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**Challenges To
Implementing
'Inclusive And
Human-Centred'**

Security Mechanisms For Sustainable Peace And Development In Africa:

Implications For Policy And Practice.

By William Hermann Arrey, Ph.D.

Policy Paper

**CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTING 'INCLUSIVE AND
HUMAN-CENTRED' SECURITY MECHANISMS FOR SUSTAINABLE
PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR
POLICY AND PRACTICE**



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The opinions expressed in this policy paper are those of the author and
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AU:	African Union
BTI:	Bertelsmann Transformation Index
DDR:	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
GBV:	Gender-based Violence
IDPs:	Internally Displaced Persons
MNJTF:	Multinational Joint Task Force
NAP:	National Action Plan
NAPs:	National Action Plans
NW:	North-West
OCHA:	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PBIED:	Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices
PBSO:	United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office
SSR:	Security Sector Reforms
SW:	South-West
SIPRI:	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSCR 1325:	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
UNSCR 2250:	United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250
WILPF:	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Abstract

In an interconnected world, security must be deemed a global public good. In many parts of Africa, whenever security issues are at stake, military and strategic considerations take centre stage. Security is largely approached from a legitimate state's monopoly on violence, assessing governmental stability and capacity to contain non-state armed and "terrorists" groups.

The fundamental questions that inform this policy paper are: Can a national security initiative be effective and capable of facilitating sustainable peace and development processes while excluding strategic stakeholders such as women (alongside children) and youth who are mostly considered as victims; and sometimes perpetrators of violent conflicts (especially young men)? What are the challenges to implementing inclusive and human-centred approaches to security for sustainable peace and development in Africa? What are the implications for security policy and practice? This paper moves with the assumption that for national security initiatives to be effective and be able to contribute to sustainable peace and development in Africa, governments must adopt an 'inclusive and human-centred framework of analysis with women and youth as strategic partners. The analysis in this paper contributes to our understanding that state-centric notion of security, which prioritises the territorial integrity of the state and the adoption of military strategies in addressing violent conflict 'episodes ' and security threats, falls short of tackling the human dimension of insecurity and the 'epicentre ' of violent conflicts, for sustainable peace and development.

Thus, the key conclusion reached is that if governments of conflict affected and fragile states in Africa do not urgently and actively invest in inclusive and human-centred approaches to security sector reforms with women and youth at the 'front and centre stage'; international, continental and national development policy frameworks will at best be unsustainable and at worst remain at the level of aspirations. The security issues addressed in this paper have important implications for policy and practice in many African countries currently experiencing complex security challenges such as the case in Cameroon. International development partners will find the analysis and its policy recommendations relevant as they collaborate with African governments in facilitating the implementation of inclusive and human-centred security frameworks at national and local levels.

Key words: State-centric security, human-centred security, inclusive security, security mechanisms, policy frameworks, policy implementation, sustainable peace, sustainable development, women, youth, Cameroon, Africa

¹ The outbreak of violent conflicts.

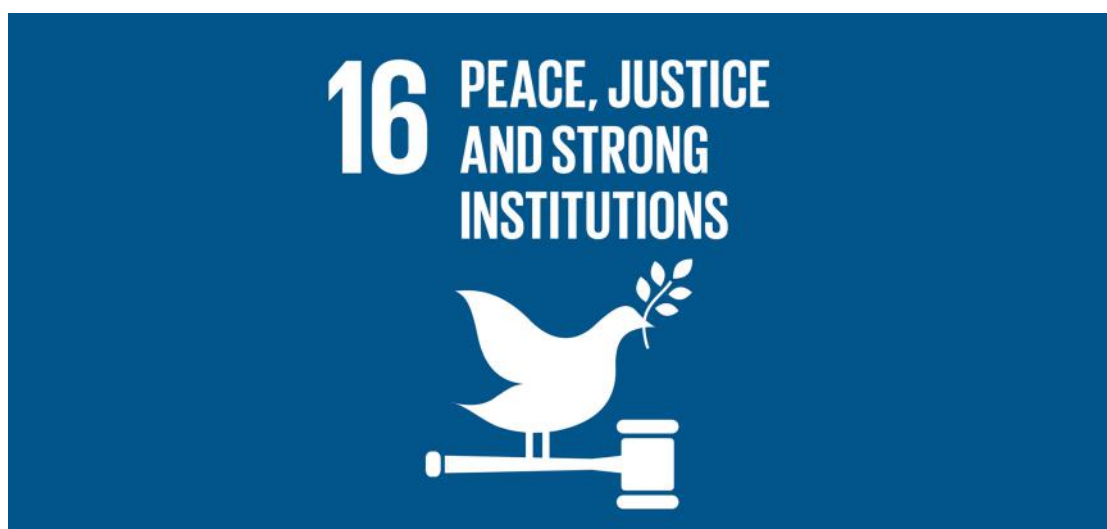
² The deep rooted and structural issues that led to the violent conflict and insecurity in the first place.

