# South Africa and Conflict Resolution in Africa: From Mandela to Zuma

**Katabaro Miti**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

## Abstract

This article looks at how the three presidential leaders of South Africa – Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma, have dealt with various conflict situations on the African continent. They were involved in the Burundi conflict (Mandela and Zuma), in the DRC, Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe (Mbeki and Zuma) and the Libya conflict (Zuma). In their handling of these conflicts they were influenced by their own experiences during the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). This acted as a handicap because the CODESA conditions did not exist in the collapsing and failing African States. What is important, however, is the fact that there has been a willingness and political commitment to address the continental conflicts and national resources have been committed to this end.

## Introduction

It is important to start this article by noting two things that have influenced South Africa's involvement in conflict resolution on the continent. First is the conviction that conflicts deter development on the continent through sheer destruction that includes massive death and displacement of civilians and the destroying of the little infrastructure in existence. Furthermore, conflicts perpetuate the negative image of Africa as the 'dark continent' and by extension prevent external investments which are necessary for unblocking the continent's riches. It is South African leaders' conviction that South Africa can only develop in a stable and peaceful continent. Focusing on resolving African conflicts is in the best interest of the country. This is what is at the core of South Africa's African agenda (South African Institute of International Affairs 2008, Habid 2009). There is the political will and commitment to engage in conflict resolution within the country's leadership. Besides, the country is better resourced than most countries on the continent. This has raised expectations both from the continent and globally of South Africa playing a major role in resolving continental conflicts.

The second influence has been South Africa's Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) process, which is seen as a mirror for conflict resolution on the continent. The two main elements of the CODESA negotiations were inclusiveness and compromise. However, the South African CODESA experience is not replicable anywhere on the continent as the conditions

that made the negotiated settlement possible do not exist elsewhere (Shillinger 2009, Solomon 2010). What made the negotiations in South Africa to succeed was, among other things, the continuous existence of a strong state. But in much of the rest of the continent we have weak, fragile and collapsed states. In South Africa there is the existence of a major mass movement with extensive internal support, legitimacy and external quasi unanimous recognition (that is the African National Congress - ANC). Elsewhere on the continent we have a multitude of splinter groups, spoilers and free riders. The principle protagonist in South Africa, were the ANC and the National Party (NP) government. This allowed for the application of the principle of sufficient consensus which basically meant agreement between the two main parties. Furthermore, there was a clear divide of the conflict, a racial divide between blacks and whites. Elsewhere on the continent, the conflicts represent a combination of ethnic, economic and political factors. There is also the fact that the negotiations in South Africa were internally driven. The international community respected the internal process in part because of the continued existence of a strong state and in part because of the importance of South Africa to the international community. Elsewhere on the continent the negotiations are externally driven with conflicting regional and international interests. Negotiations are often started while the internal groups are still looking for a military solution.

In considering South Africa's role in the resolution of conflicts on the continent under its three presidents, Mandela (1994-1999), Mbeki (1999-2008) and Zuma (since 2009), one has to keep the two elements noted above in mind. In the following pages I examine Mandela's mediation in Burundi, Mbeki's involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe, and Zuma's involvement in Burundi, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire and Libya.

## Mandela and Conflict Mediation in Burundi[1]

It is important to start this section by giving a brief history of the conflict in Burundi. While the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi can be traced back to the struggles for political control that resulted in massacres in the 1960s, the conflict to which Mandela was called upon to mediate started in October 1993 with the killing of the first Hutu president, who was elected under the 1992 constitution. His successor also tragically died in April 1994 when the plane he was travelling in with the President of Rwanda was shot down over Kigali. These incidents sparked a violent power struggle in Burundi that resulted in a new power-sharing arrangement known as the Convention of Government in October 1994. This guaranteed the Tutsi-led opposition a 45 percent share of the government. This completely annihilated the Hutu's 1993 election victory

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1 For a more detailed treatment of Mandela's role in Burundi see Bentley and Southall (2005), and International Crisis Group (ICG 2000a). The ICG has 27 reports and Briefs on Burundi. These can be found at: http://www.crisisgroup.org.

and set aside the 1992 constitution. In response the Hutu formed the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD) and began to fight the all Tutsi army (Weissman 1998). Thus by the beginning of 1995 Burundi was engulfed in an open civil war. The army took power in July 1996.

