



Post Bakassi Conflict: Exploring the New Issues Shaping Nigeria-Cameroon Relation

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ABSTRACT

This paper explored Nigeria-Cameroon relations in the post-Bakassi conflict era. It specifically examined new issues apart from the Bakassi Peninsula ownership tussle. Data for the study was gathered through secondary sources such as articles in journals, newspaper publications, and online materials. Data was analysed using content analysis. The results revealed that floods in Nigeria, border disputes, refugee crisis, separatist alliance between IPOB and Ambazonia, insurgent attacks, and insecurity in border areas are the news issues shaping their relations. It concluded that both countries had cooperated more than they disagreed in the post-conflict era.

Keywords Insecurity, post-Bakassi conflict, cooperation, border dispute, and flooding

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Introduction

Nigeria and Cameroon have historically maintained strong neighbourly relations since gaining political independence, fostering cordial ties for an extended period without significant strains. However, the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon over who owns the Bakassi Peninsula surprised African leaders and the international community. During the Nigeria Civil War, Cameroon specifically exerted efforts to ensure Nigeria remained an indivisible entity, providing essential assistance to help Nigeria navigate the threat posed by the secessionist movement of Biafra. This territorial question became a major source of conflict between the two neighbours, a matter that has since been resolved. Nonetheless, new issues have emerged that now shape the trajectory of the relationship between these African neighbours, particularly after the court's verdict in 2002. Since 2002, a lot of issues have emerged, and some are capable of further straining relations between Nigeria and Cameroon. However, regardless of the imminent threat to an already fragile peace, both countries have consistently concerted efforts to stabilise relations.

This paper is anchored on the International Regime Theory in international relations. The theory argues that power is scattered among many different agents, including state and non-state actors, who operate as tacit coalitions under similar understandings of procedures and desirable outcomes. Krasner (1983) defines the International regime as principles, *norms, rules, and decision-making procedures* in which players' expectations are met in a given situation. The International Regimes Theory espoused by Gerald Ruggie originated in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the wake of the emerging dissatisfaction with classical realism's dominance over international relations. The international regime theory explains post-Bakassi conflict Nigeria-Cameroon relations because it explains why neither Nigeria nor Cameroon rejected the verdict or took the path of violence as an alternative measure to taking control over the disputed area. Instead,

both countries have cooperated on all fronts to solve the problems that have emanated from the whole disagreement. This is more so because both countries are playing according to the rules of international law as enshrined in the United Nations Organisation's charter and also the African Union, which emphasises peaceful resolution of disputes between sovereign actors.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The aim of this paper is to explore new issues that are shaping Nigeria-Cameroon relations, specifically:

1. Find out the specific issues shaping Nigeria and Cameroon relations since 2002
2. Discuss how both countries are responding to the issues
3. Suggest a way forward to resolving the issues

Research Question

1. Are there new issues affecting Nigeria-Cameroon relations after 2002?
2. How are both countries responding to the issues?
3. What is the possible solution to resolving these issues?

Research Method

This work exclusively relied on secondary sources of data such as articles in journals, books, conference proceedings, online sources, and newspaper magazines, such as the Guardian, Punch, and ThisDay, among others. The content analysis method was used to analyse the data since the paper is exploratory in nature.

Brief Literature Review

Kia and Ebele (2020), in their paper entitled "Nigeria-Cameroon Diplomatic Relations: Dynamics, Challenges and Strategic Options," explored the relations between both countries after the International Court of Justice ruled the contested oil-rich Bakassi in Cameroon's favour.

Corroborating this view, Mark (2015) argues that:

Cameroon and Nigeria are neighbouring nations that share a common border, people and history. Both nations relied on this propinquity to create opportunities that benefited them in the economic, social and political domains. But considering the ethnic character of and the stakes involved in controlling the natural resources of the borderlands, these opportunistic benefits were intermittently perturbed by incidences of conflict and hostility typified by the Bakassi territorial dispute, pirates' action and the transnational insecurity orchestrated by Boko Haram and, hence placing the relationship on the balance of paradox.

