

# Regional Reconciliation in Africa's Ungoverned Spaces



**Prof Tim Murithi**

**Extraordinary Professor of African Studies, Centre for African Studies, University of Free State, South Africa**

**Head of Peacebuilding Interventions Programme  
Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town**

**Research Associate, Institute for Democracy, Citizenship and Public Policy in Africa (IDCPPA)**



**[tmurithi@ijr.org.za](mailto:tmurithi@ijr.org.za);  
[tkmurithi@hotmail.com](mailto:tkmurithi@hotmail.com)**

# Regional Reconciliation in Africa: The Elusive Dimension of Peace and Security

**Summary:** Intra-state conflicts with regional dimensions – “spill over” effect

- ***Part 1: Conceptual Issues - Regional Conflict Systems***
- **Theory of Regional Reconciliation** – sovereignty, citizenship and regionalism
- **Decolonization and Regional Reconciliation**
- **Three Pillars of Regional Reconciliation** –
- Leader-to-Leader/government-to-government/people-to-people
  
- ***Part 2: Case Studies: Africa's Ungoverned Spaces***
- **Great Lakes region - Eastern DRC** armed militia – Burundi crisis; Rwanda genocide
- **Horn of Africa – Extremism** Al Shabaab; Boko Haram; ISIS-affiliated
- **South Sudan** – *a regional crisis*; **Karamoja Cluster** - Northern Uganda Lord's Resistance Army; Sahel: Mali - Ansar Dine / AQIM;
- **Forgotten regionalized conflicts** – Cabinda; Caprivi; Casamance; Lake Chad Basin



## *Part 3: Analysis and Normative Proposals*

- Framing the case for **regional reconciliation**
- Illustrations of Cross-border Redress
- ***Infrastructure*** for regional reconciliation



- Regional Reconciliation as a precursor to ***Regional Integration***
- The **constraints and limitations** on regional reconciliation
- **Strategies for Implementing Regional Reconciliation**

## Contextualizing Regional Reconciliation

- **Key argument – securing Africa's ungoverned spaces through** peace and security in Africa cannot be sustained *without* effective regional reconciliation processes – What is reconciliation?
  - contested - multi-disciplinary and multi-level in nature
  - reconciliation - **address deep divisions within societies**
  - violations - actors, communities, state, other states**
  - United Nations (UN) definition of peacebuilding
- *The Principles of Reconciliation* - **truth** recovery; **justice** – retributive/restorative; **Reparation**/redress; restoration of **human dignity**; re-establishment of **human relationships**
- *The Processes of Reconciliation* - **future-oriented process** although remedying violations of the **past** - formation of equal, inclusive and fair societies
  - multiple levels including the **interpersonal, communal, and national**
  - *truth commissions; judicial/cultural institutions for redress; institutional reform; gender reconciliation* – **combination of these** – **transitional justice process**



## Contextualizing Regional Reconciliation

- recognising *interdependence*; engage in genuine *dialogue*;
- embrace an *inclusive and democratic attitude*; address the legacies of *socio-economic exploitation and injustices*, including gender-based violence

## Regional level reconciliation would include:

- war-affected states and communities in close proximity to each other - recognizing **regional interdependence**
- engaging in **genuine regional dialogue**
- embracing inclusive regional political dialogue
- **redress** legacies of socio-economic exploitation – **regional economic development**





## Understanding Reconciliation Approaches

- Notions of justice and reconciliation can be locally specific and culturally defined:
- ***National Reconciliation*** - common understanding –

*National Reconciliation Strategies and National Reconciliation Legislations*

- ***Community Reconciliation*** – localised and communal process – gacaca (Rwanda) , mato oput (Northern Uganda)



## Regional Conflict Systems as Ungoverned Spaces

IR - regionalism “in terms of patterns and networks of interdependence” – illicit trade weapons, drugs, human trafficking in *ungoverned spaces*;

