



Received: 26 April 2020

Revised: 17 June 2020

Accepted: 24 June 2020

Published: 30 June 2020

CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

KONFLIKTY I KRYZYSY W NIGERII: ZARZĄDZANIE I ROZWIĄZANIA DLA BUDOWANIA POKOJU

Abraham Ejogba Orhero

PhD, Department of Political Science, Delta State University, Abraka / Nigeria

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7596-554X>

* *Corresponding author*: e-mail: orheabraham@gmail.com

Abstract:

Conflicts and crises do not imply peace rather they are anti-peace. They stand for or symbolize problems in human society. Historically, Nigeria profiles the highest statistics of violent conflicts in Africa. These conflicts range from land disputes, resource control, and ethnic cleavages to wars of liberation. Unfortunately, the dilemma confronting Nigeria today is not really the occurrence of conflicts and crises in the real sense, but how to resolve them in such a manner as to prevent the past ones from reoccurring and contain the present ones from escalating or degenerating into full-scale war. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that this paper examines the nitty-gritty of conflicts and crises, their antecedents, and their management and resolution in Nigeria. The paper also presents methods for better management and resolution of conflicts and crises in Nigeria. Finally, the paper concludes that the traditional conflict resolution techniques such as mediation, reconciliation, adjudication, and negotiation as well as cross-examination which were employed by Africans in the past, offer great prospects for peaceful co-existence and harmonious relationships in post-conflict periods than the modern method of litigation settlements in law courts. Thus, the paper recommends among others that the Nigeria government, especially the National Assembly should make and implement policies aimed at addressing the root and trigger causes of conflicts and crises in the country.

Keywords: Conflicts, Crises, Management, Resolution, Peaceful Co-existence

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska



This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

Streszczenie:

Konflikty i kryzysy nie implikują pokoju, lecz są anty-pokojowe. Stanowią lub symbolizują problemy w społeczeństwie. Historycznie Nigeria charakteryzuje się najwyższymi statystykami dotyczącymi konfliktów z użyciem przemocy w Afryce. Konflikty te rozciągają się od sporów o ziemię, kontroli zasobów i podziałów etnicznych, po wojny o wyzwolenie. Niestety dylematem, przed którym stoi dziś Nigeria, nie jest występowanie konfliktów i kryzysów, ale sposób ich rozwiązania tak, aby zapobiec ponownemu pojawianiu się poprzednich konfliktów i powstrzymaniu obecnych przed eskalacją i rozwinięciem się do stanu pełnej wojny. Dlatego właśnie na tym tle niniejszy artykuł analizuje sedno konfliktów i kryzysów (obecnych jak i poprzednich) oraz zarządzania nimi i rozwiązywania ich w Nigerii. W artykule przedstawiono również metody lepszego zarządzania konfliktami i kryzysami oraz rozwiązywania ich. W artykule stwierdzono, że tradycyjne techniki rozwiązywania konfliktów, takie jak mediacja, orzekanie i negocjacje, które stosowali Afrykanie w przeszłości, dają obiecujące perspektywy pokojowego współistnienia i harmonijnych relacji i są one lepsze niż obecna metoda rozstrzygania sporów sędowo. W związku z tym w artykule zaleca się między innymi, aby rząd Nigerii, a zwłaszcza Zgromadzenie Narodowe, opracował i wdrożył politykę mającą na celu usunięcie przyczyn konfliktów i kryzysów w kraju.

Słowa kluczowe: Konflikty, kryzysy, zarządzanie, rozwiązywanie problemów, pokojowe współistnienie

Statement of the problem in general outlook and its connection with important scientific and practical tasks

