



Pervasive Violence in Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa, Impediments to Peace-Building and Socioeconomic Development

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Abstract: This study explores the pervasive violence and its impact on peacebuilding and economic development. A qualitative method of data collection is adopted. Content and descriptive analysis are used to analyse the data collected. Conflict theory was chosen for the underpinnings of the study. Findings have shown that attempts to tackle these issues encounter notable obstacles such as corruption such as where Nigerian elites are alleged to be behind most violent activities for selfish interests, lack of political will, and weak institutional capacities such as the failure of the judiciary to stand firm as the hope of the people by ensuring justice and openly undermining the rule of law. Complex power dynamics, mistrust among parties, and entrenched interests benefiting from instability frequently make peacebuilding projects difficult to implement. Conclusively, the challenges that emanate from pervasive violence in Sub-Saharan Africa highlight the pressing necessity for all-encompassing approaches that give peacebuilding equal weight with socioeconomic advancement. All stakeholders should promote efforts toward grassroots, national and international peacebuilding. Rules on violence must be clear, and sanctions should be applied to defaulters. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for

policymakers in making policies that will enhance unity, peacebuilding efforts and promotion of socio-economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: Pervasive Violence, Peacebuilding, Socioeconomic Development, Sub-Saharan Africa.

Introduction

Various forms of violence are pervasive in Sub-Saharan Africa but not exclusive to the region, as similar patterns can be observed globally (World Bank, 2011; OECD, 2021; Wodon, Male & Onagoruwa, 2024). It has taken various forms, including the use of arms or verbal use, like the use of violent language and others alike. Verbal violence is intended to cause emotional pain or control. When an individual carelessly formulates hate speech such as “your tribe is known for criminality”, your tribe will never be voted into power in this nation”. The attempt of a people to defend their tribe and protect their image can result in violence. This can escalate conflicts into full-blown violence just as much as the use of physical objects with the intent to harm. If everybody spoke with the intent to practice empathy, promote understanding, and have a positive change, the wounds and consequential effects that words can have will be eliminated (Ashu, 2024). Violence manifests not only in direct forms, such as killing or harm, but also in more concealed ways within social structures, including legal or socioeconomic systems, and in societal beliefs (Chigudu, 2024)—Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, insurgents in Mozambique. In the end, the outcome of violence will devastate any form of peace-building efforts and impede socio-economic development since investors are discouraged.

It could be psychological, physical, emotional, rational, hidden or explicit, structural or personal. Different spaces, such as media, culture, sports, religion, etc., experience violence, and various factors, such as weak political institutions and corruption, contribute to the exhibitions of violence in Sub-Saharan Africa (Mikołajczuk, 2020; Sinani, 2023). Sub-Saharan states like Nigeria experience multiple forms of violence across various levels and spaces. For example, at the regional level, some Northern states in Nigeria face insurgencies by Jihadist groups and ethnic violence, while others commonly face gender-based violence.

The term "pervasive violence" describes violence that occurs frequently, is deeply rooted, and continues at various societal levels, including the individual, communal, institutional, and societal levels. Different communities understand the violence around them and can act against it. (Gram, Paradkar, Osrin, Daruwalla, & Cislighi, 2023). The impacts of various forms and types of pervasive violence in Sub-Saharan Africa are examined in this study. In Sudan, the widespread violence has caused the displacement of civilians, scared away willing investors, and caused continuous conflict and socioeconomic underdevelopment.

Violence is embedded in instability that

negatively impacts the environment and its social and economic activities (Le, Bui, Uddin, 2022). It leads to low investment, a bad image abroad for any country, and continuous widespread problems when adequately checked. Though these are part of the features of developing countries, efforts from civil society groups and governmental and non-governmental organisations are good strategies for limiting the level of violence witnessed in SSA. This work explores the nature and effects of this ongoing violence on peacebuilding and socioeconomic development in SSA. In gathering the needed information, the qualitative research method is adopted. This comprises the use of books, journals, newspapers, magazines, government archives, and internet sources that are useful for the study. Conflict theory is chosen for the underpinnings of the study. Content and descriptive analysis are also chosen for an extensive analysis of gathered information.

Description of the Study Area

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is the region of Africa located south of the Sahara Desert, encompassing 49 countries, each having distinct geographical, cultural, political, and socioeconomic characteristics. Sub-Saharan Africa spans a vast area of approximately 24.3 million square kilometres, making up about 15% of the Earth's land surface and making it one of the most geographically diverse regions in the world.

Figure 1. Map of Sub-Saharan Africa



Source: Ogunjemilua (2020).

The Map of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) shown in Figure 2 embodies all the countries and areas of SSA. The Atlantic Ocean borders it to the west, the Indian Ocean to the east, and the Sahara Desert to the north, with terrains ranging from savannahs and tropical rainforests to mountainous regions and deserts. The region is known for its rich biodiversity, housing unique ecosystems such as the Congo Basin and the Serengeti (SAOGA, 2024). Sub-Saharan Africa is home to over 1.2 billion people, with a rapidly growing population projected to double by 2050. The region has significant ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity, with over 2,000 languages spoken. Nigeria, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo are among the most populous nations in the area. The population is predominantly young, with over 70% under 20 presenting opportunities and challenges for socioeconomic development (Fornino & Tiffin, 2024).

Economically, Sub-Saharan Africa is a region of contrasts. While it is rich in natural resources such as oil, minerals, and agricultural produce, it remains one of the least developed regions globally.

Many countries rely heavily on agriculture, which employs a significant portion of the workforce but is often subsistence-based and vulnerable to climate shocks. In recent years, growth has been seen in telecommunications, renewable energy, and financial technology sectors, especially in countries like Kenya and South Africa. However, widespread poverty, inequality, and unemployment remain pressing issues (World Bank Group, 2024).

Sub-Saharan Africa's political landscape is complex, shaped by a history of colonisation, liberation struggles, and ongoing governance challenges. While some countries, like Botswana and Ghana, have made strides in establishing democratic governance, others, such as Congo DRC, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Rwanda, have grappled with political instability, authoritarian regimes, and armed conflicts. The region also faces social challenges, including inadequate healthcare and education systems, high levels of corruption, and gender inequality (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024).