³ For example, by developing inclusive and people-centred national action plans for the effective implementation of key international inclusive security instruments such as UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security and UNSCR 2250 on youth, peace and security.

⁴ Such as Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, African Union Agenda 2063 and national visions for economic emergence (such as vision 2035 for an emerging and democratic Cameroon, united in its diversity)

1. Introduction

The importance of security and justice for sustainable peace and development in any society cannot be over emphasized. While peace and stability are essential ingredients for development and an ordered social life, security and justice are the critical ingredients for the smooth functioning of all sectors within the social system. It is therefore not surprising that Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, goal 16: *“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”* is a logical global response to the problems of exclusionary peace and security policies as well as sustainable development issues around the world. This is a milestone because it frames the promotion of sustainable peace and security as a development issue.



Moreover, one of the aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063 is ‘a peaceful and secure Africa.’ It aims to strengthen mechanisms and promote the inclusive and dialogue-centred prevention and resolution of conflicts to ‘silence the guns’ by 2020. It further identifies good governance, democracy, social inclusion, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law as necessary pre-conditions for a peaceful and conflict-free continent. The Agenda 2063 also regards peace as a prerequisite to sustainable development. This reflects what many leaders have long known: development is impossible without peace and there can be no peace without security, and vice-versa. For example,

former UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali's statement: "There can be no peace without economic and social development, just as development is not possible in the absence of peace" was a powerful representation of early recognition of the nexus between peace and development. Along this same line, another former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, wrote that "we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights." (*Report of the Secretary General Kofi Annan*, UN doc. A/59/2005). In reaction to the security challenges imposed on Cameroon by the Boko Haram terrorist group, the President of the Republic of Cameroon in his 2015 New Year Speech to the nation laid emphasis on the important relationship between peace, security and development. In his words: "*il n'y a pas de paix sans sécurité, pas de développement sans paix*" which literally means there can be no peace without security and no development is possible without peace. More recently, during the Democratic Republic of the Congo's first ever transfer of power by electoral means in fifty-nine (59) years of independence, newly elected president Felix Tshisekedi, in his inaugural address also prioritised inclusion, peace, security and development. As he put it: "*We want to build a strong Congo, turned toward its development in peace and security. A Congo for all, in which everyone has a place.*" (The Guardian, 24 January 2019)

However, the increasing security challenges in many parts of Africa raises, important concerns about the current state-centric approach to ending wars/violent conflicts and the challenge to the effective implementation of inclusive strategies for sustainable peace and development. For instance, despite the success in negotiating and adopting international instruments and standards aimed at meaningful involvement of women and youth in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding processes, the reality in many parts of Africa is continuing exclusion of the 'critical mass' (women, youth and other marginalised groups).

The fundamental questions that this policy paper addresses are: *Can a national security initiative be effective and capable of facilitating sustainable peace and development processes while excluding strategic stakeholders such as women (alongside children) and youth who are mostly considered as victim; and sometimes perpetrators of violent conflicts (especially young men)? What are the challenges to implementing inclusive and human-centred approaches to security for sustainable peace and development in Africa? What are the implications for security policy and practice? The paper moves with the assumption that, for national security initiatives to be effective and contribute to sustainable peace and development in Africa, governments must adopt an 'inclusive and human-centred framework of analysis' with women and youth as strategic partners.*

Hence, for the purpose of coherence of understanding, we begin with a brief presentation of the current global and African peace and security challenges, discuss the weaknesses of state-centric responses to violent conflicts and insecurity that prompts the need for an 'inclusive and human-centred' security framework in peace and development work. This is then followed by an analysis of the international 'inclusive policy' frameworks (UNSCR1325 on women, peace and security and UNDCR2250 on youth, peace and security), with a focus on the challenges to their implementation at

the national and local governmental levels. From here, a logical conclusion is reached with important implications for security policy and practice.

2. Current Global and African Peace and Security Challenges

Conflicts throughout the world have multiplied in complexity and intensity. According to *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's 2018 Yearbook*, global security has deteriorated markedly in the past decade. The number, complexity and lethality of armed conflicts have increased, and there has been prolonged and shocking violence in large parts of the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (SIPRI Year Book, 2018). In the same vein, the 2018 Global Peace Index published by the Institute for Economics & Peace finds that the global level of peace deteriorated by 0.27% in 2017 and this was the fourth successive year of deterioration. The report further states that “the average level of global peacefulness has deteriorated by 2.38% since 2008. Over that period, 85 countries deteriorated, while 75 improved. It reveals a “world in which tensions, conflicts and crises that have emerged over the past decade remain unresolved, causing a gradual, sustained decline in global levels of peacefulness” (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018).

