Peacekeeping Operations in Africa:
Liberian Lessons, a Platform for Deepening
Future UN Peacekeeping Engagements.

George Hikah Benson, (PhD)

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George Hikah Benson, (PhD)

Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Studies

Education/ Centre for Conflict, Human Rights, and Peace Studies,

University of Education, Winneba-Ghana

Email:ghbenson@yahoo.com.

Abstract

Purpose: In terms of UN peacekeeping deployments, the African region has received the most, just as it has contributed the most in terms of military personnel. The Liberian UN-ECOWAS joint peace operations are acknowledged by many as one of the most successful, globally. The study argues that experiences from these operations can enrich this global effort. Hence, the study sought to establish lessons from the operations that could guide future peacekeeping operations.

Methodology: The study adopted a research approach that was analytical, descriptive, legal, historical and sociological; where data was mainly gathered from secondary and tertiary sources. To this end, scholarly books, edited works, articles and periodicals (duly acknowledged in the reference list) within the study area of international peacekeeping and the Liberian Civil War, were reviewed. Policy and legal documents by the United Nations (UN) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), media stories, reports from non-governmental organizations, research reports and reports from the Liberian government in relation to the multi-functional peacekeeping operations in that country; were not left out when data was gathered for this write-up. Additionally, in terms of secondary sources, dictionaries, bibliographies, encyclopedia, databases, abstracts and indexing sources were used.

Findings: Main findings were that the joint operations brought lasting peace to Liberia and that lessons from those experiences have the potential of guiding future peacekeeping operations across the globe.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The study which is useful for academic, policy-formulation and implementation purposes, recommends: that the UN Security Council institutes prompt, appropriate and adequately funded interventions that have clear, effective and purposeful mandates at the start of conflicts; 'spoilers', 'trouble makers' and warlords should be heavily sanctioned; and effective coordinative measures be put in place by the UN so as to regulate activities of Non-UN peacekeeping actors.

Key Words: *Africa, United Nations, Liberian lessons, platform, deepening, and future peacekeeping operations.*

Introduction

Of all the images and ideas about the United Nations (UN) today, international peacekeeping is perhaps one of the greatest testimonies to human progress in the conflict resolution process (Kennedy 2006). Peacekeeping has become an important tool for the UN in its efforts to keep the peace, foster voluntary democratic transformation of many a collapsed states, as well as protect and promote fundamental human rights of the peoples of the world. As a conflict management tool, peacekeeping has come to involve other non-UN actors such as states, regional groupings, non-governmental organizations, individuals and private companies; and has become multifunctional in its operations (Bellamy, Williams with Griffin 2010). Some of these functions include the prevention of conflicts, supervision of elections and the restoration of democracies, enhancement of the rule of law, strengthening and building of security institutions, promotion of human rights, peace-building and state-building activities, provision of humanitarian aid, protection of refugees, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, support for socio-politico-economic development, *inter alia* (Diehl 2008). Table 1 below outlines the peacekeepers' tasks. Notwithstanding the challenges and shortfalls surrounding this technique, it has been a relevant conflict management device to the UN in particular and the international community at large; as it has often been used extensively to manage and resolve several conflicts across the globe.

Table 1: Tasks of the peacekeeper

Military	Civilian
Assist in implementing peace agreement	Help former belligerents implement complex peace agreements
Monitor a ceasefire or cessation of Hostilities	Support delivery of humanitarian assistance
Provide a secure environment	Assist in the disbarment, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants
Prevent the outbreak or spill-over of conflict	Supervise elections
Lead states or territories through a transition to stable government based on democratic principles	Build rule of law capacity
Administer a territory for a transitional Period	Promote respect for human rights
	Assist economic recovery
	Set up transitional administration as a territory moves to independence

Source: (DPKO 2003:2-3).

One of the basic purposes of the UN stemming from the UN Charter, is the maintenance of international peace and security (Article 1 of the UN Charter). In response to

actions with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression, the world body through its Security Council organ is mandated by the UN Charter to do the following: seek solution to conflicts using the tools of negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement and other peaceful means (Article 33(1); the application of non-forceful measures such as economic sanctions, the interruption of rail, sea, air and other means of communication (Article 41); or the use of military sanctions in extreme cases (Article 42). Nowhere in the Charter has peacekeeping found explicit expression as a conflict management tool of the UN. Be that as it may, the technique of peacekeeping which former UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjold suggested was coming from Chapter Six-and-half of the UN Charter, has become one of the most successful conflict management tools of UN in particular and the international community in general. Thus, giving credence to Kennedy's (2006) assertion.

Peacekeeping which is guided by the four fundamental principles of consent, neutrality, non-use of force and voluntarism, is the maintenance of truce between belligerents by international military, civilian or police forces that have the main purposes of protecting civilians, reducing or stopping violence, strengthening of security and the empowerment of national authorities and state agencies. Fig 1 illustrates the three main principles of traditional peacekeeping commonly referred to as the 'holy trinity'. In essence, peacekeeping involves the prevention, containment, moderation and termination of hostilities between or within states through the medium of third-party intervention organized and directed internationally, using multinational military, police, and civilian personnel to restore and maintain peace (Rubinstein 2008). Fortna (2008) distinguishes four types of peacekeeping, three of which are consent-based missions crafted under Chapter VI of the UN Charter and the last which is Chapter VII mission based. They are unarmed small contingent civilian or military Observation Missions; large and lightly armed contingent traditional interpositional Missions; Multidimensional Missions; and Peace enforcement Missions.
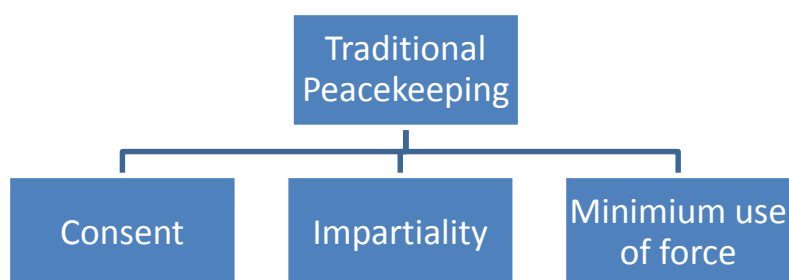
Source: (Bellamy, Williams with Griffins 2010:174).