Key issues hindering development in Sub-Saharan Africa include poor infrastructure, limited access to quality education and healthcare, and vulnerability to climate change. The high prevalence of diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS further strains public health systems and economic productivity. Despite its challenges, Sub-Saharan Africa holds immense potential due to its abundant natural resources, youthful population, and emerging markets. Understanding the dynamics of this region is crucial for addressing global challenges such as poverty reduction, food security, and climate change

mitigation. Moreover, Sub-Saharan Africa's strategic importance in global trade and its growing influence on international politics make it a vital area for study and policy intervention (Goldstone, 2019; African Development Bank Group, 2024).

Literature Review

This section examines the patterns, causes, and approaches to addressing pervasive violence in global society by focusing on three countries—the United States (North America), India (Asia), and Brazil (South America). These countries represent diverse contexts outside Sub-Saharan Africa and provide insights into how violence manifests and impacts socioeconomic development.

In the United States, urban violence, particularly gun-related violence, remains a significant issue. According to the Gun Violence Archive (2023), the U.S. experiences over 45,000 firearm-related deaths annually, with urban areas like Chicago, Detroit, and Baltimore being epicentres. Violence disproportionately affects minority groups, including African Americans and Latinos, exacerbating existing social inequalities. Racial and economic disparities contribute to violence, with underprivileged communities lacking access to quality education, healthcare, and employment. The Second Amendment states that '... the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed', and the strong gun lobby complicates efforts to implement stricter firearm regulations. A history of individualism and gun ownership normalises violence in specific communities.

Urban violence undermines public safety and economic stability. Businesses are

hesitant to invest in high-crime areas, perpetuating cycles of poverty. Additionally, violence burdens the healthcare system and drains public resources that could otherwise support development. Community Policing: Initiatives like Chicago's CeaseFire program focus on violence interruption and community engagement. Although progress is slow, states like California have implemented stricter gun laws, resulting in lower firearm-related deaths compared to more lenient states. Programmes addressing the root causes of violence, such as job training and after-school initiatives, aim to reduce youth involvement in crime.

India faces significant issues related to gender-based violence (GBV) and communal violence. Cases of sexual assault and domestic violence are widespread, with the National Crime Records Bureau (2022) reporting over 31,000 rapes annually. Communal violence, often between Hindus and Muslims, also periodically erupts, as seen in the Delhi riots of 2020.

Deeply entrenched cultural attitudes contribute to the prevalence of GBV, often normalising violence against women. Political rhetoric and historical tensions between religious communities fuel communal violence. Despite laws like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), enforcement remains inadequate. GBV hinders women's participation in the workforce, reducing their economic contributions. Communal violence disrupts local economies and deters foreign investment. Moreover, societal divisions undermine national cohesion, impeding long-term development goals. Recent amendments to sexual assault laws have strengthened penalties and

improved victim support systems. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like Jagori work to raise awareness and empower women. Programs fostering interfaith dialogue aim to reduce communal tensions, though political will remains crucial.

Brazil is characterised by high levels of organised crime and violence against children. According to the Brazilian Public Safety Forum (2021), over 50,000 homicides occur annually, many linked to drug cartels and gang wars. Children are particularly vulnerable, often recruited into criminal organisations or exposed to violence in favelas. Poverty and Inequality: Economic disparities in urban areas create fertile ground for criminal activity. Weak governance and corruption within law enforcement allow criminal networks to thrive. Groups and individuals who commit violence or crime deserve to be punished (Aluko, Apeloko, Chukwudi, Paimo, 2023).

The experiences of the United States, India, and Brazil demonstrate that pervasive violence is often rooted in structural inequalities, cultural norms, and governance challenges. Key lessons include addressing violence by combining legal, economic, and social strategies, such as community policing and education programs, tackling poverty and inequality, which is the root cause of reducing the socioeconomic conditions that breed violence, and strengthening effective governance institutions and anti-corruption measures that are essential for sustaining peace-building efforts. Every government ensures its environment's stability (Chukwudi, Gberevbie Abasilim, & Imhonopi, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts conflict theory and

structural violence theory. Conflict theory has its proponents, such as Weber (1978) and Dahrendorf (1959), who assert that societal inequalities and resource competition create tensions that escalate into violence. Conflict theory explains persistent inequalities in social institutions like education, politics, and criminal justice. Collins (1975) submitted that some groups maintain power, dominate, and marginalise others with the help of policies.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, historical legacies of colonialism have left power imbalances, weak institutions, and economic disparities that exacerbate competition among ethnic, religious, and political groups. These conditions foster resource-based violence, ethnic and communal violence, and urban violence. Olumba (2024) posits that land use systems, exclusion practices, and regulations are commonly witnessed in Nigeria, Ghana, and the Sahel region, particularly between Fulani herders and sedentary farmers. The competition for access to minerals, oil, and arable land often leads to violent disputes, such as those seen in the Niger Delta (Nigeria) and mineral-rich regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The conflict over the equitable distribution of resources to different regions of Nigeria has further aggravated the crisis, which has birthed bandits that aim at attacking oil facilities and the more organised Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND). Similarly, the Ogaden region of Ethiopia is incredibly blessed with mineral resources. However, it remains marginalised, causing them to always revolt against the Ethiopian government through their organised Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). These agitations over natural resources against the government have

led to organised violence, such as the ONLF attack on a Chinese-run oil plant in 2007 that claimed the lives of numerous Ethiopian and Chinese workers; the conflict intensified (Reliefweb, 2012).

Ethnic groups competing for political representation and control over resources frequently clash, especially in countries with weak governance, such as South Sudan. Rapid urbanisation without corresponding socioeconomic development creates slums, unemployment, and crime, leading to heightened urban violence. Conflict theory also explains the role of elites in perpetuating inequalities and manipulating ethnic or religious divisions to maintain power. For example, political leaders in Kenya have been accused of inflaming ethnic tensions for electoral gains.

Conflict exacerbates divisions, making consensus-building and reconciliation difficult. Resource-based conflicts divert investments away from education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. Power struggles undermine the legitimacy of state institutions, impeding effective governance and peace-building initiatives.