Conflicts and crises are found at every stage of life. Individuals, groups, associations, societies, local, national, and even world communities continue to experience conflicts and crises in one way or the other (Alabi, 2010). According to Otite and Albert (2001), conflict is a struggle over values and claims to status, power, and scarce resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. It can also be seen as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, values, or goals. There is actually nothing wrong with conflict because it is a critical mechanism by which goals and aspirations of individuals and groups are articulated; it is a channel for a definition of creative solutions to human problems and a means to the development of a collective identity (Albert, 2001). However, what is often questioned is how man responds to conflict. A poorly handled conflict could become violent or destructive, it could become a crisis. A crisis is said to occur when a conflict persists for too long and seems to defy easy solution. Historically, Nigeria profiles the highest statistics of violent conflict in Africa. These conflicts range from land disputes, resources control, and ethnic cleavages to wars of liberation. Unfortunately, however,

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska



This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

the dilemma confronting Nigeria today is not really the occurrence or egregiousness of conflicts and crises in the real sense, but how to resolve these conflicts and crises in such a manner as to prevent the past ones from reoccurring and also contain the present ones from escalating and degenerating into full-scale war. Thus, effective strategies that can help to nip conflict in the bud and to prevent it from escalating if it erupts, as well as to sustain peace to avert future occurrence of crises and their attendant large scale effects should be developed and sustained by any nation that seeks peace, growth, and development (Alabi, 2010; Eke, 2013). It is instructive to note that conflict may generally exist whenever and wherever incompatible activities occur and may result in a 'win-lose' situation. The management and resolution of conflict may also produce a 'win-win' situation. Therefore, this paper examines the causes, antecedent, management, and resolution of conflicts and crises in Nigeria with a view to propose better strategies for conflicts and crisis management in modern-day Nigeria.

Analysis of latest research where the solution of the problem was initiated Theoretical Conceptualization of Conflict and Crises

Conflict as an element of social interaction has been defined in various dimensions. Some scholars argued that a conflict situation emerges when two and more parties could not agree on an issue. The parties to such conflict may not necessarily be the government or nation-states. In an incompatible stage among nation-states, every part involved seeks to achieve certain objectives, such as additional or more secure territory, security, access to markets, prestige, alliances, and the overthrow of an unfriendly government (Omotosho, 2004 cited in Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). To Coser (1956), the conflict has to do with a struggle over value or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aim of the conflicting parties is not only to gain the desired values but to also neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. According to Bello and Olutola (2016:72), conflict is "the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups. It is calculated attempt to pursue an actor's political and socio-economic objectives, which are reflected in their values, needs, interests, and positions". In the view of Molwus, Ewuga, and Orih (2016:21), conflict refers to "contradictions arising from differences in the interests, ideas, ideologies, orientations and precipitous tendencies of the people involved in a relationship, business or contract". These contradictions are inherited at all levels of social and economic interactions of the human race. It may thus exist at the individual, group, institutional, national, and international levels. Conflict is, therefore, a pervasive phenomenon in human relationships and has been seen as the basic unit for understanding social existence (Nnoli, 1998). In the opinion

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska



This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

of Weber (1949), conflict is part and parcel of social life. This means that conflict can be positive or negative depending on the context in which it is brought to bear with social realities in society. This supports the assertion of Ademola (2006) who posits that conflict can be used constructively to investigate different solutions to a problem and motivate creativity by recognizing and thoughtfully exposing conflicts as a way of bringing emotional and non-logical argument into the open when deconstructing long-standing tension. For example, the case of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the government decision of granting them amnesty after a very protracted conflict between them and the government over resource control. However, since Nigeria gained political independence in 1960 the country has witnessed various shades of conflicts. These conflicts vary from clusters of ethno-religious conflicts, protracted civil wars, inter, and intra conflicts (Olufemi & Adewale, 2017). In their observations, Ekiyor (2008); Alabi (2010) submit that these conflicts have resulted in millions of death, the displacement of many (countless number of internally displaced persons), the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and the stagnation of economic growth and development. In the opinion of Albert, 2013 cited in Ajaji and Buhari (2014: 141), “there is nothing wrong with conflict; it is a critical mechanism by which goals and aspirations of individuals and groups are articulate; it is a channel for a definition of creative solutions to human problems and a means to the development of collective identity”. Similarly, Alabi (2010) posits that there is actually nothing wrong with conflict; no society that seeks to develop can absolutely do without it. What is often questioned is how man responds to conflict. This is the crux of the matter in Nigeria. A poorly handled conflict could become violent or destructive. It could become a crisis. A crisis said to exist when a conflict persists for too long and seems to defy an easy solution. A typical example is the Niger Delta crisis which has been raging for over three decades until Late President Umaru Yar’ Adua initiated an amnesty program. According to World Book Encyclopaedia, 2004 cited in Albi (2010: 311), the crisis is “a turning point in the course of anything, uncertain time or state of affairs, a moment of great danger or difficulty”. Harks (2000) gives synonyms of crisis as catastrophe, calamity, emergency, disaster. Thus, crises are sudden eruptions of unexpected events caused by previous conflicts. Conflict and crisis are ‘foreign bodies’ in human society or relationship. They constitute a disturbance to peaceful co-existence in human society and they cause a dent to a harmonious relationship and peacebuilding in societies.

