Tony Karbo and Kudrat Virk (eds.): The Palgrave Handbook of Peacebuilding in Africa

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The Palgrave Handbook of Peacebuilding in Africa, edited by Tony Karbo and Kudrat Virk, represents the collective work of a group of authors who focus on the theme of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and peacemaking. The Handbook provides a critical perspective on issues facing species programmes and regional organisations in building sustainable peace in Africa. Dr Tony Karbo is one of the main creators of the book and is co-founder and Executive Director of the N'Zarama Centre for Peacebuilding based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. He has taught in many universities in the Great Lakes region and many other parts of Africa and intensively worked with organisations operating in conflict zones. The another editor of the publication, Dr Kudrat Virk, is a researcher at the Institute for Democracy, Citizenship and Public Policy in Africa. She also previously served as an Executive Director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town, South Africa.

The book comprises of a series of essays from leading scholars and experts on Africa, including practitioners such as diplomats. Besides the editors, its authors include prominent African professors such as Adekeye Adebajo, who is Director of the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa, and Kwame Akonor, who is Associate Professor of Political Science at Seton Hall University, New Jersey, in the United States. Among those based outside the African continent are Professor Kenneth Omeje, who is Senior Research Fellow at the John and Elnora Ferguson Centre for African Studies at the University of Bradford in the United Kingdom, and Research Fellow at the Centre for African Studies at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, in South Africa; Professor Ismail Rashid, who is Professor of History at Vassar College in New York; Professor Oliver P. Richmond, who is Professor of International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom; and Professor Douglas A. Yates, who is Professor of African Studies at the American Graduate School (AGS) in Paris, and Professor of Anglo-American Law at the University of Cergy-Pontoise, which i salso in France. Other contributions were provided by scholars and practitioners such as Francis M. Deng, Ibrahim Gambari, John L. Hirsch, James O.C. Jonah, Augustine Mahiga, Bruno Stagno Ugarte, Margaret Vogt, and Brigadier General (Professor) Dan Kuwali.

The aim of the book is to present the theory and practise of peacebuilding and peacekeeping in Africa after the Cold War. The publication combines thematic analysis and case studies and includes a wide range of interesting opinions on the subject. Against the background of large global changes and the renewing of Pan-African thinking, the publication seeks to contribute to the search for a *"-new concept-?* of *Pax Africana*, which would strive for respecting the principles and standards beneficial to peace and collective security in Africa. The authors try to find the answers to whether the efforts to institutionalise the African Union (AU) contributed to building sustainable peace on the continent, and how to confront new obstacles which threaten peace.

The book is divided into six parts and twenty-five chapters. In the first part, Professor Ali A. Mazrui describes the theory and practise of *Pax Africana*. The second part deals with conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The topic of mediation as a form of conflict prevention- is analysed in the seventh chapter, which is also in the second part. The perspective of the United Nations and the UN Security Council on issues of sustainable peace building is dealt with in the third part of the book, which considers the impact of the Economic Community of West African States in a related context. The fourth part, which is connected to the previous one, is focussed on the controversial responsibility of peacekeeping missions, which also affects the health sector. An interesting chapter in this part is the one where the authors analyse narratives based on Hollywood depictions of peacekeeping efforts in Africa. The following part deals with the issue of peacebuilding by utilising knowledge from the fields of political economy, gender and inequality, thus capturing a new perspective of the topic. The final, sixth part considers the role of external actors in creating peace; for example, one of the discussed topics is the role of Great Britain in Africa.

In 1967, Professor Ali A. Mazrui, one of Africa's leading political scientists, published a book with the title *"Towards a Pax Africana: A Study of Ideology and Ambition."* The reviewed book's first chapter, by Tony Karbo, discusses it. Mazrui's concept of peace and safety in Africa stands on the idea of the ended struggle for independence from colonial rule. The transformation of this ambition for peace remains a challenge, which is reflected in the efforts of the African Union (p. 3). According to Mazrui's view, *Pax Africana* is based on the idea that Africans provide peace for the continent itself with its own material and financial means. Against the background of the Cold War, Karbo also discusses questions related to disarming, non-violent resistance, security cooperation and the role of the UN as the enforcer of international peace and security (p. 4). The initial chapters of this publication show that progress in the search for *the "new" Pax Africana* carries important implications for policy at the continental and regional levels in Africa. In this context there are several questions left unanswered; Has the vision of the new *Pax Africana* been realised? What is the future of *Pax Africana*?

In relation to the issue of Pan-Africanism and peacebuilding, the second part of the book advocates the structural changes at all levels of the continent. The emphasis is put on the state reconstruction being responsive to the needs of its citizens. The essential criterion is the support of international partners for the development and promotion of human rights and justice for everyone. As the Afro-optimist Tim Murithi (2007: 1) explains, the AU was created as an institutionalisation of the ideals of Pan-African thinking. Since 2002 the AU achieved progress in peacebuilding and stabilisation of the continent. The book describes the engagement of the AU in several complex peacekeeping operations, for example, those in Somalia since 2007.