Between 1994 and 1996 the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations' (UN) attention was focused on Rwanda following the 1994 genocide and the existence of large numbers of refugees encamped in Zaire across the border. Little attention was paid to what was unfolding in Burundi. Besides, a Tutsi takeover in Rwanda bolstered the Tutsi resolve in Burundi to reverse the 1993 Hutu electoral success. It was only in March 1996 that the OAU leaders appointed a facilitator for the all-party negotiations in Burundi. The person appointed was Julius Nyerere, the former president of Tanzania. There were, however, conflicting regional and international interests in Burundi that were to hamper Nyerere's efforts at mediation.

A regional summit, consisting of the Presidents of Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia, was hastily convened to deal with the 1996 coup in Burundi. The summit, which came to be known as the Regional Initiative for Burundi, imposed economic sanctions on the new regime in Bujumbura and called on the new government to restore the National Assembly, reinstate political parties and begin immediately unconditional negotiations with all parties to the conflict both inside and outside the country. The sanctions, however, were strongly opposed by the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA), who strongly believed in working with the so-called moderate leaders. Buyoya, the new president was regarded by the EU and the USA as a moderate and hence worthy of support. This undermined the regional efforts and resulted in the internal promulgation of a transitional constitution in 1998 thus legitimizing the coup and Buyoya's presidency. The power-sharing arrangements that were made under the new constitution were hailed by the EU and the USA as "representing a new consensus on the transformation of the state institutions, creating a new style democracy and a true just society" (Van Erk 1998). These arrangements, however, complicated the mediation process as they increased the number of groups that had to be accommodated in the negotiations.

The 1993 election results had clearly shown the dominance of two major parties in Burundi – National Union for Progress (UPRONA) and Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU) representing the ethnic divide in the country. In all the internal wrangles for control, these remained the key parties in the formation of the Convention of Government in October 1994, and the partnership arrangements that were agreed upon in 1998. But when it came to external mediation 19 parties presented themselves for negotiations. The Tutsi group was represented by what came to be known as the G10: The Party for National Recovery (PARENA), the Party for the Reconciliation of the People (PRP), Party for Social Democracy (PSD), Burundian African Alliance for Salvation (ABASA), INKIZO (the Shield), Rally for Democracy and Economic Social Development (RADDES), Alliance of the Valiants (AV-INTWARI), National Alliance for Law and Economic Development (ANADDE), UPRONA and the Government. The Hutu were represented by the G7, known generally as the Forces for Democratic Change: Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU), National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD),

People's Party (PP), Party for the Reconciliation of the People (RPB), Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (PALIPEHUTU), and Front for National Liberation (FLORINA). Two Hutu groups refused to participate in the negotiations – Party for the Liberation of Hutu People – National Liberation Forces (PALIPEHUTU-FNL) and National Council for the Defence of Democracy – Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD). To this group was added a long list of external participants. These included the UN, represented by the UN Secretary General's Representative for Burundi; the USA initially represented by former president Carter and later by Richard Borgosian and Howard Wolpe; the OAU facilitator, Julius Nyerere and later Mandela; and representatives of the European Union, Belgium and Sweden. This made it almost impossible to reach any agreement. It is no wonder that by the time of Nyerere's death in 1999 very little progress had been made in the Arusha Burundi negotiations (Abdallah 2000).

It was within this complex picture that Nelson Mandela took over as mediator for Burundi in January 2000. The expectation was that Mandela would use his political and iconic stature to force the parties to negotiate and adhere to the deadlines set for reaching an agreement, and to garner international support for the negotiations. Mandela did indeed succeed in gaining international support for the mediation process by raising financial resources and hosting a highly publicized Burundi Peace Summit in Arusha in February 2000. Six African presidents were involved for three days in the negotiations, and the president of the USA made a televised appeal to the Burundi leaders. This breathed new life into the negotiations. Mandela did also succeed in pressuring the parties to sign the Arusha Agreements in August 2000[2]. He went as far as threatening to quit three times if the negotiators did not accept his proposals. In the end, as noted by the International Crisis Group's December report on Burundi (ICG 2000a), the negotiators did sign the accord as a mark of respect to Mandela. There were, however, numerous reservations from various parties. There was a general understanding that the accord did not foreclose the negotiations. Discussions were expected to go on and indeed did go on to accommodate the reservations raised by many signatories. Signing the accord for many parties was a mark for international recognition and future participation in the transitional government. This was very important for many of the small parties.

