

ISSN 2277 0585

**International Journal of Applied  
Research and Technology**

**Special Issue  
July 2023**

 **Esxon Publishers**  
<https://esxpublishers.com>

***Special Issue of***  
**International Journal of Applied  
Research and Technology**

**ISSN 2277-0585**

**CARDINAL ONAIYEKAN FOUNDATION FOR  
PEACE (COFP) INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH  
OF PEACE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

*Volume 2*

Available online: 02 July 2023.



## **PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE**

*This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.*

*The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contexts will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instruction, formulae and analysis should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.*

Received: 05 May 2023 / Accepted: 04 June 2023 / Published: 02 July 2023).

## **Copyright**

*This report is published under the publishing agreement with Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) on Peace and Civic Engagement.*

*For corresponding author:*

*E-mail: [info@esxpublishers.com](mailto:info@esxpublishers.com)*

*Subject: 23-0501.*

*© 2023 Esxon Publishers. All rights reserved*

## **Editorial Notes**

This Second edition of peace research published as a Special Issue under Social Development section of International Journal of Applied Research and Technology is an outcome of 2022 practical civic engagement that COFP Ambassadors/Fellows conducted in various states in Nigeria and Kenya. The six (6) geopolitical zones and Kenya have peculiar conflicts and crises that were addressed by the Peace Ambassadors in this research.

The work of COFP has reached grassroots across the African continent. We hope the reader will enjoy reading the works of Ambassadors and will contribute to promote peace building in their communities.

Dr. Yohanna Shaibu Mamza

## **Name of Contributors**

| <b>S/N</b> | <b>Names</b>         | <b>Geo-Political Zones</b> | <b>States</b> |
|------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1          | Agatha Chikelue      | North Central              | Abuja         |
| 2          | Neibo Boniface Achor | North Central              | Abuja         |
| 3          | Gerald Musa Mamman   | South-South                | Port Hcourt   |
| 4          | Sabina Nganga        | Kenya                      | Kenya         |

### **COFP Editorial Board**

Dr. Yohanna Shaib Mamza  
Research Consultant/Editor in Chief  
Religion Education, University of Jos, Nigeria

Prof. Jeny Mary Eniege  
English Education,  
University of Jos Nigeria.

Rev. Sr. Agatha Chikelue, DMMM  
Executive Director, Cardinal Onaiyekan  
Foundation for Peace (COFP)

Dr. Johnson O. Ebibi  
English Education,  
University of Jos, Nigeria.

### **COFP Consulting Editors**

His Eminence,  
Cardinal John Onaiyekan (CON),  
Founder/President, COFP Foundation  
Cardinal Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja

Prof. Olanyinka Ramota Karim  
Vice Chancellor,  
Fountain University, Osogbo, Nigeria.

Prof. Dr. Chigozie Enwere  
Department of Political Science and International  
Relations,  
Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja.

Rev. Prof. Gyang D. Pam  
Provost GTS,  
Plateau State Nigeria.

Prof. Galadima Bala  
Faculty of Medicine,  
University of Maiduguri, Nigeria.

Prof. J.N. Kwasau  
Department of Arts Education,  
Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria.

## **Table of Contents**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Copyright .....  | ii  |
| Editorial Notes .....  | iii |
| Name of Contributors .....   | iv  |
| Table of Contents .....  | v   |
| Early Warnings and Response in Preventing Conflict .....   | 1   |
| The Effects of Electoral Violence on Women Participation in Elections in Kenya: A<br>Focus on Kenyan Elections Held in August 2022 ..... | 6   |
| Assessing the Principle of Objectivity in Journalism and Peacebuilding in the Scope<br>Newspaper of Adamawa State, Nigeria .....         | 13  |
| Role of Women of Faith in Conflict Mediation Between Irigwe and Fulani Herdsmen in<br>Bassa L.G.A, Plateau State Nigeria .....           | 23  |

## **Early Warnings and Response in Preventing Conflict**

Neibo, B. A.

### **Abstract**

The axiom, "prevention is better than cure," is at its best in conflict prevention. This is because experience have shown that to cure or deal with conflict or its aftermath is far more expensive and painstaking than preventing it. The many communal clashes in Nigeria is a loud testimony to this fact. It is against this backdrop that this research aimed at enunciating the Early Warning and Response System as an antidote for forestalling communal conflicts especially in Nigeria. It fulfilled the objectives of answering the questions of what Early Warning and Response System is, the nexus, strengths and challenges and how useful they are to conflict prevention. In the final analysis, this research recommends that the early warning and response systems must be effectively linked and every key actor in the process must be closely connected and the human, intellectual and material resources should be sufficiently available and competent.

**key words:** Early Warning; Early Response; Conflict.

### **Introduction**

This research work came up as a result of intervention of Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) through training of its ambassadors on peace building and civic engagements. The workshop was carried out and the report is used as the finding at the end of the work. For more than a century and above, Africa has been a melting pot of cycles of violent conflicts: From colonial conquest, armed struggles for independence, and civil wars. Just as Tazoacha and Tametong observed, these civil wars have many causes, including the battle over artificial frontiers inherited from colonial legacy, friction and contention among different ethnic and religious groups, and the rudimentary yearning for power and greed associated with some African leaders' wealth. Parenthetically, the level of violence on the continent has remained high since the end of the Cold War. Civil wars which, no matter their backgrounds, attracted interventions by stronger powers either from within or outside the continent or both, and have become the model rather than the exception in some parts of Africa. Thus, addressing Africa's conflicts before they manifest has become crucial to minimize the ramifications and foster sustainable development.

Pertinent to mention is that most crises that eventually masquerade as violent conflicts in many countries especially in Africa begin at the micro level usually at communal levels. Nonetheless, no matter what the causes of these clashes or conflicts may be, the fact is that long before little misunderstandings become full blown conflicts, the signs can be identified and quickly tackled or squashed. The ageless axiom that "prevention is better than cure" proves its validity and authenticity in the area of conflict management. This is because experience have shown that to cure or deal with conflict or its aftermath is far more expensive and painstaking than preventing. Sometimes, trying to manage conflicts at its instance or aftermath is synonymous to treating a dead patient. What can you really do when the head is cut off? Perhaps burial and mourning.

Nigeria has not been spared of the excruciating consequences of violent conflicts since the civil war of 1967-1970. Pre-election, election and post-election violence, the activities of Boko Haram, the Herdsmen-Farmers crises, and the bandits, and the sessionist agitations in the South East and South West have torn communities apart and have forced people from their homes, the reason for the many internally displaced persons scattered around the country. Nevertheless, that the pointers to the eventualities of these crises did not bear out would be tantamount to canonizing a pig, the neatest saint in world history. For instance, in the South East, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have at the root cause of their agitations against the Federal government of Nigeria, the poor investment, political alienation, inequitable resource distribution, ethnic marginalization, and heavy military presence, extrajudicial killings in the South-Eastern part of the country. The lopsided appointments of the current administration and the unprofessional way the IPOB was handled lead to the unrest in the South East. If these signs were spotted and the issues were responded to immediately and tackled accordingly, it would not have erupted to what it is today. It is therefore against this backdrop that this paper will identify and recommend two very effective and intertwined approaches to conflict management, namely, Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism as antidotes to forestalling communal conflicts.

### **Statement of Problem**

Nigeria is bedeviled by challenges that lead to many avoidable losses to lives and properties. One of these worrisome challenges is communal clashes. In Nigeria, communal clashes are regular occurrences that only gain much attention as the memory of the last incident fades. There are Tiv and Jukun clashes in Taraba and Benue states, Ife and Modakeke intercommunal conflict, Aguleri-Umleri conflict, clashes between communities in Cross River and Ebonyi states, and boundary disputes between Enugu and Kogi states' communities. Although these conflicts happen periodically, they are usually fatal in most cases, and also lead to grievous body harm, destruction of properties and displacement of people (Communal Clashes).

Communal clashes in Nigeria however episodic is not a new phenomenon. But over the years, government at the federal, state and local levels are failing to nip the situation in the bud. They have failed to recognize that the focus should be for governments to examine the innate factors that act as enablers of the communal conflicts. Rather than being pro-active, most times, governments efforts have just been reactionary to the clashes, which is followed by efforts to restore peace. Such efforts will only achieve fleeting normalcy. More so, apathy and indifference to conflict warning signals in Nigeria, most often, lead to the escalation of conflict. It is important therefore, to have a thorough understanding of the triggers of violence in these areas prone to communal clashes. And one of the ways, and of course, effective way to handle this is: focusing on early warning signs and following up with early response which will not only guarantee sustainable peace but will help to curb fatal disputes (Communal Clashes).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this paper is to enunciate Early Warning and Early Response Mechanisms as antidotes to forestalling communal conflicts with Nigeria as a specimen. This paper will achieve this aim by following the set objectives of:

1. Explicating the concepts: Early Warning and Early Response; types and systems.
2. Highlighting the strengths of Early Warning and Early Response.
3. Identifying the obstacles and challenges of Early Warning and Early Response Mechanisms.
4. Analysing the usefulness of Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism in forestalling communal conflicts.

### **Research Questions**

1. What exactly are the Early Warning and Early Response mechanisms?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Early Warning and Early Response mechanisms?
3. What is the nexus between Early Warning and Early Response?
4. How useful or relevant is the Early Warning and Early Response mechanisms to forestalling communal conflicts and to what extent?

### **Materials and Methods**

The research methodology employed for this paper is the secondary quantitative research method. Research data and information have been pulled from external sources; online and published sources. This research method has been informed by the successes recorded in this area of research in both theory and practice by formidable international bodies such as the United Nations and Safer world and as well as experts in the field of Conflict Management and Peace Resolution either as a body or as individual authors. This paper will collate results of their research on Early Warning and Response Mechanisms, noting its pros and cons while promoting or projecting it as an antidote for forestalling communal conflicts.

### **Result and Discussion**

According to David Nyheim, Early Warning Systems have evolved along three generations namely. The first-generation systems (1995-1999) are centralised in structure and focused on prediction and providing analysis to inform decision-making. Second generation systems (1999-2003) will be closer to the regions they cover, have field monitors, focus on prediction and analysis, but also make proposals for response. Third generation systems (2003–present) are localised in structure; the monitor and responder are often the same person, and the focus is on using information as a response. These systems aim to prevent violence in specific localities (3).

Along these generations of the evolution of Early Warning Systems, the definitions have also evolved. In 1997, the Forum for Early Warning and Response (FEWER) defined Early Warning as: “The systematic collection and analysis of information coming from areas of crises for the purpose of: a) anticipating the escalation of violent conflict; b) the development of strategic responses to these crises; and c) the presentation of options to critical actors for the purposes of decision-making.” Today, with



greater appreciation of the application of early warning to different phases of conflict (outbreak, escalation, and resurgence) and the role of information and analysis as a response in itself, the 2009 OECD/DAC definition reads, “Early warning is a process that (a) alerts decision makers to the potential outbreak, escalation and resurgence of violent conflict; and (b) promotes an understanding among decision makers of the nature and impacts of violent conflict” (Nyheim). Early warning systems (also from the 2009 OECD/DAC study), then, “Involve regular and organised collection and analysis of information on violent conflict situations. They deliver a set of early warning products (based on qualitative and/or quantitative conflict analysis methods) that are linked to response instruments/ mechanisms.”

