

Elections in Africa: the voter, the court, the outcome

Eleições na África: o eleitor, o tribunal, o resultado

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Resumo

Pessoas de toda a África, independentemente da região, fervorosamente acreditam que a participação em uma eleição não é apenas uma “responsabilidade civil”, mas, fundamentalmente, a oportunidade de decidir quais indivíduos e/ou grupos assumem a liderança do país em que vivem e, conseqüentemente, influenciar a evolução das políticas e dos programas dos eleitos. O eleitorado africano, infelizmente, não tem sido bem assistido pelo sistema judicial local, particularmente pelas cortes, que têm essencialmente determinado os resultados das eleições no continente. Essa tendência predominante tem impacto devastador sobre a democracia. O papel dos ex-conquistadores europeus de perpetuar essa negação flagrante de participação democrática fundamental do povo persiste, e é evidente hoje que a liberdade de respeitar o voto do eleitor na África está intrinsecamente ligada às exigências frenéticas atuais e aos movimentos em várias regiões para construir novos estados que respondam aos interesses críticos dos povos constituintes - longe dos existentes “Estados de Berlim”, que em grande parte ainda servem aos objetivos de seus criadores.

Palavras-chave: Sistema judicial na África. Estados pós-Berlim. Genocídio na África. Eleições na África. Direito e política na África.

Abstract

People across Africa, irrespective of region, fervently believe that participating in an election is not just a “civil responsibility” but, crucially, the opportunity to decide on which individuals and/or parties assume the leadership of the country they live in and consequently influence the evolution of policies and programmes

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of those elected officials. The African electorate has unfortunately not been well served by the local juridical system, particularly the court, which has in the main determined the outcomes of elections on the continent. This prevailing trend has had a devastating impact on democracy. The role of the ex-(European) conqueror regime in perpetuating this blatant denial of the people's fundamental democratic participation persists and it is clearly evident, presently, that the freedom to respect the voter's vote in Africa is intrinsically linked to the current frenetic demands and moves in several regions here to construct new states that respond to the critical interests of constituent peoples – away from the extant "Berlin-states" which by and large still serve the goals of their creators.

Keyword: *Juridical system. Voter. Electorate. Court. Post-(European)conquest. Africa. "Berlin-state". Post-"Berlin-state". Father of African Literature. Age of pestilence. Foundational genocide. Genocidist regime. Occupation regime. Restoration-of-independence. Constituent people(s).*

Introduction

One of the most profoundly enduring iconic imageries of the African scene during an election in any region of the continent – west, south, east or even in the desperately bleak "Arab spring" of the north – is the thrust and enthusiasm of the very patient and disciplined would-be voter waiting, anxiously, in stretched out and meandering queues, quite often in uncomfortable high temperatures or heavy downpours, for their turn to cast their vote in that ballot box... Tens of thousands may have begun queuing first thing at dawn, some having earlier walked several kilometres to a designated polling station, and several probably not able to vote well into sundown and a few returning the following day, if eventually unable to vote, in cases where a "staggered" election arrangement operated. For this teaming population of the electorate, it is not just a demonstration of some abstract civic responsibility to wish to cast their vote, but, more importantly, their belief, their earnest conviction, that they are involved in a democratic programme to *exercise* and *clearly indicate* their personal choice on who or what party should represent and advance their prescribed or preferred interest(s).

However, what these would-be voters gravely contend with, year in, year out, across Africa, is that the panoply of institutions of the judiciary in their varying countries, particularly the courts, often acts as the crucial deciders of the outcome of the polls. Despite the hallowed provisions in these countries' constitutions, across the board, to the effect that an "independent judiciary is an essential ingredient in free and fair elections" (ABUYA, 2013), the courts appear to exist, on the contrary, to "impact [...] elections through [its] decisions" as Judedavid Mbamalu (2012) has cogently argued. Even when most post-poll accounts, including those from independent monitors and observers show rigged elections, especially carried out by incumbent candidates, the courts more often than not endorse the fraudulent outcomes. Charles Montesquieu's "next to nothing" aphorism (MONTESQUIEU, 2002, p. 156), depicting the "stabilising" power of the judiciary vis-à-vis the legislature and executive arms of the state's separation-of-powers interplay is, in practice, as we shall demonstrate in this paper, pursued more ominously by the courts in Africa at the obvious cost to the citizen's involvement and consequently democracy.

Apart from South Africa, Botswana and Senegal, elections by and large across Africa are decided by the courts. Besides Zambia and Malawi, the courts' decisions over the years have always upheld incumbent candidates especially in the all-important presidential (or prime-ministerial in countries such as Ethiopia where the latter office-designation represents the executive power of the state) poll. The results of Ghana's December 2012 presidential elections were recently "validated" by the country's high court after eight months of litigation mounted by the defeated candidate. The court found for the victor. In Kenya, in March 2013, the high court there had to rule on the results of the county's own presidential poll in which the victor was upheld (this same court was dubbed "Kibaki's court", after the name of the president, by the opposition in the previous, 2007 bloody election). In Zimbabwe, also earlier on in the year, the high court was "saved" the labour of deciding on the outcome of the election for the presidency, third time in 12 years, because the defeated candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, believed

that the courts were “controlled” by the victor, Robert Mugabe, who had been in power for 33 years, stating, quite bluntly: “[T]here was little difference between the judiciary and Mr Mugabe’s ... party” (BBC, 2013). As we will show soon, developments in both Zimbabwe and Kenya, as well as in Nigeria, and the activity of some foreign powers and interests are indeed very important in our understanding of the critical features of the politics of election rigging in Africa and the programmatic role of the courts therein.

1 Retributive justice?

In 1979, after 13 years of military rule during which it perpetrated the Igbo genocide, the foundational genocide of post-(European) conquest Africa in which 3.1 million Igbo people or one-quarter of this nation’s population were murdered, Nigeria returned to civil rule. But the elections aimed for this change in politics were quickly mired in controversy. The candidate, Shehu Shagari, ascertained victorious by the country’s electoral commission, had failed clearly to win the electoral law’s stipulated minimum percentage score of 25 per cent of the votes cast in two-thirds of the 19 electoral regions of the country. Shagari was five per cent short of this overall requirement, which rendered the poll “inconclusive” and final result to be determined by an “electoral college” (MBALU, 2012). The loser of the polls, Obafemi Awolowo, challenged the outcome in the country’s high court but failed to overturn Shagari’s presumed victory. The court ruled that the elections were “conducted substantially in accordance with the rule of law” (MBAMALU, 2012), evidently avoided dealing with the “reasonable meaning of the relevant words of the [electoral] statute” (OYEBODE, 2006). The fact that Atande Fatayi-Williams, the lead judge of the presiding justices in this case, a person appointed to his position by the outgoing military junta, emphasised that his court’s judgement should not be “cited as a precedent” (MBAMALU, 2012; OYEBODE, 2006) is telling enough. Four years later, in the subsequent election cycle in Nigeria, Awolowo again ran for president and yet again lost to the incumbent, Shehu Shagari, even

though the overwhelming consensus of most independent observers and commentators was that the electoral commission had rigged the elections in favour of its declared victor. This time round, though, Awolowo sought not to head for the high court to seek adjudication as in 1979 because, according to him, the “judiciary had become terribly corrupt” (OYEBODE, 2002). Awolowo’s choice of words to describe the judiciary, which he was a member of as “senior advocate” of the Nigerian bar, was astonishing. Such was his utter disappointment and mistrust of the system that he added that he would no longer seek elected political office in the country.

