Privatization of Security, Arms Proliferation and the Process of State Collapse in Africa

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ABSTRACT

Most so-called ‘collapsed states’ in Africa are extreme cases of the complex and contradictory processes of state-making and unmaking which are unfolding in the continent. Beneath the veneer of sovereignty, virtually all these nations started their independent existence in the 1960s as shell states. Since then, they have either followed the path of self-destruction (state collapse) or have sought to fill the shell with institutional content (state-making). Private military intervention is one of the key external factors undermining the state-building project. Whether in its traditional ‘soldier of fortune’ form, or in its current corporate cloak, the privatization of security injects an inflammatory element into the governance process in weak states. Since independence, the populations of Africa have been subjected to structural violence that has highlighted force and de-emphasized human security as the cornerstone of governance. Civil society reactions to this have become more pronounced since the end of the Cold War, and have led to negative reconfiguration in weak states that are least equipped to manage the new challenges. The privatization of security impedes efforts to fashion accountable governance, and entrenches the culture of violence. Private military companies, their partner arms brokers and local warlords are the principal actors in illegitimate resource appropriation — a major cause of ongoing asymmetric warfare in Africa — and the proliferation of weapons — an incendiary element in these wars.

INTRODUCTION

This study analyses the nexus between the privatization of security, the proliferation of arms and the worsening structural paralysis in Africa’s weak states. It aims to show that ‘corporate mercenaries’ have become a debilitating element in internal conflicts, particularly in inverted states endowed with easily extractable resources.

The study first examines the metamorphosis that has taken place since the 1960s within mercenary activities in Africa and describes various types of contemporary mercenary activities on the continent. Second, it critically analyses the milieu within which these mercenary activities thrive. Here, the
central focus is on the internal governance process in Africa and, more narrowly, on the type of African state that is most prone to private military destabilization, while the related issue of the impact of external influences on state-making and state collapse in Africa is also looked at. Third, the study examines the manifestations and consequences of private military intervention, including the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, worsening violence and human rights violations. Finally, in the conclusion, it evaluates which policy options could not only curtail mercenary activities, but also stop the rot in the internal governance process in Africa.

PRIVATE SECURITY IN HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

The phenomenon of mercenaries — and therefore private military intervention — has a long history in Africa. Many will remember how Bob Denard, Jean Schramme, Mike Hoare, and other foreign ex-servicemen from the colonial powers carried out destabilization missions in different parts of Africa in the 1960s and 1970s. Those mercenaries were attracted to African conflicts mainly by the pull of adventure and the promise of cash rewards, danger allowances and free vacations after a short stint at the front (Mockler, 1970). They usually operated as lone wolves or were organized into small bands to frustrate (or assassinate) nationalists, to support factions in internal power struggles, and to overthrow regimes that were unfriendly to a foreign power. Their activities triggered the adoption of the OAU Convention for the Elimination of Mercenaries in Africa in 1977, followed by a similar Convention by the UN in 1989.

Since then, however, the mercenary trade has moved on. One illustration of how it has changed comes from Sierra Leone. In May 1997, a motley crowd composed of discredited junior army officers and the rebel Revolutionary United Front drove Sierra Leone’s President Tejan Kabbah out of power. While in exile in neighbouring Guinea, the deposed president entered into an agreement with the UK-based mercenary outfit, Sandline International, and their mining partners — the Toronto-based British–Canadian company DiamondWorks. In return for an initial US$ 10 million of arms and mercenary support to restore his administration, Kabbah agreed to cede 30 per cent of the country’s diamantiferous landmass (worth US$ 200 million) to the mining company (Tam-Baryoh et al., 2002; Musah, 2000a: 98). Before his overthrow, Kabbah had renewed the contract of Executive Outcomes (EO), a sister company to Sandline which was active in the conflict, extending it for twenty more months from April 1996, at a fee of US$ 35.2 million. By July 1996, Branch Energy, one of several corporate mining entities fronting for EO and Sandline, had been granted diamond mines in the Kono District (where the EO offensive against the RUF was mainly concentrated) and kimberlite pipes and other mineral assets along the Sewa River in
Koidu. In 1996, the majority shares in Branch Energy were transferred to DiamondWorks.

Sandline and EO epitomize the new mercenaries — the extension of traditional mercenary activities into the yet uncharted territory of big business, made possible by increasing market fundamentalism and asymmetric warfare in the least developed parts of the world. Neo-mercenaries or private military companies have become the advance shock troops that pacify rich enclaves for resource exploitation by extraction companies which are closely tied to them.

Sifting Through the Definitional Maze

What is known today as ‘private security’ is in effect the logical transformation of traditional mercenary activities into a variety of new forms. First are private military companies (PMCs), who may be better described as private mercenary contractors. PMCs are corporate entities comprising military and intelligence entrepreneurs whose activities incorporate the provision of multi-purpose security-related products and services. They may organize mercenaries into temporary armies for combat operations in foreign conflicts on behalf of a party to that conflict, and may procure war material and logistics, provide military advice, undertake intelligence gathering duties and act as force multipliers for clients. They also provide VIP escort services and guard installations.

A major feature of PMC activities in Africa is the close corporate and operational ties with extraction and finance companies. The names of Gurkha Security Guards, Sandline International, and the now defunct South African outfit, Executive Outcomes, may be the best-known examples. Others, such as the UK-based Defence Systems Ltd and the US-based Military Professional Resources Incorporated, DynCorp and the International Chartered Incorporated, occupy the grey area between PMCs and private security companies (PSCs). As a rule, PSCs provide all the above-listed services with the possible exception of direct combat operations. PSCs are sometimes subsidiaries of PMCs: the relation between LifeGuards and Executive Outcomes/Sandline is an example of this. In resource-driven conflict situations, such as that in Angola, there is little difference between the activities of PMCs and PSCs. Security firms such as Saracen in Uganda and Teleservices in Angola are often joint ventures between foreign military entrepreneurs and local military strongmen.