According to Nyheim, definitions of early response or early action have not changed significantly since the mid-1990s. Early response refers to “any initiative that occurs as soon as the threat of potential violent conflict is identified and that aims to manage, resolve, or prevent that violent conflict”. These responses or actions are delivered by early/rapid response systems, which “are one or several preventive instruments and mechanisms (political, economic/financial, social, security) informed by an early warning that are deployed to manage, resolve, or prevent the outbreak, escalation, and resurgence of violent conflict” (6). Different types of response exist, ranging from fact-finding, mediation, peace-making dialogue, negotiations, preventive diplomacy or more robust mechanisms such as sanctions (Defontaine).

The foundations of ‘early warning systems’ are founded in two principal sources – disaster preparedness, where the methodical assortment of data was expected to make crystal clear the causes of natural disasters, and the collection of military intelligence. In the 1950s, a nexus was made between the efforts to predict ecological calamities, such as drought, floods, famine, and attempts to foresee crises emanating from the political causes. The 1960s to the 1970s was considered, by a strong belief, in the value of information technology and faith in the marvels of statistical scrutiny (Tazoacha and Tametong).

The early warning systems were mainly founded on the analysis and processing data from open sources, such as news reports and readily available statistics. These approaches, though, demonstrated derisory to the intricacies of deeply rooted conflicts and far-fetched local situations about which minute public data existed. Simultaneously, a discourse was developed to link early warning with response measures and the specific recommendations for target groups. During the 1990s expert organisations – both local and international – became more concerned in getting early warning information and analysis to assist as a basis for their programming. Such thinking gave rise to the emergence of various early warning systems worldwide. Some of them were integrated with early response capacity, and others with a mission to provide analysis and recommendations for actors (Tazoacha and Tametong).

Early Warning and Response Systems (EWRS) are designed at different institutional levels. At the governmental level, EWRS were designed in France (Système d’Alerte Précoce, located at the General Secretariat for National Defense) and in Germany (BMZ Crisis Early Warning System) (Defontaine). At the inter-governmental level, the African Union has developed a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) to advise the Peace and Security Council on “potential conflict and threats to peace and security” and “recommend best courses of action”. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has designed the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), as an institutional foundation for addressing conflicts in the region. These systems are top-down, state-owned, and not embedded into local dynamics (Defontaine).

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has also developed the Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) to engage in data collection and analysis, and the drafting of up-to-date reports on possible emerging crises, ongoing crises and post-crisis transitions. ECOWAS early warning systems have been tested full scale in Ghana and Liberia. Non-governmental organizations have also set up their own early warning systems, such as FEWER-Africa that focused on the Ituri region in the Democratic Republic of Congo or the Early Warning and Early Response Project (EWER) for Timor-Leste. The scope of these bottom-up systems tends to be limited to the local level, with little traction or link to the central level (Defontaine).

According to Defontaine, early warning can be an effective tool if strongly linked to responders. However, the link between early warning and early response has not always been effective. Strengthening this link to provide better responses to violent conflicts requires:

- Promoting stronger interactions between warner’s and responders, and exchanges to discuss strategies for response
- Timely and quick responses to warning
- Monitoring the impact of responses to conflicts to inform decision-making and strategies
- A better understanding of the value-added of EWS among institutions, the proximity and quality of the interface between early warning and response mechanisms
- Designing evidence-based response instruments to adequately respond to warning

- The design of nuanced response actions to take into account changes in the conduct of warfare.

Nevertheless, the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) observed that many contemporary EWER systems are built to address the “if” but fail to answer the “how” and “when.” That is to say, early warning focuses on the collection and dissemination of early warning data and information to stakeholders with the intention of informing decision makers on if an intervention is called for, but the process often fails to include guidance on how (and when) that information should be used for preventive interventions (5). One of the greatest challenges in the design of contemporary early warning systems has been the difficulty in ensuring that early warning information leads to timely and effective response. Although the challenge is largely a result of a disconnect between the two processes, the solution is not a plug-in which would close the gap. Rather the solution is about strategically reimagining the entire EWER process whereby early warning information is analysed, formatted, and disseminated to stakeholders in the system who are positioned (or pre-positioned) in such a way as to receive and act upon that information. Additionally, while many early warning systems may be designed to inform and encourage response, rarely are response systems designed to systematically utilise early warning data and information to guide analysis and plan policy or action.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, many early warning programs and initiatives have failed to lead to effective response not because of the shortage of early warning information, at least for those who want to be informed, but largely because those early warning programs may not rigorously and systematically track indicators of conflict risk (De La Haye) or present the information in a way that can be used by actors ready to use it (PIND 6).

In Nigeria, peacebuilding stakeholders’ responses to early warning signals are weak and inadequate due to a lack of coordination between major stakeholders – policymakers, civil society and local actors. prerequisite resources – human expertise, technological infrastructure, and political will – needed for successful early warning and early response mechanism are lacking. Without these, information will not be easily accessible, and responses cannot be rapid. The politicisation of EWER in Nigeria remains evident, specifically in the control of political information in cases of (national) security (Sodipo).

Notwithstanding, the application of the EWRS has recorded some success in Nigeria in spite of the prevailing challenges. Civil society organisations such as the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and, Inter Faith Mediation Center (IMC) have been involved in sensitisation, capacity building, design, and implementation and reporting of EWER programmes in Nigeria. For example, WANEP established a Nigeria Civil Society early warning-response mechanism, and SFCG runs a participatory EWER system in Plateau State (Sodipo).

### **Recommendations**

- For EWER systems to be successful in Nigeria, closer engagement between local actors and government are essential. Most of conflicts in Nigeria emerge from the local community. The role of traditional and local leaders, community-based organisations, and faith groups need to become more prominent in providing information and support (Sodipo).
- Traditional and cultural institutions in towns and villages in Nigeria have mechanisms for EWER that influence their conflict response and peaceful coexistence, such as village assemblies and town hall meetings. These mechanisms are often not documented but play a crucial role in peacebuilding and community resilience to violent conflict (Sodipo).
- The dynamics of capacity, willingness and cooperation of relevant institutions and stakeholders towards positive change is always a challenge. Timely response to early conflict indicators is very helpful in the prevention of conflict. Understanding the early indicators places individuals and society in a position to avert or mitigate an impending conflict. The early warning system is not a one-off activity but entails continuous engagement (Sodipo).
- Clear and accurate information is integral to EWER. Wrong or subjective information can lead to a wrong response. Importantly, information should reach decision-makers fast enough in order to make quick decisions. The contribution of local, state and national systems to conflict prevention in Nigeria will depend on how strong the linkages between them are, and how they can adequately complement each other (Sodipo). As such, the local, states and national should be enhanced to cooperate with each other effectively.
- Operational early warning and response systems entail human expertise, unified political support and a specific technical platform degree. Stakeholders need proper education on indicators and response mechanisms, and peace committees should be organised with succinct accountability and policymaking systems (Tazoacha and Tametong).
- Moreover, there is a compelling need for governments to invest in policies and a genuine culture of prevention, since public administrations which are dysfunctional by conflict and corruption are often ineffective at implementing response recommendations. In less developed communities, lack of

technological know-how and infrastructure can impede clear communication and teamwork between peace stakeholders (Tazoacha and Tametong).

- Early warning and early response systems entail incorporated engagement between local actors and government officials. More specifically, traditional leaders and religious organisations need to be better informed and involved in these systems, as they are often keenly aware of threats on the ground. Their support is also vital in helping governments and international organisations implement an adequate response (Tazoacha and Tametong).

## **References**

- "Communal Clashes and Avoidable Losses." SPD Nextier, 2022. <https://nextierspd.com/communal-clashes-and-avoidable-losses/>
- Defontaine, Catherine. "Setting up early warning and response systems to prevent violent conflicts and save lives." World Bank Blogs, 2019. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/setting-early-warning-and-response-systems-prevent-violent-conflicts-and-save-lives#:~:text=Early%20warning%20is%20defined%20as,analysis%20of%20data%20on%20conflicts%2C>
- De la Haye, J. (2009) A Strategic 'Peacebuilding Partnership' – From Early Warning by Civil Society to Early Response by the European Union. Part 2, Chapter 16. [http://eeas.europa.eu/ifs/publications/articles/book2/book%20vol2\\_part2\\_chapter16\\_a%20strategic%20peacebuilding%20partnership%20-%20from%20early%20warning%20by%20civil%20society%20to%20early%20response%20by%20the%20european%20union\\_%20jos%20de%20la%20haye.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/ifs/publications/articles/book2/book%20vol2_part2_chapter16_a%20strategic%20peacebuilding%20partnership%20-%20from%20early%20warning%20by%20civil%20society%20to%20early%20response%20by%20the%20european%20union_%20jos%20de%20la%20haye.pdf)
- Nyheim, D. (2015) "Early Warning and Response to Violent Conflict: Time for a Rethink?" Saferworld Report, October 2015. <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/oldsite/resources/view-resource/1009-early-warning-andresponse-to-violent-conflict-time-for-a-rethink> PDF
- PIND- The Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta. An Intergrated Conflict Early Warning and Early Response System Manual For Data Collection and Analysis PIND, 2019.
- Sodipo, Michael. "Early warning and early response for peacebuilding in Nigeria." Peace Insight, 2014. <https://www.peaceinsight.org/en/articles/early-warning-early-response-peacebuilding-nigeria/?location=nigeria&theme=conflict-prevention-early-warning>
- Tazoacha Francis and Steve Tametong. "The Importance of Conflict Early Warning and Response Systems in Conflict Prevention in Africa." On Policy Magazine, 2021. [https://onpolicy.org/author/tazoacha-francis/%3Fmologui\\_byline=true%26mca=https://onpolicy.org/author/dr-steve-tametong/](https://onpolicy.org/author/tazoacha-francis/%3Fmologui_byline=true%26mca=https://onpolicy.org/author/dr-steve-tametong/)

## **The Effects of Electoral Violence on Women Participation in Elections in Kenya: A Focus on Kenyan Elections Held in August 2022**

Sabina Njeri Ng'ang'a.

Kenya Women of Faith Network Nairobi, Kenya.

### **Introduction**

This research work is a product of the training of Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) to its Ambassadors. The report of the electoral observation by the fellow of COFP in Kenya was analysed and presented as the finding at the end of research.

