A Comparative Analysis of the Landscape of Conflict in North and West Africa

By
Nyewusira, Chituru PhD
Department Of History and Diplomatic Studies
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
P.M.B 5041 Rumuolumeni,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
Email: nyewusira@gmail.com
Phone: 08033013318
&
Eleazar, C.M
Department Of History and Diplomatic Studies
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
P.M.B 5041 Rumuolumeni,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
Email: eleazarcharisma@gmail.com

Abstract

Over the years, conflicts in North and West Africa have taken different forms and dimensions, and have impacted greatly, the fabric of society, devastating civilian infrastructure and exacerbating humanitarian issues. In West Africa, the surge of violent conflicts has led to wanton killings and the destruction of properties, and this has posed a serious threat to nation-building and the concept of sovereignty in many African States. Using the secondary and multidisciplinary sources, this study examined the landscape of conflict in North and West Africa. The study adopted the use of the conflict and the frustration-aggression theories in the analysis of the subject under discourse. This was done to provide a proper understanding of the drivers of conflict behaviours in both North and West Africa. The study, however, revealed that Africa has been awash by various forms of conflicts that date back to periods in antiquity. The study showed that in the aftermath of the 9/11 attack, terrorism and other acts of civil unrest dominated the landscape of both North and West Africa. The spread of terrorist groups and the devastation that follows each of their operations

are such that upset national governments. The study listed ethnic group conflicts, border conflicts, religious conflicts, and resource conflicts as constituting the forms of conflicts in West and North Africa. It revealed that poverty, marginalization, arms proliferation, and colonial legacies, etc. as the major causes of conflict in both North and West Africa. The study further showed that the types of conflicts in both North and West Africa differ and are influenced by a myriad of factors. The research provided the number of violent conflicts that have occurred in both North and West Africa, as well as the number of fatalities, and thus, concluded that conflicts in North and West Africa are multifaceted in nature.

Keywords: Africa, North, West, Proliferation, Conflict, Landscape

Introduction

After the 9/11 attack in the early 2000s, a mix of rebel groups (like Al Shabab, Boko Haram, AQIM), self-defense militias, and organizations linked to Al-Qaeda or the Islamic State (ISIS) eroded the legitimacy and stability of regimes in North and West Africa. In recent decades, the regions have witnessed an unparalleled degree of conflict, characterized by numerous instances of violence and a significant number of casualties resulting from armed conflicts. This observed phenomenon can be ascribed to a notable surge in political violence, with a particular focus on civilian populations and border areas. Thus, it is uncertain to what degree violent organizations have intensified and concentrated their acts of violence in particular regions, spreading insecurity to a growing number of regions, or relocating as a result of government pressure. Therefore, cognizant of the increasing prevalence of conflict in North and West Africa, this research attempt to investigate the conflict landscape in these regions and the potential factors contributing to these conflicts. The study examined the origin and evolution of conflict in Africa, and undertook a comparative analysis of conflicts in both North and West Africa.

Literature Review

Conflict

According to Suppiah and Rose (2006), a universally agreed-upon definition of conflict is unattainable, as its nature is contingent upon the specific academic discipline and the perspective from which is it examined. However, they argued that conflict is a natural byproduct of human contact and hence, unavoidable.

Similarly Ejiogu (1990) argued that conflict, which is derived from the Latin word "conflictus," is unavoidable in both human interactions and organisational behaviour.

For Simmel (1955) cited in Silverman (2006), conflict can be understood as the efforts to achieve irreconcilable goals, resulting in one party gaining advantages at the detriment of the other. Conflict as he stressed, is the result of rivalry, thus, it assumes a significant level of interdependence, where the involved parties are obligated to establish their connections based on certain interests, values, goals, and expectations.

Similarly, Kesterner and Ray (2002), described conflict as a situation in which multiple parties vie for goals that are within the reach of a single party, or when incompatible strategies are employed to attain a specific objective. This implies that conflict entails conflicts for important rights, such as claims to authority and limited resources, with the goals of those engaged being to eliminate competitors along the way and achieve their desired outcomes.

