

PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN EAST AFRICA

MAJOR DEFINITIONS

- a) A conflict is a struggle and a clash of interests, opinion or even principles.
- b) Conflict and instability trends in East Africa make it one of the most unstable regions in the whole world.
- c) Conflicts in East Africa take different forms including armed conflicts, community violence, political instability, genocide, terrorism, displacement, human rights abuses, state failure, election and post-election violence among others.
- d) It can also take on the form of increased crime violence in the cities, burglar, high jacking, poaching in the game parks, robbery, high jacking, human trafficking and cattle rustling.
- e) In the rural areas the most common ones are land conflicts, eviction, grabbing of property, tribal clashes, boarder conflicts, refugee crisis, poaching, murders and many more.
- f) Conflicts in East African region are common in Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan.
- g) Such conflicts cause general disorder on regional security.
- h) In Uganda rebel activities, military coups, terrorism, border conflicts, refugee crisis, election violence, protests by the business community are major conflicts since independence.

DIFFERENT COMMUNITY CONFLICTS IN EAST AFRICA

1. Cattle rustling involving cross border cattle raids especially between Uganda and Kenya mainly by the Karamojong and the Masai who share borders with Tanzania.
2. Forced disarmament of cattle keeping groups causes conflict between government and the locals.
3. Land disputes and conflicts due conflict of interest between land lords and tenants, border conflicts for districts.
4. Election and post- election violence which sometimes lead to financial loss, loss of life and property destructions.
5. Tribal conflicts among the Luo, Jalu and the Kikuyu, Acholi and the Madi. These sometimes are taken into government, in the army etc.

6. Resource conflicts especially over water bodies, fishing grounds between Uganda and Kenya, pasture and grazing land, mineral wealth like in South Sudan.
7. Cross- border conflicts which affect businesses and limits people's freedom of movement.
8. Internal district border conflicts
9. Cultural and religious conflicts
10. Political marginalization of some groups because some people feel they are excluded from government e.g., Oromo and Tigray of Ethiopia, Bakonzo, Baleera, Basoga
11. Political power struggle and civil wars
12. Military coups especially in Uganda in 1966, 1967, 1971 and 1986
13. Business strikes and protests over taxes
14. Competition between foreign investors and local business communities. Local people feel the government favours foreigners at the expense of the citizens,

CUASES OF COMMON COMMUNITY CONFLICTS IN EAST AFRICAN REGION

1. Too much poverty in the country and high levels of unemployment especially among the youth and the educated people.
2. Porous and insecure borders between East African countries
3. Availability of low-cost weapons i.e., people can easily acquire weapons because of the many conflicts that have taken place in the past.
4. Natural disasters and destruction of resources people are supposed to survive on.
5. Ignoring the killing of civilians and extra judicial killings
6. Unfair distribution of land and resources
7. Grievances of the disgruntled communities against those that are highly privileged.
8. Scarcity of resources in some places and exhaustion of resources in other communities.
9. Unresolved border issues
10. Communities sharing borders between two or more countries.
11. Historical hatred between tribes in East Africa due to traditional rivalries

12. Cultural factor and different customs
13. Refugee crisis due to conflicts in neighboring countries together with internally displaced persons.
14. Politics of identity due to special recognition and favors by government.
15. Land grabbing and unethical acquisition of land
16. High levels of corruption
17. Misuse of drugs especially among the youth
18. Lack of true democracy in the region
19. Rigging of elections.

COMMON COMMUNITY CONFLICTS

Key definitions

- ✓ A conflict is a clash of interests.
- ✓ A conflict is a struggle between people.
- ✓ It may be physical or ideological.
- ✓ Some conflicts come from within communities themselves while others from outside community.
- ✓ Conflicts emerge between two people, nations, society, politics, economic ideology, regions or may be international.

What is a community conflict?

- ✓ A community conflict is a violent conflict between local groups of people organized under a shared society identity and how they relate to state explanation of violence.
- ✓ Community conflicts are manifested in disagreements, anger, village quarrels and hatred among others.
- ✓ In East Africa the common community conflicts are common in all areas.
- ✓ They are more common in cities and towns.
- ✓ Common slums in Kampala include Katanga, Kisenyi, Kamwokya, Makerere Kivulu, Kikoni, Bwaise, Kiwuunya, Kiyaaye, Kinnawattaka among others.
- ✓ In Kenya all main towns have slums but Nairobi city the common slums are Kibera, Mathare, Moruru, Kawangware, Kiriyaobangi, Eastleigh and Langata.

- ✓ In Tanzania the most common slums are Mkwawa, Kagoro, Kigoma. Tanzanian slums however are more organized and developed than those of Uganda.