Elections are held in all countries in the contemporary world. They are a means of ensuring the transfer of power from one regime to the other. Kenyan elections have been held after every five years since 1920 when the first elections to the Legislative Council were held. The aim of allowing for peaceful transfer of power from one regime to the other is not always realized as mostly these elections are marred by violence. The consequences of electoral violence have caused untold suffering to the citizens with women and children being affected most. Electoral violence has caused deaths, rape to women and defilements to children, displacements, family separations, disruption to economic development, and above all untold trauma to the victims. The 2022 general election is the seventh election since the inception of the multi-party democracy which came as a result of the repeal of Section 2A of the Kenyan Constitution, which had converted Kenya to Single Party State in 1982. It is the third election since the promulgation of the New Constitution, 2010. The elections of this country have been characterized by electoral violence which leave the affected persons with both physical and psychological wounds. In 1992, there were many cases of violence which left 1,500 Kenyans dead while 56,000 were displaced from their homes (Human Rights watch world Report 1993). In 1997, post-election violence left 104 Kenyans dead while 10,000 persons were displaced.

This trend continued and in 2007, 1,133 Kenyans again died while 650,000 others were forced to flee their homes and ended up as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (BBC,2010). Most of those affected by the skirmishes were women and children. During the Presidential debate which was held on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022, one of the presidential candidates namely Dr. William Ruto attributed the violence to politics meant to punish his supporters (Daily Nation, 27 July 2022, an allegation that was dismissed by the Interior Minister, Dr. Matiang'i (Citizen Digital 27, July 2022)

### **Statement of the Problem**

The elections give an opportunity for the leaders to seek fresh mandate from Kenyans so as to represent them in all levels of leadership as stipulated by the Kenyan Constitution, 2010. Women aspirants, however, face a lot of violence and this discourages women from seeking elective positions. Women voters fear to exercise their democratic right of electing their representatives because of the violence that take place during the electioneering period.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the forms of violence that women in various capacities in Kenya experienced during the 2022 general elections. The study will also try to establish why women are more vulnerable to electoral violence as well as the measures taken by different stakeholders to empower women to seek elective positions.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- (i) To identify the different categories of women that face violence in Kenya.
- (ii) To understand the different forms of electoral violence against women in Kenya
- (iii) To understand why women are more vulnerable to electoral violence than men.
- (iv) To understand the consequences of the electoral violence against women in Kenya.
- (v) To examine the measures taken to empower women to participate in elective politics.

### **Research Questions.**

- (i) What Categories of women face electoral violence in Kenya?
- (ii) What are the different forms of violence that women in Kenya face?
- (iii) Why are women more vulnerable to violence than men?
- (iv) What are the consequences of electoral violence against women in Kenya?
- (v) What are the measures taken to empower women to participate in elective politics?

### **Related Literature Review.**

This section will review related literature on the categories of women that experienced violence during the 2022 general elections, the different forms of violence they were exposed to as well as the consequences of violence and how these impacts on women participation in the electoral process. The chapter will also focus on measures taken by different stakeholders to empower women to participate in elections in Kenya

According to the Kenyan Constitution of 2010, women must make one third of all the elected representatives. However, only 26 women out of 290 total members of parliament were elected during the elections held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022. Out of 47 senators only three women were elected while 7 women were elected into gubernatorial positions. There are also forty- seven women positions reserved for women representatives in the parliament as part of affirmative action to represent the youths, People living with disability as per the Kenyan Constitution.

According to the Global Inter- Parliamentary Union (GIPU), Kenya has the lowest rate of women in politics in East Africa with women in parliamentary seats even as the total population stands at 52%, with Rwanda leading in the region and the world with 61.3% of the parliament being women. Violence against women in politics is a violation of human rights as it curtails women's participation in politics. It is that kind of violence that arises from the inherently competitive nature of elections. This takes place at different levels e.g. during campaigns and the Party primary nominations, on the voting day and during the tallying and the declaration of the results. The electoral violence is known to leave the affected persons with both physical and psychological wounds.

### **The different categories of women that face violence in Kenya.**

Electoral violence can target any gender. In the just concluded general elections several incidents of violence against women were reported. The incidents took place during party nominations, during the campaign period and during the elections. The following categories of women were affected.

#### ***Women Aspirants:***

These are women who were contesting for different elective positions. There were cases of physical violence meted against female aspirants which included physical assault, Cyber bullying and name calling, being blocked from accessing certain areas to carry out their campaigns as well as being threatened by hired goons. On Aug 1 (Reuters) - Liz Njue, a Kenyan psychologist who wanted to contest for a county assembly seat, had just arrived to vote in her party primary when opponents attacked her, pulling her hair and tearing her blouse. She fled without casting her ballot and lost the race. Njue is one of dozens of female candidates who have been physically assaulted during campaigning for presidential, legislative and local elections on Aug. 9, according to the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association.

The re-emergence of outlawed groups such as the Mombasa Republican Council (Daily Nation, 30 June 2022) and the emergence of gangs such as 'Confirm' in Nakuru (Kenya Standard, 28 June 2022) and its subsidiary 'Nyuki' (Citizen Digital, 15 July 2022); 'Miticharaka' in Tana River (The Star, 21 July 2021); and 'Bogi Mawe' in Kitale (Daily Nation, 26 July 2022), among others, also contributed to increased violence, including murder and muggings. Citing the Coastal region, Interior Minister Dr. Matiang'i recently acknowledged that criminal gangs were grouping ahead of the general election (Kenya Standard, 20 July 2022). In Nakuru, for instance, police interrogated three members of parliament over their alleged links to the gangs (Daily Nation, 28 June 2022). Overall, there was little evidence of concerted political violence by a specific party in the pre-election period, but many active gangs were available to be repurposed to this end if parties deemed it necessary.

#### ***Female electoral officials:***

These are hired by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) at different levels from the polling station, constituencies, counties and the national levels to man the elections. They included the polling clerks, presiding officers, Deputy Presiding Officers and Returning officers. According to the Chairperson of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) during an evaluation workshop held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022, the commission's members of staff were subjected to arbitrary arrests and abductions as well as intimidations and harassment by security agencies and political goons which prevented the elections officials from conducting their duties. The Commission further noted that they lost two returning officers namely Mr. Daniel Musyoka who was the Returning officer for Embakasi East was abducted, tortured and killed while Mr. Geoffrey Gitobu who was the Returning Officer for Gichugu died of elections related stress. A female Returning Officer from Eldas, Ms Maryan Hassan Mohammed had to brave gun fire attacks fired by criminals during the final tallying exercise.

***Observers and monitors:***

These were drawn from seventy international bodies and local organizations led by The Inter-Religious Council of Kenya, ELOG which a coalition of organizations including the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), the Institute for Education in Democracy (IED). The International Observers included the following organizations:

The East African Community (EAC)- Election Observer Mission led by H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete who is the former president of the United Republic of Tanzania. The African Union/ COMESA team of observers was led by former Sierre Leone President Ernest Bai Koroma. The team included former presidents Domitien Ndayizeye (Burundi) and Mulatu Teshome (Ethiopia) as well as Ambassador Marie-Pierre Lloyd from Seychelles. The International observers gave their reports in which they commended The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) for conducting transparent and credible elections. They reported no case of violence against them and generally lauded Kenyans for being peaceful. The local observers and monitors who were representing the Inter- Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK) and the Catholic Justice the Peace Commission (CJPC) and the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCCK) reported that they conducted their duties without hindrance from the both the police and the electoral officials.

***Female Security officers:***

These are officers who were tasked with the mandate of maintaining law and order during the electioneering period. A case of a female security office who was physically assaulted during the election's day was reported.

**Different forms of electoral violence**

Cases of violence against women in politics are unfortunately nothing new. They are used as tactics to intimidate women from vying and occupying political leadership positions. Gender based violence exists due to the historically manifested social and cultural structures that are inherently rooted in unequal power systems that translate to gender-based discrimination. Compared to past elections especially those that have taken place since Kenya became a multi-party democracy in 1992, the 2022 general elections can be considered most peaceful. However, Women who have run for electoral positions in past elections have faced violence or harassment both online and offline. For example, during the country's 2017 general election, women who ran for different positions faced harassment, intimidation, and abuse both physical and online.

Examples of violence or harassment against women in politics include Millie Odhiambo, a Member of parliament, whose house was burnt down during the 2017 general election campaign rallies. Another member of parliament aspirant Eunice Wambui during the same elections was attacked while on a voter registration run in Nairobi. There is a considerable amount of violence that was reported by the local observers and monitors around the electioneering period, i.e. before, during and after the elections results have been pronounced.

***Physical Violence***

According to data from the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Kenya) collected by their Election Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) monitors across the country more than 100 monitors have been on the ground since April documenting incidences of SGBV perpetration against women aspirants, voters and supporters. The Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) dozens of female candidates had been physically assaulted while campaigning during the just concluded general elections. The organization gave an example of a 39 year- old Liz Njue who had her hair pulled and her clothes torn in the attack.

***Sexual violence***

The National Gender-Based Violence Network (NGBVN), which coordinated by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) noted that 60 cases of rape were committed during the voting period in August 2017. During the 2007-2008 post-election violence in Kenya, for example, thousands of women were sexually violated although the government never acknowledged it despite the cases being mentioned in the Truth and Justice Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) Report.

According to International Federation for Human Rights and the NGO Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) Women candidates three of whom are running as running mates for presidential candidates were confronted with sexist and aggressive language gender stereotyping, online gender abuse and sexual harassment,

**Cyber Bulling**

Cyberbullying is the use of cell phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass, threaten or intimidate someone. It includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. It is the second highest form of abuse against women aspirants with over 117 cases being recorded countrywide,” FIDA said. According to UN Women, violence against women is a serious problem and women in the public limelight disproportionately deal with online toxicity. When women and girls have access to the internet, they face online violence more often than men through a continuum of multiple, recurring, and interrelated forms of gender-based threats. Many times, systemic gender-based discrimination surfaces as violence or harassment on the internet and other social media platforms.

**Psychological Violence**

This includes threats, character assassination, humiliation as well as online abuse. Because this kind of violence can be extended to immediate family members, women shy away from pursuing their political ambitions.

**Party violence**

This happens during party nominations in which women face violence from within their parties. The process of nomination guarantees the candidate the party ticket which almost guarantees the aspirant some assurance of becoming a winner as they ride on the back of the party’s presidential candidates. During the 2022 general elections, several cases of goons being transported by opponents were reported from different parts of the country.

**Cultural violence**

In Kenya, social and cultural norms continue to undermine ongoing legal and administrative efforts to promote gender equality and reduce violence against women. According to Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW), Kenya (2017), the patriarchal nature of Kenyan society is the underlying reason for violence against women. Too often, men are believed to be superior to women. Also, many customs continue to oppress women’s freedoms, especially in rural areas. Traditional norms often link a woman’s sexuality to her honor and emphasize the need to ensure chastity, including through the use of FGM. In some Kuria and Teso communities, for example, it is taboo to discuss sexual matters (including sexual violations). Even when there are opportunities to speak out about violations, women in those communities often use alternative expressions to explain attacks against them (TJRC 2013).

