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The African Organizational and indigenous efforts towards peacekeeping and conflict resolution: Lessons from the CAR conflict 2002-2016

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Abstract

The prevalence of conflict has remained a major feature in post independent Africa. The excitement that greeted Africa's independence in the early 1960s soon dissipated as the continent got engulfed in conflicts. The African continent therefore has been seriously affected by wars and conflicts that ranged from ritualized vendettas of tribal society to the revolutionary guerillas of modern times. Within the period 2002-2016, the Central African Republic was engrossed in a civil war that attracted sustained internal and external efforts towards its resolution. This study focuses on the African organizational as well as indigenous efforts in the resolution of the CAR Conflict. The paper is divided into two parts excluding the introduction and the conclusion. Part one deals with the roles of the various African Organizations towards the resolution of the conflict while the second part dwells on the role of indigenous NGOs and Civil Society Organizations. The paper argues that conflicts in Africa can be better and effectively handled by organizations and groups within Africa. This is logical as they can easily relate to the conflict and therefore more likely to understand the issues at stake. They should mostly depend on the international community for financial and logistical support if the need arises. The study is based on the use of primary and secondary sources that are keenly analyzed to arrive at its conclusions.

Keywords: Regional, Sub-regional, Conflict, Resolutions Mediation, Subsidiarity.

Introduction

The African continent has been conflict prone since independence. An effective response to these conflicts requires agreement on and understanding of its causes. Past responses to conflicts have often failed to understand the context within which the conflicts operated or to address its causes. Fragile and conflict affected states present unique and complex challenges to achieving effective development. While the range of issues can vary depending on the country or region of fragility, some key issues are common to all of them. These include chronic poverty; government and state structures lacking the capacity or will to provide public safety, security and basic services to the population; low levels of state accountability to citizens; challenges relating to natural resource management; a private sector which may be largely informal and opportunistic; low levels of foreign direct investment; and a high risk of further state decline.¹

¹MthuliNcube et al, "Drivers and Dynamics of Fragility" In Africa Economic Brief, Abidjan: ADB Group, Vol. 4 Issue 5, 2013), 1

The conflict in the Central African Republic from 2002 – 2016 falls within this category of conflicts in Africa. It came with consequences for neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Gabon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan amongst others. The consequences include spill overs of the conflict into neighboring countries, displacement of the country's population that became refugees in other countries and disruptions in the trading patterns between the CAR and her neighbors.

From the onset of the conflict, the sub-regional organizations, the Economic and Monetary Union of Central African States (CEMAC) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) got involved in efforts towards its resolution. These regional bodies by so doing gained experience in conflict resolution at sub-regional level and witnessed challenges and strains that impacted on member states. The focus of this paper is to examine the African organizational efforts towards resolving the CAR conflict from 2002 to 2016

The period of the study is between 2002 and 2016. The rationale for the period is because the current conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR) became glaring from 2002. By 2012, it turned into an all-out war that raged on amidst indigenous, sub-regional, regional and international efforts towards its being resolved. This went on till 2016, when a post conflict President Faustin Touadera Archange was sworn in to consolidate the conflict resolution and reconciliation process.

This study examines the efforts made by the African Union (AU), the Economic and Monetary Union of Central African States (CEMAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in the reconciliation process in the CAR. It also examines the efforts of various African NGOs and those indigenous to the Central African Republic in the resolution of the Conflict.² While the security problems in some of the countries in Africa including the Central African Republic have resulted in the collapse of state structures, Afro-centric and indigenous responses to the cataclysmic effects of war have also increased. Sub-regional Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations as well as the African Union in collaboration with the United Nations Organization are coming out forcefully to explore avenues for peace. The efforts of these groups are examined in this study and are found to be in consonance with the theory of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity is a principle of social organization which holds that social and political issues should be dealt with at the most immediate (or local) level that is consistent with their resolution. This principle is founded on the idea that sustainable peace is possible if conflict resolution mechanisms are led by actors who are culturally, geopolitically and/or strategically close to the crisis.³

French Colonial practice in the CAR was to lease out most of the colonial territory to private companies, a mode of governance that some have labelled as “concessionary politics”⁴. This privatization of the public space remained a recurrent practice throughout the country's history. The Central African Republic became independent in 1960 but its state infrastructure was virtually non-existent. French technical advisers effectively ran all the ministries for years throughout up to the 1980s. This French indirect running of the affairs of the CAR ended in the early 1990s with the end of the Cold War⁵. While Civil Conflicts in the CAR until the end of the Cold War had largely been limited to relatively isolated incidents, from 1993 onwards the scenario changed to nationwide conflicts that eventually led to the situation of 2002. This situation escalated in 2012 and soon beckoned on external initiatives towards its resolution amidst difficulties.

²Elise Boulding, ed., *New Agenda for Peace Research: Conflict and Security Re-examined* (Washington: USP Press, 1997), 16

³ECCAS. *The Principle of Subsidiarity: The example of ECCAS in the Central African Crisis*. Libreville: ECCAS-CMI Publication, November 2016.

⁴Rebecca Hardin, “Translating the Forest: Tourism, trophy hunting and the transformation of resource use in Central African Republic” unpublished Ph. D dissertation, (Yale University, 2000), 16

⁵Tatiana Carayannis et al., “Lessons from African Union-United Nations Co-operation in Peace Operations in the Central African Republic”, 221.

The CAR polity since independence was characterized by numerous coups and counter coups. However, in August 1993 the first free and fair elections were organized in the country which Ange-Felix Patassé won.⁶ He also won the bitterly contested re-election of September 1999. The divisive situation created in the country by Patassé's victory in the 1999 elections informed the abortive Coup of May 2001 led by General François Bozizé, who was the Chief of Staff in the national army the *Forces Armées Centrafricaines* (FACA). The Coup attempt failed and Bozizé fled to Chad and later France. However, in October 2002, Bozizé's supporters staged a raid on Bangui which was at the roots of the conflict under study. The situation eventually led to Françoise Bozizé taking over the helms of power in March 2003. His take over however compounded the security situation in the country and deepened the conflict thereby making the regional Organizations around it to be involved in the Conflict in view of nipping it at the bud while waiting on the UNO. The focus of this paper is the efforts made by the AU, sub regional organizations and indigenous NGOs and groups in resolving the CAR conflict.

