Conflict resolution mechanisms and peacebuilding in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya: An analytical study of Inter-ethnic dynamics from 1963 to 2023

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Conflict resolution mechanisms and peacebuilding in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya: An analytical study of Inter-ethnic dynamics from 1963 to 2023

Mercy Chebet Kiplagat[1], Chebii Kiprono[2], Sarah Bundotich[3]
[1] Department of History and Gegraphy, The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya
[2] Department of Humanities and Social Science Education-Alupe University, Busia, Kenya
[3] Department of Educational Psychology, Management, Policy and Studies-Alupe University, Busia, Kenya

Abstract
In the post-independence period of Kenya, inter-ethnic conflicts have been a persistent and pervasive issue. Uasin Gishu County, in particular, has experienced recurrent episodes of ethnic violence since the early years of independence. To address, mediate, and reconcile the various ethnic communities, multiple conflict resolution mechanisms have been established. Following the significant outbreak of post-election violence in 2008, this study investigates the conflict resolution processes specific to Uasin Gishu County. The primary objective is to critically examine the initiatives and efforts undertaken to mitigate and resolve inter-ethnic conflicts in this region. Utilizing a historical research methodology, the study draws upon a range of primary and secondary data sources. These include annual governmental reports, official commission reports, interviews with key stakeholders, judicial rulings, and statistical data. Additionally, secondary sources such as academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and unpublished manuscripts were reviewed to situate the research within the broader scholarly discourse. The study's findings indicate that both international entities and various governmental and non-governmental actors have made concerted efforts to dismantle the entrenched culture of violence in Uasin Gishu County. The study recommends that all involved stakeholders—both public and private—adopt a multifaceted strategy to address the root causes of previous conflicts and prevent their recurrence. The implications of this research are anticipated to be valuable to historians, policymakers, government officials, and social organizations, including religious institutions and non-governmental organizations, in their efforts to foster justice and peace in Uasin Gishu County and comparable regions.

Keywords: Ethnic conflicts, conflict resolution, Uasin Gishu County

Introduction
Conflict resolution, as defined by Shonk (2021) [18], encompasses both informal and formal processes that enable disputing parties to arrive at a peaceful resolution. These processes become imperative when conflicts disrupt the social and economic fabric of societies, obstructing the normal flow of life. Various methods such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and litigation are commonly employed in conflict resolution efforts. In the context of Kenya, conflict resolution has been a critical need since the nation gained independence in 1963. A significant potential crisis emerged during the early years of independence, revolving around the transfer of land from colonial settlers to native Kenyans. President Jomo Kenyatta navigated this issue delicately by allowing willing settlers to remain in Kenya, thereby avoiding the violent land reclamation anticipated by many freedom fighters (Ochieng, 1990) [15].

Kenya has experienced large-scale ethnic violence, notably in 1992 and 2007/2008, particularly within the Rift Valley region. In response, both local and international conflict resolution mechanisms, including interventions by the International Criminal Court (ICC), have been applied to address these conflicts. According to Mwakikagile (2007) [14], the inter-ethnic conflicts in Kenya's cosmopolitan regions mirror those seen in other African countries such as Rwanda, Nigeria, Sudan, and Somalia. Oucho (2002) attributes these conflicts to historical land injustices, political intolerance, discrimination, and competition for natural resources.

Uasin Gishu County, specifically, has a long history of inter-ethnic conflicts dating back to Kenya's independence.

The region has witnessed tensions during various political periods, including the transition to multiparty politics in 1991, and subsequent elections in 1997 and 2007. Notably, a relative calm was observed during the 2013 and 2017 election periods, which is largely attributed to the political realignments that temporarily unified the main conflicting groups, the Kalenjin and Kikuyu communities. Mwakikagile (2007) [14] highlights that Uasin Gishu County has historically experienced conflicts involving the majority Kalenjin community and minority groups such as the Kikuyu, Luhya, and Luo.

