Enhancing Socio-Political, Peace and Security Capacity to Reduce Conflict in East African Region

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Abstract

The East African Community member States with exception of Tanzania have witnessed conflicts, which spill over the cross-borders. The partner states of East African Community such as Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi have suffered from conflicts for many years, which needs a regional approach to address it. The aim of this study is to examine the economic achievements of East African Community and its spill-over effect to reduce conflict. The study used document study analysis, group discussion and interview to collect data besides extensive literature review on the subject. The findings of the research reveal that EAC has made a number of achievements which have had direct or indirect significant contribution in reducing conflict in East Africa. These among others include establishment of social-political institutions such as East African Court of Justice, Inter-University Council for East Africa, East African Parliament to reduce tension among the citizens in the region; which provides details policies to harmonize social policies.

Keys Terms: Social-political Institutions, Peace and Security, Regional Cooperation

Introduction

The objective of this study is to explore East African Community (EAC) socio-political, peace and security strategies aimed at enhancing capacity to reduce conflict in the region. EAC is one of the fastest growing regional organisations on the African continent, where the partner states are reaping similar benefits through single socio-political and security cooperation. This is among the top agenda of the East African Community (EAC) cooperation. Leaders of the EAC member states are provoked by both internal and cross-border conflicts as a common problem among them as a result of their inadequate capacity to singly deal with them. For instance Hutu-Tusi conflict in Rwanda and Burundi

have had enormous consequences on humanity in the region. They therefore, agreed to promote collective management of peace and security to answer the issues fuelling conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi and generally the entire region.

The regional effort to ease tension between Hutu and Tutsi and restore peace for instance in Burundi as early as 1996 when Nyerere, the former President of Tanzania convened talks between Tutsi UPRONA and Hutu FRODEBU. In this effort Tanzania and Uganda felt it was their duty to persuade conflicting parties in Burundi to accept regional neutral peacekeeping force to help bring down the hostility. But this humanly proposal was turned down by the Burundi army. The unwelcoming expression by the army attracted regional isolation of Burundi and this pre-empted Burundi to withdraw from the peace process that had been initiated; and the Tutsi felt that Nyerere who was leading talks was determined to favour the Hutu cause (Boshoff et al., 2010). The EAC partner states of East Africa, particularly Tanzania, helped Rwanda to make tangible progress in making the victims of genocide access justice through, the Court that was housed in Tanzania and this supplemented on the local *gacaca* court set up to help the community to try people for their involvement in the conflict In addition, it was reported by respondents that all member states of EAC had succeeded in ensuring that good neighbourliness is promoted adopted. Tanzania played a central role in influencing the negotiation between the government of Rwanda and the rebel group (RPF) (Mpangala, 2004). Similarly, in Burundi former president of Tanzania late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere was a central figure in the negotiations to ease tension between the Hutu and Tutsi (Hyera, 2003).

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This expansion of the East African Community is one way to open up opportunities for wider enhancement of regional security governance Chikwanha (2007). A study by Khan et. Al. (2009), found that regional cooperation between/among states had a potential as a tool for reducing regional and state conflict. His finding suggests a link between trade, conflict and peace in different and varying contexts. Within the context of this literature, this study utilises functionalist and neo-functionalist framework to examine the objective of the study. According to scholars such as Keneth Waltz cited by Baylis (2008) points out that states have institutions that are similar and perform the same function to address common problems they face. This clearly fits in EAC regional cooperation. David Mitrany (1966) argues that establishing peace and stability can be through international cooperation when states experience inability enforce peace and stability of their citizens.

Methodology

This study is qualitative and used a descriptive-analytical approach to examine the EAC socio-political and security strategies to enhance capacity to reduce conflict in the region. The study collected from both secondary and primary sources. The secondary sources included information from journals, periodicals and other published and unpublished materials relatedness to the study. The

primary sources will include document analysis of EAC reports, interview with EAC officials, ordinary citizens considered to have knowledge and information necessary for the study. Open ended questions were asked to respondents socio-political and security strategies being pursued to reduce conflict in the region.