Along with private military and security companies, commercialized national army units also feature in the new mercenary landscape. These units are frequently associated with the situation of regionalized internal conflicts, that is, conflicts fought out mainly within the borders of a single state, but with several countries supporting internal factions, principally for gain. For example, on one side of the on-going war in the Democratic
Republic of Congo are Zimbabwean army units, which are actually President Robert Mugabe’s commercial army, propping up Kabila’s war efforts in return for mineral deals for the president and his military/business associates. Billy Rautenbach, an associate of Mugabe, heads Gecamines, the main mining concern in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Military strongmen from both countries have set up Osleg, a major mineral marketing company, to exploit Zimbabwe’s huge mineral resources (Howe, 2000; Shaw, 2000). On the other side of the divide, Ugandan and Rwandan army units are waging a predatory war to carve out territory and resources — diamonds and the strategic mud, coltan — for their leaders. The private army units of Liberian leader Charles Taylor, and Sierra Leone’s Revolutionary United Front rebels were at the heart of the diamonds-for-guns operations that illegally exploited Sierra Leone's diamonds, a portion of which were bartered for sophisticated weaponry to fuel the decade-long civil war. In the power struggle that followed the presidential elections in Côte d’Ivoire, Charles Taylor supplied Liberian mercenaries to serve in the personal security unit of former Ivorian coup leader, General Robert Guei (Musah, 2000b). The mercenaries were to fulfil the dual task of defending Guei’s usurpation of power and targeting Taylor’s political opponents based in Abidjan (ibid.)

Interspersed among the categories described above, and serving as ready fodder for local warlords, are the floating indigenous mercenaries. In the conflict clusters of Africa, there are pools of ex-combatants and ex-soldiers who offer services as mercenaries for different operations: prosecution of factional wars, debt collection, settling of scores, forced protection and other criminal activities. As a rule, these indigenous mercenaries are drawn from different nationalities within the conflict clusters. They are often ex-combatants who desert their warlords because of disillusionment or desert national armies because of deplorable service conditions, or demobilized soldiers who have not been properly reintegrated into society. Others start off as part of civil defence forces and vigilantes and later move on for adventure and better remuneration. The phenomenon of floating indigenous mercenaries can also be observed outside Africa. The Russian army has recruited ex-soldiers from former Soviet republics to wage the so-called ‘weekend wars’ in Chechnya; in Colombia, militants from neighbouring countries have been implicated in the cocaine and counter-insurgency wars. Regardless of their origin, these new mercenaries share many of the characteristics of traditional mercenaries and constitute available tools for the perpetration of violence for profit.

As will be discussed below, totalitarian liberalization in the realms of global economics and politics is a key facilitating factor in the modernization and proliferation of mercenary activities. However, mercenaries — and particularly the PMCs — would be redundant in the absence of active conflict. Violence can be instigated, escalated, and influenced in various ways from the outside, but conflict usually brews from within. Consequently, the
pull factors for the new mercenarism need to be traced first to transformations within the African state itself. All African states can be understood as weak states, but not all have become magnets for neo-mercénaires. The next section analyses how internal governance processes in Africa have made some states, but not others, prominent sites for neo-mercénaires.

STATE COLLAPSE AND THE PRIVATIZATION OF SECURITY IN AFRICA

The primary purpose of colonial rule in Africa was to secure resource enclaves for raw materials. Therefore, any rudimentary institutions that were built in colonial states were either incidental to this central objective or designed to facilitate pacification and resource exploitation (Musah, 1999: 111; Osaghae, 1998: 11–12). In these extractionist colonies, coercive security was the central focus of institution building. All the colonial governments used African soldiers to control other Africans (Clapham, 1999: 25–7) and ‘as far as the rank and file was concerned, they could be described as mercenary armies’ (Miners, 1971: 2–12). In the anti-colonial struggle, therefore, nationalist leaders mobilized local support against the settler authorities by stressing the ‘alien’ nature of the colonial state, in whose well-being the colonized society at large had neither stake nor interest (Osaghae, 1998: 21). Thus, in popular consciousness, there was no need to demonstrate accountability or transparency towards this state and it was legitimate to plunder and undermine it.

This legacy of colonialism weighed heavily on early state formation in African. In the first decade after independence, all African states looked alike in at least three respects. All were founded on a contradiction between traditional values and grafted inherited institutions. All were vulnerable to the vagaries of external political and financial systems; and, within all of them, the security sector was singled out as a priority area for consolidation. Thus, African states as a group shared arbitrary boundaries, extractionist/rentier production relations, and repressive security apparatuses.

Beyond their similarities, however, the African states are differentiated by the paths to development that they have followed since the 1960s. The modern state is argued to have passed through a ‘Tillian’ formation, whereby the state operated as a ‘security racket’ (Tilly, 1985: 169–86), to a ‘Weberian’ (Bonapartist) form marked by bureaucratic impartiality and the pursuit of public welfare in a context of relatively widespread socio-political legitimacy (see the introduction to this volume). Most African states can be understood as having taken a Tillian form. A few were less Tillian and more Weberian from the beginning; in these cases, the civil societies fostered in them have been better able to withstand the destabilizing effects of the post-Cold War era and continue in the drive towards Weberian statehood. Others, however, have evolved from Tillian to extreme Tillian states. As we
shall see, extreme Tillian states are the main terrain of the new mercenary interventions.

Making Tillian States

A marked feature of most African states has been that the state is the primary source of violence. This owes much to an important failure of the first generation of African leadership, namely its inability to overcome the contradictions of the colonial legacy and to transform inherited structures to meet popular aspirations for human security and peaceful transfer of power. Instead, these institutions were grafted onto, and grew apart from, traditional structures, creating fatal fault lines in the architecture of the new states. To the extent that ordinary people did not see themselves as stakeholders in the state-building project, the typical African state lacked popular legitimacy and has remained a shell from independence.

Fearful of societal backlash for its failures, the post-independence leadership in most African states retreated into security paranoia. Leaders’ preoccupation with assuring personal power and regime security blocked any moves towards democratic institution-building. Starting off at independence as parodies of the liberal democracies of the former colonial powers, most African governments had transformed themselves into one-party states a decade later. By denying space for healthy competition between ideas and among groups, and by aborting the efforts to consolidate the nascent structures of checks and balances within the body politic, the one-party state and its variants became the harbingers of institutional violence.

In these Tillian states, the ruler was obliged to rely on a clique of sectional/regional political heavyweights, usually selected on the basis of personal loyalty and ethnic affiliations, to ensure personal and regime security, as well as to extend a coercive security roof over its subjects. Often, the ruler became beholden to these powerbrokers — powerful military commanders and party stalwarts — who also had political and economic ambitions of their own, and thus confronted the ruler with a security dilemma. ‘The ruler who organized the security racket was liable to be replaced by those who actually executed it’ (Hutchful, 2000: 213). The politicization of the military as a result of it becoming the prime arbiter in the struggle between the civilian elites and the masses, and the resultant military coups that spread across Africa from the late 1960s through to the end of the 1980s were, in part, a function of these dynamics. The loss of central control over weapons also occurred within this process.