One of the sticky issues for which Mandela was again to be involved was the transitional leadership. Mandela proposed a split of the three years transition into two equal periods of 18 months. The first would be led by Buyoya as president with a Hutu vice president – Domitian Ndayizeye, and the second by a Hutu president and a Tutsi vice president to be selected at the time. This came to be known as the Pretoria Agreement of 10 July 2001 between the two main parties of FRODEBU and UPRONA. It was endorsed by the Heads of State of the Regional Initiative for Burundi and by the other signatories to the Arusha Accord on 23 July 2001. This

2 The text of the Arusha Agreements can be found in the United States Institute for Peace, Peace Agreements Digital Collection (see references below).

then set the date for the formation of a transitional government as 1 November 2001.

A much bigger problem was the fact that the Arusha Accord excluded the main armed groups. The Accord was signed without a cease fire. For Mandela, as noted in the ICG report on Burundi (2000a) the signing of the accord even without a cease fire would provide a new momentum for the peace process and would act as pressure on the rebels to join the peace process. It took, however, three years of hard negotiations to bring the rebels into the fold. Fortunately this task did not fall on Mandela's shoulders but on Mbeki, who had taken over as President of South Africa in 1999 and to Zuma who as vice president of South Africa took over the mediation process in 2001. The implementation of the Burundi Arusha Accord would not have been possible without the continued engagement of the South African government that not only provided troops to ensure a peaceful transition (two battalions) but also continued to shoulder the costs for the negotiations of a ceasefire agreement between the governments and the armed groups.

## Mbeki and the Mediation Process in the DRC, Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe
### DRC/Zaire[3]

South Africa's early involvement in the DRC was in early 1997, when it attempted to broker a deal between Mobutu and Kabila aboard the SAS Outenigua. There was on the part of South Africa a misreading of what has come to be known as the First Congo War. The attempted mediation between Mobutu and Kabila ignored the fact that the war in the DRC represented an invasion of the country by Rwanda and its allies Uganda and Burundi with some support from Angola. Kabila's AFDL (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo) was brought together by Rwanda and its allies to act as a front for its invasion of Zaire. The Alliance brought together four disparate movements: The Democratic People's Alliance (DPA) consisting mainly of Zairean Tutsi – the Banyamulenge who were fighting for their right to citizenship and led by Deogratias Bugera; the Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of Zaire led by Anselme Masasu Nindanga; The National Resistance Council for Democracy led by Andre Kisare Ngandu from Kasai who became the first leader and commander of the AFDL forces and; the People's Revolutionary Party led by Laurent Kabila, who was initially referred to as the spokesman of the alliance and took over the leadership after the mysterious death of Ngandu. The group was held together by the Rwandan alliance and by their common desire to oust Mobutu. It did not, however, have the military capacity to swiftly overrun the country from the east to Kinshasa.

South Africa equally ignored the fact that Mobutu's army had already been defeated by the Rwandan alliance, which was not ready to give up its victory for a government of national unity

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3 Mobutu renamed the Belgian Congo (or Congo-Kinshasa) Zaire. When Kabila took over in 1997 he renamed the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo – DRC.

with Mobutu. Equally ignored was the fact that Mobutu's internal support had been on the wane since the convening of the Conference Nationale Souvraine in March 1991. Unfortunately, the multiplicity of internal parties and their animosity had allowed Mobutu to hang on to power. The arrival of Rwandan refugees into eastern Zaire had brought renewed external support for Mobutu allowing him to postpone the elections from 1994 to 1997. Thus what allowed the invasion to succeed was the weakened support for Mobutu and the existence of a power vacuum in Kinshasa. This allowed Kabila to declare himself president on 16 May 1997 with broad executive, legislative and judicial powers pending the adoption of a new constitution in October 1998, a referendum by December 1998, and legislative and presidential elections by April 1999. None of this was to take place as the Second Congo War started a year later.