- **half of violent conflicts in Africa** can be linked to conflicts in neighbouring states – *ungoverned spaces*
- Conflicts do not stop at the border, but in fact **spill over – cascading and ripple effects**
- Spill over effect of **Rwandan genocide** – an exacerbating factor to the conflicts in the eastern DRC
- Lords Resistance Army (LRA) - regionalized the conflict, spill over to DRC, Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan
- regional conflict systems are *notoriously difficult to stabilize*
- The challenge of **regional conflict systems** - how do we address cross-border violations and the need for redress?
- lack of precedents in of Africa - necessary to undertake a ***theoretical interrogation of this notion of regional reconciliation***



## A Theory of Regional Reconciliation

- Since conflicts, atrocities and violations straddle borders and ungoverned spaces - how can reconciliation can take place across borders?
- venture into ***new analytical ground*** - to illustrate link between regional reconciliation and peace and security in Africa;
- international relations theory - conditions for promoting peace and mitigating against conflict;
- ***Agenda for Peace*** - peacemaking, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding;
- Critical theoretical approaches peace and security studies
- **emancipatory power of knowledge generation**
- useful entry point to frame the issue of *regionalised insecurity*
- *Regionalism* - a societal understanding of regional space
- **regions are political and social projects**
- regional reconciliation - implementing processes of *truth recovery*, redress, including *gender justice*, and institutional reform across borders
- creation of spaces - develop inclusive narratives of past/future visions





## Decolonization and Regional Reconciliation

- necessary to **interrogate how logic of colonial dominion** and aggression continues to haunt present experiences and reality of African countries



### *The Crisis of State Malformation in Africa*

- forces of colonization which entrenched and left the statist imprint
- **African nation-states remain programmed** - colonial logic of control, dominion, dehumanization, subjugation, oppression, exploitation, and manipulation



- *Healing the Pan-African body politic* requires **decolonize** its culture, society, economy and politics
- **dismantling the state structures** that this colonial logic left behind

# Decolonization as a Pathway to Reconciliation



- *Reconciliation* concerned with redressing the violations of the past
- *Decolonization* concerned with remedying/eradicating the effects of violations of colonialism's logic of dominion, dehumanization
- **there is a natural synergy between efforts to promote decolonization and efforts to pursue reconciliation**
- *National Reconciliation as the **Continuation** of the Decolonization Project*
- *Regional Reconciliation as the **Fulfillment** of the Decolonization Project*



## A Theory of Regional Reconciliation

### ***Sovereignty and Regional Reconciliation***

- reluctance of nation-states to **devolve sovereignty** and adopt processes that might be seemingly outside of their sphere of authority – across borders
- Nation-states utilize sovereignty to **harbor perpetrators** of human rights violations from neighbouring countries – *in ungoverned spaces*

### ***Citizenship and Regional Reconciliation***

- Citizenship - **rights and obligations** individuals are entitled in a defined **political community**
- regional reconciliation will effect how citizenship is conceptualized and operationalized in Africa

### ***Regionalism and Regional Reconciliation***

- *emerging* common regional identity; cross-border trade/agrarian programmes; trans-boundary road/rail networks; infrastructure development
- ***New African Union Passport*** – issued June 2016, Kigali



## The Three Pillars of Regional Reconciliation

- Levels of engagement to be operationalised for cross-border redress deep divisions
- Regional reconciliation requires **three pillars** in order to become **functional and integrated between different levels**, namely:
  - 1) **Leader-to-leader** dialogue and problem-solving;
  - 2) **Government-to-government** joint policy development and implementation;
  - 3) **People-to-people** professional, academic, social, entrepreneurial exchange



## Case Studies: The Great Lakes Region of Africa Fledgling Regional Peace Initiatives – Securing

- **UN Force Intervention Brigade (FIB)** – South Africa, Tanzania, Malawi

- *UN-brokered Peace, Security and Cooperation*

*Framework for the DRC - end decades of conflict* Great Lakes

Flawed in looking at the DRC as the *‘problem-child’*

- does not sufficiently acknowledge cross-border nature of the violations – between the three countries



