

Africa as Endemically a War Continent: Explaining the Changing Pattern of Armed Conflicts in Africa

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Abstract : The history of post-colonial African States has been dubbed a history of endemic warfare in existing literature. Indeed, Africa political environment is characterized by a multiplicity of threats to peace and security. Africa's leading drivers of conflict include abundant (especially mineral) resources, personal rule and attendant political authoritarianism, manipulation of identity politics across ethnicity, marginalization of communities, as well as electoral mal-practices resulting in contested legitimacy and resultant violence. However, the character of armed conflicts in Africa is changing. This paper attempts to reconstruct the trajectory of armed conflicts in Africa and explain the changing pattern of armed conflict. The paper contends that large scale political violence in Africa is on the decline rendering the endemic thesis an inappropriate paradigm in explaining political conflicts in Africa. The paper also posits that though small scale conflicts are springing up and exhibiting trans-border dimensions, these patterns of armed conflicts are not peculiar to Africa but emerging waves of global conflicts. The paper explains that the shift in the scale of warfare in Africa is a function of a multiplicity of post-cold war global contradictions. Inclusive governance, social justice and economic security are articulated as workable panaceas for mitigating warfare in Africa.

Keywords : Africa, conflicts, pattern, war

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