Structural violence theory is used to explain gender-based violence, violence against children, and land and property rights violence because structural violence theory emphasises how systemic inequalities harm individuals and communities. In Sub-Saharan Africa, these inequalities manifest as inadequate access to standard healthcare, education, and economic opportunities, which perpetuate cycles of poverty and violence. Women and girls often face systemic discrimination exacerbated by cultural norms and a lack of access to

education or economic opportunities. In Nigeria, the political landscape is characterised by marginalisation and exclusion. The high political power as president and vice president has not been held by a South Easterner since after the first Republic when the late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was the President. The same marginalisation of the South Easterners is witnessed in the political appointment and resource allocation (Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim, & Imhonopi, 2019). This situation has not sparked violence, but it remains an underlying factor if it happens in that context.

Poverty and lack of infrastructure lead to child labour, trafficking, and exploitation. Structural inequalities in land ownership disproportionately affect marginalised groups, leading to disputes and violence. Structural violence also explains how global systems contribute to underdevelopment. For instance, international institutions and foreign corporations' exploitative trade policies have been criticised for perpetuating economic dependency and inequality. In other words, trade policies have not given every region an equal opportunity to trade and expand economically. This has caused continuous inequality and prolonged dependency, and conflict theory maintains that inequality is the root of societal conflict. Women and girls must be protected because they add to the efforts towards the success of the SDGs. In Sub-Saharan Africa, different forms of violence have continued to exist due to inequality and have consequently impeded peace-building and socioeconomic development. They are discussed as follows:

The two theories fit well in this study, and they complement each other in the analysis of the study. Conflict theory

captured inequality and the pursuit of resources, while structural conflict theory centred on GBV. The two theories underpin inequalities, which also exist and have made GBV possible because the female gender is not equal, especially as perceived by Africans about the culture and norms.

Communal Violence

Communal violence occurs between groups divided along common traits or communal lines. The perpetrators are strongly aligned with their respective groups, and victims are targeted based on their affiliation (Uduji, Okolo-Obasi, Nnabuko, Ugwuonah, Onwumere, 2024). Compared to state-based conflicts and other forms of non-state violence, communal violence is more limited in scope and duration. It typically involves local actors clashing over intergroup disagreements, with varying casualty numbers. Communal violence, including land disputes and inter-community clashes, is another prevalent form of conflict in the region. Such violence is often linked to competition over religion, socioeconomic strata, or natural resources like water and grazing land. In Nigeria's Middle Belt region, clashes between farmers and herders have escalated in recent years, resulting in significant loss of life and property. These conflicts exacerbate poverty and hinder the development of affected areas (Döring & Mustasilta, 2024).

Communal violence is also a significant driver of insecurity both within and across borders, causing large-scale displacement and disrupting livelihoods. The displacement exposes people to greater vulnerability and acute scarcity of essentials such as food, clothing, shelter, and education. This spirals into low human capital as people are tempted to

become more concerned with surviving than living in more significant expressions of their potential (Osman & Abebe, 2023; Anierobi, Obasi, Nnamani, Ajah, Iloma, Efobi, Nwaoga, Asadu, Okonkwo & Chigbe, 2024). Uduji, Okolo-Obasi, Nnabuko, Ugwuonah, and Onwumere (2024), in their study on oil-producing regions in Nigeria, suggest that an increase in corporate social responsibility by reducing multi-dimensional poverty, as well as reducing frustration and indignation, will dissuade local people from involvement in inter-communal violence.

Ethnic and Religious Violence

Ethnic violence poses significant challenges to peace-building and socioeconomic development due to its complexity, historical grievances, and internal and external factors that fuel conflicts (Bertinelli, Cömertpay & Maystadt, 2025). It often results in catastrophic consequences such as genocide, mass migrations, economic hardship, and environmental destruction, further compounded by a winner-take-all mentality that erodes trust and relationships. Ethnic violence is a critical issue in Sub-Saharan Africa, often rooted in historical grievances, competition for resources, and political manipulation. For instance, conflicts such as the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 serve as stark reminders of how ethnic divisions can escalate into widespread violence. Contemporary cases like the tensions between the Amhara and Tigray groups in Ethiopia highlight ongoing challenges. Such violence undermines community trust, complicating efforts at peace-building and socio-economic integration (Hartoyo, Sindung, Teuku & Sunarto, 2020; International Crisis Group, 2023).

To address these issues, strategies such as

fostering economic development, leveraging local wisdom, promoting the rule of law, reforming security sectors, and using education to improve inter-ethnic relations can help rebuild trust, resolve conflicts, and establish a foundation for lasting peace. Local communities are likely the most effective in solving cases of ethnic violence because they are closer to the community and usually have first-hand knowledge and experience of the crises. Sometimes, certain ethnicities align with certain religions, such as Islam, the Middle East, or Northern states across Sub-Saharan Africa. Among individuals and institutions, tolerance will facilitate peace and socioeconomic development (Aguilar, 2019; Asylum Research Centre, 2024).

Religious violence in Sub-Saharan Africa often stems from tensions between different religious groups, as well as conflicts within the same faith. In countries like Nigeria, inter-communal violence between Muslims and Christians has intensified, especially in the northern and middle-belt regions. The conflict between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government has taken on a religious dimension, with Boko Haram seeking to impose an extreme interpretation of Islam. Similarly, religious violence has occurred in the Central African Republic (CAR), where tensions between Muslim and Christian militias have led to numerous atrocities. Religious violence not only leads to loss of life but also threatens social cohesion, as it often becomes deeply intertwined with ethnic and political identities.

The relationship between religion, conflict, and peacebuilding in Africa is complex, with religion being both a source of violence and a means of

promoting peace. While religion has fueled conflicts in regions such as East Timor, Sudan, and the Balkans, it has also played a pivotal role in peacebuilding efforts. Religious values in Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity encourage conflict resolution and peace (Chigudu, 2024). Religious and traditional leaders offer a unique legitimacy that can bridge grassroots initiatives with formal peace processes, highlighting the need for their greater strategic inclusion (Finn Church Aid (FCA) & Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, 2024). During the Iraq war in 2003, religious leaders, including Pope John Paul II, strongly opposed the invasion, calling for peace and human rights protection, while the Vatican condemned the military attacks as immoral and contradictory to peace (Jamil, Atta & Kabil, 2024).