- Incomplete - **2016 UN Independent investigation on Burundi (UNIIB)**

expressed *‘alarm about the potential threat to peace and security in the Great Lakes region’*

- Failure to re-think peace and security intervention leads to an incomplete framework for intervention

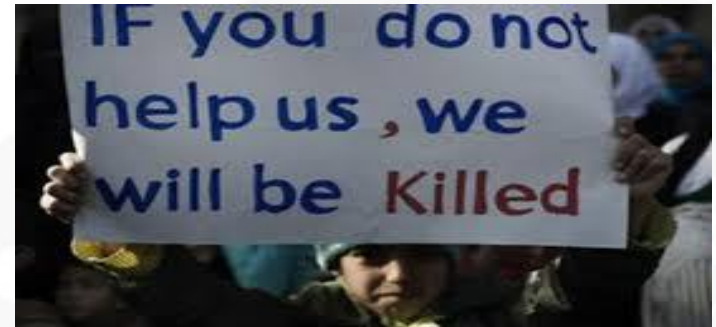
- leader-to-leader regional reconciliation framework

- **Paul Kagame, Evariste Ndayishimiye, Felix Tshisekedi, Yoweri Museveni and John Magufuli** - common political dialogue - a first step towards operationalizing a framework and process of regional reconciliation.



# Case Studies: The Extremism Challenge in the Horn of Africa – Regional Dimensions of Somali Conflict

- **1991** - fragmented Somalia's sovereign structure
- neighbouring countries intervened ostensibly to address their own *self-defined national interests*
- UN, AMISOM – Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, historically Ethiopia/Islamic Courts Union
- 21 September 2013 – Westgate Mall attack
- 2 April 2015 – Garissa, 147 massacred
- 15 January 2019 – Nairobi DusitD2 Attack
- A need **cross-border reconciliation** between Kenya and Somalia to contain the *Triumph of extremist ideology*
- promoting reconciliation in Somalia and **linking** this to reconciliation processes in Kenya
- Kenya has a sizeable Kenyan citizens of Somali heritage
- Ultimately a more effective/sustainable approach to reducing the war and strife generated by the Somali conflict system
- Leader-to-Leader and **people-to-people regional reconciliation**



## Case Studies: The 2013 South Sudan Crisis: A Regional Conflict

- 2013, 2015 - plunged young country into a **debilitating and brutal conflict** with **regional dimensions**
- drew in **Museveni's Uganda**, which deployed troops into South Sudan to shore up the incumbent **Kirr's government**
- **Machar** in turn received diplomatic, political and military support from the government of **Al Bahir's Sudan**
- **Ethiopia and Kenya** – with political and economic interests in South Sudan crisis – regional consequences
- ability of South Sudan government to implement Peace Agreement will be contingent on **leader-to-leader regional reconciliation processes**
- *regional political dialogues* between **Kirr, Machar, Museveni, Hamdok Abdallah, Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia and Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya**



## Examples of People-to-People Regional Reconciliation

- Karamoja Cluster Project works across - Kenyan and Ugandan borders to promote people-to-people regional reconciliation and peacebuilding;
- establishment of people-to-people dialogue platforms; **former enemies can come together;**

## ***Part 3: Analysis and Normative Proposals***

### **Framing the case for regional reconciliation**

- Reality of **cross-border violations** and the need for **cross-border redress**
- applying a regional lens to reconciliation
- how can reconciliation also take place across borders

### ***Gender and Regional Reconciliation***

- gender dimension to the issue of cross-border redress
- perpetrators or gender-based violations cross the border to seek **sanctuary** in neighbouring countries and ungoverned spaces...

