

EGMUN 2015 - Agenda Report

“Reducing religious, political and sectarian conflicts in Africa.”

Definitions

Religious conflict

Religious conflict may be defined as often violent opposition between two or more parties which cause stems from, or its actions justified by, the religions or religious practices of the party.

Communal conflict

Communal conflict may be defined as “...violent conflict between non-state groups that are organized along a shared communal identity...”. Communal conflict can lead to larger scale violence such as civil or state conflict.

Sectarian conflict

Sectarian is a word describing something having to do with smaller groups or sects. Similar to the above two types of conflict, sectarian conflict is often violent conflict between two or more opposing sects. The criteria that divide these sects determine the type of sectarian conflict. Oftentimes it is religious segregation and ideological opposition between sects that cause sectarian conflict.

Introduction

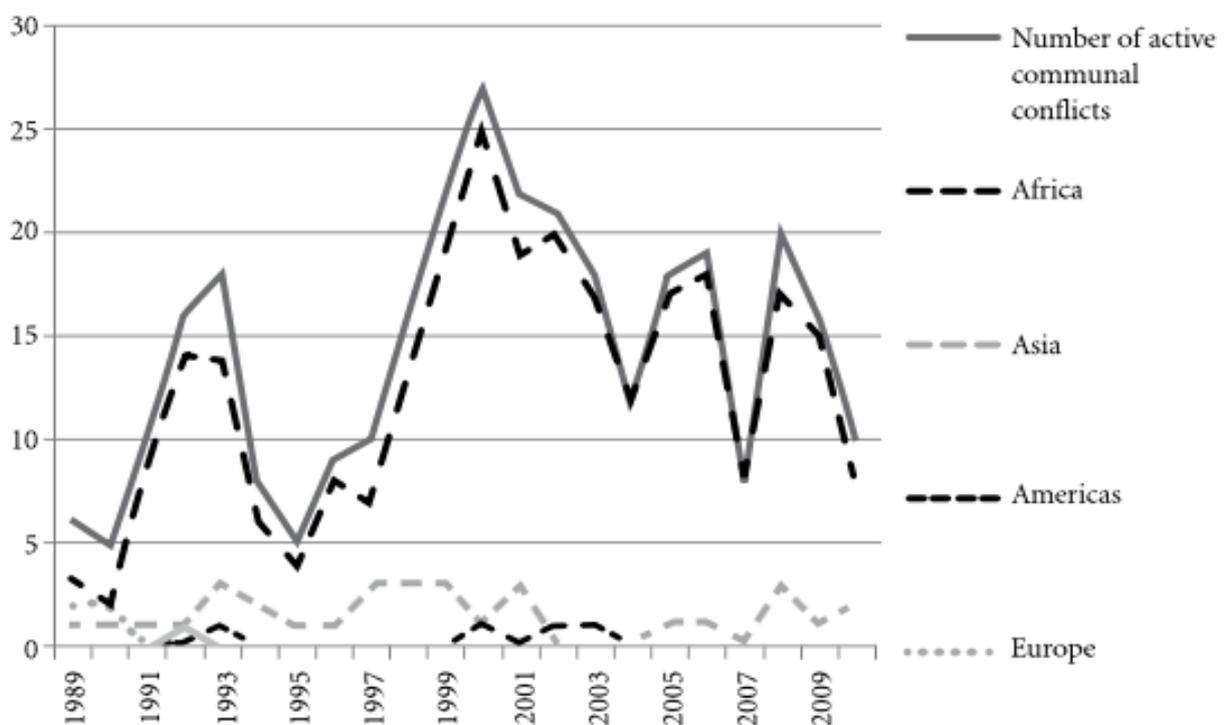
Religious, communal, and sectarian conflicts are often contrived in the defense of the identity of an individual or a group of individuals. Although these conflicts are prevalent worldwide, they have been escalating in intensity with violence as a result thereof in African countries such as the Central African Republic, Nigeria, and Sudan. These violent conflicts gravely affect the potential development as a nation and as a continent, and contribute to maintaining poverty and a low quality of life for civilians in the region. Furthermore, as the violence continues to escalate, often parties involved in religious, communal, and sectarian conflicts employ increasingly inhumane methods of warfare, such as the forced recruitment of child soldiers, holding hostages, etc.

History

Due to the immense ethnic, religious, and socio-cultural diversity in Africa, conflict within the continent has been abundant since the time of its colonization.

One of the inciting factors of conflict in Africa could be during colonial times when colonizers exploited the land for its resources such as ivory and coal, and the people for their labour, enslaving them. The decolonization of Africa created a division between groups in the different countries with various ambitions for the future of the nations and the protection of their traditions and values. This was crucial to the conception of racial and ethnic conflicts, many of which have been reignited since colonial times and continue to rage. These conflicts have also developed into communal and sectarian conflicts, often with strong religious and traditional undertones. In 2014, African conflicts made up approximately 44% of the world's conflict

Figure 2: Active communal conflicts by year and region, 1989–2010



Source: UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset v. 2.3-2011