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska



This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

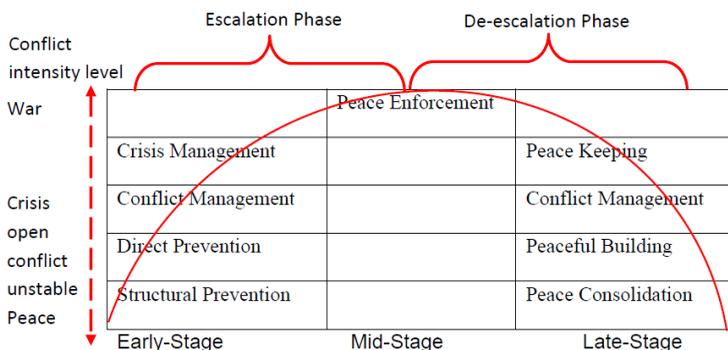
International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

Aims of paper. Methods

This paper examines the causes, antecedent, management, and resolution of conflicts and crises in Nigeria with a view to propose better strategies for conflicts and crisis management in modern-day Nigeria. Conflicts and crises in Africa particularly Nigeria are caused by a range of factors such as the difference in perceptions, the legacy of colonialism, the difference in status, resource control, abject poverty and acute unemployment religion and ethnicity, high level of illiteracy, the difference in personal trait/behavior, poor communication skills, mutual dependence on limited resources and the difference in value. These factors have continuously pitched Nigeria in the valley of multi-various conflicts and hydra-headed crises. More so, Swanstrom and Weisman (2005) stated that conflict is not a static situation but a dynamic one. The conflict has a life cycle like that of a human being. There is usually a start, a mature and a resolution or death stages. Conflicts need to be described as cyclical with regard to their intensity levels. That is, escalating from relative stability and peace into crises or war, thereafter deescalating in relative peace. However, Swanstrom and Weisman (2005) divide both the escalation and de-escalation of conflict cycle into phases as shown below.

Figure 1. The conflict cycle.



Source: Swanstrom and Weisman (2005:11).

The curve is divided into five levels of conflict intensity (stable peace, unstable peace, open conflict, crisis, and war) in a total of nine chronological phases. Stable peace is a situation where the tension between the parties is low and there exist different forms