Mark further argued that the historical, geographical proximity and, therefore, interdependence between Cameroon and Nigeria has been beneficial for both countries and has reinforced their willingness to work together in seeking lasting solutions for their conflicts and the growing trans-border insecurity.

In his own contribution, Julius (2020), commenting on Cameroon's foreign policy, posited that Cameroon has been conservative, weak and timid. By examining the nation's policy toward Nigeria, in view of the Nigerian civil war, the Bakassi Peninsula crisis and the Boko Haram insurgency, Julius maintains that, while the nation's policy was cautious, its leaders focused on objectives and, as a result, scored major victories. Julius' point of view suggests that Paul Biya invokes the same skills to address the ongoing Anglophone problem in the English-speaking parts of Cameroon. In an online document entitled “**An Analysis of Nigeria – Cameroon Relations (1990 –2007),**” the author

examined and highlighted Nigeria – Cameroon relations in light of the diplomatic rows between them as a result of the Bakassi question. The paper suggested methods and ways that could be used to resolve discord between the conflicting states. The author posits that the International Court of Justice verdict of 2002 ceded about hitherto 33 Nigerian villages around Lake Chad and some others in the South-Eastern border with Cameroon. He went further to assert that even the political dimension of relations between Nigeria and Cameroon since independence has been in a state of flux. As it were, the initial peace that characterised Nigeria-Cameroon relations in the years following independence in 1960 soon shifted from periods of pretentious friendship and cooperation to a “cold war” and even military confrontation. By virtue of a common border and the controversial boundary demarcation between the countries, the relationship has been marred by constant and severe border conflicts.

Discussions

Border Disagreement

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling and its implementation created a state of uncertainty for the Nigerian border population. Following the October 2010 judgment that ceded certain Nigerian territories to Cameroon, the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC) was established by the United Nations Secretary-General in November 2002. Led by the special representative of the Secretary-General in West Africa and Sahel, the CNMC's purpose is to facilitate the judgment's implementation, including land and maritime boundary demarcation, troop withdrawal, transfer of authority in specific areas, addressing affected populations, and recommending confidence-building measures for peaceful coexistence and cross-border cooperation.

The Greentree Agreement and CNMC's mediation efforts were applauded by the Security Council for their successful

implementation. However, recent developments in Kwaja, a border town between Nigeria and Cameroon, suggest that there are still unresolved disputes. Tensions rose when a contractor working on the border demarcation project placed border signs kilometres within Nigerian territory. On February 14, hundreds of residents protested, calling for Nigerian authorities to intervene and stop what they saw as an 'external invasion.' The protesters, from border villages in Adamawa State, opposed Cameroon's efforts to annex villages like Kwaja, Kinga, Jugruma, Fajawa, and Girziya. There were altercations between protesting residents and Cameroonian soldiers who were accompanying surveyors, almost leading to violence when the soldiers threatened force against the resistant civilians. Since 2016, there has been a feeling of unease among residents due to suspicions of activities occurring along the international border. They believe that Cameroon is taking advantage of CNMC initiatives to cross boundaries while also blaming Nigerian authorities for what they perceive as a lack of effort in protecting the border. Given the challenges posed by border disagreement and the impact it is having on both countries, the Federal Government of Nigeria has expressed determination that in no distant time, the areas of border disagreement between Nigeria and Cameroon will be resolved amicably. The leader of the Nigerian delegation, former Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami (SAN), made this known at the thirty-fourth session of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC) held in Abuja. According to him,

Nigeria is committed to the quick and successful execution of the mandates of the Mixed Commission, noting that areas of disagreement have been reduced to just three. Experts are encouraged to “embrace pragmatism in order to reach consensus in all the three areas of disagreement; amicable solutions

would be found as soon as possible to enable the work to be completed. (Daily Trust, 2022).