Findings on Enhancing Socio-Political Capacity to Reduce Conflict in East African Region

The study found that the East African Community had succeeded in putting up regional socio-political institutions aimed at enhancing capacity to reduce conflict in the region. Respondents mentioned that the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Council of Ministers, and the East African Court of Justice were established giving them regional functional power to perform the function of legislation and oversight to ensure policies and programmes designed are implemented, judicial function, respectively. The East African Legislative Assembly has its headquarter in Arusha, Tanzania. Interviews with EALA MPs a number of interesting revelations were made. One respondent said *"the formation EALA as an organ of EAC has contributed significantly in reducing conflict such as Hutu-Tutsi conflict. The once marginalized group, the Batwa who had no opportunity to share anything in the government, now have been given a slot among EALA representatives from Burundi". This is because EAC promotes togetherness, accountability, democracy and good governance.* This assertion by this respondent corroborates several other respondents who said a lot has tremendously changed in regard to representation of the once marginalized groups. Interestingly, respondents reported that EALA sits in different partner states as scheduled to develop and discuss matters and bills into legislation to guide the integration processes. It was stressed by the respondents that the establishment of these institutions was an important step for the East African member states to actualise their effort to have a political federation and minimize conflict caused by marginalisation of minor groups. It is interesting to know that this is in conformity Article 50 of the EAC Treaty.

On the other hand, EAC established East African Court of Justice. This is a unique and important institution which addresses matters of conflict and justice in the region. Respondents reported that this court as a judicial body monitors adherence to in the EAC. One respondent said *"one of the leading cause of Hutu-Tutsi conflict either in Rwanda or Burundi is unequal treatment and lack of access to justice. We are happy EAC Treaty has vested EAC Court jurisdiction the power to arbitrate in commercial agreements.* This is clearly stated in Article 32 and 129 of the EAC treaty. In that regard, each of the five member states of EAC has ceded judicial power to the EAC Court of Justice. It was revealed by the respondents during interviews that the Court is mandated to address issues citizens raise as a body product of EAC integration process. They mentioned that it acts as an independent regional judicial body not as a state actor. Interesting to know is that EAC has no constitution but it bases the running of administration of its institutions on EAC Treaty as its legal

document to guide its activities. Thus, it is the role of EAC Court of Justice interprets the laws and policies EALA passes. In other words, it holds the privilege to interpret the regional laws enacted.

In addition to regional East African Community Court of Justice, the Councils of East African Ministers to ease the process of people accessing justice, they opened sub-registries for complaints in all member states of EAC. In that regard, a registry was established in Kampala, Kigali, Dar-es-salaam and Nairobi and Bujumbura. These registries are responsible for registering and forwarding complaints to Arusha if need arises. Otherwise cases are arbitrated by judges at the different establishments to make it accessible and affordable to citizens in the region who find it difficult to have their cases heard at East African Court of Justice based in Arusha, Tanzania.

Furthermore, EAC has established institutions such as women rights organisations, media and a host of others as observatory bodies which periodically assess if member states keep to common regional benchmarks set by EAC Treaty. These bodies are used as consultation organisations in matters related to conflict management initiatives and are involved in ensuring efficiency of good governance in the region. This conceptual approach is important in building democratic governance and boosts fewer struggles based on socio-economic and political injustices fuelled by poor and undemocratic governance.

The respondents also revealed that for purposes of common identity and to strengthen the political cooperation and integration, EAC adopted a common East African passport, flag and anthem. It was stressed by respondents that any person holding East African Passport needed not to go through immigration process of stamping. Interview with a custom official at Namanga Border stated that *our citizens enjoy free movement across borders and their businesses are enhanced through increased free movement of goods and services in the member states".* In addition to common passport it was also said that countries of EAC also adopted a common entry and departure form to ease bureaucratic tendencies and to help promote unity. Thus, there can now be free influx of workers within the region. This would provide easier means to address massive unemployment especially of youth who were easily lured into conflict because of lack jobs. Thus, provision of lower barriers among the partner states of EAC reduced on hostility as people are free to move without restrictions. In other words, the aspirations of partner states of East African Community is to break multiple barriers not only at their borders but also among societies such as the Hutu-Tutsi who hated to see eye to eye. In addition, it was mentioned that East African states i.e. Uganda and Tanzania provided millions of Hutu fleeing Rwanda and Burundi during the civil war.