of connections and cooperation between them, often including economic and environmental cooperation as well as cooperation within other non-sensitive issues. During a period of unstable peace, tension has increased. This is a situation where albeit the existing negative peace, the tension between the parties is so high that peace no longer seems guaranteed. Open conflict is when the conflict is defined and the parties have taken measures to deal with it, even if militarized options are the preferable or likely option. There is no regular open violence. In the de-escalation phase, the pattern is reversed, moving from war to crises through open conflict and unstable peace to finally reach a situation of stable peace. Just as the phases of the conflict cycle are important, the link between conflict prevention and conflict and crisis management needs to be developed further. The easiest way to separate the concepts is by focusing on the time factor. Starting with conflict prevention, it is by definition applied before the conflict has become open and violent. That is, to prevent a conflict from emerging in the first place. Conflict prevention measures are effective at the levels of stable – and unstable peace before a conflict has become manifest, here, it is essential to differentiate between structural measures that often aim at specific groups or issues such as economic development, political participation or cultural autonomy. The benefits of applying structural measures at an early stage is simply that the acceptance of preventive measures tends to be higher at low levels of inter-party suspicious and hence more far-reaching and institutional measures can be implemented. If structural preventive measures are implemented at an early stage, including both the building of institutions and development of trust and long-term cooperation, they decrease the perceived need to, and hence the risk of escalating potential conflict issues into the level of unstable peace (Fagbemi& Adedeji, 2015). In the unstable peace phase, the direct preventive measures are directed at issues with a shorter-term in mind. That is, to reduce tension and create trust between the actors. Thus, the window of opportunity for long-term initiatives such as the building of institutions fades away slowly and the conflict becomes more issue-specific and more costly in financial and political terms. The direct preventive measure can, for example, be formal or informal workshops dealing with the possible conflict issues, they can also aim at creating openness in certain fields such as the military, reducing military spending, or achieving cooperation in rescue operations. Other examples include sanctions, coercive diplomacy, the dispatch of special envoys, and problem-solving workshop. Conflict and crisis management do, on the other hand, involve tactics that are enforced when violent conflict is deemed likely

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska



This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

(conflict management) or imminent (crisis management), but before a situation escalates into war. Conflict management can be enforced as soon as the conflict has been identified by the actors, as an effort to reduce tension and prevent further escalation. Crisis management is employed in the short time frame before a war is to erupt when the conflict escalates rapidly and the time for managing it is limited. This period is characterized by a scarcity of time and other resources to address the conflict as well as inadequate information (Ebisi, 2016). Therefore, crisis management entails more drastic measures than conflict management and aims at containing the outbreak of militarized conflict with all available means. Examples of such measures include third party intervention by actors such as stakeholders, presidents of other nations, and the United Nations (UN). During the stage of the war, neither prevention nor management is possible. Military weapons are used as the primary tool, even if political, social, and economic tools are used simultaneously to decrease the opponent's willingness and/or capability of the fight. At this stage, the actors either have to fight things out until reaching a so-called hurting stalemate where both parties realize the need to end the crisis or peace has to be enforced by external actors. At this point, there are of course many different measures that could be utilized, but few of them are peaceful. The stages of peacebuilding and peace recognition are often financially costly and require enormous political and economic commitment from the international community as well as the involved actors. This is not to mention the economic and social costs affect the population at large, but especially the poorer sections of the society. In general, the measures used in the de-escalation phase are often much more financially and politically demanding than the pro-active measures in the escalation phase (Swanstrom & Weisman, 2005).

Exposition of the main material of research with complete substantiation of obtained scientific results. Discussion

Conflicts and Crises Management in Nigeria

The dilemma confronting Nigeria today is not really the occurrence of conflicts and crises in the real sense, but how to address these conflicts and crises in such a manner as to prevent the past ones from reoccurring and also contain the present ones from escalating and degenerating into full-scale war. The wanton destruction of lives and properties occasioned by incessant crises in Nigeria calls for the need to look into the issue of conflicts and crises management, a strategy that can help to nip conflict in the bud and to prevent it from escalation if it erupts as well as to sustain peace to avert future occurrence of crises and their attendant large scale effects (Alabi, 2010). It is

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska

 This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

important to note that we do not have the option of staying out of conflicts and crises as human beings unless we stay out of a relationship, family, work, and community. Therefore, all we need to do is imbibe conflicts, management strategies, and sharpen our crisis management skills to interact meaningfully with one another. In the view of Schmid, 2000 cited in Alabi (2010), conflict management is interference in an ongoing conflict in such a manner as to contain and, if possible:

- I Reduce the level of violence and destruction
- II Prevent the vertical escalation towards the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
- III Prevent horizontal expansion into other areas.

