

**AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES
(ECOWAS) IN RESOLVING INTRA-STATE CONFLICTS
IN WEST AFRICA (2012- 2013).**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Confronted with political crises, undemocratic governments, civil strife and droughts, African sub-regional organisations have experienced growing challenges in resolving these problems. The Economic Community of West Africa, although it is regarded as the most successful sub- regional grouping has also been confronted by new emerging threats to security as the West African group has been a haven of terrorist linked groups. It is in face of these challenges that this research evaluates the effectiveness of ECOWAS in resolving intra- state conflicts in West Africa with specific focus on Mali. The study sought to establish whether ECOWAS has successfully addressed the problem in Mali which began in January 2012. The study also had the objective of examining the institutional frameworks available in ECOWAS that governs its response to crisis in the region. The other objective was to explore measures which have been put in place by ECOWAS in resolving the Malian crisis. The study adopted a case study approach based on Mali where interviews were conducted to gather information from key informants. The results of the study indicate that ECOWAS has not been effective in resolving the Malian conflict. African sub-regional groupings do not have a solution to problems affecting their member states. As such, they are prone to external manipulation which undermines their role as sub-regional organisations. There is need for ECOWAS and other sub-regional organisation to be self- sufficient in the future so that they are able to resolve problems on their own. However, in Mali, where the international community has already intervened, there is need for a concerted effort and coordination by the involved parties so that there is a lasting solution to the problem in Mali. There is need for training of ECOWAS soldiers as well as the Malian army. An inquiry on the operations of the Islamic militants should also be done to establish their sources of help and be able to monitor them.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my brother Alen Manyevere and my parents Mr. A and Mrs. S Manyevere.

ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
AFISMA	African- led International Support Mission to Mali
AQIM	Al – Quaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CEDEAO	Communiante Economique des Etats del’ Quest
COMESA	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
EU	European Union
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Early Warning System
ESF	ECOWAS Standby Force
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
MNLA	Azawad National Liberation Movement
MUJAO	Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OMC	Observation Monitoring Centre
PNA	Protocol on Non- Aggression
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UN	United Nations
UNOGBIS	United Nations Peace Building Support Office

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Problem

There are a number of regional organisations in Africa which were formed to foster economic and political cooperation and integration, to prevent and settle regional conflicts thus maintaining peace and stability in the region. These include the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). However, most of these sub-regional organisations have been slow in responding to political crisis in their respective regions. This research focuses on the role of ECOWAS which consists of 15 member states and was established in 1975 with the main aim of fostering economic development but later on incorporated regional security issues in its mandate where it has intervened in political crisis and armed conflict situations.

According to Jaye et al (2011: 12) “the organisation was, in its origin, meant to foster economic integration and only got into peace and security by default.” ECOWAS consists of institutions such as the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), Council of the Wise, Early Warning System, Protocol of the Mechanism for Conflict Management and Resolution and the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. ECOWAS has in the past deployed ECOMOG troops to help end conflicts in West African states which has earned its status as the most successful regional organisation in conflict resolution in Africa evidenced by its’ relative successes in peace-making in Liberia (1990-1998), (2003-2006), Guinea Bissau (1999-2003) and Sierra Leone (1997-2000). Aiereff and Johnson (2012: 9) state that the “Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance declares zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained by unconstitutional means.” These protocols apply to the Malian crisis where a coup’ de tat in March 2012 by Captain Sanogo removed the former President Amadou Toumani Toure’ from power. Mali, a largely Muslim country which is regarded as poor, gained its independence from France in 1960 and has a history of coups and violent rebellions from the Tuareg who have the quest for secession. Therefore, the coup which took place after 20 years of democratic governance is an indication of history repeating itself. As propounded by Aring et al (2012: 3), “the March Putsch that ousted

President Amadou Toumani Toure' is a reflection of the weakened state of Mali national army fuelled by the Tuareg's persistent rebellion."

ECOWAS intervened in the Malian political crisis which emanated from frustration over the abandonment of Northern Mali leading to conflict between armed groups and the Malian government. According to Amnesty International (2012: 8), "the absence of effective state structures and lack of development have encouraged over the course of the past decade, the emergence of demand for autonomy and appearance of armed groups in the North of Mali." These problems marked the beginning of the crisis in January 2012 where armed groups, Ansar Edin and the Azawad National Liberation Movement (MNLA) launched a rebellion in Northern Mali. The Malian army intervened which resulted in violent fighting between the army and armed groups and it is believed that the way the army handled the situation resulted in the coup. According to Amnesty International (2012: 7), "the coup leader justified their coup de' tat highlighting the inaction by the government to provide adequate means to the armed and security forces to fulfil their mandate to defend the integrity and national territory." The armed groups later took advantage of the situation to fulfil their secessionist tendencies as they captured the Northern cities of Mali and one of the armed groups, Al-Quaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) imposed Sharia law which resulted in increased violence.

According to the Communitate Economique des Etats de l' Afrigue del' Quest (CEDEAO), (2008: 6), ECOWAS "has achieved remarkable success in fulfilling its mandate by containing violent conflicts in the region and carrying out conflict prevention through preventive diplomacy initiative – fact finding missions, quiet diplomacy, diplomatic pressure and mediation." ECOWAS has since responded to the crisis by imposing sanctions which has brought back civilian rule. Also, it and has sought United Nations' (UN) approval to deploy troops as a way of resolving the political crisis. The African- led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) has since been deployed to fight the Islamic insurgents. However, ECOWAS is facing a lot of challenges which include financial constraints, lack of training and internal divisions which have limited its capacity to end the conflict in Mali. It is against this backdrop that the study aims to make an analysis of how effective the measures taken by ECOWAS have been in dealing with the Malian crisis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

African regional organisations have not been very effective in dealing with political crisis in member states. Despite ECOWAS' interventions, Mali continues to be embroiled in an internal political crisis. Rebellion in the Northern part of Mali by the armed groups, followed by a coup and secessionist tendencies in Northern cities of Mali are events which are all part of the crisis in Mali. Aring et al (2012: 6) postulate that "the coup de' tat also crippled the security agencies into disorder, allowing MNLA to overrun three Northern regions of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu." This has led to massive violence, civilian killings and other human rights abuses which include women being raped, abductions, destruction of religious shrines and also food shortages. As a result, a massive number of people have been displaced as they seek refuge in neighbouring countries. According to the Security Council Report (2013: 5) "150,000 people have fled to neighbouring Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso, while an additional 230,000 have been internally displaced." This has worsened the situation in neighbouring countries such as Mauritania and Niger which already suffer from food shortages thus the refugees from Mali are a huge burden on these countries. The situation in Mali has been condemned by the international community such as the United Nations, the International Criminal Court (ICC), the AU, ECOWAS, and human rights organisations such as the Amnesty International and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). As propounded by Aiereff and Johnson (2012: 13), "A UN Human Rights Council resolution in July 2012 cited the destruction of cultural and religious site as well as violence. In July the ICC opened a preliminary inquiry following a Malian government request." This is an indication of how grave the problem in Mali is as it has been criticised by the international community who are assisting ECOWAS in solving the crisis. The study therefore seeks to assess the measures adopted by ECOWAS to end the problem in Mali.

1.4 Research Objectives

The overall objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of ECOWAS in resolving intra- state conflict in West Africa with specific focus on Mali.

The researcher seeks to accomplish the following specific objectives:

- To examine the institutional frameworks available in ECOWAS that governs its response to crisis in the region.

- To explore measures which have been put in place by ECOWAS in resolving the Malian crisis.
- To assess the effectiveness of ECOWAS' response to the Malian crisis.
- To assess how other regional organisations respond to political crisis in the region.

1.5 Research Questions

What factors underlie the Malian crisis?

What are the institutional frameworks available in ECOWAS that governs its response to crises in the region?

What measures have been taken by ECOWAS in view of the Malian crisis?

How effective has been the response of ECOWAS to the Malian crisis?

How is the response of ECOWAS compared to other regional organisations in Africa?

1.6 Justification of Study

Regional organisations in Africa have faced a lot of challenges in conflict resolution. The paper therefore aims to give important lessons for other regional organisations on how to maintain peace and stability learning from ECOWAS' experiences in Mali. Although ECOWAS has not yet ended the Mali crisis, it responded rapidly to the crisis where it imposed sanctions on the coup leader and has brought back civilian rule. Also, it has deployed troops to end the crisis in Mali hence the need for other regional organisations such as SADC to emulate such efforts. The deployment of ECOWAS troops may be a way of assisting the Malian army in bringing peace to Mali. However, it has been argued that the move was received with mixed feelings by the Malian population, therefore it can only bring fear, confusion and more violence thus worsening the situation.

The Malian crisis since it is recent lacks adequate literature such as books therefore it is the intention of this research to provide an in- depth analysis of the situation in Mali. Also, the research intends to generate prescriptions and ideas which will be subject to debate to policy makers in the ECOWAS body on how to resolve the crisis and maintain peace and stability.

1.7 Methodology

In carrying out the research, data was gathered mainly through qualitative research method. A case study approach which relied heavily on documentary search was utilised. Instruments such as in- depth and key informant interviews using the face to face approach were conducted with political scientists and analysts who have knowledge about the problem in Mali and how they view the response of ECOWAS to the crisis.

1.7.1 Documentary Search

Documentary search was used to gather data from published materials. Documents such as books, newspapers, journal articles and internet sources were used. Books, journal articles and scholarly internet articles provided a historical background of Mali and the historical factors that could have influenced the political crisis. In analysing the ECOWAS institutional and legislative framework, the ECOWAS Charter was made use of. The ECOWAS Charter provided a background to ECOWAS and the various Acts which govern its response to crisis situations. Malian Government publications were utilised to provide the measures adopted by ECOWAS and the international community in resolving the crisis. However, some documents may have been biased which is unlike going to Mali to have first - hand observation of the situation in Mali. To bring out an objective and impartial position, the researcher made a thorough analysis and verification of quite a number of articles and their sources. A balanced analysis may have been produced through the use of reports by non-governmental organisations that have been operating in Mali such as the ICRC and Amnesty International.