Land and Property Violence

Africa is rich in natural resources like soil, vegetation, water, and biodiversity, and its economy is growing rapidly. However, its development faces both opportunities and challenges. One major issue is the increasing pressure on land caused by population growth, climate change, and economic activities. This has led to land scarcity and conflicts, often worsened by weak leadership, gender inequalities, and fragile systems (Kayode & Okugya, 2023).

Land and property disputes are prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in rural areas where access to land is often critical for livelihood and survival (Bélair, Haar, Wieckardt, Wangu, Githuku, Atukunda, Sebbanja, Mudinga, Nghitevelekwa, Bichehe, Namaganda, 2023).

Conflicts between farmers and herders over land use have led to violent clashes

in countries like Nigeria, Mali, and Ethiopia. Climate change exacerbated these disputes, making agricultural land scarce and causing competition for increasingly limited resources. The violence that ensues often disrupts agricultural productivity, leading to food insecurity and poverty and hindering socio-economic development by creating environments of uncertainty and instability (Abdel-Latif & El-Gamal, 2024). Competition for fertile land has also been traced to poor resource usage and maintenance. These disputes also often stem from deeper issues like climate change, migration, and the lack of legal land rights, and they can trigger more significant conflicts (de Jong, de Bruin, Knoop & van Vliet, 2021).

Addressing land conflicts is crucial for Africa's growth, peace, stability, and human rights. Effective land conflict resolution is essential to manage these challenges and support peacebuilding and socioeconomic development in the 21st century (Asaaga, 2021).

Political Violence

Political violence manifests in forms such as coups, electoral violence, and state-sponsored repression. Sub-Saharan Africa has seen numerous instances where elections have sparked violence, often due to allegations of fraud or exclusionary practices. For example, the post-election violence in Kenya in 2007–2008 led to over 1,000 deaths and displaced thousands (Ochieng, Matanga & Iteyo, 2023). Political instability disrupts governance and deters investment and development, creating a vicious cycle of underdevelopment.

There is a broad consensus that governance significantly impacts development, with effective institutions

playing a critical role in economic growth and stability. Governance determinants, such as political stability, rule of law, and accountability, positively correlate with development outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), as shown in various case studies and empirical data. Governance challenges persisted while the early 21st century saw progress in poverty reduction, post-conflict stabilisation, public administration reforms, and peaceful electoral transitions. Many African countries have struggled with governance failures, policy reversals, and the fallout from external crises like fluctuating commodity markets, rising insecurity, the COVID-19 pandemic, and geopolitical shifts. These issues underscore the uneven development trajectories across the continent, reflecting the interplay between governance quality and development outcomes (Isser, Raballand, Watts & Zovighian, 2024).

Political actors have historically employed propaganda to strengthen their power and heighten ethnic tensions. Disinformation surrounding Ivorian heritage played a significant role in the civil war. Despite its connection to political violence, these tactics remain in use. During election periods, disinformation campaigns intensify. In the 2020 presidential and 2021 legislative elections, political figures fueled fear and doubt among Ivorians, spreading rumours about the government using youth gangs to target opposition supporters. This incited violence between rival political factions. A notable example of the impact of disinformation occurred in M'battao after the 2020 presidential election. Protests erupted in this predominantly Malinke area, supporting President Ouattara's ethnicity. Clashes led to six deaths and about 40 injuries. Social

media platforms, including Twitter, amplified rumours and fake news, including false claims of ethnic killings, further inflaming tensions (Albrecht, Fournier-Tombs & Brubaker, 2024). In this direction, Ezebuilo (2023) has maintained that youths must be gainfully empowered to contribute to socio-economic development.

In the decade before 2021, Africa experienced an average of one successful coup annually. However, since 2020, military coups have surged across countries like Burkina Faso, Sudan, Guinea, Chad, Mali, Niger, and Gabon. While the specific contexts vary, common predictors include failing social contracts, insecurity, and the militarization of politics. Widespread dissatisfaction with poor service delivery, flawed democratic governance, marginalisation, and perceived illegitimacy of governments often precede coups, sometimes sparking social protests and, initially, popular support for military interventions despite citizens' general preference for democracy (Akinola & Makombe, 2024).

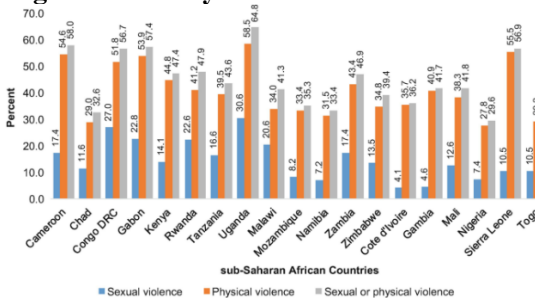
Poor living conditions in Sub-Saharan Africa have also been closely linked to political violence. This can be resolved by prioritising poverty alleviation in governance, improving socioeconomic status, and enhancing living standards. Population control policies should also be implemented alongside welfare measures and equitable resource distribution (Fagbemi & Fajingbesi, 2022).

Gender-Based Violence

The United Nations (UN) defines gender-based violence (GBV) as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women,

including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” GBV can be categorised based on the relationship between the perpetrator and victim (e.g., intimate partner violence [IPV] or non-IPV) or by the type of act, such as sexual, physical, or emotional violence (Muluneh, Stulz, Francis & Agbo, 2020).

Figure 2: Family Violence in SSA



Source: Chisumpa, Chirwa-Banda (2020)

Figure 2 is the result of using data on domestic violence from 19 SSA nations gathered from 2011 to 2015 as part of the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). They investigated the relationship between family violence, work, wealth, and educational attainment. The findings indicate that the prevalence of family violence varies by country, with Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Gabon, Sierra Leone, and Uganda having high rates of family violence (over 50%) (Chisumpa, Chirwa-Banda, 2020). Studies have describe the pervasive nature of violence in DRC:

For more than 20 years, the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) eastern area has been enmeshed in conflict. The findings highlight the need to recognise that women affected by war, especially those who are displaced, are more likely to have encountered several forms of

gender-based violence. We find that displacement and abuses associated with conflict are risk factors for IPV and sexual violence that women have encountered in the last 12 months. The findings demonstrate that women experience many types of gender-based violence, which emphasises the necessity of programs for women who are continuously displaced and at risk because of conflict (Gram, Paradkar, Osrin, Daruwalla, & Cislighi, 2023).