While crisis management is the coordinated and timely application of political, economic, military, and or security measures taken in response to a situation threatening peace with the aim of defusing the tensed situation, preventing escalation, or achieving a peaceful settlement of a dispute. In Nigeria, successive administrations have managed conflicts and crises in different but coercive and unconstructive ways. For example, Abacha's administration used police and military to resolve Ife-Modakeke crises in 1997, but all to no avail until peaceful intervention of United States Agency for International Development/ Office of International initiatives (USAID/OTI). Soldiers were also drafted in 1999 to quell the Arogbo Ijaw-UgboIlaje crises by Obasanjo's administration. The same administration, in its bids to settle and resolve Niger- Delta crises used Military Joint Task Force (JTF) with the ideological slogan: Operation Restore Hope' in order to win legitimacy. Also, in most of the tribal and religious clashes, soldiers had been drafted to such areas in order to quench crises and restore peace, little or no attention was paid to restore permanent peace between and among the concerned groups after temporary peace was restored (Albert, 2003; Alabi, 2010; Eke, 2013). The administration of Late Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar-Adua employed an alternative dispute resolution spectrum to resolve the Niger – Delta crises, the crises that have become phenomenal albatross around the neck of Nigeria. He created Niger-Delta Ministry and granted amnesty to the Niger – Delta Militants. This has greatly yielded a lot of results and peacebuilding in the region (Alabi, 2010). Goodluck Ebere Jonathan's administration used the Military Joint Task Force (JTF) to quench the Boko Haram crises in the North – East of Nigeria from 2009 to 2014, but all to no avail. Also, Buhari's administration since 2015 to date has been battling with Boko Haram and the herders – crop farmers clashes with the use of soldiers and police and all the intervention strategies employed have yielded next to no achievements.

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska



This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

Traditional Conflict Resolution Techniques

1. Negotiation is Roger Fisher's approach to conflict resolution which introduced the term 'principled – negotiation'. The principle-based approach aims to resolve the conflict by deferring judgment to a moral principle. Such an approach advocates the need for interest-based negotiation in contrast to those based on a 'position' (Fisher & Ury, 1991). For example, interests include issues like security, esteem, and pleasures, while positions define how one achieved those interests. Fisher encourages the need for empathy and asks the question – 'why does one hold one position and another hold a different one'. Empathy allows parties to discern the underlying interest which by creativity may result in an amicable solution (what this author would refer to as 're-negotiated position' to each party). Like Bartos (1974).

Fisher and Ury (1991) define the most powerful interests as human needs, which they identify as security, economic well-being, a sense of belonging, recognition, and control over one's life. Negotiation, therefore, constitutes the "art of the dialectics of wills that use force and/or peaceful measures to resolve their conflict (Luthwak, 1989 cited in Bello & Olutola, 2016: 76). Negotiation can be collaborative when synergies are displayed by the disputing parties and are able to constructively engage in positive simulation. The secret of negotiation is to harmonize the interests of the disputing parties. Thus, even when the conflict involves a number against his or her society, there is an emphasis on recuperation and reinsertion of errant member back into its place in society. The recovery of a dissident member can just as well be seen as the restoration of the harmony and integrity of the community, as the assertion of value consensus and social cohesion, so that the management of the conflict favors the concerns of both disputing parties (Ajaji & Buhari, 2014). In traditional African society, peace was negotiated. Apology for wrongs done to individuals and the entire community was a feature of negotiation. Such apology was channeled through elders in council, family heads, and chiefs of high caliber in the community. These groups of people share a common commitment to peace and universal human rights; they also bring with them a wealth of diverse expertise and experience. They are peacemakers, peacebuilders, and social revolutionaries. Thus, the negotiation is done on the representative level or quasi-representative (Olaoba, 2005).