The military defeat of Mobutu brought Kabila to power, but it did not result in an effective control of the country or the establishment of a popularly supported government in Kinshasa. In fact, on coming to power Kabila completely ignored the internal opposition to Mobutu. Mobutu's soldiers were replaced by Rwandan soldiers in Kinshasa, and the Rwandan commanders were installed in the villas of the fleeing Mobutuists and drove around Kinshasa as conquerors. This sparked anti-Tutsi and anti-Rwanda sentiments in the capital and made Kabila appear as a Rwandan puppet or prisoner with Rwandan soldiers guarding him. This threatened Kabila's survival as president and he reacted by calling on all foreign troops to leave the country on 27 July 1998. This was immediately followed by the departure from Kinshasa to Goma by Kabila's three Tutsi associates: Bazima Karaha, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Deogratias Bugera, Minister for Presidential Affairs and former general secretary of the AFDL; and Moise Nyarugabo, Kabila's presidential secretary. On 2 August a second rebellion was launched in Goma and Bukavu with the sole aim of removing Kabila from power. A new movement was quickly created – the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) on 16 August 1998. This brought together the DRC Tutsi, the old Mobutuists under the leadership of Alex Tambwe and Emil Ilunga, and other anti-Kabila forces under the tutelage of the Rwandan Alliance. This sparked off what has come to be known as Africa's First World War as Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Chad and Sudan came to the aid of Kabila.

The foregoing was presented to serve as background to the conflict in the DRC. By 1999 the war had reached a stalemate and had slowly become a predatory war for the country's vast resources turning rebel leaders into warlords and external armies into resource extraction forces (ICG 2000b[4]; UN Security Council Panel of Experts Report 2001). It was under these conditions that the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was signed on 10 July 1999 by the six countries involved in the DRC and by the rebel groups in August 1999.

There was very little movement towards the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, in particular the aspect that called for a national dialogue between the government of

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4 The ICG has 35 reports and briefs on the DRC that go back to 1998.

the DRC, the RCD and MLC (Movement for the Liberation of the Congo), as well as the unarmed opposition (Article 3.9). It was not until December 1999 that a facilitator was finally agreed on by all the parties and subsequently appointed by the OAU. Sir Kitumile Masire, the former president of Botswana became the facilitator for the DRC. However there was very little progress until the assassination of Laurent Kabila on January 16, 2001 and his replacement by his son Joseph Kabila. The young Kabila accepted the deployment of MONUC (United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) forces in government controlled areas and recognized the AU facilitator for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. This resulted in the passing of Security Council Resolution 1341 in February 2001 which demanded the withdrawal of foreign forces and urged the parties to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement to adopt a precise plan and schedule by May 2001. It is at this juncture that South Africa and Mbeki in particular re-entered the mediation process in the DRC conflict.

The conflict in the DRC had been complicated by the varying regional and international interests. On the one hand were the security concerns of Rwanda and Uganda which they often presented as the main reasons for their continued engagement in the DRC. It was therefore clear that to achieve any movement in resolving the conflict in the DRC one had first to deal with the mending of relations between the DRC and its hostile neighbours. Mbeki was able to broker an agreement between the DRC and Rwanda – the Pretoria Agreement of 2002 which led to the withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the country. Angola helped to broker an agreement between the DRC and Uganda – the Luanda Accord of 2002 that led to the withdrawal of Ugandan forces from the country. With the two main backers of the rebels appeased it was possible to go ahead with the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. On the other hand were the global interests with various countries having their special representatives for the DRC or the Great Lakes. These included, among others, the USA, France, the EU and Belgium. South Africa and Mbeki in particular had to deal with the interests of these actors as the Inter-Congolese Dialogue unfolded.

