

Research

## **Human Rights Crisis, as a Factor Procuring Conflict, and Ingenious Interventions by External Actors**

**Kenekayoro .T. Peter**

Lecturer, Faculty of Law, University of Africa. Toru-Orua, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Correspondence should be addressed to: [kenekayoroxoxo@gmail.com](mailto:kenekayoroxoxo@gmail.com)

---

**Abstract:** In line with the theory of interdependency of human rights, all issues that affect the human condition in society inevitably have a significant effect on the rights and liberties of persons. So the violation of economic rights for instance, can create a negative domino effect that resultantly undermines civil rights and vice versa. Thus, the role of the State in upholding public trust, eradicating poverty, and ensuring that peoples are free from oppression, injustice and all forms of violence, is very consequential to the human rights of citizens, as well as peace and political stability; and for preventing circumstances that might compel citizens to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression. So it is imperative that human rights are protected by the rule of law, that is why the orthodoxy is for national and international laws to emphasize the State's duty to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights. On the other hand, systemic corruption is antithetical to good governance, and contrary to the rule of law – so one of the major ramifications of protracted practices of systemic corruption is a human rights crisis; and other associated problems like political instability, and war in extreme cases. Thus, this research portrays how systemic corruption and gross violations of human rights procure wars and political instability, which leads to more violations during conflicts, as a consequence of the violence, loss of life, starvation and other ramifications of war. Reference is also made to the role of external actors, who intervene either for just or manipulative purposes, which are preventable if the government upholds public trust.

**Keywords:** Human Rights, War, Distributive Justice, Discrimination, Corruption.

---

### **Introduction**

The theory of interdependency of human rights postulates that human rights are interrelated, interdependent, and indivisible; in the sense that the violation of one human right will procure a snowball effect that consequently hinders other related human rights and liberties (Javaid, 2010, p.8). Hence, various United Nations treaties and declarations have emphasized the

role and obligation of States to execute the primary function of respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights, by guaranteeing freedom from fear, poverty, oppression, injustice and violence (Article 6, UNMD). Hence, the success of the government in achieving its fiduciary functions, depends on its ability to ensure, protect, and advance the civil, economic, social, cultural, and political rights of the citizenry. Thus, what happens when the State fails to uphold its fiduciary responsibilities, due to corrupt practices, and distributive injustices? The preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has provided an indirect answer to this question in the preamble to the declaration, emphasizing the duty of the State to facilitate progress, distributive justice, and shared prosperity, as essential measures to ensure that marginalized sections of society are not ‘compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression’, and ‘that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.’ That dynamics is also recognized by Mähler, emphasizing that –

*Natural resources can be the motive for violent conflicts. This means part of the population might feel that they are deprived of financial benefits of the resource revenues – while possibly also suffering from the ecological and social impacts of production (motive of grievance) or that resource wealth can be the target of avaricious rebels who wish to take possession of the resources (motive of greed). Resources, can indirectly increase the likelihood of violent conflict by weakening political institutions and/or by triggering socio-economic decline (Mähler, 2010 p.8).*

Using the Nigerian Constitution for example, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (CFRN) states the fundamental objectives and directive principles of State policy, which are essential to national progress and development, inter-alia, including the duty of the State to ensure the security and welfare of the citizenry as the primary purpose of government (Section 14, CFRN); a guaranteed right of the people to participate in governance (Section 14, CFRN); to engender peace and progress in the country, and to facilitate national integration, while proscribing all forms of discrimination in the country (Section 15, CFRN); the abolishment of all corrupt practices and the criminalization of acts of abuse of power (Section 15, CFRN); to actualize national prosperity through the maintenance of an efficient, productive, and self-reliant economy (Section 16, CFRN); to enhance economic development, distributive justice, poverty eradication, access to food, shelter, health care, satisfactory standards of living, adequate sources of livelihood, and to ensure that the economy is not operated in such a manner that permits the concentration of wealth or means of production in the hands of a few, in a way

that is prejudicial to the rights of marginalized sections of the society (Section 16, CFRN), etc. Thus, as implied by Mähler, there is a strong possibility that the State's failure to uphold the aforementioned Constitutional obligations, might procure severe levels of conflict, instigated by those either motivated by greed in the worst case scenario – in an environment where injustices have offered them a legitimate objective to serve as a disguise for executing ulterior motives; or by revolutionary movements that are motivated by grievances procured by: distributive injustices, public sector corruption, and the breach of public trust perpetrated by the ruling class (Mähler, 2010, p.8).