This study aims to critically examine the conflict resolution mechanisms implemented in Uasin Gishu County, with a focus on efforts to prevent, mitigate, or resolve inter-ethnic conflicts. The research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on conflict resolution by providing insights into the local and international strategies employed to foster peace and stability in a historically volatile region.

Objectives of the Study
Main Objective: The primary objective of the study is to critically examine the conflict resolution efforts initiated to address inter-ethnic conflicts in Uasin Gishu County.

Specific Objectives
1. **Evaluate the Effectiveness of Conflict Resolution Strategies:** To assess the effectiveness of various local, national, and international conflict resolution strategies and interventions implemented in Uasin Gishu County, with a focus on understanding their impact on mitigating and resolving inter-ethnic conflicts.

2. **Analyze the Historical and Political Context of Conflict Resolution:** To explore the historical and political dynamics that have influenced inter-ethnic conflicts in Uasin Gishu County and to understand how these factors have shaped the conflict resolution processes. This includes examining the roles and contributions of different stakeholders, such as government bodies, non-governmental organizations, and the international community, in these efforts.

Material and Methods
This study was conducted using a case study design. The rationale for choosing this approach was twofold:

1. **In-Depth Analysis:** The primary objective was to conduct a thorough and detailed examination of ethnic conflicts in Uasin Gishu County. The case study method facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the conflict dynamics, including causes, impacts, and resolution strategies.

2. **Focused Scope:** The case study design allowed for a focused investigation on a specific geographic and thematic area, namely ethnic conflicts in Uasin Gishu County during the post-independence period. This approach provided the opportunity to delve deeply into the complexities of the subject matter, rather than taking a broad or general perspective.

Findings and Discussions
1. Contribution of the State to Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Uasin Gishu County
The Government of Kenya has played a pivotal role in addressing inter-ethnic conflicts in Uasin Gishu County by establishing various commissions of inquiry to investigate and recommend solutions. Following the 1991/1992 inter-ethnic violence in the Rift Valley, the government set up the Parliamentary Select Committee of Inquiry in 1993, chaired by Honorable Kennedy Kiliku. The Kiliku report revealed that high-ranking state officials had instigated and perpetuated the violence, challenging earlier narratives that attributed the conflicts primarily to land issues. Instead, it highlighted political power struggles as the core drivers of the clashes (Apollos, 2001).

In 1998, the government appointed the Akiwumi Commission, led by Justice Akiwumi, to investigate inter-ethnic clashes across Kenya. Similar to the Kiliku Commission, it underscored the role of political actors in provoking violence and identified land grievances as a significant factor (IDMC, 2006). Despite these findings, political impunity persisted, and the recommendations from both commissions were not implemented. The 2002 electoral victory of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) was seen as a potential turning point, leading to the establishment of the Ndung'u Commission in 2003 to address illegal land allocation. This commission's findings implicated prominent government figures in land misappropriations, making the implementation of its recommendations politically sensitive and contentious (Khamisi, 2018) [10].

In response to the post-election violence (PEV) of 2007/2008, the government, in collaboration with opposition parties, formed a grand coalition to mitigate ethnic tensions. This power-sharing agreement facilitated the resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and

helped restore peace in conflict-affected areas such as Uasin Gishu (ICG, 2008).

Decentralization emerged as a crucial strategy for reducing inter-ethnic conflict by diluting central power and fostering local governance. The formation of the National Accord and Reconciliation Act in 2008, following the intervention of mediator Kofi Annan, formalized power-sharing between the Party of National Unity (PNU) and the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), addressing the root causes of ethnic violence related to political exclusion and power concentration (Cheeseman, Lynch & Willis, 2016) [13].