Awolowo’s decision was indeed extraordinary, a dramatic development for a very ambitious politician who had spent most of the previous two decades wanting to be Nigeria’s president. Such was Awolowo desperation to be leader that he was arrested in 1963 for plotting a coup d’état against the country’s first post-(British)conquest government, found guilty, and sentenced to 10 years in prison. After three years in jail, Awolowo was released by the new military junta that had embarked on the Igbo genocide. The junta appointed him deputy-head of council (prime minister) as well as head of the powerful finance ministry and “chief theorist” of the genocidal campaign. On the very sordid role of campaign and support for Nigeria’s prosecution of the Igbo genocide by Awolowo, this high profile lawyer, the respected Chinua Achebe, Father of African Literature, recently reminded the world in his incomparable memoirs on the genocide, *There was a Country*:

It is my impression that ... Obafemi Awolowo was driven by an overriding ambition for power, for himself in particular and for the advancement of his Yoruba people in general. And let it be said that there is, on the surface, at least, nothing wrong with those aspirations. However, Awolowo saw the dominant Igbo at the time as the obstacles to that goal, and when the opportunity arose – the Nigeria-Biafra War – his ambition drove him into a frenzy to go any length to achieve his dreams. In the Biafra case it meant hatching up a diabolical policy to reduce the members of his enemies significantly through starvation – eliminating over two million

people, mainly members of future generations. (ACHEBE, 2012, p. 233)

Even at the supposedly formal end of the genocide in January 1970, Awolowo, the high court top lawyer and presidential-hopeful, and his Awolowoist/Awolowoid-accolates in Yoruba/Edo west region of the country, expanded the parameters of this campaign against the Igbo people, concentrating now on the Igbo economy aimed at the financial and economic strangulation of the 9 million Igbo survivors...They devised and embarked on the implementation of the most dehumanising raft of socioeconomic package of deprivation in occupied Igboland, not seen anywhere else in Africa. The brigandage of terror includes the following seven distinct features which clearly constitute one of the five acts of genocide explicitly defined in article 2 of the December 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide: “deliberately inflicting upon the group conditions of life designed to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part” (Office of the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights, 2013):

1. Seizure and looting of the multibillion-(US)dollar capital assets across Biafra including especially those at Port Harcourt/Igwe Ocha conurbations and elsewhere in Nigeria, particularly in the Lagos/greater Lagos industrial-commercial region
2. Comprehensive sequestration of Igbo liquid assets in Biafra and Nigeria (as of January 1970), bar the £20.00 (twenty pounds sterling) doled out *only* to the male surviving head of an Igbo family
3. Exponential expropriation of the rich Igbo oil resources from the Abia, Delta, Imo and Rivers administrative regions
4. Blanket policy of non-development of Igboland
5. Aggressive degradation of socioeconomic life of Igboland
6. Ignoring ever-expanding soil erosion/landslides and other pressing ecological emergencies particularly in northwest Igboland
7. Continuing reinforcement of the overall state of siege of Igboland

Before enacting these programmes, Awolowo had toyed with the idea of abolishing money altogether in the economy of the occupied-land of the resourceful and enterprising Igbo. He reasoned that this would deliver the “final solution” that had eluded Nigeria during the “encirclement, siege, pounding and withering away”-strategy of the previous 44 months... He ended up with the “compromise” pittance of £20.00 sterling (twenty pounds sterling only) per the *surviving* “male-head” of the Igbo family – a derisory sum, which, he reckoned, stood no chance of averting the catastrophe of social implosion he envisaged would occur in Igboland subsequently. We mustn't fail to note that the £20.00-handout *excluded* the hundreds of thousands of Igbo families whose “male-heads” had been murdered during the genocide... Subsequently, many Nigerian operatives who worked as advisors, at varying layers of the genocidist command and control infrastructure, went to, or returned to universities and colleges as professors and researchers, some became university administrators, bureaucrats, media editors and executives, company chief executives and directors, ministers of state, ministers of religion, businesspeople; many of the commanders and commandants became generals and admirals and marshals, and state legislators, administrators and the like; some even sought the highest office of state – head of regime (Obafemi Awolowo, twice, without success; Olusegun Obasanjo, three times successful; Muhammadu Buhari, once successful; Ibrahim Babangida, once successful; Sanni Abacha, once successful; Abdulsalami Abubakar, once successful). Only recently, in July 2013, Raji Fashola, an Awolowoist, another “senior advocate” of the Nigerian bar and governor of the Lagos region, very much operating in the genocidist groove of his ideological mentor, deported 72 Igbo people from Lagos to Onicha, the Igbo Oshimili/Niger delta city, 230 miles away (OBIOHA, 2013). This was the second such deportation that Fashola had embarked upon within a year. In September 2012, Fashola deported “hundreds” of Igbo people from Lagos to Onicha. The deportees had all been earlier detained in “warehouses” in Lagos and some in the neighbouring Ogun region for months before their deportation to Igboland. Many of the deportees are children and older people and some have disabilities. The world

will note that these deportations contravene articles 2 (b) and (c) of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide to which Nigeria is a signatory as we have already indicated. The deportations do indeed fit into the overarching architecture of the current phase of the Igbo genocide, initiated principally by Awolowo, as we have also shown.

Some could attribute the failure of Obafemi Awolowo to become president of Nigeria after his involvement in the perpetration of the Igbo genocide as a case of this lawyer having his own comeuppance, a form of retributive justice. Despite Awolowo's ambition, the Nigeria state consistently "awarded" its highest executive office to a politician from the Hausa-Fulani muslim north region, the senior partners of the Nigerian religio-regional genocidist alliance (EKWE-EKWE, 2011, p. 160-171). By supporting a campaign of genocide of the Igbo, 23 years after the devastating Nazi genocide against the Jews in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, and 15 years after the UN convention against genocide to which Nigeria is a signatory, Awolowo, a very senior lawyer of the Nigerian bar, had inflicted a far greater damage to the reputation of the Nigeria judiciary than this institution's malfeasant practices of backing and perpetuating election rigging in the country. Awolowo's, it must be stressed, is a crime against humanity as the UN's relevant 1948 convention reminds us all. It is indicative of the tragedy of the prevailing Africa's age of pestilence, which Nigeria inaugurated, following its execution of the Igbo genocide, that Obafemi Awolowo was not winched off to a court house in The Hague to stand trial for the crime of genocide rather than the added depressing insult that this same personage *really* desired to occupy some state house in Lagos regardless.