In effect, the internationalisation of what often begins as purely internal conflicts, the nexus of criminal violence and the activities of a multitude of armed groups together with the growing impact of climate change have served to further exacerbate human insecurity in the world. More problematic is the fact that belligerents increasingly target civilians, and global displacement from violent conflicts and terrorism has also sharply increased over the last years (SIPRI Year Book, 2018). In 2017 alone, the ‘global population of forcibly displaced people increased to 68.5 million, compared with 65.6 million in 2016’ (UNHCR’s global trend on forced displacement in 2017) and this figure has been increasing sharply in recent years. This is especially so as a result of violent conflicts and insecurity in countries such as Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Myanmar, Syria, Nigeria and Cameroon.



With regards to Africa, the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development states that armed conflicts in Africa claim on average 15,000 victims per year and 25% of all violent deaths take place on the continent which has 15% of total global population (Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, undated). In the case of Cameroon, the increasing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is exacerbated by the ongoing complex socio-political crisis in

the North-West (NW) and South-West (SW) Regions of the country. For example, in 2017 and for the first time in Cameroon, the Government in partnership with the humanitarian community adopted a multi-year humanitarian response plan covering the period 2017-2020; this in response to the increasingly violent conflict and insecurity-induced humanitarian crisis in the country. According to information from the Humanitarian Response Plan (2017-2020), in 2018, *“Cameroon continued to face a complex and unprecedented humanitarian crisis which has impacted the lives and livelihoods of 3.3 million people, an increase of 14% compared to last year.”* The Humanitarian Response Plan envisages the support of 1.3 million of the people in need in the most affected regions of Adamaoua, East, North and Far-North (ibid). There is also a special Humanitarian Emergency Plan put in by the government in May 2018 (with a coordination unit in the Ministry of Territorial Administration), to specifically support the victims of the ongoing crisis in the NW and SW. According to the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Cameroon, Ms. Allegra Baiocchi, (presenting the UN’s 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan to the UN Security Council in Geneva on 24 January 2019), insecurity and violence in these two regions have forcibly displaced 437, 000 people from their homes and forced over 32,000 to seek refuge in neighbouring Nigeria and overall, around 4.3 million Cameroonians, mostly women and children, are now in need of lifesaving assistance (OCHA-Cameroon, 2018).

In fact, the socio-political turmoil and complex security challenges in Cameroon, once internationally recognised as a ‘peaceful’ country, as well as experiences in other African countries such as Sudan, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Burundi, Nigeria etc. reveal that despite some peace and democratic advances, Africa as a whole continues to experience serious issues rooted in injustice related to the quality of state and human security. Africa’s security environment remains fragile with a wide array of ongoing and emerging threats placing great strains on already overburdened governments. Many conflicts in the continent have resulted from post-colonial liberation struggles, others from struggles for effective and inclusionary governance, marginalisation, and resource control. Recently, African countries have been faced with socio-political crises emanating from weak electoral processes and corrupt politico-administrative practices; the politics of belonging; the instrumentalisation of disorder and differences for political ends, the rise in intolerance, social media hate speech and violent extremism.

Moreover, as new forms of conflicts demand innovative responses, experiences on the ground reveal that states emerging from war in many parts of Africa and other fragile states also frequently relapse into war. Peace-making efforts often succeed in the short-term only to fail in securing sustainable peace. Clearly, this increasing global incidence of violent conflicts and insecurity is considered one of the most urgent peace and development problems in the world today, affecting both the developed and developing world, all levels of governments, persons, social classes and religion affiliation. These peace and security problems raise important questions about the effectiveness of the current state-centric approach to ending wars/violent conflicts and ensuring the human security of individuals and communities.

3. Limitations of State-centric Approaches to Violent Conflicts and Insecurity in Africa

Regarding state responses to the security challenges, many African leaders' preference is the use of a militarised response against the 'opposition' and rebel movements that challenge their authority. Most African governments fail to see the issues raised by these groups and therefore rarely pursue genuine dialogue with them. Unfortunately, as a result of inherent weaknesses many African militaries are unable to sustain long battles with those initially dismissed as rebel groups. Shortly after facing African armies, rebel movements in many parts of the continent overrun the countryside seizing vast territories that evade government control. This was the case in countries such as Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Libya, Sudan, Mali and Democratic Republic of the Congo.



In effect, in many parts of Africa the traditional response to increasing levels of social conflict has been one of repression. This repressive approach (also known as crime and violence control or reduction approach) focuses on addressing the problem after the crime or violent act has been committed. It is reactive rather than proactive and usually related to 'toughening' up the legal and justice system, increasing policing resources and capacities, and introducing harsher penalties as a deterrent. In this approach, crime, violence and insecurity are the responsibility of the state (governing authorities, the army, police and/or the courts).