During a recent meeting, Nigeria and the Government of the Republic of Cameroon expressed their dedication to working closely together to identify and execute trans-border infrastructure projects aimed at enhancing economic cooperation and integration within both countries and the broader West African region. As a result, various suggestions were made, including the mutual completion of an agreement on hydrocarbon exploitation along the maritime border shared by Nigeria and Cameroon.

Following the meeting, a statement was issued indicating conflicting interpretations of the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) ruling on the borders in places such as Rhoumski, Pillar 8, and Koja (DailyTrust, 2022). Consequently, the Mixed Commission decided to refer these discrepancies to the ICJ for clarification. Despite reaching agreements on boundary demarcations in specific areas like Mabas village and the installation of 327 additional markers in the Alantika Mountains, as endorsed by the Mixed Commission, the parties voiced concerns about the potential loss of territory. The Ad hoc Committee on the International Boundary Dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon, in the House of Representatives, expressed concern about the potential loss of Cross River State territory, which could be similar to the situation in Bakassi. This issue is expected to have a significant impact on Danare and Biajua communities as well as on an estimated 7,000 to 10,000 hectares of land in the Boki Area of Cross River State. (Source: Daily Trust, 2022) Victor Abang claimed that the technical committee's failure to find pillar 113A by the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission was responsible for this risk. As a result, the House decided to form a committee to investigate Cameroon's possible encroachment on the land and to evaluate the security and

technical aspects of resolving the disagreement. Beni Lar, the Chairperson of the Ad hoc Committee, expressed serious concerns about the potential loss of substantial land and Nigerian citizens to Cameroon, emphasising the pressing need to demarcate the border between the two countries accurately.

The situation was emphasised as highly critical due to its potential impact on Nigeria's territorial integrity and the well-being of its citizens, particularly following the loss of the Bakassi Peninsula. Lar expressed appreciation for the dedicated efforts of various government entities, including the Office of the National Security Adviser, National Boundary Commission, and Office of the Surveyor General, as well as the Office of the Attorney General, Nigerian Armed Forces, Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, and the Governor of Cross River State in safeguarding Nigeria's interests in the border dispute. As reported in the Daily Trust Newspaper,

Constructive dialogue, negotiation, and cooperation are essential to reaching a fair and just solution that respects historical, cultural, and social ties while protecting the rights of Nigerian citizens. The committee also calls upon Nigerian citizens, civil society organisations, and stakeholders to remain calm, patient, trusting the efforts of those charged legally to protect the Fatherland, as well as be supportive throughout this critical period. Unity and collaboration are crucial to achieving a favourable outcome that preserves Nigeria's territorial integrity and upholds the rights of its citizens. Furthermore, the Ad-Hoc Committee on the Nigeria-Cameroon Border Dispute remains committed to a peaceful and amicable resolution, guided by international law and the

principles of justice, fairness and equity. It is confident that with the collective efforts of all parties involved and with a very good sensitisation collaboration of the media, a lasting solution can be reached, which is securing Nigeria's land and the well-being of its citizens. (Daily Trust, 2022)

Several years following the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling that demarcated the Cameroon-Nigeria border, progress has been made by the UN and both governments in physically marking the border and supporting development in the Bakassi region, which had long been marginalised despite its oil-rich status. However, according to residents of Bakassi, despite positive steps in the Nigeria-Cameroon demarcation process, there's still much work needed for development (Patrick, 2022).