Further efforts included the establishment of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) framework, which saw the formation of the Independent Review Committee, Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), and the Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence. The TJRC's recommendations were embedded in the 2010 constitution, leading to the creation of the National Land Commission (NLC) to address land-related disputes and historical injustices. The NLC's County Land Management Boards aimed to resolve local land conflicts, although they faced challenges such as political interference and resistance from vested interests (Cheeseman, Lynch & Willis, 2016) [13].

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), established by the 2010 constitution, promoted national unity and addressed ethnic tensions through initiatives like negotiated democracy. This approach has helped mitigate ethno-political conflicts in Uasin Gishu by ensuring power-sharing among political elites, thereby reducing the likelihood of violence (Lynch & Anderson, 2014). The political alliance between William Ruto's United Republic Party and Uhuru Kenyatta's The National Alliance contributed to the absence of violence in the 2013 and 2017 elections, highlighting the effectiveness of such power-sharing arrangements (ACLED, 2018).

2. Role of the Church and Non-Governmental Organizations in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Uasin Gishu County
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society play a very significant role in enhancing peace and conflict resolution. Klopp (2006) [9] asserts that the role of civil society is to protect people or citizens from state violence. Moreover, NGOs play a fundamental role in establishing cohesion where politicians have preached ethnic hatred. Civil society organizations (CSOs), especially the Catholic Church and the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) as well as the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), have greatly contributed to peace-building in Kenya. When violence broke out in Rift Valley in 1991, the church played a significant role in speaking on behalf of the victims amid the intolerance to criticisms by the then ruling party, KANU. The church pointed out the political nature and dynamics of the conflict. In addition, the church offered food to internally displaced persons as well as made attempts to reconcile the antagonistic ethnic groups and resist political propaganda (Oyugi, 2000) [17]. Churches are perceived as safe sanctuaries since they receive numerous victims of ethnic violence during clashes. The fact that the churches bring together members of different ethnic groups enhances their credibility as safe places during ethnic conflicts. They have, therefore, played a key role in providing initial aid and shelter to victims of violence.

According to Omondi (2003) [16], the role that religious groups played in conflict resolution in Uasin Gishu has been immense. Religious leaders from all denominations came out strongly to condemn inhuman acts perpetrated by the attackers, preached messages of peace and reconciliation, and organized reconciliation workshops that united the warring ethnic communities. Other organizations that have contributed to peace efforts in Uasin Gishu are the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), Kenya Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services, Anglican Church Kenya (ACK), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), World Vision, Kituo Cha Sheria and Action Aid among others (Omondi, 2003) [16].

The NCCK played a very instrumental role in conflict resolution in Uasin Gishu. It was established in 1991 and it is an umbrella organization that brings together 26 Protestant churches in Kenya. Over time, it has become conspicuous in responding to issues of peace and reconciliation in Uasin Gishu. Among its major objectives was to promote peace and security through community mobilization and peace-building initiatives. In the wake of the inter-ethnic clashes in the County, NCCK was among the first organizations to provide relief and rehabilitation to victims (NCCK, 2001). It came up with the National Agenda for Peace, which was an advocacy platform for peace as well as issues of development.

In 1992, the NCCK came up with a peace and rehabilitation project for those affected by clashes. The aim of the programme was threefold: emergency relief as well as peace and reconciliation for the communities that were adversely affected. Furthermore, NCCK developed a transformational framework; this framework promoted emergency intervention resettlement of displaced persons, and peace and reconciliation at the community level. In the wake of and after the 1992 and 1997 ethnic clashes in Uasin Gishu, NCCK facilitated several joint sessions between the communities that were clashing. It convened Good Neighbourliness Seminars (GNS), Village Peace Committee, and Area Peace Reconciliation Committees as well as public *Barazas* (Omondi, 2003) [16]. Membership of NCCK was drawn from across the board, ranging from the local people displaced by clashes, those who remained in their villages after the clashes, and those who represented local leadership, NGOs, churches as well as youth and women (Kilimo, L., 2007) [8]. The various groups held monthly community meetings. On the other hand, the Good Neighbourliness seminars were aimed at assessing community workers and the youth. They analyzed conflict situations and developed strategies to deal with conflicts.