CAUSES OF COMMON COMMUNITY CONFLICTS IN UGANDA

- a) Poverty-related conflicts that are common in slums where poverty levels are high due to unemployment and overpopulation.
- b) Gender-based violence. This involves family conflicts that became more rampant during COVID-19 pandemic where all parents were forced to stay home in lockdown period
- c) Land-related conflicts. Land is the main source of livelihood. These conflicts are common in Kigezi-Sub region and Northern Uganda.
- d) Drug abuse among the youth. This is very common mainly in slum areas for both male and female making the youth trouble makers.
- e) Tribalism is another common source of conflicts despite being members of the same country.
- f) Conflict over natural resources like fishing grounds, forests, minerals. The governments usually arrest local people for over exploitation of these resources.
- g) Leadership conflicts between supporters of rival politicians in mainly parliamentary and local council elections.
- h) Competition for natural resources especially in Karamoja, Hoima, Masindi.
- i) Cultural conflicts
- j) Lack of true democracy
- k) Poor infrastructure in the country especially bad roads, railways and housing facilities leads to conflict between government and the local people.
- l) The power that goes off frequently especially among the business communities
- m) Voter bribery and unfair results in the election processes usually cause post-election violence.
- n) The tendency of government favoring foreign investors at the expense of communities
- o) Displacing local people from wetlands.

SOLVING CONFLICTS IN COMMUNITIES

1. Using democratic methods to elect leaders.
2. Building true democratic institutions.
3. Training children at an early age about how to respect elders.
4. Instilling the value of integrity among citizens especially leaders.
5. Sensitizing the people about the value of preserving the environment.
6. Punishing people who bring about conflicts.
7. Sensitizing the people about anger management through peace talks between political sides.
8. Reconciliation
9. Sharing power between national and local governments

RECENT COMMUNITY CONFLICTS IN EAST AFRICA

Between 1987-2007 Lord's Resistance Army of Joseph Kony

1996 Allied Democratic Forces which is still ongoing along western Uganda border with Congo.

2000 Six days war between Uganda and Rwanda in DRC in Kisangani

2009 Migingo Island dispute between Uganda and Kenya which is now under control of Uganda Police.

2019 cross border conflicts between Uganda and Rwanda affecting business and limiting people freedom of movement.

CAUSES OF ARMED CONFLICTS IN EAST AFRICA

- 1) Military officers' personal grievances over promotions in the army, unfavorable conditions of living like housing and other logistic supplies.
- 2) Military organizational grievances for example unfairness in promotions and demotions.
- 3) Mismanagement of the economy by civilian governments leading to economic decline.
- 4) Nepotism and tribalism that makes other communities feel marginalized and excluded from political power.
- 5) Unfair distribution of resources between regions by leaders. Leaders tend to give a lion's share to places where they come from.
- 6) Widespread corruption and mismanagement. As a result, people do not get good services yet they pay a lot of taxes.

- 7) Unfair appointments in the army, civil service and foreign offices.
- 8) Decline in the economy and failure of the government to solve the social and economic problems
- 9) Rigging of national elections and unfair declaration of results
- 10) Increasing cost of living and general increase in the price levels.
- 11) Regional imbalance in terms of development programs.
- 12) Multi-party grievances
- 13) Cold war politics between America and Russia.
- 14) Foreign influence especially donor countries.
- 15) Violation of human rights and extra judicial killings
- 16) Absence of constitutional rule and its violation
- 17) Rise of war mongers

EFFECTS OF ARMED CONFLICTS ON EAST AFRICAN PEOPLE

- ✓ Financial loss.
Government spends a lot of money on repairing damaged property.
A lot of money is used to buy weapons to fight against the rebel group.
Conflicts in the country discourages investment thus the government does not earn revenue.
- ✓ Destruction of property.
Weapons used are very destructive e.g., Bombs which destroy property like schools, arcades, hospitals, bars, and betting houses.
- ✓ Loss of life
People lose their lives during the conflicts; others die because of injuries and some die of diseases brought about by use of bio-weapons.
Young soldiers are put on the frontlines to be used as human shields.
- ✓ Limiting the inflow of tourists hence affecting the tourism industry
Very many tourists fear for their lives thus do not attempt to carry out their travel activities in the area.
There is destruction of tourist attractions i.e., statues, buildings like Casinos in Las Vegas
Some wild animals cause migration to peaceful countries thus loss of tourists
- ✓ Decline in the economy especially agriculture and industrial dislocation
People abandon their farms and gardens thus a decline in agriculture.
Farms are usually destroyed during the conflicts while implying strategies i.e., scorched earth strategy.
- ✓ Displacement of persons
There is displacement of persons due to abandonment of homes.

People are displaced due to homes being burnt and thus they have nowhere to stay

- ✓ Refugee crisis

The displacement of people causes them to move into other countries causing refugee crisis

If the armed conflict becomes very concentrated and violent, nearby countries receive very many refugees and looking after them may not be easy for example the war in DRC.

- ✓ Famine and hunger

Due to some war strategies e.g., scorched earth, people are unable to get food due to destruction of farmland and killing of animals like cattle.

- ✓ Demographic impact

(Demography means population structure)

The demography of the area decreases due to death of many people by bombs and bullets.*. *

- ✓ Internally displaced persons

People lose property and loved ones causing migration in the same country from one place to another

- ✓ Loss of homes and occupation

- ✓ Wide spread of diseases

Migrations caused by people causes transmission of diseases.