Terrorism

The concept of terrorism like many other concepts, defiles a universally acceptable definition. Laqueur (1979) contended that there is currently no one definition of terrorism, and it is unlikely that one will be discovered in the near future. However, he characterized terrorism as the utilization or possibility of force by an individual or a group, even if they are acting against established authority, with the intention of inducing intense anxiety or fear in a larger target group beyond the immediate victims. The purpose is to compel that group to comply with the political or religious demands of the perpetrators. The crucial elements here are violent behaviours designed to instill fear in order to advance an interest.

Terrorism, as defined by Goitom (2011), can also be characterized as an act to coerce a government or an international organization, to execute a specific goals or cease from performing a specific series of actions that may be detrimental to the government, individuals, or group. Terrorism, for Stepanova (2008), is seen as the most asymmetrical violent conflict involving a superior adversary, be it a nation-state or a coalition of nations-states.

Barga (2012) defined terrorism as a approach employed by individuals, groups, or governments with some level of caution, involving repeated acts of violence to achieve arbitrary, illegal, or political goals. It fundamentally revolves on power, the acquisition of power, and the utilization of power to achieve political transformation regardless of the consequences. Terrorism refers to the utilization of actual or potential violence as a means to further a political objective. According to Friedlander (1979), terrorism refers to the intentional creation and utilization of fear by acts of violence or the possibility of violence, with the aim of achieving political transformation.

North Africa

According GEMET (2021), the term "North Africa" refers to a geographical area on the African continent that lies to the north of the tropical rain forest and to the south of Europe and the Mediterranean Sea. It encompasses countries like Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt to the west of the Suez Canal, as well as the Atlas Mo-untains and the Sahara Desert.

West Africa

West Africa is defined by the United Nations in Wikipedia (2024) as the westernmost part of the African continent. This geographical area encompasses a total of 16 nations, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Additionally, it includes Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha, which are territories under the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom. As of 2021, the estimated population of West Africa stands at 419 million individuals.

Theoretical Framework

To provide a better explanation for why specific events occur and the environment in which they occur, researchers frequently use theories, models, and concepts. As a result, Silverman (2006) defined theory as a collection of concepts used to characterize and/or explain a phenomenon, setting it apart from other research terminology like model, idea, and procedure. For this study, however, the researcher will adopt the use of the **conflict and frustration-aggression** theories, to aid the proper understanding of the study under discourse.

Conflict Theory

The conflict theory is a sociological approach propounded by Karl Marx and his collaborator Friedrich Engel. In "*Das Kapital*" and their jointly published work "*The Communist Manifesto,*" Marx and Engel explained how the division of society into classes, causes conflict. They postulated that, throughout human society, there exists an ongoing state of conflict between distinct social classes, predominantly between the bourgeoisie, who possess the means of production, and the proletariat, who constitute the working class. This battle is widely regarded as the primary catalyst for societal transformation and the advancement of civilization. In relation to North and West Africa, class division in both regions has resulted in the marginalization and exploitation of the masses, which has aggravated accumulated grievances, thus, leading to series of premeditated conflicts.

Frustration-Aggression Theory

The frustration-aggression theory was first put forth by Dollard et al. in (1939) and holds that frustration is a major factor in conflict. According to this notion, when humans are hindered from attaining a desired objective or satisfying a requirement, they encounter frustration. The experience of frustration thereafter heightens the probability of engaging in aggressive behaviour as a means of managing or mitigating the frustration. Frustration, thus, arises when an individual's endeavours to attain a specific objective are impeded or hindered by external factors or impediments, which is the predominant feeling in both North and West Africa. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that this frustration can be social, economic, and/or environmental, etc.