One critical element of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue was the mobilization of funds to implement it. South Africa's offer to meet 50 percent of the envisaged costs opened the way for Western donors to make their contributions to the Sun City meetings of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in 2002 that, in December, finally produced the Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the DRC, better known as the Pretoria Agreement. Mbeki had to directly intervene in the dialogue to break some of the deadlocks. One of the major deadlocks was on power-sharing arrangements in the transitional government and in particular the issue of the presidency of the transitional government. Mbeki did succeed in convincing the negotiators to retain the incumbent president Joseph Kabila. His main concern was to prevent a power vacuum as the process of transition began. With the incumbent in place there would be a more smooth transition.

Having secured an agreement for the formation of a transitional government in the DRC, South Africa had to become a kind of midwife by providing overall support for the implementation process of the Pretoria Agreement. It thus became a member of the follow up committee that included the USA, UK, France, Belgium, the EU and Angola. Together they

helped the parties in the DRC to reach a Transitional Government Agreement in April 2003 and an Agreement on Military Integration in July 2003. It also became involved in the organization of the elections by providing logistical and technical support through its Independent Electoral Commission. This included the provision of 128 electoral experts and 118 observers. By the end of 2003 the South African government had spent 819.6 million rand on the DRC (Khadiagala 2009).

While peace has not completely returned to the eastern parts of the DRC, South Africa and Mbeki in particular did help to bring to an end Africa's First World War. The only reward for all these efforts was the creation of a Bi-National Commission in 2004 under which several agreements were concluded. Among these agreements are those dealing with defence, health, economic cooperation and investments, public administration and diplomatic consultation.

## Cote d'Ivoire[5]

Cote d'Ivoire under President Houphouet Boigny (1960-1993) was one of the most prosperous countries in the former French West Africa. This prosperity attracted immigration from neighbouring countries, including Burkina Faso and Mali. The population of Cote d'Ivoire thus grew from 3 million in 1980 to 17 million in 2000. As long as the economic situation remained vibrant, few appeared concerned about the immigration, but with the economic crunch and forced structural adjustments, it became a very sensitive political issue. President Conan Bedie who succeeded Boigny under the nationalistic rallying call of "Ivoirite" enacted an electoral code which stipulated that in order to be elected president a person had to be born in Cote d'Ivoire of parents who were themselves born in the country. The law was specifically intended to prevent former Prime Minister Ouattara from the north from contesting the presidential elections. Bedie was ousted in a coup in 1999 and the former army chief, Robert Guei became president. But Guei was forced to organize elections immediately which he lost to Laurent Gbagbo. Once elected, Gbagbo tried to retrench a large number of soldiers from the Ivorian army. This sparked an attempted coup in September 2002 by a group of 800 soldiers who were scheduled to be demobilized. While the coup failed, an armed conflict ensued and the soldiers succeeded in dividing the country. The Force Nouvelle rebels gained control of the predominantly Muslim north, while the Christian-dominated south remained under government control. The failed coup and the division of the country reignited the issue of citizenship and eligibility for presidency as well as the issue of land reform which was closely linked to citizenship.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervened immediately by calling an extraordinary summit of heads of state in Ghana and by organizing a peacekeeping force for Cote d'Ivoire. They were, however, unable to force an agreement between the opposing

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5 The ICG has been covering the Ivorian Crisis since 2003 and has produced 14 reports and briefs on the country that provide a useful context and coverage of the crisis.

groups. France, with over 16,000 nationals in the country, intervened and scheduled a round table of Ivorian political forces in France in January 2003. The outcome of the round table was the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement of 24 January 2003. This agreement called for, among other things, the formation of a National Reconciliation Government under a neutral prime minister, changes in the nationality laws and the organization of elections in 2005. The implementation of the agreement stalled because of government resistance, and, despite numerous attempts by ECOWAS at implementation of subsequent agreements (Accra II and Accra III), there appeared to be no progress at all. In fact, the situation continued to get worse. In early November 2004 the Ivorian air force bombed Bongora, Boko and Bouake in the north. The bombing of Bouake resulted in the death of 8 French soldiers and the wounding of 38 others. The French retaliated immediately by completely destroying the Ivorian air force. This infuriated the government and its supporters stormed the streets of Abidjan forcing foreigners (mostly French nationals) to be evacuated. It was in this hostile situation that president Mbeki was persuaded and appointed by the AU to act as mediator in the Ivorian conflict. Mbeki was appointed in part because of his success in the recent mediation in the DRC, but also in part because of his distance from the conflict which would allow him to bring some neutrality to the mediation process following the bickering within the ECOWAS over Cote d'Ivoire (Lecoutre 2009).