The Role of the Economic and Monetary Union of Central African States in the CAR conflict.

One of the earliest regional organizations that got involved in the Central African Republic's Conflict in view of resolving it was the Economic and Monetary Union of Central African States (CEMAC). CEMAC is a relatively young organization, but with old roots. It is the successor of the Central African Customs Union, Union Douanieré des Etats de L'Afrique Centrale (UDEAC), created in 1966 by Cameroon, Gabon, Chad, the Republic of Congo and the CAR to maintain the colonial era economic ties among them⁷. To achieve its objectives, UDEAC foresaw the progressive harmonization of taxes and duties and the establishment of a common external tariff. This body was joined by Equatorial Guinea (an ex-Spanish Colony) in 1984. The organization was revived in the N'Djamena Treaty of 1999 that changed its name from UDEAC to CEMAC⁸.

Although CEMAC initially had purely economic objectives, its scope was with time progressively widened to include peace and security issues. This is evident in its role in the CAR conflict. In other to forthrightly mediate in the conflict in the CAR, CEMAC in 2002 formed the Force Multinationale en Centrafricaine (FOMUC), as a peacekeeping mission deployed into the country by members of the organization and tried to keep peace from 2002 – 2008⁹. CEMAC therefore, initiated the regional peace effort in the CAR with the formation and deployment of FOMUC in 2002 till it was taken over in July 2008 and transformed into the Mission de Consolidation de la Paix en République Centrafricaine (MICOPAX) by a wider regional grouping, The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).¹⁰

FOMUC was composed of 380 troops, who were initially based in Bangui. At the early months of its deployment, its mandate was to protect the government of Ange-Felix Patassé against further coups and rebellions and to secure the capital and its airport. The size of the force however was too small to prevent François Bozizé from seizing power from Patassé in March 2003. This takeover of power and the violence that accompanied it necessitated a revision of FOMUC's Mandate. The core of its mandate remained the restoration and consolidation of peace, security and stability in the CAR. It was also responsible for monitoring the transition and reconciliation process launched by François Bozizé and assisted in the preparations for the elections that were held in 2005. The FOMUC force within the years 2006-2008 was in addition to protecting Bangui, involved in fighting against military activities by armed rebel movements in Bria, Bozoum and Paoua.¹¹

⁶Ibid., 221

⁷Angela Meyer, *Peace and Security Cooperation in Central Africa: Developments, Challenges and Prospects*, 13

⁸Ibid

⁹Ibid., 9

¹⁰Tatiana Carayannis and Mignon Fowles, "Lessons from African Union – United Nations Co-operation in Peace Operations in the Central African Republic", 220 – 226

¹¹Ibid.

In carrying out its responsibilities, this CEMAC force received financial, logistical and technical support from France and the European Union. In October 2007, the Central African heads of state agreed to transfer supervisory authority of their joint peace mission in the CAR from CEMAC to ECCAS. The transfer of authority indicated the commitment of Central African States to Co-ordinate the responsibilities of the two regional groupings, CEMAC and ECCAS, and to increasingly focus ECCAS on security issues. In July 2008 therefore ECCAS formally took over the supervisory authority of FOMUC and constituted an enlarged force with a robust mission to replace FOMUC known as MICOPAX.¹²

This initiative of CEMAC is in line with the mantra of “Africa on its own”. It indicated that Africans are not passive beneficiaries of International efforts towards the resolution of African based conflicts but that Africans through regional organizations as the case of CEMAC in the CAR are ready to and do take initiatives in the resolution of Conflicts in Africa. These efforts of CEMAC in the CAR were acknowledge by the African union (AU) in 2010 as they went a long way in mitigating some of the atrocities of the rebels in the various areas that the CEMAC force operated. It played a key role in facilitating peace initiatives to reconcile the various belligerents in the conflict.¹³

The involvement of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in the Resolution of the CAR conflict.

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), is another Sub-regional inter-state organization that also played a key role in the efforts towards the resolution of the Conflict in the Central African Republic through its peace keeping force MICOPAX and by hosting conferences aimed at reconciling the belligerents and arriving at a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The treaty establishing the Economic Community of Central African States was ratified by eleven original members in 1983¹⁴. The organization is presently composed of ten countries namely, Cameroon, Gabon, the CAR, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Burundi, Angola and SãoTôme and Príncipe. Rwanda that was a founding member quit the community in 2007 for the reason that she was facing difficulties in maintaining multiple memberships in four regional communities¹⁵. ECCAS was founded as one of the pillars of the African Economic Community (AEC), in the Context of the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action whose aim was to increase Africa’s development and self-sufficiency by promoting economic development at regional level. It was thus directed towards the facilitation of self-sustained development in the Central African Sub-region. The proper functioning of this body was hampered by the numerous conflicts that affected most member states in the 1990s. However in February 1998, an extraordinary session of the organization held in Libreville revived ECCAS and gave it a new impetus with the goal of promoting economic co-operation and development through the progressive creation of a single Central African market retained as the central aim.¹⁶

The lessons from years of conflict and crises made it evident that regional economic co-operation could not succeed without regional peace and security initiatives and commitment. Based on these realities, the mandate of ECCAS was broadened to include the joint promotion of peace, security as well as stability in the sub-region as was agreed in the Malabo summit of June 2002.¹⁷ This new focus on security led to the creation of an organ charged with the responsibility of ensuring peace and security in the region. Thus the establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), in February 1999 to promote, maintain and consolidate peace and security in the Central African Sub-region. Article 4 of the COPAX protocol defines its objectives in the field

¹²Ibid., 20

¹³African Union, *Peace and Security Council, Communiqué* (Addis Ababa: PSC/PR/COMM. (CCLV), 23 December 2010), 2

¹⁴Treaty Establishing the Economic Community of Central African States ECCAS.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Angela Mayer, *Peace and Security Co-operation in Central Africa: Developments challenges and Prospects*, 10

¹⁷Resolutions of the ECCAS Malabo Summit, June 2002.

of preventing, managing and settling conflicts; reducing tensions and preventing armed conflicts; developing confidence-building measures between member states; promoting peaceful dispute-resolution measures; and facilitating mediation efforts in crises and conflicts between member states and with third parties.¹⁸