Empirical Review

Alexander (2012), in his *"Terrorism in North, West and Central Africa: From 9/11 to the Arab Spring*," stressed that the death of Mummar Ghaddafi during the Arab Spring of 2010s and the subsequent collapse of Libya, coupled with the proliferation of arms and ammunition to civilian populace, increased in no small measure, extremist attacks in all parts of Africa. For instance, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and two others namely; Movement for the Oneness of Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Ansar Al Dine respectively, became more pronounced just after the Libyans conflicts. AQIM on the one hand, has its roots in Algeria and Mali for over a decade and specializes in the kidnap of expatriates

for ransom. MUJAO interestingly, broke out from AQIM and is notorious for employing the same type of approach. Several bombings and dastardly attacks have been carried out in Mali, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Morroco, Somalia, Chad, Niger, Egypt, etc. For instance, in 2015, radical Islamist groups carried out an attack and took hostage of 170 persons in the Malian capital (Bamako), forcing the government to declare a state of emergency. In 2013, the Malian holy city of Timbuktu was bombed by radical Islamist militants which left scores dead. This work gives an insight on the topic of terrorism, and how it affects the African continent.

Lohmann (2011), in her "*Who Owns the Sahara? Old Conflict, New Menace: Mali, and the Central Sahara between the Tuareg, Al Qaida, and Organised Crime"* discussed the reasons for conflicts in Mali. She argued that Mali is seen as a safe haven for terrorist groups like AQIM and others, because of the obvious deficiencies in its military's strength. Thus, she stressed that conflicts excel in states that are politically and militarily weak. Therefore, though, Mali is a multi-religious state, AQIM capitalizing on the societal deficiencies, particularly on the northern front, has been able to operate, as such, unleashing mayhem on the Malian state.

Albert, Danjibo, and Albert (2020), in "*Back to the Past: Evolution of Kidnapping and Hostage Taking in the Niger Delta",* looked at an aspect of the conflict that concerns kidnapping and hostage-taking in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In this work, he discusses kidnapping and provides a linkage between poor governance and conflict behavior. They contended that Niger Delta youths resorted to violence in the 1990s as a means to draw the government's attention to the hardships faced by the people in the region. They stressed that, with the devastation of the delta's ecosystem due to oil spillage, coupled with the negligence and non-inclusiveness of Niger Deltans in the scheme of things, they resorted to attacking and bombarding pipelines, shutting down flow stations, involved in oil bunkering and theft, as well as kidnapping expatriate workers for ransom, while the unlucky ones are killed. The analysis of this work provides insight into the understanding to this topic particularly as it relates to why individuals exhibit violent behaviours.

In "*The Geography of Conflict in North and West Africa,*" the OECD (2020) noted that political violence in the region has increased significantly since the early 2010s.

Instigated by domestic grievances, national strife, and international ideologies, regional conflicts have reached unprecedented levels of violence and scope. They argued that over 100,000 people have been slain in clashes between government forces and their adversaries, including local militias, rebel organizations, and violent extremist organizations, over the past decade. Moreover, numerous instances of these conflicts have transcended national boundaries, engendering unrest and apprehension in numerous states concurrently.

The foremost expert on civil wars and terrorism, Fortna (2015), contended in her work *"Do Terrorists Win? Rebels Use of Terrorism and Civil War Outcomes"* that, utilizing terrorism to further a group's political objectives is often more harmful than beneficial in civil wars. She listed five main outcomes of civil wars: government triumph, minimal rebel group activity, continued conflict for a certain amount of time, a peace deal, and rebel victory. She then looked at how a group's tactical decisions affected the course of the war and provided empirical evidence showing that more than half of rebel groups who did not use terrorist tactics eventually obtained concessions at the negotiating table. She argued that while none of the terrorist-using rebel organizations have succeeded, only around 15% of those factions have signed a peace deal.

Origin and Evolution of Conflict in Africa

Africa has been plagued by conflict since antiquity. Scholars have seldom argued that the continent is awash in conflict owing to the extensive record of violent confrontations that have transpired throughout history. From precolonial rivalries between and within empires to colonial struggles for liberation, as well as post-colonial struggles for identity, inclusion, and good governance, Africa continues to be faced with devastating conflicts. For most scholars, the prevailing pattern in Africa is one of warfare and conflict. Since the 1960s, there has been a succession of civil conflicts that have occurred in Africa, such as; the Somalian war, the Congo crisis, the Rwandan genocide, the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War, the Liberian Civil War, the Bakassi crisis, and the Sierra Leonean war, etc. These conflicts, thus, have impacted the African continent a great deal.