### ***Trauma and Psycho-Social Support for Regional Reconciliation Processes***

- **victims** who may have **crossed borders** and lost family members in the cause of a displacement would need trauma support
- trauma support groups across borders. *A challenge!*



## Illustrations of Cross-border Redress

### *Pan-African Criminal Justice and Cross-border prosecution*

- Special Tribunal for **Sierra Leone** – Charles Taylor former President of **Liberia** – convicted for crimes
- African Union Extraordinary Chambers in **Senegal** - Hissene Habre conviction on 30 May 2016 – for crimes in **Chad**

## International Examples of Cross-border Redress

- Tony Blair apologized for the Irish potato Famine and illegal Iraq invasion 2003
- Japanese reparations to Korean ***'comfort women'*** / Germany reparations to Israel
- SA apartheid victims seeking redress from US companies



## Insights from Regional Security Initiatives

- military and intelligence sectors are also struggling to introduce a regional security and intelligence approach – in ungoverned spaces

- **African Standby Force (ASF)** – 2021 operationalisation?



- ***regional coordination is a necessity not a luxury***

- Fostering regional reconciliation requires a **more innovative approach**



## Infrastructure for Regional Reconciliation

- Regional institutions are necessary to oversee regional or cross-border reconciliation processes
- **Formal Regional Reconciliation Processes and Mechanisms**
- **Informal Regional Reconciliation Processes and Mechanisms**
- Great Lakes Regional Reconciliation Commission
- Horn of Africa Regional Reconciliation Commission
- Southern Africa Regional Reconciliation Commission
- AU, SADC, IGAD, ECOWAS, ICGLR, EAC, COMESA
- **African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC);**
- African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)
- **Panel of the Wise; CEWS; MSC**



## Infrastructure for Regional Reconciliation

- Civil society organization's nevertheless pursue cross-border regional reconciliation initiatives

### *Functions of the Infrastructure for Regional Reconciliation*

- monitoring and evaluating the impact of their interventions, governments, inter-governmental and civil society actors
- media and outreach

### *• Capacitating Regional Reconciliation Mechanisms*



## Regional Reconciliation as a precursor to Regional Integration

- ***Durable and sustainable regional integration*** cannot proceed without efforts to engage with the historical injustices
- particularly if violations were originated or perpetuated **across borders**
- Regional integration has been framed as an economic and top-down political terms
- *Necessary to reverse this perception – grassroots and **people-to-people** regional reconciliation can have a **cascading effect** on promoting regional integration from the ground up.*

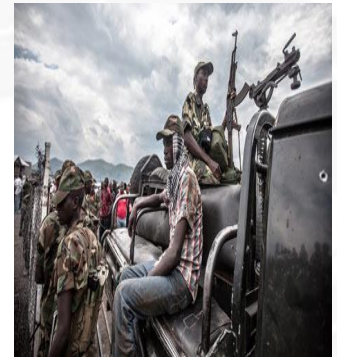
## ***Globalization: Pathways to Global Reconciliation?***

- global reconciliation – a cumulative outcome of the implementation of these regional reconciliation initiatives
- An ideal to far away – centuries?



## Constraints and Limitations on Regional Reconciliation

- Border restrictions and perpetrators evading justice by hiding in other countries – exploiting *ungoverned spaces*
- In terms of policy we should not fall into a trap of not seeing the bigger picture
- **It is necessary to pursue Pan-African policy coherence on this notion of regional reconciliation – *which remains the elusive dimension of peace and security in Africa***



## Strategies for Implementing Regional Reconciliation

- Implementing “reconciliation” across borders still remains **uncharted territory for states and inter-governmental organizations**
- an absence of shared thinking – which has to be promoted and inculcated
- **African governments** need to adopt people-to-people and government-to-government regional reconciliation processes as *strategic objective* of their **foreign policy**
- February 2019 - ***African Union Transitional Justice Policy has officially adopted by Heads of State and Government - which provides a framework to pursue the implementation of regional reconciliation in Africa’s ungoverned spaces.***
- There are ***real consequences*** for a failure to effectively operationalize regional reconciliation - geo-political instability; political tension; armed militia formation





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