EAC is striving to improve the quality life of the citizens in the region. The data gathered from document analysed on human development reveals that EAC member states are trying to address social issues such as human development to close unequal economic power which was one of the fertile ground that contributed to insecurity between the Hutu and Tutsi. As it is acknowledged in

the previous chapter, the Hutu experienced severe denial of human needs such as education let alone unequal distribution of resources and exclusion from the domain of political power. Such exclusion from government forced the two ethnic groups i.e. Hutu and Tutsi into conflict demanding for inclusion.

Data obtained from documents also suggest that Kiswahili is lingua franca, which enjoys goodwill from policy makers in the partner states of east African Community to facilitate easy understanding of programmes and implementation with common ground in the region. In this perspective, Mazrui emphasised that Kiswahili and English are widely understood by many people in the East African region (Mazrui, 1995). During the interviews respondents stressed that all member states of East African Community had adopted Kiswahili as a common language for communication in the region. It was reported by respondents that a common language was relevant to achieve the East African Community as people needed it not only as a medium of communication but also as a sign that would foster common identity and heritage.

Also, respondents interviewed revealed that EAC adopted Kiswahili as lingua-franca. They stated that this was having common language promoted unity and togetherness to reduce tension between the Hutu and Tutsi because it does not put certain ethnic group in superior position or disadvantaged position. One respondent specifically stated that "*Kiswahili is widely spoken in the region and EAC member states feel it was necessary to adopt it as lingua-franca. It encourages brotherhood and easy communication. And EAC member countries such as Uganda and Burundi with small population who can speak Kiswahili had introduced teaching of Kiswahili language at primary and secondary schools to match with other East African countries, which had Kiswahili widely spoken in their countries".* This is intended to boost it to fully integrate into East African Community and among the citizens. This corroborates the study finding of Habwe (2009:2) that Kiswahili played a role as micro-cultural and macro elements in reinforcing the socio-economic and political cooperation among the member countries of East African Community. It is clear then that supporting and encouraging common language and teaching it in all schools in EAC members states will encourages young learning people to discuss and co-exist beyond their past conflict tension.

Similarly, respondents said that Rwanda and Burundi, which are mainly French speaking, had recruited English teachers from East African Community to teach English language to scale up the use of English language as official and language of instruction in schools. On respondent from Burundi specifically said that "*for us in Burundi we have adopted a method of promoting three languages i.e. French, English and Kiswahili. This is one of the biggest advantage we have because the bigger business and international community use English language so to speak we are privileged we can interact with this community, it has widen our scope of interaction.*" Respondents further said that promotion of these languages is to avoid ethnic conflict like Hutu-Tutsi and any of the member

state of the East African Community to lag behind because of language barrier. It was also mentioned that English was the official language of the East African Community, while Kiswahili is the official recognised by the East African Community as the lingua-franca. One of the respondents specifically stated that *"we are lucky that apart from speaking French we can also speak English; for us in Rwanda and Burundi it is an added advantage and it has opened us to wider community because many people speak English than French."* This development has helped Rwanda and Burundi to make significant progress to recover from the catastrophic Hut-Tutsi conflict through de-legitimising the explicit political expression of ethnicity (Lunn, 2006). This finding is also consistent with earlier finding by Chambers that when language is made a mark that binds people, it builds solidarity and group identity (Chambers, 1995).

That aside, championing of Kiswahili language has another advantage that it promotes literacy in the region and citizen acquire education as well as other values that build peace which encourage by education. All officials of EAC interviewed agreed that investing hugely in education was paramount in reducing tension not only among the Hutu and Tutsi but all ethnic groups that show rivalry in the region. They argued that partner states of EAC were not only emphasising teaching and learning of Kiswahili language alone, the effort in geared towards fuelling economic growth through skilled labour force. These views strengthen earlier findings that education providing education to citizens is one of the greatest ways to lift them out of poverty and reduces the risks of war. This is because "teaching and learning builds a commitment to global solidarity, peace, acceptance of differences, social justice and environmental awareness in the young people who are easily lured into conflict (Fountain, 1999; UNESCO, 2002). This demonstrates that education or learning of new ideas is likely to bring constructive change.