Recognizing the destructiveness of conflict, Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) proscribes war by stating that '(1.) Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law. (2.) Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law'; the United Nations Millennium Declaration (UNMD), emphasizes the normative value of respecting the right to human dignity, by virtue of which, all persons shall be free 'from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice', as beneficiaries of the inalienable right of all persons to enjoy the dividends of national development – that being a goal to be achieved by striving for 'the full protection and promotion in all our countries of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all' through democracy and good governance (Article 6 and 24, UNMD); and States are entrusted with the duty to fight against injustice, violence, terror and crime (Article 29, UNMD).

Systemically corrupt regimes plagued by consequential distributive injustices, administrative inefficiencies, underdevelopment, discriminatory practices, and a wide range of institutionalized acts of abuse of public authority that lead to the violation of rights – possess attributes that qualify them as dysfunctional public administrative systems. Hence, such systems become fragile due to the lawless acts of agents of the State, which in-line with Mähler's greed or grievance theory of reactions, will legitimize the agitations of anti-regime factions that are hell-bent on ousting the incumbent regime (Mähler, 2010, p.8). It also legitimizes the role of external actors, who also in the context of Mähler's theory, may involved themselves in the internal affairs of the State, for the purpose of achieving objectives that might be based on genuine assistance in the best case scenario; or other ulterior motives (Mähler, 2010, p.8).

### **Systemic Corruption**

Systemic corruption connotes institutionalized acts of abuse of public authority, perpetrated by agents of the State/public officials (Simplice, 2013, p.39). It is synonymous to the

concept of institutional decay, which occurs when corrupt practices pervade the highest levels of government (Mbaku, 2016, p.681). Thereby procuring a very destructive impact, owing to the high level of influence which its perpetrators hold, in the determination and execution of public policies.

### **Human Rights Crisis**

A human rights crisis is epitomized by worsening human conditions, in terms of declining levels of security. It is also a byproduct of civil, economic, or political problems that are primarily a consequence of leadership failures; or protracted/reoccurring acts of breach of public trust. Thus, it is most commonly a result of systemic corruption, which sabotages the effectuation of the States duty to respect, protect, and fulfil human right obligations through the institutions of government. There is a high probability that such circumstances will lead to the violation of peremptory norms of human rights law, when corrupt public administrative systems ‘encourage, or condone [...] consistent patterns of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights’ (Unknown, p.172). That is also the basis of Mubangizi’s advocacy for the recognition of ‘a right to freedom from corruption’ (Mubangizi, 2020, p.243). So the chain of causality is that –

- (1.) Systemic corruption leads to leadership failures (bad governance);
- (2.) Consistent or protracted patterns of bad governance ineluctably sabotages the ability of the State to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights;
- (3.) Consequently, acquiescence to, or active perpetration of consistent patterns of gross violations of human rights leads to a human rights crisis.

Such state of affairs can degenerate to the point of procuring protests and other forms of agitation; it can also lead to reactionary: revolutions, secessionist movements, and armed conflicts in extreme cases.

### **Liberian Civil War: Internal Issues, and the Role of External Actors**

The Liberian Civil War was the ramification of a nexus of problems and grievances, which were inextricably connected to executive corruption that undermined good governance, and distributive justice in the State (Harry, 2012, p.85). The first native Liberian President – Samuel Doe, ascended to power in 1980, when he staged a violent coup d’état that ousted the administration of President William Tolbert, and concomitantly caused the suspension of the Liberian Constitution (Harry, 2012, p.88). The progressive efforts of Tolbert’s administration to implement economic and political reforms was abruptly halted by the violence, unfair trials, and public executions that accompanied the unconstitutional capture of power by Samuel Doe, and

his associates (ibid). Nevertheless, he legitimized his authority as a democratic leader, through an election held in 1985 that was clouded by allegations of electoral fraud (Harry, 2012, p.91).