According to Omondi (2003) [16], in fronting conflict resolution, NCCK went ahead to recognize the potential of each affected community as well as appreciate its peace initiatives. The joint training of village peace animators from all walks of life and communities has contributed to peaceful coexistence by easing inter-ethnic tensions. Furthermore, the peace and reconciliation project of NCCK involved the rehabilitation of destroyed infrastructure, opening up of closed markets, restoration of trade, and increasing interactions between the fighting communities in Uasin Gishu. At the same time, the project by NCCK enhanced the promotion of cultural contacts and exchanges through sports, such as netball and football, among other joint group activities. Accordingly, NCCK (2002) recognized that sports constitute a vital peace-building strategy that works by promoting interaction between communities and thereby reduces idleness giving people, especially the youth, the opportunity to engage in delinquency and acts of destruction.

Another NCCK project in Uasin Gishu County aimed at peace-building and conflict resolution entailed rehabilitation work through the formation of area peace and rehabilitation committees. This was done by leasing and buying land to resettle those whose farms had been lost. Through this project, NCCK provided building materials such as posts, nails, windows and doorframes, iron sheets, and essentials to those who had lost their houses and livelihoods during clashes. These activities, as noted by Omondi (2003) [16], helped not only reduce bitterness in those whose livelihoods were shattered but also to assist them in moving on with their lives. Moreover, another project of peace-building in Uasin Gishu was spearheaded by the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC). The organization has been quite active in conflict prevention, management, and resolution in Uasin Gishu. It was driven by several objectives, namely: to develop programmes to educate people about having a sense of justice; to eradicate injustices, and to guide pastoral action on achieving justice and peace (CJPC, 2000).

In the aftermath of the 1992 inter-ethnic flare-ups in Uasin Gishu County, the CJPC became involved actively in peace and reconciliation activities toward healing of the post-conflict wounds. It began by supplying basics to the affected people in the form of foodstuffs, like maize, beans, sugar, milk, and other essentials. Five years later, the project embarked on a programme aimed at resettling conflict victims who resided in market centers. In this programme, CJPC bought land and subdivided it among the affected families as well as providing money to finance the construction of houses. In the end, 72% of the families totaling 3,200 people were settled (CCR, 2009).

Another organization that played an instrumental role in 1992 and 1997 was the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR). It was originally based in Nakuru but had branches in the entire Rift Valley, Uasin Gishu included. It sought to promote positive productive and participatory methods of conflict prevention, management, and resolution among the communities living in the Rift Valley. It also undertook civic education as well as spearheaded campaigns to resolve disputes and reconciliation in the county. At the same time, CCR sought to empower communities through the impartation of the requisite knowledge for peace-building. It also emphasized the need to integrate traditional methods in conflict resolution to promote lasting peace among the ethnic communities in the Rift Valley region. To achieve its objectives, CCR organized informal meetings, seminars, and discussions in work groups that were aimed at strengthening the existing structures of peace-building and reconciliation. Further, it also engaged in capacity building among community members by forming peace committees in affected areas and the public is in reconciliatory messages within the conflicting communities (Gecaga, 2000) [4].

The National Peace Programme (NPP) western zone was established in Eldoret town in June 1999 by a group of women whose mode of living and principles had been changed by the inter-ethnic violence in their respective areas. Its main objective was to enable women from the warring communities to not only meet but also analyze and come up with solutions to the problems that affect them and their communities (NCCK, 2000). The motivation behind

the formation of NPP was the need to incorporate women into community decision-making processes. This was deemed necessary because women, along with the children, are the most vulnerable groups in conflict situations. As such, the NPP founders saw a need to address violence and particularly see how they could mitigate the effects of war among women and children. To this end, NCCK (2002) avers that the organization became a very important instrument, especially in the promotion of peace-building activities in Uasin Gishu and similar areas.