Further probe why Kiswahili was adopted as a common language among the partner states of the East African Community, it was revealed that it promote unity, eases communication and strengthens brotherhood as people speak one language. This revelation supports the view that it "has the potential as a tool for social communication and development" (King'ei, 1999). Respondents highlighted that common language was central in realising many of the objectives set out by the treaty establishing the East African Community such as custom union and common market, which involved trade. They said common language could facilitate easy cross-border trade. This finding supports earlier finding that formal and informal cross-border trade was mainly transacted through Kiswahili (Ibid.). This way, it promoted unity across diverse ethnic groups within the East African region and limited border conflicts as people could see themselves linguistically united (Ibid.). Thus, it can be argued that tolerance based on common language could in part build peace. In addition, providing citizens with such educational opportunity reduces on later-life unemployment which has partly contributed to Hutu-Tutsi conflict in East Africa. Tension between these two ethnic groups is in part grievances as a

result of unmet expectations access employment opportunities as the Hutu were initially denied educational opportunities as discussed in the previous chapter. However, though adopting Kiswahili as a common language for the people of EAC region has merits it may little impact in reducing conflicts such as the Hutu and Tutsi. This because despite the fact the Hutu and Tutsi shared common language and culture tension evolved between and many lives and property were destroyed in Rwanda and Burundi.

Generally, EAC has explored education as another to reduce conflict in the region. It established the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA). The purpose of IUCEA is to provide education opportunities to citizens in region and to discuss relevant matters to improve education system to avoid marginalisation of the underprivileged. It became operational after the five Heads of EAC members states assented to the IUCEA Act, 2008. Article 4 (2) (e) states that the Council shall promote equal opportunities for all students of East Africa, including those with special needs. This supports Kotite (2012: 12) view that "education has the potential to prevent conflict" because it alters or encourages changes in structural, attitude and individual behaviour. This may positively reduce risk and help bring peace and stability because as Kotite (2012) argues education affects structural, behavioural and attitude of individual persons.

On structural he points out that:

(i)   Education is an important area through which government can use in its relationship and commitment to its people to bring equity;

(ii)   Access to education is considered a symbolic indicator of equity which is linked to income earning potential and the ability to reduce inequality;

(iii)   Education is one of the top most important policy option for any government to increase social cohesion; and

(iv)   Imbalance in educational services brings about grievances and exacerbates state fragility.

On the behavioural change:

(i)   Educational institution/schools impart knowledge, interpersonal, political, social and legal principles that underlie good citizenship;

(ii)   Educational institution/schools bring together people of different origins and teach them how to coexist and work together peacefully;

(iii)   Educational institution/schools combine interests and objectives of a wide range of group of people to establish common understanding; and

(iv)   Interaction of different groups of people through educational institution/schools processes builds relationships inside and outside which develops trust and cooperation.

Finally, respondents noted that education plays a key role in attitudinal change in the following ways:

(i)   Peace education has positive effects on students' attitudes;

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(ii)   Teachers demonstrate positive values such as acceptance of diversity, kindness, tolerance and consideration of others' feelings; and

(iii)   Teaching students values of cooperation and tolerance of cultural differences helps to overcome prejudicial stereotype that opportunistic leaders routinely use for their own interests.

The inclusion of education in EAC strategies in their effort to build a peaceful region is a clear manifestation that leaders of EAC member states understand that education is a fundamental right as it is stipulated in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights as well as a tool that shapes citizens' abilities to live positively and minimise the potential of conflict. This is because as it is argued in chapter three denial of Hutu to access education is one of the premium contributing factors that whetted the Hutu-Tutsi conflict. Also, during focus group discussion with EAC officials, there was a popular view among respondent that EAC has encouraged intermarriages. They noted that there is increase in intermarriages as a result of EAC integration process. This has helped the Hutu and Tutsi to access better jobs as they are considered as part of the wider community.