1.7.2 In- depth Interviews with Key Informants

For the purpose of this research in- depth interviews with key informants were made use of. In- depth interviews involves probing whereby follow up questions are used basing on the response. According to Kumar (1989: 6), “Key informant interviews involve interviewing a select group of individuals who are likely to provide the needed information, ideas and insights on a particular subject.” These people include professionals and people in the community who have in- depth knowledge on a certain area. Therefore, academics who include Dr Ibbo Mandaza from the SAPES Trust and Ahmed Ibrahim Saleh, Minister at the Nigerian Embassy were interviewed on the subject under study. In- depth interviews with key informants are critical as they give special knowledge from people who have experience with the political issues in Mali. However, was difficult to obtain information on some issues as people chose not to reveal information viewed as sensitive.

1.7.3 Data analysis

Inductive content analysis was used in the analysis of data. According to Zhang (2009: 1) “Content analysis is a research method for the subjective interpretation of content text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns.” This method begins with the examination of raw data, open coding will then be used before data is reviewed. Data will then be organised into groups which will allow it to be compared recurrently.

1.8 Delimitation

The study focused on the capacity of regional groupings to resolve conflicts with specific focus on ECOWAS’ response to the political crisis in Mali which began in January 2012. The purpose of this research was to assess how ECOWAS has dealt with political crisis in Mali. However, the role of ECOWAS on economic performance was not covered.

1.9 Limitations

Poor cooperation from some targeted embassies was major setback in accessing information. Some reports were not clear and realistic thus making compilation of data difficult. More so, the crisis is still on- going therefore making it difficult to assess the effectiveness of ECOWAS in resolving the crisis because there might be changes in the situation in Mali hence ECOWAS’ response might change thus impacting negatively on the original hypothesis of study. To bring about an independent, diverse and informed position, the researcher intended to interview as many people as possible so as to get adequate and relevant information, however, poor cooperation from embassies was a limiting factor.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the writings of other authors on the Malian crisis, ECOWAS and other sub-regional organisations' response to the crisis. The role of these sub-regional groupings in conflict resolution will be analysed and these will be compared to ECOWAS. There will be an analysis of political regional integration in Africa and theories of regional integration will be briefly outlined. A review of the concepts of idealism and collective security and their role in the establishment of regional institutions will be outlined, the focus being on their relevance to modern day era and the Malian political conflict.

2.2 General Overview of Regional Organisations

Since time immemorial, the international scene has been characterised by rampant conflicts. Agyapong (2005: 30) quotes the British Army Doctrine Publication's definition of a conflict as a "situation in which violence is either manifested or threatened... a struggle or clash between contending wishes. It does not always induce violence but the risk of it is implied." However, this researcher argues that the way conflicts have been handled in West Africa has in many cases led to violent fighting between contending parties.

Inter- state conflicts were most prominent in the Cold War era as power struggles were a norm. However, with the end of the super- power rivalry which characterised the Cold War era, countries have witnessed an increase in intra- state conflict. Latif (2000: 1) states that

After the end of the Cold War, many internal conflicts broke out in different parts of the world. There was a dramatic demand for the UN peacekeeping operations. Thus, the UN started to challenge traditional norms of international politics, such as state sovereignty, non-intervention into domestic affairs, and non-use of force in peacekeeping operations, and itself as an international organization.

Intra-state conflicts in Africa have been caused by a variety of reasons. According to Agyapong (2005: 2) "In West Africa, ethnicity and religion flared up many of these intra-state conflicts...there were numerous coups and countercoups in almost all the West African countries. All these accounted for an upsurge in civil strife and intrastate conflicts in the sub-region." Zeleza (2008: 6) divides these into "six types of intra-state wars: secessionist wars,

irredentist wars, wars of devolution, wars of regime change, wars of social banditry, and armed inter-communal insurrections.” For Sarki (1998: 45) “in the west-African sub region, conflict emerges mostly due to bad governance, little disregard for equity and rule of law.” The causes of the intra-state conflicts in Mali have been coups, secessionist tendencies by Tuaregs and other insurgent groups.

Regional organisations were formed with the main aim of maintaining peace and stability. Bennet and Oliver (2002: 237) define a regional organisation as “a segment of the world bound together by a common set of objectives based on geographical, social, cultural, economic or political ties and possessing formal structure provided for in intergovernmental agreements”. The realisation on the part of sub- regional groupings like ECOWAS that there can never be full realisation of economic development where there is political instability has led to the inclusion of collective security in their mandates thus an increase in sub- regional organisations purposes to encompass political, social, cultural and economic factors. Yabi (2010:6) stipulates that “(ECOWAS) has been gradually transformed, under the pressure of political events, into an organization also responsible for finding solutions to armed conflicts and other political crisis which were undermining peace and security within the community space.”

Zounmenou (2011: 2) also states that

even though emphasis was placed on economic integration. Today, after more than three decades of existence, ECOWAS appears to have established an impressive normative and institutional framework to realise the core objectives of not only regional economic integration, but also of good governance, peace and security.

There is an overall agreement by different authors that ECOWAS was originally an economic grouping before its transformation. It is the purpose of this paper to give a detailed analysis of ECOWAS background, institutional framework and proffer recommendations which have not been addressed by writers on the Malian crisis which erupted in January 2012.

Abass (2004: 3) connotes that “the regionalist wave in the 1960’s has...been attributed to the growth in the number, scope, and diversity of regionalist schemes causing an unprecedented intermingling of micro-economic organisations and macro regional political organisations.” Interdependence has influenced the formation of regional groupings as states depend on each other for survival. Based on several factors of interest, states have integrated to resolve

conflicts, to rescue one another from financial constraints, disaster situations and other challenges.

According to Chingono and Nakana (2008: 5) these challenges include “poor economic and political governance, nationalist rivalry, mono-cultural agro based economies, debt and dependency on the West, lack of financial and technical resources and institutional capacity.” Major challenges include lack of finance and institutional capacities, lack of consensus and lack of political will mainly because of unsustainable debts by member countries, lack of consensus and lack of political will. Because of the colonial injustices and neo-colonialism, many African countries have been crippled in terms of their financial capacities thus there are unable to contribute fully to their groupings. SADC, for example, consists of countries like Mozambique and Zimbabwe which have a huge debt burden which makes it difficult to assist other nations. African regional organisations need to be reformed so that these organisations effectively respond to crisis situations. ECOWAS failure to maintain peace in Mali is mainly attributed to lack of financial and technical resources which has resulted in delays in the deployment of ECOMOG forces.

2.3 Substantive Regional Integration

Regionalism forms the basis of the formation of sub-regional organisations as states depend on each other for survival. As propounded by Abass (2004: 7), “regionalism was often analysed in terms of the degree of social cohesiveness (ethnicity, race, language, religion, culture history, consciousness of a common heritage;) economic cohesiveness (regime type, ideology), and organisational cohesiveness (existence of formal regional institution.” There is little emphasis on physical location as influencing regionalism, more emphasis may however be placed on countries which sharing the same communal identities and languages for example Francophone countries in North West Africa.

Lee (2002: 4) defines regional integration as “a process by which a group of nation states voluntarily and in various degrees” have access “to each other’s markets and establish mechanisms and techniques that minimize conflicts and maximize internal and external economic, political, social and cultural benefits of their interaction”. Existing literature places more emphasis on economic factors having influenced regional integration. However, there is failure to acknowledge that regional integration has also shifted to put primacy on issues relating to peace and security. Sub-regional integration increases interdependence in this globalised world, thus the reduction of conflicts. West African states which include

Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, and Sierra Leone took the initiative to form ECOWAS which was primarily for economic gain but later incorporated political and security work so as to end intra-state conflict. Thus, regionalism has influenced West African States to cooperate in effort to end intra- state conflict in Mali.

Sub- regional organisations which are economic in form include Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), IGAD, East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and SADC. However, the need to prevent conflict has made organisations such as ECOWAS and SADC incorporate political and security issues in their mandate since they realised that conflicts hinder economic development. The incessant conflicts in West Africa have resulted in ECOWAS concentrating much on security issues which have resulted in its underperformance in the economic sector.

Adeyemi and Ayodele (2007: 314) observe that “Regional integration therefore at the very least constitutes Africa’s response to globalisation, and an instrument to reverse the trend towards the marginalisation of the Continent.” Regional integration allows states to work cooperate as this is the only way of detaching itself from the seclusion and poverty which are some of the many effects of caused by colonialism. However, without finding ways ending intra- state conflicts, Africa will remain the least developed since conflicts cripple all the various types of development be it social, economic or technological. As propounded by Adeyemi and Ayodele (2007: 314), “Politically, a country may participate in a regional scheme in order to bolster its military prowess, augment its political stature, and deter or wade off aggression from hostile neighbours.” Therefore, political integration can be the best initiative towards the realisation of peace in the region as it presupposes that collective impact in international politics is large enough to influence decisions to their advantage. Acharya (2005: 1) argues that “In many cases, regional action is crucial to preventing the escalation of conflicts, in containing and diffusing violence resulting in significant loss of lives and damage to states and peoples.” However, countries may also integrate for social reasons, to exchange culture and also to fight diseases such as HIV and AIDS. In Southern Africa, SADC holds a number of social activities such as sports and music festivals and this is a platform for interacting and learning more about each others’ culture thus bringing a sense of oneness.

For Acharya (2005: 1), “the relationship between the UN and regional organizations is an important part of efforts to strengthen the capacity of the international community to address threat to international peace and security.” This study however questions the inconsistencies by the UN on its operational framework. The UN provides the legislative framework under which regional organisations should operate. Article 52, Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, “allows states to form regional organisations to deal with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action.”(UN Charter 1945). Regional organisations therefore seek the approval of the UN whenever there is need for enforcement action Article 53 states that the “United Nations Security Council shall where appropriate utilise such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority. But such action shall be taken under the United Nations Security Council.” One may however argue that this principle contributes to the malfunctioning of regional groupings. The fact that a sub-regional organisation has to await UN’s approval indicates superpower dominance. In Africa, the AU is the mother body which should influence decisions of sub- regional organisations. However, when there is a crisis situation which requires military intervention, the AU only acts on behalf of this sub- regional organisation to ask for approval from and yet it can have the capacity to do so since they are the ones who understand their problems better. In Sierra Leone, ECOWAS had to intervene militarily without UN’s approval since seeking approval would have resulted in unnecessary delays.