The 40-day inter-ethnic conflict that ravaged Uasin Gishu County after the announcement of presidential results in 2007 resulted in serious socio-economic challenges. To mitigate the effects on the affected, several initiatives were formed to address the ramifications of the ethnic violence. The churches once again acted as safe havens for most of the victims and were at the forefront in encouraging the government and the opposition to cooperate to resolve the conflict as well as preaching peace among the warring ethnic groups (ICG, 2008).

One of the peace programmes in Uasin Gishu, according to Jebet (2016), was the Wareng Youth Initiative for Peace and Development in Uasin Gishu County. The organization sought to involve the youth in conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives. Its goal was to reach out to the youth who for a long time had been left out during peace meetings. The organization paved the way for the youths to become part and parcel of peace and reconciliation discussions and make them understand their role in community affairs. Jebichi (2015) [7] avers that the involvement of the youth in conflict resolution was seen as an important consideration. This is because previously; youths had been used by politicians to cause conflicts. The organization adopted open forums that were significant and effective among the youthful generations. For instance, 25 youths were funded with 78,000 shillings to work for 21 days rehabilitating schools, roads, and bridges (Jebichi, 2015) [7]. One of the schools that had been destroyed by fire during the clashes was called Usalama. Through this project, the youths supported the rehabilitation of this school. Jebichi (2015) [7] also enumerates that another project that the youth engaged in the pursuit of peace and reconciliation was the construction of a bridge at Kimure, which separated two conflicting communities. The joint rebuilding of the bridge signaled a re-connection of the two communities that had fought each other during the post-election violence.

Elsewhere, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission also took part in the conflict resolution strategies after the 2007 ethnic violence in Uasin Gishu. This commission was spearheaded by the late Archbishop Cornelius Korir of the Catholic Diocese of Eldoret, who was highly credited for being involved in peace campaigns in the affected areas (Kipkalya, D,. 2020) [11]. The commission engaged in a wide array of activities aimed at enhancing peace. These activities included person-to-person contacts, peace dialogue meetings, shared and collaborative forums, use of councils of elders, peace marches, negotiation and reconciliation, peace tournaments, encouraging inter-ethnic marriages, capacity building, and civic education, among others.

To provide a lasting solution to inter-ethnic violence in Uasin Gishu County, Bishop Cornelius Korir initiated one-on-one meetings between members of warring communities aimed at reaching small groups. He targeted opinion and highly respected community leaders including elders, chiefs, and their sub-chiefs. The meetings first started with separate elders and opinion leaders from different ethnic groups until trust was developed between groups. This was to kick start discussions that would lead to peace talks and chart out a roadmap to help warring communities live in peace. Paul Kisang (OI) narrates that in the wake of the PEV of 2007/2008, a meeting with opinion community leaders and chiefs was held under a tree in Lemook River that borders two warring communities. The meeting place became a symbol of peace so communities began to popularly refer to the venue as the "River of Peace."

Another conflict resolution strategy that gained fame in Uasin Gishu during this period was the Africa Sports Talent Empowerment Programme (ASTEP). ASTEP (2010) mainly targeted the youths who were strong in body and full of energy to help them channel their energy to sports rather than to conflict. Through the initiative, the highly energized youths were able to participate in the peace marches occasionally arranged either by specific organizations or during the International Day of Peace when most peace-building organizations participated in the peace marches. Furthermore, ASTEP employed the use of a council of elders to reconcile the conflicting youths; this was because the elders commanded much respect and their counsel was taken seriously by the youths, hence they became part and parcel of peace initiatives.