Apart from those countries in the throes of active liberation wars (southern Africa, ex-Belgian Congo and Guinea Bissau), Africa was not burdened with the proliferation of weapons as it approached independence. Even in territories where the superpowers dumped weapons to support proxy wars, such as in Ethiopia and Somalia, arms were generally under adequate control by state
organs. The advent of *coup d’État* gradually emphasized the decisive role of weapons as the shortest route to power, and their proliferation increased with the entry of junior military officers into the political arena. In West Africa alone, there were six junior officers’ coups between 1980 and 1986. As a rule, such coups further exacerbated arms diffusion, introducing arms possession to the civilian youth — radical students, workers’ leaders and the marginalized sections of the urban population — and increasing gun-related civilian casualty rates (Musah, 1999: 115–19). The diffusion of arms into the civilian domain became a facilitating factor in the emergence of the civilian warlord, desperate to create his autonomous politico-economic power base by jumping on the bandwagon of legitimate internal grievances, appropriating these grievances and using them as a smokescreen for his personal gain.

Personal rule and regime security, it must be stressed, are not unique to Africa. The former Soviet Union (and indeed all the former communist states) was built on the slogan: *partia i naroda, ediniy* (the unity of the party and the people). The military dictatorships that edified South Korea, Argentina, Brazil and Chile relied on extreme state-sponsored violence to project power. However, in all these states the ruling elite retained a modicum of patriotism and limits on their greed for personal wealth, and were therefore able not only to project military security but also to oversee the creation of public material goods, if not the assurance of physical security. This ‘development first, democracy later’ paradigm has also been found in some African states.

Towards Weberian States

The ‘development before democracy’ model of governance can be understood as an attempt at Weberian state-making. It implies an effort to fill the ‘shell’ of the state with institutional content, and to minimize the state’s propensity to become a protection racket. In the African context, a few leaders adopted the ‘development before democracy’ model and with it, a Weberian state-making project. Assuming a father figure role under a Bonapartist arrangement, they made genuine efforts to develop infrastructure, create public goods, and develop a sense of belonging among their populations by closing internal inequality gaps.

Ghana’s president Kwame Nkrumah (1957–66), for example, virtually removed the north–south divide in the country by providing free education and extending infrastructure to the deprived north. Nationally, his development-oriented programmes provided opportunities and removed some key causes of conflict — social and ethnic inequality. Presidents Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Sekou Touré (Guinea), Modibo Keita (Mali), Houphouët Boigny (Côte d’Ivoire) and Leopold Senghor (Senegal) all managed more or less to forge a common sense of belonging among diverse ethnic groups, and made efforts
to proportionately distribute opportunities as well as the burden of poverty nationally. They recognized the inhibiting role of inherited borders and espoused the idea of continental government in one form or the other. They all exhibited authoritarian tendencies but were charismatic and untainted by massive corruption. Often, as in the case of Nkrumah, Sekou Toure and Nyerere, the radical non-aligned stance of these leaders made them the prime targets of controlled destabilization by internal conservative forces and the West. They became the victims of mercenary invasions (Guinea and Benin in the 1970s) and coup plots (Ghana between 1966 and 1981).

Ironically, civil society\(^1\) in many of these countries grew in sophistication and resilience with the recurrent coups and instability during the Cold War, developing in the process the knowledge to absorb shock and push for the creation of open society. These societies therefore managed better to absorb the destabilizing effects of the post-Cold War era and continue with the drive towards Weberian state-building. Mali, poor but endowed with gold, could have degenerated into anarchy in 1991. However, the determined resistance of civil society, led by students and ordinary workers, brought down General Moussa Traore’s corrupt dictatorship and ensured a smooth transition to democratic rule. In Ghana, civil society pressure on Flt. Lt. Rawlings’ junta forced the pace of democratization from 1991, eventually nudging the regime out of power in December 2000 through democratic elections. Although threatened in the regions with breakdown in law and order (see Reno in this volume), Nigeria is most unlikely to collapse due principally to the determination and resilience of civil society. Similar processes in such countries as Benin, Senegal, Mauritius, Botswana, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania speak more to the evolution towards the empirical Weberian state of bureaucratic institutions and democratic structures than to a descent into state collapse.

**From Tillian to Extreme Tillian Statehood**

In contrast to the African states that have taken on elements of Weberian statehood are those in which Tillian beginnings have become deepened and pronounced. These extreme Tillian states are marked by very high levels of repression, internal fractionalization, external manipulation, poverty of leadership, institutional incompetence, and graft.

The Democratic Republic of Congo under Mobutu Sese Seko (1965–97) constitutes the most obvious case in which all the above characteristics

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1. The main deficiency in current discourse on state collapse is that too often, civil society is not adequately factored in as an active subject in state-building and its trajectories (including collapse). Instead, the emphasis remains exclusively focused on the political elite — political leaders, strongmen and warlords.
converged, but other countries shared many or all of the same traits. Here, political leaders perfected the patrimonial system into a fine art. They relied on personal armies and numerous security and paramilitary agencies whose *modus operandi*, if not their nationality, equated them to mercenaries. They survived by crude divide-and-rule tactics, eliminating or corrupting potential rivals and playing one ethnic group against another. Mobutu disenfranchised entire ethnic groups, declared the Banyamulenge in eastern Congo to be aliens, and incited the rest of the population against them. He managed the Congo as one giant mining concern for the benefit of foreign interests and his Ngbandi clan. Under the guise of preserving the tropical rainforests, he kept different provinces isolated from each other, without road or telephone communications.  