While the appointment of Mbeki brought fresh momentum to the stalled negotiations between the Force Nouvelle and the government that included Mbeki's visit to Cote d'Ivoire and several meetings in Pretoria between the two antagonists, very little progress was made. A number of factors have been cited in explaining the lack of progress on the part of Mbeki. The first (and perhaps the most critical) was his approach to the conflict. Akindas (2009) accuses Mbeki of having taken a legalistic approach to the resolution of the conflict with his preoccupation of restoring a legal and constitutional order at any cost, even without treating the injustices at the heart of the demands by which the rebel movement were justifying their use of arms. He was thus overly preoccupied with the restoration of state authority, which in essence meant the restoration of Gbagbo's authority over the entire country. Mbeki was thus seen by the rebels as being biased and in favor of Gbagbo. Lecoutre (2009), on the other hand, attributes Mbeki's failure in Cote d'Ivoire to his ignoring of the regional leaders, ECOWAS in particular, in his mediation process. Furthermore, Mbeki was accused of being anti-French, which led him to interpret the conflict in anti-colonial terms. But without the ECOWAS and the French supporting the negotiations being undertaken by Mbeki, no progress could be made. Mbeki himself came to realize that and withdrew from his mediation role after just ten months in August 2005.

**Zimbabwe**[6]

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6 For a good background on the conflict in Zimbabwe see Sachikonye (2011); Campagnon (2011); and ICG 2001 (the ICG has 27 other reports and briefs on Zimbabwe that go back to 2000).

The current crisis in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the February 2000 constitutional referendum which sought among other things to: Allow for land expropriation without compensation (unless paid for by Britain); increase the powers of the president and; extend Mugabe's tenure for another 12 years. A new movement was formed in 1999 – the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) – to challenge the new draft constitution. The campaign by the MDC succeeded in defeating the draft constitution. This defeat, however, prompted the violent invasion of white farms by the war veterans which was not challenged by the state. The Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) defeat in the constitutional referendum was followed by a very impressive showing in the June parliamentary elections by the MDC. It obtained 46 percent of the votes and 57 of the 120 elected seats. ZANU-PF obtained 48 percent of the votes and 62 seats. But since the president has the power to appoint an extra 30 parliamentarians, the ZANU-PF majority in parliament was unassailable.

The results of the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections in 2000 provided for the first time a credible challenge to ZANU-PF, which had been in power since 1980. It increased among the population, in particular the urban dwellers, the desire for change. The ground was thus set for a presidential challenge against Mugabe in the 2002 presidential elections. The Mugabe regime, to ensure victory, used all means at its disposal including intimidation, torture, rape, manipulation of the voters' registry and the revival of emergency legislation. Mugabe emerged victorious and his re-election was warmly welcomed by many African leaders. The Western world, however, saw the elections as not being free and fair and responded by imposing personal sanctions against members of Zimbabwe's ruling elites, cutting off aid and closing their embassies. The Commonwealth suspended Zimbabwe for twelve months and it could only be readmitted if it carried out electoral reforms, repealed oppressive laws, entered into party talks with the MDC and engaged with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on land redistribution.