Negotiations over Bakassi's control were once tense, but both governments have worked through these periods, along with the Lake Chad area, as assigned by the ICJ ruling to Cameroon. Gradually, trust has improved between the countries, enabling joint security and economic endeavours to support Bakassi's fishing and oil industries. Since 2011, technical and logistics teams have been deployed from Dakar, Senegal, to install concrete pillars delineating the Cameroon-Nigeria border. The UN support team for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC), tasked with physically demarcating land and sea boundaries, operates from Dakar. The demarcation process has been unusually challenging due to the difficult terrain and harsh weather conditions. This project has taken longer than previous UN-led demarcation projects in Ethiopia-Eritrea, Indonesia-East Timor, and Iraq-Kuwait. While it is standard to cast concrete primary and secondary pillars on-site, the transportation of materials to areas that are inaccessible by road is a major obstacle. The

process of erecting a pillar involves mapping coordinates, preparing and excavating the site, constructing the pillar, curing the concrete, and verifying the placement. In regions like the Alantika Mountains, where boundary markers cannot be reached, cartographers have digitally mapped locations using GPS coordinates and a 'digital elevation model' program to ensure accuracy within 1cm.

Complicating matters are insecurities in several target areas: Bakassi faces piracy due to its location in the Gulf of Guinea, Boko Haram and other militant groups engage in violence on the Nigerian side, and there are instances of banditry. Despite these challenges, the mostly peaceful resolution of the border dispute, which once led to outright conflict, sets an example for other ongoing boundary discussions in Africa.

Separatist Alliance

The conflict in the Bakassi region ignited aspirations for independence among its inhabitants even prior to the territory's handover. The people of the Peninsula yearned for autonomy, desiring freedom from both Cameroonian and Nigerian dominance. This unrest saw the emergence of separatist movements, most notably Ambazonia in Cameroon. Ambazonia is a political entity within Cameroon seeking freedom from perceived maltreatment by the Cameroonian government. The North West and South West regions of Cameroon are said to be forming Ambazonia. Despite armed conflicts with the Cameroonian military since 2017, Ambazonia has yet to gain international recognition as an independent state, a requirement for statehood according to international law. Historically, these regions were British trust territories in 1961, while the rest of Cameroon was a French trust territory. A plebiscite at Cameroon's independence allowed the people of Southern Cameroon to choose their affiliation, opting to merge with Cameroon. However, over time, perceived injustice by the francophone-dominated government fueled agitation among

the region's inhabitants.

In 2016 and 2017, widespread protests occurred but were quickly suppressed by the government, sparking riots in the affected area. Ambazonian leaders unilaterally declared independence, pushing for self-determination. Adopting guerrilla warfare, separatists engage the Cameroonian government, particularly dominating rural areas with minimal government presence, launching attacks on federal forces. The group's efforts have been bolstered by both internal and external collaborators, impeding negotiations with the government. These conflicts have led to numerous human rights abuses, including kidnappings, indiscriminate killings, rape, and other gender-based violence. (*The SUN Newspaper, Cameroon, 2017*)

The term "Ambazonia" originated from "ambozes," denoting the bay at the mouth of the Wouri River, anglicised as Ambas Bay. Initially coined in 1984 by Fon Gorji Dinka, it signified the push for autonomy and preservation of English-speaking institutions in the region. While separatists use "Ambazonia," official sources refer to the "Northwest" and "Southwest" regions or the "No So" regions. The situation in Cameroon mirrors struggles in Nigeria, where groups like the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra and the Indigenous People of Biafra seek independence for the Igbo people. Similarly, several groups in Southern Cameroon, including the Ambazonia Defense Forces, Ambazonia Self-Defence Council, Red Dragon, Tigers, and the African People's Liberation Movement, are actively advocating for secession. The Ambazonia Defense Force, led by Ayaba Cho Lucas, stands as a key player in the push for Southern Cameroon's self-determination. Established in 2017, it champions Ambazonia nationalism and maintains alliances, notably with IPOB, with an estimated membership of about 1,500 individuals.