In response to the worsening security situation in the CAR, a sub-regional body CEMAC decided in October 2002 to deploy FOMUC in the Conflict as the first initiative by Central African States to carry out a joint peace mission in a member state. This force exercised its mandate amidst daunting challenges in the protracted conflict in the CAR. It also was able to realize some of its goals. However in October 2007, the Central African head of States agreed to transfer supervisory authority of their joint peace mission in the CAR from CEMAC to ECCAS. As such, the ECCAS force MICOPAX took over from FOMUC in July 2008 as the sub-regional peacekeeping force in the CAR.¹⁹

MICOPAX mission in the CAR composed of more personnel than FOMUC and also envisaged the deployment of police and civilian elements required in the peace process in the CAR. The Mandate of this Sub-regional force was to assist the CAR government in institutional restructuring, reforming the security sector in implementing a programme for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants (DDR), to help establish and maintain the rule of law and public order and security in the country and to ensure the security of UN staff and the civil population. Another objective of the force was for it to support the post-conflict political transition in the CAR, notably through the promotion of democratic principles and by supporting the reconciliation and dialogue initiated by the CAR government. It was also to promote and monitor respect for human rights in the CAR and to co-ordinate humanitarian aid in the country. The MICOPAX force therefore operated as the main external peace keeping force carrying out its mandate amidst challenges from 2008-2013. Following the escalation of the conflict in 2013, MICOPAX required larger support. The UN Security Council Resolution 2127 (2013) thus authorized an AU- led International Support Mission to the CAR (AFISM-CAR) while ECCAS remained in the country, with the mandate of conflict prevention and developing its early Warning Mechanism (MARAC).²⁰

ECCAS and its member states consistently played quite significant roles in efforts to stabilize the CAR. ECCAS was heavily involved in conflict resolution and peacekeeping efforts, most notably by providing a peacekeeping force-MICOPAX. At the same time, it had to share the same space with multiple other actors involved in conflict resolution and peacekeeping. These included amongst others, the AU, the EU, the UNO and the French Sangaris force. These groups deployed forces to CAR simultaneously under separate, but complementary mandates. Despite the multitude of organizations and actors involved, ECCAS was successful in crafting a role for itself in CAR, by better defining its involvement and added value within international mediation efforts.²¹

The military and security role of the ECCAS force MICOPAX was very crucial from inception as it pursued its mission of securing the Bangui-Mpoko airport, the City of Bangui and three other areas within the country where it was deployed, namely Paoua, Bozoum and Kanga-Bandoro. It also contributed to the restructuring of FACA, helping it to patrol the west and north-central regions and through the gradual transfer of its entire mission to the defense and security forces of the Central African Republic²². These efforts of ECCAS received words of gratitude from

¹⁸COPAX Protocol. Art. 4, February 1999

¹⁹CEEAC, 13^{ème} Session Ordinaire de la Conférence des Chefs d'Etats et de Gouvernement: *Décision /CEEAC/CEEG/XIII/08, Portant Mandat de la Mission de Paix du 12 juillet au 31 décembre 2008 et Mission de Consolidation de la Paix du 1^{er} janvier 2009 aux environs de l'année 2013 du conseil de Paix et de Sécurité de l'Afrique Centrale en République Centrafricaine*. June 12, 2008.

²⁰Gustavo de Carvalho et al., "Fractured Peace building in the Central African Republic; Lessons for African Union Engagement". (Pretoria: Institute for Security studies, Policy, July 2016) Brief 87

²¹CEEAC-ECCAS, *The Principle of Subsidiarity: The example of ECCAS in the Central African Crisis-Bringing a peace process closer to the people*, (Libreville: ECCAS-CMI, November 2016).

²²African Union, *Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the situation in the Central African Republic*, (Addis Ababa: African Union, PSC/PR/2(CCLV), 23rd December 2010), 7

the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU for its support and assistance which enabled CAR to engage resolutely on the path of democracy peace-building and peace consolidation.²³

With renewed violence in 2012, ECCAS assumed a fairly pragmatic position towards the conflict. It was out to seek a balance between the preservation of constitutional order in the CAR with the reality of the formidable uprising challenging it. ECCAS in the early phases of mediation assumed the leading role through its proximity to the crisis and its existing commitment on the ground in CAR. ECCAS thus effectively embraced the principle of subsidiarity in the early phases of the conflict by taking the lead in the effort to pre-empt and later resolve the CAR crisis.²⁴

As the Séleka rebels approached Bangui in late 2012, ECCAS held an emergency summit in which it called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a rebel pullback. ECCAS also sought the use of its peacekeeping force MICOPAX to force both sides to the negotiating table. Both sides were thus forced or convinced to sign to the Libreville Agreement of January 2013. In its press statement of 14th January 2013 and in connection with this landmark agreement that was realized through the mediation of ECCAS²⁵, the Peace and Security Council of the AU expressed its deep appreciation to the leaders of ECCAS. This appreciation was for its prompt and sustained efforts towards the stabilization of the situation in the CAR and ensuring successful negotiations with the warring parties. The council also welcomed the political agreement to end the crisis, the ceasefire and the Declaration of Principles signed in Libreville, on 11th January 2013, by the CAR government, the opposition parties, the politico-military movements and the Séleka under the auspices of ECCAS to put an end to the crisis affecting the CAR. The Libreville Agreement exacted necessary concessions from François Bozizé the then president of the CAR and gave sufficient gains to the rebel coalition over what was envisioned to be a three-year transition process. The agreement though workable on paper, did not last as ECCAS was only able to force an agreement on both sides, but was unable to ensure that the parties complied with its terms.²⁶

The Libreville Agreement therefore failed due to the recalcitrance of Bozizé, the continuous rebellion by the Séleka and the inability of ECCAS to effectively enforce compliance. Though ECCAS had a peacekeeping force on ground in the CAR, it was not strong enough to contain the Séleka advance on Bangui. The outcome of this inability of ECCAS to contain the advance of the Séleka rebellion was its takeover of Bangui in March 2013.