Similar governance practices occurred in Somalia under Siad Barre and in Liberia where, for decades, the Americo-Liberian oligarchy under Presidents Tubman and Tolbert presided over a ‘Black Apartheid’ system in which returnee freed slaves held the vast native population as second-class citizens. In these countries, no serious attempt was made to develop economic infrastructure, health or educational facilities, leaving large sections of the population without livelihoods. They became key arenas of the Cold War proxy confrontations (the Congo, Somalia, Angola and Ethiopia). Crucially, civil society in these countries experienced extremely stunted growth and lacked the unity of purpose required to confront dictatorship, making it vulnerable to repression and manipulation. The struggles for power were, therefore, left in the hands of the narrow political elite and expressed through the will of rival warlords and the military. In many of these countries the processes of state reconfiguration mimic seventeenth century state building in France and elsewhere in Europe (see Tilly, 1985), and are characterized by security rackets, predation and mercenary activity in an unending cycle of violence. These entities remain contested territory in which the reassertion of statehood is in permanent competition with state collapse.

Whether these contested territories return to new forms of statehood or crumble is determined by a number of factors. One is the ability of one faction to regenerate coercive power over the entire territory. Another is

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2. Incidentally, the absence of roads between provinces was one factor that contributed to the collapse of Mobutu’s regime. It was impossible to move loyal troops from the capital, Kinshasa, to confront the advancing rebel forces from Kisangani in the east. He had to fly in ill-motivated Serb mercenaries, who proved no match for the Ugandan and Rwandese-backed rebel forces.

3. Uganda at the end of 1985 and beginning of 1986, and Rwanda in the transition between the Hutu-led genocide and the victory of the Tutsi-led Rwanda Patriotic Front, experienced momentary periods of collapse, episodes that were reversed by the ability of the new political dispensations to generate and project enough coercive power over their territories. The failure of Laurent Kabila (1997) and his son, Joseph, to generate and project similar power after the demise of Mobutu might well lead to the ‘somalianization’ of the DRC.
the internal balance of forces between civil society and the warlords. The extreme Tillian states, as described above, offer the primary context for subsequent analysis. This state is typically resource-laden, contested and predatory, thus making it a major arena for private military intervention, arms proliferation and illegal resource appropriation on the continent. However, the internal dynamics within African states that have attracted mercenary intervention do not occur in a vacuum. They are also influenced by developments from without, to which the discussion turns next.

LIBERALIZATION AND PRIVATIZATION OF SECURITY

Rapid globalization may have united the world’s peoples around certain shared values, but in weak states it has also ruthlessly exposed the inadequacies of governance and catalysed the violent empowerment of non-state actors — warlords, terrorists, private military entrepreneurs. We live in an era when state and non-state actors alike are guaranteed speedy and often indiscriminate access to lethal technologies, including night-vision equipment, satellite communication gadgets, and rocket-propelled grenades. Africa has become the destination of choice for much of this deadly merchandise. Advances in electronic technology are crucial to these transactions, enhancing the ability of agents other than the state to efficiently and speedily carry out business involving the sale of gems, brokering and delivery of arms from the remotest possible parts of the globe. The receding threats of mutually assured destruction by the superpowers, the collapse of apartheid and waning proxy wars following the end of the Cold War, have also led to massive global downsizing of armies without any proper alternative training and reintegration of demobilized soldiers. Consequently, a huge labour pool of potential mercenaries has been created, particularly in South Africa, eastern and central Europe.

The weapons industries in these regions have become the states’ main competitive enterprises in the post-Cold War global economy. Many new and surplus weapons have ended up in private hands, from where they find their way into conflict zones, adding to the huge Cold War stockpiles. If there were ten manufacturers of small arms in the former Soviet Union in the 1960s, by 1999 this figure had grown to sixty-six in the ex-Soviet territories. Globally, corresponding figures stood at 99 and 385 respectively (Abel, 2000: 83). From sales of around US$ 3 billion per annum during the Cold War, estimates of global private arms sales were reported to have exceeded

4. As an internationally recognized entity, Somalia might have collapsed, but from its ashes are sprouting new entities — Somaliland, Puntland — with clear state-making characteristics spearheaded by activated traditional/civil society. The reactivation of civil society is also a feature of the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia.
US$ 25 billion in 1996 (Hutchful, 2000: 217). In the Slovak Republic, Bulgaria and Ukraine, networks of the criminal underworld, corrupt military personnel and rogue arms brokers divert or loot weapons from official sources, which are then shipped into conflict zones. Recently, a parliamentary commission in Ukraine revealed that, between 1992 and 1998, some US$ 32 billion worth of weaponry (a third of the country’s stocks) had been stolen from national armouries (Princeloo, 2002).

In addition, the organizational and operational ethos of the new private military groups cannot be divorced from today’s dominant paradigms in politics and economics — a one-size-fits-all liberal democratic strait jacket based exclusively on market fundamentalism. The neo-conservative philosophy that sees the state as overburdened and incompetent in matters of political economy has led to pressures on governments to offload. Private enterprises, including private security companies, have become the ultimate lever to pry concessions from, and roll back, the state. As Nossal has noted, ‘engaging the private sector to provide public security efficiently, effectively, and relatively cheaply is the logical outgrowth of a neoconservative theology that preaches that the private sector will do a more competent job, building, owning, and profiting from what used to be the public works in many countries’ (Nossal, 1998: 3).

Since the mid-1980s, internal conflicts — which have always taken place concurrently with inter-state wars, but which were suppressed by Cold War priorities — have intensified, proliferated, and threatened to tear states apart. However, the huge interest generated by these conflicts at the level of rhetoric has not been matched by a vigorous practical international response. Again, mercenary groups — cloaked in corporate garb this time around — are taking advantage. According to Harding, what the new mercenary outfits and their mining partners have done so successfully to date is ‘to interpret political instability in Africa as a market issue, and position themselves perfectly in that market’ (Harding, 1996: 12).

In this order of things, the policies of the international financial institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) have become a case study in contradictions. On the one hand, they have incorporated pro-active roles in conflict prevention in their dealings with conflict-prone societies by demanding ‘good governance’ and ‘human rights’ as yardsticks for engagement. On the other hand, through cure-all structural adjustment programmes, they have put excessive pressure on the already anorexic state to further slim down by selling off state assets, and cutting down on military expenditures and subsidies on essential social services.