In Kwale County, marriages are arranged for girls at a young age, which has resulted in numerous cases of early marriages, early pregnancy, and forced marriages (Chimbi 2016). In Kajiado County, particularly among the Maasai communities, FGM is openly practised even though it is illegal (Chimbi 2016). A woman cannot contest for a political position in the areas where FGM is practised as she will be considered “immature”. This continues to suppress the capacity of women and they shy away from vying for elective positions.

**Factors that contribute to the vulnerability of women to electoral violence.**

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on women in 1995 calls on governments to take measures to ensure women’s equal access to and full participation in decision making. The governments should do this by creating gender balance in government administration, integrating women in political parties, increasing women capacity to participate in decision making and leadership as well as increasing women’s participation in electoral process and political activities.

Article 27(8) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 provides that the state shall take steps to ensure that not more than two-thirds of members of all elective and appointive positions are not of the same gender. This has not been realized more than ten years since the promulgation of the constitution as the number of women in these positions remain very low. This has been contributed by a number of factors as explained below.

(i) **Social norms (both cultural and religious):** Traditional attributes towards gender inequality influence women’s advancement in political participation. Social norms make it very difficult for women to leave their traditional domestic roles for more public roles outside their homes. Culturally there is a belief that women are to be led and not to lead.

(ii) **Low levels of women empowerment:** Women are known to lag behind in acquiring education. This is despite the very popular saying that goes “When you educate a woman you educate a nation”.

According to Wamahiu (2011) in Kenya out of every 100 girls, 76 complete their primary education as compared to 87 boys. This means that though children of both genders drop out, girls are more disadvantaged. The poor transitions translate to gender imbalances at higher educational institutions. This makes women miss many political opportunities as their bargaining capacity for positions remain low.

(iii) **Socio-economic inequality.** Men and women tend to have different socio-economic profiles and economic growth and development do not benefit men and women equally. This makes women dependent on men for finances.

(iv) **Lack of Social support:** An expression of interest for a woman to participate in elective politics is normally met with a lot of opposition. The woman will encounter opposition right from home as politics is mainly seen to be “man’s business”. Even for those who may enjoy family support, because women are considered ‘weak’ in most African cultures may encounter hostility that deters women from participating in politics.

### **The consequences of electoral violence against women in Kenya.**

Across the globe, violence against women and girls is often used as a war tactic to terrorize civilians. In 2020, the United Nations verified 2,500 cases of conflict-related sexual violence in 18 countries targeting against women and girls. In Afghanistan, 62% of women have experienced all three forms of gender-based violence which included physical, psychological and sexual abuse. The consequences of violence have caused untold suffering to the victims which including trauma, stigma, poverty and unwanted pregnancies.

Electoral Violence also contributes to low turnout of women during the elections. In 2017 general elections out of 19,611,423 registered voters only 79.51 turned up to vote. The 2022 general election witnessed a lower percentage of voters with only 64.77 turn out. Out of more than 16,000 political aspirants, less than 2,000 were women. This is according to the Kenya Women Parliamentarian report. Naturally women choose to remain at home for fear of violence that could erupt during the electoral process. Women therefore do not exercise their civil and democratic right to vote or aspire to take the elective positions. Their voice remains suppressed and there are not enough women to represent or articulate women issues.

### **Measures taken to empower women to participate in elective politics.**

The Government of Kenya has set up legal frame works to ensure the rights of women and other special groups including people living with disability are protected. One such commission is The National Gender Equality Commission (NGEC). The commission is tasked with the responsibility to promote and ensure gender equality and non-discrimination for all persons as provided for in the constitution of Kenya 2010. The functions of the commission include among others include promotion of gender equality and freedom from discrimination in accordance with Article 27 of the Constitution of Kenya.

The Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have also played a key role in promoting the participation of women in elective politics. This has been done through capacity building forums such as seminars and workshops. The Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO) which is a Kenyan women organization has been very instrument in championing women rights and gender equity.

Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) both local and international have also played a pivotal role in promoting women rights as well as undertaking capacity building workshops for women and leadership. Among the local and International Organizations Faith based organizations are The Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK) which is the umbrella body for all Religious Coordinating Bodies (RCBs) in Kenya, The African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL), African Women of Faith Network (AWFN) and Kenya Women of Faith Network (KWFN)

Political parties that nominated women aspirants and supported them through the campaign period was also a milestone that made women candidates ascend to leadership positions. One such female leader is Miss Linet Chepkorir aged 24 years who was elected as the Woman Representative for Bomet County. Many other women were elected from the County Assembly, as Members of parliaments, senators and governors. At the National level, out of the four presidential candidates, three had chosen women to be their running mates while out of forty-seven gubernatorial positions twenty-three women had expressed interest and seven of them clinched the positions and became governors in their respective counties.

### **Methods and Materials**

The research is based on reports filed by both local and international observers who represented various bodies accredited by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) which is the independent body mandated to conduct continuous registration of voters and revision of the voter's roll, the delimitation of constituencies and wards, the regulation of political parties process, the settlement of



electoral disputes, the registration of candidates for elections, voter education, the facilitation of the observation as well as monitoring and evaluation of elections as provided for by the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

Compared to all the past elections held since the introduction of Multi-party democracy in 1992, the 2022 general elections can be considered most peaceful. During the general elections which took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and the results were announced on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022, the Kenya Women of Faith Network (KWFN), and the Kenya Eminent Women Group (KEWG) worked jointly to establish the various forms of violence that women were exposed to during the campaign period and on the voting day. The two groups worked with about one hundred electoral monitors and observers who had been trained before being deployed in thirty-eight counties out of forty-seven counties nationwide. The monitors and observers captured cases of violence against women in the areas of their operation and reported the same to the Women Situation Room (WSR) through a Toll- Free number after which necessary actions were taken.

### Result and Discussion

The data that was collected on 9<sup>th</sup> of August only during the voting day captured seventy-eight (78) cases as follows:

| Forms Of Violence | No. Of Cases Reported | %    | Who Was Targeted  | What Happened  |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------|---|--|
| PHYSICAL          | 51 cases              | 65.3 | Female candidates, Female candidates body guards, Female election officials, Female journalists , Female observers and monitors | - assaulted by male opponents, hired goons<br>- Police officers<br>-Blocking the female candidate from accessing the tallying station.                     |
| CULTURAL          | 3 CASES               | 3.8  | Wives and aspirants   | Wife denied a chance to vote and the husband insists that he would vote for her.<br>Female aspirant threatened with a separation for getting into politics |
| SOCIO-ECONOMIC    | 11                    | 14.1 | Female candidates   | Female candidates could not afford high nomination fees charged by the political parties   |
| PSYCHOLOGICAL     | 13                    | 16.7 | Female candidates   | A lot of Cyber-bulling and character assassination.<br>Verbal abuse by opponents   |

### Recommendations.

- i. **Training and capacity building.** Women aspirants seeking to enter politics for the first time need to be encouraged and be supported through trainings and mentorship as an indicator for the party's commitment to the principle of gender equality.
- ii. **Economic Empowerment of women.** The cost of seeking a political office in Kenya is very high which makes it extremely difficult for women to seek political office. Women in Kenya find it very hard to get finance from financial institutions as many of them cannot get collaterals or bank securities. This is because women don't own properties registered in their names as property is mainly registered in the names of their husband.
- iii. **Reservation of some quotas for women at all levels from the County Assembly and the National Assembly by political parties.** This will help to reduce undue competition between men and women contestants.
- iv. **Security for Female Contestants.** The government of Kenya through the Office of the President and the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of Government which is charged with the responsibility of public administration and internal security should ensure that those who offer themselves to the service of their country are protected as required by the Constitution

of Kenya, 2010. Women, due to their vulnerability should be given special consideration. This will encourage even young girls in school to take up leadership positions.

### **References**

- Authority of Kenya. (2018). Publications. Retrieved from [www.ca.go](http://www.ca.go).
- Bari, F. (2005). Women's Political Participation: Issues and Challenges. Bangkok: United Nations
- Kagwanja, P. (2008). 'Breaking Kenya's Impasse. Chaos or courts?' African Policy Institute, *Working paper*.
- Kamau, N. (2010). Women and Political Leadership in Kenya. Nairobi: Heinrich Böll Foundations
- Kituyi, Mukhisa. (2001). "The gender Question: Futility of Tokenism" in Sunday Nation on The Web, July 29
- Nzomo, M. (2003). Civil Society in the Kenyan Political Transition: 1999-2002. Nairobi: Heinrich Böll Foundations
- Potter, M. (2004). Women, Civil Society and Peace Building. Belfast: Training for Women Network. Retrieved from: [http://www.nationaudio.com/news/DailyNation/29072001/Comment/News\\_Analysis1.html](http://www.nationaudio.com/news/DailyNation/29072001/Comment/News_Analysis1.html)
- Spring 2011 edition of NDI Reports. Women Participation, gains, grounds, faces High Hurdles. Retrieved from: [www.ndi.org/NDI-Reports-Spring-2011/index.html](http://www.ndi.org/NDI-Reports-Spring-2011/index.html)
- Wamahiu, S. P. (May 6th, 2011). Educate more girls today for a better Kenya. Talk presented at the Global Action Week- Big Story Campaign at Milimani primary school, Nairobi on 6th May 2011.

### **Abbreviations**

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| ACRL   | African Council of Religious Leaders            |
| AWFN   | African Women of Faith Network                  |
| CBOs   | Community Based Organizations                   |
| CJPC   | Catholic Justice and Peace Commission           |
| COVAW  | Coalition on Violence Against Women             |
| CSOs   | Civil Society Organizations                     |
| EAC    | East African Community                          |
| IEBC   | Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission |
| IED    | Institute for Education in Democracy.           |
| IEDPs  | Internally Displaced Persons                    |
| ELOG   | Elections Observation Group                     |
| FBOs   | Faith Based Organizations                       |
| FIDA   | Federation of Women Lawyers                     |
| GIPU   | Global Inter- Parliamentary Union               |
| IRCK   | Inter-Religious Council of Kenya                |
| KEWG   | Kenya Eminent Women Group                       |
| KHRC   | Kenya Human Rights Commission                   |
| KEWOPA | Kenya Women Parliamentarian Association         |
| KWFN   | Kenya Women of Faith Network                    |
| MYWO   | Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization              |
| NCCK   | National Council of Churches in Kenya           |
| NGBVN  | National Gender-Based Violence Network          |
| NGEC   | National Gender and Equality Commission         |
| NGOs   | Non- Governmental Organizations                 |
| SGBV   | Sexual Gender Based Violence                    |
| TJRC   | Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission     |

## **Assessing the Principle of Objectivity in Journalism and Peacebuilding in the Scope Newspaper of Adamawa State, Nigeria**

Malachy C. Wache and Gerald M. Musa

### **Abstract**

This study examines the concept of objectivity in journalism as it relates to peacebuilding, specifically focusing on the Scope newspaper in Adamawa state. The research aims to understand whether journalists at Scope newspaper adhere to the principle of objectivity in their reporting and identifies factors that may hinder objective news coverage. The study uses the deontological theory as its theoretical framework and employs content analysis as the research methodology. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the visible content of the newspaper reveals that while journalists at Scope newspaper are knowledgeable about the ethical principles guiding their profession, they do not strictly adhere to objective reporting due to factors such as personal opinion, ownership influence, personal beliefs, and interests. The study recommends that journalists at Scope newspaper should prioritize adherence to the ethical principle of objectivity and that the government should create an enabling environment for journalists to carry out their practices.