Fig 1: The holy trinity of traditional peacekeeping

Peacekeeping has a deep history within UN conflict management engagements, which started in 1948 with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). So far about 70 UN Peacekeeping Missions have been established in all regions of the world notably; United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR), United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH), United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) and United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) (Berdal, & Economides, 2007). Thirteen current operations under the supervision of the Department of Peace Operations include the following: MINURSO in Western Sahara; MINUSCA in Central

African Republic; MINUSMA in Mali; MONUSCO in D.R. of the Congo; United Nations /African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID); UNDOF in Golan; UNFICYP in Cyprus; UNIFIL in Lebanon; UNISFA in Abyei, Sudan; UNMIK in Kosovo; UNMISS in South Sudan; UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan; and UNTSO in the Middle East (www.peacekeeping.un.org).

The experiences of UN peacekeeping in Africa has been deep and overwhelming, perhaps explaining why Adebajo (2011) insists that Africa has remained a giant laboratory for UN peacekeeping in the post-Cold War era; where the capacity and political resolve of the Security Council (SC) of the UN has repeatedly been tested. Be that as it may, in its first four-and-a-half years existence as a conflict management technique, only one UN peacekeeping operation was established in Africa, fondly referred to as the tragic Congo intervention (1960-1964) in which a UN Secretary-General lost his life in a plane crash when undertaking an official task. After this harrowing experience, it took the UN twenty-five long years to return to the continent by way of peacekeeping in 1989 on the Namibian question. However, in the 1990s the UN magnanimously deployed seventeen peacekeeping missions in Africa alone, obviously coming with huge financial costs. For instance between 2008 and 2009, of the $7.1 Billion UN peacekeeping budget, $5.1 Billion was expended on missions in Africa alone as reported by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. At the time, the largest four missions of the UN were based in Africa deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Darfur, South Sudan and Chad, and accounting for about 63 percent of UN's entire peacekeeping budget during that period as was reported by the Department of Field Support of the UN.

Indeed, Africa as aptly described by Adebajo (2011), is a theatre of intra-state conflicts whose effects have always engulfed the entire continent that already finds itself in a mirage of challenges. As rightly classified by Benson (2016), these challenges are mostly socio-politico-economically motivated. Many African countries such as Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic have been rampaged in Civil Wars at devastating magnitudes on the security and well-being of such countries that transcended immediate national borders (Aksu 2003; Alabi 2006; Carment 1994; David 1997). The effects of these violent conflicts were: Hundreds of thousands of lives have been cut short in these ravaging moments, millions of citizens displaced resulting to a high rise of refugees within the continent, several state and private properties destroyed, many already fragile democracies were derailed that led to states failing in the circumstances, amongst others.

In the given milieu, the international community spearheaded by the UN, have had to intervene using varied conflict resolution and management mechanisms of which peacekeeping is key (Emunue 2004). For emphasis, apart from Africa being the region that has received most peacekeeping deployments in the world (31 out of 70 UN peacekeeping missions, and 7 out of the current 13 operations), the region has also contributed immensely to UN peacekeeping efforts, particularly in terms of military, police and civilian personnel over the years. For instance between 1948 and 2008, the continents army took part in 53 of the 63 UN peace missions deployed globally, providing over 40 percent of peacekeepers across the globe (Lijn, et al. 2015). Also, many prominent sons and daughters of Africa especially Kofi Annan and Boutros Boutros Gali have served the UN in various capacities, foremost within the peacekeeping arena as special representatives of the UN Secretary-General with varying degrees of success (Adebajo 2011, Benson 2019). What is more, many of the operations across the continent have come with relevant lessons in times of both

success and failure which, have guided the technique of UN peacekeeping. Finally, it is worth noting that, Africa being the theatre of UN peacekeeping, where some of the most complex missions have been established such as UNAMID in Darfur, UNMISS in South Sudan, MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo and UNASOG in Chad, have taken a chunk of UN's peacekeeping budget of over 63 percent, reported by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support.

UN peacekeeping in Africa has been very successful as in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Namibia, Mozambique, Burundi, but only failing in a few countries including Somalia and Angola. According to Adebajo (2011), three factors account for the success in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa. He listed these factors as: where key permanent members of the Security Council have committed to resolving the conflict in question and have also willingly mobilized diplomatic and financial support to the peace processes; the willingness of warlords and belligerents to cooperate with the UN in implementing peace accords reached and their readiness to punish spoilers; and lastly where regional players in the peace processes do cooperate with each other and support UN peacekeeping efforts via diplomatic and military support. United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has been perhaps the most successful UN peacekeeping operation in record time. The reasons are not farfetched and include the following: Foremost, UNMIL provides vast lessons on what makes a successful peacekeeping mission; lasting peace has returned to Liberia through the efforts of the joint UN-ECOWAS multifunctional peacekeeping efforts as it rebounded from a brutal Civil War of many years that left over two-hundred and fifty thousand people dead with close to two million internally and externally displaced populations; Liberia has witnessed in three sessions, peaceful transfer of power within the framework of free and fair elections and has become a beacon of political stability; a rebutted economy has been resuscitated with support for infrastructural development; amongst others (Benson 2019).