Other armed groups like the Red Dragons, Tigers, and Ambazonia Defence Forces also emerged in English-speaking parts of Cameroon, posing significant security threats to the nation. The

Ambazonia Self-Defence Council recognised as the Ambazonia Restoration Forces, integrates smaller militias like the Seven Karta, Red Dragons, and Tigers, solidifying itself as the largest armed group, as perceived by residents like Okereke in southern Cameroon. In the absence of reliable opinion polls, it is impossible to gauge the level of their support, but the authorities' brutal crackdown has only pushed more of the local population into the arms of the separatists. Women will cook for them, share information with them on troop movement and, in at least one instance, even help lure a soldier to his death in the Manyu Division [in the Southwest]. The militias have made many small towns and villages in the two main Anglophone regions, the Northwest and Southwest, "ungovernable". They probably have 500 to 1,000 active fighters, but more importantly, they have the morale and determination to fight for the independence of what they call Ambazonia state.

The insurgency groups operating in the border areas between Nigeria and Cameroon have been responsible for rampant insecurity, employing hit-and-run tactics against security forces and targeting influential figures like local chiefs, whom they frequently abduct (Richard, 2018). An illustrative instance of their attacks is the assault on Manga village, a riverside community situated in Taraba state's Takum local government area. These groups' aim for an independent Southern Cameroon has inadvertently imperilled the communities in Cameroon's Northwest region. Fleeing the conflict between government forces and separatist fighters, many sought refuge on the Nigerian side, seeking sanctuary among their kinfolk. Tragically, coordinated attacks originating in Cameroon and extending into Manga village claimed 12 lives, with over 20 individuals, including women and children, still missing. The assailants showed no mercy, damaging homes and plundering valuables during the assault. (*The SUN Newspaper, Cameroon, 2017*)

The assault inflicted profound sorrow, hardship, and a sense of helplessness among the villagers. The attackers struck in the early hours when most were still asleep, arriving by boats from a Cameroonian village and infiltrating Manga village through its mountains. The sudden outbreak of gunshots shattered the tranquillity, prompting children to flee and leaving mothers, in the midst of meal preparations, to abandon their cooking amidst the chaos. The men, taken unawares, were unable to defend their homes against the unexpected assault at daybreak. Residents who spoke to Saturday Vanguard prior to the attack on Manga village recounted their experiences, highlighting the vulnerability and sense of unease prevalent in the region. According to Saturday Vanguard:

Some villages on the Cameroon side had witnessed constant attacks from the separatists. Even though they never stated why the Separatists were attacking those they claimed to be fighting the Cameroonian authorities for, the residents of Manga village claimed they were targeted by the Cameroonian separatists for being a generous host to their brothers seeking refuge in their domain. (Vanguard, November 27, 2021)

Abubakar Manga, who works in the palace, was one of those who fled for his life, narrating what he could recall, said:

Our saving grace was the immigration officers who had a post here when the gunmen struck in our village; if not, the fatality would have been more. Our attackers followed a narrow bush path from the foot of the mountain behind the village into our community. The palace was close to the road they followed, and that was why they were able to gain

access to our monarch and kill him. Some people ran into the river while others followed the bush and mountain to escape being killed. This is the first time something like this has happened here, and before now, we have never had any issue with either the Cameroonian forces or the Separatists. Six dead bodies were recovered during search and rescue, and more than 20 persons and three children are still missing. (Femi Bolaji, November 27, 2021)

Another resident, Kezia Manga, said:

Most of those that fled into Manga village were from Okpa community in Cameroon, which was attacked by the Separatists. The separatists attacked Okpa and another village in Cameroon. Those that could run fled to this village and others in Nigeria. We were surprised on Tuesday at about 6 AM when we started hearing gunshots because the fighters came in here to attack us for providing refuge to those that ran here. From what we heard, three people each were killed in the two villages they attacked in Cameroon before coming here. (Vanguard, November 27, 2021)

Certainly, the activities of separatist movements in both Cameroon and Nigeria have significantly impacted both nations, compelling them to collaborate. The historical backdrop of Nigeria's struggle with separatist movements, particularly the Biafra conflict in the late 1960s, resonates with present-day dynamics. The Biafran secessionist attempt, rooted in feelings of marginalisation, led to the declaration of the Biafra Republic. Even after the conflict, these sentiments persisted, fostering continued efforts toward the actualisation of Biafra. In the 21st century, groups like IPOB and MASSOB have emerged, actively advocating for Biafran sovereignty. Their strategies include

declaring public holidays in certain Eastern Nigerian states and resorting to violence against those perceived to oppose their cause or align with the Nigerian government. Consequently, leaders of these groups have faced various forms of persecution, such as the current legal proceedings against the leader of IPOB on charges of felony.