It was at this point that Mbeki's mediation began. This was first as a member of the Commonwealth triad (Australia, Nigeria and South Africa) that was set up to deal with the crisis in Zimbabwe. Mbeki viewed land resettlement as the core of Zimbabwe's political and economic problems and tried as much as he could to convince the UK, USA and other Western countries that if the land issue could be resolved by providing funding for compensation of the acquired white farms things could go back to normal. Mbeki was also of the opinion that the search for a political solution in Zimbabwe should be left to the African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and this should not include regime change or the ousting of Mugabe that was now being called for by the Western countries. Furthermore, Mbeki was opposed to the sanctions that were being imposed on Zimbabwe's leadership. The main concern for Mbeki and the leaders of the neighbouring countries was to prevent state collapse in Zimbabwe, as this would have negative consequences on the region. The preferred solution for these leaders was for a power-sharing arrangement between the ZANU-PF and MDC which would allow the accommodation of some of the opposition's demands. This, however, was not possible in a situation of great power imbalance between the two parties. On the one hand, the

MDC still hoped to win through the ballot box and get rid of Mugabe for good. On the other hand, Mugabe, fully backed by the military, thought he could stifle the opposition by a show of force. It was within this context that the political crisis in Zimbabwe continued to evolve. The situation was made worse by the continuing meltdown of the economy which resulted in 70 percent unemployment by 2003, with 70 percent of the population living below the poverty line (Geldenhuys 2004).

The next set of clashes between the two parties came with the 2005 parliamentary elections which resulted in a very impressive showing for the MDC despite the machinations of the government. The response to the election results was operation murambatsyina (whose translation is operation drive out the filth). The stated purpose of the operation was to get rid of illegal and informal settlements and houses in the urban areas. The operation, however, appears to have been prompted by the urban support for the MDC. It was thus a form of retaliation on the urban population that had supported the opposition. The operation resulted in more than 700,000 people being left homeless and some being deported to the rural areas. This only served to increase the economic meltdown and the suffering of the people. This was, however, a foretaste of what was to come in the 2008 presidential elections. Tsvangirai of the MDC won the first round of the presidential elections with 47 percent of the votes against Mugabe's 43 percent. This, according to the Zimbabwe constitution, called for a second round of voting. In the period before the second vote there were unprecedented levels of harassment, killing and torture of people suspected of being a member or supporter of the MDC. The violence against MDC supporters escalated to such an extent that the Tsvangirai opted out of the contest leaving Mugabe to retain the presidency. The violence was condemned from all quarters and there was heightened pressure for regime change. This then set the stage for a new mediation process in response to the Zimbabwean political crisis. Mbeki was mandated by the SADC summit in Tanzania to act as mediator between the MDC and ZANU-PF.

What tilted the balance in this second mediation process was on the one hand the closure of the electoral route for the MDC to oust Mugabe. This resulted in growing tensions and struggles within the MDC. The outcome was a split of the MDC into MDC-Tsvangirai and MDC-Mutambara. On the other hand it became increasingly clear to Mugabe and ZANU-PF that continued violence had not delivered the results and was becoming detrimental to the party. Besides, it was clear that the economic meltdown had reached alarming proportions. The only solution for the economic collapse was to accommodate the opposition. It was this changed scenario that allowed Mbeki to coax the antagonists to an agreement in September 2008, popularly known as the Global Political Agreement. This opened the way for the formation of a Government of National Unity which Mbeki had been pushing for all along. Unfortunately, Mbeki's fortunes in South Africa took a dive and he was removed from power to be replaced by Kgalema Motlante as interim president until the elections in 2009 which brought Jacob Zuma to power. It then fell on Zuma to ensure the implementation of the Global Political Agreement for Zimbabwe.

## Zuma and Conflict Resolution in Africa

Zuma has twice had the unenviable task of sorting out the incomplete agreements left by his predecessors. The first was in Burundi where he took over from Mandela. Mandela, who had given up the presidency of South Africa was begged by the dying Julius Nyerere to continue the mediation process in Burundi. But once the Arusha Agreements had been signed in August 2000, Mandela, given his age and health, could not supervise the implementation process of the Accords. Zuma, then South Africa's Vice President, with the full backing of the South African State[7], took over from Mandela. He had then to resolve the outstanding issues of the Arusha Agreements signed under Mandela's mediation. The most difficult task that Zuma had to deal with was to bring the Burundi armed groups that had refused to participate in the negotiations into the transitional arrangements. It took two years of hard negotiations and mediation before the Rebel Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD) reached an agreement with the Burundi Transitional Government on two main outstanding issues that dealt with power-sharing arrangements. Two protocols were signed in Pretoria in October and November 2003 between the Transitional Government and the FDD: The Protocol on Political Defence and Security Power Sharing in Burundi (8 October 2003), and the Protocol on Outstanding Political Defence and Security Power Sharing in Burundi (2 November 2003). These protocols were sealed at the Regional Summit for Burundi on 16 November 2003 at which the CNDD-FDD and the Transitional Government for Burundi signed the Global Ceasefire Agreement. With the main armed group incorporated into the transitional government a new stage was reached in the resolution of the Burundi conflict. It took, however, more months of hard negotiations before the remaining armed group FNL (Agathon Rwasa) was brought into the fold. This finally paved the way for the elections in Burundi in 2005.