Findings on Peace and Security Capacity to Reduce Conflict in EAC Region

It is pointed out that "local conflict have a tendency sooner or later to walk across the national borders, spreading violence and refugee in their paths and destabilising entire regional neighbourhood" Otunu Olara (1998: 317). The effects of Hutu Tutsi conflict in Rwanda and Burundi spread all over EAC region and the states affected felt it is necessary to resolve this conflict collectively to build regional peace and security. In this context, East African Community have emphasised that peace and security matters should be dealt with from regional approach (Nikki and Felicio, 2006). The Heads of EAC member states conceived that the solution to conflict in Rwanda and Burundi lay in regional initiative. Thus, peace and security issues are within the mandates of the East African Community organisation. This way, the treaty establishing East African Community considered peace and security as one of its central concern to realise the East African cooperation and integration. In fact, Article 123 (5) of the Treaty established EAC, points out clearly that peace and security is a major preoccupation of the partner states of East African states. It clearly elaborated the path-through to follow to foster cooperation and integration. The study revealed that the East African Community has succeeded in establishing different institutional framework as policy guidance to ensure peaceful and stable environment to facilitate East African integration and reduce the Hutu-Tutsi conflict. In order to enhance security, peace and good governance respondents revealed that East African Community organisation undertook initiatives to promote collective effort in areas of security. They mentioned that the organisation established the following organs to deal with security matters threatening the region such as the Hutu-Tutsi conflict:

(i)   Sectoral council on inter-state security;

(ii)   Sectoral council on cooperation in defence; and

(iii)   Joint sectoral council on foreign policy coordination

East African countries recognised the importance of peace and security as an important factor to realise the initiative for the integration. In that regard, respondents interviewed stated that these organs provide expert inputs to create strategic and policy initiatives on military intelligence and defence. In this vein, on further probe respondents said that in 2006 East African Community adopted a regional peace and security strategic plan to foster regional peace and security on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers in 2001. In this regional peace and security strategic plan a number of issues were identified which include:

(i)   Enhancing the exchange of criminal intelligence and other security information between member states;

(ii)   Enhancing joint operations and patrols;

(iii)   Installation of common communication facilities for border and inter-state security;

(iv)   Adopting the UN model law on mutual assistance on criminal matters;

(v)   Implementing protocol on combating illicit drug trafficking;

(vi)   Exchanging visits by security authorities;

(vii)   Exchanging training programmes for security personnel;

(viii)   Establishing common mechanisms for the management of refugees;

(ix)   Establishing regional disaster management mechanisms;

(x)   Formulating security measures to combat terrorism;

(xi)   Establishing measures to combat cattle rustling;

(xii)   Establishing measures to combat proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons;

(xiii)   Developing mechanisms to reduce security challenges on Lake Victoria; and

(xiv)   Developing a mechanism for conflict management and resolution.

In this perspective, respondents reported that the following activities were operationalised by the partner states of East African Community to create regional peace and security strategy to enhance collective responsibility in maintaining regional security. It was revealed by the respondents when asked that this security strategy covered cooperation on cross-border and trans-national security threats because Hutu-Tutsi conflict climaxed in Rwanda and Burundi due to poor socio-economic and political factors which could provide fewer opportunities to defend them against the Hutu who were out to eliminate them. This ethnic division is not only in Rwanda and Burundi but it is eminent among the partner states of East African Community. In this regard, it was said by the respondents as well as evidences from the documents studied showed that this had created the establishment of the following:

Joint Sectoral Council on inter-state security and Sectoral council on defence cooperation had been established to form a regional peace and security forum of chiefs of defence, police and intelligence, which meets on annual basis to assess the security situation in the region. In this forum, there "joint working experts to handle cross cutting issues and report to joint meeting of chiefs of defence and intelligence" (EAC Gazette, 2007). The cooperation established among the police chiefs in the member states of EAC under the umbrella of East African Police Chiefs Cooperation (EAPCCO) is intended to create peace and stability as a way achieving development to answer the inequality that spurs conflict in the region. The emergence of this kind of arrangement between the partner states of East African Community is based on cooperative behaviour and the adoption of common policies and institutions to ensure civil conflicts such as the Hutu-Tutsi conflict could easily be regionally controlled collectively rather than at state level.