Doe struggled to maintain his executive position through fear and intimidation, as epitomized in the execution of a former Commanding General of the Armed Forces, for a failed coup attempt, and the subsequent public exhibition of the corpse [of Thomas Quiwonkpa] in the executive Mansion in Monrovia (Harry, 2012, p.91). The popular legitimacy of the administration of Samuel Doe, was further undermined by the corrupt and totalitarian tendencies of the regime; the systemic discrimination, and persecution of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups; ethnocentrism and preferential treatment of the Krahn (ibid). Thus, creating a justification for revolutionary movements, established for overthrowing the government. Hence, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) was formed for the purpose of spearheading a revolution. So the NPFL orchestrated an invasion; and in the course of the conflict a faction of the NPFL, formed the militia called the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) that orchestrated the capture, torture, and execution of Samuel Doe, under the headship of Prince Johnson as the leader of the INPFL in 1990 (Harry, 2012, p.91). Thereby creating the background for another power-centric struggle between the NPFL and the INPFL (ibid).

After a protracted conflict, Charles Taylor was elected as the President of Liberia in 1997. The Second Liberian war was instigated by the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), based on their attempt to destabilize the government, in order to gain control over local diamond fields in Liberia (Konah, 2025, p.98). Hence, hostilities were reignited when anti-Taylor forces invaded Liberia in 1999. The first Liberian Civil war, which ended in 1996, led to approximately 200,000 casualties, including the execution of the President; while the Second Civil War, which ended in 2003, led to over 250,000 casualties, and the displacement of close to a million Liberians (ibid). At the aftermath of the conflict, Charles Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in prison for numerous crimes involving violence and illegal ownership of weapons (Amnesty International, 2004).

External actors often play supportive roles in armed conflicts, under the cloak of humanitarian assistance. However, the realpolitik of such interventions might be anchored on deeper economic or political agenda. For example, in the course of the Liberian civil war: Assistance offered to the rebel group known as Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), by the government of Guinea was instrumental to the efficacy of their attacks against Charles Taylor's regime – which overthrew the repressive government of Samuel Doe (Konah, 2025, p.105). Libya, also played a facilitative role in the Liberian Civil

War. In 1989, 'Charles Taylor initiated an armed insurgency from Côte d'Ivoire with the support of the Libyan government' (Konah, 2025, p.98).

The Liberian Civil War was instigated by the internal dynamics of state capture, kleptocracy, distributive injustices, ethnocentrism, and discrimination – which were a calamitous recipe for disaster, and war galvanized by the efforts of internal and external actors, either motivated by grievances in the purest sense; or corruption as captured by Mähler's concept of the motive of greed (Mähler, 2010, p.8). In the course of the conflict, rebels had persistent access to external sanctuary in neighboring countries; and a fair number of such countries 'willingly contributed to the conflict to extract resources for economic gain' (Konah, 2025, p.98).

*Important material and logistics support for Charles Taylor's (NPFL) insurgency was provided by Libya and Burkina Faso, the latter giving it arms, training and access to Liberia through the Masakounda between Silo and Fattah in Guinea. This involvement from outside helped NPFL to start a full-scale insurgency with a cross-border campaign launched from Côte d'Ivoire (Konah, 2025, p.100). Meanwhile, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, and Nigeria were Anti-Taylor, and the ECOMOG was also biased against Taylor (Justin, 2024, p.2).*

### **Nigerian Civil War**

The Nigerian Civil war was also procured by the lethal combination of systemic corruption, distributive injustices and ethnocentrism that starved the nation of the loyalty and cohesion required for a sustainable future as an indivisible and indissoluble State (Daniel, 2012, p.333). The grievances of other parts of the country were galvanized by the northern hegemonic control of the federal government: The northern dominated public administrative system was accused of manipulation of public authority – by applying it as a tool for orchestrating kleptocracy and the concentration of development projects in the north at the expense of other federating units (Daniel, 2012, p.117); alleged inflation of census figures as a manipulative means of obtaining higher percentages of public revenue, among other claims (Skurnik, 1967, p.412). Hence, the economic corruption and distributive injustices that pervaded the early post-independence Nigeria, sabotaged the future of the first republic, which collapsed by virtue of a military coup that led to the ascendance of Aguyi Ironsi to the position Head of State, in 1966 (Skurnik, 1967, p.413). Nevertheless, a counter-coup was executed. Thus, Yakubu Gowon took over office in 1966. His tenure lasted through the Nigerian civil war, until years after in

1975, when a bloodless military coup was orchestrated in favour of Murtala Mohammed (Pita, 1999, p.63).