The role of the courts to deny the voter the right to ascertain the outcomes of elections in Nigeria did not of course start in the wake of the catastrophe of the Igbo genocide. The courts' blatant support for rigged elections in both regional and central parliamentary elections in 1963-1965 were a contributory factor to the military coup of January 1966 (MBAMALU, 2012). But the genesis or origin of the court's rigging-role in Nigerian elections occurred a decade earlier, in 1959, and the culprits

were not Nigerians nor were the institutions involved African-controlled. The unenviable role of the premier election-rigger in Nigeria and Africa as a whole is indeed Britain, via the executive power-ensemble of its occupation governor in Lagos. This fact cannot be overemphasised as we note the position of Britain in the politics of elections and post-elections controversy in Africa, especially in the 2000s, as reviewed latter on here.

In 1959, the British occupation regime organised a Nigeria country-wide election to determine which of the three main political parties in the country would form the first post-conquest government after 1 October 1960's termination of the occupation. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons was the pan-African freedom party which had been the principal restoration-of-independence party. There was the Action Group, the smaller regional party led by Obafemi Awolowo and, lastly, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), an islamo-feudal party that mostly served Hausa-Fulani regional interests in the north. According to Harold Smith, a Briton who worked for the occupation regime in Lagos, the NPC was "largely a creation of the British and hardly a normal political party in the accepted sense. It was funded by the British controlled [local government] Authorities and was quite simply a tool of the British administration" (SMITH, 2005). The NPC in fact *opposed* the termination of the British occupation for most of the time. No such political party had such a record in Africa through out this era of the campaign for the restoration of African freedom (EKWE-EKWE, 2002). The NPC only "changed" its mind on this accord when the British guaranteed it to take-over power after October 1960 and, furthermore, govern Nigeria in perpetuity. The British also contrived a bogus census numerical superiority figure for the north region as part of this package. Harold Smith (2005) recalls:

The British loved the North and had arranged for 50% of the votes to be controlled by the Northern People's Congress ... Because of this, independence was to some extent a sham because the results were a foregone conclusion. The North and the British would continue to rule ... [this poll was a] mockery because the outcome – Northern domination of

Nigeria after independence – was assured before a single vote was cast.

The British were still not prepared to take any chances with all its pre-election arrangements to rig this very important exercise. Even before all the results across the country were in and validated, James Robertson, the outgoing British conquest-governor invited Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of the Northern People's Congress to form a "take-over" regime. This Anglo-north Nigeria strategic alliance would play a devastatingly vicious role in the Igbo genocide – just six years away (EKWE-EKWE, 2011, p. 160-171).

By the 2000s, few doubt that the typical African voter's choice during an election is accorded the integrity sanctified in the democratic ideal. Many an African regime appears preoccupied to control the judiciary to perpetuate in office. The mantra appears to be, "Rig into Power"! Nothing about this desperate situation is secret anymore; everything is in the open! On the August 2007 elections in Sierra Leone, the London-based Chatham House think-tank describes the Sierra Leonean judiciary as "easily corrupted" (IRIN, 2007). The International Crisis Group agrees: "The perception of the judiciary as unjust and subservient to the executive is still very strong" (IRIN, 16 August 2007). In the March 2002 elections in Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe is once again returned to power, the fifth time in a row. Opposition candidate Morgan Tsvangirai is understandably dismissive of the outcome: "We foresaw electoral fraud but not daylight robbery... It's the biggest election fraud I've witnessed in my life" (MACGRILL; MACASKILL, 2002). In the bloody outcome of the 2007 elections in Kenya, some observers felt that "Kenya's election commission ignored undeniable evidence of vote rigging to keep the government in power" (GETTLEMAN, 2007). As for the court in Kenya, the opposition dismissed it contemptuously as "Kibaki's court", the "president's court", as we pointed out earlier. In neighbouring Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, who has been in office since 1986, has been routinely "re-elected" every four years, subsequently, changing the constitution at will to have an "unrestricted tenure" in office. In Museveni's typically managed 2011 elections, some monitoring observers were quick to

describe the event as “highly compromised” (MORGAN, 2013). Writing under the very programmatic title, “See what the judiciary has done to Nigeria”, Nigerian newspaper columnist Sam Ndah-Isaiah concludes, graphically, on a monumental indictment of an institution which is supposed to safeguard the rule of law in the country:

The dignity of Nigerian judges is at its lowest ebb. Nigerians no longer respect the courts or, worse still, the judges. The image of the judiciary in Nigeria today is that of an institution where anything goes. The last seven years have exposed the soft underbelly of an institution that was designed to be the last hope of the weak. If you are rich enough or well connected to power enough, you can just get justice delivered to you at home ... The 2003 elections effectively killed democracy in Nigeria, but it was the judiciary that buried it. The elections were rigged beyond the word “rigging”, and every election monitor said so. The Catholic Secretariat in Nigeria, which deployed more than 30,000 election monitors, said there were no elections in most parts of Nigeria where the president’s cronies were declared winners. People in the opposition parties ...who went to court thinking that the judiciary was the last bastion of democracy were shocked at what they discovered. They returned poorer but wiser (NDA-ISAIAH, 2013).

2 The conqueror-state still in the mix

Yet the response of the rest of the world to these fraudulent election developments across Africa were, to state the least, most uneven. There was generally silence on the events in Nigeria even though going by the number of those murdered and the sheer audaciousness of the thuggery, the emergency created in Nigeria, in the poll aftermath, was far worse than Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda and anywhere else. Zimbabwe received the main attention and focus, thanks to British lobbying of international organisations in Europe and the United Nations. The European Union, “prodded by Britain, [was] planning to extend the range of sanctions against Zimbabwe, targeting more members of the

leadership. Earlier [on], the EU imposed a travel ban on Mr Mugabe and 19 members of his regime and froze their overseas assets” (MACGRILL; MACASKILL, 2002). Britain’s primary concern over Zimbabwe and not Nigeria nor Kenya nor indeed any other elections malpractices and violence elsewhere in Africa has been the fate of European farmers, mostly British, in this former British-conquered and occupied country in southcentral Africa. Britain could hardly, any longer, disguise its very narrowly-embedded interest on this subject when, in 2003, it supported a 3-person African heads-of-regime “mediation” mission to Zimbabwe. The mission was organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, and curiously, or so it appeared, co-led by Nigeria’s Olusegun Obasanjo, himself the recipient of the tag of “president” grabbed after he ruthlessly rigged the elections in Nigeria of that year that Sam Nda-Isaiah aptly records in the quote above.

