CIMUN VI Chair Research Report

Committee: Security Council
Issue: Enhancing regional security and governance in post-conflict zones, particularly in Liberia and West Africa
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Committee Introduction

As one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, the Security Council was established on October 24th, 1945, with the task of safeguarding international peace and security. Much of the Security Council's work relates to the addressing of conflicts, and is uniquely able to create legally binding resolutions in order to maintain, restore, and promote peace on a global level. The Security Council also has the unique abilities to take action through the issuing of sanctions and the authorization of the use of force. The Security Council consists of 15 member states, with five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) with the unique ability to exercise veto power. The other 10 member states are elected, and require a two-thirds majority vote from the UN General Assembly in order to secure a seat in the council for a two-year term. At the sixth iteration of CIMUN, delegates of the Security Council will likewise address two conflicts and work to restore peace and stability on an international level.

Agenda Introduction

The Security Council is tasked with building regional security and governance in post-conflict zones, such as that in Liberia and the West African subregion at large. Post-conflict societies generally struggle under precarious peace, weak state institutions, and ongoing security challenges. The post-conflict peacebuilding is always a complex process, not only the cessation of violence, but the transformation of political, social, and economic institutions to be able to deliver sustainable peace and stability.

Post-conflict contexts, such as Liberia and the West African region, feature a variety of actors. National governments, non-state actors, international organizations, and regional organizations, all have significant roles to perform in security governance. In these contexts, issues addressed include disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants, security

sector reform (SSR), re-establishment of the rule of law, and transitional justice. All of these attempts have to be coordinated at various levels, ranging from the local community, regional institutions, to the global community, to ensure that peacebuilding is both sustainable and inclusive.

The Security Council recognizes that effective security governance in post-conflict regions is not just necessary in order to prevent the resurgence of violence, but also to support development and political responsibility. SSR, civic participation, and regional security measures integrated in Liberia ar critical for a peaceful and effective post-conflict transition from war.

Nevertheless, ongoing issues such as weak state capacity, armed non-state actors, and socio-economic weaknesses continue to undermine stability in the region.This agenda is also intended to address the broader work of establishing a regional security framework, advocating for robust governance, and the building of cooperation among national, regional, and international stakeholders. Drawing on lessons achieved in Liberia and with regard to the broader West African context, the Security Council aims to design approaches that not only achieve immediate security needs but also create a ground framework for peaceful, accountable, and stable societies.

Definition of Key Terms

Post-Conflict Zone

A geographic area that has recently emerged from armed conflict but still experiences the long-term effects of war, including damaged infrastructure, weak institutions, economic instability, and societal trauma. Post-conflict zones are vulnerable to renewed violence due to fragile governance, unresolved grievances, and lack of reconciliation or reintegration of former combatants.

Regional Security

The protection of peace and stability within a geographic region, often achieved through collaboration among neighboring states, international organizations, or peacekeeping bodies. In West Africa, regional security is challenged by transnational threats such as terrorism, arms trafficking, and political instability. Strengthening regional security requires coordinated efforts in intelligence sharing, border control, and peacekeeping operations.

Governance

The system and process through which public institutions conduct public affairs, manage resources, and ensure accountability, transparency, and rule of law. In post-conflict settings, good governance involves rebuilding trust, restoring service delivery, reducing corruption, and promoting inclusive political participation. Weak governance is a major cause of relapse into conflict.

Peacebuilding

A broad range of efforts aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, or recurrence of conflict by addressing root causes and laying foundations for sustainable peace. Peacebuilding may involve disarmament, reintegration of ex-combatants, judicial reforms, national reconciliation, and institution-building, especially in fragile states emerging from war.

Fragile State

A country with weak state capacity or legitimacy, leaving citizens vulnerable to a range of shocks including conflict, poverty, and poor governance. Fragile states often struggle to provide basic services, enforce law and order, or maintain control over their territory, making them susceptible to civil unrest and external intervention.

ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States)

A regional political and economic union of 15 West African countries, established in 1975 to promote cooperation and stability in the region. ECOWAS has also played a significant role in peacekeeping and conflict resolution, including deploying troops in Liberia, Mali, and the Gambia under its regional security framework.

Peacekeeping Mission

A UN-led or regionally mandated military and civilian operation deployed to maintain or restore peace in areas affected by conflict. Peacekeeping missions aim to protect civilians, disarm combatants, support political processes, and assist in rebuilding national institutions. For example, UNMIL (United Nations Mission in Liberia) operated from 2003 to 2018 to help stabilize Liberia after its civil wars.

DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration)

A process in post-conflict peacebuilding where former combatants are disarmed, formally discharged from armed groups, and reintegrated into civilian life. DDR is essential for reducing the risk of future violence and fostering long-term security and reconciliation in post-war societies like Liberia.

Transnational Threats

Security risks that cross national borders, including terrorism, organized crime, arms trafficking, human trafficking, and drug smuggling. In West Africa, porous borders and weak law enforcement enable these threats to flourish, undermining regional stability and governance.

Timeline of Key Events

1980 - A violent coup ignited in Liberia when Master Sergeant Samuel Doe seized power, overthrowing President William Tolbert. Doe's seizure of power led to ethnic tensions, poor governance, and corruption worsening, laying the foundation for prolonged instability in Liberia.

1989 ~ 1997 - Liberia was engulfed in its First Civil War, initiated when Charles Taylor's rebel group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), invaded from Côte d'Ivoire. The war along the western coast of Africa killed thousands of innocent Liberians, inducing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to make a decision to form ECOMOG (ECOWAS Monitoring Group)—intervene in military operations. However, the prolonged crisis was soon after arbitrated with the Abuja Peace Accord, and Liberia was able to move into elections, which Charles Taylor won.