It is worth noting that in pre-colonial and post-colonial Africa, conflicts were basically a state versus state affair, thus, most conflicts fought during those periods

were limited to inter-state conflicts. However, in recent times, intra-state conflicts seem to have dominated the conflict terrain in Africa. The rise of religious extremists, coupled with that of disgruntled/marginalized groups has led to unprecedented levels of conflicts in many African states. This has created a developmental vacuum as state infrastructures are devastated with impunity, while criminal elements continue to have a filled day.

Forms and Patterns of Conflict in North and West Africa

The multifaceted nature of conflict in North and West Africa is frequently precipitated by an interplay of ethnic, political, economic, and social elements. In West Africa, instances of intra-state conflicts, military coups, border disputes, chieftaincy disputes, resource disputes, and so forth are frequent. Nevertheless, North Africa is beset by an assortment of conflicts, including those of a religious nature, involving interstate borders, and over resources, among others. The following are frequent patterns and manifestations of conflict identified in these areas:

- **Ethnic Group Conflicts:** The ethnic and tribal diversity of numerous countries in West and North Africa contributes to tensions and conflicts among various ethnic groups. These conflicts are frequently imbued with historical grievances, competition for resources, and political power. In nations such as Nigeria, Sudan, Liberia, Ivory Coast, and Mali, for instance, ethnic conflicts have resulted in population displacement and violence. This, in turn, has created severe problems for these states and impacted greatly, nation-building efforts.

- **Religious-Driven Conflicts:** Religious tensions, particularly those that exist between communities of Muslims and Christians, have been a source of conflict in nations such as Nigeria, Mali, Morocco, and Libya. These divisions have been exploited by extremist groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Islamic Tuareg, and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the Sahel area in order to further their respective agendas. Because of the presence of these extremist groups and the atrocious crimes they engage in, social and cordial cohesion has been ripped away, which has led to an increase in tensions and prejudices among the people who live in these regions. Basedau (2017), as cited in Basedau and Schaefer-Kehnert (2019), asserted that the

amount of religious conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa has been on the rise, particularly when we consider the proportion of all conflicts that have occurred in the most recent years. According to their argument, the predominant cause of this growth may be traced back to doctrinal conflicts, but the proportion of conflicts across different religions has remained relatively consistent.

- **Border Conflicts:** Periodically, historical border disputes and tensions between states that border each other might turn into armed confrontations. Due to the actual challenges of regulating migration in the regions, borderlands in North and West Africa have historically been areas where state authority is only ephemeral, at most (Radil, Irmischer, and Walther in OECD, 2021). In the last two decades, violent extremist organizations and rebel groups have used this susceptibility to perpetrate a growing number of atrocities that are meticulously planned and conducted from a neighbouring country. The border disputes between Morocco and the Western Sahara and between Sudan and South Sudan are two typical examples of such conflicts.

- **Resource Conflict:** Rural areas often have conflicts as a result of the fight for scarce resources, such as land, water, and minerals. The Sahel region frequently witnesses occurrences of disputes between pastoralists and farmers, wherein a rivalry arises between nomadic herders and sedentary farmers over the governance of land and water supplies amidst mounting environmental difficulties. In West Africa, particularly in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the fight for the control of scarce mineral resources have led to the surge of multiple armed groups (like the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), and the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), amongst others.), thus, causing both humanitarian and environmental issues.