**Keywords:** Objectivity, Journalism, Peace-building, Scope Newspaper

### **Introduction**

This research article is a product of Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP) training to its ambassadors as 2023 Presidential and Gubernatorial election observers all over the country. The report on the media's role are analyzed and presented as a finding at the end of paper.

In contemporary journalism, journalists often fall into the trap of misinformation and end up spreading problematic news. This can be attributed to various vulnerabilities in the practice of journalism. There have been accusations that journalists' articles and editorials contribute to promoting violence. To address this, journalists must always prioritize ethical principles, particularly objectivity, in their work. The fundamental principle in journalism is the ethical responsibility to present all sides of a story in an equal and objective manner. Journalistic principles emphasise a detached and unbiased approach to gathering and disseminating news and information. This helps professionals make informed decisions about the world and events without imposing their subjective views on accepting or rejecting information.

From another school of thought, objectivity in journalism refers to the category of journalism style that is devoid of biases, and subjective views that appear to sway peoples' way of understanding information. Today, people still depend on the information from the media especially when it concerns the cause for peaceful coexistence in their immediate environment. However, journalists in Nigeria, as in other parts of the world, are confronted with the challenge of implementing the basic principles of objectivity in journalism. A professional journalist is expected to be trained in the field of ethics, yet it cannot be doubted that his or her diverse background shapes the capacity in distributing information.

According to Adeyemi (2013), media professionals are less guilty of corrupt practices which are largely attributed to a lack of objectivity. Journalists are often accused of biased reporting by the audience because of their lukewarm attitude to a vital aspect of journalistic objectivity. A professional journalist always strives to be self-reflexive. Even though, every journalist is influenced by factors that include personal upbringing, religion, education, community identity and work experience. It is equally important for journalists to be aware of how their personal background and community may influence their professionalism, for peace or violence. The core principles of journalism give an excellent foundation for professionals and those who aspire to accept the practice of journalism. These principles greatly help them to exemplify responsibility in how the use of gathering and disseminating information. There are many codes of conduct, by-laws and regulations made by media and professional unions outlining the principles, values and obligations of the practice of journalism in Nigeria.

Journalism as a practice draws a great deal of prominence and legitimacy from the fact that it is able to present true pictures of reality. If journalism is known for the dissemination of false pictures of reality, then it will easily lose the interest and trust of the reader. Concepts such as 'truth' and 'reality' cannot be separated from the concept of objectivity. Hence, if one can speak of the ideal model within journalism, we might conceive such a paradigm in the requirement for objectivity in disseminating news. Even Charlotte, (2006) would say that it is one thing to operate with objectivity as a beacon, and another thing else to operationalize objectivity in the everyday practice of a journalist. This study tends to observe

how journalists of the weekly Scope newspaper have attempted to operationalize the concept of objectivity by following the ethical principles of journalism.

### **Statement of the problem**

Journalism profession is like other arts and crafts where professionals adhere to one or more ethical principles in practice. As part of their practice, journalists interview people, listen to them and present their views and opinion to the large community. In the course of this professional practice, journalists promote objective (truth and factual) presentation of news and event that will encourage the existence of peace among people, especially in cosmopolitan regions like the Northeast, Nigeria. Regardless of their faith and orientation, journalists must strictly abide by the basic principles of objectivity to report news and events.

Like other print media, the Scope Newspaper is widely read in Adamawa State so much so that it can be found in rural settlements. Yet, in spite of their potential in providing news and information to citizens of Adamawa State, the newspaper to a very large shows lapses in reporting news and events that do not promote and sustains peaceful stay. There are articles and news reports that are unbalanced and capable of generating tension. Some are politically motivated as the ownership influence cannot be denied in media operations. But this does not leave the fact that journalists could be influenced by personal opinion, creed and cultural background. This means that the journalists ignore or snub the basic principle of fair journalism practice (objectivity), and by implication, their news and reports can distort the relative peace in the State and beyond. Therefore, this study sought to ascertain the responsibility of journalists toward the principle of objectivity, and how it is practiced in Weekly-Scope Newspaper in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

### **Aim of the study**

The aim of this study is to explore the journalistic principle of objectivity facing the journalism profession in the Weekly Scope Newspaper of Adamawa State.

- i. To discover the implications of headlines on peace-building as a feature in the Weekly scope Newspaper of Adamawa State.
- ii. To find out the level to which political undertone influences the style of reporting for peace-building journalism in Weekly Scope Newspaper.
- iii. To ascertain how personal opinion, affects objective news reporting in the Weekly Scope Newspaper of Adamawa State.

### **Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following questions:

- i. What are the implications of headlines on peace-building as featured on the Weekly Scope Newspaper?
- ii. To what level does political undertone influence the style of reporting for peacebuilding in the Weekly Scope Newspaper?
- iii. In what way does personal opinion affect objective news reports in Weekly Scope Newspaper?

### **Scope of the study**

The Scope newspaper is a weekly publication of the Adamawa State Press Limited. The study covers two months' edition (8) papers of Weekly Scope Newspaper. It hopes to further examine journalistic principles as practiced and respected in other national dailies.

### **Significance of the study**

This research is timely in the sense that ethical journalism must be observed to add to the strength of peaceful journalism in Nigeria. It is also important for politicians, government public servants, media owners, journalists, media practitioners, and the general public.

### **Definition of terms**

The terms used in this study are:

**Objectivity:** Objectivity refers to a type of reporting meant to portray issues and events in a neutral and unbiased manner, regardless of the journalist's opinion or personal beliefs.

**Journalism:** In this study, journalism refers to the process of gathering, processing and disseminating information to different audiences via the use of mass media. It equally includes reporting and editing news for large audiences.

**Peace-building:** In this study, it refers to an approach to conflict prevention or resolution activities performed either by external or internal agents with the aim of establishing and maintaining peaceful coexistence.

### **Literature Review: communication media and peacebuilding in Nigeria.**

For many decades, the communication media have played a pivotal role in disseminating the culture of peace, depicting the impact of violence, conflict and war on both individuals and societies. Robust communication media give people flowing access to information, enable dialogue, encourage people to express their opinions and views, prompt greater social interaction and encourage accountability (Katty, Williams, 2017). The Media have a broad-based information-sharing capacity and have been among the vital means of resolving violent crisis issues. Between the leaders and the masses of any society, the media perform the role of a midwife in informing, entertaining and educating the people. This defined the reason why the media is applauded as the Fourth Estate Realm after the executive, legislature and judiciary arms of government (Uzuebumam & Omenugha, 2018).

Best (2013) argues that peacebuilding is the collective process to end or mitigate conflict, rebuild and reconcile post-conflict and foster conditions that avoid conflicts in the first place. Looking at the ideas of Communication experts in the field of peacebuilding, they seem to advocate that in promoting peaceful coexistence, and resolving conflict more is needed to be done than the absence of violence (Lodge, 2018). This does not spare the fact that among scholars there has been an argument on how media assist in the peace-building process. Some are of the view that the media escalate conflicts and crises while a divergent view opposed the view that accepts the idea that media functions well to de-escalate conflict and crises, hence advocating peace-building for better leaving (Salawu, 2009). Salawu, further argues that the media, as a social institution are involved in conflicts in society either as the harbinger, the channel of information and analysts of the conflicts, or as part of the escalation or resolution of violence. The inability to adhere to the basic principles of journalism contributes to the challenge media is witnessing in its role in peacebuilding in Nigeria.

For instance, in 2002, Isioma Daniel a Nigerian journalist was accused of responsibility for a religious riot that destabilized the relative peace of the nation particularly the northern region of the country. It was a case of a newspaper report in which the Holy Prophet Mohammed was allegedly denigrated. A compulsory mandate to kill (Fatwah) was issued on the life of the journalist and her family members. The article was met with a huge backlash from some Muslims in northern states, and the devastating effect was a very damaging religious war that claimed over one hundred lives, five hundred persons sustained various degrees of injuries properties were razed and destroyed (Uzuebumam C. E. & Omenugha, N. O., 2018). The incident occurred as a result of the dereliction of the profession to the basic principles of journalism which is devoid of biases, and subjective views that appear to sway peoples' way of understanding information, therefore, it can always endanger the peace-building process. The tension created by this write-up has still kept journalists unsafe in some areas of northern Nigeria.

As Nigeria wades through the struggle of insecurity worsened by the terror group Boko Haram, bandits' cruel activities in some regions of the country particularly the north, and the IPOB agitation in eastern parts of the country, the question searching for a meaningful answer is: What strategies are the media employing to manage these conflicts and stop further escalation? The media are expected to use various channels, programmes, developing stories, investigative reporting of news matters, advertisement and so on to strictly abide by the basic principles (objectivity) of journalism. The agenda is expected to serve the audience by going by the principle of balanced and fair dissemination of information and entertainment. It is also expected that the audience follows media programmes with unflinching trust, particularly print journalism (Norak, K. 2010). But the reverse is the case nowadays, the media has suffered stigmatization it is accused of favouring sensationalism and being influenced by personal opinion, creed, ethnic and socio-political backgrounds rather than being guided by the principles of journalism of accuracy, balanced and fair reporting. The ability to make objective opinions strengthens communities and fosters development, and a positive outlook on the future. A journalist reporting for print media should resist the temptation of presenting a one-sided or unbalanced story.

### **Challenges to peace journalism in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, journalism faces numerous challenges, including the influence of ownership pressure and politics on media operations. These factors result in unbalanced news stories, double standards, and the use of stereotypes that can ignite crises. Additionally, unchallenged and unverified opinions and views are prevalent in news reporting (Omenugha and Okunna, 2008). Also, the language in which news stories are reported is out of context that does not align with the headlines and editorial. Despite accusations of such mistakes, journalists often go uncorrected and warnings are not adhered to.

Uzugbunam and Omenugha (2012), identified the second aspect to consider in reporting for peace-building as influence from the government in authority. Most media firms in Nigeria are influenced directly or covertly by political, and government control. Adamawa State press limited; the publishers of the Scope newspaper are not exempted. Counting from the colonial regime to today's democratic dispensation, the relationship between the government and the media has continued to raise contentions and concerns. The situation is so ugly that the relationship is described as 'cat and mouse' as well as 'bitter-sweet'. The history of Nigerian media has been told and re-told with examples of oppression from the government – censorship, the killing of journalists, razing/demolition of media firms, illegal detention of journalists, confiscation of operation mandate, and other extra-legal measures. Such a situation can stifle objective news reports and editorials, especially towards peace-building.