This modest work looks at the Librarian crisis, a largely consequential Civil War which took place in two phases-from 1989 to 1996 and then between 1999 and 2003. The crisis is described by many scholars and practitioners as one of the bloodiest in the continent of Africa in recent times. The bizarre circumstances were aptly captured by Deme (2005) who argues that the two decades of Civil War brought untold hardships and loses to the government and people of Liberia- a shattered economy, deprivation of good governance and the rule of law, rampant human rights abuses, displacement of the populations, and insecurity. Following these human-generated atrocities, three peacekeeping operations namely; Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), Economic Community of West African States Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) and United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) were setup in Liberia to curb the atrocities and resolve the Civil War. These operations achieved both successes and failures in the war-torn country; and what is more, lessons accrued from the experiences which form the basis of my investigation, have the potential of forming a bedrock upon which future UN and Non-UN peacekeeping operations would strive on. This paper seeks amongst other things to evaluate the multifunctional peacekeeping operations that took place in Liberia following the two-phased Civil Wars, in particular highlighting the lessons that can be adopted by the international community so as to improve its conflict management skills in both the near and distant futures.

Part I: Theoretical Framework that guided this study

Until the aftermath of the Cold War era, peacekeeping operations which are practical activities by nature, had no theoretical basis (Stamnes 2007; Fortna 2008). Hitherto, however, notable scholars such as, A. B. Fetherston and Indar Jit Rikhye had begun to evolve the idea of giving peacekeeping, a theoretical and conceptual base (Bellamy, Williams with Griffins 2010). First, Indar Jit Rikhye (1984: 234) argued that peacekeeping provided a mechanism for resolving inter-state conflicts, without having necessarily to draw the attention and action of superpowers, since the mechanism itself had the propensity of mobilizing the international community in respect of the creation of necessary conditions. This theory as suggested by Bellamy, Williams with Griffins (2010), was rather restrictive in scope to traditional peacekeeping operations during the Cold War era. Second, A. B. Fetherston (1995) on her part, posited that peacekeeping takes the form of a third party-mediation, where there was a gap between the practice of peacekeeping and its theory. To fill this gap, she propounded a theory which borrowed from many conceptual sources- peace research, conflict studies, pluralist discussions of the international system and cross-cultural training research; to offer a testable hypothesis as a theoretical base for peacekeeping within the remits of Galtung's notion of positive peace (Rietjens & Ruffa 2019). Mainly, however, her proposed theory was bed-rocked on conflict resolution theories (Bellamy, Williams with Griffins 2010). Since then, many scholarly writings on peace operations have always attempted at including theoretical underpinnings to the content of their works (Berdal & Economidas 2007).

Basically, four theories are relevant to peace operations as at today, one of which this study is premised on. They are namely; liberal peace theory, global cultural theory, cosmopolitanism and critical theory. First, liberal peace theory connects the achievement of international peace and security in its true sense, to democratic practices such as the rule of law, transparency in decision-making, good governance, and liberalism (Jarstad & SISK 2008; Owen 2000). These variables Bellamy (2004) suggested, should be promoted not only within stable political orders but at all levels of international and national political communities. Against this backdrop, it is strongly argued that, both the theory and practice of peace operations are informed by a commitment to liberal peace (Paris 2004). Second, global cultural theory draws inspiration from world polity theory, and as argued by Roland Paris (2003), the international normative environment that comprises formal and informal social rules, guide international life and shape peace operations in fundamental ways. He further posits that considering the potential effectiveness of the global cultural determinant strategies (which actors in the peacekeeping field must conform to) as techniques for fostering peace which is the stated goal of peacekeeping, it should take precedence over other considerations within reasonable remits (Paris 2003: 442-3 and 451). Bellamy, Williams with Griffins (2010:26) argue that, the global cultural notion enhances the determination of the sorts of activities that are considered appropriate for peacekeeping operations, while ruling out every other thing. Third, several analysts have applied critical theory to peacekeeping operations. It stands on the presumption that, theory is not politically neutral as it is always for someone and for a purpose that aims at emancipating humanity from oppressive tendencies (Bellamy & Williams 2005a; Booth 2007). Furthermore, peacekeeping operations according to critical theorists, maintain a particular understanding of international peace and security that is ostensibly compatible with the capitalist global political economy (Pugh 2003). Moreover, peace operations are well positioned to establish and protect a neoliberal economic order, impose normalcy of democracy to conflict zones, and give voice to the voiceless, the

unrepresented and the powerless (Duffield 2001; Pugh 2004). Fourth, drawing from cosmopolitan political theory, cosmopolitanism insists that the maintenance of stable international peace and security requires a particular way of understanding, organizing and conducting peacekeeping operations that is based on the conception of global governance, with emphasis on inclusivity, accountability and the principles of conflict resolution (Caney 2005; Miiall et at., 2005).

