

October 2008

Enhancing Peace Through Promoting Security and Development: The ICGLR Cross Border Zones Concepts

Singo Stephen Mwachofi
ICGLR Secretariat, Bujumbura Burundi

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/pcmr>

Recommended Citation

Mwachofi, Singo Stephen (2008) "Enhancing Peace Through Promoting Security and Development: The ICGLR Cross Border Zones Concepts," *Peace and Conflict Management Review*. Vol. 1 : Iss. 2 , Article 19. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/pcmr/vol1/iss2/19>

This Presentations and Discussions is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Access Journals at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Peace and Conflict Management Review by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

Darfur: After the Genocide Comes to an End, Then What?

Prof. Samuel TOTTEN, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

The mass killing, mass rape and massive displacement of the black Africans of Darfur (Sudan) by Government of Sudan (GOS) troops and the Janjaweed (Arab militia) began to draw the attention of the larger international community in 2003. While a massive amount of humanitarian aid was flown and trucked into Darfur and hundreds of thousands of words were spoken and written about the situation, little to nothing was done to protect the black Africans from additional attacks in their villages.

In July and August 2004, the U.S. Department of State sent a team of investigators into the refugee camps in Chad, along the Chad/Sudan border, to interview refugees from Darfur for the express purpose of collecting data in order to ascertain whether genocide had been committed (or not) by the GOS and Janjaweed. Upon analysis of the data collected by the Atrocities Documentation Team, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell declared, on September 9, 2004, that the GOS had committed genocide and was possibly still doing so. Instead of organizing an intervention to halt the mass killing, the United States referred the matter to the United Nations. Subsequently, the UN decided to conduct its own investigation, the UN Commission of Inquiry into Darfur.

During December 2004 and January 2005, the UN, upon analysis of the data, declared that while it did not find that genocide had been committed in Darfur, it did find that crimes against humanity had been perpetrated. Instead of organizing an intervention to halt the mass killing, the UN referred the Darfur matter to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC then decided to conduct its own investigation in Darfur in order to ascertain whether it should bring charges against any GOS government and military officials, the Janjaweed, or any other actors.

Over the recent four years (2004-2008), various entities (including the UN Security Council, the United States government, the European Union, the African Union, NATO, among others) issued scores of warnings to Sudan to cease and desist from its attacks on the black Africans of Darfur and its support of the Janjaweed.

Time and again, Sudan made and broke promises and did little to nothing to halt the ongoing mayhem.

The crisis in Darfur is far from over. Attacks continue to be carried out to this day against the black Africans by the GOS and Janjaweed. Battles between the GOS/Janjaweed and the rebels groups also continue unabated. And now, adding to the chaotic mix, the innocent are caught up in raging battles between and amongst the various rebel groups and even between and amongst groups of Janjaweed.

Once the fighting and killing stop, the crisis in Darfur will still be far from over. Indeed, if a host of underlying issues (desertification, recurring droughts, conflict over land, and a general sense of disenfranchisement) are not addressed and addressed in a way that is satisfactory to both black African groups and Arabs (both sedentary and nomadic or landless), then the post-genocide period could prove to be as volatile as the first five years of the genocidal period (2003-2008).

To put off figuring out how to address such issues in a timely and effective manner is asking for trouble. In light of that, the international community should, at this very moment, be engaged in working with the GOS, black African groups and Arabs in an attempt to make and show solid progress on all these fronts. Of course, that is easier said than done when war continues to rage on in the region. Indeed, some are bound to ask, how the very actors who are still engaged in violent conflict can be expected to address such issues when they cannot even work out a peace among themselves. It is a fair question, but it is also one that does not face the fact that the issues yet to be solved could serve, in part, as the linchpins for bringing about the peace Darfur.

THEME 2: SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

Enhancing peace through promoting security and development: The ICGLR cross border zones concepts

Singo Stephen MWACHOFI, ICGLR Secretariat, Bujumbura Burundi

The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) is a collaborative regional effort by 11 member states that seeks to transform their conflict and poverty ridden region into a space of peace, stability and development. The initiative is both historic and unique in the sense that it is an expression of political commitment by leaders who have recognized that the problems confronting them are similar, they cut across national boundaries, and their effects have a regional magnitude. Their solutions therefore lie in a regional, systematic and harmonized approach, underpinned by concerted and systematic efforts to enhance cooperation between and among them. The ICGLR pact has four pillars namely Peace and Security, Development and Good Governance, Humanitarian and Social Issues and Economic Development and regional Integration. Within them, these pillars contain 33 projects, 11 protocols and a structured regional follow-up mechanism.

The ICGLR process recognizes that sustainable security cannot be achieved within a vacuum. It must be accompanied by development. Peace and security thrives more often in an atmosphere characterized by developed economies. Within the Great Lakes region, insecurity and under development are serious challenges that are most pronounced along the common international borders.

For the successful of the desired goals of peace, security and development along the border zones, a number of challenges need to be overcome: legal hurdles through harmonizing existing laws, mobilizing the necessary resources to launch the projects, cultural differences and ensuring the sense of "ownership" of the cross border initiatives amongst the local populations, overcoming political differences amongst the member states,

harsh climatic and geographical conditions in some of the zones (e.g. Zone 3), lack of technical capacity (Human and material), poor infrastructure, illegal exploitation of natural resources along border areas and security challenges such as cattle rustling and the proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons.

Despite these challenges, there is a genuine sense of optimism that the member states of the ICGLR have the desire and commitment to overcome these challenges and to fully operationalize these concepts. The political will exists, and this is exemplified by the signing and ratification of the pact on peace, stability and development. It is also exhibited by the commitment of financial resources through contributions by member states to the Regional Fund for Reconstruction and Development and for the operations of the conference secretariat.

There are a growing number of development partners who are willing to support the implementation of some of the projects to be developed out of these concepts. This offers hope that the efforts and commitments of the member states will be complemented by the goodwill of friends of the region. The people of the region also provide a source of hope for the success of these projects because of their cultural and language homogeneity. In all, there is great hope for real peace and development, through regional integration initiatives.