2.4 Regional Integration and Conflict Resolution in Africa

The establishment of OAU in 1963 signalled an evolution of regional integration in Africa and there was an escalation of inter and intra- state conflict. Ajayi (2008: 2) states that, “the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Africa’s first effort to foster continental integration, was formed in 1963. It marked Africa’s first attempt to address its own security challenges.” The formation of OAU was mainly to decolonise Africa but however as most states gained independence the regional body focused on intra-state conflict such as coups, armed conflict and border disputes which has robbed Africa of economic development. The conflicts which took place in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Liberia, Somalia, Eritrea, Burundi and Rwanda have left these countries economically unstable as the conflicts hindered economic development as a lot of money would only be channelled towards military expenses, renovation of infrastructure and other problems associated with politically unstable governments. The founding father of OAU, former Ghanaian President Kwame

Nkrumah realised there was a need for cooperation of African states to build a better peaceful and united Africa. According to Aguilar et al (2008: 11) former South African President, Nelson Mandela was quoted saying, “I dream of an Africa which is at peace with itself. I dream of the realisation of a country in Africa whereby its leaders combine their efforts to solve problems of this continent.” Therefore, the African mother body has the main objective of promoting unity and thus it influenced integration efforts which then led to a rise in sub- regional organisations.

The ECOWAS Treaty derived some of its objectives from the OAU Treaty and in matters of military intervention, ECOWAS looks up to the AU for the implementation of its decisions. However, one can argue that AU is not independent from external influence as its decisions are usually influenced by the UN which comprise big powers which may influence certain decisions which suit their interests. According to Swanstrom, (2005: 80), “...African Union (AU) are examples of organizations with little independent power over the individual member states and they are thus dependent on the more powerful members.” In the Malian crisis, AU had to represent ECOWAS at the UN, instead, as Africa’s mother body it should be in a position to make decisions of its own. This calls for a reform of AU as it needs a collective security system which is independent from external forces.

The Southern African region is characterised by a multiplicity of regional institutions such as SADC, SACU, COMESA among others. Malungisa (2006: 5) states that the SADC Mission statement is to “promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient productive systems, deeper co-operation and integration, good governance and durable peace and security so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in the world economy.” Regional integration in SADC aims to achieve political stability and economic development. However, SADC lacks collective response as evidenced where Namibia, Angola, and Zimbabwe intervened in DRC in 1998 whilst in that same year South Africa and Botswana intervened in the Lesotho crisis, evidence of a lack of common ground for SADC member states. SADC has to emulate some of ECOWAS initiatives and responses to crisis which is considered one of the successful regional organisations in Africa. However, the achievement of peace and democratic transitions in Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa in the 1990s and Angola in 2002 shows some positive regional outcomes in SADC. Three decades after the formation of SADC, the misery of the people of Southern Africa has not diminished. SADC can effectively meet the developmental needs of the region once it addresses the challenges to regional integration

which include lack of technical and financial resources, poor political governance and lack of political will and consensus amongst member states.

2.5 Regional Integration in ECOWAS

The political crisis in Mali though still evolving has had an overwhelming interest from several authors who have assessed the effectiveness of ECOWAS and the African mother body the African Union in resolving the crisis. Both African and European writers agree that ECOWAS has not been effective in resolving the conflict in Mali.

According to Sperling (2011: 2)

Without international support, successful intervention is not conceivable. ECOWAS needs not only financial, material and logistical aid, but –it above all requires legitimacy through respective resolutions of the AU and the United Nations (UN), which have not been forthcoming to date.

Sambe (2012: 12) also argues that “ECOWAS may not succeed is the organisation’s latest institutional crisis that has had a negative impact on its involvement in the Mali situation. ECOWAS will only really be able to save face with the help of other strategic partners (USA, France, UN, AU and EU).”

It can be argued that ECOWAS can be successful if it is independent from international interference. It does not have to rely on financial aid from the international community. External interference only diminishes the role of ECOWAS in conflict resolution. Berman (2002: 39) notes that “Africans must create a healthy financial basis for their mechanisms and undertakings. They continue to rely too heavily on outside sources for financial and material support... when Africans rely excessively on foreign aid, their chances for success become more complicated.” If there is consensus amongst ECOWAS member states they can work with each other and devise mechanisms to help them be self-sufficient.

French military support for African dictators since independence gave leaders a sort of security and protection. Special military cooperation agreements and accords were signed and most West Africans have remained suspicious of French intentions. French and Portuguese “gunboat diplomacy” in their support for various factions in Guinea Bissau; the American long years of military and financial support to Samuel K. Doe all played negatively in the 1990s by instilling a spirit of suspicion, procrastination and mistrust (Suifon 1992: 9).

This further reinforces the point that sub-regional organisations need to be self-sustainable so that they do not play a limited role in issues that affect their member countries. Although, the

French and the international community are of great help to the sub- regional organisation, for example the intervention of France in Mali, this diminishes the role that is supposed to be played by these organisations and paves way for internal interference.

Saugman (2012: 5) argues that “the situation in northern Mali can only be resolved politically or diplomatically...there is likely to be some military component to address the security concerns, but the military component will not be sufficient, nor will it be decisive.” Given the intensity of the problem in Northern Mali which has been the hub of insurgent armed groups whose prime motive was to occupy the Northern Mali and impose Sharia law negotiations will only be futile. Negotiations have been done before and were fruitless and the last option available is to intervene militarily. The armed groups are not only a threat to Mali alone but to international security as they have links with terrorist groups around the world including the Boko Haram in Nigeria. Given such a case, military intervention despite some negative outcomes seems the only last option.

Sambe (2012: 14) notes that “throughout the crisis there have been any number of summit meetings at the highest levels but none of them have resulted in any tangible progress. Much of what has happened points to a lack of clear strategy on the part of ECOWAS.” ECOWAS has not been successful in resolving the problem in Mali. However, there is need to acknowledge that ECOWAS successfully brought back constitutional rule and even threatened to impose sanctions on the cop leader, which has been commendable.

Both African and European writers have been generally consistent on the notion that ECOWAS has failed to address the challenges facing the sub-region especially the Malian crisis. Most writers however fail to give a clear methodological framework on their analysis which makes their analysis prone to bias where the analysis is based on information from unreliable newspaper and television sources. This paper therefore seeks to give detailed analysis of the crisis where documentary research will be used coupled by gathering data from key informants from embassies and other key organisations.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Regionalism forms the basis under which regional organisations operate. Functionalism is a theory of economic regional integration which discourages autonomy and places primacy on the interdependence of states which cooperate with each other to achieve economic development. Anadi (2005: 137) stipulates that, “The functionalist blueprint based its

assumptions on the belief that in the world of economic interdependence, apolitical problems such as social, technical and humanitarian could be prioritised and solved.” The theory acknowledges the importance of international organisations for states to solve their political economic and social problems. However, this theory has its shortfalls as it fails to explain that human beings are irrational that may not cooperate. Therefore, there is no guarantee that war can be prevented through cooperation of states. In Mali, insurgent groups with different motives failed to cooperate and resolve their problems through diplomatic means and a complex crisis erupted. Therefore, the theory fails to take into account the dynamics and complexity of human behaviour where people cooperate for selfish gains.

The Federalist approach is also a theory to regional integration which presupposes that there should be a high supranational authority to which states are loyal to political power should be shared between higher and lower levels of government where supranational governments have the powers to make national governments surrender their sovereignty. According to Anadi (2005: 139), “The process of community formation is dominated by nationally constituted groups with specific interests and aims willing to adjust their aspirations to supranational means when this course appears profitable.”

Neo-functionalists, however, merge the above-mentioned theories as they believe that nations are always interconnected even before they enter into intergovernmental organisations. This theory posits that regional integration can best be achieved through joint participation by all parties involved. As propounded by Anadi (2005: 139) “This could be achieved by upgrading of common interest under the guidance of a supra-national body.” The creation of these specialised administrative institutions demonstrates the importance of regional integration to member states. If these supra-national entities achieve their mandates member states will adhere to them and give more competencies to them thus the realisation of successful regional integration. However, this theory is criticised for giving primacy to economic, social and technical problems and thus fails to incorporate political issues. The functionalist approach is the most suitable theory for this research as it stresses the importance of interdependence which encourages nations to work collectively for economic, political and social gains.

The concept of Idealism also influenced the formation of regional institutions which in its normative aspects view people as moral and reasonable and thus can avoid conflicts. War is regarded as a senseless act and people are viewed as rational such that they can prevent war

as highlighted by Woodrow Wilson in his fourteen points. According to Carr (1958: 154), “there is an international moral code binding on all states and the most important and most recognized is the obligation not to inflict unnecessary death and suffering on other human beings.” Ethical considerations therefore influence the formation of institutions where there is a belief that a world without war can be achieved. Idealism therefore is necessary as it provides a moral ground for states to be peaceful as it is prescriptive and gives value judgment on how the world should be ordered. Idealistic views however fail to provide explanations on why wars occur and what leads to conflicts. Realists therefore question the practicality of idealism. The upsurge of the Second World War is evidence to the irrationality of human beings as they always compete for power. Therefore, the treaties that govern the UN and the ECOWAS Charter do not stop state behavior as it is not the human mind is not governed by norms. The conflict in Mali is evidence to this as ECOWAS could not stop the insurgent groups and the coup leader from bringing political unrest to the once peaceful and democratic Malian state. Individuals are self-seeking as evidenced by the Malian coup leader, Captain Sanogo, who had to adhere to ECOWAS requests to surrender only after being given some incentives and thus a return to constitutional rule was achieved.