This study which stems from Liberian peacekeeping operations is premised upon cosmopolitanism. Tom Woodhouse and Oliver Ramsbotham (2005) who are strong advocates of this theory, have called for the development of cosmopolitan peacekeeping operations that would be conducted by a standing UN Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS), to be made up of highly trained military and civilian personnel. This variant of an earlier proposed UN standing army which dates back to the origins of the UN where provisions were made in the UN Charter for a Military Staff Committee to control and manage the army, stands capable of protecting civilians, ensuring the implementation of the full range of the UN's human security agenda and deterring and reversing aggression (Roberts 2008; Woodhouse & Ramsbotham 2005: 153). This falls in line with the assertion of this study. The paper argues that, had there being a standing UN peacekeeping force in place at the beginning of the Liberian Civil War, its prompt deployment would have prevented the carnage that went on in the war-ravaged country, where several lives were lost amidst extensive damages that resulted in extreme untold human suffering. Indeed, many other scholars in the like of Mary Kaldor (2006), called for peace operations to be redesigned as instruments of 'cosmopolitan law enforcement'. According to her, the key to resolving new wars is the construction of a legitimate political authority that is capable of enforcing cosmopolitan norms, enforcing international humanitarian and human rights law, protect civilians from harm and the capturing of war criminals (Kaldor 2006: x, 132). This preposition again reemphasis the assertion of this study that, war criminals of the Liberian Civil War were treated with 'kid gloves', when they ought to have been arrested and prosecuted in the first place other than allowing them to rise to the highest office of the land, as was in the case of Mr. Charles Taylor. With the establishment of a legitimate cosmopolitan authority, this aspect would have long been effectively taken care of. In conclusion, the UN Brahimi Report (2000) equally called for a new conception of impartiality and centrality of civilian protection in peace operations, which this study corroborates. Under a legitimized cosmopolitan authority that has gained the support of many in recent years, it is argued that the problem of occasional operational fallouts, can be effectively addressed (Johansen 2006).

Part II: Conflict Dynamics of the Liberian Civil War

The Liberian Civil War is a classic example of intra-state wars, and has been described as one of the bloodiest in the continent of Africa in recent times (Aksu 2003). It took place in two phases-the first phase from 1989 to 1996 while the second phase spanned the period between 1999 and 2003. The consequences of both violent conflicts were overbearing on the once peaceful and fast developing West African country. In the events, rebel forces from many splinter groups unleashed mayhem on the population resulting in the deaths of over 150,000 people (1 out of every 17 Liberians were killed), while thousands others were maimed for life (Adebajo 2008). As if that was not enough, close to 1,500,000 people were either displaced internally or forced to flee into neighbouring countries including Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Gambia and Sierra Leone under refugee status (Aboagye & Bah 2004). Disgustingly, women were raped before their husbands by rebels including child soldiers after which they were killed; while pregnant women had their bellies ripped off as foetuses

were evicted forcefully (Tipoteh 2007). The one time promising economy was shattered and massive destruction of property took place within both public and private circles (Aboagye & Bah 2004; Adebajo 2008). In less than three months, the humanitarian situation had deteriorated unprecedentedly, desperately beckoning to external intervention by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and later on, UN (Adebajo 2008; Benson 2013). Liberia was characterized by such anarchy before the advent of the ECOWAS and UN interventions (Benson 2019).

Map of the Republic of Liberia

Fig 2: Map of the Republic of Liberia

II.1: Liberian Civil War I

To reiterate, Liberian Civil War I took 7 years while Civil War II took 4 years with 3 years negative peace in-between them. The roots of the wars which are multifaceted, are often traced to ethnic rivalry stemming from ethnocentric discrimination, territorial disputes, and poor governance amidst dictatorial rule, unending domineering of the minority Americo-Liberian ethnic group and economic decline (Levitt 2005). Other writers have added poverty, corruption and religious differences as the root causes. The oldest republic in Africa since July 22, 1847, was founded in 1822 by 16 indigenous ethnic groups and freed slaves namely; Kpelle, Bassa, Grebo, Gio, Mano, Kru, Loma, American-Liberians, Kissi, Gola, Krahn, Gbandi, Vai, Dan, Mandingo and Bella. For over a century, the West African country came to be ruled by the minority American-Liberians who formed only 5 percent of the Liberian population. They did so with iron fists, dominating in all sectors of the economy including

the political space until 1980, when a 28 year old Staff Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe overthrew the 133-year Americo-Liberian aristocracy that created deep-seated resentment and divisions which left historical scares within the society, in what was described as a popular coup d'état (Adebajo 2002; Moran 2006). In that event, President William Tolbert, many others of his government and another former President of the Republic were assassinated. Indeed, subsequent executions of leading political figures and government officials, came to end the over century dominance of the Americo-Liberians, effectively (Adibe 1996; Sesay 1996, 37).

The new Head of State who showed naivety at the onset, promised to hold high the dignity of the majority population, build a robust economy and put back Liberian within the trajectory of fame, amongst the comity of states (Benson 2019). But before long, the *primus inter pares* of 1980 and his People's Redemption Council had failed to live up to the expectation of his people. The joy that greeted his takeover turned to discontentment, resulting from his dictatorial, corrupt, tribal-centred and heartless iron-fisted rule. Many opposing leaders who dared criticize Doe's regime either got missing, killed or maimed. To legalize his cling to power, he organized and allegedly rigged the 1985 elections and continued with his distasteful dictatorial rule, perpetuating several human rights violations including the arbitrary arrest and summary executions of perceived enemies (Adebajo 2002).

Unfortunately, time ran out of him when on December 24, 1989, an ill-trained rebel group under the name of National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), numbering about 150 invaded the country from neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire under the leadership of Mr. Charles Taylor. In no time, the conflict had engulfed the entire nation, with splinter rebel groups springing up every now and then across the country, all in an effort to occupy the Executive Mansion. They came to include INPFL, ULIMO-K, ULIMO-J, and LURD (Moran 2006). Doe who fiercely resisted the invasion with his brutal 2AFL battalions, was eventually brutally assassinated by Prince Yormie Johnson and his group which split away from NPFL to form the INPFL. Despite the ECOWAS and later UN interventions, Civil War I raged on, spilling over to other neighbouring countries, in particular Sierra Leone. The violent conflict by all standards, intensified from 1991, the insurgency having fragmented into full-scale gang warfare as the NPFL in particular became a business venture that traded in timber, diamonds and iron ore (Bay & Aboagye 2005). However, external interference and support for the various factions prolonged the war which halted in 1996, paving the way for elections in 1997 that saw Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Party (NPP) winning both presidential and the National Assembly. The war had distinctive features from other known Civil Wars that include the following: the use of child soldiers was phenomenal; very few prisoners of war were taken as a shoot to kill policy was adopted by all the factions; damming acts of savagery became the order of the day where pregnant women were not only killed but foetuses were carved out from them and shot separately (African Watch 1990; Ellis 1989).