Without a doubt, the violent study's findings contradict the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In other words, the achievement of SDGs 5 and 16 of the UN Agenda 2030 is facilitated by the well-being of families with zero violence of all forms, especially Gender Based Violence (GBV). In opposition, most African societies with their norms and traditions are not in alignment with the SDG on Gender Equality when they believe it is unculture since male remains the supreme in the society

Family is a minute unit of every society. It is the primary background to the formation of every child. Once the family is laden with violence, it gives a bad mold to the development of society. The statistics in Figure 2 has shown the distribution in percentage of how different Sub-Saharan African countries are affected. The impact cannot be disconnected with the peacebuilding and socioeconomic development because the remaining stumbling blocks due to extant violence, bad image, discouraged investors, and other negative effects.

GBV is a global public health crisis that is also prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa. It significantly contributes to morbidity and poses substantial challenges to human

health. Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive issue, disproportionately affecting women and girls. GBV includes sexual violence during conflicts and harmful cultural practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). According to the United Nations, one in three women in Sub-Saharan Africa experiences some form of GBV in her lifetime. Such violence violates human rights and undermines public health and social stability (Patel & Roesch, 2020; Watson, 2022; Safiyan, 2024).

Ouedraogo and Stenzel (2021) examined the increasing prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic and its significant economic and social impacts. Lockdown measures and poor economic conditions intensified domestic violence, with notable surges in reported cases, such as Nigeria's rise from 300 to over 700 cases within a month and Croatia's 228% increase in rape cases in early 2020. These figures are based on actual calls or reports, as reporting challenges during lockdowns likely led to underreporting.

From the cultural perspectives, many African societies place women at the lowest level and believe that the male have all the rights to dictate how they live. Culture undermines the economic capacity of women and leaves them continuously vulnerable to violence. According to Alhassan (2019), most West African nations are male-dominated, with cultural norms that place men in positions of power over women. Male dominance and the use of physical force to "control" or regulate feminine behaviour are often justified by this hierarchical structure. The withdrawal that may follow this physical oppression does not align with socioeconomic

vibrancy on the part of the women.

For businesses, GBV contributes to absenteeism, staff turnover, and reputational risks. With women and girls feeling safe only within their homes, there is reduced labour supply, lower productivity, diminished human capital investment, and increased healthcare and judicial service demands. There are also issues with lower pay for females, which creates lower living standards for single-parent (women) households (Rees, Beeber, Sampson & Lietz, 2023). These are contrary to peacebuilding and socioeconomic development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Estimates highlight the global cost of GBV at \$1.5 trillion, with GDP losses of up to 3.7% in some countries. GBV costs South Africa 0.9–1.3% of GDP annually, and Ghana around 0.9%. GBV has a substantial economic toll, warranting increased focus on mitigation efforts (Ouedraogo & Stenzel, 2021).

The case is not all doom and gloom, however. Significant progress has been achieved in several areas. The proportion of women with access to bank accounts has increased considerably, narrowing the gender gap in access to formal financial services. More women now report having a say in how their earnings are used, with notable improvements observed in many countries over recent decades. The gender gap in labour force participation has also reduced as more women enter the workforce (Ouedraogo & Stenzel, 2021; Marcus & Somji, 2024). Allan (2019) proposes the following for businesses to mitigate and stop gender-based violence: - identify potential risks to prevent violence and harassment, promote gender equality and diversity throughout the workplace, implement supportive policies and procedures to

protect employees, engage in collaboration and advocacy beyond the workplace, and ensure accountability by monitoring progress and actions.

Criminal Violence

Organised crime, gang activity, and trafficking contribute significantly to criminal violence in Sub-Saharan Africa. Crime is a barrier to socioeconomic development because it discourages investments, increases business and living costs, and discourages investments, especially foreign direct investment (Jonathan, Akinyede, Bernadin & Inoussa, 2021). Countries such as South Africa face high rates of homicide and armed robbery, often linked to socio-economic inequalities. Moreover, human trafficking and drug trade routes in West Africa fuel corruption and weaken state institutions, further destabilising the region. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has consistently experienced a high level of armed conflict, as reported by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), with countries such as Nigeria, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Somalia being key sites of ongoing violence. The conflicts range from large-scale civil wars to localised insurgencies.

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) highlights the human toll from 1989 to 2022: Central Africa saw 42,481 deaths, East Africa recorded 1,305,734 deaths, and West Africa experienced 142,156 deaths, with Nigeria accounting for over half of the fatalities in West Africa due to the Boko Haram insurgency. The region faces escalating violence, particularly in the Western Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, where fundamentalist groups are spreading, and tensions between states, such as the

ongoing DRC-Rwanda conflict, continue to fuel instability. Ethiopia also faces internal strife, notably the Tigray conflict, which is exacerbating regional tensions. These conflicts reflect the complex and interconnected nature of different forms of violence in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ogbe, Abdullahi & Ding, 2024).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with funding from the German Federal Foreign Office, has officially signed a contract for the third phase of the police reform in Nigeria. The project, titled Supporting Police Accountability and Transformation (SPAAT), builds on efforts that began in December 2021 to strengthen the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and improve security for Nigerians. The goal is to create a police force that is effective, accountable, and professional while being responsive to the needs of all citizens, including vulnerable groups. The third phase will focus on providing training and development to prepare officers to handle current security challenges and protect the rights of people and communities (UNDP, 2024).