The sense of marginalization; and claims concerning gross violations of civil, economic and political rights by the central government, caused the south-east to resort to War, based on the view that secession is a practical solution for ending the corruption and marginalization orchestrated by the northern hegemony (Rotimi, 2018, p.186). So the Nigeria-Biafra war began in 1967.

During the war a blockade was systematically established to hinder the transportation of resources to territories occupied by the Biafran Army. Thus, leading to mass starvation and casualties of between 500,000 to 2 million citizens, as a result of the blockade, when Nigerian troops surrounded the southern region, while capturing coastal oil facilities, and parts of Rivers State (Frank, 1997, p.324). The seeds of agitation had been brewing in the hearts of southerners since the amalgamation policy of 1914, executed by colonialists for financial expediency (Abada, 2019, p.398). Thus, leading to the adoption of fiscal federalism in Nigeria, when the north was financed by revenue generated from the southern protectorate. Hence, sentiments were already lingering in the minds of southerners that felt exploited. The grievances were further galvanized by the kleptocracy and injustices of the first republic (Daniel, 2012, p.333). Consequently, the south-east resorted to secession as a revolutionary measure against corruption, injustice, tribalism and other kinds of marginalization (ibid). Hostilities continued, until the Biafran civil war ended with the re-emancipation of southern Nigeria in 1970. Between one to three million casualties were recorded (Frank, 1997, p.324).

### **The Role of France in the Nigerian Civil War**

In the early post-colonial era, France was invested in maintaining its hegemony and imperialistic influence in West Africa; that was the basis of its rivalry with Nigeria, between 1960 and 1990 (Juma, 2002, p.10). Hence, 'French dominance in West Africa rested on its strong political, cultural, and economic ties with its former colonies and injection of military and economic resources into its former colonies in the postcolonial era' (ibid). On that account, the government of France operated permanent military bases in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, for the protection of its client regimes (Juma, 2002, p.10). In contrast to that modus operandi, rather than aiding the federal government of Nigeria during the Nigerian Civil War; France, in cohort with Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire, rather supplied arms to the Biafran army, as a means of suppressing the perceived Nigerian hegemony in West Africa (ibid). However, after the Cold

War, France change its strategy to an economic approach, as it rather focused on maintaining bilateral relations with Nigeria (Juma, 2002, p.11).

### **The Rwandan Genocide and the Role of External Actors**

The Rwandan genocide occurred between April and July 1994, with an estimate of eight hundred thousand casualties (Alan, 2021, p.102). Similar to other conflicts in the continent, the Rwanda case was a consequence of ethnocentrism, and unfavorable colonial legacies, owing to administrative policies implemented by the colonial regime. The ethnic divide orchestrated by German and Belgian imperialists, spanning from the late 1800s to 1962, was characterized by systemic marginalization of the Hutus (Alan, 2021, p.104).

*The colonial powers treated the two groups as different races by “relegating the vast majority of Hutus to particularly onerous forms of forced cultivation and by actively favoring Tutsi in access to administrative posts, education, and jobs” and this policy provided the perfect foundation for the genocide (ibid).*

The systemic marginalization progressed until the era of post-independence advocacy, which was spearheaded by the Tutsi's. That was the development that caused the Belgian imperialists to favour Hutus, as a reaction to the independence movement, and in-line with the ambition to maintain colonial control over the territory (ibid). After independence, the ethnocentric divide, and the pedestalization of sectional loyalties, created an aura of hostility and conflict. That caused the Tutsis to establish the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which was a rebel group focused on changing the power dynamics in favour of the Tutsis (Alan, 2021, p.105). ‘In the 1990 Rwandan civil war, the RPF had almost toppled the Habyarimana regime if not for the intervention of France. In 1994 it had successfully taken control of Rwanda’ (ibid).

