



FEATURE

BARBARA BARUNGI & KARANJA MBUGUA

From Peacekeeping to Peace Building: Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Africa

Can Africa claim the twenty-first century? Finding African solutions to African problems is what has marked Africa's claim to the 21st century. One of the greatest achievements in Africa at the dawn of the new millennium was the adoption of the Constitutive Act establishing the African Union (AU). Of great significance is that the Constitutive Act underlines the links between peace, security and development.¹ It stresses in its preamble that the scourge of conflicts in Africa forms a major impediment to the socio-economic progress of the continent and hence the need to promote peace, security and stability.

The adoption of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union, in Durban, South Africa in July 2002 was a remarkable leap forward. The PSC not only provides the anchor for a continental peace and security architecture but also enables a more politically engaged African Union.² It is within this framework that an innovative African approach to peacekeeping, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction should be harnessed. To do this, two fundamental questions must be answered. First, is it realistic and feasible to make post-conflict considerations an integral component of a peace agreement?

Second, would a developmental peacekeeping approach be an effective response to breaking the conflict trap?

A new approach: developmental peacekeeping

The key aspect of a developmental peace keeping approach would be ensuring that peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction (PCR) concerns are weaved together in such a way as to ensure a continuum. Such an approach demands a very different perspective and modus operandi by both national and international actors. The Africa Human Security Initiative (AHSI) comments that,

It also has far reaching implications for: the mandate of UN Missions; the coordination of humanitarian, development and peacekeeping assets; the phasing and priority accorded to the provision of security and post-conflict reconstruction efforts; and local ownership.

Indeed, it would require policy innovation, improvisation and flexibility coupled with political commitment to such a process. The recent peacekeeping missions in

the Great Lakes Region – Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda – provide insights into the reality of having to deal with the simultaneous needs of peace making, maintaining of security, provision and coordination of humanitarian aid, resettlements of large populations, and reconstruction of basic infrastructure and tackling of war economies.

The deployment of the AU's first peacekeeping mission in Burundi (AMIB), for example, represented a critical moment for the development of a continent-wide security architecture in Africa.³ The AU took the responsibility of deploying AMIB because the UN could not authorise a peacekeeping mission in the absence of a comprehensive ceasefire agreement. AMIB's central objective was to create conditions sufficiently stable for the UN Security Council to authorise a UN intervention. AMIB essentially provided the security dimension of the UN's political mission in Burundi, thus linking it to the UN system.⁴

In addition to maintaining liaison between the parties and monitoring and verifying ceasefire implementation, AMIB's other tasks were facilitating the movement of combatants towards assembly areas, providing technical assistance to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Though the mission was not mandated to protect civilians, the challenges of ground operations forced its leaders to draft rules of engagement (ROEs) to allow their troops to protect civilians in the face of imminent danger.⁵ AMIB's intervention was hailed across the continent as a possible model for an 'African solution to African problems' and its lessons has been incorporated in the PCR programme in the Darfur region of the Sudan.

In Rwanda, one of the parties to the conflict decisively won the war against the regime that instigated genocide, and, therefore, the country's PCR programme has followed the path as dictated by the winning party. Thus, Rwanda's PCR model has put more emphasis on justice and punishment. This emphasis is mitigated by the nature of the genocide. The government's case is that in order to stop impunity and future crimes against humanity, it is imperative that genocide perpetrators are prosecuted according to Rwandan law and international covenants.

Available instruments for the government include the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), the common law courts, and the Gacaca traditional courts. The latter is, however, much more than a common law court for it includes truth-telling and forgiveness seeking.

As a PCR mechanism, this may contribute to reconciling the social fabric of society.

The case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is more complicated. Various peace interventions mediated by South Africa, Zambia and Libya have been violated by all sides. The Lusaka accords of 1999, for instance, provided for the disarming of militias, deployment of UN peacekeeping forces, and an Inter-Congolese dialogue, but little progress was made in implementation and all parties violated the agreement. However, the inclusion of the Inter-Congolese dialogue and power-sharing transitional government followed by all-inclusive universal suffrage elections guaranteed by an international peacekeeping force (MONUC) can be referred to as an attempt to incorporate a PCR programme in the peace process.

Though quite different in trajectory and achievement, what these three cases have in common is the lesson that a conflict-affected country must confront the challenges of a trade-off between immediate emergency needs, short-term measures necessary for rehabilitation, reconstruction of destroyed social and physical infrastructure and the medium to long-term needs for socio-economic recovery and sustainable development.

Peace agreements at a glance

Some have argued that the possibility of incorporating post-conflict considerations within peace agreements should be explored. The thinking behind this argument is that peace keeping intervention strategies, as manifested in the Great Lakes Region initiative, represent entrance at a conflict mitigation level. This in essence means conflict management through supporting 'keeping peace' and getting parties to sign agreements.

Yet, practical experience in most cases including Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Sudan shows that this is not enough. The experience from across Africa shows that there is a need to broaden the intervention strategy from peacekeeping and securing peace agreements to PCR activities that address the root causes of conflict, confidence-building measures between divided parties and people, and changing the pervasive culture of violence and conflict.