The history of women's involvement in conflict is diverse. Women play both positive and negative roles in conflict, as victims, combatants, peace activists, formal peace brokers, and surviving actors Lihamba, (2003), argues that women's participation in conflict resolution and peace process takes two approaches; first is representation and participation at high-level political meetings and decision-making mechanisms for conflict resolution, including debates in international agencies for long-term conflict prevention. A second, disparate collection of women's grassroots peace initiatives provides a more comprehensive understanding of the causes of alternative solutions to conflict and bolster actions addressing varying needs to help sustain and maintain peace over time.

According to Kilonzo and Okware (2020) [12], the use of peace connectors to bring together communities after the 2007/2008 PEV was an attempt to resolve the inter-ethnic conflict. The initial connector peace projects and activities included the sharing of planting seeds, food, goat kids, and farm tools. Others included building bridges, roads, and specific projects aimed at boosting women's socio-economic status in violence-hit areas of Yamumbi, Kapteldon, and Burnt Forest. Popular women's activities included merry-go-rounds, table banking, and social events like weddings and dowry arrangements. In evaluating the role of women in the Peace Connector project, one sees an increased participation in the coordination and implementation of activities supported by the church. For instance, the goat-rearing project served to break ethnic animosities among the warring communities in Uasin Gishu County. Similarly, women in Timboroa were actively involved in agricultural activities where the harvest was shared among neighbours, preferably of different ethnic groups. This was an indication of breaking ethnic barriers and ultimately ethnic differences that brought animosity between communities. Pius Kimaiyo (O.I) narrates thus:

Customarily, when former enemies ate together, it signified reconciliation and healing. Further, the sharing of a meal cemented an agreement to be peaceful with one another. We do not eat with people we dislike, but if we do, it forces us to be civil for the length of the meal.

Kilonzo and Onkware (2020) [12] posit that women play a big role in providing psychological support for community members affected by inter-ethnic violence. Florence Njeri (OI) recounts that psychosocial support worked to reunite several families that were torn apart by inter-ethnic conflict. It helped to re-establish relationships that had been disrupted by displacement, which enabled children to return to school at the same. Moreover, it encouraged reconciliation and forgiveness among community members through the different peace connector projects and activities in the area. Another oral informant, Samuel Kanyi, stated that women were instrumental in building trust. The psychological support group in Kapsoya in Eldoret East became a space for women to share their lived experiences. Within these groups, trust was rebuilt and new and strong relationships began to emerge. According to Jebichi (2015) [7], the Rural Women Peace Link (RWPL) was also another initiative that was fronted to accelerate the process of peace and conflict resolution. The organization brought together women and employed dialogues, meetings, and capacity building as peace-building strategies with particular key involvement of women. Open forums were encouraged where thematic issues touching on peacebuilding were prioritized and people were allowed to weigh in on the issues to come up with peaceful solutions to ethnic conflicts.

3. Role of International Actors in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Uasin Gishu County

International responses to conflicts that occur within the boundaries of sovereign states are often difficult. In such cases, actors have to strike a balance between respecting the sovereignty of the state and ensuring the rights of the people who live in those states are upheld. Nevertheless, the respect for state sovereignty cannot supersede the need to protect human lives and respect for human rights. As such, international actors have always responded to conflicts across the globe. Similarly, they have responded in various ways to inter-ethnic conflict in Kenya.

Following the 1991/1992 inter-ethnic conflicts in the Rift Valley, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in 1993, initiated a programme to resettle Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as a way of mitigating the effects of inter-ethnic clashes. According to Klopp (2006) [9], the initiative by UNDP sought to enhance reconciliation and re-integration of those who had been displaced by inter-ethnic violence in Uasin Gishu and other parts of the country. Although the government was reluctant to cooperate with this agency, it eventually yielded after much international pressure. To win support from the government, the UNDP remained neutral and tended to turn a blind eye to the Kenya government's complicity in the conflicts and harassment of the local actors assisting in the programme (Klopp, 2006) [9]. The UNDP and the Kenya government utilized US$20 million to implement the programme. The programme was supported by bilateral donors, such as Australia, Finland, Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States as well as European Union (Brown, 2011) [24].