The Small Arms and Light Weapon Nairobi Protocol: the study uncovered that illegal gun and ammunitions were among the main factors, which fuelled the Hutu-Tutsi conflict. It was stressed by the respondents that absence of strict control on trade in small arms had made it so easy the East African countries i.e. Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi to engage in buying and selling of illegal small arms. They said that this had resulted into the destruction of many lives in the region. One respondent specifically reported that "*we have initiated a programme and activities such as engaging civil societies and empowerment of citizens to be involved in decision making; we have established common record keeping of all licenced and state owned arms as well as specialised arms marking".* In that regard, the East African partner states established joint operations and patrols across their borders to control and reduce increasing activities of small arms and light weapons in the region. It was mentioned by the respondents that people dealing in small arms and light weapons in the region were a potential threat to security and peace. It was specifically mentioned that East African Community states over the years experienced and continue to experience acts of terrorism, displacement of population and human rights abuses were facilitated by availability unregistered arms transfers in the region. They said that the partner states of East African Community had succeeded in establishing computerised firearms database to help harmonise and regulate on the use of small arms and light weapons in the region. It was also mentioned by the respondents that the East African States i.e. Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya Tanzania and Uganda had agreed unanimously to Arms Trade Treaty. This could limit hostile tribes particularly the Hutu and Tutsi access to arms, which they use against each other. These views unveiled by this study corroborate Barltrop, (2008) perception in his work that the influx and misuse of small arms bolstered conflict in Rwanda and Burundi.

In addition, EAC actively engaged in facilitating the exercise of disarmament and retrieving small arms illegally possessed by citizens and their subsequent destruction. EAC in conjunction with

national bodies of the member states are at the centre in reducing small arms from the hands of wrong people. This is considered as part of securing peace and stability in Rwanda and Burundi. To fully realise their target EAC signed agreement with regional centre on small arms to secure collective action in establishing peace and security in the region.

Conflict resolution and management is another activity respondent mentioned as a major achievement where the East African Community had implemented to support regional peace and security. The study showed that the council of ministers of the partner states of East African Community had approved measures, which they have to use to respond to the growing threat to security and peace among the member states particularly to enhance strict cooperation in the arms and non-proliferation their common neighbourhood and treating it as a regional security matter. The East African Standby Force (EASFCOM) a military arm of East African Community is used to deal with conflict such as Hutu-Tutsi conflict in the region.

The East African Community succeeded in making gains in security cooperation. Interviews with the respondents revealed that EAC has initiated joint military training and exercises for security persons such as defence forces and the police. One of the respondents mentioned that t*hrough our joint military exercises we have succeeded to bring those believed to be marginalised to create forum where their ideas are shared and spirit of togetherness is promoted".* Through this joint cooperation in the security field had helped to build mutual cooperation among the partner states of the East African Community. It was mentioned that this had made East African countries understood that peace and security were one of the prerequisites for social, economic and political development. This collaboration among the East African Community member states is a positive step in realising peace and stability in the region. East African states can jointly deal with Hutu-Tutsi conflict because it is looked at as a problem that affects the entire east Africa region.

Further probe, respondents said that East African countries still suffer from security threats from civil conflicts such as Hutu-Tutsi, Lord Resistance Army (LRA), Allied Democratic Force (ADF) rebel groups, Al-Shaabab, Al-Qaeda and livestock rustling. It was also mentioned that in order to deal with these security threats, a regional defence counter-terrorism organ had been established with its headquarter in Nairobi, Kenya. It was stressed that this had enhanced intelligence in gathering and sharing security information. It was stated by respondents that this had enabled security in detecting security threats, particularly on terrorism. It was further revealed by respondents that this organ constantly keeps a close watch for any individual(s) who may want to destabilise peace and security in the region. The establishment of these regional organs to deal with security matters has promoted closer cooperation among the partner states security organs to enable them to work jointly to fight different crimes and security threats to the East African community.

Similarly East African standby force was established to lay foundation for comprehensive security cooperation among the EAC states. This was to address regional security issues due to the changing nature of conflicts in the region including the Hutu-Tutsi conflicts. Marginalisation of the Tutsi in the socio-economic and political fields had heightened tension between it the Tutsi and its rival the Hutu leading to conflict which EAC based on to establish this force because this Hutu-Tutsi conflict had implications on peace and security in the region.