- ✓ Increased national debts

Governments have to borrow in order to access weapons to equalize with rebels.

- ✓ High cost of recovery and reconstruction of damaged infrastructure.

- ✓ Rise of dictators

Those who get in power using the gun are not easy to remove/ be removed from power using the ballot paper.

- ✓ Bad reputation internationally/ the image of the country is put in check.

At times, rebels can cause foreigners, tourists and high-ranking officers like UN officers to be killed during the crossfires.

- ✓ Gross violation of human rights, child abuse and women marginalization.

EAST AFRICAN TRADITIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION.

Introduction

Before the colonization of East African countries, indigenous traditional societies were independent and they had their own mechanisms for conflict resolutions.

The traditional kings and chiefs had their own courts that would sit, hear matters and then solve conflicts.

Other societies had traditional elders and clan heads that would equally handle the affairs of their communities.

The coming of colonialists watered down the roles of traditional institutions in favor of universal law and respect for human rights.

In 1993 traditional institutions were restored in Uganda 27 years after they were abolished by the central government following the Kabaka Crisis of 1966.

Before they were abolished, they were custodians of norms, practices and cultural values upon which modern day Uganda was eventually founded.

African traditional institutions both centralized and non-centralized depended on family and clan systems.

Centralized states include Busoga, Ankore, Buganda, Bunyoro, Wanga, Nyamwezi from 1870s and Karagwe.

The non-centralized states include Acholi, Lango, Kramajong, Maasai, Teso, Kikuyu and Tonga among others.

CULTURAL VALUES THAT TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS INSTILLED IN PEOPLE BEFORE COLONIALISM.

- Justice based on reconciliation and dialogue.
- Hospitality
- Chastity before marriage
- Telling the truth
- Respect for elders
- Keeping and respecting of covenants.

- Hard work
- Good character
- Protecting children and women
- Forgiveness
- Helping the disabled

REASONS FOR THE ABOLITION OF TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The new Republican Constitution of 1967 advanced by Dr. Apollo Milton Obote did not provide for such institutions.

Traditional institutions especially Buganda were stronger than the central government which did not please the prime minister who had executive powers.

The prime minister wanted to transfer overall powers to the central government.

Dr Apollo Milton Obote wanted to break people's attachment to their historical traditional institutions and to ensure that people work for a united Uganda and not their kingdoms only.

The post-independence land tenure system gave large pieces of land to the kingdoms than the central government.

The central government had limited powers to control land unless these kingdoms were abolished.

There was need to abolish the federal government of the time where kingdoms collected their own revenues which undermined the central government.

The political decisions made by the Baganda to remove the seat of the central government from Buganda and Kampala.

Dr. Apollo Milton Obote who was the commander-in-chief of armed forces ordered Colonel Idi Amin Dada to attack the king of Buganda in his palace at Lubiri Mengo leading to the Kabaka crisis.

Muteesa II who was the president of Buganda was exiled in London leading to the abolition of Buganda and all other kingdoms.

KEY REASONS WHY KINGDOMS WERE RESTORED BY THE NRM GOVERNMENT

Introduction

The traditional institutions which were abolished in 1967 were later restored by president Museveni in 1993.

The announcement was made in Gulu during an army council meeting.

They were returned as cultural entities, they were not supposed to involve themselves in politics, they were not supposed to collect taxes as before.

The need to compensate these kingdoms for their assets the central government had taken or grabbed in 1967.

It was a reward for having supported the NRA bush war especially mobilizing the masses to join and support the war.

Very many Baganda had been promised that if the war ended in favor of Museveni, he would return the king who was living in London for a long time.

There was need to restore cultural status of the Ugandans.

There was an aim of restoring peace and unity and reconciliation among the Ugandans.

It was a sign of saying sorry for the bloody Kabaka Crisis of 1966.

To create a good relationship between government and public.

There was desire to return traditional justice courts

Traditional institutions were expected to be partners with central government in terms of development.

Museveni wanted to win the support of the general public in the national elections that were expected in 1995 and 1996.

ROLE PLAYED BY TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN DEVELOPMENT

Opened up Radio stations and television stations on which people are mobilized. Some others get employment opportunities.

Agricultural and environmental programs with view of restoring the eco systems

Boosting tourism through the historical sites

Promoting good diplomatic relationships with other kingdoms in Africa like Sokoto, Zanzibar, Lesotho etc.

Promoting public works especially in rural areas- for example in Buganda Bulungibwansi.

Promoting health and fighting diseases by organizing birthday runs, fundraising functions, coronation celebrations etc.

Promoting education and sports. Most of these kingdoms have schools up to university levels especially in Buganda and Busoga.

Promoting culture and youth camps where young people are taught practical skills and good morals for example Ekisaakaate kya Nnaabagereka.

Many youth programs and saving schemes like CBS POWESA

Encouraging cooperation between themselves

Soliciting for support from the central government for projects

Managing land issues within their areas of operation

Promoting unity among the citizens of Uganda.

Creating a platform for political discussion for politicians on which they analyze issues related to development, good governance among others.