To continue with its mediation role in the CAR, ECCAS held a summit in N'Djamena in April 2013 in which the leaders confirmed the transitional plan earlier on outlined in Libreville, and in addition, established a transitional legislative body tasked with the following, electing a new president of the transition; writing the National Charter of the transition and approving the roadmap for the transition.²⁷ The summit also created an International Contact Group for the CAR, responsible for mobilizing the necessary support for the reviewed transition. This International Contact Group Created by ECCAS with a Coordinating Core of eight (G8-CAR, namely, the United States, France, the United Nations, Congo Brazzaville, the European Union, the World Bank, ECCAS, and the African Union) came to assume a leading role in shaping the CAR peace process. The president of Congo Brazzaville Denis Sassou-N'guesso was given the responsibility of the International Mediator in the CAR crisis²⁸. Based on these efforts of ECCAS and other members of the G8-CAR, the country moved from open conflict to transition, with heavy regional and International support. These early efforts and the political pressure that accompanied them did not succeed in preventing the Coup but they established a basis for a post-Coup transition.

²³African Union, *Communiqué of the 215th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council*, (Addis Ababa: African Union PSC/PR/COMM (CCXV), 8th January 2010), 2

²⁴Ibid.,4

²⁵African Union, Press Statement of the Peace and Security Council, at its 350th meeting, (Addis Ababa: African Union, SC/PR/BR.3(CCCL), 14TH January 2013),1

²⁶Conciliation Resources: *Analysis of Conflict and Peace building in The Central African Republic*, 6

²⁷CEEAC – ECCAS, *The Principle of Subsidiarity: The example of ECCAS in the Central African Crisis – Bringing a peace process closer to the people*,11

²⁸République du Congo, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et de la Coopération, *Communiqué de la Médiation Internationale sur la crise en République Centrafricaine*, Brazzaville, 17 January 2015).

In 2013, due to the worsening sectarian violence and growing anarchy in the CAR, the African Union (AU), through its Peace and Security Council decided to authorize the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (AFISM-CAR). The nucleus of the force was constituted by the contingents that were already serving in MICOPAX.²⁹ The transition from MICOPAX to AFISM-CAR began effectively from 1st August 2013 and ran for some weeks and was conducted in close consultation with ECCAS.³⁰ This transition however did not diminish the role of ECCAS in the crisis as it provided the largest contingent in AFISM-CAR and the President of one of its member states-the Republic of Congo, Denis Sassou N'Guesso maintained the role of the International Mediator in the CAR Conflict. ECCAS actually from 2014 re-assumed a more active approach in the conflict as it called the N'Djamena Summit of January 2014 in which the organization obtained the resignation of Michel Djotodia. He was then replaced by Catherine Samba-Panza as the President of the Transition Government.

In April 2014, the UN took a stronger direct role through an authorized peacekeeping mission MINUSCA³¹. Thence on, the mediation was transformed into an international mediation consisting of the ECCAS Lead Mediator, the AU and the UN acting as deputy mediators. The International Contact Group (ICG-CAR) then agreed on the outlines of what would eventually become a three-phase mediation process, as follows;

1. A forum in Brazzaville on National Reconciliation and Political Dialogue, with the main aims being an agreement to end the hostilities, bring about disarmament of armed groups, and to create a new framework for the transition.
2. A consultative process/mediation education at the level of the Prefectures.
3. A larger national level forum in Bangui.³²

The Brazzaville Forum held from 21 to 23 of July 2014 and was a landmark initiative towards the peace process in CAR. This was a more inclusive forum and the regional actor ECCAS was tasked to be the rapporteur for the process. This role of main mediator given to ECCAS by the ICG-CAR was very vital as it avoided further complications and duplication of efforts in the peace process as international attention on the CAR crisis grew. The Committee on Mediation (CMI) during the Brazzaville Forum assisted ECCAS through mediation expertise, capacity building of the Secretariat, as well as with logistical and human resources assistance. The major outcomes of the Brazzaville Forum were the adoption of an agreement on the cessation of hostilities and support by CAR actors for transferring the next steps of the peace process to the CAR. The Forum included many CAR representatives than was the case in the Libreville Agreement. However ECCAS faced difficulties of Coordination with the other actors, the AU and the UN, some of the parties in the conflict refused to be part of the forum and there was also a lack of clarity about the working relationship between the ECCAS Secretariat and the Lead Mediator who had set up his own team to support his work.³³ Despite the obstacles, during the forum, ECCAS gained valuable experience in mediation through this experiment.

Another landmark effort towards resolving the conflict in the CAR in which ECCAS played a significant role in, was the Bangui Forum that held from 4-11 May 2015. Prior to this Bangui Forum,

²⁹African Union, *Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council, 386th Meeting*, (Addis Ababa: African Union, PSC/PR/COMM. 2 (CCCLXXXV), 19 July 2013), 1

³⁰African Union, *Launch of the transition from MICOPAX to the African-Led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic, Press Release* (Addis Ababa: African Union, 1st August 2013) 1, and African Union, *Peace and Security Council 397th Meeting at the level of the Heads of state and government, Press Release*, (New York: African Union, PSC/AHG/BR/2(CCCXCVII), 23 September 2013), 1

³¹United Nations, *Resolution 2149(2014), Adopted by the Security Council at its 7153rd Meeting*, (New York: United Nations, S/RES/20149(2014) 10 April 2014)

³²CEEAC – ECCAS, *The Principle of Subsidiarity: The example of ECCAS in the Central African Crisis – Bringing peace process closer to the people*, 12

³³Ibid., 13

the International Mediator Sassou N'Gusso sponsored a deal that was concluded between two warring factions namely, the FPRC of Nourredine Adam and a pro-Bozizé faction led by Maxime Mokom in January 2015 in Nairobi. These signed an agreement that included a ceasefire, cessation of hostilities, DDR agreement, amnesty for all perpetrators of violence, and the removal of the members of the transition.³⁴ This decision to change the members of the transition³⁴ government that was not taken in consultation with other actors in the peace process undermined the transition process and conflict resolution efforts. It therefore created complications for the Bangui Summit.