This “mediatory” initiative by the heads of regime of Malawi and Nigeria and the president of South Africa had been prompted initially by rumours in the press in January 2003, quoting state and opposition party officials in Zimbabwe, that Robert Mugabe could resign his position as “president of Zimbabwe”, despite his insistence to the contrary since the disputed 2002 elections, if the opposition were to guarantee him “immunity from prosecution” (PETA THORNEYCROFT, 2003). Furthermore, Mugabe made very conciliatory remarks to the opposition in an interview on state television in April 2003 (KATZENELLENBOGEN, 2003). But to their obvious consternation on arrival in capital Harare in May 2003, the “mediators” found that Mugabe was neither open to any persuasion to quit office nor indeed meet the leaders of Zimbabwe’s political opposition for a “meaningful dialogue” on the future of the country. Instead, he was in a bullish mood. He reiterated his uncompromising position, stated soon after the 2002 elections, that the only condition for talks with his opponents was that the latter must “recognise” him as “elected president of Zimbabwe” and “withdraw all court proceedings challenging the outcome” of the polls. In re-emphasising this condition which was tactically omitted in his April television statement, and which he himself clearly knew the opposition were most unlikely to concede,

Mugabe literally brought that “mediation” to an abrupt end. In the end, the yearlong impasse that had caused enormous deprivation and disruption to the lives of Zimbabweans and ruined a thriving economy continued unabated. Mugabe had changed his mind dramatically; or so it appeared! Or, perhaps, he never really intended to set his sights towards quitting as he speculated earlier. Or alternatively, he did, but there had since been other intervening factors that had made him change his mind. If that was the case, these factors must have been totally unforeseen and were surely unavailable to him when he made his April (2003) conciliatory remarks. In other words, if these developments had occurred prior to that April, it was highly unlikely that Mugabe would have had cause to utter any hints of early retirement, and the London Commonwealth Secretariat and others who consequently arranged for the “mediation” visit would have been generally more circumspect. In the end, everyone, not least the “mediators”, were left wondering what had happened to the apparently “more conciliatory” Mugabe of the previous month and why the “more intransigent”, Mugabe-“damn the opposition”-posture of May 2003 had resurfaced!

Few would have reckoned that events which would occur in mid-April in Nigeria, 2500 miles away from Zimbabwe, would cause the *volte-face* that the world would witness in Mugabe’s thinking and tactical disposition within a fortnight of high political drama. The outcome of the Nigerian legislative and presidential elections of 12 April and 19 April respectively could not have been a greater boost to morale, a shot in the arm, for Mugabe who for a year had been virtually quarantined by a determined internal political opposition, battling against his widely reported and rigorously documented rigging of the country’s 2002 presidential poll. The sympathy and support that the opposition had since mobilised abroad had ensured that Mugabe and most leading officials of the ruling party and the state were barred from travelling to countries of the European Union, as we have already indicated, and north America, and had had their financial and other assets in these countries sequestered. Then, suddenly, the April 2003 Nigerian elections! Or, more appropriately, the aftermath of these elections – particularly the 19th, involving the

incumbent head of regime Olusegun Obasanjo who was standing for reelection. According to widely reported and rigorously documented sets of dossier on this poll, compiled by reputable independent African, European and north American election observers and monitors (including that which was produced a week earlier on the legislature elections), Obasanjo massively rigged the results of the exercise to claim victory.

Just as in Zimbabwe during the previous year, a number of prominent Nigerian opposition party candidates and their supporters were murdered prior to, and during the elections; just as in Zimbabwe, millions of Nigerian registered voters in predominant opposition party districts and regions were disenfranchised by members of Obasanjo's party organisations; just as in Zimbabwe, Obasanjo ordered his military and other Nigerian security apparatus to swamp polling stations in predominant opposition party strongholds, unleashing violence and intimidating millions of potential voters from casting their ballot; just as in Zimbabwe, Obasanjo's party officials in direct collusion with state electoral officials (virtually handpicked by Obasanjo!), liberally stuffed ballot boxes with votes to secure extraordinarily inflated returns for the party – most bizarrely, ballots had been cast for the Obasanjo party using names of some dead prominent officials of the party including Bola Ige and Marshall Harry (NDA-ISIAAH, 2013); just as in Zimbabwe, extreme political violence, sheer chaos, trauma and acute deprivation had been the *definitive* feature of life of millions of people in Nigeria in the previous four years of the “presidency” of Olusegun Obasanjo. Unlike Zimbabwe, though, many more Nigerians have been murdered in this violence (quite often emanating directly from the state and its agents) during the period: a total of 10000 as against 200 in Zimbabwe.

Despite Obasanjo's mutually shared interest with Mugabe in the art of election-rigging, and despite having just executed his with dazzling military precision, he unabashedly allowed himself unto the 3-person delegation which flew into Harare to ask the Zimbabwean to relinquish power! Understandably, the very erudite Mugabe, historian and dialectician, did not miss the irony. According to the Zimbabwean media, Mugabe was publicly very effusive, whilst welcoming Obasanjo

at the Harare airport, in contrast to the relatively low-keyed exchange of pleasantries that characterised the arrivals of Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Bakili Muluzi of Malawi. From all accounts covering those talks, it was clear that the professor of dialectics in Mugabe had had a great day! He dominated the proceedings, hammering away his points by quickly isolating, for sustained analysis, the recent elections in Nigeria and their self-declared victors, with confidence and sagacity. He dared any of his guests to ask him, Robert Mugabe, not to mention pressurise him, to quit office! The proceedings must surely have been breathtakingly sensational, a script that would break all box-office permutations!

Britain felt completely outmanoeuvred by Mugabe's defiance in this round of Zimbabwe's election cycle and looked forward to the next, in 2008, but without much luck either. This time, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown felt that his government had to take the "question of Zimbabwe" right to the conference hall of the African Union, the continent's apex supranational socio-political organisation. Yet, despite the unprecedented overdrive of its diplomatic pressure on African heads of regime during the June/July 2008 African Union assembly in Egypt, Britain failed abysmally to persuade the summit to condemn another Zimbabwe election, in June 2008, once again rigged by Mugabe. For the Brown administration, this failure was a disappointing anticlimax in a season of sustained publicity blitz across Britain in which the state and media found a rare common purpose and a convergence of opinion on the subject of the demonisation of Robert Mugabe. The typecasting was unmistakably swift and assured: Mugabe became the purveyor or indeed "inventor" of election-rigging in Africa, the grotesque human rights violator, the quintessential, fiendishly-sutured African dictator (BBC, 2008; METRO, 2008; TELEGRAPH VIEW, 2008; BLACK, 2013). Even provincial newspaper editors and commentators as well as their radio and television counterparts, usually concerned with more mundane local issues, became instant experts on Mugabe and Mugabeism – such was the frenzy of the times! Thanks to this bizarre British offering of "African history" of the past 50 years, the plaque of shame that lists the cabal of Africa's notorious heads of regime and genocidist operatives of the

age of pestilence appear casually erased for the occasion: Muhammed, Gowon, Danjuma, al-Bashir, Idi Amin, Mengistu, Bokassa, Awolowo, Buhari, Compaoré, Aminu, Eyadéma, Haruna, Mobutu, Toure, Enaharo, Abubakar, Akinrinade, Patassé, Obasanjo, Are, Gbadamosi King, Habré, Adekunle, Ayida, Ali, Babangida, Taiwo, Useni ...