Warren (2015) argues in favour of the above challenge when he states that influence and the difficulties associated with extending such influence over any space have long been noted as central forces underlying the geography of collective peace. The print media weighed down by challenges emanating from ownership pressure and personal opinion tendencies may do very little to play a significant role in resolving conflict and building peaceful coexistence in the entire nation. Based on the above assumption, the audience may be tempted to switch to ever-attractive media, new media; the internet and social networking sites.

### **Empirical review**

Bonde, B. N. (2005) in his dissertation provides an integrated model for the analyses and design of media interventions in peace-building, conflict transformation and prevention. He offers a model to adapt media interventions in periods of conflict. He identified areas to intervene as part of efforts to prevent conflict and build peace such as media content, media structure, capacity building and ethics of journalism. The study shows how media and communication strategies must be based on thorough analysis for peace-building. He identified the vital area of intervention as the journalist's objective code and ethical ability/standard to report. The author argues that the strategies developed for internal conflict are useful in designing answers to peace-building efforts across the globe. Strategies are important for media firms but ethical formation will enable journalists to have unbiased coverage of events related to peacebuilding. The author did not mention the necessity for objective reporting as a panacea for peaceful coexistence.

Mu'azu, A. & Ibrahim, M. (2016) in their article titled Media and the challenges of peacebuilding in a period of insurgency, examined the ways by which the Nigerian media could be used to address the challenges of peacebuilding in a period of insurgency. The discussion was in the context of the Boko Haram insurgency that emanated from Nigeria and spread across the neighbouring countries of the republics of Cameroon, Chad and Niger. The authors agreed to the fact that conflict situation is important to the media providing them with news material, issues and events to analyse or discuss. But insurgency, much as it offers news material to the media, also puts journalists and media firms in danger. An environment riddled with terrorist attacks is unhealthy for journalism practice. Even from the perspective of the media have a role in the campaigns for peace to return to the larger society. The article failed to bring out the approach a journalist will take when reporting against insurgency. Journalists can be sympathetic to the ideologies of terror groups and report from that angle. Instead of encouraging the end of the insurgency, the action can jeopardize the process of peace-building.

In another article, Norak (2010) discuss that a measure of peace-building can enhance peace journalism. Peace journalists have a crucial responsibility to uncover the root causes of conflicts and the genuine intentions of people, while also ensuring that reports humanize the victims of conflict. It is expected that journalists resist the temptation to sensationalize damages and instead strive for balanced reporting, illustrating how media reports can be manipulated. Adhering to journalistic principles in this practice can lead advocates of peace-building to denounce war and violence, potentially serving as a solution to prevent further escalation of conflicts and promote peace. This paper emphasizes the need for a code of conduct that can restore audience trust in journalism, particularly in the context of peacebuilding. However, it acknowledges that while journalism has the potential to contribute to peaceful conflict resolution, its influence may be limited.

### **Theoretical framework**

#### ***Deontological Ethics:***

The Deontological theory of profession is an ethical orientation that takes its roots from the Greek word 'deon' which means 'duty'. It is the formalistic, absolute, legalistic and duty-bound ethics posited and popularized by a popular German philosopher – Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant argues, that "only an action taken out of self-imposed duty could be ethical" (Merill *et al.*, 1994, p, 379). The fundamental moral principles of deontological ethics are captured in Kant's categorical imperative which is based on;

- (i) Moral rules that should be universally applied which have respect for the dignity of people
- (ii) The belief is that people should always be treated with respect and as ends unto themselves but not as means to an end.

Deontologists hold firm to the principle of acting according to certain universally approved moral duties without regard to the good or bad consequences of their actions, hence they are sometimes referred to as ‘non-consequentialists’. Advocates of this school of thought do not approve of the use of foul means to achieve positive ends; on the relationship between duty and the morality of human actions. For example, there is no justification for reporters if they employ deceptive means to ferret out a news report or stories. In deontological ethics, an action is considered morally good as a result of some characteristic of the action itself, not because the product of the action is good. In a similar vein, deontologists would not see any justification in the use of sophisticated arms and promotion of banditry or herders-farmers clash by journalists to achieve mass appeal. This may be responsible for the reason some journalists consider this absolutist approach as unrealistic and by extension a threat to the practice of journalism. Be that as it may, the duty-based theories enjoy some advantages as pointed out by Day (2000, p. 60). First, there is a duty to act according to the rules, regardless of the outcome. Second, there is more predictability in the deontological theories, and one who follows these ideas consistently is likely to be regarded as a truthful person. In a nutshell, Deontological ethics holds that at least some acts are morally obligatory regardless of their consequences for human welfare. Descriptive of such ethics are such expressions as “Duty for duty’s sake,” “Virtue is its own reward,” and “Let justice be done though the heavens fall.”

This theory may not be perfect, since, duty-based theories do have some disadvantages which include over-adherence and loyalty to rules. For example, journalists who uphold this ethical theory will insist on not divulging the sources of their information, even when that will land them in prison. Hence, the supreme categorical command of Kant’s philosophy is: “Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universally accepted law.” Kant considered that formulation of the categorical imperative to be equivalent to: “So act that you treat humanity in your own person and in the person of everyone else always at the same time as an end and never merely as means.” Another evident shortcoming of the deontological ethical theory is that of the non-application of general principles to specific unusual circumstances. Given as an example, journalists in this school of thought cannot in any circumstance knowingly publish false information, even if that will amount to saving the life of someone held hostage at gunpoint. This is because they know and strongly believe that the basis for sound journalism is respect for the truth. This could serve as one of the bases of deontological theories that have been perceived to be formalistic because their central principle lies in the conformity of an action to some obligations.

Therefore, fundamental civic right is the main guarantee for the freedom of expression, without which the protection of other fundamental press freedom could not be guaranteed. However, we must bear in mind that exercising these liberties as a journalist includes duties and responsibilities. The press has to have the right to compile and publish, without restriction, information and commentaries to ensure the formation of public opinion, unity and peace. The author agrees with the implication of the ethics in this thought; that the universal emphasis on the code of protecting fundamental human rights; and also, on the duty not to violate them—can also be seen as a triumph of deontological ethics in journalism practice.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study adopts the content analysis method. The visible content of the newspaper was examined in a qualitative and quantitative style for the purpose of determining and analyzing the pattern of newspaper coverage of the journalistic principle of objectivity for peacebuilding in Nigeria. The content analysis population consists of all 54 editions of the year 2020 weekly publications published in Adamawa state during the period of the study (March 2020 – November 2020 (39 editions).

Out of the 54 weekly newspapers that constitute the population of the study, 11 were purposively sampled for investigation. They are March 22-28, March 29-April 4, August 1-7, August 22-28, August 29-September 4, September 22-28, October, 10-16, October 17 -23, November 7-13, November 17-23, and November 24-30. These editions were selected based on accessibility and consistency of publication of headlines in connection with violence and peace-building. Every edition has an audience appeal. The editions are also readily and easily accessible to readers and are weekly published. These criteria indicate that the mentioned editions will adequately cover the investigation under study.

All issues of the 11 editions published between March 2020 – November 2020 were sampled for investigation. This period is a significant part of the events surrounding critical peace-building in the state, good for this study. For each of the 11 editions, 880 issues constitute a moderate item of the news report and events of the entire publication under study. These issues also carried the example of the journalistic

principle of objectivity about peace-building in the practice of journalism in the weekly Scope Newspaper of Adamawa State. Fifteen per cent of the entire issues constitute the sample. This is in conjunction with the suggestion by Kerlinger (1979) and Babbie (1992) that a sample size between ten and twenty per cent of this population of sort nature is proper. Thus, 80 issues of the 11 newspapers were studied (80 issues for each weekly edition). For each of the 11 editions, 80 issues constituted the totality, numbering 20,240 issues for all the eleven editions.

The systematic sampling technique was used to acquire the sample of 880 issues. The sampling interval was determined by dividing the population by the sample size ( $20,240 \div 880$ ). A total of 22 (18.9%) issues of each edition were sampled for the study. This recorded a content analysis rate of 93.9% which was adjudged and considered good for the researcher to proceed. Analysis was done qualitatively under the following categories: influence of headlines, effects of political undertone and impact of personal opinions.

### **Data analysis**

The tables of the Scope newspaper editions showing their headlines for peacebuilding in Adamawa State week-by-week are arranged qualitatively with the interpretation given the investigation under study. The editions were selected in the same year based on the calendar of the year. The eleven editions within the two months of the study had 5 front-page headlines on reports regarding peace-building. The rest of the edition did not feature any headline related to peaceful coexistence.

Out of the 21 headlines published by Scope on peacebuilding, 8 (48.09%) were objectively capable of encouraging peaceful coexistence among citizens, 7 (33.3%) were biased and capable of increasing tension among people, 4 (19.04%) were neutral giving more information.

### **Result and Discussions**

In carrying out the study, the researcher explored the 'journalistic principle of objectivity in journalism of Weekly Scope newspaper based on some variables such as objectivity, journalism principles, and peace-building in journalism practice. The findings of this study with regard to the various research questions are discussed as follows:

#### ***RQ1: What are the implications of headlines on peace-building by the weekly scope newspaper?***

In many instances, audiences of print media have accused newspapers of encouraging violent conflict by the way newspaper headlines are written. With the emergence of Boko Haram terror activities in Nigeria, the peaceful atmosphere of Adamawa State was put at stake even though the only government-owned newspaper, the Scope newspaper is commended for providing information that promotes peaceful coexistence. Thus, the implications of the headlines in the Scope newspaper are objectively encouraging peace-building, and giving more information, it has some biased headlines that can generate or heighten tension. Examples of such headlines include; Roles of NGOs in Adamawa: Invisible NGOs rearing ugly heads; How Fintiri quelled the Adamawa looting to the chagrin of naysayers; Over 500 rape cases recorded in Adamawa and so on.

The levels of these implications vary between the 11 editions. The editions have tried to maintain objective headlines that can promote peace-building. This is an indication that the newspaper has tried in informing the readers rather than increase already existing tension. The newspaper needs more encouragement to be objective in journalism. The table above shows that the Scope newspaper headlines are objective and encourage peaceful coexistence among citizens. Journalists should not fall to the seduction of the government but make sure that the reporting is balanced and demonstrate how easily news and media reports can be corrupted, this is the deontological principle. They should always keep in mind that they know and strongly believe that the basis for sound journalism is respect for the truth. This could serve as one of the bases of deontological theories that have been perceived to be formalistic because their central principle lies in the conformity of an action to some obligations. It is a duty call and one should follow the natural inclination.

#### ***RQ2: To what level does political undertone influence the style of reporting for peacebuilding in the Weekly Scope Newspaper?***

It is not easy to point out political undertone in print media by just reading the headlines. Some experts are of the opinion that the political undertone in a headline is often expressed in the ignorance of the editor who writes the headlines (Journal of Communication and Media Research, vol7, 2015). In as much as it is difficult to single out a political undertone in a headline the following heads of the editions may possess a political undertone: Adamawa: Sitting on a time bomb? We have no evidence that herders clashing with farmers are foreigners – NIS, How Fintiri quelled the Adamawa looting to the chagrin of naysayer, my new security structure is yielding positive result – Fintiri.