The Bangui Summit on National Reconciliation that eventually held in May 2015 partly due to the efforts of ECCAS and other international actors was aimed at defining a collective vision for the country's future. Participants adopted several recommendations, and nine factions signed a new DDR agreement, which called for all combatants to give up their weapons by the time of the national elections; the release of child soldiers; a timeline for elections and the extension of the current government's mandate, national and local mechanisms for justice and reconciliation, as well as social and economic development priorities.³⁵ The forum allowed a dialogue to occur at the local and national levels. The Forum however excluded Djotodia and Bozizé's parties as the two leaders were on exile and under international sanctions.

ECCAS meaningfully contributed to the Bangui Forum. However what was evident was that it was working in a challenging environment due to lack of coordination between its Secretariat and the office of the International Mediator. This experience therefore highlighted the need to build effective working relationships between the main actors in a conflict and the need to form complementary niches to avoid overlaps and confusion in future peacekeeping experiments.

The mediation of ECCAS in CAR extended beyond the presidential elections of January 2016 that were won by Faustin Touadera Archange. After the elections, ECCAS affirmed the electoral process and promised to continue working in collaboration with other international actors towards the process of peace and stability in CAR³⁶. The mediation and effectiveness of ECCAS in the CAR is an indication that regional organizations can effectively effect peace and security outcomes in conflicts. Its partnership with the Committee on Mediation (CMI) as well as with the AU, the UN and other International actors is indicative of the fact that if proper co-ordination is put in place, the principle of subsidiarity can effectively be used in resolving the plethora of conflicts that have so far bedevilled the African continent as ECCAS did and is doing in the CAR.

The involvement of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)

Another regional organization that made an apparition in the CAR conflict in view of seeking a return to peace and security in the country was the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)³⁷. This is an inter-governmental organization of the countries of the African Great Lakes region. Its establishment was based on the recognition that political instability and conflicts in these countries were having considerable regional dimensions due to spill overs and thus required concerted efforts in order to promote sustainable peace and development.

In response to the crisis in the CAR, the ICGLR convened an extraordinary meeting of its ministers of defense and agreed as follows:

³⁴Nathalie Dukhan, *The Central African Republic Crisis*, 26

³⁵Ibid., 27

³⁶CEEAC – ECCAS, *Communiqué de la Présidence en exercice de la CEEAC Relatif Au Processus électoral en République Centrafricaine*, (Libreville : CEEAC – ECCAS, 24 Fév. 2016)

³⁷The ICGLR is composed twelve member states, namely: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Republic of South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia.

- i) To convene a joint ICGLR/ECCAS summit on the situation in the Central African Republic;
- ii) To financially contribute to the CAR Trust/Basket Fund to enable the Transitional Authority to finance its programme and ensure the establishment of solid republican institutions to guarantee the stability of the country;
- iii) To provide support to the Central African Republic in the form of Military Assistance and Experts to assist the CAR in establishing a professional Defense and security Force which can defend and exercise control over the national territory;
- iv) Francophone member countries were to consider seconding renowned Judges and other legal experts from their respective countries to assist in the revival and stabilization of the country's legal system;
- v) Advocated Sanctions on rebel Commanders and leaders perpetrating atrocities in the country;
- vi) To continue encouraging and supporting stakeholders to expedite the national reconciliation process in view of the forth coming elections in the country;
- vii) In collaboration with ECCAS, to join the CAR in urging the UN Security Council to lift the arms embargo as an essential requirement to bring back stability in the country;
- viii) The establishment of a Military Experts Committees from the ICGLR and its dispatch to the CAR to assess its military needs and to draw a plan for technical assistance.³⁸

These efforts of the ICGLR in resolving the conflict in the CAR were seen to be in line with the principle of subsidiarity which is hinged on the idea that sustainable peace is possible if conflict resolution mechanisms are led by actors who are culturally, geopolitically and/or strategically close to the crisis in question. Based on the role of the organization, it was included alongside the AU, ECCAS, Angola, Chad, and the Republic of Congo in the effort to harmonize mediation efforts in the CAR. It was thus included in the Roadmap for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR initiated by the AU to ensure the coordination of peace efforts by neighboring states and organizations that were playing active roles in the CAR peace process. These efforts of the ICGLR went a long way in providing palliatives to the protracted peace process in the CAR as it worked in collaboration with other mediators to move the peace process forward.³⁹

The Involvement of the African Union (AU) in the Conflict

The next major Africanist Organisation that got involved and played a significant role towards the peace process in the CAR in the period under study was the African Union (AU). The conflicts that afflicted the African continent from the end of the cold war to the first decade of the 20th century demanded that urgent changes had to be made in the approach towards conflict at regional level. It became clear to many leaders in the African Continent that it was necessary to find a way to revive the spirit of Pan-Africanism as a vehicle to resolve urgent problems⁴⁰. This renewed spirit of Pan Africanism was evident in the penultimate Summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) convened in 1999, in Sirte, Libya. Subsequently, the Constitutive Act of the African Union was signed, in Lome, Togo, on the 11 July 2000. This cleared the way for the official inauguration of the African Union, as the Successor to the Organisation of African Unity, in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa. As such, the African Union replaced the OAU and took over all its assets and liabilities.

³⁸ICGLR – CIRGL, *Final Communiqué; Extraordinary Meeting of Ministers of Defence on the Security and Humanitarian Situation in the Great Lakes Region, with special focus on the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, The Republic of South Sudan and threats of terrorism*”, (Luanda: ICGLR – CIRGL, 12 May, 2015)

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Tim Murithi “The African Union’s Foray into Peacekeeping: Lessons from the Hybrid Mission in Darfur” *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development*, Issue 14, (July 2009), 4

The AU Peace and Security Council was established in 2004. This Council initiates any peace operations by analyzing a potential or existing crisis situation, which if necessary is followed up by the deployment of fact-finding missions to the trouble areas. The council then makes recommendations to authorize and legitimize the AU intervention in an internal crisis situation. It was this Peace and Security Council of the AU that recommended the intervention of the Organization in the conflict in the CAR from 2013.⁴¹