Eventually, due to a lack of government will, cooperation, and commitment, coupled with local and international criticism for its neutrality, the UNDP pulled out and the programme collapsed in 1995 (Oyugi, 2000) [17].

Bilateral donors and the European Union (EU) also continued cooperating with various NGOs and church groups to help the victims of ethnic clashes in addition to initiating reconciliation forums among the members of different ethnic groups in Uasin Gishu, especially in areas of Burnt Forest, Ngeria, Munyaka, Yamumbi and Turbo (Brown, 2011) [24]. Donor organizations have applied aid conditionality to pressure the government to resolve the ethnic violence and restore peace. The United States, Germany, and the Dutch governments are some of the key donors who applied notable pressure on the Kenya government under the late President Daniel Moi in the 1990s (Oyugi, 2000) [17]. As such, the government became responsive to the biting effects of ethnic conflict in the country. In the subsequent years up to 2007/2008, the scale of ethnic conflicts in Uasin Gishu began to reduce. However, in 2007, following the disputed presidential election, Uasin Gishu again became the hotspot for violence. The international community also sprung back to action. Due to its intensity, the 2007-2008 post-election violence attracted much attention outside Kenya. The African Union, the United Nations, the European Union as well and various foreign governments manifested significant involvement in the search for a solution to Kenya's political impasse. They applied considerable diplomatic pressure on the Kenya government and the opposition to cooperate towards resolving the conflicts and maintaining political stability in Kenya (HRW, 2008).

Initial efforts by Mr. John Kufuor, president of Ghana and the then chairman of the African Union (AU), did not succeed in resolving the conflict. The PNU side, flanked by the government spokesman of the time, Dr. Alfred Mutua, refused to have President Kufuor as part of the process, dismissing his presence in Kenya as having come to 'take tea' and not to negotiate with the warring factions regarding the elections (Barasa & Ombaka, 2008) [1]. Afterward, the AU mandated a mediation team headed by former United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to diplomatically and amicably resolve the situation (Oyugi, 2000) [17]. These efforts were also backed by the US and the EU, among other international actors who encouraged power sharing as a viable solution (ICG, 2008). For example, the US president at the time, George Bush, sent his Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, to Kenya at the time of crisis. She was very categorical that the only solution to the impasse was power sharing between the opposing sides, namely ODM and PNU. Furthermore, aid conditionality and threats of asset freeze and personal sanctions to uncooperative political leaders were also applied by the international community to pressure the leaders to find an amicable solution and end the violence and human rights violations (HR, 2008). Since 1991, aid conditionality has been used as a tool for applying pressure on the Kenya government as well as elsewhere in Africa. As earlier mentioned, the same aid conditionality was applied to pressure the late Moi government to allow for political liberalization in Kenya in 1991 and to allow dialogue with opposition parties in 1997. Although it has helped leaders to take certain desired measures, aid conditionality has not been very effective in resolving ethnic conflicts in Kenya.

Besides, as Brown (2011) [24] correctly points out, it is hard to monitor the implementation of agreements arrived at through conditionality, since the government could accept the agreements just to bow down to pressure, and then overlook the agreements after receiving aid.

The intervention by The Hague-based court, the International Criminal Court Justice (ICC), to name and prosecute suspected masterminds of the PEV in Kenya served to deter subsequent inter-ethnic violence. This came following the Waki Commission's (CIPEV) report, which contained the names of those who had allegedly masterminded the post-election violence. These names were handed over to Kofi Annan who, after the failure to establish a local tribunal to try the suspects, handed it over to the ICC Prosecutor, Louis Moreno Ocampo. The Commission was chaired by Justice Philip Waki, a judge of the Court of Appeal. The other two commission members were Gavin Alistair Mc Fayden, a former police Assistant Commissioner in New Zealand, and Pascal Kambale, a lawyer from the Democratic Republic of Congo who was at the time a worker at the Open Society Africa Governance and Monitoring project. The secretary to the commission was George Mon'gare Kegoro, an advocate of the High Court, and he was assisted by David Shikomera Majanja, an advocate of the High Court of Kenya (CIPEV, 2008). According to Cheeseman, Lynch & Willis, 2016) [13], charges against key political leaders and senior government officials, namely Uhuru Kenyatta, William Ruto, Henry Kosgey, Francis Muthaura, Hussein Ali, and radio journalist, Joshua Arap Sang, directly contributed to the simmering tension between members of the two protagonist communities in Uasin Gishu County.