II.2: Liberian Civil War II

The Second wave of the Civil War which restarted in 1999 ended in 2003. Indeed, the return of the country to democracy did very little to return peace, since in 1999 another rebel group, namely; the Liberians for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) attacked the town of Voinjama in north-western Liberia from their stage base in Guinea (ICG 2002). The attacks were alleged to have been initiated by certain actions and inactions of President Taylor's government and his personal conduct after he was sworn in as President of Liberia. In particular, his dictatorial rule was in full display while his persistent clamp down on

opponents continued. Also, his involvement in the domestic affairs of Sierra Leone were some of the causes that re-sparked the violence.

In response to the LURD attacks, Taylor deployed his irregular ex-national Patriotic Front of Liberia and the Anti-Terrorist Unit to counter the insurgency. Taylor, together with RUF and some Guinean dissidents got engaged in a complex three-way conflict with Sierra Leone, Guinea and the dissidents. However, Taylor's government having been weakened already by UN sanctions for his support for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), was unable to hold back the rebels, hence were pushed back into Liberia and Sierra Leone (ICG 2002; www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm, accessed 12 July 2008). By the beginning of 2002, LURD had gotten the support of both the Sierra Leonean and Guinean governments, at a time Taylor was supporting various opposition factions in the two countries. This attracted the wrath of both the United Kingdom and the United States, with the two, giving financial support to Guinea. In the meantime, two permanent members of the Security Council advocated for UN sanctions against the government of Taylor in May 2001. When LURD was succeeding, Taylor declared a state of emergency by mid-February (Adebayo 2002), only to receive more attacks from the Ivoirian-backed Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) in early 2003. Before the middle of 2003, Taylor was only in control of only a third of the country. By late 2003 when he was suffocating under the might of the rebel attacks, he desperately requested ECOWAS to send a military force to Liberia, with the objective of assisting him repel the rebels (Levitt 2005, 221). The regional organization stepped in again seizing the attacks.

Taylor was forced to resign as President of Liberia on August 11, 2003 by his ECOWAS colleague Heads of State, and was immediately exiled to Nigeria, ahead of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which formed the basis for the negotiation that ended the Civil War. In 2006 he attempted to escape from Nigeria and was subsequently arrested at the border and handed over to stand trial at the International Criminal Court, upon his conviction after many years of trial, he was incarcerated and serving in the United Kingdom currently.

Adebajo (2002,19) has suggested six key issues that may have contributed to the causes of the Civil War in Liberia to include the following: the exclusionary rule of the Americo-Liberian oligarchy; the brutal and inept rule of Samuel Doe; the deleterious effect that Doe's rule had on the Liberian Armed Forces; ethnic rivalries and personal ambitions that had been heightened by the Doe rule; sub-regional tensions and rivalries resulting from Doe's bloody rise to power; and the destabilizing effect of United States sudden withdrawal of its support for the Doe regime. Though agreeing with Adabajo to a large extent, I also believe that economic and social factors also contributed to the conflict that took the international community over a decade to stabilize.

Part III: Peacekeeping Interventions by the Economic Community of West African States and the United Nations

The success story of the peacekeeping operations that took place in the West African country for nearly two decades, is tied to two key international organizations. In much as these two organizations share the glory, initial failures of the operations and the numerous mistakes that took place during the multifunctional operations in the failed state, are equally attributably to them to some extent. Engagements of these two institutions in that respect, namely; the United Nations (UN) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are discussed below.

III. 1: ECOWAS Peacekeeping in Liberia

The Sub-regional organization of ECOWAS was formed on May 28, 1975 by fifteen West African countries meeting in Lagos. The current sovereign member-states include: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The United Kingdom Overseas Territory of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha have applied to join organization. ECOWAS and UN multifunctional operations in Liberia have positively impacted the global resolve to settle domestic conflicts of international ramifications.

After taking siege of the Liberian crisis during a Summit meeting on August 23, 1990, ECOWAS leaders deployed its *ad hoc* military wing, 'ECOMOG' to stop the carnage that engulfed their sister country, Liberia. The Mission drew its initial 3,500 military personnel from Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Subsequently, over 10,000 troops and later on over 24,000, came to be deployed in Liberia where almost all member-states contributed to. Its mandate tasks primarily included securing a ceasefire, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, the protection of civilians and the prevention of the ceasure of power *via* the use of force by any of the feuding factions (Benson 2013; Benson 2019; Kieh 2003).The mission in the early days failed to accomplish its tasks for many reasons that included, financial challenges, operational shortfalls, lack of cooperation of belligerents, non-involvement of the international community that saw the crisis from the perspective of non-interference, and to an extent, the late deployment of the West African peacekeeping force. However, the persistent efforts of ECOWAS Heads of State that culminated into the signing of many peace accords between the feuding factions, eventually brokered a ceasefire (Armon 1996).

ECOMOG presence had continued even after the late deployment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) by the UN in 1993. After ECOMOG managed a ceasefire propelled by the 1990 Banjul Conference on Liberia, an Interim government under Amos Sawyer was established. For close to 7 years, ECOMOG became the singular source of stability for the war-torn country, further securing a coalition government in August 1993. Moreover, ECOMOG played a huge role in the conduct of the democratic election in which Taylor won in 1997, following the Cotonou Agreement and 1994 Akosombo Agreement (Ellis 2001; Vogt 1992).

