



# Editorial

*Cedric de Coning*

Our aim with the African Journal on Conflict Resolution is to curate empirical research on specific conflicts and conflict resolution initiatives in Africa. In this issue we have collected two articles that deal with protection, one in the context of how the African Union (AU)'s policy on the Protection of Civilians has been implemented in Somalia and South Sudan, and the other on the effectiveness of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine in the context of the civil war in Ethiopia. Our third article is about the reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the quest for a permanent African seat in the Council. This issue also contains two articles about conflict over access to land in Ghana. One related to a chieftaincy dispute and the other related to tension between farmers and herders. The issue concludes with a book review about the women who chose to join the armed struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

In our first article Andrew E. Yaw Tchie, a Senior Research Fellow with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and Liezelle Kumalo, the Acting Gender Manager at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV), assess the extent to which the AU has been able to influence the capacity of states to protect their own populations where it has deployed peace operations. They find that although the AU has made progress, its protection of civilians policy has not been implemented effectively in South Sudan and Somalia.

In our second article, Israel Nyaburi Nyadera of Egerton University and Census O. Osedo of the Tom Mboya University, both in Kenya, analyse the effectiveness of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine in the

context of the international community's response to the civil war between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front.

Our third article, by Niguse Mandefero Alene, Mohammed Seid Ali and Kebede Yimam Tadesse, all based at Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia, explore the arguments and challenges surrounding Africa's drive to secure a permanent seat in the UNSC. The debate around Security Council reform has been dormant for a long time, but it has flared up again in the wake of the Russian war on Ukraine. In almost all proposals put forward by various countries and groups, including by current permanent members, there is support for a permanent African seat. However, as the authors point out, the main challenge remains the need to find a formula for deciding which countries will represent Africa and the issues around the veto.

In the first article related to conflict resolution in Ghana, Bernard Okoampah Otu, a lecturer at the Koforidua Technical University and Kwasi Sarfo, a PhD candidate at the Centre for African Studies of the University of Cape Town, write about the conflict between migrant farmers and nomadic herders in the Kwahu Afram Plains District. This article shows that conflict over access to land does not only occur between indigenous and migrant groups but also between migrant groups and offers practical recommendations for managing these and other conflicts over access to land.

In our second article related to Ghana, Aminu Dramani, Sebastian Angzoorokuu Paalo, and Samuel Adu-Gyamfi, who are colleagues at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), write about the Bawku chieftaincy conflict in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Their analysis suggests that a shared political and landownership system has the potential to resolve the struggle for absolute control of the Bawku paramountcy, but they also highlight several issues that such a system will have to address. Their article contributes to a growing body of literature in this journal and others on managing and resolving chieftaincy and related landownership issues in Africa.

As usual, this issue of the Journal ends with a book review. Anthea Garman, a professor in the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University in South Africa, reviews Siphokazi Magadla's book,

published by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Press in 2023, entitled *Guerrillas and Combative Mothers: Women and the Armed Struggle in South Africa*. Garman points out, that as the beneficiaries of their sacrifices, we owe an enormous debt to these women. She also argues that Magadla's book makes a major contribution to gender theory in South Africa.

We hope that you will find this collection of articles by African researchers on African conflict resolution experiences valuable for your research and practice.