Most countries battling high levels of crime, violence and insecurity find that these measures are not enough to have a significant positive impact. For example, not relying on either the African Union



(AU) or any regional organisation, the countries of the Lake Chad basin – namely Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger – established a multinational joint task force (MNJTF) to address the Boko Haram crisis. Despite progress registered by the joint task force, day-to-day events on the ground indicate it may be premature to declare victory. According to a

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung research report titled: *The Boko Haram Conflict in Cameroon: Why is peace so elusive?* by Ntuda Ebode et al., (2017), “the delay in destroying the sect and the sudden increase in terrorist attacks in the past months shows that the conflict is far from over”. They further note that “the attacks, incursions and infiltrations by Boko Haram from 2014 caused the Cameroonian government to opt for a mainly military response; but this choice now seems inadequate in the face of the ever-changing strategies of the enemy”.

According to BTI 2018 Country Report on Cameroon, Western military assistance, and a more effective posture by Cameroon’s security forces put Boko Haram on the defensive. Yet numerous suicide attacks and the continued displacement of large numbers of Cameroonians indicated that the challenge was far from resolved. The security situation in the Far North region deteriorated beginning 20 November and between 20-30 November, 15 attacks were recorded. The use of Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (PBIED) was also reported (Humanitarian situation report (UNICEF), November 2018). This was even more problematic as the densely populated Far North Region was Cameroon’s poorest region by a wide margin before the onset of the conflict (74% of the population are defined as poor compared to a national average of 38%) (BTI 2018 Country Report on Cameroon). “There were no promising signs during the review period that the government was addressing the situation effectively beyond the military response, leading some observers to warn of the increasing threat of radicalization among the region’s marginalized youth” (ibid). In this regard, civil society has criticised the effectiveness of the military-centred approach that often ignores the people-centred responses proposed by the humanitarian and development organisations. The over-reliance on the military at the expense of an ‘inclusive and people-centred’ approach, has had the effect of deactivating individual and community resilience in the face of Boko Haram attacks and other societal shocks (see Ntuda Ebode et al., 2017).



Members of the Cameroonian Gendarmerie patrol in the Omar Bongo Square of Cameroon's majority anglophone South West Regional capital Buea on October 3, 2018 during a rally in support of Cameroonian President Paul Biya

Source: VOA news.

Furthermore, such highly militarised approaches including the use of force on the civilian population and abuse of the human rights of vulnerable groups such as women and children are often accompanied by a loss of confidence in the criminal justice system, the police, and the military whilst public concern about crime, violence and insecurity remains high. In fact, such an outcome exposes the limitations of a largely state-centric approach to security concerns. It brings out the futility of using force or militarising cities as a response to security challenges as observed in many parts of Africa. This however, is not to say that state-centric or militarised responses are not acceptable, but rather that such measures though useful in defending the territorial integrity of the state often fall short of tackling the deep-rooted issues that led to the violence and insecurity in the first place. In addition to this, the 'imposed peace' process usually is not inclusive of the diversity of interest, knowledge and capacity of individuals and marginalised groups affected directly or indirectly by the violent conflict, thereby making sustainable peace almost impossible. Clearly, African governments can no longer afford to pursue primarily state-centric and militarised responses, nor can they afford to remain indifferent to the call for an 'inclusive and human-centred' security strategy with women and youth at the centre of analysis.

4. The Case for an 'Inclusive and Human-centered' Security Mechanism



Source: Africa Center for Strategic Studies

Regarding the right to peace for individuals and nations, the declaration on the preparation of society for life in peace adopted by the United Nations on 15 December 1978 (resolution 33/73) declares that: *“Every nation and every being regardless of race, conscience, language or sex has the inherent right to live in peace. Respect for that right as well for the other human right is in the common interest of all mankind and indispensable condition of advancement of all nations, large and small in all fields”*. Additionally, the United Nations declared after the 3rd World Conference on Women, Nairobi 1985 that *“peace includes not only the absence of war, violence and hostility at the national and international levels but also enjoyment of economic and social justice, equity and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within the society.”*

Consequently, peace, just like security, is a much broader concept than the absence of armed conflict (negative peace). The removal of armed threats is only a minimalist condition for the attainment of ‘positive peace’ and sustainable human security. Thus, the peace question must be seen in two aspects: first, peace should be conceptualised and perceived not only in the negative sense of minimising or resolving conflict but also in the positive sense of creating material conditions which provide the population a certain minimum condition of human security. The two positions are intimately related

not only for the purpose of analysis or as an intellectual exercise but as the only meaningful way to face the security ‘problem’ and define the policy and practical conditions for sustainable peace and development in a continent such as Africa where ‘poverty and marginalization’ is greatest.