The AU authorized her peacekeeping force in the CAR in July 2013. Prior to this, the organization had been giving logistical and other required assistance to the sub regional force MICOPAX that was constituted by ECCAS, member states. In July 2013, four months into Michel Djotodia's rule, the AU began planning to absorb the Sub-regional force MICOPAX into a new regional African – led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (AFISM-CAR).⁴² With increasing international recognition that MICOPAX was falling short of resolving the complex issues involved in the CAR conflict, the AU Peace and Security Council decided to absorb the MICOPAX force and to come up with a regional force that was to have a robust mandate in the CAR crisis. The Council thus authorized the deployment, for an initial period of six months, of AFISM-CAR whose mandate was to:

- i) Protect civilians and to restore security and public order in the CAR, through the implementation of appropriate measures;
- ii) Stabilize the country and restore the authority of the central government;
- iii) Restructure the defense and security sector;
- iv) Create conditions conducive for the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need.⁴³

The official launching of the transition from MICOPAX to AFISM-CAR took place in Addis Ababa on August 1 2013 with Hawa Ahmed Yusuf appointed as the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU in Bangui. This force was approved by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2127 of 5 December 2013. This AU led force was assisted in its duties by the French soldiers that ran the Operation Sangaris.⁴⁴

When the African Union Created the AFISM-CAR to replace the ECCAS peacekeeping force in the CAR, General Martin Chomutumba of Cameroon was appointed as the Force Commander. He served in this position from December 2013 to September 2014. In the September 2014, he was appointed as the Force Commander of the UN assembled peacekeeping force MINUSCA.⁴⁵ He occupied this position till death in November 2015 and was replaced by General Bala Keita of Senegal whose appointment took effective from the 4th of February 2016.

The AFISM-CAR was involved in fighting against sectarian clashes in the country. However, violence continued in the country due to the activities of the Séleka and the anti-balaka elements. The African led force, tried amidst difficulties to stabilize the country alongside the French Operation Sangaris as well as through the continuous ECCAS mediation. These efforts helped in establishing public order and in the protection of civilians. The AU also participated actively and supported the recommendations of the Brazzaville Forum of 21-23 July 2014 and the Bangui Forum of May 2015. The AFISM-CAR in its operations however suffered from a number of capacity issues. There was

⁴¹African Union, *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union* (Addis Ababa: African Union, December 2003), 9

⁴²AFISM-CAR, in French as Mission Internationale de Soutien à la Centrafrique Sous Conduite Africaine (MISCA).

⁴³African Union, *Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 386th Meeting* (Addis Ababa: African Union, 19 July 2013), 1

⁴⁴African Union, *Press Release, Launch of the Transition from MICOPAX to the African – Led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic*, (Addis Ababa: African Union, 1st August 2013), 1

⁴⁵United Nations: *Couverture des Reunion et Communiqués de Press, SG. Nominations*: (New York: United Nations, SG/A/1490/6411-PKO/423, 30 July 2014)

no unified command structure and rivalries among troop contributors were rife, with varying commitments to meet the goals of its mandate. These divisions within the AFISM-CAR made the force ineffective in carrying out its mandate and this gave the UN the leeway to gradually transform the force from an African Union led peacekeeping force to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). This UN force was authorized in April 2014 by Security Council Resolution 2149. Thereafter, the African Union contingent was subsumed into the larger UN force that was to address the short falls of AFISM-CAR in protecting civilians in the CAR and in stemming the escalation of further violence in the country.⁴⁶

The AFISM-CAR was able in its activities to create a positive and decisive impact on the ground in the CAR. It did so by protecting civilians and preventing serious violations of international law, and in the implementation of other aspects of its mandate as reflected in the 2013 progress report of the AU commission on the deployment and Operations of AFISM-CAR⁴⁷. This AU led Operation in an African Conflict is an indication that the Organization is ready to take initiative and act decisively and forthrightly through its peace and Security Council to mediate and come up with “African Solutions” to the conflicts in Africa. This went a long way to justify the principle of subsidiarity which is to the extent that sustainable peace is possible if resolution mechanisms are led by actors who are culturally, geopolitically and strategically close to the crisis in question.

The effectiveness of the AU led force in the CAR as its contingent continued to dominate in the conflict even after AFISM-CAR had been engulfed into MINUSCA validates the principle of subsidiarity in conflict resolution in Africa. This idea informed the decision by the AU and the UN to see the need to transform the partnership between the two organizations into the one that is “predictable, systematic and strategic”. This was fulfilled when the secretary General of the UNO António Guterres and the African Union’s Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat endorsed a joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, as a basis for collaboration through joint mechanisms and regular consultations. Under this joint framework, the African Union Commission and the United Nations Secretariat agreed to collaborate from the earliest indications of conflict on the African continent.

The two organizations pledged to work together to identify and respond to indicators of potential conflict and plan for its prevention as well to co-operate on early warning. Should preventive efforts fail, the two bodies commit themselves to work together throughout the stages of conflict management preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace building⁴⁸. This memorandum of understanding is an indication that the AU has been making remarkable efforts in resolving conflicts in Africa generally and in the CAR conflict in particular. Such efforts have been recognized by the United Nations Organization whose primary function is to maintain international peace and security. For the UNO to succeed in this task, it has to collaborate with regional organizations as well as sub-regional organizations that are culturally and strategically close to the conflict in question as the AU was to the conflict in the CAR.

From the above therefore it can be seen that the sub-regional organizations around the Central African Republic such as CEMAC, ICGLR, ECCAS as well as the regional organization the AU, played significant roles towards the resolution of the conflict in the CAR. Each played its own role based on its abilities and capabilities and where lapses were noticed, larger sub-regional and later the regional organization subsumed the efforts of these sub-regional groupings. Later on however, the UNO took over the leadership in the attempts to resolve the conflict in the CAR.⁴⁹ It benefitted markedly from the earlier efforts made by the regional and sub-regional bodies. It can thus be seen

⁴⁶United Nations, *UNSC Resolution 2149(2014)*, *Adopted by the Security Council at its 7153rd Meeting*, (New York: United Nations, S/RES/20149(2014) 10 April 2014).

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸United Nations – African Union, *Annual Conference, Joint United Nations – African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security*, (New York: United Nations – African Union, 19 April 2007).