The Rwandan PCR provides a unique example on two fronts. First it provides for the establishment of the Specialised Commissions including the Commission for National Unity and National Reconciliation. Second, key socio-economic development issues of rehabilitation, repatriation and reintegration are provided for in detail



As part of demobilisation and reintegration, former child soldiers of the rebel SPLA attend class at a primary school

within the PCR programme. Of particular significance is the provision made in Chapter 1 Article 4 of the Protocol of Agreement on the repatriation of Rwandese refugees and the resettlement of displaced persons. Under article 4 it is stated that,

in order to promote social harmony and national reconciliation, refugees who left the country more than 10 years ago should not reclaim properties, which might have been occupied by other people. The Government shall compensate them by putting land at their disposal and shall help them resettle.⁶

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of Sudan provides an even more interesting PCR programme. The CPA comprises various accords that were successfully reached in the course of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) negotiating process. These are two agreements, on wealth sharing and security arrangements, and four protocols – power sharing, resolution of conflicts in the three disputed areas and self-determination for the south. The CPA also includes two annexes which detail the implementation modalities of each separate agreement.⁷

The PCR challenge in Sudan lay in facilitating the emergence of a New Sudan paradigm that is inclusive, cross-cultural, inter-religious and pluralist. Towards this end, the CPA provides a formula for power and wealth sharing. It also recognises that the relationship between

state and religion is one of the most divisive issues in the Sudan polity. Thus, it stipulates that the country's constitution will have to be rewritten during the interim period so that Islamic law does not apply to non-Muslims. Section 3.2.1 declares that,

There shall be a National Government, which shall exercise such functions and pass such laws as must necessarily be exercised by a sovereign state at national level. The National Government in all its laws shall take into account the religious and cultural diversity of the Sudanese people.⁸

The CPA, further, provides for the creation of Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC), the National DDR coordinating council (NDDRC), to be appointed by the Presidency, and two separate DDR committees, one for the north and the other for the south.⁹ There is no doubt that the establishment of a national unity government, the move towards a decentralised system and the latter commissions and committees are mechanisms for enhancing a PCR programme in Sudan.

Not as complex as the Sudanese CPA, but equally important in its recognition of a PCR programme, is the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi (APRAB) that was signed on 28 August 2000. Comprising five protocols, the agreement's approach revolves around the important issues of national reconciliation, and the distorted histories of the various

communities in the Burundi society.

Protocol 1 of the agreement addresses the problems of exclusion and genocide, and stipulates a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a mechanism for addressing issues of distorted histories, justice and impunity. Protocol 4, on the other hand, addresses issues of reconstruction and development and mandates the establishment of a commission on the rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees, IDPs and returnees.

Reconciliation as catalytic for peace building and PCR

Viewed broadly then, a central theme that runs through the Rwanda, Burundi and the north-south Sudan peace agreements is national reconciliation and unity, not as ends in themselves but as pillars of national development. Indeed, without national unity and reconciliation it is hard to imagine how the transition from conflict to recovery can be made. For national unity and reconciliation provides the foundation for lasting peace and development.

Yet, group solidarity is an important characteristic of the African continent's social dynamics and represents an important pillar on which national unity and reconciliation and future developments can be built. As the three cases highlight, it is in fragile societies that some of the ripest opportunities present themselves for innovative local solutions and for leaping forward into the global environment through rebuilding the nation into a much stronger, self reliant and more modern state.

This means, in effect, that the process of national unity and reconciliation must take centre stage in moving from war to peace and from nation building to recovery and sustainable development. Crucial in this movement is the international community, which will need to change the way it approaches peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction. Meaningful and sustainable peace building and recovery require comprehensive longer term support, which only the international community can provide.

This support includes political and financial commitment from all parties including international development organisations. Indeed, the recent call by the UN Secretary-General for the creation of an international peace building commission (PBC) is a step in the right direction. An enhanced PBC is an important building block towards the realisation of this goal.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our argument is that the decline in

inter-state conflicts and the dramatic increase in intra-state conflicts have raised the need for a broader framework of conflict intervention that transcends traditional peacekeeping. Traditional peacekeeping has its origins in the UN response to inter-state conflict and is predicated on the security of the state. The transformation of conflicts from inter-state to intra-state has, therefore, demanded a change from a narrow framework, designed to mitigate the impact of war, to one which acknowledges that the nature of modern conflicts is such that something more than 'keeping the peace' has to be done to help conflict resolution and peace-building.

The thinking is that intra-state conflicts in Africa destroy the productive human capacity and infrastructure necessary for development, which in turn disrupts production and weakens social, economic and administrative structures, and ultimately causes the collapse of the state and the peace-time economy. In turn, this reduces the ability of post-conflict societies to normalise economic relations and structures that can dismantle war economies and predatory practices.

There is, therefore, a need to develop a framework with a PCR programme that focuses not just on the disarmament of combatants and their re-integration into society, but that also focuses on dismantling war economies, which are at the root of the problem. ▀

Barbara Barungi is a Development Economist currently serving with UNDP New York as the Strategic and Programme Advisor, Regional Bureau for Africa.

Karanja Mbugua is a Senior Researcher at ACCORD.

Endnotes

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the respective organisations.

- 1 See Protocol Relating to the establishment of the Peace & Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Powell, K. 2005. 'From Promise to Practice: The African Union in Burundi and Darfur'. North-South Institute, Ottawa, Canada. Monograph No. 119, May 2005.
- 4 UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations (UN-DPKO), available at www.un.org/depts/dpko
- 5 Powell, 2005.
- 6 Rwanda Peace Agreement, Accord July 2002.
- 7 Rogier Emeric, 2005. 'No More Hills Ahead: Sudan's Tortuous Ascent To Heights of Peace,' Netherlands Institute of International Relations Report. August 2005.
- 8 Korwa G. Adar, Nyuot Yoh, John & Maloka, Eddy. 2004. *Sudan Peace Process: Challenges & Future Prospects*. Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa.
- 9 Ibid.