

# **War and Peace in Africa**

Edited By

**Toyin Falola**

and

**Raphael Chijioke Njoku**

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*To Hetty Ter Haar and Alusine Jalloh*

*For their numerous contributions to African Studies*

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# Preface

---

The frequency of armed conflicts in Africa since independence in the 1960s portrays Africa as a continent in retreat. As recent as the 1990s, there have been more than a dozen conflicts scattered across the continent. These include the irredentist movements in Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Comoros, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. Other hotspots of conflict include Nigeria, the Sudan, the lesser-known Casamance struggle in Senegal, and the nascent Berber cries for “self-determination” in Morocco and Algeria. Those still recovering from their civil wars are Sierra Leone and Liberia. The essays in this volume are the fruits of the engaging discussion at the “War in Africa” conference convened at the University of Texas at Austin between March 28 and 30, 2008. Each of the contributors, which include professional historians, anthropologists, political scientists, human rights advocates, gender activists and women studies scholars, and constitutional experts among others, analyzed different dimensions of the complex wars and conflicts that have disturbed peace in Africa across different historical periods.

The results demonstrate that armed conflicts in Africa have taken different dimensions, including: intraethnic, interethnic, secessionist/civil, interstate, regional, and global. No matter the scope and scale of the conflicts, they have mostly involved struggles for economic and political advantages. The impacts of these wars and conflicts have also reverberated across the world as local and transnational actors have been summoned for humanitarian and peacemaking programs, participate in refugees’ resettlements, and are involved in demilitarization, democratization, and other forms of post-conflict reconstruction or political balancing.

Together the specter of riots, rebellions, ethnic conflicts, civil strife, and secessionist movements, as witnessed on the continent since the period of decolonization, are some of the ways the masses have expressed their disillusionment with both the past colonial state and the succeeding postcolonial state. The popular disenchantment implicates the persistent cries of aggrieved groups for national conferences on sovereignty—a forum to allow the component groups to renegotiate new terms of unity and statehood.

The various essays in this book detail important background information that can help readers and policy analysts put in proper perspective the dominant historical yardsticks with which the continent’s wars and conflicts are judged. The book strives to put the myriad of normative and theoretical issues that result in conflicts and wars in Africa within their historical and global contexts.

We want to express our profound gratitude to all the contributors who traveled from far and near to Texas for the important academic meeting that produced this book. Their strong commitment to the subject of the debates at the conference in particular, and to the affairs of Africa in general, is best represented by the high quality of the essays they authored. More importantly, we thank our sponsors through whose generosity the conference was made possible.