- **Political Conflicts:** Coups d'état and political instability have been prevalent in several nations throughout North and West Africa. Corruption, power conflicts among political elites, and inadequate governance structures frequently contribute to instability and conflict in these regions. Political conflicts in these regions, have a multifaceted process, a complex history, and consequences that are both numerous and multidimensional, all of which occur within a complex environment (Kimemia, 2021). They are too complex to be adequately described

or defined using a single variable, which would oversimplify an enormous problem and consequently make it difficult to devise a viable, long-term resolution. Major conflicts that have erupted in North and West Africa, have the capacity to disrupt stability, cause infrastructure damage, undermine production industries, and impact the distribution of products and services, among other. The turmoil that ensued in Libya after the regime of Muammar Gaddafi collapsed serves as a notable illustration. Other prominent examples are those of Mali, Niger, Guinea, and Gabon etc.

- **Terrorism and Insurgency:** Both the North and West Africa regions have been devastated by the emergence of transnational terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). These organizations employ insurgency strategies, conduct attacks, and capitalize on local grievances in order to recruit adherents and increase their sphere of influence.

- **Proxy Wars:** Frequently, external actors engage in interventions within the territories of North and West African nations, employing both direct and indirect means, which either intensify preexisting conflicts or instigate novel ones. These interventions may manifest as military assistance, clandestine activities, or diplomatic interference.

Causes of Conflict in North and West Africa

Conflicts in North and West Africa result from several interconnected sources. These include, but not limited to the following:

First, historical cum colonial legacies are such that contribute to the rise of conflicts in Africa. According to Michael (2019), a significant number of the borders in West and North Africa were delineated capriciously by colonial powers, disregarding the indigenous populations' ethnic, cultural, or tribal divisions. As a consequence, a multitude of border disputes and conflicts have arisen concerning resources and territory, causing divisions among communities across international borders. To maintain control, colonial powers frequently utilized divide-and-rule strategies which pitted distinct ethnic, religious, or tribal groups against one another. The deliberate manipulation of societal divisions resulted in the establishment of

enduring animosities and rivalries. Thus, as a result of the disruption of established social structures and cultural norms caused by colonialism, identities became fragmented, and collective solidarity was weakened. Disagreements regarding competing interpretations of history, religion, and national identity, in addition to struggles for representation and recognition are manifestations of this fragmentation.

Secondly, poverty and economic deprivation as Goodhand (2021) observed, is also another major source of conflicts in Africa. According to him, high rates of poverty, unemployment, and economic inequality all contribute to social instability and violence. He emphasized that youth restiveness and unemployment, in particular, can foment discontent and create fertile ground for extremist recruitment. Poverty and marginalization, thus, frequently result in economic exclusion, in which certain people are denied access to critical resources, services, and opportunities. This difference can lead to anger and grievances among minority communities, who believe they are unfairly disadvantaged in comparison to others. He argued that economic marginalization exacerbates social inequality, instilling a sense of injustice and discontent among vulnerable populations. When socioeconomic gaps are combined with ethnic, religious, or regional distinctions, they exacerbate existing fault lines and contribute to intergroup tensions and conflict.

Thirdly, arms proliferation contributes to the rising tide of conflict world over. In Vines (2005), it is argued that the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) over the decades has impacted African states greatly. This has resulted in the devastation of civilian infrastructure and the surge in humanitarian (refugee) crisis. Arms proliferation and external intervention by neighbouring states and international actors, thus, have the potential to escalate conflicts and extend periods of instability. According to Oghuvbu (2020), geopolitical rivalries and proxy conflicts in both North and West Africa, serve to intensify preexisting tensions. Since arms availability facilitates the acquisition of weaponry by insurgent groups, rebel militias, and criminal organizations, there is the likelihood of encouraging the escalation of violence and the contestation of state authority. These groups frequently expand their operations and traffic weapons by exploiting porous borders and feeble governance structures. Arms proliferation, according to Nwobueze, and Okolie-Osemene (2018), can undermine

peacebuilding efforts by providing spoilers with the ability to influence those who oppose negotiated settlements. The perpetuation of conflict by armed factions for the purpose of retaining political power or resource control may pose significant challenges to the attainment of sustainable peace agreements. The pervasive accessibility of weaponry exacerbates humanitarian crises, contributes to population displacement, and undermines endeavours to deliver aid to communities impacted by such crises. Armed conflict causes civilian casualties, disrupts means of subsistence, and impedes access to vital services.