⁴⁹United Nations, *Resolution 2149* (New York: United Nations, S/RES/2149 (2014)), 10 April 2014)

that success in peace and conflict resolution is incremental and is effective when the organisations and grouping that are culturally and strategically close to the conflict are involved in the peace process. In the CAR case, it is also seen that one of such essential ingredients of success is the proper harmonization of efforts and co-ordination between the various actors. This co-ordination is aimed at preventing unwieldiness in the peace process and ensuring that all actors involved in the process are acting towards the summum bonum, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security.

Indigenous Efforts towards Resolution of the Conflict

With the state structures in disarray and with the lack of confidence in state officials, some groups of people within the CAR such as non-governmental organizations, religious leaders, civil society organizations, local peace committees, women groups and informal community associations came up and became involved in the peace process. The gains made by civil society leaders and organizations locally and nationally demonstrated that they had legitimacy especially due to their proximity to the people and shared religious identity. These bodies were assisted by International NGOs and did so much in efforts to prevent and mitigate the effects of violence. This section of the paper examines the roles of some of these indigenous bodies in the peace process and in preventing and mitigating the effects of violence in the CAR.

One of such prominent groups that played key roles in efforts to resolve the CAR crisis were the religious leaders. These leaders were involved in peace building efforts at all levels as they used their influence to stop and prevent violence by communities and armed groups. Since religious identity was one of the root causes of the violence, these leaders played particularly important roles in mitigating the violence. These leaders organized ecumenical prayers and joint celebrations of Christian and Muslim festivals as symbols of the imperative and value of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence. These leaders also directly mediated in conflicts at both provincial and local levels.⁵⁰

The heads of the three principal religious bodies in the CAR, Imam Oumar Kobine Layama, the Catholic Archbishop of Bangui Dieudonné Nzapalainga and Reverend Nicolas Guerekoyame-Gbangou of the Evangelical Alliance, created an inter religious platform as soon as the crisis began to reconcile the people.⁵¹ These leaders sustained their calls for peace, especially during the unrest in September 2015, and played a major lobbying role in the CAR and abroad to put reconciliation high on the agenda of the transitional authority and the international actors. This official involvement of religious leaders lent a moral authority in the peace process and was bolstered by the Pope's high profile and timely visit. Pope Francis visited CAR in November 2015, and this visit was critical in generating momentum for peace, galvanizing hope, eliciting commitments to nonviolence from all sides, and turning the tide after the September violence. The Pope's insistence on visiting PK5 (-a decision that the security teams strongly advised against-) provoked an emotional response from the Muslim community, heightened by images of the Pope praying at the Central Mosque in the neighbourhood. The pride and goodwill generated by this visit carried forward positive dispositions towards reconciliation efforts and allowed for the intense election cycle to follow.⁵² In provincial towns, some priests acted as ad-hoc mediators in order to protect Muslim communities under siege. These spontaneous mediation initiatives resulted from the fact that the Muslims that were persecuted by the anti-balaka rebels often sought refuge near or in churches. Priests therefore found themselves involved in the conflict and became natural mediators in the enclaves where Muslims were surrounded by anti-balaka militia such as Bouar, Boda and Yaloke⁵³. Also, during the September 2015 violence, the Bishop of Bossangoa took the preventive initiative of bringing together anti-balaka

⁵⁰ Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, *Country Report: Central African Republic*, (Washington DC: ACLED, January 2015), 8-9

⁵¹ Conciliation Resources, *Analysis of Conflict and Peace building in the Central African Republic* (London: Conciliation Resources, November 2015), 21

⁵² Elizabeth Murray et al., "The 2015-2016 CAR Elections: A look back", *United States Institute for Peace*, May 2017, 6

⁵³ Conciliation Resources, *Analysis of Conflict and Peace building in the Central African Republic*, 22

leaders and persuaded them to desist from violence against the Muslims. These efforts of the religious leaders through inter-faith platforms, their participation in local peace committees as well as indirect mediation in the conflict at local and provincial levels went a long way to revitalize the peace process.⁵⁴

The other indigenous bodies that were seriously involved in the peace process in the CAR were the civil society organisations and local peace committees. These civil society groups helped in the creation of local peace committees and in raising awareness on the need for peace. These civil society groups also got involved in mediating directly between communities in conflict. The Central African Brothers, a local NGO, led campaigns for peace in some districts of Bangui using taxis. Vitalité Plus, another local NGO, supported local peace committees by providing training for their members and organized the caravane de la paix in Bangui in August 2014.⁵⁵

The prevalent mechanism of civilian peace building initiatives in the CAR during the period under study, were local peace committees whose roles consisted of monitoring security and crime in the various neighbourhoods, raising awareness of security threats, facilitating inter-communal dialogue, alerting the various bodies responsible for security about imminent risks and lobbying for reconstruction initiatives. These peace committees were in regular contact with security forces and sometimes, they tried to formulate community security plans and to convince the community leaders to accept the return of Muslims and the reconstruction of destroyed Mosques.⁵⁶

The September 2015 troubles in Bangui triggered a wide range of civil society peace initiatives. During the violence, community leaders called for calm and restraint in the 6th *Arrondissement*, organized peaceful demonstrations and discussed with troublemakers on the need and utility of peace. These local civil society organizations and peace committees were more effective than other actors in their initiatives towards peace as they were regarded by the public as being legitimate and thus accepted by the people. However their efforts were somewhat limited by the lack of proper coordination between their early warning, and the response from armed international actors, that could have prevented some eruptions of violence if they responded on time. The peace building role of local civil society groups was also complicated by their actual or perceived lack of neutrality.⁵⁷

The peace building initiatives of these civil society bodies and local peace committees were complemented by the efforts of several international NGOs that also acted in peace process such as the *Danish Refugee Council*, *Norwegian Refugee Council*, and *Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development* amongst others. These combined efforts went a long way to reconcile the warring factions, mitigate the violence and sufferings of the affected people and communities and prepared the way for post conflict national elections in the CAR. The organization of these elections and the swearing in of the elected president however only reduced but not completely ended the conflict.