Corrupt elites, especially in extreme Tillian states, have responded in the most cynical way possible. Firstly, they have cut down on military strengths, starved the army of pay while setting up numerous informal parallel security groups outside the purview of aid agreements, whose main preoccupation is to guarantee personal and regime security, crush civil society dissent and eliminate threats from rival strongmen. Such security apparatuses as Charles
Taylor’s Anti-Terrorist Unit, the Cobras of General Sassou Nguesso and the Cocoye of Pascal Lissouba (both in Congo-Brazzaville), and the Interahamwe of the Hutu elite in Rwanda may be composed of nationals, but they are often led and trained by foreign mercenaries, and their primary allegiance is to sectional interests. Meanwhile, the paralysis within the formal armies has thrown up freelancers all too eager to engage in mercenary and terrorist activities — assassinations, fighting wars in foreign lands and serving in protection rackets for strongmen and criminal gangs — for next to nothing.

Secondly, external demands have offered rulers a handy excuse to complete the privatization of the state by relinquishing any remaining responsibility for development and provision of social services to international non-governmental organizations. At the same time, they are selling off state assets to their cronies and striking lucrative deals with shady external private entrepreneurs to loot national resources. Thus, throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, Ghana was held up as the IMF success story in structural adjustment in Africa. After twenty years of structural adjustment the local currency, the cedi, has collapsed. In 1982, US$ 1 exchanged for C2.75. In 2000, the same dollar bought C6000. The national debt shot up from US$ 1 billion to US$ 9 billion in the same period, and the country was spending 51 per cent of GNP on repaying external debts. State enterprises were sold on the cheap to party stalwarts who, despite running the factories down, continued to receive millions of dollars in state subsidy. The IMF-sponsored Ghanaian structural adjustment programme was exported lock, stock, and barrel, including Ghanaian advisers, to Uganda to wreak similar havoc when President Museveni seized power in 1986.

Discourse about external exacerbating factors in Africa’s malaise cannot ignore the role of foreign powers as trends within the African conflict zones increasingly undermine the notion that the end of the Cold War has put paid to proxy wars. After the Cold War, France insisted that it would no longer act as the gendarme of Africa, but would only help Africans to defend themselves. This was followed by overall troop cuts from 430,000 to some 300,000 and an intention to close down bases in Africa. Yet as of 2001, France still maintained bases in Djibouti, Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, Chad and Gabon with overall troop strength of over 6,000 (Ulbrich, 2001). Furthermore, these pronouncements had been preceded in 1993 by the creation of a Rapid Deployment Force made up of 15,000 paratroopers from the French Foreign Legion, which is engaged in exercises in Africa and which has a capability to intervene anywhere on the continent within forty-eight hours (Renou, 2000). Since the mid-1980s, the Americans have maintained a high profile presence in Uganda and Rwanda and have been using private military companies, such as MPRI, extensively in the Great Lakes Region and other parts of Africa, notably Angola and Nigeria. The UK’s high profile military role in Sierra Leone in support of the beleaguered Tejan Kabbah government, and in Zimbabwe against Mugabe, is also an indication of shifts in British African policy from the immediate post-Cold War stance.
For all three countries, the need to build new alliances in Africa to protect their economic interests and contain unfriendly regimes remains paramount. Throughout the 1990s Angola and Nigeria provided close to 20 per cent of US oil requirements while France is anxious to maintain its control over oil and gems in Gabon and the Congo through Elf Aquitaine. In a throwback to the Cold War, the Americans and French have thrown their weight behind warring factions in conflict zones in Africa with the active deployment of mercenaries and the supply of weapons.

Rwanda and Uganda have invaded the DRC twice in the last five years. In 1996, the armies of both countries had a double agenda: to support Laurent Kabila’s push to topple Mobutu and to pursue and destroy the Hutu genocidaires. In 1998, both armies occupied the eastern provinces of DRC, this time ostensibly in support of anti-Kabila forces. It is obvious now that both invasions had the underlying aim of opening up the DRC’s vast resources for exploitation by the top brass in the two governments, their relatives, and foreign firms. The 1996 operation took place with guidance and intelligence from a US-built military base in Cyangugu, near the Congolese border. African–American mercenaries and US private security firm, Brown & Root (a subsidiary of Halliburton) trained and supported Rwandese forces with arms and logistics and participated in the massacre of thousands of Hutus (Madsen, 2001). They deployed heavily armed and armoured helicopter gunships fitted with 105 mm cannons, rockets, machine guns, landmine ejectors, and infrared sensors (ibid.). On the other side of the conflict, a Serb mercenary army, put together and supported by the French internal and external secret services, DST and DGSE, propped up Mobutu’s crumbling forces (Pech, 2000: 138–9). America Mineral Fields (AMF), an Arkansas-based mining company with close ties to a Curaçao-based PMC, International Defence and Security (IDAS Belgium SA), part-financed and militarily supported Kabila’s campaign against Mobutu. In fact, AMF was the first entity, state or otherwise, to recognize Kabila’s government (Peleman, 2000: 155).

The sustained illegal exploitation of Congolese mineral resources and bogus arms deals began, however, with the second invasion. The most active participants, according to the UN Expert Panel Report on the DRC, were the immediate clan around Museveni. His half-brother, Major General Salim Saleh, Saleh’s wife Jovia Akandwanaho, and a host of top military officers have been actively involved in the trade in diamonds, coltan, timber, coffee and gold through sham companies (The Monitor 18 April 2001). Saleh also arranged arms shipments into Uganda through bogus brokers. In 1996, through the UK-based Consolidated Sales Corporation, he fixed the sale of two MI-24 helicopter gunships to Uganda that turned out to be junk (The Monitor 19 April 2001). In Angola, American business interest pressure on the Clinton Administration was key in Angola’s replacement of EO by MPRI after the former had done most of the fighting to pacify resource enclaves that were threatened by UNITA rebels. In the Mano River Region,
France is often seen as the ultimate power behind the Libyan-supported war machine that groups together Liberia, the RUF, Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire. The support by foreign powers to client states has offered the burgeoning private military companies a legitimizing cover to wade into conflicts to prop up factions that enjoy ‘international credibility’.

The new foreign private partnerships that are rediscovering African wealth, just like their counterparts in the colonial conquests, offer both the hand of war and the hand of trade to their hosts. The mining companies come complete with their multi-purpose security outfits that help the local elite to eliminate or at least downgrade the threat posed by local rivals and the national army. Thus, in the conflict zones of Africa, oil and mineral extracting firms as well as illegal gem buyers from the West, Eastern Europe, South Africa and the Middle East, are complemented in their ventures by private security outfits. Preying on the vulnerability of kleptocratic regimes to new demands of governance, the corporate armies mainly target the creation of safe havens around enclaves that are rich in natural resources.