1999 ~ 2003 - Liberia descended into a Second Civil War, with government forces and rebel groups such as LURD and MODEL imposing widespread human rights abuses across Liberia.

2003 - The parties involved in the conflict signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Accra, Ghana. With the establishment of UNMIL (United Nations Mission in Liberia) to aid in disarmament, institutional reconstruction, and the peace-building process of Liberia.

2005 - Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected following the resignation and exile of Charles Taylor. The government was able to mark a shift toward democratic governance and stability in Liberia, by focusing on major post-war reforms, emphasizing anti-corruption, legislative reform, public financial management, and programs for youth reintegration and education.

2006 ~ 2011 - Liberia implemented an extensive Security Sector Reform (SSR) where Liberia's police and army were divided and rebuilt by using help from the UN, the US, and other allies. The reform also included disarmament, training, and reintegration, which were accomplished for thousands of former soldiers. The professionalization of the new security forces, civilian control, and examination were to enforce further peace in the region.

2012 ~ 2016 - UNMIL reduced its deployment, and Liberia gradually took command of internal security operations. The Ebola outbreak, however, put the advancements to the test by revealing

serious flaws in the government and healthcare system. Western African countries, including Liberia, were able to navigate the crisis in spite of these obstacles through the help of international aid.

2016 - Liberia took full control of national security without further intervention from the UNMIL

2018 - UNMIL officially ended its 15-year mandate, with the UN and international partners praising Liberia's peaceful and democratic transition.

2019 ~ 2020 - The expansion of violent extremism from the Sahel region was a major factor in the increase in regional insecurity and the breakage of short-term peace. Terrorist organizations like Boko Haram, ISGS, and JNIM increased their operations into coastal states in West Africa, while ECOWAS strengthened its counterterrorism, border security, and regional intelligence-sharing plans.

2020 ~ 2023 - West Africa experienced a wave of military coups, severely challenging democratic norms and regional security. Coups occurred in Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger. These events significantly weakened ECOWAS's political influence and raised alarms about the fragility of post-conflict democracies across the region.

2023 - Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger withdrew from ECOWAS and formed the Alliance of Sahel States, a mutual defense pact that challenges regional governance frameworks. These moves signified the growing resistance of western African countries to traditional multilateral institutions in favor of military-led governance to the international community.

2024 and 2025 - The African Union and ECOWAS are advocating to strengthen civil-military relationships, encourage youth engagement to prevent terrorism, improve reintegration programs for veterans, and enhance early warning systems like the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) to promote a new regional security framework. These programs seek to guarantee lasting peace and governance throughout West Africa and avert future conflicts.

Positions of Key Member Nations and Bodies

China

In the context of Liberia, China stands in favor of efforts such as UN peacekeeping and infrastructural development within Liberian borders. However, China also emphasizes the importance of national action, and likewise upholds the stance that that non-interference is the best course of action. In West Africa, China similarly supports efforts such as infrastructural development and economic assistance within the region. China's economic involvement in West Africa, which entails the construction of infrastructure such as railways, ports, and roads, has

cemented China's position as the largest trading partner not only in the West African region, but also in the African continent as a whole. Although such practices have raised concerns of "debt-trapping" and the unsustainable nature of the debt that is likely to result from such practices, China's model of taking action poses an alternative to direct interference in governmental affairs within the region.

France

Regarding Liberia, France stands in favor of UN peacekeeping efforts and related measures to maintain peace in the region. In West Africa, France, particularly due to its historical ties to the region (i.e. Francophone Africa), upholds quite a strong stance in the region, advocating for early military intervention (given its historical military presence in the region) and the bolstering of African organizations in order to best uphold and maintain peace. Regarding its military presence, France's military has been present in the West African region for decades since the era of decolonization, with the French military having taken action (such as counterterrorism measures in the Sahel) in the region in order to best maintain peace. Given France's historical understanding of and ties to the region, France is committed to maintaining peace within the West African region as a whole.

Russia

Similar to China, Russia also upholds that the best actor for maintaining peace within Liberian borders is none other than the Liberian government itself. Although Russia stands in favor of UN peacekeeping efforts in the region, with a stance favoring non-interference, Russia believes that internal action directed by the Liberian government will be more effective than external governmental intervention. This line of logic translates to Russia's stance regarding the situation in West Africa, with Russia believing that stability and peace should be constructed and maintained from nearly nowhere but within.

United Kingdom (UK)

The UK stands in favor of both UNMIL and the need for international cooperation and action to maintain peace and prevent conflict in Liberia. Similarly, the UK also believes that regional cooperation is essential for conflict prevention in the West African region—a belief shared by other P5 nations such as the US and France (as is the case with much of the UK's stance on both agendas).

United States (US)

The US has stood strongly in favor of UNMIL and peacekeeping operations in Liberia, and has also stood in favor of the promotion of democratic values within Liberian borders. In West Africa, the US has backed not only organizations such as ECOWAS that promote regional stability, but also democratic transitions that occur within the region.

Questions A Resolution Must Answer

1. How can ECOWAS strengthen democratic resilience in post-conflict states like Liberia while navigating the rising wave of military coups in the region?
2. How can the African Union and ECOWAS jointly fund and implement early warning systems like ECOWARN to detect and prevent emerging conflicts?
3. What policies can address youth unemployment in West Africa to reduce the appeal of extremist groups and political violence?
4. How can trust be re-established between civilians and state security forces in countries with a history of military abuse and weak judicial systems?
5. What economic or social reintegration programs are most effective for former combatants in Liberia and other west African countries, and how can these be scaled across the West African region.

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