The irony of the awkward bind in which Britain found itself in the Zimbabwe saga was fascinating. Britain was absolutely right that Mugabe rigged those elections. But everybody knew that! The African “leaders” at the Sharm el Sheikh (Egypt) summit also knew that. More importantly though, they also knew that, like Mugabe, each and everyone of them (total of 53 heads of regime then), except, possibly, the leaderships of Sénégal, Botswana, Ghana and South Africa, was head or “beneficiary” of a rigged election/no-election regime. Not even Hosni Mubarak, the host of the gathering who had since lost power due to the “Arab spring”, could distinguish between a rigged election and one designated “free”/“fair”. It was therefore not surprising that, on the eve of the conference, Mugabe dramatically capitalised on these well-known facts on bogus elections-that-“elect”-bogus leaders in Africa and dared any of his fellow summiteers to criticise his own signature of poll-rigging!

Hardly anyone of them took up that challenge. In the end, it was left to Britain, an obvious non-member of the African Union, to lobby delegates hard in hotel suites, conference halls, committee rooms and corridors to sign up to its “Mugabe illegitimate re-election”-resolution quest but without success. For African “leaders” and quite a few other observers, Britain still had to explain the *rationale* for its policy to pick-and-choose from Africa’s rigged-election catalogue. Whilst it recognised and fraternised with the regimes that emerged from the rigged elections in Nigeria (April 2007) and Kenya (December 2007), it demonised and wanted the rest of the world to ostracise the regime that took power after the rigged poll in Zimbabwe (June 2008). Yet no independent assessments of the three “polls” have shown that the charade in Zimbabwe was any worse than either the one in Nigeria or in Kenya. This is the case if one evaluates the comparative data available on the three countries, focusing particularly on such key indices: (a) competitive

environment for all contestants and their affiliate organisations (b) genuine and free access to vital campaign resources including the ability to form independent political parties (c) raise finance (d) access to publicly-owned media outlets for party broadcasts and advertising (e) access to private media institutions (f) unhindered campaigns in time and space (g) intimidation (h) pre-“poll” levels of violence (i) “poll” day/post-“poll” day levels of violence (j) number of persons murdered (k) number of persons injured (l) homes/other properties damaged or destroyed (m) displacement of persons, and (n) overall state of “stability and security” within the country in the aftermath of the “poll”. On the very crucial subject of fatality in these “polls”, for instance, more Africans were murdered in Kenya than in Zimbabwe; more Africans were murdered in Nigeria than in Zimbabwe. Finally, it should be stressed that for the regime in Nigeria, unlike its counterparts in Kenya and indeed Zimbabwe, its April 2007 “election” was nothing short of a military campaign – aptly, albeit ominously code-named “operation do-or-die” by regime head Olusegun Obasanjo, a barely literate genocidist general in the Nigeria army during the 1966-1970 Igbo genocide. This was Obasanjo’s third election rigging in eight years.

3 Gukurahundi

Except Britain is perhaps much more concerned with the destiny of Africans in election-rigging Zimbabwe *than those* in the rest of other equally election-rigging African countries which include Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya, the June 2008 rigged presidential poll in Zimbabwe does not, in itself, sufficiently explain the basis of the present British hostility to Robert Mugabe. One of the myths peddled along the stream of mutual propoganda by both sides in this crisis is to exaggerate the timeframe of the “confrontation”. Contrary to current popular perception, Mugabe has generally had a close and warm relationship with successive British governments during most of his 33 years of absolutist power. Few African “leaders” of comparable disposition have had such ties with Britain in recent history.

We mustn't forget that the overwhelming majority of victims of Mugabe's ruthless rule, right from the outset, have been Africans. In 1982-83, two years after he came to power following the "restoration" of Zimbabwean independence, Mugabe ordered the notorious *Gukurahundi* or the 5th brigade of his military forces to embark on a devastating, murderous campaign against the Ndebele people in the south of the country (GUMA, 2010). A total of 20000 Ndebele were slaughtered during the pogrom (GUMA, 2010). Mugabe essentially assumed supreme political power across Zimbabwe after these murders. The Ndebele were the core electoral constituency for the ZAPU liberation movement, which, in alliance with Mugabe's ZANU, had won the pre-"restoration" of independence election organised and supervised by Britain.

At the time of the Ndebele massacre, the British still exercised some administrative "oversight" on Zimbabwean security and land resources, an important feature of the "restoration" of independence settlement worked out in London in 1979/early 1980. Britain was therefore fully aware of the Ndebele atrocity. The *Gukurahundi* campaign was comprehensively and extensively covered across the world's media then. In 1984, barely one year after the *Gukurahundi* outrage, the prestigious Edinburgh University awarded Mugabe an honorary degree for "services to education in Africa". Ten years later, the Zimbabwean "leader" made an official visit to London. The British state used the grand occasion to crown its special relationship with Mugabe by appointing him the prestigious honorary Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath (Following the June 2008 revocation of this honour, there was consternation and disappointment among some in African-centred intellectual circles in Britain who were unaware that Mugabe had all along, until very recently, been a proud recipient of British knighthood!).

This cosy relationship began souring in the late 1990s. The Blair government that took office in 1997 reneged on making the annual British financial payment to the Mugabe regime (that had been paid since 1980 – part of the London pre-"restoration" of independence settlement) to enable it engage in the perverse venture of "buying back" African lands expropriated by the British invasion of Zimbabwe during the course of the

previous century. Mugabe responded by implementing a “land recovery programme”, which should have been part of the strategic goal of the liberation project back in 1980. The Mugabe “version” being executed 20 years later was clearly opportunistic, a hardly disguised stratagem for the personal survival of a dictator! The compelling lesson of the belated Mugabe-British discord couldn’t be clearer: Mugabe could murder and murder as many Africans in Zimbabwe and trample on their other human rights as he deemed fit but there was a “red line” he mustn’t cross – harm Europeans in Zimbabwe. For Britain, Mugabe’s “land recovery” exercise was just “land robbery” that harmed Europeans in Zimbabwe. He had crossed that “red line” and must be punished!