Brown (1992: 35) in his review of Emmanuel Kant’s “Perpetual Peace” observes that, “states can be peaceful if there is open diplomacy, non- aggression, self-determination, non-intervention delineation of lawful means of making war and disarmament.” The Holy alliance and the Peace of Westphalia are some of the treaties which had the concept of collective security in their mandates. Kant proposed an international community so that to maintain peace in the world. Achuburgi (1995: 447) observes that, “Kant proposed a league of sovereign to settle disputes between state and the Holy Alliance was meant to be an institution more or less of this kind.”

The formation of the League of Nations was based on the collective security concept which requires a commitment to the maintenance of peace by regional institutions. According to Abass (2004: 122), “...only through the establishment of a global organisation comprising all states might peace and security be maintained throughout the world.” Collective security measures incorporate the pacific settlement of disputes. According to Bennet and Oliver (2002: 113) Collective security is a “technique used by intergovernmental organisations to restrain the use of force among members. It includes norms and procedures for inducing members to delay hostilities, norms and procedures summed up under the label “pacific settlements of disputes.” However, if this fails enforcement mechanisms are then called for

where the UN approves military intervention in crisis. In the Malian conflict, pacific settlement of disputes seems to have failed whereby the violent insurgent groups are not accepting any negotiations. Therefore, the West African regional grouping has incorporated the collective security system where it will apply enforcement measures where three thousand ECOMOG troops are expected to be deployed in Mali to bring peace and order. The 1999 ECOWAS protocol demonstrates that unlike in the past regional organizations now put primacy on the collective security aspect that they are ready to use the military to solve conflicts.

The Malian crisis thus has further demonstrated that sub- regional institutions are ready to put collective security mechanisms into action. Negotiations, when there is an impasse between conflicting parties usually give a short- term solution to the problem. When the coup leader took over power through forceful means in March 2012, the ECOWAS body imposed sanctions and this was successful to a limited extent. It was only when it threatened to impose more sanctions that constitutional rule was maintained. Therefore, the use of preventive and reactive measures of collective security as evidenced in the Malian crisis is something to be emulated by other sub- regional organizations although it a lot is yet to be done.

2.7 Conclusion

The findings of authors can never be conclusive; however, there is an overall view by different authors that Africa sub-regional organizations have not been effective in dealing with their respective mandates. Although ECOWAS has adopted several measures to end the crisis in Mali, it has not been successful in ending the crisis. ECOWAS needs to reform its structures and security mechanisms for it to be effective in its conflict responses. It is therefore the purpose of Chapter three to provide a detailed analysis of ECOWAS institutions, various organs and security mechanisms as established by the ECOWAS Treaty.

CHAPTER 3

AN OVERVIEW OF ECOWAS CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the historical background of ECOWAS, its role as a sub-regional organisation, its institutions and organisational structures that govern its operational framework. The chapter will also give an analysis of the protocols and frameworks which were adopted by ECOWAS in its mandate to prevent and resolve crisis in its member states. The Liberian crisis of 1990 marked the beginning of endless conflicts in West Africa and thus gave ECOWAS the initiative to revise and come up with mechanisms of conflict prevention and resolution. The chapter provides an assessment of how effective these organs have been in managing conflict across the West African region.

3.2 Historical Background of ECOWAS

ECOWAS was established on 28 May 1975 and is composed of 15 West African States which according to Adeniran (2012: 1) are the “Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.” Mauritania was once a member but withdrew in 2001 following disagreements with the ECOWAS summit. ECOWAS only came into effect in 1977 as its activities only commenced that year and so was the ratification its protocols. ECOWAS was in its origin meant to promote economic development, however conflicts which characterised the region impeded economic growth and this realisation gave the grouping the initiative to include peacekeeping issues. As propounded by Ibrahim (2008 :iv) ECOWAS was “founded, ... to promote cooperation and integration through the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, foster relations among member states, and to contribute to the progress and development of the African continent.” With the realisation that their original mandate could not be achieved as states were diverting funds meant for economic development to conflict resolution, ECOWAS gave primacy to peaceful ending of conflict in the region.

The West African region has been characterised by droughts, wars, coups, terrorism, border disputes and civil unrest. Thus in 1990 with the help of the UN and ECOWAS intervened in

the Liberian crisis where it deployed ECOMOG forces and its interventions in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau without the approval of UN serves to show the determination of ECOWAS to end political conflicts. ECOWAS condemns governments which come into power unconstitutionally According to Engel (2010: 10) “on Niger ... to the dissolution of parliament by President Mamadou Tandja on 26 May 2009... ECOWAS ...did not regard this act, which clearly was meant to prepare for a third term in office which was not foreseen in the country’s constitution, as an unconstitutional change of government.” Although ECOWAS managed to bring stability to Liberia and played a critical role in the Sierra Leone (1997) and Guinea Bissau (1999) civil wars, its conflict resolution strategies have not been effective enough to end internal wars in the West African region. Yabi (2010: 7) argues that, “What seems undeniable is that ECOWAS indeed faced enormous difficulties in achieving its objectives of restoring peace where it intervened but its military and diplomatic engagement contributed immensely to the international effort which finally helped in ending conflicts that devastated the Mano River Basin region between 1990 and 2003.”

The reformation of the ECOWAS treaty in 1993 was thus a positive development as ECOWAS sought to broaden its operational framework.

3.3 Institutional Framework of ECOWAS

ECOWAS comprise institutions which are the ECOWAS Commission, Authority of Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers, Community Parliament, Community Court of Justice, the Bank for Investment and Development and the Mediation and Security Council. These institutions serve as pillars of ECOWAS as they were established to help the sub-region in attaining its goals and objectives. Among its goals as stated in by Brown (1999: 9) is the “Non-aggression between Member States, maintenance of regional peace, stability and security through the promotion and strengthening of good neighbourliness, peaceful settlement of disputes among Member States, active co- operation between neighbouring countries, and promotion of a peaceful environment.” The following is a detailed analysis of how the above- mentioned ECOWAS institutions operate.

3.3.1 ECOWAS Commission

The ECOWAS Commission consists of the President, Vice President and seven Commissioners. It is responsible for executing ECOWAS policies and it oversees the implementation of the budget. It is based in Abuja, Nigeria. The Executive Secretariat became the ECOWAS Commission in 2007. According to ECOWAS (2010: 36), “The

Commission is in charge of the annual budget, represents ECOWAS in the international arena and prepares studies and papers regarding regional policies. It publishes the annual (and since 2009 a half-yearly) report of the community.”

3.3.2 Authority of Heads of State and Government

The Authority of Head of States and Government is the highest and most important institution as it is the one that controls the grouping in its general functioning. It meets once a year in ordinary sessions. It is made up of Heads of States and Governments who give directives to the Community. According to Article 7 of the ECOWAS Treaty (1993: 8) “The Authority shall be responsible for the general direction and control of the Community and shall take all measures to ensure its progressive development and the realization of its objectives.” It is the major decision body and thus it is responsible for making the final decision of the ECOWAS activities and these decisions are binding to all ECOWAS members and institutions. The Authority welcomed the United Nations Security resolution 2071 which approved for military intervention in Mali and also extended the operations of the ECOMIB forces in Guinea Bissau for another six months after the expiry of its term in November 2012. The Authority delegates its authority to the Mediation and Security Council which sets an example to other sub- regional organisations which have the tendency of centralising powers. With regards to the Malian crisis, the Authority has been meeting in its extra- ordinary summits and in November 2012 the Authority whose Chairman is the President of Cote’ d’Ivoire Alassane Qattara met to discuss the developments in Mali and Guinea Bissau. CEDEAO(2012: 2) notes that the “Authority reiterates that dialogue remains the preferred option in the resolution of the political crisis in Mali. However, regarding the security situation, recourse to force may be indispensable in order to dismantle terrorist and transnational criminal networks that pose a threat to international peace and security.” ECOWAS therefore encourages negotiations as a measure of conflict resolution but will only resort to the use of force where the former would have failed.

3.3.3 Council of Ministers

The Council of ministers is made up of ministers from ECOWAS member states and they have a duty of managing ECOWAS affairs for the development of the Community. According to the ECOWAS (2010: 36) “The Council of Foreign Ministers normally monitors the day-to-day activities of ECOWAS, prepares Authority meetings, and deals with matters arising between these meetings.” Therefore, the Council which meets twice a year gives advice to the Authority in different activities of the Community which include budget

implementation. Also, the Council of Ministers is responsible for proposing the Court of justice to give recommendations on legal matters.

3.3.4 ECOWAS Parliament

The ECOWAS Parliament was established under the ECOWAS revised treaty of 1993, and the protocol relating to the Parliament was signed in 1994. The ECOWAS Parliament began its operations in 2002 in Abuja, Nigeria. It is made up of deputies from all national parliaments in the sub-region. The ECOWAS parliament has only an advisory role. The Parliament is composed of 120 seats where each member state has 5 seats at minimum and the remaining 40 seats are shared. The Parliament is responsible for reviewing the ECOWAS treaty and makes recommendations to the various organs of the Community. The Parliament is “empowered to consider issues concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens; interconnection of energy networks; interconnection of telecommunications systems; increased cooperation in the area of radio, television and other intra- and inter-Community media links; as well as development of national communication System” (ECOWAS Treaty 1993). It also reviews health and educational policies of the Community so that they are in line with international standards. The ECOWAS Parliament however needs not to only give an advisory role but need to “acquire legislative powers as well as institute directly elected representatives” (ECOWAS 1993).

3.3.5 ECOWAS Court of Justice

The Court of Justice is a permanent institution situated in Abuja which deals with grievances from member states. It comprises a President, Chief Registrar and seven judges. As stated by ECOWAS (2010: 36) “Individual citizens of ECOWAS member states can appeal to the appeal to the Court if an action by a member state infringes the rights of a citizen under the ECOWAS treaty.” The ECOWAS Court of Justice also helps with the interpretation of the ECOWAS treaty. The Court of Justice should however widen its operational framework to address the human rights abuses by Islamic extremists in Mali, Algeria and the Sahel region since this is a threat to international peace and security.