Indeed, the operations of ECOMOG which can be described as successful and effective, even though may not have reached perfection, took place in phases. The first phase involved the initial stages when it was faced by varied challenges including rebel resistance and domestic opposition to its formation by some member-states of ECOWAS that rendered the maiden challenges ineffective (Olonisakin 2000). The second phase witnessed the adoption of peace enforcement actions by ECOMOG which led to the installation of sanity, confidence and reasonable peace resulting in the return of many who had fled the country (Adbajo 2002). The third phase was chaotic as it involved a period of stagnation of peace processes, following the rejection of several peace accords by the rebels (Olonisakin 2000). The fourth phase involved the return to the peace enforcement strategy, amidst the accusation of non-neutrality and human rights aberrations by the peacekeeping force (Benson 2013; Benson 2019).

Following renewed fighting during Civil War II, ECOWAS set up a second mission in Liberia in 1999 namely; the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL). The mission which initially consisted of about 3,800 troops from Benin, Gambia,

Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo, had its mandate outlined in Security Council Resolution 1497 of 2003 to include the following: the monitoring of belligerents; disarmament and demobilization activities; protection of civilians and senior political and military leaders, *inter alia*. Its operations were largely successful as it built upon the peace making processes of its predecessor. United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), established under Security Council Resolution 1509 of September 19, 2003, absorbed the personnel of ECOMIL.

III.2: United Nations Peacekeeping in Liberia

The entry of the United Nations into Liberia had been rather late in spite of the fact that it rolled out humanitarian activities from the very outset (Olonisakin 2000). Its direct involvement came in 1993 with the deployment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), established by Security Council Resolution 866 of September 22, 1993; being the first-ever UN peacekeeping operation to have been established to work in cooperation with a parallel regional or sub-regional peacekeeping operation (Annabi 1997). With a military, medical, engineering, communication, transportation and electoral component, UNOMIL was mainly tasked to support ECOMOG in the implementation of the Cotonou Peace Agreement (Adebajo 2011; Wilmot 1997). Furthermore**,** it was tasked to monitor the cantonment, disarm and demobilize combatants, oversee the UN-imposed arms embargo of Liberia in 1992, report on human rights aberrations and coordinate humanitarian assistance activities (Adebajo 2011, 144). However, one shortfall of its operations had to do with the frosty relationship that existed between UNOMIL and ECOMOG, based on many factors, thus derailing its achievements (Adebajo 2011). At some point, UNOMIL military and civilian staff were stopped and harassed at ECOMOG checkpoints, further weakening their operations (Amnesty International 1995). The sour developments notwithstanding, UN-ECOWAS collaboration in Liberia provided a number of useful lessons that could guide similar future operations. When UNOMIL's mandate came to an end on September 30, 1997, it was replaced by the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia (UNOL). Tasked primarily with assisting the government of Liberia in consolidating the peace, following the 1997 elections. It also facilitated the promotion of national reconciliation and good governance, and mobilized international support for state-building efforts of Liberia (Wilmot 1997).

Hindered by the inability of the government of Liberia and the opposition leaders to agree on key issues in respect of governance, UNOL's mandate was terminated with the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) under Security Council (SC) Resolution 1509 (2003) of September 19, 2003. The mandate of the mission included the following: Support the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement; protect UN Staff, facilities and civilians; support humanitarian activities and ensure human adherence to human rights; support security reforms in Liberia; support the implementation of the peace process; and as amended by SC Resolution 1638(2005), apprehend and detain former President Charles Taylor in the event of his return to Liberia to be transferred to stand trial in the International Criminal Court. UNMIL was a classic example of a multidimensional peacekeeping engagement as the military, police and civilian force performed several functions including the following: the creation and strengthening of the justice system; the provision of humanitarian assistance; its involvement in socio-politico-economic development programs; provision of medical services; involvement in child reintegration programs; deepening of electoral and democratic processes; and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration engagements, amongst others (Sisk 2009, 214). Operations of UNMIL were

successful and professional remarkable, as peace was fully returned to a onetime failed state that has now become a shining democracy within the sub-region (Adebajo 2011; Higate & Henry 2009). Nonetheless, many mistakes were made during the operations that came to be terminated in 2018.

Be that as it may, the activities of many non-UN actors in Liberia contributed to the success story. They were engaged in many multifunctional peacekeeping activities such as peace-making, peace-building, state-building, humanitarian assistance, human development, election monitoring, diplomatic interventions, troop deployment, funding of government and private projects, human resource training and economic support, amongst others. The actors include the African Union, UN agencies (UNHCR, UNDP, World Bank, UNICEF and IMF), Non-governmental organizations (Carter Center, CARE, OXFAM, World Vision, USAID and Action Aid) and individual states, in particular US and UK (Kieh 2003).

Part IV: Lessons to Learn From

The Liberian crisis is now history and so are the robust peacekeeping operations that were undertaken there. Ye still, the lessons that accrued from the failures and successes of those operations are renewing and valid for all times and will guide future peacekeeping operations (Demé 2005). As illustrated above, three major peacekeeping operations were undertaken in Liberia namely; ECOMOG setup by ECOWAS, UNOMIL and UNMIL both under the auspices of the UN. ECOMIL and UN UNOL though important were lesser operations. I argue that these operations have left significant traces of lessons that can be extracted from the successes, failures, mistakes, challenges, conflict dynamics as imbedded in belligerent activities, the implementation processes and the activities of actors in particular the UN and ECOWAS. This paper briefly explores them below.