Observers claim that there is evidence supporting the culpability of France in the Rwandan 1994 genocide (Vinay, 2007, p.480), ‘France offered a constant stream of arms to the Hutu forces’, partook in the interrogation of affiliates of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), and facilitated the training of ruthless militias (Vinay, 2007, p.481). ‘Indeed, as the killings mounted in the spring of 1994, French armaments poured into the hands of the Hutu killers at a frenzied pace’ (ibid). On that account, Kagame averred that the genocide was fueled by France’s support for the government of Rwanda (FGT, p.1). Habyarimana, who was ‘fluent in French, apparently a devout Catholic, impressed French President François Mitterrand and others with his assimilation of French values’ (ibid). France exercised a significant level of control over African

policy; and its political relations with Rwanda was consequential to its hegemonic influence in Africa (ibid). Habyarimana also had cordial relations with other French elites, like Georges Martres, who was the French ambassador in Kigali, as well as links with high-ranking military officers of French origin (ibid).

Thus, the strength of those relationships were reinforced by French foreign policy objectives. ‘French policy-makers believed that France must continue to have strong links with African allies if it were to have any stature on the international scene’ (FGT, p.1). Rwanda was instrumental to this ambition, considering that it was not a former French colony. That imbued it with a special status in the eyes of France, being an ally won away from Belgium i.e. its erstwhile colonial rulers (ibid). France was invested in maintaining its status and external legitimacy as a dominant force in the global political scene. Thus, its ability to manage and efficaciously administer the Rwandan political situation, was vital to its reputation in the eyes of other ‘power holders dependent upon French support elsewhere on the continent’ (ibid).

*Backing Rwanda offered the chance not just to out-do Belgium but also to humiliate the Anglo-Saxon forces thought to be behind the largely English-speaking RPF. According to former French minister Bernard Debré, Mitterrand believed that the U.S. had “hegemonic aims” in the region [...] Gérard Prunier, an analyst well-informed about the French Defense Ministry, has suggested that Habyarimana may have helped France with some illegitimate business in the past, perhaps passing on arms shipments to embargoed countries, and thus made the French feel more obligated to support him. In addition to these general considerations, French policymakers also supported Rwanda in order to have a firm base for dealing with potential crises in Zaire (ibid).*

Amidst all these issues, the French obviously needed a legitimate objective to justify its military presence in Rwanda. Thus, “protection of French citizens” was only a cover, considering that ‘French numbered only a few hundred and were not threatened’ (FGT, p.2). Alternatively, French-trained soldiers were involved with militias, and understood the prospects of a genocide (FGT, p.2).

### **The Collapse of Zaire**

‘The collapse of Mobutu’s Zaire in 1996/97 was the result of an unprecedented correspondence of domestic, regional and international interests’ (McNulty, 1999, p.53). The Western anti-communist faction, played a significant role in the establishment and sustenance of Zaire, under the leadership of Mobutu Sese Seko, during the Cold War era (ibid). However, ‘By

1996, with the failure of French credibility and the United States refusal to intervene, it had no reliable external protector' (ibid). Prior to the collapse of the regime, the political efficacy of the government of Mobutu Sese Seko, was sustained with the aid of his Western allies, viz. United States, France, and Belgium (ibid).