3.3.6 Mediation and Security Council

The Mediation and Security Council (MSC) mainly meets when a conflict situation arises and either heads of states or ministers meet to decide whether a situation needs intervention or not. The MSC consist of Ambassadors accredited to ECOWAS, ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security or heads of States who meet to decide on areas of

intervention.” Ibrahim (1997: 13) states that “in the Liberian conflict, for example, the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government established a Community Standing Mediation Committee, which in turn created ECOMOG at its inaugural session. The MSC has the final decision on the deployment of ECOMOG troops and they also decide on the responsibilities of the troops where they will be on mission. Yabi (2010: 11) states that “ the MSC shall take decisions and implement policies on issues of conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security ; authorize all forms of intervention and decide among others on the deployment of political and military missions.”

3.3.7 Council of the Wise

According to Yabi (2010: 11) The Council of the Wise is made up of “eminent personalities who can, on behalf of ECOWAS, use their good offices and experience to play the role of mediators, conciliators and facilitators. These personalities coming from various segments of society, including women, political, traditional and religious leaders” are proposed on a list approved by Mediation and Security Council at the level of Heads of State and Government. These personalities are called upon when the need arises by the Executive Secretary or the MSC to deal with a given conflict situation.

3.4 ECOWAS Protocols and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Soon after its existence ECOWAS member states signed two security agreements in 1978 and 1981. It was the realisation that ECOWAS member states were facing external as well as internal threats which encouraged the signing of the security mechanisms. The Protocol Relating to Non- Aggression (PNA) which was signed in 1978 discouraged the use of force by member states. According to ECOWAS (2010: 36), article 5 (2) of the PNA stated that any dispute that cannot be settled peacefully among other member states shall be referred to a Committee of Authority.” This treaty is however viewed as idealistic as it lacked the desired responses to conflicts. The inadequacies of this protocol led to the signing of the Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence.

The Protocol Relating to Mutual assistance on Defence was signed in 1981 in Freetown Sierra Leone. Bolarinwa (2011: 35) notes that it “provided for the establishment of an Allied Armed Force of the Community” which is responsible for responding collectively to threats. The major reason behind the signing of the protocol was to encourage member states to give mutual help when a conflict situation arises. Just like the Protocol Relating to Non-

Aggression, the Protocol Relating to Mutual Defence fell short of adequate security mechanisms for conflict resolution and the institutions which were supposed to be established never came into force. As propounded by Kabia (2011: 2) it also “focused heavily on external threats and did not envisage a role for the regional body in coups that destabilised the sub-region in the 1970s and 1980s and the internal conflict that swept through West Africa in the 1990s.” Therefore, the Protocol was not effective in its response to the West African conflicts and this prompted for the establishment of the Standing Mediation Committee in 1990. Under its auspices ECOMOG was established in 1990 and deployed in Liberia on its first mission.

3.4.1 Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security

The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security was adopted by the Heads of State and Government in 1999. According to the Protocol “the Assembly of Heads of States shall be the highest decision making body on issues relating to conflict prevention, management and resolution, peacekeeping and security, humanitarian support, peace building, control of cross-border crime, proliferation of small arms as well as other issues covered by the provisions of the Mechanism.” Yabi (2010: 10). The mechanism replaced the two security protocols of 1978 and 1981 and consists of the Mediation and Security Council and the Council of Elders. The mechanism is the main organ for collective security and it encourages intervention where peaceful means of settling disputes would have failed.

3.4.2 1999 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance

The West African region has been characterised by complex political systems which has led to violence, civil wars and coups as a way of ousting these bad governments. Zounmenou and Loua (2011: 1) observe that “recent political crises in West Africa have resulted from... bad governance, the uneven distribution of national wealth and the manipulation of ethnic communities.” The root cause of the West African region’s crisis is bad governance, therefore, there was a realisation by the sub-region that they did not need to focus on making security mechanisms on paper but address the main cause of the crisis. The suspension of Guinea and Niger following coups display the determination by ECOWAS to recognise democratically elected governments. Kabia (2011: 9) connotes that, “whilst there are still cases of bad governance and threats to democracy in a number of countries in the sub-region, on the whole, governance appears to be improving across West Africa.” The end of the Cold

War resulted in a dynamic change of ECOWAS' interests where it shifted its focus from member states to and became more involved in protecting its citizens. According to Tiruneh (2010: 3),

The end of the Cold War resulted in an immense change in the nature of war in Africa. Wars became more intrastate than interstate, leading to the deaths of more civilians. ... These grave circumstances and the increasing concern of the international community forced African leaders to reconsider some of their guiding principles, structures and policies...the idea of non- interference and respect for the territorial integrity of states was challenged.

The 1991 Declaration of ECOWAS Political Principles signed in Abuja was a reflection of political values of the region which gave primacy to the freedom and rights of people. According to Aning and Bah (2011: 3) the "Declaration sought to: "Promote and encourage the full enjoyment by all [West African] peoples of their fundamental human rights, especially their political, economic, social, cultural and other rights inherent in the dignity of the human person and essential to his free and progressive development." The ECOWAS declaration of Political Principles therefore encouraged its member states to maintain human rights and the rule of law. This led to the incorporation of governance issues in the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Human rights in 1991.

The adoption of the Supplementary Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy in 2001 serves to show the commitment of ECOWAS to promote democracy in the sub-region. According to Aning and Bah (2011: 4) the document "stated that access to power must be through free, fair and transparent elections, with zero tolerance for power obtained through unconstitutional means, strict adherence to democratic principles and decentralization of power at all levels." ECOWAS has been on the record of imposing sanctions to states that break these principles. However, ECOWAS has not been really effective in implementing these norms and values that underlie the Protocol on Good Governance and democracy as displayed by the failure of its member states to uphold free and fair elections for example in Guinea- Bissau, Nigeria, Senegal and Guinea. Aning and Bah (2011: 4) argue that "close to a decade after its promulgation, the record of implementation, oversight, compliance and possible sanctions against member states that fall foul of these principles is, at best, weak." Despite its efforts to promote good governance ECOWAS is found wanting in the implementation of its various protocols. Its failure to ratify and enforce protocols on time prolong the incessant conflicts that are rampant in the West African region.

3.5 ECOWAS Standby Force

ECOMOG also known as the ECOWAS Standby force is made up of forces who will be in their country of origin awaiting deployment when need arises that is in emergency situations. According to Yabi (2010: 11) “ECOMOG, ...is a structure made up of several multi-purpose units (civilian and military) on stand-by in their country of origin and ready to be deployed in due course.” ECOMOG troops are responsible for intervening in conflict situations when diplomatic efforts would have failed. ECOMOG which came into being after the signing of The Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance is Africa’s first regional initiative. Ibrahim (2008: 16) states that “The ECOWAS military vision is therefore anchored on the need to: Define, build, organize, and maintain an ECOWAS stand-by regional military capability in peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance to a level of self-sustenance in the in the areas of troops and logistics support in order to respond to internal or external regional crises or threats to peace and security, including terrorist and/or environmental threats.” This influenced the formation of ECOMOG as a way of bringing stability and order to the West African region. After all channels of negotiations would have failed, ECOWAS seeks approval from the AU and UN for the use of force and deployment of troops. Yabi (2010: 11) states that “ECOMOG conducts among others observation and peace monitoring missions, peacekeeping and restoration operations, humanitarian action support missions, missions to monitor the enforcement of sanctions, including embargos, preventive deployments, peace building operations, disarmament and demobilization, policing activities to fight fraud and organized crime and any other operations.” ECOMOG intervened in the Liberian crisis in 1990, 2001 and 2003, Sierra Leone in 1997 and Guinea Bissau in 1999.

In Liberia ECOMOG intervened in the conflict between Samuel Doe’s government and Charles Taylor. As stipulated by Brown (1999: 12), “the official explanation for West African intervention in Liberia was to end the senseless slaughter of Liberians and to restore stability by means of a cease-fire, an interim government, and democratic elections.” ECOWAS attempted to bring stability in Liberia by way of using travel bans and other restrictions as well as sanctions were futile. This prompted the Standing Mediation Committee which comprised Ghana, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Guinea to intervene militarily through ECOMOG. ECOMOG managed to bring a cease fire to Liberia, despite facing violent resistance from Charles Taylor’s rebels. ECOMOG played an important role in Liberia as it managed to establish a provisional interim government. However, it is believed that there were some divisions in the ECOMOG forces which led to troops supporting

different parties an indication of lack of consensus among the forces that resulted in the conflict being prolonged.

ECOMOG forces intervened in Sierra Leone in 1991 but unlike in the Liberian crisis, the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government did not formally approve of the ECOMOG force. The Authority only had to intervene months after the ECOMOG intervention which only serves to show the lack of clear decision making structures in ECOWAS. In Guinea- Bissau ECOMOG forces did not play a significant role as few countries participated due to lack of financial resources. As stipulated by Yabi (2010: 6) “Guinea Bissau continued to show signs of political instability and violence over a period of ten years after this intervention, despite the presence of a United Nations Peace Building Support Office (UNOGBIS) and sustained attention from ECOWAS.” In 2002, ECOMOG intervened in the crisis in Cote’ d’Ivoire to contain the crisis which had resulted from a military coup.

In Mali, there were disagreements on whether they should be military intervention or not which contributed to the delay in the decision to seek UN’s approval. Speculations over the consequences of deploying troops were rife as some argued that this would worsen the crisis. Abderrahmane (2012: 1) argues that:

military intervention could have dramatic consequences and create a spill over that will affect not only Mali but also the entire Sahel and the African continent...it would be a huge mistake to think that 3 300 ECOWAS troops – or even 3700 – could defeat the terrorists of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO)... there is a strong probability that the latter could simply flee to the different neighbouring Sahelian countries with notoriously porous frontiers which facilitates such movements.

The UN has since approved military intervention where AFISMA has been operational in Mali. Religious shrines have been destroyed and also Sharia law has been imposed by insurgent groups leading to violence, killings and displacement of people. The decision by ECOWAS to deploy troops in Bamako was welcomed by many who applaud ECOWAS commitment in dealing with the crisis in Mali. ECOWAS forces were only deployed in January 2013 after the intervention of France. Aireff (2013: 10) stipulate that “ECOWAS and African Union (AU) efforts to forge a response to Mali’s crisis have been hampered by regional divisions, rivalries, and a lack of planning and military capacity.” This shows that ECOWAS is not able to act swiftly to crisis as they keep on delaying as the situation exacerbated.