It is essential to note that over the last couple of years there has been a growing body of literature, mainly in the field of international relations, which explores different aspects of the security concept. Human security found its earliest comprehensive analysis in the 1994 Human Development Report published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The report argued that the best ways to address the problems of insecurity are to focus on tackling “freedom from want” and “freedom from fear”. The report thus explicitly recognised the “interdependence between security and development as the two main components of human life and human dignity.” It also listed seven dimensions of human security: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. These dimensions reflect the need to recognise that security is as dependent on such factors as political democracy, human rights, social and economic development as is military stability. As such, this revitalised notion of security identifies two main challenges: first the existence of non-military threats that demand non-military means of providing security and secondly, the need for extending the concept of security from the state to the citizen. The fact is, many security threats, such as government corruption, access to weapons, religiously motivated violence, poverty, and climate change, do not have military solutions. Hence, security of individual and communities depends on political, economic and social factors and not just military solutions – which as pinpointed earlier, are inadequate in many conflict situations. This analysis presents a potential opportunity to identify and meet the needs of vulnerable groups and is a positive development in how the international community, including African governments, should approach security issues. While state security concerns took primacy over all other approaches following the onset of the ‘War on Terror’, there has more recently been a shift in the donor community back towards addressing the root causes of violence rather than merely protecting state interests in responding to conflict situations.

Human security requires both *protection* of civilians and *empowerment* of civil society. Neither of these can be dealt with in isolation as they are mutually reinforcing. The concept of ‘protection of civilians’ has tended to emphasise a ‘top-down’ approach, with states having the primary responsibility. The concept of ‘empowerment’ emphasises people as actors and participants in defining and implementing their vital freedoms. It implies a ‘bottom-up’ approach and it enables people to develop their potential and their resilience to difficult conditions. Therefore, the concept of human security as used in this paper, is *inclusive, democratic and people-centred*, requiring national governments (and the international community) to consult with and listen to the security interests of ordinary citizens. Thereby, empowering local people to assess vulnerabilities and threats and then identify and take part in strategies to build security rather than imposing outside definitions. Human security in this paper is also, *holistic*, involving “freedom from fear”, freedom from want” and “freedom to live in dignity. It is also prevention-oriented for the fact that the cost of prevention is always lower than the cost of ‘cure,’ reacting to the consequences of violent conflict and insecurity. According to Anna

Moller-Loswick's (2017) analysis posted on the website of *The Global Observatory* the world's military spending continues to increase sharply. In 2016 for example, it reached nearly \$1.7 trillion, while peace and development activities remain chronically underfunded (\$142.6 billion in 2016).



*Programme to enhance the overall level of human security in the Pool region of the Republic of Congo.
Source: United Nations Trust Fund for Human security*

Human security policymaking process therefore, requires inclusive mechanisms to determine what individuals and communities perceive as security threats as well as what is needed in order to feel secure. Experience has demonstrated that when individuals and communities are put at the centre of analysis, there are positive implications for the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of security and peacebuilding initiatives. Hence, as global and African security challenges evolve, it is critical that policy makers and practitioners consider the diverse contributions of various groups in building and sustaining peace, as well as in addressing emerging security issues.

Collecting data and ensuring monitoring of local contexts, with the participation of 'excluded and marginalised' groups is a key element in any inclusive approach to addressing security challenges. Moreover, since human security is a tri-level (individual, institutional, and structural/cultural) phenomenon, it is critically important to base peacebuilding/human security efforts on the lives of 'marginalised people,' who are often women, children and frustrated youths. Therefore, an 'inclusive and people-centred' approach to security could result in African governments, such as Cameroon, giving greater voice to youths and women; especially as these groups are often at the centre of victimisation during violent conflicts. It is certainly for these reasons that the international community

has instituted legal frameworks requiring national governments to adopt an inclusive approach to peace and security efforts with women and youth not just seen as mere victims or perpetrators but as key partners in peacebuilding processes.

5. International Policy Frameworks (UNSCR1325 & UNSCR2250) for the Inclusion of Women and Youth in Peace Negotiation and Security Initiatives: Challenges to Implementation

As noted earlier, the international community has, over the past couple of decades, moved away from a narrow focus on national security (state-centric approach) to security recognising the need for inclusive and human-centred approaches in designing peacebuilding programmes. On October 31, 2000, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. This was the first UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) that specifically addressed women's roles in conflicts and peace processes, as well as the impact of war on women's livelihoods. The resolution advocates for the protection of women and children during and after violent conflict, urging parties to take special precautions to prevent gender-based violence (GBV). It also encourages state agents to consider women's meaningful inclusion in post-conflict reforms such as disarmament, security, judicial, constitutional and electoral processes. As many international and UN organizations have developed their programs and engaged in peace processes, resolution 1325 remains the cornerstone for any peacebuilding work aimed at the inclusion and protection of women. Other international bodies have subsequently adopted resolutions underscoring the importance of women's participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes.