The CAR youth also became part of the conflict, either as members of armed rebel groups or agents of peace. Given their active roles during conflicts, young people also played important roles in negotiations, conflict analysis, social cohesion, inclusive national dialogue, reconciliation, peace promotion and mediation. Since the beginning of the conflict, concerns were raised by the youth about local and national policy framework that would promote the inclusion of youth in peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. Many youth organizations such as Birds of Peace made efforts to enhance the respect of human rights, good governance, rule of law and capacity building through peace education programs.⁵⁸

Some youth organizations in the CAR got engaged in designing, planning and implanting programmes and activities to resolve conflicts and promote peace. ONG Prospérité, for example got involved in peace clubs, community dialogue and youth capacity building.⁵⁹ It began offering skills and training programmes that encouraged young people to train their communities and foster peace

⁵⁴Elizabeth Murray et al., "The 2015-2016 CAR Elections: A look back", 6

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Elizabeth Murray et al., "The 2015-2016 CAR Elections: A look back", 6

⁵⁸Fabrice Kitenge Tunda, "Youth Engagement in Conflict Transformation in the Central African Republic", *African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) Conflict Trends* 2017/3, (12 Oct 2017), 4

⁵⁹Ibid.

education among the CAR population. Youth organizations were also engaged in urging young people and child soldiers to leave rebel groups. These youth organizations were and are still funded mainly by foreign donors and also by ECCAS. By promoting youth participation in peace building and conflict transformation initiatives, lots of positive grounds were covered by these indigenous efforts towards the resolution of the conflict in the CAR.⁶⁰

The CAR youth became aware that inclusive and honest dialogue could pave the way for sustainable national reconciliation, and they played the role of setting up peace, dialogue and reconciliation committees in several neighborhoods and districts affected by the conflict. Most of these committees expanded to become youth organizations with clear visions of local and specific needs in terms of conflict resolution and peace consolidation. Emmanuel Koudoubada the executive director of ONG Vitalité plus, argued that his organization had come up with a number of round table conferences to diagnose the conflicts origins and causes of conflicts, as well as different mechanisms to prevent and transform the conflict.⁶¹ The resolutions of these round table conferences organize by youth groups contributed immensely towards efforts at resolving the CAR crisis.⁶²

Conclusion

From the above, it can be seen that the efforts of the sub regional organizations such as CEMAC, ICGLR, and ECCAS as well as the main African regional organization, the AU in collaboration with the indigenous civil society bodies and NGOs did much in the peace process in the CAR. Since 2002, these bodies operated in the country to mitigate the violent conflict that followed the various coups and post-election violence that came up after each election in the CAR. These bodies also worked tirelessly either individually or in association with the other groups in mitigating the sectarian violence that erupted in the country from 2012. They also got involved in efforts to resolve the conflict and mitigate the sufferings of the affected populations.

The mediation efforts of these groups secured the resignation of Michel Djotodia in 2014 and his replacement by a transitional authority-headed by Catherine Samba-Panza. It also led to such landmark peace initiatives as the Libreville Agreement of January 2013 signed between the Seleka, François Bozizé and opposition parties including civil society organizations; the Brazzaville Agreement on cessation of hostilities that was secured in July 2014 which brought together representatives of the ex-Seleka and anti-balaka armed groups, as well as representatives of the Transitional Authority, political parties, civil society, as well as religious bodies. These peace initiative called for the cessation of hostilities by armed groups in the entire territory, and disapproved the calls from some quarters for the partition the country. They in addition, also demanded the repatriation of all mercenaries to their respective countries of origin and the promotion of further reconciliation processes.⁶³

Another landmark peace initiative achieved under the auspices of these sub-regional, regional organizations and indigenous initiatives was the Nairobi Deal of January 2015. This deal was sponsored by the International Mediator in the CAR Denis Sassou N'Gusso and was between two warring factions, the FPRC of Nourredine Adam and a pro-Bozizé anti-balaka faction led by Maxime Mokom. These actors agreed on a ceasefire, cessation of hostilities, Disarmament, Demobilization and Repatriation (DDR), amnesty for all perpetrators of violence, amongst others.⁶⁴ This deal however was not popular as it proposed the removal and replacement of the members of the Transition Government and so did not end up achieving much towards the peace process as it was flawed by that unpopular demand.

⁶⁰Ibid

⁶¹Ibid., 5

⁶²Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), Central African Republic CAR/RCA: *Humanitarian crises Analysis 2017*, (Stockholm: SIDA, February 2017)

⁶³The resolutions of the May 2015 Bangui Forum.

⁶⁴Nathalia Dukhan, *The Central African Republic crises*, 26 - 27

Also, these bodies were able to organize the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation in May 2015. This forum brought in participants from all levels of society in the CAR and agreed that all combatants should give up their weapons before the time for the national elections and to release the child soldiers within their ranks. The parties also agreed on a timeline for elections and on the national and local mechanisms for justice and reconciliation. Discussions in the Forum also focused on the social and economic development priorities. The various actors involved in the peace process ensured that elections were held in the country at the end of 2015. These elections took place and in early 2016, Faustin Archange Touadéra was sworn in as the democratically elected President of the post conflict CAR. Faustin-Archange was born in 1957 in the Central African Republic. He evolved into a politician and an academic. He was elected President in March 2016. He served previously as the nation's Prime Minister from January 2008 to January 2013. He did his university studies in Bangui, Abidjan, Lille 1 and the University of Yaoundé 1 in Cameroon where he acquired a doctorate in Mathematics. He thereafter, became the Rector of the University of Bangui. This was after a long period as in university lecturer before his appointment in 2008 as the Prime Minister. He has since March 2016 been President of the CAR.⁶⁵

The initiatives of the regional, sub-regional and indigenous NGOs and civil society groups thus played a key role in achieving relative peace in the CAR and also in initiating the peace process that was impacted upon by other international actors that complemented efforts to secure a lasting peace in the fragmented country. Though lasting peace is still elusive in the CAR, positive steps have been taken towards it and there are potentials for peace in the future. This has been made possible by the early intervention by African organizations in the conflict and is a proof that "Africans can do it on their own" in resolving African conflicts or at least can take the initiative and lead efforts towards resolving conflicts in Africa. This is opposed to the idea rather following International actors such as the UNO, EU and Countries out of Africa that may not be able to easily comprehend the cultural dimensions of the conflict in question.

⁶⁵Vincent Duhem "Central Prique: Cinchozes à Savoir sur Faustin-ArchangeTouadéra" *Jeune Afrique*, February, 22, 2016

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