ECOMOG has faced a number of challenges in its earlier operations and according to Ibrahim (1997: 8) these include “excessive control by home governments; language differences; lack of standardization of equipment, arms and ammunition; different training standards, doctrine and staff procedures; poor sea- and air-lift capabilities; absence of vital air-to-ground support assets; lack of logistic support for some contingents; inadequate resources to deal with humanitarian problems; and poor coordination and liaison with international relief agencies.” The lack of a formal decision mechanism in ECOWAS and also the fact that ECOWAS has in the past taken the initiative to authorize military intervention leaves confusion on who really controls ECOMOG.

3.6 Early Warning System

The early warning system came into being after it was realised that ECOWAS was failing to anticipate conflicts before they erupt. Therefore, the early warning system is a measure to keep ECOWAS informed of potential crisis before they erupt. According to The ECOWAS early warning system (ECOWARN) focuses on human security and is different from the traditional intelligence-gathering in that all its information is from an open source and also, it makes all the information accessible for the general public.” Signs of potential conflicts would be detected and monitored in member states before being reported by the ECOWAS Commission. According to Yabi (2010: 12) it is made up of “an observation and monitoring system based at the head-quarters of ECOWAS as well as monitoring and observation zones.” There are four zones which according to the AU (2008: 3) are the “Observation Monitoring Centre (OMC), located at the Executive Secretariat with four zonal information and reporting bureaus in Cotonou (covering Benin, Nigeria, Togo), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger) and Banjul (The Gambia, Cape Verde, Guinea- Bissau, Senegal.” In Togo and Guinea Bissau, ECOWAS managed to use its conflict resolution mechanisms to deal with conflicts before they erupt. Anadi and Bah (2010: 3) propound that “Unlike Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire, where ECOWAS intervened to deal with the aftermath of violence, its engagement in Togo and Guinea was credited for averting the eruption of further violence in both countries.” However, critics argue that although ECOWAS has managed to set up various security mechanisms it is not severe when dealing with Heads of states demonstrated by its failure to convince President Conté to leave his office. The ECOWAS early warning system has faced criticism for not being effective in being proactive to crisis. The fact that ECOWAS continues to give responsibilities to unstable states which have a history of civil wars contributes to the malfunctioning of its mechanisms.

According to Kabia (2011: 4) “the placement of one of the observatories in Burkina Faso, a country notorious for supporting insurgencies in the sub-region, is misguided. The ability of the observatory to gather and disseminate critical information on this government will be adversely affected, as the government in question might restrict the system’s work.” The Early Warning System also lacks the integration capacities with other security institutions within the sub-regional body.

3.7 Conclusion

ECOWAS established various institutions and security mechanisms which have contributed significantly to conflict resolution which has gained its popularity as the most successful sub-regional organisation in the region. However, a lot needs to be done by ECOWAS to reform its mechanisms and institutions so that they achieve their intended purposes. Its security protocols also need to be fully implemented so that its conflict resolution strategies will be fully realised. There is no doubt that ECOWAS is still struggling to end conflicts in the West African sub-region which is evident in the Malian crisis which seems to be another test for the existing ECOWAS framework in responding to threats to peace and security. It is against this background that the next chapter will examine how ECOWAS has utilised these institutions and mechanisms in its attempt to end the crisis.

CHAPTER 4

ECOWAS AND ITS RESPONSE TO THE MALIAN CRISIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the background of Mali as well as unpacking the root causes of the conflict that still haunts the state to this day. The Malian conflict dates back to its independence as the Tuaregs have been rebelling against the government on their quest for independence and recognition. This chapter therefore explores the events that marked the beginning of the Malian crisis up to the current episode. These include the incessant coups, the Tuareg rebellion among others. ECOWAS response to the crisis will be evaluated to establish its successes and failures in resolving the crisis. This Malian crisis has been a threat to global security and this has called forth the response of the international community thus this chapter also examines this intervention in terms of its relevance and effectiveness.

4.2 History of Mali

Mali is a poor landlocked country which is composed of a largely Islamic population. Pringle (2006: 7) highlights that “it ranks as one of the poorest, least formally educated states in the world and is at the geographic centre of a conflict-prone region.” Mali as of 2005 had an estimated population of twelve million people (ibid). The Library of Congress (2005:4) states that “at about 1.2 million square kilometres, Mali is almost twice the size of Texas or about equal to that of Texas and California combined.” Mali is composed of many tribes and more than forty languages with French as the official language but most people communicate in Bambara. Mali constitute the following tribes: “the Bambara), Soninké and Malinké, all part of the Mande language group, constitute more than 50 percent of Mali’s population. Other significant groups are the Fulani, or Peul), Sénoufo, Dogon, Songhai, Diola, and Bobo and Oulé. In addition, Mali has significant numbers of Tuareg and Moors, or Maur, desert nomads related to the North African Berbers. (Library of Congress 2005: 6). Despite the fact that the Tuareg constitute a large population they have been the most neglected population which has resulted in repeated revolts in the North.

Keita (1998: 6) highlights that “despite its ethnic diversity, Mali generally has avoided the ethnic strife which has plagued some other African states.” Unlike many African states which are characterised by tribal or ethnic conflicts, the Malian government has managed to

contain ethnic conflicts by avoiding favouritism. However, the Tuaregs are believed to be a neglected tribe and have shown discontent over the way the government has been treating them. Thus, they have been seeking self-determination which is the root cause of the current conflict among other factors as shall be discussed as the chapter progresses.

A former French colony, Mali gained its independence on September 22, 1960 with Modibo Keita as its first President. France which occupied Mali and most of the West African nations in the late 19th Century, took control of its resources and territorial boundaries. The French defined the frontiers of their possessions, resulting in the borders now dividing the independent francophone countries of the sub region. Though much smaller than the ancient empire,....Mali ...emerged from French colonialism in 1960 (Keita 1998: 6).

Modibo Keita established a one party rule and the government faced economic hardships during its transition from colonial rule to majority rule. The government also confronted with opposition from the Tuareg rebels who did not acknowledge the government. Modibo Keita was removed from power through a military coup by Moussa Traoré in 1968. In 1974 the Malian state became a one party state under the Democratic Union of the Malian people, (UDPM). In “1979 and 1985, Gen. Traoré won the presidential elections unopposed.” (Technology Integration Division (2011: 21). However, Traoré did not usher in democracy other than allowing members of the National Assembly to hold elections in 1988 under the single- party state, the UDPM, a clear indicator of undemocratic rule. During his reign, Malians encountered civil strife, political instability and droughts which thwarted his attempts to reform and rebuild the Malian state. According to a research by Poulton and Youssof (1998: 13),

Moussa Traore was unable to address “development” beyond the capital city and the armed forces. The peasants were exploited, and the social services neglected. Far from Bamako, northerners suffered proportionately more than the rest of Mali from neglect and marginalisation...the North suffered from the abuse of military governors, while at the same period (1965-90) a cycle of drought was causing huge economic and social disruption especially to the Touareg population.

The map below shows the towns in the North of Mali that Tomboctou (Timbuktu), Gao and Kidal which have always been abandoned by the government which is one of the major contributor to the conflict in Mali. These towns have since been captured by the insurgent groups in Mali who took advantage of the confusion generated by the coup. “Taking advantage of the disorganization generated by the coup, the armed groups of the MNLA and Ansar Eddin seized the three main cities in the North of Mali (Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu) at

the end of March, beginning April 2012” Amnesty International (2012: 8).



Image courtesy of the CIA World Factbook

Source: Library of Congress (2005: 4)

In 1991, Traoré was deposed through a military coup by Amadou Toumani Touré which is an indication of the political instability that is still haunting the state up to the present day. Touré was not part of the elections that brought Alpha Oumar Konaré into power who managed to stifle the Tuareg insurgents in the North. (Pringle 2006). In 1997, Konaré won the elections which are described by Pringle (2006: 20) as “procedural shambles boycotted by virtually the entire opposition.” The elections were flawed and had a low voter turnout of 28.41%. (Nunley 2012). Konaré did not contest in the 2002 elections which were won by Touré. Touré who came back in the spotlight as a civilian, had an upper hand because of the popularity he gained from his role in the transitional government of 1991 to 1992 where he organized new

legislative and constitutional arrangements that gave way to a multi-party system and presidential elections. As stipulated by the Library of Congress (2005: 4) “The 2002 election was a milestone, marking Mali’s first successful transition from one democratically elected president to another, despite the persistence of electoral irregularities... Touré then appointed a politically inclusive government and pledged to tackle Mali’s pressing social and economic development problems.”

According to Epstein and Limage (2008: 322) “Touré was re-elected in April 2007 with approximately 68 percent of the vote,...promised development programs and anti-poverty intervention for the Tuareg.” However, following the conflict between the government and Tuareg rebels, he was ousted March 2012 through a military coup which resulted in the Ansar Dine and the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb taking advantage of the situation to impose Islamic laws.

4.3 Background to the 2012 Malian Conflict

The January 2012 Malian crisis emanates from a multiplicity of factors. The fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 resulted in the return of two armed groups the MNLA and Ansar Dine who rebelled against the government. The other insurgent groups in Mali include the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), Arab and Songhay militias. (Amnesty International 2012).

Northern Mali has been a neglected region which has influenced secessionist tendencies as the Tuaregs seek self-determination. In 1991, Traoré attempted to bring an end to Tuareg rebellion. Although a Peace Accord was signed in 1991 and 2002, the Tuaregs did not give up on their quest for independence. According to Aireff and Johnson (2012: 2), “Algeria mediated peace processes that brought an end to previous Tuareg uprisings in Mali in 1991-1995 and 2006-2009.”