Despite the Federal Government's consistent opposition to separatist movements in Nigeria, these groups have persisted, finding ways to withstand government pressure. Notably, recent attempts to form alliances with separatist groups in Southern Cameroon, also seeking self-determination, mark a significant development. This convergence has prompted Nigeria and Cameroon to re-engage, reminiscent of their collaboration during the Nigerian civil war. Both countries have agreed to join forces against armed separatist groups operating within their borders. Babagana Monguno, the national security adviser to Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, asserts that these secessionist groups are unifying to destabilise both Cameroon and Nigeria. Consequently, the two neighbouring nations have committed to jointly combatting the rebels, recognising the shared threat posed by these separatist movements. This collaborative stance reaffirms the imperative for collective action to address cross-border security challenges. Corroborating this view:

Muhammadu Buhari reassures you [Cameroon] that Nigeria's territory will never be used by any group of secessionists to destabilise another friendly sovereign country. In addition, we would work closely together to ensure that any real or perceived attempt to form any alliances between secessionist groups in Nigeria and Cameroon are decisively dealt with. Nigeria will continue to support the efforts of Cameroonian authorities to stop

the separatist crisis in Cameroon's English-speaking western regions. (Moki Edwin Kindzeka, August 27, 2021)

The United Nations says at least 3,000 people have been killed and 550,000 civilians displaced in Cameroon and Nigeria by the separatist crisis that escalated into an armed conflict in 2017. Commenting on the intention of the Cameroonian government, the Territorial Administration Minister, Paul Atanga, said thus:

Militaries of the two countries are already at work to map out ways of stopping separatists operating in Cameroon and in Nigeria. The two countries have decided to provide jobs and improve the livelihoods of people in border areas. Poverty is driving many civilians to join separatist groups in pursuit of food and better living conditions. To eradicate trans-border insecurity in all its forms or, I believe, to reduce it to minimum, our security forces must intensify intelligence gathering and information sharing. It must include measures to check religious radicalism, foster education, and promote economic and social development projects along our common border. Cameroon is sincerely grateful for Buhari's permanent commitment never to allow any part of Nigerian territory to serve as a safe haven for terrorists and separatist groups against its neighbour, Cameroon. (Moki Edwin, August 27, 2021)

Capo Daniel, deputy defence chief of the Ambazonia Defense Forces, a rebel group in Cameroon's English-speaking Northwest and

Southwest regions, said the Ambazonia Defense Forces and Indigenous People of Biafra are determined to foster an alliance the Nigerian and Cameroonian separatist groups created in April (Jess, 2021).

The alliance generates solidarity between the military wing of the IPOB, that is, the Eastern Security Network and the Ambazonia Defense Forces. We will continue to intensify the collaboration in areas such as operating training camps, exchanges in military trainers, open exchange of weapons and military personnel, as well as sharing intelligence across the border. (Moki Edwin, August 27, 2021)

There have been no official pronouncements from the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) about their cooperation with the Ambazonian Defense Forces. On social media, there are videos, though, of people posing as representatives of various rebel organisations conversing. Concerns have been expressed by Cameroon and Nigeria, who claim that rebel and separatist organisations from their respective nations have been getting together and trading weapons.

Nigeria and Cameroon have a long 1,975-kilometer border, and since 2010, their forces have worked together to handle violent conflicts. Attacks by Boko Haram are frequently reported in the northeastern Nigerian states of Borno and Adamawa, which border the Far North area of Cameroon. According to Cameroon, separatist organisations use Nigeria to purchase weapons by taking advantage of open borders. The security situation is made worse by the apparent cooperation between the Indigenous People of Biafra and the Ambazonian Defense Forces.