The subtlety of handling newspaper headlines with a political undertone remains the discretion of an editor who champions his/her profession above political interest or ownership policy control. Very often, journalists presume that whatever they publish the readers will accept easily. They can accept but these readers can also identify a few elements in the headlines that have a political undertone. In the example above, the three headlines can increase tension among political rivals. Journalist coherence must be emphasized among workers of the Scope Newspaper, it will be a possible way to avoid a political undertone. The study's theoretical framework, based on deontological coherence, makes at least three sets of predictions about human behaviour in moral judgment tasks:

- i. people hold (potentially sophisticated and complex) deontic moral rules that inform their moral decisions,
- ii. these rules are generally not inviolable but instead, provide soft constraints that can be overridden by other rules or by considerations related to consequences, and
- iii. resolving conflict related to moral concerns is achieved through coherence-based reasoning, which yields systematic coherence shifts in relevant attitudes and evaluations.

***RQ3: In what way does personal opinion affect objective news reports in Weekly Scope Newspaper?***

There exists managerial incompetence that affects the practice of journalism in Nigeria. Based on the result of the study, the researcher discovered that there are discrepancies in practice as regards the rules and regulations which gives an opportunity for personal opinion. Just like political undertone, personal opinions in headlines of the newspaper are difficult to point out but some incidences proved that personal opinion has sparked violent crises. For instance, early in 2006, a fully-fledged crisis erupted in Maiduguri, a city northeast region of Nigeria, dominantly Muslim, over a cartoon in a Danish newspaper that allegedly discredited Prophet Mohammed. The crisis spread to other parts of the country, notably Onitsha in eastern Nigeria. In a research conducted by Okunna and Omenugha (2008), the researchers examined the New Nigerian newspaper owned by the governments of the 19 northern states and Daily Champion owned by Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, a paper considered to be dedicated to the cause of the Easterners, mostly inhabited by the Igbo Christians. They found that both newspapers were more interested in reporting "their own side of the stories."

The editions of Scope newspaper under investigation reveal insignificant news reporting that is a personal opinion. That does not also ignore the fact that orientation influences the opinion of the journalist. Journalists have a responsibility as citizens to ensure that their reportage is as balanced and fair as possible. The theory of Deontology promotes this principle mind: helping media professionals to address the challenge of a media representation and expression that take into account the diversity of our contemporary societies of today. Professional ideals and practices seek to demand objectivity in news reporting and the separation of fact from personal opinion.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Critical observers have criticized Nigerian newspapers for endangering the peace of the country by not carefully considering the consequences of their reporting, especially on security matters. While some view it as a casual reflection of society, this perception can be detrimental to efforts towards peace-building in society.

From the foregoing, it can be inferred that objectivity can be achieved in news reporting, especially when journalists maintain neutrality and report an issue from an unbiased perspective. It is evident that some journalists allow their personal interests and beliefs as well as gratifications and ownership influence to becloud their sense of news judgement. The issue, therefore, remains that, for objectivity to be achieved, a journalist should be free from all internal and external factors so that they can be free to perform their social responsibility of presenting accurate and balance reports of day-to-day events.

Based on the outcomes of the study, the following suggestions were made:

1. Journalists should exhibit ethical principles in practice and should not be biased in reporting news and events. They should always stand by the ethics of the media profession which is objective reporting.
2. Journalists should avoid allowing their sentiments and affiliations to influence their sense of news judgement.
3. Media owners, including the Adamawa State government, should always adhere to journalistic objectivity so that the integrity of the profession will not be jeopardised.
4. Media regulatory bodies should always monitor newspaper reports to ensure they do not encourage conflict.

**References**

- Adeyemi, A. (2013). Nigeria media and corrupt practices: The need for paradigm shift. *European Scientific Journal*, vol 9 (1): 119-136.
- Best, M. L. (2013). Peacebuilding in a networked world. *Communications of the ACM*, vol 56(4), 30. <http://doi.org/10.1145/2436256.2436265>
- Day, L. A. (2000). *Ethics in media communications: Cases and controversies* (third edition) Australia: Wadsworth/ Thomas Learning
- Lodge, T. (2018). Conflict resolution in Nigeria after the 1967–1970 Civil War. *African Studies*, 1-22. DOI: 10.1080/00020184.2018.1432125.
- Merill, J. C., Lee, J. and Friedlander, E. J. (1994). *Modern mass media* (Second edition) New York: Harper Collins College Publishers
- Mu'azu, A. and Ibrahim, M. (2016). Media and the challenges of peacebuilding in a period of insurgency.
- Nora, K. (2010): The role of the media in peace-building, conflict management and prevention. Accessed from E-international relations.
- Okunna, C. S. and Omenugha, K. A. (2008). Media, ideology and the nation: the Nigerian press coverage of the 'Denmark cartoon crisis'. *Journal of Media and Communication*, Vol 1(1), 92-109.
- Omenugha K. A, Uzuegbunam, C.E. and Omenugha, O. N. (2013): Good Governance and Media Ownership in Nigeria: Dilemmatic Practices, Stoic Challenges. *Global Media Journal African Edition*, Vol 7(2):92-115
- Omenugha K. A, Uzuegbunam, C.E. and Omenugha, O. N. (2018): Mainstream media, social media and peacebuilding in Nigeria: Old challenges, new opportunities. *Nigeria Journal of Communication*, vol 15 (2):519-534.
- Salawu, A. (2009). Media Narrative Construction of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria. *Estudos EmComunicacao*, Vol 5, 75-93.

**Table 1:** Selected headlines and news reports on peace-building of The Scope newspaper from March to November 2020

| <b>Headlines</b>   | <b>Date of Publication</b> | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Implication</b>        |
|--|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Black out in Mayo-Belwa: Residents, NAMS take to the street.                   | March 22                   | Bias         | Increase intension        |
| Adamawa: Sitting on a time bomb?   | April, 4                   | Bias         | Increase tension          |
| Lawmaker escapes armed bandits attack  | August 29                  | Objective    | Encourages peace-building |
| Arrest, disarm and prosecute persons with prohibited firearms                  | August 22                  | Objective    | Gives information         |
| Eid-El-Kabir: Fintiri felicitates with Muslims, urges prayers for peace        | August 1                   | Objective    | Encourages peace-building |
| Live in peace or face the consequences- Crowther Seth                          | September 22               | Objective    | Encourages peace-building |
| Farmers, middlemen pointing accusing fingers at each other                     | October 10                 | Objective    | Gives information         |
| End SARs looters remanded in custody   | November 7                 | Objective    | Gives information         |
| Adamawa supports campaigns for integration of repentant Boko Haram             | October 17                 | Objective    | Encourages peace-building |
| We have no evidence that herders clashing with farmers are foreigners – NIS    | November 17                | Bias         | Increase tension          |
| Heal the nation with little kindness – Hajiya Lami Fintiri challenges leaders. | November 24                | Objective    | Encourages peace-building |

**Table 2:** selected headlines in The Scope newspaper between March – November 2020.

| Headlines   | Date of publication | Grade     | Implication               |
|---|---------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| IDPs camps in Adamawa State: the good, the bad and the ugly         | March 22            | Objective | Gives information         |
| Random musings on Covid-19 toll                                     | March 29            | Objective | Gives information         |
| My new security structure is yielding positive result – Fintiri     | August 29           | Objective | Encourages peace-building |
| Hatemachi sacrifice: A cultural significance among Heba Race        | August 22           | Neutral   | Gives information         |
| Roles of NGOs in Adamawa: Invisible NGOs rearing ugly heads.        | August 7            | Bias      | Increase tension          |
| How Fintiri quelled the Adamawa looting to the chagrin of nay sayer | November 7          | Bias      | Increase tension          |
| Over 500 rape cases recorded in Adamawa                             | October 17          | Bias      | Increase tension          |
| When liberality is mistaken for weakness                            | November 17         | Neutral   | Encourages peace-building |
| Save us from early marriage, Adamawa girls beg Lami Fintiri         | November 24         | Objective | Encourages peace-building |

**Table 3:** selected headlines in The Scope Newspaper of March – November, 2020.

| Headlines   | Date of publication | Grade     | Implication               |
|---|---------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Polio vaccination: District head seeks parents' cooperation                 | November 24         | Objective | Encourages peace-building |
| What Nigerians are saying about the proposed Hate Speech Bill               | November 17         | Objective | Gives information         |
| Aftermath of looting spree in Adamawa                                       | November 7          | Bias      | Increase tension          |
| Adamawa State Commissioner of Police cautions against Herders-farmers clash | October 10          | Objective | Encourages peace-building |
| Patience and perseverance in the face of calamities and afflictions         | August 29           | Objective | Gives information         |
| Lamurde communal clash: Commission of Enquiry commences sitting             | August 7            | Neutral   | Encourages peace-building |
| Murder suspect regains freedom  | August 22           | Bias      | Increase tension          |

# **Role of Women of Faith in Conflict Mediation Between Irigwe and Fulani Herdsmen in Bassa L.G.A, Plateau State Nigeria**

Agatha Chikelue

Executive Director,  
Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP).

## **Abstract**

The paper, Role of Women of Faith in Conflict Mediation between Irigwe Tribe and Fulani Herdsmen in Bassa L.G.A, Plateau state Nigeria aims at analyzing the role that women can play in peace building with intention to include them in peacebuilding process as one of the most vital stakeholders in society. The paper reviewed the roles some women played in other countries. Qualitative method was adopted for the paper by interviewing 300 women during the studies. It was revealed that women played key roles in calming the war. Recommendations were proffered to the government to always consider dialogue as key in peace process. Also, for the Irigwe and Fulani war Lords to see the need to live peacefully since they have no other community or place to call their home if they destroy theirs.

**Keywords:** Role, Women, Faith, Conflict, Mediation.

## **Introduction**

Plateau state was created out of Benue-plateau on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1976. It is a mountainous area in the north of the state with beautiful rock formations. The altitude ranges from 1,829 meters to 4000 feet above sea level (Galleria, 2023). The state is located in North Central Nigeria. It occupies 30,913Sqkm. It shares borders with Kaduna State to the North, Nassarawa state to the East, Benue state to the south, Taraba state to the East and Bauchi state to the North East. It is located between latitude 80<sup>o</sup>24'N and longitude 80<sup>o</sup>32 and 100<sup>o</sup>38 East. Plateau state is best known for its mining production that was why Jos town was called earlier as "Tin city". The state was open to civilization as early as 18<sup>th</sup> century. The state has such a conducive weather and rainfall that agriculture is the major occupation of the people.