Violent clashes between the armed groups and the Malian government resulted in civilian death. In March 2012 a military coup by Captain Sanogo ousted Malian President, Amadou Toumani Touré dissolving the constitution. The coup came just before the elections which were scheduled for April 2012. According to Aireff and Johnson (2012: 1) the coup was “motivated by government’s failure to devote adequate resources toward fighting a rebellion in the vast, sparsely populated north by a loose alliance of predominantly ethnic Tuareg separatists and Islamist extremists.” According to the International Crisis Group (2012: 8)

the crisis in Mali might have emanated from “brutalisation of the population by the security forces, failure to comply with commitments made in the various peace agreements, the government’s lax approach to AQIM and drug traffickers, and corrupt use of international aid provided for the north.”

After the coup, the insurgents took advantage of the situation and the MNLA seized three towns in the North of Mali which are Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. The looting of shops and destruction of shrines and other places of worship soon followed. The Ansar Dine with the help of AQIM later took control side lining the Tuareg and imposed Sharia Law and engaged in various human rights abuses. According to Aireff (2013: 1)

Mali has been mired in overlapping security, political, and humanitarian crises. After Mali’s government was overthrown in a military coup in March 2012, insurgents, capitalizing on the ensuing power vacuum, seized much of the country’s vast and sparsely populated northern territory. As of early January 2013, three loosely connected Islamist extremist groups—including Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization—reportedly controlled all major towns in the north.

The insurgent groups have been advancing South of Mali where they seized the town of Konna. The situation in Mali has been condemned by ECOWAS and the international community at large which led to the intervention of France under operation Serval and the deployment of AFISMA forces. According to Pryce (2013: 1) “Drawing its mandate from UN Security Council Resolution 2085, adopted unanimously by that body on 20 December 2012, AFISMA is intended to gradually take over responsibility for maintaining peace and security in Mali from the French intervention that was hastily initiated in mid-January 2013.” France and Malian forces have managed recapture several towns which include Douentza, Timbuktu, Gao, Konna and Dialaby. Following the successful offensives, France has since started withdrawing troops to pave way for a UN peacekeeping mission. However, the withdrawal of French troops has sparked fears that the Islamic insurgents might return leading to the war being prolonged.

4.4 ECOWAS Response to the Crisis

Given the intensity and complexity of the crisis, ECOWAS has taken some measures to end the conflict in Mali. Although ECOWAS has not put adequate measures to end the crisis, there is however a general acknowledgement that the West African regional grouping has put some positive measures in an attempt to bring peace in Mali. ECOWAS suspended Mali

from the regional grouping in March 2012 and imposed sanctions on the coup leader which saw the restoration of constitutional rule where interim President Diancouda Traore came into office and the suspension being uplifted. Chambers (2012: 1) argues that, “ECOWAS’ inability to prevent the coup... underlines the fact that it remains predominantly a responsive, rather than proactive, security actor.” ECOWAS failed to utilise its Early Warning System to prevent the current conflict. There was need for the body to have foresight and adopt the necessary measures that could have contained the problem in its early stages. Therefore, one can argue that ECOWAS’ Early Warning System needs to devise effective measures to respond to crisis situations.

AFISMA forces which are under the support of the AU, include countries from West Africa and other African countries. According to the AU (2013: 1) are “as of 3 March 2013, the AU and ECOWAS had recorded pledges up to 7,727 military and police personnel. On the same date, 6,167 troops, broken down as follows, were deployed on the ground: Benin (300) Burkina Faso (498), Ghana (125), Guinea (144), Niger (675), Nigeria (1,186), Senegal (501), Chad (2,015) and Togo (723).” Earlier, before the deployment of troops there were fears that the presence of forces would worsen the situation. As such, Malians were uncomfortable with the idea of the presence of troops in the country. Arieff and Johnson (2012: 9) observe that “most actors, observers and diplomats consider that the intervention by ECOWAS [referring to the post-coup diplomatic response], and particularly by Burkina Faso, has mainly had a negative impact,” and warned that a regional military operation would likely lead to increased civilian casualties and a greater “contagion and radicalization” of the conflict.”

According to Rogers (2012: 3) “From the point of view of the leadership of AQIM in North Africa, and Boko Haram in Nigeria, military intervention would actually be welcome as further evidence of external interference, in particular if there was French and US involvement.” In Mali, the French troops have faced so much resistance from the Islamist militants further complicating the situation in Mali. However, one may argue that military intervention will not only improve collective security of the West African countries but will also stop the human rights abuses and may bring about peace and order in the country. Negotiations have since failed, and the Tuareg rebels and the insurgent groups have refused to disarm ahead of the proposed election in July 2013. Therefore, military intervention seems to be the most viable solution to conquer the violent insurgent groups in Mali and restore order.

Bensah (2012: 1) argues that, “had Mali not taken the matter to the United Nations to seek Chapter VII-approval, an ECOWAS standby force (ESF) might just be in that country now and Malians would have probably felt less trepidation about an eventual intervention.” Sub-regional bodies like ECOWAS should be able to act independently on issues that affect their member countries so as to prevent the big powers from interfering. France’s intervention in Mali without the approval of the UN which was later granted after the intervention raises a lot of questions on the efficacy of the UN as the mother body that is meant to ensure and translate peace in the international community. The situation in Mali worsened whilst ECOWAS waited for UN’s approval to deploy troops. (Bensah 2012: 1). The conflict could have been contained on time but ECOWAS had to justify to the UN why there is need for enforcement action and as the UN was deliberating and delaying the crisis in Mali intensified. Therefore, one can argue that UN should amend its Charter and give sub-regional organisations the jurisdiction to manage their own affairs and decide to put enforcement action when they see it necessary. Therefore, the delays that are experienced though seeking approval for enforcement can only be solved if sub-regional organisations can act independently in emergency situations.

However, blame for the delays can be attributed to ECOWAS’ and AU’S failure to provide the required information needed by the UN to approve enforcement action. Arieff and Johnson (2012: 9) observe that, “international support has been inhibited by the lack of sufficient information concerning the proposed mission’s structure and the ability of participants to carry it out.” ECOWAS failed to give the required objectives and possible measures for the deployment of troops therefore the sub-regional body should have competent technical expertise so as to improve its communication strategies.

According to Arieff and Johnson (2012: 9), “Blaise Compaoré the ECOWAS chief negotiator efforts to end the Malian crisis were unsuccessful as some regional leaders reportedly view his role in Mali with suspicion. The scope of Compaoré’s negotiation efforts and their prospects for success—and for the acceptance of any deal by Malian elites and the military—remain to be seen.” One can note that a negotiator should be someone who has a charismatic character, thus the fact that the ECOWAS chief negotiator is not trusted by other regional leaders has a negative bearing on its effectiveness in containing this crisis. Therefore, the failure of ECOWAS to solve the crisis through pacific settlement of disputes

could be attributed to their wrong choice of a leader. However, one can argue that the leader did his best as he managed to convince the coup leader and there was a return to constitutional rule. Also, the insurgent groups are so powerful and violent to an extent that it is highly unlikely that they would be convinced through talks. Therefore, although the ECOWAS negotiator is viewed with suspicion, he tried to bring order to the conflict-ridden state but where the insurgent groups have different motives, some with the drive for independence and others are trying to impose Sharia law to bring about an Islamic state. Thus, the problems have become so diverse and complicated such that only military action is the last option available.

Although some measures have been put to end the crisis, ECOWAS has not been proactive enough to deal with the crisis. As mentioned above, it failed to prevent the coup and had to respond to the crisis after the situation had gone out of control. ECOWAS also failed to communicate its objectives for military intervention in Mali. This has also been another weakness on the part of ECOWAS as this resulted in the delay by the UN to grant the West African body the powers to deploy troops in the region. Lack of consensus among its member states on what ought to be done and the disagreements amongst the Malian army as well as the citizens on military action is also problematic as this will only bring confusion and fear to the Malian country. The conflict in Mali is still raging because of the above-mentioned shortfalls. It is highly likely that it will take a lot of time, maybe even years before the conflict will be resolved completely. However, it can be acknowledged that despite all the challenges being faced by the regional grouping, it has achieved some successes as it imposed sanctions on the coup leader and also brought constitutional rule. Its efforts for military intervention can be applauded as that is the only hope left for the restoration of peace and sanity to the conflict-ridden Malian state.

According to Boom (2010: 5) “ECOWAS is for many observers the vanguard of regional integration in Africa. It is often cited as the most successful integration scheme on the continent.” ECOWAS has had some remarkable successes whereby through ECOMOG troops it has intervened in crisis situations in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Bennet and Oliver (2002: 237) state that “in West African conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, ad hoc military interventions under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) depending on Ghana and Nigeria, have achieved some stabilization of the conflicts.” Although it has faced some criticism on its intervention in Sierra Leone and Liberia where it intervened without UN’ approval it brought some stabilisation of the

conflicts. Abass (2004: 124) asserts that “Article 24(1) provides that in order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its members confer the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on its behalf.” Therefore, ECOWAS was supposed to ask for approval when it intervened in Sierra Leone. However, since it managed to bring some relative successes it shows that ECOWAS can act on its own and in emergence situations it does not require UN’s approval for military intervention. In the Malian intra- state conflicts, had not ECOWAS asked for approval maybe the situation could have stabilised since UN delayed in approving for military intervention.

Financial challenges have robbed ECOWAS of its capabilities as a sub- regional organisation. This has resulted in ECOMOG operations having few successes as it faced transport and logistical problems thus impacting negatively on its operations as in the case of Guinea and Guinea Bissau. (Yabi 2010). Lack of political will is also another challenge as states and contending parties fail to cooperate and contribute to problems affecting them. Boom (2010: 54) states that, “lack of political commitment to the agreed peace negotiation process and the deployment of military force prolonged the Liberian crisis unnecessarily.” The fact that states and conflicting parties do not want to lose their treasures impact negatively in resolving conflicts. According to Pryce (2013: 1),

Chad has demonstrated the willingness and ability to bolster AFISMA is fortuitous as history has shown that some governments in the region have been consistently willing to imperil the success of multilateral interventions simply to curtail Nigerian influence. If such behaviour is to continue, it casts doubt on the capacity for ECOWAS to emerge as a successful security community, where states set aside narrow conceptions of self-interest in order to promote the collective good of the myriad peoples of West Africa.