Amidst the colonial legacies of artificial borders and the concomitant ethnocentric heterogeneity that undermined the prospects of nationalism: Mobutu Sese Seko, was projected by himself, and his Western allies as the unifying factor, to preserve the national identity of the post-colonial State (McNulty, 1999, p.54). Nonetheless, the noble claim, was a mask that disguised the realpolitik of corruption, exploitation, and kleptocracy. A mode of operation that inevitably created an enabling environment for revolutionary movements and militias fueled by 'the population's resultant alienation, anger and frustration' (ibid). These and other cumulative pressures led to the final collapse of the State, and the reemergence of Zaire as reformed Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The collapse of the regime, was a combination of various factors including the disunity among Western countries at the multilateral level that diminished the role of its external protectors; and lack of popular legitimacy of the incumbent regime, owing to the corrupt, elitist, and extortionary practices that pervaded the State (ibid). Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi played decisive roles in the outcome of the conflict (McNulty, 1999, p.56). Among other factors, their involvement was instigated by the need to secure their 'western borders against attack from Zaire', which they accomplished by late 1996 (ibid). When the collapse of the Seko's regime seemed inevitable, a commentator made a statement that 'in Africa, things stay the same until they fall apart' (ibid). Corroborating the dark reality that systemically corrupt regimes in the continent, are almost incapable of implementing required reforms and concessions, until the State degenerates into conflict, civil unrest, or armed revolutions. The collapse of Zaire, was a consequence of the actions of internal opponents, and regional rivals united by their harmony of interest in regional security (McNulty, 1999, p.57). The nation was a creation of the Cold War era that correlatively collapsed at the end of the Cold War (ibid).

### **Conflicts as Ramifications of Injustice**

Wars can be galvanized by the struggle for natural resources, for instance in Sierra Leone and Liberia. In the case of Serra Leone, similar to other African countries, the grievances that provoked conflict, are ramifications of acts of colonialists. Colonial rule in Africa was a major vector of distributive injustices, and cronyistic administrative practices that excluded certain groups while favoring others. Thus, the colonial administrators in control of diamond rich

regions, gave diamond concessions to certain private companies and workers (Juma, 2002, p.11). Thereby, creating a private sphere of influence over the mining industry. That created an enabling environment for a wide range of malpractices, including corruption and tax evasion (ibid). Consequently, the struggle to control the diamond industry, transmogrified into a full blown war – As aggrieved people resorted to violence, as a means of enforcing distributive justice and administrative reforms; while the factions that monopolized the mining industry, used their resources to fund rebels and war lords (Juma, 2002, p.12). Hence, the struggle to gain control, and to maintain monopoly over diamond mines, made the conflict more lucrative and beneficial for rebels. That is a reality that also played out in Liberia –

*The conflict in Liberia seemed to benefit a small circle of warlords heading factions such as the NPFL, the Liberia Peace Council (LPC), and the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), which controlled vast territories rich in natural resources. These groups exploited ethnicity and military power to dominate a lucrative export trade in diamonds, timber, iron ore, and gold in collaboration with US, European, and Asian commercial firms [...] Thus, political and economic strategies are linked in ways that enable corrupt groups to prolong and benefit from conflicts in West Africa (Juma, 2002, p.11).*

‘In the wake of its independence from the British Empire, Sierra Leone became a one-party state engulfed by corruption under Joseph Saidu Momoh’s All People’s Congress (APC)’ (Jackson, 2022, p.1). Thus, the State was experiencing a host of concomitant issues related to the problem of corruption, including “mass abject poverty” (ibid). Hence, procuring the dynamics explained by Mähler, when retaliatory factions emerge, either based on the motive of greed or grievances (Mähler, 2010 p.8). Consequently, in 1991, Foday Sankoh established the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which projected the legitimate objective of agitating for democracy (Paul, 2003, p.9). But was rather invested in seizing the nation’s diamond mines (Jackson, 2022, p.1). In order to achieve its objective, the RUF launched attacks that led to the Sierra Leonean civil war (ibid).

Amidst the chaos, aggrieved members of the national army defected, and joined militias (ibid). A coup was orchestrated and executed in 1992, overthrowing the regime of Joseph Saidu Momoh (ibid). However, the conflict still persisted even with the new regime, under the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), led by Valentine E. M. Strasser (ibid). The new regime was also plagued by corruption, and other related injustices. Another coup was executed in 1996

(ibid). Due to the fragile state of the regime, and other related factors, a revolution was orchestrated. ‘A new group of disgruntled officers emerged in 1997, forming the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). They soon took control of the country, forced Kabbah into exile, and invited the Revolutionary United Front to rule with them’ (ibid).

