact with the Technical Planning Team and is continuing with the war; *Palipehutu-FNL* (Rwasa) has not signed a ceasefire agreement and are also engaged in military activities; this affected the FAB’s participation in the DDR process.

Political guidance will be required or not to deploy the AMIB military forces, especially if the prevailing security situation at the time of imminent deployment degenerates” (2003:5). Williams (2011) opined that peacekeeping is unlikely to succeed where there is no peace to keep – that is the parties to the conflict are not committed to achieving peace. The arguments over when to intervene, and the right to intervene is yet another impediment to peacekeeping missions by the AU. The AU’s delay or inability to deploy missions is blamed on UN’s definition of peacekeeping doctrine. It concisely states that such missions must get the backing of the Security Council; the parties to the conflict showing willingness to end the conflict, and also have positive regional engagement (Williams, 2011). In Burundi, the UN was sceptical of the ‘genuineness’ of the intervention; hence, Murithi (2009:15) noted that the AU’s intervention in Burundi “was to enable a more robust UN Peace operation; and perhaps, the reason for not being criticized openly was because AMIB did not extend its mandate”. But Greenwood (1993) opined that international law should not be a hindrance to the protection of a country’s citizens under the principle of the responsibility to protect when a state turns against its own populations.

Socio-Cultural Challenge

Africa is a multi-cultural society, characterized by sentimental attachments to religious beliefs, and socio-cultural and ethnic affiliations. As shown in the case-analysis, Darfur and Burundi – religion and ethnic rivalries were vital in explaining violence which ravaged these African countries, with associated humanitarian catastrophes. While Darfur was between the non-Arab and Arab populations in the West of Sudan, the ethnic rivalry between the Hutu majority and Tutsi-led government explained the massive genocide in the small country (Aremu, 2010).

Amnesty International (2008) noted that ethnic differences and interests led to in-fighting and emergence of several splinter groups from within the SLM/A and JEM (for Darfur); and the CNDD-FDD and FDD, FNL (for Burundi); and caused the frustration of peace talks, and ceasefire agreements implementations. According to Osmancavusoglu (2000), “internal political struggle characterized by ethnic – based disputes made the peace operations complicated; hence without clear consent of the parties”.

Structural Challenges

Under structural challenges, like logistics, unpreparedness of the AU, ill-planned framework for operations and mandates and non-commitment by member-States to peacekeeping

operations undermined AU peacekeeping missions. Murithi (2009) noted that lack of well articulated framework and ill-equipped and inadequate deployment affected the AU missions in Darfur Burundi and Somalia.

The AU peacekeepers are compelled to confront several attacks to their safety due to poorly defined borders or ceasefire lines resulting from ill-articulated deployments (Masha, 2008). Also, lack of trainings, geographical definitions and absence of humanitarian intelligence required for effective operations and handling of parties in conflicts are aspects of structural imbalance which affect the AU peace-keeping operations. Global Security (2007) reports showed that the AU peacekeeper casualties amounted to over 20 deaths in Darfur; this resulted from poor planning, ill-equipped deployment and a lack of military intelligence to execute its mandates. Murithi (2009) also identified the secretariat's ineffective preparations before deployments as a major problem of peacekeeping by the AU; he asserted that troops were usually left to fend for themselves.

There is also poor communication especially in the hybrid mission in Darfur. The absence of leadership role or influence is yet another significant factor or structural challenge affecting peacekeeping missions by the AU.

Conclusion

The study aimed to assess and analyze the AU peacekeeping operations in Burundi and Darfur.

African governments have been identified as major obstacles in keeping peace in violent conflict situations. The roles of Al-Bashir of Sudan and the successive Burundian Tutsi regimes in the conflicts in these countries also frustrated AU's peacekeeping missions. While Al-Bashir's continued support to the *Janjaweed* against the non-Arab Muslims in Darfur region frustrated ceasefire agreements; the consolidation and manipulation of ethnic cleavages in Burundi made the conflict protracted in nature.

Recommendations

For the AU to achieve effective peacekeeping, this study made the following recommendations:

1. Effective multilateral and bilateral diplomacy should be adopted to secure reliable support for its missions.
2. Bilateral arrangements such as between the AU and the UN; AU and EU; and multilateral frameworks such as alliances with various regional and international organizations and institutions; and among various African countries to gather supports for its peacekeeping operations.
3. Humanitarian intelligence is a necessity. Understanding the nature of a conflict, the interests of parties, victims and sponsors of conflicts is an essential ingredient in peacekeeping or humanitarian intervention.

4. Finally, the best less-costly way to keep peace is to adopt preventive diplomacy and avoid escalation through various conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms.

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