First, the world was rudely awaken by the Liberian crisis to the fact that, conflicts may erupt unexpectedly in any part of the world, even in relatively peaceful countries. To that end, global efforts at preventing conflicts must be intensified and well-structured (Woodhouse & Ramsbotham 2012). And that, wherever and whenever conflicts arise, it should be a global concern that must attract immediate attention (Benson 2019).

Second, well thought-through measures rather than *ad hoc* decisions should precede the deployment of peacekeeping operations (Diehl 2008). The establishment of ECOMOG was birthed from an *ad hoc* decision of ECOWAS, explaining the staggering of the mission at the initial stages and the several mistakes that resulted from the operations. Besides, deployments should be made promptly, since 'one stich' they say, 'saves nine'. To retain its moral authority, the UN must get involved in the resolution of conflicts at the early stages (Kieh 2003; Woodhouse & Ramsbotham 2012). That certainly was not the case in the UN Liberian intervention. While the ECOWAS intervention in Liberia took close to a year, UN's presence in Liberia took three years to materialize. All this time, belligerents were engaged in carnage--- killing, maiming, raping, destroying property and displacing populations. As a matter of fact, actors should not even wait for conflicts to start before intervening, but even respond when there are warning signs. If ECOWAS had stepped in at the time signs were written on the wall with the initial attack on Monrovia by Charles Taylor and his men, the Civil War that took time and huge resources to resolve, would have been prevented. To that end, I posit that the UN must establish an office that is tasked to look out for warning signs across the globe and promptly inform the Security Council to take appropriate actions.

Third, intra-state conflicts in the form of Civil Wars as was the case in Liberia, are usually complex and intractable, where the right approach to the management of a particular conflict is not adapted (Aksu 2003). Approaches to initial interventions in the Liberian crisis by the international community were wrong, inadequate, and ineffective (Adibe 1996). For example the ceasefire efforts of ECOMOG should have been immediately followed by peace enforcement measures since the belligerents were uncooperative from the very outset, and there was the need for the application of a reasonable amount of force. For a fact, the level of success in every peacekeeping operation corresponds to the types of peacekeeping functions implored in relation to the conflict dynamics. The initial operation that was needed in Liberia was peace enforcement, in particular as the warlords were not stopping at anything.

Fourth, while it will take the full commitment of the UN Security Council to achieve sterling success in the field of peacekeeping, lukewarm attitude of the UN system and member-states towards conflict resolution will always produce inappropriate results (Woodhouse & Ramsbotham 2012). In the Liberian case, some members of the Security Council were unperturbed with the carnage that was going on in the war-torn country (Luck 2006). The attitude of the 'It is after all an Africa affair' smirks of the idea of collective security where the principle of 'all for one and one for all' holds (Danchin & Fischer 2010). For instance, the prompt contributions of the United States and the Russian federation in the form of financial, diplomatic and logistical support to the mission in Namibia played an important role in its success. In the case of Liberia, the United Nations came in rather late, which in itself was a serous drawback on the peace process, as the ill-equipped and financially challenged ECOMOG could hardly accomplish its task on point.

Fifth, mistakes from the Liberian operations were numerous and yet useful when analysed and publicised within the right perspective, so as to avoid the repetition of similar mistakes in future peacekeeping engagements. These mistakes some of which were operational in nature, were attributable to actors, peacekeepers, belligerents and the government of Liberia (Ellis 2001). That aside, some ECOMOG peacekeepers in particular Nigerian contingents, were hugely involved in wrong-doing such as illicit trade, womanizing, rape, looting, drug abuse, human rights aberrations, killing of civilians and involvement in criminal activities (African Watch 1991). These wrong-doings though regrettable, I submit that they form a rich basement of lessons that could guide future operations across the globe.

Sixth, there is the need for the UN to take political authority whenever it engages in joint peacekeeping operations with regional organizations. In the case of the Liberian joint operations, UNOMIL was seen to be playing second role to ECOMOG, when it came to the taking of decisions at the local level (Boulden 2003). This certainly affected operations and delayed or even derailed successes in the operations that sought to bring peace to the country under siege. That aside, there is the need for the Department of Field Operations to effectively coordinate the activities of other non-UN peacekeeping actors in the field. It was detected at the late stages of the Liberian multidimensional interventions that, many actors arbitrarily engaged in conflicting activities that did not help in the peace process.

Seventh, the neutrality principle should be upheld and displayed at all times during operations. Many member-states of ECOWAS including Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Burkina Faso took sides during the crisis, even to the extent of funding their preferred feuding factions; thereby exuberating the crisis (Adebajo 2011).

Eighth, the ill-resourced and weak-mandated multinational ECOMOG, faced financial challenges thus initially affecting its performance (Annabi 1997). Within ECOWAS, only a

few member-states were prepared to support the collective cause with finances, logistics and troops, while the UN was watching from afar. Kieh (2003) has suggested that 'political will' and commitment to enforce peace in conflict zones by actors, are pivotal to the success of peacekeeping operations.

Ninth, sanctions meted to "spoilers' and unrelenting warlords are usually weak and ineffective. For these reasons, the UN and other non-UN actors must develop strategies that are aimed at countering the activities of 'spoilers' who are out to wreck peace processes (Stedman 1997). The UN could also establish panels to 'name and shame' countries and leaders that support rebels. Additionally, warlords should not be allowed to participate in elections as was the case in Liberia where Charles Taylor the chief warlord, subsequently became president. And with the power in his hand, he engaged in revengeful activities that led to Civil War II in 1999, which could have been circumvented if all warlords were disqualified from running for office from the outset. In the end, most of the warlords and feuding factions refused to cooperate nor accept Mr. Charles Taylor as the legitimately elected Head of State. In future, it is my considered view that, no warlord or active belligerent be allowed to contest elections. Be that as it may, the level of economic, political, diplomatic and legal sanctions as imposed on Taylor in Liberia and Savimbi in Angola, were very appropriate and should guide the world.