However, once Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto took over power in 2013, the ICC cases collapsed one by one. The reason for the collapse of the cases, according to the then ICC prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, was because of interference with and disappearance of some key witnesses (ICC, 2015). Politically, the accused saw an opportunity in those cases to gang up for political mileage. It directly contributed to the formation of the Jubilee Alliance between William Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta. The alliance moderated the potential for conflict between Kikuyu and Kalenjin communities. According to Samuel Kanyi (OI), the fear of prosecution by the ICC made local politicians keep away from uttering hate speeches. If the ICC had not intervened by prosecuting political elites and senior government officials, matters would have been different. ICC did not only prosecute senior political elites but even common people such as radio presenter, Joshua Arap Sang. This put a message across the general public that common people were liable and that prosecution was a real possibility for those who perpetuated ethnic animosity and violence. Pius Kimaiyo (OI) narrates that local opinion leaders and common citizens toned down inflammatory ethnic statements since nobody was immune to prosecution at the highest court of justice in the world, the ICC.

The international community, through organizations such as the United States Institute for Peace (USIP), supported peace-building throughout the country, especially in areas prone to inter-ethnic violence. Through this support, the Kenya government set out a very ambitious peace agenda that encompassed investment in new technology, early warning systems, and capacity building of men and women (Elder, Stigant & Clae, 2014). In 2008, the National Steering Committee (NSC) on Peace Building and Conflict Management was mandated to coordinate prevention efforts from international organizations. Working with national agencies, governmental and non-governmental institutions, such as the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), District Peace Committees (DPCs), and local organizations, such as Amani Mashinani, the NSC endeavoured to identify possible flashpoints for violence, anticipate and mitigate potential threats, thus enhancing government's capacity to deal with moments of vulnerability through targeted responses and community-based approaches.

Conclusion

The paper has delved into the peace-building and conflict resolution initiatives that have been undertaken by the state, civil society groups, and international actors in Uasin Gishu County, especially during the three of the most severe inter-ethnic conflicts in the area, namely the 1992, 1997 and the 2007/8 post-election violence. It has been demonstrated that several initiatives by religious and community-based organizations, together with those by NGOs and civil society have over the years contributed to peace building and helped victims of conflict to reconstruct their lives as well as reconcile and live together peacefully. The success of these initiatives was determined by political goodwill as well as the deliberate need to coexist peacefully with all those residing in Uasin Gishu. Yet, these initiatives continue to face the challenge of political machinations as politicians keep reverting to ethnic enclaves as a way of solidifying their ambitions. Nevertheless, the initiatives have to a large extent yielded significant success because different categories in society such as the youth, the women, and elders have been actively involved in conflict resolution at their respective levels and have in turn contributed to the overall enhancement of peace in the county.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Political forums ought to be free from ethnic incitement because such forums spread hateful information faster. Therefore, mechanisms should be in place to deter it from happening
- Widespread sensitization through mass media ought to be carried out to educate the public on the importance of cohesion. The citizens should instead be encouraged to embrace diversity, and pluralism and pursue national integration.
- The role of the church and non-state organizations in peace efforts should be strengthened and supported by the government.
- More studies should be carried out to establish ways of ensuring there is sustainable peace among ethnic groups that reside in the County and areas that face similar situations.

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