The situation degenerated to the point of various acts of abuse of authority, human right abuses, and war crimes committed in the course of the conflict (Paul, 2003, p.18). Hence, justifying the intervention of external actors, including ECOWAS and the British Army. That finally led to conflict resolution, the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and the reinstatement of the executive tenure of Ahmad Tehjan Kabbah (Jackson, 2022, p.7).

### **The Syrian Crisis**

The origin of the Syrian crisis is linked to ‘a local revolt against corruption, brutality,’ anocracy, and distributive injustices (Jane, 2014, p.48). But, in 2011, the crisis transmogrified into an armed conflict, involving regional and international actors (Salah, 2021, p.1). Thus, various external actors rendered support to their allies in Syria.

*Initially, Western states were the first governments to support the Syrian opposition when the uprising began in 2011, and were joined by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey in the latter half of the year. Meanwhile Syria’s traditional allies, Iran and Russia, have remained strong supporters of the regime throughout the crisis (Jane, 2014, p.48).*

Iran was invested in supporting the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Thus, ‘it sent its Revolutionary Guards to train a new pro-regime militia force’ (Jane, 2014, p.51). Iran’s vested interest in the sustainability of Assad’s regime, was centered on geo-political considerations. Nonetheless, the government of Iran justified its intervention based on the legitimate objective of anti-terrorism (ibid). Claiming that ‘they need to fight al-Qaeda in Syria, or they would end up having to fight it on their own territory’ (ibid). Hezbollah, which is an Iranian ally, also involved itself in the Syrian conflict (ibid).

The plausibility of the geopolitical argument for Iran’s involvement in the Syrian conflict, among other issues, is corroborated by the fact that while Iran systemically adopted an Islamic ideology, Syria is more of a secular state – On that account, rather than religious interest, Iran considers stability in Syria, as consequential to the regime security of the Iranian government (ibid). In the sense that it will undermine the influence of external actors, who have a vested interest in aiding, initiating, or facilitating key political changes in the region. Thus, its alliance

with Syria was ‘part of a self-styled “resistance axis” opposed to US and Israeli interests in the region’ (ibid).

The fourteen (14) year Syrian Civil War ended in December 2024, marked by the fall of Al-Assad’s regime (Al Jazeera, 2026). Thus, Al-Assad and most of his inner circle orchestrated escapes. Al-Assad fled to Russia, after the conflict which led to an estimate of half a million casualties (ibid). Reports published in 2026, confirm ongoing trials of officers of Al-Assad’s administration, including Atef Najib, the former head of political security in southern Syria’s Deraa province; also ‘charged in their absence are Al-Assad and his brother, Maher, former commander of the Syrian military’s 4th Armoured Division. Along with other former high-ranking security officials also charged in absentia, they are accused of killings, torture, extortion and drug trafficking’ (Al Jazeera, 2026).

### **Conclusion**

In the light of the interdependence of human rights, the problems associated with administrative malpractices, bad governance, and systemic corruption are far reaching, considering the numerous ways in which actions of public officers/officials can hinder the life, survival, and welfare of the citizenry. That is a reality recognized by the court in the case of *Francis v Union Territory of Delhi (1981)*, which is also similar to the position of the court in *Paschim Banga Khet Majoor Samity v State of West Bengal (1996)*. Thus, the right to life and the right to human dignity were placed in the same category, in view of the fact that the right to life cannot be guaranteed without the existence of an enabling environment for human survival and progress, in a society where the necessities of life, and essential amenities are granted to the citizenry. So when the life, survival, or progress of the people is sabotaged by agents of the State, a human rights crisis, or a resulting conflict becomes an inevitable outcome. That is a reality that played out during the Syrian crisis that began as ‘a local revolt against corruption’ and brutality (Jane, 2014, p.48). Distributive injustice, exploitation, kleptocracy, and systemic violations of the rights of indigenous people has procured crises and wars, as occurred in Liberia, Rwanda, Zaire, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, among other countries. Hence, proving the essentiality of protecting, respecting, and fulfilling human rights obligations – as a condition for political stability in the country. Thus, verifying the link between systemic corruption, human rights crises, armed conflicts, and political instability, as mutually reinforcing problems. Also, political instability and conflicts make States more vulnerable, and susceptible to the foreign influence of external

actors that might have ulterior motives, which are inconsistent with the long term interest of the nation in crisis.