Women victims of sexual and gender-based violence receive psychological support and participate in reconciliation efforts in DR Congo.

Source: United Nations Trust Fund for Human security

With regards to youths, UNSCR2250 adopted on 9th December 2015 is the first resolution that deals with the critical role of youth on issues of peace and security; putting them at the center of their own peace and security concerns. Both UNSCR 1325 and 2250 mandate member states to protect women and girls in times of war and to promote the participation of women and youth in peace negotiations and security initiatives. However, the major challenge lies at the level of their effective implementation at national and local levels. Many formal peacebuilding activities and policies suffer from an insufficient understanding or acknowledgment of the diverse communities in which they operate. For example, it has been documented that in many violent conflicts in Africa, women usually join the armed struggle; as combatants and as providers of support to fighters. Yet their involvement is often overlooked, and they are not seen as appropriate participants for negotiations and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes. The importance of including women and girls in peacebuilding and security initiatives also stems from the fact that women's experience of war is diverse – as soldiers, as victims of armed conflict, as 'war booty', and as single heads of households. In armed conflicts, sexual violence against women and girls is often seen as a weapon of war both to dishonour the woman and the enemy. Some are even forcibly recruited, kidnapped and taken as sex slaves and wives by rebel and terrorist groups' commanders. This has been the case in places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Nigeria.

Another related problem of implementation is the lack of awareness of the resolutions at national and local levels. For example, according a study carried out in 2014 in the East Region of Cameroon by a women-led civil society (*The Women's International League for Peace (WILPF)*) to assess the level of awareness of UNSCR 1325, up to 81.7% of people interviewed, including humanitarian workers and state officials, had never heard of the resolution (Ndongmo and Kumstova, 2016). Even without conducting a formal study in the country, it can be deduced that a similarly high number of stakeholders will be unaware of UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security.

The above study revealed that "because Cameroon has long been considered a peaceful country, the government (along with other stakeholders and development partners), has been slow to take action on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda". The research further notes that barriers to women's political participation and civil society engagement, as well as inadequate recognition of GBV as an early warning indicator of conflict, have contributed to delays in considering the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and putting into place necessary conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms.

Another challenge related to implementation in countries such Cameroon certainly relates to the patriarchal system that glorifies male dominance, resulting in the imbalance of power relations and social dynamics in gender relations. According to the preface of a study conducted in 2016 by a women and girl focus civil society organization (Saare Tabitha) in the Far North Region of Cameroon, the traditional laws and 'cultural taboos' in place have conditioned women and girls to perceive themselves as justly occupying a subordinate role in gender relations and to accept that men should dominate public and private life in their communities, including exercising the greatest control over

the economic means. It could therefore be argued that, in Cameroon (as many parts of Africa), the failure by the State and some communities to fully recognize the pivotal role played by women in the family and the society at large (even with regards to peace initiatives) has also retarded the implementation process of the women, peace and security agenda.

For example, according to the *Guardian Post Newspaper* of July 18, 2018, as the socio-political crisis in the NW and SW Regions of Cameroon continues, most men, young and old in some communities have either been killed or have fled for safety while others have taken up arms to join the non-state armed groups, leaving behind only women and children. As a matter of fact, women (most of them elderly), have been forced to dig the graves and bury their dead relatives and other community members killed in the gun battles between non-state armed groups and security forces, even though in most of these communities, women are not culturally allowed to dig graves or even to be around when a grave is being dug, much less bury dead bodies.

Regarding the gun battles and massive killings of civilians by non-state armed groups and security forces, women in the two regions have been seen mobilised and staged a peaceful protest against such violence. For example, on Wednesday, August 29, 2018, at Buea Independence Square, hundreds of women sat on the ground, demanding an end to the killings and insecurity in the two English-speaking regions. Some of the marching women carried placards with messages such as “War is costly, Peace is priceless,” “Daughters aren’t objects for rape,” “Stop the rape,” “More than ever, our schools need protection,” “Dialogue is the only way to peace, start dialogue,” “As women, we are partners of peace and development,” among others (The Guardian Post Daily, August 30, 2018)



Women mobilised for peace in Buea.

