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Elections and Stability in the Great Lakes Region - Evaluating 2006 and 2007 Electoral Processes in the Region

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Primary Mental Health Care for Survivors of Collective Sexual Violence: Implications for Services in the Great Lakes Region

Maggie ZRALY, The Pennsylvania State University

Primary health care (PHC) is a basic social service which is an integral part of achieving durable peace and security in the Great Lakes Region. Comprehensive HIV care can deliver PHC for all and increase access to mental health services among survivors of rape as a weapon of war and genocide. To support Member States in their capacity to find lasting solutions to guarantee protection and assistance to populations affected by political conflicts, this article discusses the status and progress on guaranteeing access to primary health care (PHC) by survivors of collective sexual violence in Rwanda.

In 2007, the Government of Rwanda developed a Rural Health Scale-Up National Strategic Plan (RHSP) designed to provide quality health care to the majority of Rwanda's citizens and to make substantial improvements in public health infrastructure. The RHSP opens up an excellent opportunity to advance mental health care integration into PHC in order to meet the mental health needs of the rural Rwandan population, including CSV survivors.

The delivery of guaranteed access to PHC for CSV survivors in Rwanda can be accelerated in other countries in the Great Lakes region with particular attention to Democratic Republic of Congo. Such services should be constructed in a way to guarantee access to primary health care systems responsive to the mental health needs of collective sexual violence survivors. Responsibility for the implementation of PHC systems is usually restricted to the level of nation-states.

Therefore, following a discussion of the status and progress of guaranteeing access to PHC, among survivors of rape during the Rwandan genocide, we open our analysis to a more regional perspective. It is suggested that regional cooperation on the implementation of PHC systems with integrated mental health care can meet the needs of populations affected by political conflicts, while simultaneously offering the possibility to enhance regional peace and security. Crossing Rwanda's western border, we briefly consider how the war-battered health care system in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) can be revivified to help deliver basic services to a population suffering with the consequences of systematic rape employed as a weapon of terror.

The perspectives and experiences of women and girls who survived collective sexual violence during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda were shared in order to describe the dynamics contributing to an accelerated need for mental health services within the emerging Rwandan rural health care system. The lessons learned from Rwanda's process should be applied immediately to the situation in eastern DRC, where untold thousands have experienced CSV and need guaranteed access to PHC. With political will, global health leadership, and creativity, effective responses to meet the health needs and realize the human rights of all war- and genocide-affected populations in eastern DRC, Rwanda and the entire Great Lakes Region will become more abundant readily available ... and will contribute to positive peace.

Elections and Stability in the Great Lakes Region- Evaluating 2006 and 2007 electoral processes in the Region

Honorable Juliana KANTENGWA, Secretary General, AMANI Forum (Rwanda)

AMANI FORUM is a network of Parliamentarians in the Great Lakes Region. That network of 700 parliamentarians is aimed to peace building and conflict resolution in the above region trough the parliamentarian channel. Regarding Elections and Stability in the Great Lakes Region- Evaluating 2006 and 2007 electoral processes in the Region, today MANI FORUM is working to find peace and stability in areas of conflicts within the Great Lakes Region. The Forum used parliamentarians to assess roots, players and dynamics of prevailing conflicts and crises and try to address the executive leadership to end them. They gave reports based on to formulate solutions to be administrated.

The other activity that was organized by AMANI FORUM was to use the parliamentarians of the countries that were in conflicts. For example when Rwanda and Uganda have had problems between them it was difficult to address the Leaders but with parliamentarians it has been possible. Through the channel of parliamentarians and with the views of the peoples from those countries, we have contributed to attenuate the tension between the two countries.