Beyond insurgency and separatist operations, there are other security concerns, such as

conflicts resulting from the exploitation of natural resources, highway robberies, drug and human trafficking, the illicit weapons trade, and agricultural disputes. The governments of Cameroon and Nigeria are taking aggressive measures to address these issues in order to stop them from becoming bigger risks to national security.

Floods

Floods have become a regular occurrence in Nigeria, with some of the most severe instances in living memory occurring in 2012 (Social Action, 2012) and later in 2018 and 2022. These disasters, though not the leading cause of fatalities in the country, have a significant impact, displacing many people and causing extensive property damage. Roughly 20% of the population faces the risk of flooding (Magami et al., 2014), with devastating consequences for communities and institutions. In the context of Nigeria-Cameroon relations, the major cause of floods in Nigeria is primarily the periodic opening of dams by the Cameroonian government. Annually, when these dams are opened, several Nigerian states, particularly in the south and some in the north-central regions like Kogi and Bayelsa, face serious flooding. This calamity has led to the loss of lives and properties in Kogi, Benue, Adamawa, Taraba, Anambra, and Nasarawa states. While the opening of dams by Cameroon contributes significantly to flooding in Nigeria, it is not solely Cameroon's responsibility. Nigeria shares the blame due to its failure to address the flood menace by constructing its own dams to mitigate the impact. The Lagdo Dam in Northern Cameroon, constructed in 1982, was part of an agreement between Cameroon and Nigeria. In order to mitigate the consequences of possible floods brought on by the Lagdo Dam, Nigeria intended to construct the Dasin Hausa Dam in Adamawa State.

The recurring flood problem in Nigeria, particularly in Kogi, has resulted in the

displacement of thousands of residents in the Ibaji Local Government Area. This region has remained submerged for extended periods, resulting in casualties, destroyed farmlands, and numerous buildings. The issue has sparked concerns for both countries, given Cameroon's sovereignty and Nigeria's understanding of the situation. Despite attempts to address the problem, Nigeria's efforts have fallen short. In 2013, Nigeria engaged Cameroon in discussions and signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at information sharing regarding rainfall and the management of excess water release to prevent flooding. However, this agreement has not completely resolved the issue. Rather than completing the construction of the Dasin Hausa Dam, which remains 90% completed, the Nigerian Government resorts to annual alerts in Kogi, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Benue, and some northeastern states before water released by Cameroon floods their communities (Bayo, 2022).

Summary and Conclusion

The 2002 International Court of Justice verdict represents a significant milestone in the history of Nigeria and in the political history of African states in the post-colonial era, because the verdict restored peace and prevented a potential war from occurring between two close African states. While the ownership question has been answered on the Bakassi peninsula contestation, several other issues not directly linked to the conflict but which came up as a result of the conflict are still pending. It is observed that Nigeria experiences flood almost annually, and what is responsible for the flooding in Nigeria is not unconnected with the release of water from the Lagdo dam by Cameroon. Every year in Nigeria, properties worth billions of naira are destroyed, and this is an issue of serious concern not only for Nigeria but also for the Republic of Cameroon. Another issue shaping Nigeria and Cameroon relations is that of insurgency; whether one would accept it or otherwise, the Bakassi conflict created the excuse for criminal elements in both countries to destabilise the West Africa sub-region. Nigeria,

for example, has gotten a fair share of insurgent attacks since 2012. Issues of terrorism cannot be handled by a single state, especially when border areas become conducive for insurgents. Against this backdrop, Nigeria and Cameroon have been cooperating on different fronts to curb insecurity in both states and ensure stability in the West African sub-region. From the foregoing, it is safe to conclude that the post-Bakassi conflict Nigeria-Cameroon relation could be characterised as cordial and collaborative, as both countries had had to jointly solve common problems facing the two countries.

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