The manifestations and consequences of these processes can be charted by examining the conflict vortices in the Mano River Union (Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone) and the Great Lakes Region, highlighting particularly the interface between these new corporate conquests and escalating violence.

**PMCs, ARMS TRANSFERS AND CONFLICT ESCALATION: THE NEXUS**

For reasons related to the dynamics of illegal arms flows, it is almost impossible to ascertain the exact extent of light weapons proliferation in the Mano River conflict cluster. Nonetheless, it is clear that the region has become a key market for small arms and light weapons (SALW), with UN estimates putting the number of small arms in circulation at seven million. An economic logic clearly exists behind the proliferation of ‘recycled’ weapons, as the acute insecurity in the zone has also made it the centre for the greatest demand for weapons. It is awash with small arms that have exacerbated the culture of violence, heightened banditry and hostage taking, and acted as a cover for horrendous mutilations, particularly among children and youth. Women refugees and internally displaced persons have become victims of food-for-sex rackets. Among rebels and local militias active in the Sierra Leone conflict, the Kalashnikov rifle became the symbol of mob justice. For example, ‘AK-47’ is interpreted as ‘out of every 7 captives, murder 4’, and AK-58 as ‘out of every 8 women, rape 5’. SALW diffusion within the region, as well as the exploitation and marketing of such resources as diamonds, gold, timber and rubber, have followed a common pattern. Libya served as a common source of training and weapons for the combatants (Musah, 2000a) while private brokers and rogue airlines fixed deals and ferried weapons and ammunitions from Eastern Europe and southern Africa.
In the Liberian civil war, Taylor’s National Patriotic Front (NPFL) combatants included mercenaries from Burkina Faso who were trained and armed by Libya. The first contingent of NPFL trainee insurgents — mainly peasants from the Nimba County of Liberia — received training in Libya and resettled in Burkina Faso (Fahnbulleh, 1994). AK-47 assault rifles, grenades and mortars were airlifted from Libya to Burkina Faso, from where they were taken on a Fokker-28 owned by Burkina Faso to Man Airport in western Côte d’Ivoire for onward transfer by cargo trucks to the NPFL base in Gbarnga inside Liberia (Prkic, 1997). The NPFL supplemented its stocks with illicit war material acquired through the illegal trade in minerals, timber, and rubber from rebel-controlled zones. According to one observer, Ivorian officials ‘arranged business meetings for Taylor and his commanders while gendarmes escorted them around, and custom and immigration officials [did] not seem to pay any attention to the goods that crossed the border’ (Prkic, 1997: 7). NPFL diamonds and forest products were now transported from Gbarnga through the Ivorian town of Danane to the ports of San Pedro and Abidjan. Here, the goods were shipped to Europe and the United States. The Gbarnga–Danane road thus became a strategic ‘minerals for guns’ route in the West African conflict.

The Sierra Leone civil war offered even greater insights into the link between PMCs and arms proliferation. The Sandline/Executive Outcomes transnational mercenary conglomerate with its mining wing, the Branch-Heritage group, made significant inroads into the political economy of the troubled country, dictating terms in the security market, winning lucrative mining and security contracts such as the Koidu diamond concessions. When EO was forced out of Sierra Leone in January 1997, they left behind their mercenary field brigade, LifeGuard Systems, to protect Branch Energy’s possessions in Koidu, after warning President Tejan Kabbah that he would be overthrown within 100 days of their exit (Musah, 2000a: 100). At the time, it was strongly rumoured that LifeGuard Systems was responsible for the supply of a ‘shipment of arms comprising RPG-7 rockets, AK-47 ammunition, mines, mortar bombs to the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council/Revolutionary United Front junta’ (ibid.: 101–10). Recently, Johan van Zyl (aka Shorty), a former South African mercenary employee of LifeGuard, confirmed the story. According to him, the group supplied the junta with the weapons in return for continued mining operations by Branch Energy (Sunday Times, 2000; Punch, 2000).

When the AFRC/RUF rebel alliance overthrew the Kabbah regime in May 1997, the UN Security Council prohibited the supply of weapons to Sierra Leone.5 This ban notwithstanding, Sandline International brokered the shipment of 35 tons of AK-47 assault rifles, ammunition and mortars into Sierra Leone in February 1998 (Musah, 2000a) under a military

contract signed with the exiled government of President Tejan Kabbah. The weapons were shipped from Bulgaria to Kano in Northern Nigeria on relay to Sierra Leone, via Ibis Airline, a company partly owned by the mercenary network. At various times in the course of efforts to dislodge the rebels from power, Sandline and Executive Outcomes supplied mercenary pilots — including veterans Joup Joubert and Neil Ellis, was well as Ukrainians and Russians — for the Nigerian AlphaJets and Mi-24 HIND gunships.

Neil Ellis has remained in the country since, operating as a lone wolf piloting a Mi-17 gunship for the Kabbah government. He has been the subject of a number of accusations, including the indiscriminate bombardment of civilian areas, and killing and maiming scores of unarmed civilians (Avebury, 2000). In the arms area, Ellis has also been accused of winning dubious contract awards from strong men within the government for arms and spare parts in return for flying them and their relatives around the country, and of short-changing the government over spare parts deals for the government helicopter gunship (Bangura, 2000). Roger Crooks, an American–Australian arms fixer who was expelled from Sierra Leone after the overthrow of the Junta for arming the rebels, has since returned to the country and now manages Freetown's Mammy Yoko Hotel, the operational headquarters of the UN peacekeepers, UNAMSIL (pers. comm.).

On the other side of the conflict former PMC personnel and criminal arms brokers were at the heart of the guns for diamonds business. Perhaps one of the most famous mercenaries today is Carl Alberts, a former Apartheid and EO top gun who has switched allegiance to the rebels. Another is Fred Rindel, another former Apartheid army officer, who now leads a group of South African freelancers in training, equipping and directing Charles Taylor’s forces in their destabilizing campaigns in Guinea and Sierra Leone. He and Nico Shafer (who worked for the former Colombian cocaine baron Pablo Escobar) were reported to have set up an international consortium with Charles Taylor and the RUF that involved the procurement of diamonds, narcotics, arms and mercenaries. An Israeli mercenary, Reserve Lieutenant-Colonel Yair Klein, contracted by Tejan Kabbah as military adviser in August 1998, turned out to be a double agent who had previously trained the Medellin cartel’s Carlos Castano paramilitary death squads in Columbia and who also shipped weapons from Libya and Ukraine to the RUF (Reuters, 1999).  