4 First steps

It is not inconceivable that Britain decided to focus on the rigged Zimbabwe poll, rather than address all the others in Africa, as the start to challenging pervasive election-robbery in Africa. After all, one must start somewhere! Maybe Prime Minister Brown wanted to re-launch a new “ethical foreign policy” that focused on Africa after the disastrous collapse of the one initiated by his predecessor (Blair) in the late 1990s/early 2000s. Under the aegis of the latter, paradoxically, Britain, in the August-September 2001 conference on racism in South Africa, vehemently opposed African peoples’ calls for reparations from Britain for its central role in the pan-European execution of African enslavement and the phenomenal wealth it accrued in the process. In the same period, Britain emerged as the leading arms exporter to Africa, now earning at least US\$2 billion per annum. At the height of the dreadful wars in the Africa Great Lakes region in 2000, Britain sold weapons to both sides of the conflict. Charles Onyango-Obbo, the respected Ugandan journalist, recalls: “Britain is supporting both sides – it just robs them of any moral authority and a lot of people rightly do despise the British government in this affair” (BBC, 2000).

It is never too late to establish this moral position, even after 500 long years ... If indeed Brown’s intention on his Zimbabwe “confrontation”

was to embark on a British policy of amends in Africa, the following steps would be profoundly rewarding:

1. Britain has to expand its current “illegitimate”-branding of the Mugabe regime to encompass the two other blatantly rigged elections that occurred in Africa since April 2007 – namely, Nigeria and Kenya.

2. Britain would need to stop its present “convenient” reading of African recent history on the question of election rigging. Britain inaugurated election rigging in Africa during the closing days of its formal occupation of the continent as we stated earlier on in this paper. This was its policy of perpetuating its control of politics and economics in Africa even after “withdrawal”. James Robertson, the British occupation-governor, rigged the 1959 pre-“restoration” of independence legislative and executive poll in Nigeria to ensure that power went to pro-British clients in the north region who strenuously opposed the liberation of the country led by Igbo people. There has been no free or fair election in Nigeria since then. Three years earlier, Robertson, then a senior British occupation official in the Sudan, had been involved in rigging the poll there in favour of the Arab minority population who are still entrenched in power till this day.

3. Britain was central, along with the Nigeria state, in planning and executing the Igbo genocide of 1966-1970. A total of 3.1 million Igbo, a quarter of the nation’s population then, were murdered. It is the foundational genocide of post-(European)conquest Africa. It was Britain’s “punishment” of the Igbo for daring to lead the struggle for the freeing of Nigeria that began in the 1930s. Twice, during that struggle, the British occupation had casually watched two organised pogroms against the Igbo in north Nigeria (1945, 1953) which were “dress rehearsals” for the subsequent genocide. As I argue in my *Biafra Revisited* (2006), Britain must apologise to the Igbo for its involvement in this crime against humanity. It should pay reparations to the survivors and lastly, but surely not the least, support current efforts to bring individuals and institutions in Nigeria, Britain and elsewhere involved in this genocide to justice. A number of prominent Nigerians involved in the genocide are still alive

and must be indicted unfailingly in international criminal courts: Danjuma, Gowon, Buhari, Babangida, Haruna, Are, Aminu, Abubakar, Obasanjo, Akinrinade, Adekunle, Ayida, Ali, Useni...

4. Britain is the premier arms exporter to Africa. This is what keeps Africa's genocide state, the bane of African social existence, very much alive. In turn, this state organises mass slaughters of peoples and nations, asphyxiates opportunities for its citizens, fuels the rigging of elections ... Britain *can singularly begin to change this dreadful dynamic* by imposing a comprehensive arms embargo on all countries throughout Africa. To embark on such a policy, a British prime minister is not required to go to parliament to seek approval. The measure can be taken during any of the weekly Tuesday cabinet meeting...

5 "I am the state"

In Uganda and with Yoweri Museveni, the country's entrenched-head of regime since 1986, we return to the pro-consul personage of the James Robertson in British-occupied Nigeria who formulates census figures arbitrarily, as it suits him, suits the interests of its conqueror regime and state back home in Europe or declares election results that suits him and his regime before the completion of collating the ballots cast... Yoweri Kaguta Museveni is unlikely to vocalise that classic dictum of absolutism, "L'etat, c'est moi" ("I am the state"), any time soon. No, he doesn't have to. This is because the Museveni patrimony in contemporary Uganda state is writ large. Museveni, who has been head of regime for 27 years and had played a key role in the countrywide insurgency of the 1970s to terminate the Idi Amin vile dictatorship, has changed the country's constitutional provisions quite a number of times to perpetuate in office. Here, the opposition doesn't easily have the illusory luxury of the courts to head to seek redress as exists elsewhere. The top echelons of the country's political, military and economic establishment are occupied by leading members of the Museveni family (THE INDEPENDENT, 2009): wife Janet is not only "first lady" but cabinet minister responsible for the important Karamoja north region; son Muhoozi, who has commanded a

special forces brigade in the military for two years, has now been appointed commander of the presidential guards and only few doubt that he is “heir apparent”, despite the officially-designated republican status of Uganda; oldest daughter Natasha is private secretary to the president and her husband Edwin oversees a real estate empire which specialises on state contracts; second daughter Patience heads a major pentecostal church in Kampala that attracts an influential clientèle of worshippers; third daughter Diana’s husband’s (Geoffrey) consultancy firm specialises in petroleum oil prospecting while Museveni’s foreign minister Sam Kutesa is none other than the father-in-law of son Muhoozi; sister Miriam is administrator at the presidency and younger brother Caleb is senior presidential advisor on defence. The leader’s cousins and wife’s cousins and their in-laws and the in-laws’ cousins and the in-laws’ cousins’ cousins and their cousins make up an impressive network of this hardworking and dedicated apparatchik. It is surely ironical, in retrospect, that the sub-title of Museveni’s very informative 1997-published memoirs on the resistance during that tragic Idi Amin epoch in Uganda is captioned, “The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda” (MUSEVENI, 1997).

Yet just to allay the concerns of some future sceptic who may not be too sure of the validity of the Uganda=Museveni plc prevailing geopolitical equation that most Ugandans recognise, it may be advisable for the regime to extend its legacy further by naming some noticeable landmarks, especially cities, towns, lakes, rivers, mountains, fauna and flora in the country after some of its illustrious personnel. Capital Kampala’s name should henceforth change to Kaguta, the leader’s middle name and the historic Makerere University renamed Museveni University. The beautiful city of Entebbe is henceforth called Janet. The majestic Lake Victoria that bears the name of a subjugating foreign sovereign of yesteryears now has a new name, albeit belatedly, appropriately called Lake Janet and the scrumptious tilapia therein acquires the name of the much-treasured initials, *ykm*. The delectable *matoke* national dish of course becomes *mky*, the reverse of those initials! The north town of Gulu becomes Miriam and Caleb replaces the name of Mbarara in the south.