Terrorism and Insurgency

The rise of extremist groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Somalia has added another layer of violence. These groups employ tactics such as bombings, kidnappings, and mass killings to achieve their ideological goals. The humanitarian impact is profound, with millions displaced and entire communities destroyed. Jihadist insurgencies in Sub-Saharan Africa have intensified and evolved, with fatalities rising by 48% and violent incidents by 22% in 2022. These insurgencies have become localised, exploiting community grievances and resource conflicts with limited international connections or

support. Key hotspots include the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, Somalia, Mozambique, and Eastern Congo, where groups like JNIM, ISWAP, and al-Shabaab dominate. Strategies vary between al-Qaeda affiliates, which focus on local governance and negotiation, and ISIS affiliates, known for extreme violence. Localised funding mechanisms, such as extortion and taxation, sustain these groups but often strain community relations. Effective governance, security sector reforms, and community engagement are crucial to countering these insurgencies, as demonstrated by successful efforts in Mauritania and Niger. However, challenges persist due to weak state capacity, geographic constraints, and climate-induced resource conflicts.

School Violence/Bullying

School bullying is another form of violence plaguing many regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa. Two Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include the right to education, health, and well-being. School bullying deprives kids and teenagers of these as it negatively impacts their psychology and development. Where learners experience violence, the country is, in turn, affected as the *products* or *graduates* of such learning systems need help and rehabilitation before they can function as regular citizens in capacities such as teachers or public policy advisors. This impedes inclusive and equitable quality education for all (UNESCO, 2019).

School bullying occurs sometimes because children are perceived to be different in terms of physical appearance or (dis) abilities and at other times. After all, they are or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). A few recommendations by UNESCO

(2019) to stop bullying stand out, such as training and supporting teachers to prevent and respond to school violence and bullying and providing information and support to children to enable them to speak up. These options are corroborated by RahIff, Rinne, and Sonnabend (2023) and Smarrelli (2023) when they also recommend investing in the skills of school principals to create a path to improving the experience of learners as they go through the educational system.

Cyber Violence/Bullying

This refers to harmful actions or abuse through digital platforms or online spaces. It involves the use of technology (such as the internet, social media, or messaging apps) to harm individuals or groups through means like cyberbullying, online harassment, doxxing, or the spread of disinformation. Cyber violence is often personal, targeting specific individuals or groups, and can result in emotional, psychological, or reputational harm. Cyber violence is separated from school violence because it occurs amongst all strata of the population, including people not enrolled in schools. For school children, however, an increase in internet usage has been linked to an increase in reports of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is also discussed separately because in-person bullying does not always translate to cyberbullying due to levels of digitalisation and media literacy. Also, school bullying has decreased, while cyberbullying has simultaneously increased (RahIff, Rinne, and Sonnabend, 2023). Cyber violence focuses on direct harm and abuse within the digital space.

Media Violence

Media violence refers to the depiction of violent actions in various media formats.

It means portraying violent acts in various forms of media, such as television, films, video games, news broadcasts, and advertisements. Media violence is usually a representation or simulation of violence and influences public perception and behaviour. While it may not always result in direct harm to individuals, it can contribute to societal desensitisation to violence or shape public attitudes toward aggression, especially among vulnerable audiences like children or adolescents. While media violence can influence attitudes toward violence, technology-assisted violence is not about portrayal but rather the actual use of technology to carry out or support violent acts. Professionalism in media use is vital in societal peacebuilding (Chukwudi, Bello, Apeloko, & Olawunmi, 2024).

Technology-Assisted Violence

Technology-assisted violence is related but distinct from both cyber violence and media violence. It refers to the use of technology to facilitate or amplify violence, often in the physical world or in ways that enhance the reach or impact of harm. Social media and online space have transformed the gathering and dissemination of information. Whereas markets, market squares, coffee shops, and colleges were typical mustering points for information sharing, similar spaces have been created through the internet in the form of internet cafés in the early 2000s, online forums, group chats, WhatsApp Communities, Twitter Spaces, etc. (Akoja & Nwenezizi, 2020). The constant upload of information in multimedia formats (video and audio) gives relatively quick and easy access to information about events worldwide. Some terrorist attacks have been innocently aided via someone's posts on social media. Governments of various

countries now intervene in using the Internet when a massive movement seems to be getting out of hand or works contrary to their agenda. The Nigerian government banned Twitter in 2022 for seven months after a Tweet about secessionist moves supposedly by the Nigerian President was deleted. The Ethiopian government also restricted internet connection and usage in conflict-affected areas of Amhara and Tigray, making it difficult for reporters to cover the incidents and humanitarian aid to reach the people. The Ethiopian case somewhat follows logic as social media platforms like Facebook were used for hate speech to incite violence and genocidal violence through campaigns for the eradication of certain groups. Meta replied with specific strategies like flagging and removing violence-related posts that they felt would keep people in Ethiopia safe (MacLean, 2022; Mekonnen, 2022; Haile, 2024).

Technology-facilitated sexual violence and abuse (TFSVA) encompasses various forms of sexual violence, exploitation, and harassment conducted through digital platforms, including image-based abuse, sextortion, and online harassment. According to the eSafety Commissioner (2023), Technology-Facilitated Abuse (TFA) can take the following forms:

- a. Technology-facilitated abuse within the context of family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV-TFA)
- b. Technology-facilitated coercive control (TFCC)
- c. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV)
- d. Technology-facilitated intimate partner violence (TFIPV)
- e. Technology-facilitated sexual assault (TFSA)
- f. Technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV)

Examples include the use of unwanted tracking and monitoring devices, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, cyber harassment, and coercive control via digital tools. TFSVA leads to psychological trauma, social isolation, and financial difficulties, with cultural and contextual factors influencing the severity of impacts. It has significant psychological, social, financial, and health impacts, disproportionately affecting women due to patriarchal societal norms. The need for effective legislation, victim-supportive policing, education on reporting mechanisms, and expanded research in Sub-Saharan Africa is underscored. As digital technology use grows, so does the urgency to address TFSVA and its consequences globally, particularly in regions with entrenched gender inequality (Sheikh & Rogers, 2023; Rutgers International, 2024; UNFPA, 2024).

Family Violence/Domestic Abuse

Family violence or domestic abuse is violence against close relatives or members of the same household. This includes nuclear and extended family relations living together and domestic staff who may live in or are regularly around the house. Family violence differs from gender-based violence because it may not necessarily be against women or sexual. Religion and politics play a role in intimate partner violence (IPV) (Patel & Roesch, 2020).