What is clear is that when women are excluded from conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes, significant grievances and sources of instability are often overlooked. Former U.S. Ambassador to Angola, Donald Steinberg suggests that women's absence from the 1994 peace negotiations in Lusaka between the Angolan government and rebel forces offers a cautionary tale in this regard. In his words,

The exclusion of women and gender considerations from the peace process proved to be a key factor in our inability to implement the Lusaka Protocol and in Angola's return to conflict in late 1998...Not only did this silence women's voices on the hard issues of war and peace, but it also meant that issues [such] as internal displacement, sexual violence, abuses by government and rebel security forces, and the rebuilding of social services ... were given short shrift— or no shrift at all (Donald Steinberg, 2007)

In the case of Cameroon and in view of its increasing security challenges, the government, in collaboration with international development partners and civil society organisations, on 16 November 2017 adopted its first ever NAP on the implementation of UNSCR1325 for a three-year period (2018-2020). This plan is aligned with the national priorities defined in the 2010-2020 Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP) and the National Policy on Gender. The NAP has as its main vision the following:

"By 2020, the commitments and indebtedness of Cameroon towards women, peace and security are realized through:

- a) The leadership and participation of women in the process of prevention and management of conflict and post-conflict situations, to construct peace and social cohesion;
- b) The scrupulous observation of international humanitarian law and legal instruments for the protection of the rights of women and girls against sexual violence and gender-based violence during periods of armed conflict;
- c) A better integration of the gender dimension in emergency aid, during reconstruction in the course of, and after, armed conflicts as well as in the management of the past;
- d) The strengthening of institutional mechanisms and the collection of quantitative and qualitative data on the consideration of gender in the domains of peace, security prevention and resolution of conflicts.

The NAP is now in urgent need for effective implementation.

With regards to youth involvement in peacebuilding work the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (UNPBSO) were tasked by then-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to jointly support the development of an independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security. Published in 2018, this study that included the views of 4,230 young people around the world revealed that in the absence of meaningful opportunities to participate socially, politically and economically, marginalised young people are strikingly creative in forging alternative places of belonging and meaning through which to express themselves. According the World Bank

(2018) report- *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, some of the greatest risks of violence today stem from the mobilization of perceptions of exclusion and injustice, rooted in inequalities across groups. The report further argues that exclusion exacerbated by state repressive machinery increases the risk of violent conflicts by reinforcing the perception that there is no viable alternative for expressing grievances and frustration. In the face of endemic poverty, loss of 'agentic power' through meaningless participation in political processes, exclusionary governance and development, the only option left for many frustrated and vulnerable youth is recruitment into rebel and terrorist groups as has been the case in the Far North of Cameroon and Northern Nigeria with regards to the Boko Haram war activities. While poor socio-economic conditions and exclusion are not the only facilitator for recruitment to terrorist causes, they constitute an important factor, not least in terms of contributing towards a general sense of hopelessness and the challenge facing many people (especially poor women and youth) in such circumstances of finding some purpose and meaning for their lives.

Despite the above challenges to inclusion, there are many cases around the world that illustrate that youths continue to play active roles in organising and mobilising their peers at national, regional and global levels to address different forms of violence. The initiatives undertaken by women and youth-led civil society organisations around the world reflect the core approaches to sustaining peace – by taking into consideration the changing nature of conflicts and the manifestations of exclusion of young people and women that remain unresolved. The analysis so far reveals that the main challenge remains at the level of policy commitment and implementation of key international frameworks promoting the inclusion of women and youth in their own peace and security concerns. The key question is: What can be done about it?

6. Implications for Security Policy and Practice.

Based on the above analysis the following policy recommendations outline specific, achievable steps that African governments, including Cameroon, can take to strengthen the framework, leadership, and accountability that ensures a more inclusive and people-oriented security mechanism for sustainable peace and development.

1. It is in the interest of national governments, especially those experiencing complex conflict situations such as Cameroon, to immediately adopt and implement laws and holistic national strategies for the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 on *Women, Peace and Security* and UNSCR 2250 on *Youth, Peace and Security*. This is very important for Cameroon with regards to the effectiveness of the National Humanitarian Emergency Plan for victims of the NW and SW socio-political crisis and National Commission for the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

(DDR) of ex-combatants of Boko Haram in the Far-North and the non-state armed groups in the NW and SW Regions of Cameroon.

2. In addition to the process components that lead to higher-impact National Action Plans, countries must also consistently address three core substantive elements: (1) active participation of women and youth, (2) an integrated approach, shifting from a state-centric vision of security to a people-centric vision, and (3) addressing behavioural issues. This will ensure a more holistic view of threats including political, economic, or security threats. Addressing social barriers to inclusion will stress the importance of 'bringing the public along with you' and not simply changing or reforming laws but changing mindsets as well. Establish robust early warning and early response mechanisms with the involvement of women and youth to help detect early signs of violent conflicts at local and national levels. In fact, a complementary response to the traditional approach to state security is one of *crime and violence prevention* which African government and Cameroon must make serious investments in. The basic premise of this response is to stop the crime or violent act from occurring in the first place by understanding and addressing the root causes of social violence. It also involves understanding associated risk factors thereby building safer communities through a focus on the community strengths rather than its problems.