Finally, those remaining locally entrenched references that are an uncomfortable reminder of that era of British conquest and occupation of Uganda such as Lakes Albert, Edward and George, Fort Portal and Mount Elgon require an immediate erasure for the following, more deserving substitutes: Lake Kaguta, Lake Natasha, Lake Patience, Fort Diana and Mount Muhoozi respectively. Following from these transmutations, Victoria Nile and Albert Nile become Janet Nile and Kaguta Nile. For a more edifying and immortalising signature, cartographers must be alerted to the new name of the Republic of Uganda – Yoweri People’s Democratic Republic.

6 Post-“Berlin-state”

Despite essentially disenfranchising its populations from participating in the political process through their democratic rights to vote and the outcome of that voting process duly respected, or precisely because of *that denial*, the state in Africa performs an incredible feat in the global economy year in, year out, that belies its appalling record of non-service to its peoples as we have highlighted in this study. For the past 22 years, or since 1981, Africa has uninterruptedly been a net-exporter of capital to the Western World. The thundering sum of US\$400 billion is the total figure that Africa has transferred to the West in this manner to date (EKWE-EKWE, 2011, p. 41-42, p. 176-177). These are *legitimate*, accountable transfers, largely covering the ever-increasing interest payments for the “debts” the West claims African regimes owe it, beginning from the 1970s. A 2010 study by Global Financial Integrity, a Washington-based research organisation, shows that Africa may have also transferred the additional sum of US\$854 billion since the 1970s (“this figure might be more than double, at [US] \$1.8 trillion”, the study cautions – GLOBAL FINANCIAL INTEGRITY, 2010) through *illegitimate* exports by the “leaderships” of corrupt African regimes – with Nigeria topping this league at US\$240.7 billion. In effect, the state, in Africa, no longer pretends that it exists to serve its peoples.

Additionally, and this might appear paradoxical, trade figures and associated data readily obtainable indicate that these African

states of seeming dysfunction have performed their utmost in that key variable for which their European World creators established them in the first place: *redoubts* for export services of designated mineralogical/agricultural products to the European World/overseas. There are no indications, whatsoever, that any of these African countries has found it difficult to fulfil its principal obligations on this accord – not genocidist and kakistocratic Nigeria, for instance, which the Fund for Peace, another Washington-based research organisation categorised as no. 16 on the think-tank's current failed states index (FUND FOR PEACE, 2013); not genocidist Democratic Republic of the Congo, no. 2 (FUND FOR PEACE, 2013), which has 80 per cent of the world's reserves of coltan¹, (refined columbite-tantalite), critical in the manufacture of a range of small electronic equipment including, particularly, laptop computers and mobile phones; not genocidist Sudan, no. 3; not Chad, no. 5; not even Somalia, the world's no.1 worst state (FUND FOR PEACE, 2013). This is the context that that seemingly contradictory aphorism, "Africa works", becomes hugely intelligible. Appositely, the *raison d'être* of the "state" in Africa is not really to serve its people(s), *African* peoples; it is, on the contrary, to respond, unflinchingly, to the objective needs of its creators overseas. And to that extent, Africa, contrary to popular, predictable perception is a success, is working!

For instance, thanks to the continuing inordinate leverage that Britain and France, the two foremost conqueror-states of Africa, exercise in these fundamentally anti-African principalities tagged "the state" in Africa, both European countries have a greater *secured* access to Africa's critical resources today than at any time during decades of their formal occupation of the continent. France, right from the post-World War II leadership of Charles de Gaulle to the current François Hollande's has such glaring contempt for the notion of "sovereignty" in the so-

¹ Refined columbite-tantalite, coltan, is critical in the manufacture of a range of small electronic equipment including, particularly, laptop computers and mobile phones; 80 per cent of the world's reserves of this mineral is in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which is being currently subjected to a genocidal conflict where 5 million people have been murdered since the 1990s.

called *francophonie* Africa, ensuring that France has invaded most of these 22 African countries 51 times since 1960. As for Britain, sheer greed and opportunism appear to be the guiding principle to attaining its unenviable position as the leading arms-exporter to Africa, including Africa's leading genocide-states. Indeed, France and Britain have never had it so good in Africa. This is the background to which the brazenly racist epithet "sub-Sahara Africa" is operationalised currently (EKWE-EKWE, 2011, p. 185-188).

Those crucial African capital exports referred to earlier, legitimate or/and illegitimate, are funds of gargantuan proportions produced by the same humanity that many a commentator or campaign project would be quick to categorise as "poor" and "needy" for "foreign aid". In the past 30 years, these funds could and should easily have provided a comprehensive healthcare programme across Africa, the establishment of schools, colleges and skills' training, the construction of an integrative communication network, the transformation of agriculture to abolish the scourge of malnutrition, hunger and starvation, and, finally, it would have stemmed the emigration of 25 million Africans, including crucial sectors of the continent's middle classes and intellectuals to the Americas, Europe, Asia and elsewhere in the world since the 1980s.

Yet, despite these grim times of pulverised economies and failed and collapsing states in Africa, we shouldn't ever forget that those who still ensure that the situation on the ground is not much worse for the peoples than it is, are *Africans* – individuals, working alone, conscientiously, or working *in concert* with others or within a larger group to feed, clothe, house, educate and provide healthcare and some leisure to immediate and extended families, communities, neighbourhoods, villages and the like. For example, the surgeon who not only works tirelessly in a city hospital, with very limited resources, but uses his scarce savings to build a health centre and an access road in his village with subsidised treatment and prescription costs; the nurse who travels around her expansive health district, unfailingly, bringing care to the doorsteps of the people who neither can afford nor access it physically; the retired diplomat who has mobilised her community to set up a robust environmental care

service that has involved the construction of public parks, regular refuse collection and some recycling, after-school free tuition for children with a planned community newspaper in the pipeline; the coach transport operator who lays out scores of his coaches to ferry survivors of a recently organised pogrom 350 miles away to safety; the civil rights activist and intellectual who rallies members of his internet discussion groups within the course of a month's intense campaign to successfully apprehend a contractor who was about to abscond with millions of (US) dollars' worth of public funds meant for a crucial upgrade of an international airport initially built by the community; a stretch of individuals' programmes of scholarships for students at varying levels of school life, provision of staff salaries in schools and colleges, maintenance of libraries and laboratories in schools and colleges, construction and maintenance of vital infrastructure in villages and counties, etc., etc. These are the authors busily scripting the path of the renaissance Africa.