A report by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) highlights the dual role of religion in intimate partner violence, serving both as a coping mechanism for victim-survivors and as a tool for abuse and control. Spiritual and religious abuse includes using religious teachings to justify violence in the family,

ridiculing beliefs, or restricting worship. Dr Mandy Truong, the report's co-author, emphasised that such abuse occurs across various religions and can be subtle, making it hard to identify. Faith leaders, though influential in combating abuse, are sometimes unequipped to respond effectively, often minimising the issue or prioritising relationship counselling over safety. The report supports professionals in addressing this abuse. It aligns with government initiatives like the CALD Communities and Faith Leaders Program, which trains leaders to identify and respond to family violence. With over half of Australians reporting religious affiliation, the research underscores the need for informed interventions to address the emotional, psychological, and social impacts of this form of violence. Less is known about intimate and non-intimate partner violence in the Sub-Saharan region.

Akoja and Anjorin (2020), examining the perceptions of female undergraduates, discovered that social media plays a significant role in breaking the culture of silence surrounding sexual violence against women. The prevalence of violence against women, coupled with the pervasive culture of silence, has been a subject of considerable concern. Research indicates that the involvement of social media groups is shifting this narrative, as these platforms support women in speaking out. Scholars have identified specific social media platforms such as Twitter, Slack, and Discord engaged in this campaign, noting their contributions to raising awareness among women, shaping their attitudes towards information on sexual violence, and influencing their perceptions of the effectiveness of social media in combating sexual violence.

Resource-Based Violence

Resource-based violence is a significant challenge in Sub-Saharan Africa, driven by the abundance of valuable natural resources such as oil, minerals, and timber. Paradoxically, these resources have often created conflict, corruption, and instability instead of fostering economic growth. This phenomenon, known as the “resource curse,” is evident in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where competition over mineral wealth fuels prolonged conflict (Sini, Rahim & Sulaiman, 2021). Resource-based conflicts hinder governance and development, as governments often prioritise resource exploitation over equitable distribution and peacebuilding (Isser, Raballand, Watts & Zovighian, 2024).

At the national level, perceptions of economic, social, or political exclusion significantly contribute to conflict, violence, and instability, thus impeding peace-building and socioeconomic development. Some governance mechanisms perpetuate this string of events by overpromising during political campaigns and under-delivery during their administration, misplaced priorities such as building schools when the people lack suitable means of livelihood to keep body and soul together and maintain or expand the infrastructures after they have been built (Abdel-Latif & El-Gamal, 2024).

Since the 1970s in Sub-Saharan Africa, dissatisfaction with standard poverty measures led to the development of multidimensional poverty and exclusion indices, also linked to social unrest.

Rebel group involvement in conflicts has risen sharply since 2018, reflecting fragmentation within political and social structures. The increase in violence,

particularly against civilians, underscores the urgency of conflict prevention. The Sahel region, especially the Liptako-Gourma area, has faced escalating violence, including terrorism by groups like ISGS and JNIM. The previously localised conflicts have begun spreading across Africa, amplifying the urgency for comprehensive intervention (Abdel-Latif & El-Gamal, 2024).

Urban Violence

Urban violence is on the rise in many Sub-Saharan African cities, driven by rapid urbanisation, unemployment, poverty, and socio-economic inequalities. Slums and informal settlements, which are home to a large portion of the urban population, often become hotspots for gang activity, violent protests, and police brutality. For example, in South Africa, the stark disparity between affluent neighbourhoods and impoverished townships has contributed to high levels of violent crime, including armed robberies and assaults (Wirdze, 2024). Similarly, in Nigeria, urban centres like Lagos and Port Harcourt witnessed frequent clashes between rival gangs, exacerbating insecurity. Urban violence disrupts daily life and poses significant challenges to law enforcement and local governance (Sakketa, 2023).

Cities that grow quickly often face the risk of violence because people compete for limited resources and space. To reduce this risk, it is important to understand what helps cities and their people stay peaceful and makes cities more resilient to violence (Elfvorsson & Höglund, 2023). A study in Los Angeles explored the link between heat and crime, finding that higher temperatures significantly increase crime rates, particularly in low-income

neighbourhoods. A 1.72% rise in crime occurs on days above 75°F, with a more substantial impact in areas with higher poverty levels. This is driven by “crimes of passion”, such as domestic disputes, rather than reduced policing efforts. Older housing and less greenery amplify the heat-crime relationship, while newer, greener neighbourhoods experience reduced impacts. The economic burden of heat-induced crime is over five times greater in poor areas, highlighting climate change’s unequal effects within cities. This relationship could apply to Sub-Saharan Africa, where the weather is hot most of the year (Heilmann, Kahn & Tang, 2021).

Figure 3: Image of police brutality on protesters



Source: Silla (2022).

The picture in Figure 3 shows the confrontation of the protesters by the police authorities with arms. This happened in Conakry, Guinea, after the government barred the opposition party from holding a peaceful march. This type of scenario does not add to the socioeconomic growth of any country. Instead, it will scare the intending investors, causing continuous backwardness.

Violence Against Children

Children in Sub-Saharan Africa are particularly vulnerable to various forms of violence, including child labour, trafficking, and recruitment into armed groups. According to UNICEF, millions

of children in the region experience physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. In conflict-affected areas, children are often abducted and forced to become child soldiers, as seen in the activities of groups like the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda. Such violence not only robs children of their innocence but also deprives communities of future generations equipped to drive development and peace (Barchi & AbiNader, 2024).

State-Sponsored Violence

State-sponsored violence occurs when government forces engage in violent actions against their citizens, often in the form of repression, torture, and mass killings. Governments may use state power to suppress political dissent, ethnic groups, or social movements that challenge their authority (Isser, Raballand, Watts & Zovighian, 2024). One notable example is the conflict in Sudan, where government forces have been accused of committing atrocities against civilians in the Darfur region. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, political opposition has been met with violent crackdowns, undermining political stability and hindering efforts toward peace and development. State-sponsored violence creates a climate of fear, disrupts governance, and can exacerbate societal divisions, making reconciliation and nation-building significantly more difficult (Babajide, Ahmad & Coleman, 2021). Intervention of international organisations is highly needed to assist victims or prevent the occurrence of violence. United Nation is a global authority that helps countries in maintaining of peace and assuring security. At the continental and regional levels are African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) respectively.