In January 1999 the RUF–AFRC rebel alliance occupied Freetown for two weeks, provoking a counter-attack by ECOMOG forces. In the course of the counter-offensive, ECOMOG fighter jets and naval gunboats attacked a ship ferrying mercenaries and weapons from Liberia into rebel-controlled territory in Sierra Leone. Several mercenaries — alleged to be mainly Ukrainians, Liberians and Burkinabe — perished in the attack (Inter
Press Service, 1999). At the UN Sierra Leone Sanctions Committee meeting in New York in July 2000, the UK team threw further light on recent dynamics of arms proliferation in Sierra Leone. According to Stephen Pattison of the Foreign Office (UK, 2000), two truckloads of ammunition and food left Monrovia for Kailahun in Sierra Leone on 8 June 2000. In late June, Charles Taylor authorized the shipment of rocket propelled grenades, mortars and rifles to RUF rebels; in the last week of June Sam Bockarie (the RUF commander based in Monrovia) led some 500 RUF, Burkinabe, and Liberian mercenaries across the border into Sierra Leone, armed with rifles, rocket propelled grenades and flame throwers.

Mercenary pilots from Eastern Europe made sorties for the rebel alliance from bases inside Liberia (Herald Guardian, 1999). Leonid Minin, a Ukrainian mafia boss, was linked to an arms and diamonds shuttle between Sierra Leone and Liberia (Le Soir, 2000). The Partnership Africa Canada Report on ‘Conflict Diamonds’ accused the South African, Michau Huisamen, and his mining company AmCan Minerals of being ‘willing to go to almost any lengths, including the provision of arms and mercenary armies, to get diamonds’ (Mail & Guardian, 2000).

Mercenary Pilots and Arms Brokering

In Africa south of the Sahara, porous borders and a lack of sea and air surveillance capacity (with the possible exception of South Africa) make the continent a haven for arms smuggling. Russian, Ukrainian and Central European pilots have become a feature of the wars in East and Central Africa while Russian-built planes have become the key arms carriers. A secret airstrip in eastern Kenema manned by the RUF became the main entry point for illegal AK-47 rifles, 60mm portable mortars, and even surface to air missiles from Eastern Europe to the anti-government forces in Sierra Leone (AFP, 1998). Boats were also used to ferry weapons from Liberia. The arms ferriers included Ibis Air, Sorus Airlines, and two British companies, Sky Air and Occidental. According to London’s Sunday Times of 28 January 1999, the last two reportedly shipped nearly 400 tons of arms and ammunition from the Slovak Republic to the RUF forces in defiance of the official UK stand in the war. A pilot of Capricorn Airlines, a company linked to the EO/ Sandline PMC family, confessed to ‘smuggling many diverse cargoes including arms, diamonds and wild birds’ (Journeyman Pictures, 1998, quoted in Wood and Peleman, 1999: 89). Yet another big player in the conflict’s arms-for-diamonds rackets was Victor Bout, a former Soviet intelligence operative who, together with Sanjivan Ruprah, operated the carrier, Air Cess. The same cartel is reputed to have armed the al-Qaida and Taliban war machine in Afghanistan (Princeloo, 2002).

A common practice in the conflict zones is the creation of security joint ventures and bogus airlines by relatives of local political stalwarts and
foreign military entrepreneurs. Sorus Air, active in arms transhipment
during EO intervention in the Sierra Leone war in 1995, was a joint venture
between Belarussians and Stephen Bio, brother of the former deputy AFRC
Junta leader, Brigadier Maada Bio (Musah, 2000a: 89). Raymond Moi, son
of Kenyan President Arap Moi, set up a joint security company and part-
owned Ibis Air with former EO Chief Executive, Eeben Barlow. In Uganda,
Major-General Salim Saleh, owned part of the security firm Saracen and

It is obvious from the foregoing that there is a causal link between negative
state reconfiguration, private military intervention, and the worsening security
environment in the weak states of Africa. However, some analysts have
described the privatization of security as an inevitable and even useful
conflict intervention tool in the post-Cold War era, arguing that PMCs are
cost effective, efficient and qualitatively and morally different from classical
mercenaries (Brooks, 2001; Shearer, 1998). The cost-effectiveness argument,
however, often fails to answer pertinent questions. For example, how does
one factor mineral concessions, which are often granted to PMCs and their
mining associates in makeweight payments, into the cost-effectiveness
equation? Besides, countries in conflict do not normally pay for multilateral
intervention. It may well be true that EO chalked up notable successes in
Angola and Sierra Leone by pushing out rebel groups from mining enclaves,
but it is also true that those victories were transient. Any study of guerrilla
warfare will show that guerrillas very seldom get defeated in civil wars.
Besides, the comparative advantage enjoyed by the PMCs up to 1995, when
they were not confronted by effective PMCs on the rebel side, has all but
evaporated.

There is also an intimate relationship between PMCs and traditional
mercenaries. For a short time in the late 1980s, it seemed as if mercenaries of
the classical type were going out of fashion and being replaced by the slick
PMCs. However, it now seems that the opposite is more likely: PMCs are
increasingly becoming the launch pads for the rebirth of primordial mercenary
activities. Wherever PMCs are active, they spawn mercenaries who, after
serving out their contracts with the PMCs and having familiarized themselves
with the conflict terrain, go on to offer their services as lone wolves to local
warlords. The examples of Neil Ellis, Fred Rindel and Carl Alberts demon-
strate this point. The return of proxy wars could become a nightmarish
reality were well-equipped foreign private forces allowed to continue prop-
ning up opposing parties in today’s conflicts.

Effects of Corporate-Military Activities on Human Security

It is thus clear that the alliances that exist between PMCs and extracting
companies in conflict zones are primarily profit-driven marriages of con-
venience that impact negatively on conflict dynamics and human security. In
a way, conflict zones have become fertile grounds for mega profits. Once a PMC can build a cordonne sanitaire around mineral-rich enclaves, there are practically no structures within the society which are in a position to negotiate favourable contractual agreements with the PMC’s mining partners or oversee production figures and declared profits. Besides encouraging corruption and bad governance, the privatization of security in a conflict environment has an exacerbating influence and the greater the numbers and varieties of private security structures present in any particular conflict, the deadlier and more intractable the conflict becomes. Angola, DRC and Sierra Leone point to that. In conflict zones around Africa and elsewhere, private military companies have often transferred deadly expertise in weapon handling to unaccountable local militias. The Kamajor militia in Sierra Leone grew in expertise and deadliness in their association with EO. Dyncorp and MPRI, to whom the US government outsources train-and-equip contracts abroad, have often been blamed for the gross human rights abuses committed by government security forces in the Colombian drug wars and by Croatian forces in the Balkans.