African governments will also do well to continue to design alternative opportunities for livelihoods and jobs that do not incentivise recruitment into armed groups, or the proliferation and use of arms for economic security by young men and women. The challenges facing many women and youths in finding purpose and meaning for their lives cannot be overstated. As we already saw earlier in this paper, prevention is more cost effective than repression. Prevention capacities can be shared by both citizens and state actors in a coordinated way. It is important to emphasise that violence control and preventive approaches are complementary. For example, an effective criminal justice system with strong policing and prevention approaches are not mutually exclusive but sustain each other. However, the use of force should only be as a last resort.

3. With the recent adoption of the National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on *Women, Peace and Security*, African governments must determine how each institution or stakeholder is best positioned to contribute positively to the effort. The effective implementation of the action plan will require commitment and support from key ministries and partners in sectors such as justice, health, education, media, police, social services, and religious organizations.
4. For such policies on inclusion to be most effective, they must be fully integrated in all aspects of national security sector reforms. For example, rather than establishing a separate coordinating body for the Cameroon National Action Plan for the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 and possibly UNSCR 2250 their principles should be woven throughout the existing national security coordination mechanism.
5. Considering the increased trend towards militarisation of cities, which many see as contributing to the increase in violent extremism, it is fundamental that the implementation of the national

action plans (NAPs) consider the full gendered spectrum of these security threats. For example, review of NAPs for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 reveals that while there has been increased attention to women's specific needs in conflicts, there is a lack of integration of a gender perspective in peace and security efforts. Thus, the variations and hierarchies within and across women and men, boys and girls, children and adults must be appropriately considered during planning and implementation processes.

In the case of Cameroon, it is critical to strengthen the gender perspective in DDR and security sector reforms (SSR) programmes and mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in post-conflict peacebuilding initiatives. This can be achieved by utilising an integrated framework that addresses institutional and structural barriers to equality and women's specific needs.

6. It is important to adapt the implementation of UNSCR 1325 to the present global context of peace and security as much has changed in the world since its adoption in 2000. For example, the increased awareness in addressing issues of GBV such as rape; women's human rights abuses, and sexual slavery by terrorist groups; heightened concern for climate change and its impact on conflict prevention and resolution, and an increased need to address violent extremism and acts of terror should be integrated into national action plans and implementation strategies.
7. Finally, the international community must encourage a conducive climate for equal partnership through its relationship with the national governments and through broad support for a divergent range of activities related to the planning and implementation of UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 2250. It should also strongly support other actions relevant to the establishment of sustainable peace and development in accordance to the global goals.



7. Conclusion

In the world of today, people are increasingly demanding to live in free, democratic societies with the ability to participate in the events and processes that shape their lives. This quest carries many opportunities as well as potential problems. It can easily transform into anarchy, violence or social disintegration. If properly nurtured in a responsive national and global framework, it can also become a source of tremendous vitality and innovation for the creation of peaceful and more inclusive societies. The dangers arise as the 'irresistible urge' for participation clashes with inflexible systems unable to usher in participatory mechanisms for the active involvement of citizens especially groups that suffer from 'poverty and marginality' in their socio-economic and political lives such as refugees, IDPs, women, youth and minorities.

As the analysis in this paper has demonstrated, approaches and security mechanisms in many parts of Africa continue to be state-centric despite international policy commitments for 'inclusive and human-centred' mechanisms. The protection of 'elite interest' and national territory takes priority over the 'interest of the people'. The consequence has been evident in this paper. Security not rooted in the 'interest of the people' but brought about using police or military force does not contribute to sustainable peace and without sustainable peace, it is practically impossible to talk about sustainable development. Moreover, it has been clear that a purely military approach is costly, dangerous and does not do much to address the epicentre (the deep rooted issues, structural violence and 'issues of trust' that caused the conflict in the first place). Inclusive security is a critical aspect of human security and at the heart of human security lies in the nexus between the state and its citizens. Human security and national/state security are not mutually exclusive but overlap and complement each other.

A dialogue between security policymakers, security forces, and civil society can help identify common ground in state security and human security perspectives and appreciate the areas where their approaches are different. This can allow cooperation in overlapping areas while appreciating the need for independence in areas that do not overlap. In this connection, meaningful inclusion of women and youth in peace and security initiatives in Africa at large and Cameroon in particular, will make the difference between failure and success in peacebuilding and security initiatives. Hence, effectively implementing the above policy recommendations is crucial especially as sustainable peace cannot be built in the absence of women and youth, and without finding creating ways to protect their lives, or meaningfully engaging and empowering them. Effectively implementing UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 2250 will certainly serve to consolidate the role of women and youths as key partners in peace policy and practice, thereby, providing recognition and legitimacy to the works currently done by these groups at local and national levels. In fact, if governments of conflict affected and fragile states in Africa do not urgently and actively invest in inclusive and human-centred approaches to security sector reforms, international, continental and national development policy frameworks such as the sustainable development goals, African Union Agenda 2063 and national visions for economic emergence, will at best be unsustainable and at worst remain at the level of aspirations.

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