2. Mediation is 'voluntary, non-coercive, and non-binding. Therefore, it is less risky for conflicting parties as it does not take away much of their control. With guidance from skilled mediators, the mediation process nudges disputants towards a mutually acceptable agreement and creates potential from transforming conflicts so that they do

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 / Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska

 This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

not recur” (DeRouen&Bercovitch, 2012:22). A mediator can be an elder, a religious leader, a wise neighbor, or a respected businessman. In mediation, the mediator tries to guide the discussion in a way that optimizes parties’ needs, takes feelings into account, and reframes representations. Olaoba (2005) described mediation as a method of conflict resolution that had been so critical to traditional African society. The mediators usually endeavored that peace and harmony reigned supreme in the society. This is also usually couched with the dictum of no Victor no vanquished as buttressed by the maxim (Isurmona, 2005; Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). In Africa, the roles of mediators depend on traditions, circumstances, and personalities. These roles include “pressurizing, making recommendations, giving assessments, conveying suggestions on behalf of the parties, emphasizing relevant norms and rules, envisaging the situation if an agreement is not reached or repeating of the agreement already attained” (Bright-Brock, 2001:11).

3. Reconciliation is an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process whereby the parties to a dispute use a conciliator, who meets with the parties separately in an attempt to resolve their differences. They do this by lowering tensions, improving communications, interpreting issues, providing technical assistance, exploring potential solutions, and bringing about a negotiated settlement. Reconciliation differs from mediation in that the main goal is to conciliate, most of the time by seeking concessions. At least, as characteristics of African traditional society, “conflict resolution methods are the use of arbitration. The reconciliation function is practiced by an authority figure that mediates between conflicting parties but is empowered to make binding judgments. The purpose is not to render judgment is the law, but to reconcile the conflicting parties and its norms. The relationship between the authority and the community is cushioned by community representatives who advise authority” (William, 2000 cited in Ajayi & Buhari, 2014).

4. Adjudication is the process in which parties present their case before a judge or jury. Here, it assumes that parties are unable to resolve their conflicts and a decision must be taken from outside (Wisslar, 2004). Adjudication is considered as a step taken either by the parties involved or by a mediator, who feels adjudication is the best process to resolve the lingering conflict or crisis. In traditional African society, adjudication involves bringing all disputants in the conflict to a meeting usually in the chambers or compounds of family heads, quarter heads, and palace court as the case may be. The dialogue was linked with the adjudicatory processes in traditional (Oloaobi, 2005; Ajayi & Buhari, 2014).

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska



This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

5. Cross-Examination is “an essential method employed in the process of conflict resolution in traditional African society. It is a means of weighting evidence through cross-checking and corroborating the facts of the conflict” (Oloaba, 2005:6). In Nigeria, a good sense of justice is associated with cross-examination. In traditional African society, extra-judicial methods were employed in conflict resolution. These took the form of ordeals and the invocation of supernatural forces to expose all sides to the conflict. For example, Olaoba (2001) noted that the oath-taking weaving instrument and chiefly scepter, royal shrine, or religious sanctuaries were the extra-judicial methods used for eliciting facts of the dispute. Also, the goddess of the river and the guardian of social morality were used to ascertaining the veracity of the story told by disputants (Olaoba, 2001).

Importance of Cultural and Tradition in Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution in a plural society can be quite complex, principally because of the determinate effects of culture and language symbolism. Culture is a marker of social difference. It should be regarded as an obstacle to conflict resolution in multi-ethnic /multicultural societies (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). However, Otite and Albert (2001) and Ebisi (2016) argue that it is dangerous to relegate culture and tradition to the background in conflict resolution indigenous methods of conflict resolution abound among the numerous ethnic configurations that make up the Nigeria State. The traditional rulers such as Emirs in the northern part of Nigeria, the Obas in the western part of Nigeria, the Olu/Oba in the mid-western states, the Obis South – East and the Igbo speaking areas in South-South, the council of elders, family heads, ward heads, local deities or oracles, e.t.c. have played a vital role in the containment and resolution of pockets of conflicts in their domains both in the pre-colonial, colonial and in the post-colonial era (Nwolise, 2005 cited in Bello & Olutola, 2016). Unfortunately, their impacts and the currency of influence they wield today is a complete departure from the past. Thus, there is a cloak of silence on the efficacy of traditional or indigenous models of conflict resolution in contemporary Nigeria State. This is why Nwolise (2005:152) argued that “the abandonment of utility-laden indigenous mechanism of conflict resolution is largely responsible for the multiplicity of avoidable violent conflicts all over the African continent”. According to Harsanyi, 1969 cited in Bello and Olutola (2016:84), today, “a mere land dispute between two families or communities leads to murder and destruction of hundreds of houses and killing of several people whereas, in traditional Africa, the mechanism put in place to monitor, manage and resolve conflicts would have readily prevented such Wanton damage”. The indigenous mechanism help to