The seventh chapter of the second part deals in an original way with the importance of non-violent approaches to conflict resolution, namely with the mechanisms of mediation. This type of conflict resolution mechanism offers all the sides of the conflict an opportunity to come together and find mutually beneficial achievements. In the book, the Kenya National Dialogue serves as an example of mediation being utilised; in this case it was used for the purpose of solving the problem of the riots during the presidential elections in 2007–2008. Knut Lundby considers mediation as *"a broader and more general concept applied to acts and processes of communication with technical media"* (Lundby 2009: 13). From the point of view of media studies, Lundby (ibid.) claims that institutional practises or modes of social interaction cannot be transformed in the long term by a process of mediation. In the mentioned Kenyan case, mediation was used in the sense of conflict prevention whereas the chapter's author Njoki Wamai presents a set of activities to prevent conflicts in Africa. One of them is that of a secured mediation team, which uses domestic movements (local civil society groups, politicians, business leaders, ordinary citizens,

eminent African personalities) as a source of support. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan led the mediation process on this basis. The Kenyan example illustrates a successful cooperation between leaders in business, religion and politics with the active involvement of citizens (p. 120).

The challenges faced by the UN and the AU in the area of conflict prevention, peace-keeping and peacebuilding, are based on planning, logistics and coordination of actions. Successful activities in Darfur (Sudan), Liberia and Sierra Leone, where cooperation has been established between African continental and regional organisations and the UN, are positively portrayed in the third part as examples of ways to effectively maintain peace (p. 461). In the following chapters in the fourth part, the authors elaborate on the negative aspects of intervention in conflict areas. The thirteenth chapter, by Kwame Akonor provides an example of this as it deals with the case of the sexual abuse and exploitation of Congolese women and girls by peacekeepers of the UN Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly MONUC, now called MONUSCO) (p. 236). This part puts the core of the main theme of peacebuilding in a controversial and proble-matic light and it is very important to talk about it in this regard. Presenting this negative side reminds the reader that in the process of peacebuilding there is always a danger of misusing power.

The fifth part of the book points out that in the process of peacebuilding in Africa it is necessary to deal with the problems arising from inequality, poverty, unemployment, marginalisation and the lack of inclusive development. In order to reach effectiveness and sustainability through the activities of peacebuilding, the processes of political recon-ciliation, transitional justice, rehabilitation, reintegration and socio-economic development must also be included in the related efforts. According to Oliver P. Richmond, the effec-tiveness of transformative peacebuilding depends on making changes at all levels of society – political, economic, social and cultural (p. 456). The authors of the book rightly highlight that peacebuilding in a war-torn country is a complex process, which demands examining the real seeds of the given conflict, in order to understand its causes. Each conflict must be analysed on the basis of an individual approach to a certain existing problem. Its solution then lies in a process with a multidimensional character.

The last chapters, which make up the sixth part of the book, deal with the role of external actors, who play a key part in supporting efforts to maintain and build the peace in Africa. In this part of the book the peace and security issues are analysed not only through the geospatial concept but also through cooperation with external partners. For example, this part contains a description of the case of the violent conflict in South Sudan in December 2013. The authors highlight the supportive role of the UN, the European Union (EU) and the United State of America (USA) during the negotiation processes and their efforts to resolve the crisis. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) monitored violations of human rights and provided humanitarian aid. The USA, Great Britain and Norway have also expressed their support for the ongoing peace process, which included financial subsidies. Besides the already mentioned countries, China also played a key role in the support (p. 461). The involvement of many actors in such processes requires consideration and careful management of their various interests, as well as frequently changing approaches to peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Meanwhile regional actors are focussed on their short-term and long-term interests that they seek to prioritise, which can complicate the efforts to achieve, build and maintain peace. However, the fundamental idea is that international partnership and mutual support are essential for sustainable peacebuilding in Africa (p. 459).

The concept of peacebuilding in Africa does not belong to new fields of study. For decades, Africans faced violent conflicts while the UN, the AU and Africa's regional economic communities (RECs) stood at the forefront of efforts to achieve peace in the affected countries. Many of these countries are facing a difficult political and economic

situation requiring a sophisticated institutional arrangement and new government structures.

The reviewed publication contains a great summary of the main ideas on conflict management. In it, the problematics of peacebuilding are investigated from a multidisciplinary point of view, so the book is composed of essays that belong to diverse fields such as international relations, political economy or sociology. This summary is very beneficial and provides knowledge of peace making from many perspectives.

Although the book touches upon many of the social science disciplines in connection with its topics, the authors do not include the field of media studies and its relevance to the conflict – related areas in their studies. The connection between media and conflict has recently been more requently discussed, and an examination of this relation would surely find its place in this book too. Currently, more and more authors deal with the media and its influence in conflict areas. Many concepts related to this have emerged in the field of peace journalism (a pioneer in this area of study is Johan Galtung [1965: 1–4]) and development journalism (see McQuail [2005: 178]).

Due to the multidisciplinary focus of the authors, this publication may be of special interest not only to students of the humanities and social sciences, but also to experts on Africa's peace, security and governance and policymakers involved in this area.

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