Private military entrepreneurs have also been shown to be at the centre of the diffusion of SALW that has taken on a life of its own in many societies, engineered the creation of multiple centres of power and brought into play many more armed actors. The result is the exacerbation of conflicts and the culture of violence. Small arms are particularly prone to rights abuse as they are easier to maintain, manipulate and carry. Faced with stark choices, groups that are caught up in the cycle of violence and insecurity are already opting for self-protection. In urban centres, the affluent of the exclusive suburbs spend fortunes building fortresses to insulate themselves from the violent environment. Concrete perimeter fencing, barbed wire, sophisticated alarms and closed circuit TV cameras are becoming standard requirements of the elite. These are complemented by armed security guards supplied by private security firms — a booming industry in Africa. At the grassroots level, individual families are arming themselves while communities have set up armed vigilante groups, neighbourhood watches and ethnic militias. Some of the civil defence forces sprang up in the face of the paralysis within the state security system, and were initially motivated by the need to protect the community against lawlessness. With time, however, many of them have become beholden to local strongmen and political interests, who use them as tools to settle sectional scores and project narrow political interests. Discouraging profit-motivated military activities in situations of conflict is, therefore, one way of avoiding a worsening security environment.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to demonstrate that the unending cycle of violence in the weak states of Africa cannot be divorced from the interplay between
irresponsible governance, illegitimate resource appropriation, transnational corporate greed, and weapons proliferation. Further, it has attempted to locate the privatization of security within this order of things. Trends within the private security sector show that the threats posed by private armies of the defunct EO calibre may have been exaggerated. The mid-1990s witnessed a decline in the fortunes of the typical combat PMC that took advantage of post-Cold War global lawlessness in the periphery to strike lucrative deals independent of its home government. In contrast, the firms that have depended on contracts from their home governments have remained afloat. EO folded at the end of 1998, blaming its insolvency on new tough South African legislation introduced to reign in the privateers. Tim Spicer has retired from his position as Chief Executive of Sandline International, although he continues to manage the company’s public relations. Since the ill-fated contract in Sierra Leone, the outfit has not struck any substantial new deals. For similar reasons DiamondWorks is struggling to cope on the Vancouver Stock Exchange. Not even the events of 11 September have altered the situation. Instead, the terrorist attacks on the US have led to greater centralization of internal security — airport and home security — at the expense of the private sector.

What this means is that private military entrepreneurs who set their sights on mercenary recruitment for combat will not win the necessary minimum contracts to keep them afloat. Instead, outfits such as DynCorp and MPRI that maintain close links with their governments and target government contracts in force multiplication, arms procurement, protection of installations and personnel are likely to proliferate. This at once poses new threats and also new opportunities for control. Under the protective shield of powerful states, outfits, such as DynCorp and MPRI, may perpetrate or cause the perpetration of gross human rights violations in such conflict zones as Angola, DRC, Colombia and the former Yugoslavia, but their contracts with home governments make both the companies and contracting states more liable to prosecution before the International Criminal Court for such crimes.

The UK government has recently published a Green Paper on options for regulating private military firms (The House of Commons, 2002). The paper leans heavily towards a loose law that would make it next to impossible for parliament to oversee the privateers. The government would do well to take advantage of the downturn in combat contracts to prohibit PMCs based in the UK from engaging in combat activities abroad except where they are specifically contracted by, and under the supervision of, the UK government. That way, the government would answer directly for the conduct of the PMCs abroad. In the same vein, there is an urgent need to upgrade arms transfer legislation to keep pace with the runaway third country arms brokering, for instance in regulating private military intervention.

Beyond the activities of private military companies, however, this study has pinpointed internal governance processes in Africa as the fundamental
cause of state collapse and private military intervention. Eliminating mercenaries from the equation is a short-term measure which, on its own, is not capable of preventing collapse. What is needed is the implementation of medium to long-term measures aimed at overhauling the process of governance in Africa. After years of military and authoritarian rule, society has developed a militarized psyche that makes violence the means of choice in settling disputes. Initiatives in security sector restructuring and civil–military relations should aim at reversing these trends. Engagement with security forces should emphasize improved conditions of service, adherence to human rights, the responsible use of weapons and collaboration with the communities that they serve. At the same time, external assistance to these countries should de-emphasize the supply of weapons, an ever-present component in bilateral security sector reform agreements. The UK intervention in Sierra Leone, like US relations with Nigeria, is heavily weighted in favour of equipping local militaries that are notorious for human rights abuses. The centrepiece of the US–Nigeria bilateral trade agreement is the arrangement under which the US State Department has outsourced the training and arming of the Nigerian military to MPRI, whose efforts so far have been concentrated on training and retooling a punitive rapid reaction force with high-speed gunboats to pacify the restless oil-rich Niger Delta basin, much to the irritation of local commanders.\(^7\) What is most worrying in these arrangements is the implied emphasis on the use of superior force in solving disputes in the context of the illiberal democracies that span Africa.

Many of the current so-called democratically elected governments in Africa can hardly claim that the people elected them. If anything, the electorate voted or chased out the old dictators. The regimes of today, like their predecessors before them, are unlikely to deliver on the essential elements of governance. To reinvigorate the state, it is imperative that much of the development assistance directed to these countries is channelled towards building the capacity, and particularly the financial independence, of critical voices and their organizations to enable them to play the role of non-partisan, independent watchdog in the fight against bad governance and corruption. This means building the capacity and ensuring the independence of such institutions as the judiciary, the security services and the media. It also means strengthening the capacity of local communities to claim ownership of local governance, thereby ensuring genuine decentralization. Such measures, ultimately, would constitute the precondition for achieving disarmament, sustainable security, and development.

\(^7\) It is widely believed that General Victor Malu, the former Army Commander, was forced to resign last year for his open opposition to MPRI’s involvement with the Nigerian army.
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