AMANI FORUM has also organized workshop on capacity building in favor of parliamentarians and political leaders on the figures of conflicts in our region. We helped them to attenuate mass media speeches that are sustaining conflicts and crises within the Great Lakes Region. Peace talks have been organized and or stimulated in Burundi and Sudan under support of AMANI FORUM for example. Furthermore, the Pact of peace and stability of the ICGLR was signed thanks to advocacy of AMANI FORUM that has been actively involved in the whole process.
Elections have been observed in many countries of the Great Lakes Region to make sure that they were organized in transparency and they were aimed to empower democratic processes: AMANI has observed for example the previous legislatives and presidential elections in Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda.



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In Uganda elections AMANI helped President Museveni and his challenger Begigye to overcome their misunderstanding and to prevent an open conflict within Ugandans.

AMANi have been observing the recent elections in Kenya. Even during the 2002 election, some parliamentarians have been sent by AMANI FORUM in the regions that were suspected to be ready getting in troubles.

During the 2007 post electoral violence, AMANI parliamentarians addressed the political leaders trough their partners parliamentarians about the danger of the on-going crises in Kenya.

The recent Kenyan elections were faith and free up to the voting process. Violence started after the results release.

AMANI that was involved during the whole electoral process made a report and recommendations addressed to the leaders in contestation.

The report was also given to Koffi Annan, the facilitator and the compromise found after the negotiations was based on AMANI recommendations. AMANI is therefore help that the peaceful path preached by AMANI before the facilitation Koffi Annan was finally chosen.

From the example of Kenya, it is apparent that failure to election process leads to instability. Great measures are then to be taken to prevent such crises after and during elections.

It will be good to strengthen civic education and democratic values such as understandable and adapted amendments of constitutions before striking like the bad example of Kenya has revealed.

The Challenges of Protecting Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) through ICGLR

Jacqueline KLOPP, Columbia University and
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The Great Lakes region has over 8 million internally displaced persons (IDP), yet only halting progress has occurred in grappling with the enormous policy problem this poses. One bright spot is the Protocol on the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons and related Project Documents that emerged from the ICGLR.

As the first legally binding regional instrument dealing with IDPs anywhere in the world, the Protocol is a watershed advocacy tool for government reformers, multi-lateral organizations and civil society actors. The central question of this paper is: What are the key challenges to localizing the Protocol and implementing the Projects, and as result, seeing real changes in IDP conditions on the ground?

ICGLR is examined as a political and diplomatic process and how this impacts the potential for the internalization and implementation of the Protocols. The Kenyan situation is also emphasized to look at how IDP advocacy efforts are faring and the opportunities for using the protocol as leverage.

Kenya's recent violence left over 1,500 dead, around 600, 000 freshly displaced and sent reverberations around the Great Lakes Region. Commerce with Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo was disrupted, and Kenya sent refugees into Uganda and Tanzania.

Despite an active civil society, government reformers and UN involvement, barriers exist to localizing the Protocol and using it effectively to impact the situation of IDPs.

These barriers include political dynamics that protect perpetrators of violence, lack of coordination among advocates within civil society, government, regional organizations and the UN, and failure of the ICGLR and its supporters to reach out to such advocates for local support. Regardless, some progress on IDP issues is emerging in Kenya. T

rans-national advocacy coalitions might better "step-down" the ICGLR and ICGLR process itself might be altered to better enhance the protection and assistance needs of IDPs and avoid becoming yet another exercise in diplomacy without any visible impact on conditions on the ground.

The countries of the Great Lakes region have signed numerous pacts, protocols, and conventions in the past. Few of these have made any real difference in people's lives.

The difference this time may be that the IC/GLR has been a more inclusive and participatory process, which represents the views of not only the signatory governments and their respective parliaments, but also of civil society groups such as women's groups, youth, and the private sector. The key will be to keep these actors informed, engaged and empowered.

Overall, much more must be done to raise the profile of the pressing need to prevent further violent displacement and assist and protect the 10 million people (approximately the size of Rwanda!) in the region that are already suffering tragically from displacement.

The Pact with its Protocols can be a valuable tool to affect change and prevent further violence, but to make it work will take tenacious effort both regionally and nationally by a wide number of players including governments.