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska

 This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

bring to the fore the whole essence of conflict resolution in the African context which is as follows: to establish the truth; remove the root causes of conflicts; reconcile conflicting parties genuinely; preserve and ensure enduring peace in the society; set the right milieu for societal production and development; promote good governance, law and order; and security of lives and property among others. All these can be adopted and utilized in today's conflict resolution theatre for peace to be achieved in Nigeria and Africa (Bello & Olutola, 2016). These are in contrast with what is obtains in Nigeria today where nobody cares about the truth. The objective of the Sharia or native court system is to win the case. Where there is violence between two groups or communities, Nigerian government deployed the police or the soldiers to restore peace, and follow this up at times by setting up a commission of inquiry, whose report may or may not see the light of day and whose recommendations may never be implemented. All these worsen, rather than resolve conflicts and crises. It is pertinent to note at this point that conflicts hardly break up societies (Otite, 2001). For conflict resolution, the obvious implication is to view conflicts as non-isolated events in its social context such perspective is not narrowly focused on conflict and its resolution. It takes into account the cultural setting and the social context. It looks at the history of proceeding events that have led to the conflict and while concentrating on the conflict itself and profess of resolving it, it takes possible implications for the future seriously. A wider look is taken than one which just includes the disputing parties, possible consequences for others in their families and social network are also taken into account potential effects on relationships and interests are envisaged (Ajija & Buhari, 2014).

Conclusions.

Conflicts and crises are inevitable in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society like Nigeria. Effective management and resolution of conflicts and crises can stem down the tide of these evils, promotes consensus-building, social bridge reconstructions, and the re-enactment of order in the society. The recent uprisings in Nigeria are products of failed conflict resolution processes. Most of the methods adopted to a large extent enable one side to take everything leaving the other side with nothing. The dialogue between disputants is today replaced by fighting, and the mediating role of traditional institutions is replaced in several clashes with police actions (tear gas), military peace-keeping operations, and endless court proceedings. This reminded us of the old adage that people live out their culture and tradition for self-confidence, self-reliance, positive change and stability and that a people without their culture are as good as dead

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska



This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

and forgotten. In conclusion, the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms offer great prospects for peaceful co-existence and harmonious relationships than the modern method of litigation settlements in law courts. The focus should be on the traditional models owing to its uniqueness and effectiveness, which are susceptible to generating tremendous results in contemporary Nigeria. From the foregoing, this paper recommends as follows:

1. The Nigerian government, especially the National Assembly should make and implement policies aimed at addressing the root and trigger causes of conflicts and crises in the country.
2. Nigeria needs to look inward through the use of what Oloaba (2008:148) referred to as 'rear-mirror' to unlock her hidden indigenous conflict resolution potential to resolve lingering conflicts and crises in the country today. This will go a long way to achieve collective well-being and happiness including the security of lives and property.
3. Just like Late Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar-Adua, the present administration of President Buhari should demonstrate more willingness and commitment to make peace heal, and restore the broken relationship between groups and communities through peace-making, peacebuilding, and confidence-building in the country.
4. Nigeria's government should sincerely tackle the issue of corruption in order to demonstrate their willingness and commitment to alleviate problems associated with poverty, acute youth unemployment, and infrastructural dilapidation in the country. This will go a long way to reduce the escalation of conflicts and crises that have claimed the lives of many today.