More so, weak governance is another propeller of conflicts in North and Western Africa. The presence of authoritarian rule, corruption, and weak governance in certain African states, particularly those of North and West Africa, engenders discontentment among marginalized communities, thus, creating social tensions and conflicts. Social tensions and conflict, therefore, exacerbate insufficient provision of public services and the absence of inclusive political systems. According to Joly (2021), exclusionary political systems, characterized by the concentration of power among a select few elites or within a dominant ethnic or religious group, frequently arise from governance deficiencies. Politically disenfranchised/marginalized groups potentially resort to violence as a means to contest the prevailing order and advocate for enhanced representation. Corruption, which is prevalent in environments characterized by weak governance, therefore, results in the mismanagement and inequitable allocation of resources, including land, wealth, and public services. This phenomenon engenders animosity within marginalized communities (of both North and Western Africa), as they perceive themselves to be unjustly disadvantaged, which may escalate into disputes concerning resource accessibility. Also, lack of adherence to the rule of law and ineffective institutions are characteristics of weak governance.

Lastly, the prevalence of human rights abuses and violations in West and North Africa serves as a catalyst for the resurgence and occurrence of violent conflicts and civil unrest in the two regions. Instances of sexual and gender-based violence, retaliatory murders, physical assaults, state institutions and officials enjoying impunity, pervasive social injustice, authoritarian and brutal governance, and inequitable allocation of state resources are among the concerns documented in

the sub-region (HRW, 2003). Each of these factors functions as both instigators and repercussions of armed conflict.

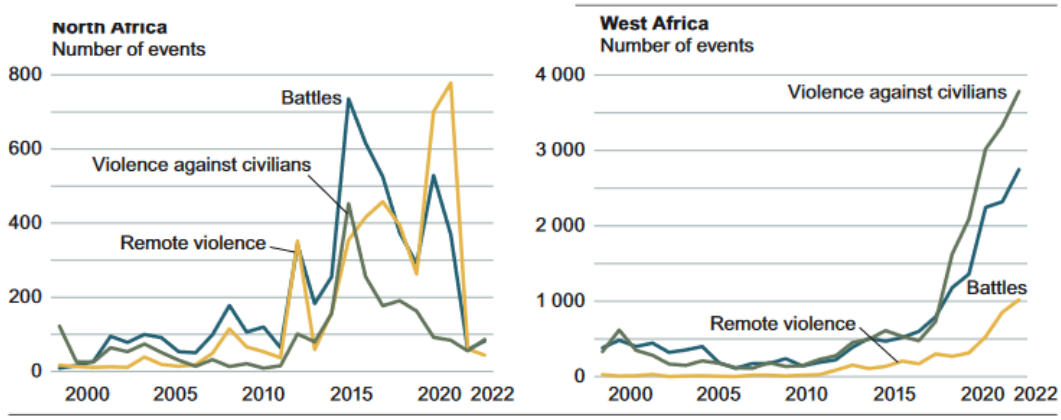
Comparative Analysis of Conflict in North and West Africa

In the past few decades, North and West Africa have had numerous instances of conflicts, with the most notable being the Arab Spring of 2010, which affected North Africa and a significant portion of the Arab world. The Arab Spring, which initiated a series of movements against autocratic governments and high inflation rates, had a significant impact not just on North Africa but also on the entire continent. Therefore, when undertaking a comparative analysis of the conflicts in these two regions, it is imperative to analyze the different elements that trigger conflicts, as well as their underlying causes, actors involved, dynamics, and the consequences.

According to Obi (2012), historical grievances, ethnic tensions, political instability, and competition for resources frequently give rise to conflicts in North Africa. For instance, the Western Sahara conflict, which pertains to the issues of regional control and self-determination, and contested between Morocco and the Polisario Front is a case in point. Conversely, in West Africa, ethnic, religious, and political factors frequently contribute to the emergence of conflicts, which are further aggravated by poverty, inadequate governance, and resource competition. An example of this is the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria and the activities of the Niger Delta militants, which originate from religious extremism and socio-economic grievances.