Chad is not a member of ECOWAS but has the largest number of forces and has been given the leading role which raises questions on the role of Nigeria which has previously dominated in the past interventions. According to Pryce (ibid) “many of the Francophone West African states have been reluctant to see ECOWAS deploy a peacekeeping operation to Mali for fear that Nigeria might use such a mission as a pretence to expand its influence further into the Sahel.” According to Mr Ibrahim Saleh from the Nigerian embassy in Zimbabwe, “ECOWAS has been hindered in its operations because of lack of trust, logistical problems since they don’t have a standing army and also because of the language barrier since there are a few Anglophone countries and the majority are French speaking.” As such

there is distrust between these countries as a result of their language differences. Therefore, there is need for political will and commitment in ECOWAS member states so that they can resolve conflicts successfully.

Yabi (2010: 56) connotes that “ECOWAS member countries have political, economic, social and demographic characteristics and experience rapid changes that will continue to expose them in the coming years to potentially violent crises, but with varying degrees. The fact that Mauritania and Algeria are not ECOWAS members has a negative impact to Mali since these countries are neighbours to Mali. ECOWAS has had its own shortfalls in dealing with the conflict in Mali which has displayed its weaknesses as a sub-regional organisation. Its incapacibilities have motivated Western intervention in Mali which might have disastrous consequences such as increased violence and western manipulation. The intervention of Western powers is evidence that African sub-regional organisations cannot provide African solutions to African problems.

4.6 Impact of International Intervention on Mali

The conflict in Mali being a threat to international peace and security has resulted in an increase in the parties involved specifically the international community. France, as of January 2012 launched airstrikes on the rebels justifying its intervention on protecting the Malians from insurgent groups. “The French intervention of Friday 11th of January with air strikes halted the advances by the insurgents and helped the Malian government forces reconquer Konna. These developments justify the consistent position of ECOWAS that halting the Islamic insurgents was necessary and it required military intervention.” (Ibrahim 2012: 2).

The rebels had been advancing to the South of Mali where they captured the town of Konna which resulted in the Interim President calling for help from France. ECOWAS and the AU support this intervention which is an indication that they cannot independently attain their objective of ending conflict in the region. Britain, Australia, Germany, European Union, The United States of America and Denmark are also planning to provide logistical support France to help conquer the insurgent groups.

Britain will not offer any troops but will provide aircraft. The United States has offered to sent drowns, ‘communication, intelligence and transport... Germany will offer logistical, humanitarian and medical support... EU...preparation for a troop training mission in Mali

whilst Denmark will offer transport. (Breitbart website 2013: 1) The United States has since sent surveillance drones to Mali whilst the E.U has since decided to help Mali financially towards the elections to be held in July and has also established a training mission to help equip the Malian army.

This intervention will have both positive and negative effects on Mali. One may argue that this might be the only means to end the crisis in Mali since ECOWAS has not been effective in ending the conflict. According to the findings by the researcher, the intervention by France has been effective. According to Mr Ibrahim Saleh, the intervention “is very effective, they have not completely succeeded but the Islamic insurgents have been neutralised.” In support of this, Dr Ibbo Mandaza described the rebels as “not organic and therefore will not last.”

However, it can be argued that the intervention may have dire consequences since the rebel leader has promised to strike back on France. The fighting has resulted in severe resistance from the Islamic insurgents which has resulted in the death of French, Nigerian and Chadian soldiers. The Malian conflict may have attracted Western intervention because the countries may have vested interests. According to the Shanghai Daily (2013: 1) “Russia has enormous economic interests in Mali so does France.” Mali is a former French colony, whose resources may be of interest to Mali coupled with the fact that France wants to establish itself to the world that it is a superpower. Therefore, one can conclude that, although Western intervention has been commendable, it may impact negatively on the sovereignty of the Malian state and may also increase violence and instability since the insurgent groups are fighting back.

4.7 Conclusion

ECOWAS has not been effective in ending intra-state conflict in Mali. Although it has responded by having negotiations, eventually imposing sanctions and intervened militarily, it has not been effective in resolving the crisis. The French intervention is evidence that the West African sub-regional organisation has failed to provide a lasting solution to Mali. Therefore, there is need for reform of the sub-regional organisation as shall be recommended in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The overall objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of ECOWAS in resolving intra-state conflicts in West Africa. This research established that the crisis in Mali emanated from bad governance, marginalism of the Tuareg people in the North and religious extremism as the Islamic insurgents later took control. The study has shown that ECOWAS has failed to end the crisis given the prolonged timeframe of the crisis. The coming in of France to the aid of ECOWAS shows the failure of the West African body to resolve the crisis. ECOWAS still face a considerable number of challenges in bringing peace in the region which makes it unable to resolve conflicts effectively. These include financial and technical incapacities, lack of consensus, lack of trust, language barriers between ECOWAS member states which has impacted negatively on ECOWAS' efforts to end the crisis. Given this background, ECOWAS has been ineffective in ending the crisis.

The first specific objective was to examine the institutional frameworks available in ECOWAS that governs its response to crisis in the region. ECOWAS consists of various institutions such as ECOWAS Commission, Authority of Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers, Community Parliament, Community Court of Justice, the Bank for Investment and Development and the Mediation and Security Council. ECOWAS institutions have implored measures and decisions which have produced although mixed results. The Head of States played a significant role as they met on several occasions to map the way forward in resolving the problem in Mali. Their decisions to suspend Mali from the sub-regional grouping, the imposition of travel bans and freezing of assets from the EBID is commendable. However, it can be argued that sanctions bring suffering to innocent citizens which might have been the other reason why the sanctions were lifted as constitutional rule was returned.

It can be argued that ECOWAS institutions have not done enough to end the crisis. The Community Parliament as well as the Mediation and Security Council support the decision by the international community to intervene in Mali. Instead, these institutions should

oversee the implementation of intervention in Mali. Therefore, despite some positive measures, ECOWAS institutions are not well equipped to act swiftly to crisis.

The second objective was to explore measures which have been put in place by ECOWAS in resolving the Malian crisis. ECOWAS has not provided adequate measures to end the crisis in Mali. The imposition of sanctions on the coup leader paved way for a transitional government which was a short term solution to the problem in Mali. The deployment of troops by ECOWAS took long to materialise and only took place after the intervention by France. ECOWAS has failed to offer a permanent solution to the problem in Mali.

The final objective was to assess how other regional organisations respond to political crisis in the region. Sub- regional organisations in Africa face numerous challenges that impacts negatively in their operations. Finance and lack of consensus amongst member states are the main challenges facing these groupings. The fact that the African groupings have to seek authorisation from the UN has only resulted in delays when it comes to intervention. African regional organisations cannot offer African solution to African problems and as such are prone to super power domination. ECOWAS' failure to end the crisis in Mali has led to the intervention of the Western community which may have serious consequences as it may be an indication of colonial reoccupation of West Africa given the fact that Mali is a former French Colony. There is need for reform of these groupings so that they address their own problems which will safeguard their sovereignty and prevent infiltration of Western countries under the guise of the responsibility to protect. It can therefore be concluded that ECOWAS has been ineffective in resolving intra- state conflicts in West Africa specifically in Mali.

5. 2 Recommendations

The following prescriptions have been proffered for ECOWAS and other sub- regional groupings, UN and the international community:

There is need for a concerted effort by the international community which to help finance and help fight the Islamic militants. The terrorist groups are not only a threat to Mali only but to the whole international community at large. The Islamic militants have been a threat to the Sahel region and also in Nigeria where the Boko Haram are a threat. Countries which include Nigeria, Algeria and the Arab Maghreb Union should work collectively to end terrorism and trans-border crimes. If the international community fail to defeat the Islamic militants this will be a global challenge as they will not only widen their horizons but also this will

encourage organised crime from other groups. Therefore, the situation in Mali requires the collective efforts from the global circles since it poses serious challenges to international security.

There is urgent need for AU, ECOWAS, UN and other humanitarian organisations to provide the necessary aid to both internally and externally displaced refugees and other victims of the Malian crisis. This support may be moral and psychological support, provision of food, shelter and security to the affected populations.

The Malian armed forces need to be well trained so that they are able to fight the Islamic militants. Since the Malian crisis has received overwhelming response from the international community, there is need to train all the forces so as to improve communication skills. Previous ECOWAS operations have been hampered by communication barriers, therefore there is need to set up communication channels in all the contributing forces in Mali.

The Malian government needs to be democratized so that it addresses the imbalances in the Northern region to address the Tuareg problem. Part of the problem in Mali emanated from the neglect of the Northern Mali by the Malian government which triggered a rebellion. There is therefore need for the Malian government to recognize the needs of the population in Northern Mali so that they may not have the quest for self-determination since their problems would have been addressed. This will prevent terrorists groups to take advantage of the ethnic problems to bring violence in the country.

Related to the above, there is need for the facilitation of free and fair elections in Mali which may be a long term solution to the problem of bad governance in Mali. The March 2012 coup which ousted Amadou Toumani Toure was a result of the dissatisfaction with the way the Malian army handled the rebellion in Northern Mali. Therefore, a new democratically elected government may usher in reforms to address the Tuareg problem.

There is need for a UN inquiry to establish how the armed groups operate and where they get their support. If established there is need for the regional and the UN peacekeeping to monitor and block the movement of either military equipment of these armed groups. Once their sources of help are identified and dealt with, this can weaken their operations in Mali.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

THE MALIAN CRISIS

1. A: What in your opinion are the major factors contributing to the Malian crisis?

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.

B: What measures have been put in place by ECOWAS to end the Malian crisis?

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

C: What are some of the challenges being faced in trying to end the crisis?

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

EFFECTIVENESS OF ECOWAS

1 A: How effective is ECOWAS response to the crisis?

.....

B: Do you justify the intervention of France on the Malian crisis?

Yes No

Give reasons to support your answer to question 3B

.....

C: Do you think the intervention was effective?

D: What is AU's position on the Malian crisis?