References:

1. ADEMOLA S.F., (2006). *Theories of social conflict*. In S.G. Best (ed.) Introduction to peace and conflict studies in West Africa: A reader. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
2. AJAYI A.T., BUHARI L.O., (2014). *Methods of conflict resolution in African traditional society*. AfricanResearchReview, 8 (2), pp. 138 – 157.
3. ALABI A.O., (2010). *Management of conflicts and crises in Nigeria: Educational planner's view*. CurrentResearchJournal of SocialSciences, 2(6), pp. 311 – 315.
4. ALBERT I.O., (2001). *Building peace, advancing democracy: Experience with third-party interventions in Nigeria's conflicts*. Ibadan: John ArchersPublishers.
5. ALBERT I.O., (2003). *Colonialism, labour migrations and indigene/settler conflicts in Nigeria*. AfricanJournal of PeaceConflictStudies 1(1), pp. 91 – 117.

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska



This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)

6. BARTOS O.J., (1974). *Process and outcome of negotiations*. New York: Columbia University Press.
7. BELLO P.O., OLUTOLA A.A., (2016). *Indigenous conflict resolution mechanism in Africa: Lessons drawn for Nigeria*. Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology, 13(2), pp. 70 – 88.
8. BRIGHT-BROCK U., (2001). *Indigenous conflict resolution in Africa*. Oslo: Institute of Educational Research.
9. DEROUSEN K., BERCOVITCH J., (2012). *Trends in civil ear mediation*. In J.J. Hewitt, J. Wikenfeld& T.R. Gurr (eds.) *Peace and Conflict*. Maryland: Centre for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) University of Maryland.
10. EBISI N., (2016). *The challenges of peace conflict resolution: A clue from Igbo cultural group of Nigeria*. International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, 1(4).
11. EKE C.C., (2013). *The challenges of conflict management in a democratic society: An overview of insecurity in Nigeria*. American International Journal of Social Science, 2(3).
12. FISHER R., URY W., (1991). *Getting to yes: Negotiating an agreement without giving in*. London: Sydney & CO. Business Books.
13. ISURMONA V.A., (2005). *Problems of peacemaking and peace keeping: Perspective on peace and conflict in Africa*. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers.
14. MOLOWUS J.J., EWUGA D.J., ORIH E., (2016). *Managing conflict in the Nigerian construction industry: A study of Jos in North – Central Nigeria*. ATBU Journal of Environmental Technology, 9 (1), pp. 19 – 29.
15. NWOLISE O.B., (2005). *Traditional models of bargaining and conflict resolution in Africa: Perspective on peace and conflict in Africa*. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers.
16. OLAOBO O.B., (2001). *An introduction to African legal culture*. Ibadan: Hope Publications
17. OLAOBO O.B., (2005). *Ancestral focus and the process of conflict resolution in traditional African societies*. In A.O. Albert (ed). *In perspectives on peace and conflict in Africa in Essays in honour of Abdul Salam A. Abubakar*. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers.
18. OLUFEMI F.J., ADEALAE A.A., (2017). *The role of civil society organizations in conflict management in Nigeria*. International Journal of Asian Social Science, 2(5), pp. 720 – 729.
19. OSABIYA B.J., (2015). *Conflict management and resolution in Nigeria public sector*. Review of Public Administration and Management, 4 (8), pp. 107- 120.
20. OTITE O., ALBERT I.O., (2001). *Community conflicts in Nigeria, management, resolution and transformation*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
21. SWANSTROM N.L.P., WEISMAN M.S., (2005). *Conflict, conflict prevention, conflict management and beyond: A conceptual exploration*. Washington. D.C. Centra Asia Caucasus Institute.
22. WEBER M., (1949). *Methodology of the social sciences*. New York: Macmillan.
23. WISSLER R.L., (2004). *The effectiveness of court-connected dispute resolution in civil cases*. Conflict resolution Quarterly, 22 (2) pp. 55 – 88.

ISSN 2543-7097 / E-ISSN 2544-9478

© 2020 /Published by: Międzynarodowy Instytut Innowacji Nauka-Edukacja-Rozwój w Warszawie, Polska



This is an open access article

under the CC BY-NC license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Orhero A.E., (2020). CONFLICTS AND CRISES IN NIGERIA: MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR PEACE BUILDING

International Journal of Legal Studies, 1(7)2020: 361 - 374

[DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127](https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.3127)