The member states of EAC, particularly Tanzania and Uganda played a pivotal role in reducing Hutu-Tutsi conflict. Before going further it important to note that Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi were once subjected to German rule in the period 1888-1916. Tanzania became a British protectorate, while Rwanda and Burundi were taken over by the Belgians. In the period 1998-2000 regional peace initiative was convened Arusha in which Tanzania as a member of EAC provided ground for peace negotiations which was concluded in what is popularly known as the Arusha Accord 2000 as well as logistics to conflicting parties to make sure they actualise negotiations. In this regard, the president of Tanzania Mwalimu Julius Nyerere played a prominent role, particularly in encouraging diplomatic track among the hostile Hutus and Tutsis. He persistently lobbied the Burundian involved in the conflict to give peace process a chance. The intention was to reduce hostilities and allow aggrieved parties joined the peace process. Examining the Arusha Accord demonstrates that Tanzania was determined to bring to reduce the Hutu-Tutsi conflict which had escalated into violence if not to end it. The Arusha Accord after the government of Rwanda were engaged in talks with the RPF they reached the following agreement:

 (i)   Ceasefire

 (ii)   The formation of broad-based transitional government with power sharing;

 (iii) Incorporation of the RPA into the army; and

 (iv) Return of all refugees.

This conclusion reached concurs with the EAC organisation target of promoting stability, peace and security in the region built on good neighbourliness. In other words, Tanzania's effort to bring peace in Burundi is partly a regional initiative. Salaita (2002) confirms it that "Tanzania believed that national peace and security would be achieved only when the region as a whole was enjoying peace. A volatile region was clearly a serious threat to national security in many ways."

Furthermore, the effort of Tanzania under Mwalimu Julius Nyerere made tremendous achievements in reducing Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi. Nyerere influenced the conflicting parties and reached the following pledges:

(i)   They agreed to suspend hostilities that was posing serous effect;

(ii)   They pledges to resolve the conflict through peaceful means and to stop all forms of violence;

(iii)   They promised loyalty and commitment to engage in all possible negotiations until a long-lasting solution was found to the conflict;

(iv)   To ensure peace and security for all

Besides acting as a ground for negotiations, Tanzania acted as a host of the Court that was prosecuting those alleged to have participated in the massacre in the Rwanda genocide as well as hosting refugees' influx from both Rwanda and Burundi.

Another tangible achievement the found was EAC members states acted in good spirit of neighbourhood and contributed immensely to different bilateral ceasefire agreements that were reached between governments in Rwanda and Burundi in the period 2002-2006 to reduce Hutu-Tutsi conflict most notably among them is the Pretoria Protocol and Arusha Accord. Article 6 of the EAC Treaty put more emphasis on peaceful co-existence and good neighbourliness, peaceful dispute settlement, good governance, democracy and mutual trust. In the same way, Article 124 gives emphasis to peace and security as an important element that would generate development to help on reducing conflict in the region. On 16 November, 2003, President Ndayizeye a Hutu rebel leader agreed and a Peace Accord under the influence of Tanzania a member states of EAC in Dar-es-Salaam. Also, the government of Pierre Nkurunziza and PALIPEHUTU-FNL signed an agreement in September, 2006 in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania which demanded that various armed groups were to be integrated into the national army and police force (Barltrop, 2008). Establishing broad based government and integrating rebel groups into the national army would offer equal opportunities in terms of political power sharing and the regime would stimulate democratic sense of feeling among them and gain popular legitimacy. This in part was to address imbalance in power structure between the Hutu and Tutsi.

In the same vein the Arusha accord put tough measure to check on the excesses that were being exercised by both the Burundian Army Forces (FAB) and the rebel fighters. In that regard, the agreement slapped a ban on those found guilty of human rights abuses and war related crimes to be excluded from the police force and army.

Therefore, it can be safely argued that Arusha Accord was instrumental in bringing about political transformation in Burundi. It helped to establish transitional government controlled by two major parties based on the principle of the agreement of power sharing, defence and security as priority. This arrangement improved the security environment in Burundi. It provided key roles of the army and police clearly defining that no particular ethnic group should exceed 50 per cent representation in the army and police institution. This was to enforce Article 14(1) (g) of the Arusha Accord which stated that "in view of the need to achieve ethnic balance and to prevent acts of genocide and coup d'etat" (Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, August, 2000, Protocol II) which the Tutsi elite monopolised as a tool of domination of the Hutu.