Violence Due to Refugees and Displacement

Violence arising from the presence of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) is a persistent issue in Sub-Saharan Africa. Refugee camps and displaced populations often strain host communities, leading to competition for resources such as water, land, and employment. For example, in Uganda, one of the largest refugee-hosting nations in the region, tensions frequently arise between host communities and refugees over agricultural land usage (Mlambo, 2024). Similarly, in the Lake Chad Basin, where Boko Haram's insurgency has displaced millions, local populations and IDPs often clash over limited resources, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities.

Addressing violence linked to displacement requires fostering peaceful coexistence through inclusive development initiatives. Strategies such as community-based resource management, dialogue platforms, and equitable service delivery are critical. For instance, Uganda's Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy aims to improve relations by integrating refugees into national development plans. Such initiatives help build trust and mitigate tensions, laying the groundwork for long-term peace (Sub-Saharan Africa, 2022).

The socioeconomic impact of refugee-related violence includes disrupted livelihoods and increased poverty in host regions. However, effective integration policies can transform displaced populations into contributors to local economies. Programs focusing on education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship have shown promise in empowering refugees and IDPs, as seen

in Ethiopia's Jobs Compact initiative. By addressing root causes and promoting economic inclusion, governments and international organisations can turn displacement crises into opportunities for growth (Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 2024).

Summary

The challenges of Peacebuilding in Africa are multifaceted and rooted in the complex nature of contemporary armed conflicts. Unlike earlier periods where conflicts were often driven by political control over central governments, modern conflicts involve varied personal and group motivations, such as separatist agendas or extremist ideologies, as seen in regions like the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and Cabo Delgado, Mozambique.

Political transitions, contested elections, resource disputes, violent extremism, and interstate rivalries led by groups such as Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, and insurgents in Mozambique contribute significantly to instability. Efforts to build peace are hindered by overlapping challenges, such as weak state authority, unresolved political and socio-economic inequalities, and the failure to address transitional justice. For instance, the disarmament and reintegration of armed groups often face resistance, while ungoverned spaces and fragmented state authority, as in Mali or Libya, further complicate the process. Additionally, the political economy of violence, including the trafficking of arms, human beings, and illicit goods, sustains conflicts while increasing humanitarian burdens like displacement and loss of life. Women are often excluded from formal processes despite their potential role in fostering peace. Successful peacebuilding requires inclusive, sustained measures that

address root causes, such as political exclusion, economic inequity, and weak justice systems, while ensuring international collaboration and coherent strategies to mitigate and resolve conflicts (ACCORD, 2020).

Suggestion for Further Studies

A quantitative research design should be used in a further studies to gather more measurable and verifiable information. A comparative study of different nations in Sub-Saharan Africa should be carried out to identify the level at which their violence differs from the other.

Conclusion

Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa remains a complex phenomenon that continues to hinder peace-building and socioeconomic development. The region's diverse forms of violence—ranging from communal, ethnic, and religious conflicts to gender-based and technology-assisted violence—are deeply rooted in historical, socio-political, and economic inequalities. Theories such as Conflict Theory and Structural Violence Theory highlight the structural and systemic issues perpetuating these challenges, emphasising the need for a multi-dimensional approach to address the region's crises. While there have been efforts to promote peace and stability, the persistence of these issues underscores the urgent need for actionable strategies and collaborative governance mechanisms.

Recommendations

- Governments in Sub-Saharan Africa should engage in direct association and discussion with the parties involved in conflict, find out the root causes and enter into transparent deliberations on the

solutions.

- All stakeholders must be actively involved toward investing and building strong, accountable institutions that promote justice, equitable resource distribution, and human rights where and victims must be pacified through provision and relocation to reduce tension
- This includes reinforcing judicial systems to address grievances and disputes fairly and transparently.
- Economic disparities should be addressed through policies prioritising job creation, equitable resource sharing, and access to education and healthcare. A specific focus should be placed on marginalised groups such as women, children, and displaced persons.
- Governments and international partners must adopt technology-driven solutions, such as predictive analytics and satellite surveillance, to anticipate and prevent outbreaks of violence. Community-based conflict resolution mechanisms should complement these systems. Regional organisations, such as the African Union (AU), should be empowered to enforce policies and sanctions against states or groups that perpetuate violence. Increased collaboration with global partners can also bolster resources for peace-building initiatives.
- Systemic poverty, inequality, and poor governance must be tackled by adopting inclusive policies. Education, healthcare, and infrastructure investments should target underserved communities to bridge gaps in opportunity and equity.
- Governments and private sectors should regulate digital platforms to prevent their misuse in perpetuating violence (e.g., cyberbullying, or

terrorism). Simultaneously, technology can foster dialogue, education, and community-building across ethnic and religious divides.

- Local communities should be empowered to create context-specific solutions to conflicts. Traditional leaders, civil society organisations, and women's groups must be engaged in decision-making processes for sustainable peace efforts.
- Policies addressing violence must incorporate gender-sensitive approaches to mitigate the disproportionate impact of violence on women and girls.
- Gender equality in leadership roles is essential for inclusive peacebuilding. Examples are local reconciliation efforts in Rwanda or community dialogues in Sierra Leone.

Policy Statement

To achieve sustainable peace and socio-economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa, policymakers must prioritise comprehensive, inclusive, and collaborative strategies that will involve peacebuilding and the intervention of external actors (individuals, local and international organisations) in cases of violence. Reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation must be part of established policies. In this case, displaced people can be accommodated and provided for to cushion the effects and limit tension. Recognising the multifaceted nature of violence, governments must address its root causes and manifestations through equitable policies, robust governance, and active engagement with international stakeholders. Furthermore, integrating community voices and protecting

vulnerable populations should remain central to all interventions. This policy framework will ensure that Sub-Saharan Africa moves toward a more peaceful and prosperous future.

Statement of Interest Declaration

There are no competing interests of any kind for the writers.

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