Tenth, the issue of child soldiers in Liberia was badly handled by the international community at the time. It took too long to educate and also reintegrate child soldiers into their respective families and societies (Benson 2019). By the time the help came in the form of career training and support to return to school, most of them were already 'destroyed' beyond repair. Even those who were given career training were not given the needed tools and financial resources in good time to restart their lives.

Eleventh, there should not only be an effective division of labour channel established between the UN and regional organizations, but it is also important that, the UN cooperates effectively with local hegemons cited within conflict zones. For example, anytime the UN undertakes multilateral missions in Africa, the world body must necessarily deal with the like of Nigeria and South Africa that possess comparative political and military strength within the regional setting. Nigeria did demonstrate its relevance and exhibited regional leadership during the sub-regional peacekeeping undertakings in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Adebajo 2008).

Twelfth, the UN would achieve maximum success where it nominates very competent UN Special Representatives to head peacekeeping missions (Aboagye & Bah 2004). This was clearly demonstrated in Sierra Leone and Mozambique when effective UN Special Representatives in the persons of Olu Adeniji and Aldo Ajello were sent to those countries. On the other hand, it was a disaster in Rwanda when less effective UN Special Representatives in the like of Jacques Roger Booh-Booh was sent to head the mission there (Alabi 2006). Each time a competent Special Representative was sent to Liberia, the results showed in the performance of the mission; and *vice versa* when leadership was weak. Furthermore, peacekeeping personnel should be given proper training before the start of operations, and should also be well-equipped. Some ECOMOG peacekeepers were ill-trained and were not equipped adequately thus affecting their performances (Adebajo 2008).

Thirteenth, ECOMOG's experience illustrated the limitations of the use of force as a conduit to create peace. Whereas force may be used to terminate violence thus reducing human suffering, it cannot be used to achieve real peace which is only gotten when the

parties are willing to have it. Other channels such as dialogue, negotiation, and mediation would help. Against this backdrop, Diehl (1994) had aptly opined that the use of military force in itself does not guarantee success of peacekeeping operations.

Lastly, achievements made under what is described as one of the most successful peacekeeping encounters by the UN and the international community, are traceable to a number of positive factors which are worth implementing in future UN peacekeeping operations. The factors which should be replicated include the following: UNMIL supervised the peaceful transfer of power in free and fair elections, making Liberia to emerge as a beacon of political stability (Adebajo 2011); the holistic implementation of multifunctional peacekeeping activities in Liberia eventually brought peace and resuscitated the failed state (Benson 2019); peacekeeping operations supported the rebuilding of the Liberian economy, infrastructure and core governmental institutions (Bay & Aboagye 2005); collaborative partnership between the Liberian government, UN, ECOWAS, AU, peacekeepers, non-UN peacekeeping actors, individual states, and donor countries, did enhance the peace process in no mean way (Benson 2019); the UN even after the termination of operations in Liberia still maintains its robust presence there, giving a helping hand in terms of specialized funds, programs and agencies wherever necessary and making sure there is no recurrence of conflict there; the transition from peacekeeping to democratic governance as well as from a post-conflict situation into a development paradigm is owed to the robust activities that were engendered by the three main missions (Demé 2005); UNMIL was one of the most adequately funded missions, thus contributing to the huge success story of the mission; and the commitment of ECOWAS to the resolution of the Liberian crisis was remarkable as the organization took the bull by the horns even when the UN was not in sight, eschewing the usual attitude of 'let's wait for the UN to start the process.'

The study has been able to identify these few lessons that accrued from the Liberian experiences from a tall list. But what is more, I submit that when used as a guide, the peacekeeping technique of the UN in the 21st Century in particular, would bring gains to the enterprise of international conflict management.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The prolonged Liberian crisis did give world leaders in particular those of ECOWAS, sleepless nights. Yet it is a truism that, experiences from the crisis provided a giant platform upon which future peacekeeping operations can strive on. Perhaps confirming the submission of Adebajo (2011) to the effect that, Africa is a giant laboratory for global peacekeeping. For instance, even though the joint UN/ECOWAS operations took too long, the needful yet tortuous interventions nevertheless resuscitated a failed state (Benson 2019). One in which state institutions were weakened, with some collapsing as a result of the Civil War (McGover 2005).

Several meaningful lessons came up following these operations, some of which have been outlined above. Whether or not these lessons were negative or positive is not the worry of this study, but whether the UN and international community would use them as a guide to improve upon future international peacekeeping operations. Indeed, lessons from the Liberian operations are not the first to be documented by the world body, neither will they be the last. It is been done before and shall always be done on many operations across the globe. Regrettably, those lessons have hardly being used as guides but left to gather 'dust' on the tables of the 'big men and women'. Be that as it may, lessons learnt from the harrowing experiences in Liberia, remain a 'blessing' to future International Peacekeeping Operations as

a relevant international conflict management strategy of which, the UN continues to play a lead role.

It is without doubt that the outcome of this study will add to knowledge in the given subject area, where not only members of the academia but policy makers and practitioners alike would find relevant and useful. Against this backdrop, the study also recommends the following: that, the UN Security Council always institutes prompt and appropriate interventions which have clear and purposeful mandates in the start of conflicts; there is the need for effective coordination of the activities of non-UN actors in the field of peacekeeping by the UN; 'trouble makers' and 'spoilers' who are seen fanning the flames of conflicts should not only be named and shammed by the system, but sanctioned appropriately so that that enterprise would become unrewarding; UN and member-states should show recommitment towards the funding of future operations; and finally, lessons from the Liberian experiences and elsewhere should serve as guides for future peacekeeping operations.

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