Therefore, generally, in analysing the influence of EAC member states, particularly Tanzania's contribution one can observe that efforts were made to push for negotiations that would reduce the Hutu-Tutsi conflict that was affecting the entire region differently. Thus, it can be said with some increasing amount of confidence that the influence of Tanzania as a member of EAC contributed greatly positively to the entire peace process that scaled down the Hutu-Tutsi conflict. it observed was able to exercise more influence in the Hutu-Tutsi conflict, particularly in Burundi because "of all the East African member states, Tanzania was in the position to enforce embargo even without the help of other countries because more than 70 per cent of Burundi's imports and exports were got through her territory" (Mwakikagile, 2012: 96).

Better still, member states of EAC particularly Uganda and Tanzania for many years hosted Rwandan and Burundian refugees. The EAC regional relations on free movement of member states features significantly as they were trying to settle and host the refugees with a view of ensuring regional peace and stability. In addition, member states of EAC, particularly Tanzania and Uganda played a big role in the repatriation of refugees and their resettlement back in Rwanda and Burundi in the process of implementing the peace agreement. For instance, there was a tripartite agreement that involved Tanzania, Burundi and United Nations High Commission for Refugees in which refugees who were in Tanzania were returned back home (United Nations, 2004). This shows that EAC sought to a strategy of dealing the problem from its source. That is to say, EAC member states preferred to address the refugee situation by settling them back to their respective country.

Similarly, both Tanzania and Uganda were a home for massive refugees fleeing Rwanda and Burundi; and considering the worsening situation Tanzania and Uganda clamoured for regional peace initiative. Thus, in 2006 when Tanzania was in charge of Presidency of the UN Security Council emphasised the need to have a long-lasting solution to the conflict not only in the Great Lakes Region but the entire world. This gave Tanzania to give peace, security and development issues on top priority of the UN Security Council which are dream-light of EAC. It was a result of this influence that Tanzania committed its effort during its tenure to address matters of peace and it lobbied for the adoption of UN Resolution 1653 (2006) on the Great Lakes Region.

That aside, the data collected from respondents further showed that Rwanda and Burundi had improved drastically in implementing reforms in many areas such as trying to adhere to the principle of good governance. Article 6(d) provides for good governance to include member states adhering to the principles of democracy, the rule of law, accountability, transparency, social justice, equal opportunities, gender equality, and protection of human rights. One respondent specifically said that "*can I tell you Rwanda is not part of that Hutu-Tutsi problem? What is in Rwanda is the issue of bad governance; issue of bad leadership. So there is no problem or conflict any between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda. The conflict which has been there is a result of bad leadership and governance. So by*

joining EAC we see ourselves participating in wide EAC issues that have helped to improve the situation in Rwanda and Burundi. EAC insists on each member adhering to the principles of democracy and good governance."

The opinion of the respondents indicated that Rwanda and Burundi being part of the bigger community has improved on leadership and governance. They reported that EAC encouraged member states including Rwanda and Burundi to support and practice rule of law, respect of human rights, constitutionalism and accountable government. One respondent mentioned that "*there was a problem of bad leadership and governance before that used ethnicity for their own interest otherwise Hutu and Tutsi lived together for centuries but because of bad leaders who want to gain used the population against each other but now leaders to engage the population in decision-making those who had been very much taken into the Hutu-Tutsi conflict because they had not been involved in issues that affect them are now part of the government."*

Interviewee also explained that EAC activities and services are good; they indicated that the Hutu and Tutsi communities in the region were involved in the intervention designed by EAC that impart skills and provide tangible benefits aimed at changing their attitude towards each other. For example, both were encouraged to share power, particularly in government positions. In addition, EAC encouraged not only Hutu and Tutsi but citizens in the region generally to take initiatives, introduce useful changes to their communities and develop horizontal networks and relationships based on cooperation rather than power stratification of different ethnic groups in the region. Thus, EAC has been avid advocates of collective approach to common problems in the region as a way of managing interests of both the Hutus and Tutsis. In total, it can be inferred that EAC member states are beginning to believe in good governance as a crucial element to shape a common political system that can act as a basis for cooperation.

Conclusion

A close examination of the above findings about socio-political EAC achievements reveals that is offering peace-building strategies that are sought to permanently insulate the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Rwanda and Burundi and similar related conflicts from further escalation. Consolidating and pursuing further achievements in the socio-economic and political issues holds out hope to minimise the repeat of open confrontation between the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi.

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