

Linking Early Warning, Political Governance and Women's Security in Liberia: Engaging the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) for Peacebuilding

Olajumoke D. Yacob-Haliso¹ and Sonsare I. Zabadi¹

¹ Babcock University, Department of Political Science, Ogun State, Nigeria

jumoyin@yahoo.co.uk

How can conflict prevention also work as postconflict peacebuilding? How do the periodizations of conflict by external actors constrain the potentialities of national and regional solutions? Specifically, how can the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) serve the above dual purposes in Liberia and still enable the success of national, home-grown initiatives directed at conflict prevention and peacebuilding? This paper investigates the above questions in light of the historical role of regional actors (states, individuals, and ECOWAS- ECOMOG) in the Liberian conflict and its resolution, but aims to assess the institutional and political requirements for a successful deployment of three of the ECPF's fourteen components. The three specific components analyzed in this paper are (a) Early Warning; (b) Democracy and Political Governance; and (c) Women, Peace and Security.

The paper explores the linkages among these components and possible outcomes, employing a human development framework and a gender lens that eschews rigid periodizations and a separation of the public and private that compromises the 'peace' that men and women may achieve after conflict. This paper further interrogates the prospects of the ECPF engagement in light of existing efforts by other regional and international actors such as the African Union and the European Union, and especially in Liberia, a country riddled with actors having a multiplicity of mandates and operational and conceptual frameworks.

It may be concluded that though the relative success of the ECOWAS in regional peacekeeping and peacemaking engagements lends it some credibility in proposing the ECPF as a framework by which various actors may streamline their activities in Liberia, its effectiveness will continue to be restrained by political considerations and lack of will among the major actors involved in peacebuilding in Liberia.

Word Count: 282

Key Words: ECOWAS, ECPF, Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention, Liberia