---

## References

1. Abada, IF and Elias CN (2019) Corruption, governance, and Nigeria's uncivil society, 1999-2016. *Análise Social* 54(231)
2. Alan, L (2021) Revisiting the Rwandan Genocide: Reflections on the French-led Humanitarian Intervention. *Geopolitics Quarterly* 16(4)
3. Al Jazeera (26 April, 2026) Syria puts first Assad-era official on trial in Damascus <https://aje.news/zx6dky>
4. Daniel, EA (2012) Between Corruption and Development: The Political Economy of State Robbery in Nigeria. *Journal of Business Ethics* 108(3)
5. Daniel, EA (2012) Serving the Few, Starving the Many: How Corruption Underdevelops Nigeria and How There Is an Alternative Perspective to Corruption Cleanups. *Africa Today* 58(4)
6. FGT, French Support for Habyarimana, Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda. <https://francegenocidetutsi.org>
7. Frank, AS (1997) Ethnicity and Nigeria since the End of the Civil War. *Dialectical Anthropology* 22(3/4)
8. Harry, NN (2021) The First Liberian Civil War (1989-1997): The Ethnic Identity Contingency during the Violent Conflict. 7(1)
9. Jackson, G (2022) Study of Internal Conflict (SOIC) – Sierra Leone 1991–2002. Study Sequence No. 27
10. Jane, K (2014) State of Play and Outlook of the Syrian Crisis: The Syria Conflict and the Geopolitics of the Region. *IE Med. Mediterranean Yearbook*
11. Javaid, R (2010) *International human rights law* (2nd edn, London: Pearson)
12. Juma, M and Aida, M (2002) The Nature and Dynamics of Conflict in Africa. The Infrastructure of Peace in Africa: Assessing the Peacebuilding Capacity of African Institutions. International Peace Institute. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09558.6>
13. Justin, E (2024) Liberian Civil War 1989–96. Study Sequence No. 44, Study of Internal Conflict (SOIC) Case Studies.
14. Konah, B and Arun, K (2025) The history of the civil war in Liberia. *International Journal of Political Science and Governance* 7(5)
15. Mähler, A (2010) A Prime Example of the Resource Curse? Revisiting the Oil-Violence Link in the Niger Delta. German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA). <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep076>, accessed 26 May 2024
16. Mbaku, JM (2016) International Law and the Fight against Bureaucratic Corruption in Africa. *Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law* 33(3)

17. Mel, M (1999) The Collapse of Zaïre: Implosion, Revolution or External Sabotage? *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37(1)
  18. Mubangizi, JC (2020) A Human Rights Based Approach to Fighting Corruption in Uganda and South Africa: Shared Perspectives and Comparative Lessons. *Law, Democracy, and Development* 24
  19. Paul, R (2003) The Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sierra Leone. *The War in Sierra Leone*. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep05512.5>
  20. Pita, OA (1999) Party Registration and the Subversion of Democracy in Nigeria. *A Journal of Opinion* 27(1)
  21. Rotimi, TS (2018) Strategies for Advancing Anticorruption Reform in Nigeria: How to Beat Back Political & Corporate Graft *Daedalus* 147(3)
  22. Salah A, Ali F, and Nathir H, (2021) Ethnic Divisions and the Onset of Civil Wars in Syria. IZA – Institute of Labor Economics: Discussion Paper Series
  23. Simplice, A (2013) Fighting Corruption in Africa: Do Existing Corruption-Control Levels Matter? *International Journal of Development* 21(1)
  24. Skurnik, WAE (1967) Nigeria in Crisis. *Current History* 52(307)
  25. United Nations Millennium Declaration, General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000
  26. Vinay, L (2007) Rwanda and the Desperation of France. *Economic and Political Weekly* February. <https://share.google/wctTIYFRrks9rQP2>
- Cases
27. Francis v Union Territory of Delhi, (1981) 1 SCC 608, AIR 1981, SC 746
  28. Paschim Banga Khet Majoor Samity v State of West Bengal, (1996) 4 SCC 37
- 



© 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>).