The state produces unique agricultural produce like Acha, Yam, Potatoes, vegetables, fruits and Animal husbandry. No wonder, Vom Veterinary Research institute was established as early as 1924 and the federal college of Animal health and production technology in 1941 (Mohammed, 2023). Fulani herdsmen and farmers have been living together on plateau for long time. Irigwe people are found mainly in Bassa LGA of Plateau state. They are hospitable and friendly people mostly living in Miango Jos and surrounding villages the people are farmers to the anthropologists for its polyandry practices and traditional dance.

They have an attractive and tourist site well known in Miango town as: like water falls, high hills, rest house etc. In 2020 it was estimated that there were almost seven hundred thousand (700,000) Irigwe people living in Nigeria. Different people call them as follows; Irigwe, Aregwe, idafan, kwal, kan, kwooll, Miango, Nkarigie, Wnerigwe, Nyango etc. they call themselves "Yirigwe" (Afrialol, 2023). Due to the land fertility in Plateau state especially around Miango area, and teste fly free environment, Fulani herdsmen have been long grazing in the mountainous area of Jos. So, the Irigwe people and Fulani have been living in peace for a long time before the emergence of violent conflicts that destroyed the relationship. This paper aims at looking at the roles that "women of faith" that comprises Christians, that is Women Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWICAN) and the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAW) played in restoring peace in the community. The goal of this paper is not to look at who offended who, or to start the blame and counter blame game rather, to review the positive role that women played and can continue to play in peacebuilding against the traditional misconception that only men can be on the roundtable for peace negotiation in conflict situations.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Plateau state is known to be a Peaceful State and home of Tourism. In recent time, the slogan "Home of peace and tourism" has become a home of threat and killings. Since 2001, Many people were

killed in Jos. The city was forcefully divided between Christian majority in the South and Muslim majority in the North.

Innocent travelers across the city of Jos often get killed on their way passing through the state during the crisis. Students of university of Jos and their lecturers also suffer during the crisis as they fall victim of the violence. Miango area that used to be an attraction and rest house to international communities and visitors has become a bloody city. Hundreds of people were killed in the area, thousands of houses and places of worship burned down. Thousands of widows and orphans were left homeless and shattered (Nanlog, 2021)

There had been several attempts by the State Government and Non-Governmental Agencies to bring reconciliation, yet the violence continued. As a result of the reoccurring violent conflict in the state, people are unable to go to farm and market. Thus, the situation has affected their livelihood, education and life in general as children can no longer go to school. In the midst of all these, the interfaith women in the community refused to give up hope, instead, they committed to peacebuilding by intervening in the situation and is the reason why this research wants to learn more about the strategies that they used in mediating in peace process especially as those that engaged in the community wars and killings as well as the victims of such wars are either their; husbands, brothers, sons, nephews, children or their fathers.

### **Review of the Role of Women in Conflict Management and Peace Building in Africa**

Globally, women have been major victims and survivors of violence. Many of them are used as sex slaves, domestic slaves, suicide bombers and many other in-human treatments. Mamza, (2020) describe the subjugation of women and their children in the hands of Boko Haram insurgency in Borno state as terrible. He called for men and women to come for the rescue of such women who were used, dumped and rejected by the society. According to Agbajobi (2010) “conflicts forced women to organize themselves to safeguard their homes, basic amenities and to carry out activities related to education, healthcare and protection of lives and property. To ensure lasting peace, they asked government to protect women and also involve them in peace negotiations at all levels”.

Meanwhile, records have shown that women have participated a lot in peace building in the horn of Africa in countries like Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi. They have contributed as advocates for peace, relief workers and mediators. Women’s efforts to counter gender-based violence have met with some challenges based on many reasons which include; the prevalence of rape and sexual assault as in the case of Rwanda, Bosnia and Kashmir. This form of violence creates fear and silences women in their effort to campaign for social, economic and political change. In Africa, cultural pressure and inadequate capacity also contributes to women’s low participation in peacebuilding efforts. Lack of education becomes a hindrance to many influential but uneducated women who cannot communicate or participate actively in peacebuilding process. These barriers notwithstanding, women have undoubtedly contributed significantly as important stakeholders in building positive in Nigeria and Africa at large.

### **Materials and Method**

The methodology used in this research comprises of the design, population, sampling, instrument action of the research and reliability.

#### ***Design of the Research***

The design of this research is qualitative research design. The researcher chose this design because of the sensitive nature of the work which requires first-hand information from both Christian and Muslim women leaders and to report them without any bias. These faith based women leaders are must be involved in the peace projects of Irigwe and Fulani communities. They must also be members of Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace Fellowship between set 2018-2023 have received technical and financial support from COFP to continue peace process in their community.

#### ***Population of the Research***

Population in this study refers to the total number of Irigwe and Fulani in Bassa L.G.A of Plateau state which Afri 101 (2023) estimated to be almost seven hundred thousand (700,000) people. Due to security challenges and large population, women leaders will be selected for study from Christian and Muslim sides to represent the population. Therefore, 3200 Christian and Muslim women were used for the study.

#### ***Instrument of the Research***

The instrument used for gathering data for this research will be oral interview and reports evaluation. Ten (10) non-structured questions were designed to gather the information for the research.

Each respondent (woman religious leader) will respond as the finding concerning the roles of women of faith on conflict mediators between Irigwe tribe in Plateau State and Fulani herdsmen.

### ***Reliability of the Study***

The instruments of the research are validated by the expert in religion and Philosophy and religion education of the university of Jos.

### **Result and Discussions**

This section deals with the reports of peacebuilding findings offered by women from the Irigwe and Fulani tribes in Miango area.

The readers need to know that Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace is an organization that is determined to build peace and cordial relationship between people of different faith communities across Africa. Since 2018 to date, the Foundation has trained men and women of faith from different works of life that includes; Imams, Pastors, Teachers, University Professors, Military personnel, Diplomats, Media personnel, among others. These men and women have impacted a lot in their communities through practical engagement peace dialogue and other community development initiatives. The Foundation in collaboration with her Fellows; Mary Asibi, the President of Nigerian Roman Catholic Fellowship and Yohanna Shaibu Mamza rescued more than two hundred (200) students trapped in their hostels during violent clashes conflict in Jos, Plateau State in August 2021. One of the causes of the conflict was the killing of Fulani travelers along Miango road. It happened on the day the Irigwe people were burying their relatives massacred by the said "unknown gun or machet men".

In a reprisal attack as a result of the above, the students of the University of Jos were killed along Bauchi Road and many of them were trapped in their hostels without food for several days. Through the financial support from COFP Foundation and some of her female Fellows residing in Jos, the stranded students were transported back to their various home towns with the aid of security assistance. Some of the students were transported to Borno, Adamawa, Taraba, Gombe, Niger, Abuja, and Kaduna states. These are some of the roles that women from both Christian and Muslim faiths played in the time of crisis in Plateau state in 2021.

Ambassador Muhiba Abdulrazak and Ambassador Rhoda Jahota who graduated from the COFP Fellowship program were the leaders of the FOMWAN and WOWICAN in the state then and intervened heavily during the crises between Irigwe and Fulani in Bassa Local Government. In an interview concerning their roles in conflict mediation, they stated that the aim of their mediation activity between the Fulani and Irigwe ethnic groups was to broker reconciliation and peace but when they discovered that they cannot handle the problem alone, they decided to involve the leaders of faith based women in the crisis area which include: Roman Catholic, ECWA, Anglican and Baptist which has about 170 representatives. They also got leaders of Muslim women representatives of Women in Da'awa, NAFSAT and Fulani communities with about 150 members involved in the peace process.

The Co-chairs of the women the WOWICAN AND FOMWAN set rules and agreed not to be bias or selfish in handling the issue. Their approach became a good example for other women even though they disagree on tough issues sometimes. They had meetings up to five times on several occasions and conducted trauma sessions for the affected women. They are collaborated with the Bassa Local Government Head of Women programme to achieve their aim. Local Government Secretariat was their venue for meeting for the purpose of neutrality and transparency. During dialogue sessions, they discovered that a lot of women were very bitter especially the Irigwe women who has lost their husbands and children, the Fulani women too reacted but the guiding rules helped in handling the matter. After series of meetings, the organizers realized that the bitterness is beginning to reduce gradually and that women from both sides can chat, talk, play and show concern to one another. The Co-chairs also revealed that Fulani women expressed sadness because they intermarried with Irigwe people and cannot understand why in-laws would want to kill themselves. They explained that the ugly situation has not only destroy the good relationship that took them years to build but has affected the entire community negatively. The women from both sides made a decision to talk to their husbands who were active players in the killing.

The Co-chairs further revealed their challenge of inadequate finance for they above project since the little money they have for the project came from their personal contribution especially, as women from other communities who participated in the program came from far and without any means of supporting their transportation, it may be difficult for them to continue since they need money to pay for transportation. Importantly, these women need government backup on securing their lives as they organize meetings and visitations constantly in their volatile area. It was also realized that women will bounce back economically which would help in restoring peace in the area if they are trained in skill acquisition programme and

empowered to set up their own business since many of them lost their means of survival and family members who use to support their family during crises period.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Having reviewed the problem associated with violent conflicts in Miango between Fulani herdsmen and Irigwe communities and in other warring communities, it was revealed that despite lack of resources, fear and other challenges, the interfaith women groups through WOWICAN and FOMWAN was determined to help in restoring peace in their communities. These women offered their lives, resource and time in advancing peace and development in Plateau state in general.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations is outlined:

1. The government at the Local, State and Federal levels should take the matter of peace and security of life and properties seriously without playing politics.
2. Both government and non-governmental organizations should consider having a long-term peace project that will support communities in achieving lasting peace.
3. The Irigwe and Fulani men should consider following the good example already set by their women for peace since no reasonable development can be sustained in the midst of violence.

### **References**

- Abdulazak, M. (interview, 10/3/2023) Jos: Amira FOMWAM plateau state, Nigeria.
- Africa101, Atribe (2020). Irigwe people of Plateau State. [www.101-as.com/tribes](http://www.101-as.com/tribes).
- Agbajobi, C. (2020): Women participating in peacebuilding Africa. *Africa Journal of Peace* 4(3)5-8.
- Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (2018) Annual Report (8).
- Galleria Nigeria (2023). Bried History of Plateau State. [www.Nigeriagalleria.com](http://www.Nigeriagalleria.com)/Nigeria Jahota, R. (interview, 10/3/2023) Chair Person, WOWICAN, Plateau State Chapter, Nigeria
- Mamza, Y. (2020). Application of Practical Religion Education in Northern Nigeria: Panace for Civic Engagement and Peace Building. *Africa Journal of Social Science and Humanities research*. [www.abjournals.org](http://www.abjournals.org)5(4)8.
- Mamza, Y. (2020). Challenge of Neglected Women and Children Victims of Boko Haram and its threat to Nation Building and Security. *International Journal of Applied Research and Technology*, 28(10):32-40 <http://www.expublishers.com>
- Mohamed, M. (2020). National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI) Vom. Plateau State.