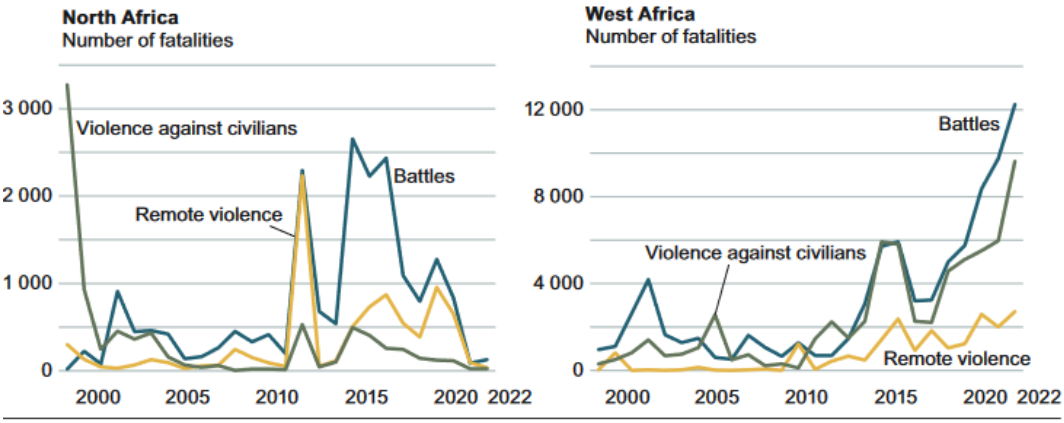
According to the OECD (2023), conflicts in North Africa, particularly since the formation of the 2021 Government of National Unity in Libya, have reduced drastically. They stressed that the number of conflicts as well as fatality figures in West Africa have reached unprecedented levels, thus, needing the not only the national government involved, but international collaborations to stem the tide. According to their findings, in the last two or more decades, West Africa have witnessed a whopping 42,000 violent conflicts with 168,000 fatalities, as compared to North Africa's 12,400 violent incidents and 37,000 fatalities. The figure below, showed a marked increase of violent conflicts between North and West Africa.

Fig. 1: Number of Violent Conflicts in North and West Africa Between 2000-2022



Source: ACLED in OECD (2023) Date: 14/04/2024

Fig. 2: Fatalities Figure in North and West Africa Between 2000-2022



Source: ACLED in OECD (2023) Date: 14/04/2024

Moreover, the primary actors involved in conflicts in North Africa generally consist of sovereign governments, rebel factions, and external actors. In Libya for instance, multiple factions, such as the Government of National Accord (GNA), the Libyan National Army (LNA), and other militias, engage in a struggle for power and authority, whereas, conflict in West Africa includes several entities,

such as governmental bodies, insurgent groups, terrorist syndicates, and criminal networks. The security environment is complicated by the existence of groups such as Boko Haram, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), and different separatist movements.

Also, conflicts in North Africa frequently give rise to intricate geopolitical dynamics, wherein various factions are supported by regional and international powers. However, the dynamics of conflicts in West Africa are significantly impacted by transnational concerns, including but not limited to terrorism, organized crime, and illicit trafficking. Inadequate state institutions and permeable borders are factors that facilitate the transnational spread of conflicts. More so, the spatial dispersion of violence in North and West Africa exhibits disparities, which can be attributed to distinct patterns of violence stemming from a combination of rebellions, jihadist insurgencies, coups d'état, protest movements, and military operations.

Conclusion

In summary, the conflicts observed in North and West Africa exhibit a complex nature, stemming from a confluence of political, ethnic, economic, and ideological elements, as such, the resolution of these conflicts necessitates the implementation of comprehensive solutions that effectively tackle underlying causes, foster inclusive government, and emphasize endeavors towards peacebuilding and development. The establishment of regional cooperation, with the backing of international stakeholders, thus, would play a pivotal role in promoting stability and effectively tackling the root causes of conflict within these regions.

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