To cap these phenomenal strides of Africans, the 25 million African émigrés mentioned earlier presently constitute the *primary exporters* of capital to Africa itself. Africans now dispatch more money to Africa than “Western aid” to the continent, year in, year out. In 2003, according to the World Bank, these African overseas residents sent to Africa the impressive sum of US\$200 billion – invested directly in their communities (WORLD BANK, 2003, p.12). This is 40 times the sum of “Western aid” in real terms in the same year – i.e. when the pervasive “overheads” attendant to the latter are accounted for. In a sentence: The African humanity currently generates, overwhelmingly, the capital resource that at once sustains its very existence *and* is intriguingly exported to the Western World. It is precisely the same humanity that those who benefit immeasurably from this conundrum (over several decades and are guaranteed to benefit indefinitely from it, *except this is stopped by Africans*) have consistently portrayed, quite perversely, as a “charity case”. The notion that Africans are in any way dependent on a European World/Western World or any other overseas's “handout” is at best a myth or at worst an all-out lie – perpetuated by a circle of academics and in the media who, in fact, in the not-too-distant-past would have been in

the vanguard “justifying”/“rationalising” African enslavement or/and the conquest and occupation of Africa.

Surely, this historic big lie of characterisation can no longer be sustained. Africa is endowed with the human resource and capital resource (in all its calibration and manifestation) to build advanced civilisations provided Africans abandon the prevailing “Berlin-states” of dysfunction that they have been forced into by the latter’s creators. Thus, Africa’s pressing problem in the past 57 years of presumed restoration of independence has been how to husband incredible range of abundance of human and non-human resources for the express benefits of the peoples rather than it being fritted away so criminally.

Africa remains one of the world’s most wealthy and potentially one of the world’s wealthiest continents. What is not always associated with the profiles of Africa is its vast acreage of rich farmlands with capacity to optimally support the food needs of generations of African peoples indefinitely. In addition, the famous fish industry in Sénégal, Angola, Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana for instance, Botswana’s rich cattle farms, west Africa’s yam and plantain belts extending from southern Cameroon to southern Sénégal, the continent’s rich rice production fields, etc., etc., all highlight the potential Africa has for fully providing for all its food needs. Thus, what the current African socioeconomic situation shows is extraordinarily reassuring, provided the acreage devoted to cultivation is expanded and expressly targeted to address Africa’s own *internal* consumption needs. Land-use directed at agriculture for *food output* must become the focus of agricultural policy in the new Africa, as *opposed* to the *calamitous waste* of “cash-crop” production for export and/or the more recently observed “land-grab” – parcelling away of land to foreign governments and organisations – occurring across the continent (AKAEZUWA, 2013).

The overall statistics of the African situation are even more revealing as with regards to the continent’s long-term possibilities. Just about a quarter of the potential arable land of Africa is being cultivated presently (FAO & IIED, 2008). Even here, an increasingly high proportion of the cultivated area is assigned to so-called cash-crops (cocoa, coffee,

tea, groundnut, sisal, floral cultivation, etc.) for exports at a time when there has been a virtual collapse, across the board, of the price of these crops in international commodity markets. In the past 30 years, the average real price of these African products abroad has been about *20 per cent less* than their worth during the 1960s-70s period which was soon after the “restoration of independence”. As for the remaining 75 per cent of Africa’s uncultivated land, this represents *60 per cent* of the entire world’s potential (ENDRES, 2012, p. 1). The world is aware of the array of strategic minerals such as coltan, cobalt, copper, diamonds, gold, industrial diamonds, iron ore, manganese, phosphates, titanium, uranium, and of course petroleum oil found in virtually all regions across the continent.

It is an inexplicable and inexcusable tragedy that any African child, woman, or man could go without food in the light of the staggering endowment of resources in Africa. Africa constitutes a spacious, rich and arable landmass that can support its population, which is still one of the world’s least densely populated and distributed, into the *indefinite* future. There is only one condition, though, for the realisation of this goal – Africa must utilise these immense resources for the benefit of its *own* peoples within newly negotiated, radically decentralised sociopolitical dispensations which must abandon the current murderous “states” or “Berlin-states” as they should be more appropriately categorised (EKWE-EKWE, 2011, p. 27, p. 41, p. 44, p. 69, p. 200). These principalities that dutifully go by the very fanged names of their creators (Nigeria, Niger, Chad, the Sudan, Central Africa Republic... whatever!) are an agglomeration of inchoate, inorganic and alienating emplacements that have been an asphyxiating trap for swathes of African constituent nations with evidently distinct histories, cultures and aspirations. These states do not respond to the aspirations of the peoples. They were not indeed constructed to do that by their creators.

We now no longer require any reminders that the primary existence of these principalities is to destroy or disable as many enterprisingly resourceful and resource-based constituent peoples, nations and publics within the polity that are placed in their genocide march and sights. Here, the example of the Igbo people of west Africa cannot be

overstressed. This is one of the most peaceful and industrious of peoples subjected to the longest-running genocide of the contemporary epoch by the Nigeria state. The Igbo genocide is the foundational genocide of post-(European)conquest Africa. It inaugurated Africa's current age of pestilence. During the course of 44 months (29 May 1966-12 January 1970) of indescribable barbarity and carnage not seen in Africa since the German-perpetration of the genocide against the Herero people of Namibia in the early 1900s, the composite institutions of the Nigeria state, civilian and military, murdered 3.1 million Igbo people or one-quarter of this nation's population. To understand the politics of the Igbo genocide and the politics of the "post"-Igbo genocide is to have an invaluable insight into the salient features and constitutive indices of politics across Africa in the past 50 years. Africans elsewhere remained largely silent on the gruesome events in Nigeria but did not foresee the grave consequences of such indifference as subsequent genocides in Rwanda, Darfur, Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan (all three in the Sudan) and Zaïre/Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in other wars in *every geographical region* of Africa during the period have demonstrated catastrophically. Just as the Nigerian operatives of mass murder appeared to have got away without censure from the rest of Africa, other genocidal and brutal African regimes soon followed in Nigeria's footpath, murdering a horrifically additional tally of 12 million people in their countries considered "undesirables" or "opponents". These 12 million murdered in the latter bloodbaths would probably have been saved if Africans had intervened robustly to stop the initial genocide against the Igbo people.

It is abundantly clear that the factors which have contributed to determining the very poor quality of life of Africa's population presently have to do with the nonuse, partial use, or the gross misuse of the continent's resources. This is thanks to an asphyxiating "Berlin-state" whose strategic resources are used largely to support the Western World and others and an overseer-grouping of local forces which exists solely to police the dire straits of existence that is the lot of the average African. As a result, the broad sectors of African peoples are yet to lead, centrally, the *entire* process of societal reconstruction and transformation *by themselves*. Surely,

an urgently restructured, culturally-supportive political framework that enhances the quality of life of Africans is really the pressing subject of focus for Africa.

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