The second was in Zimbabwe. Once more Zuma was called upon to continue the mediation in Zimbabwe once President Mbeki had been removed from office by the ANC. Zuma had to oversee the implementation of the Global Political Agreement signed under Mbeki by the ZANU-PF government and the two MDC opposition factions. As in the case of Burundi, a number of outstanding issues had been left out of the agreement. The outstanding issues included the allocation of ambassadors, the Attorney General, The Reserve Bank Governor, the Provincial Governors, the swearing in of Roy Bennett as Deputy Agriculture Minister from the MDC-Tsvangirai, and the more pressing issues of a new constitution and elections. However, the most contentious of all the outstanding issues, which has remained unresolved to date, was the reform of the intelligence and security establishments that have remained the main backers of Mugabe and who have gone to the extent of declaring that they would not support the election of a president who had no background in the liberation movement (Zimbabwean 2011). This was a direct reference to Tsvangirai who was now the Prime Minister in the Government of National

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7 This went to the extent of providing a protection force to guard the Burundi leaders returning from exile.

Unity. In the case of Zimbabwe, Zuma had to continue Mbeki's non-confrontational approach (Landsberg 2010). This was in part because of the support ZANU-PF enjoys within the ANC and other liberation movements within the SADC. These include the support from the ruling parties in Angola, Mozambique and Namibia. This has resulted in complaints from the opposition groups in Zimbabwe that Zuma has not devoted enough time to resolve the outstanding issues. This is partially true since Zuma has left most of the negotiations to the mediation team for Zimbabwe under his overall control. This is completely different from Mbeki, who was very often directly involved in the mediation process.

Zuma has had to respond to two other major conflicts: Cote d'Ivoire and Libya. In Cote d'Ivoire the conflict was centred on the results of the elections of October/November 2010. This was expected to bring an end to the long conflict that had split the country into two. The Electoral Commission and the UN representative announced that Alassare Ouattara had won the second round with 54.1 percent of the votes, against the 45.9 percent by Laurent Gbagbo the incumbent president. The Constitutional Council on the other hand declared Gbagbo the winner with 51.4 percent against Ouattara's 48.5 percent. The double results led to each being sworn in as President of Cote d'Ivoire. The ECOWAS responded by suspending Cote d'Ivoire from the organization and the AU did the same. The international community led by the UN and France recognized Ouattara and called upon Gbagbo to give up power. Emmissaries from ECOWAS (presidents of Cape Verde, Sierra Leone and Benin) were sent to persuade Gbagbo to relinquish power but to no avail. Similarly, the AU sent Thabo Mbeki and later Raila Odinga to find a solution but nothing came out of it. The only option left was either to forcefully remove Gbagbo or persuade Ouattara to enter into a government of national unity with Gbagbo.

It was in the context of the above impasse that Zuma stated that the calls for forcing out the incumbent were counterproductive and that in the current situation national reconciliation and unity should be emphasised. This was interpreted as support for Gbagbo and a call for a partnership arrangement a la Kenya and Zimbabwe. The statement was, however, in line with the AU norm of seeking settlement to civil wars through inclusive power-sharing arrangements (Dewaal 2012). This norm appears, however, to go against the international demand for justice and prosecution of those responsible for serious crimes. It is this that informed the French intervention on the side of Ouattara and the arrest of Gbagbo and his being sent to the International Criminal Court. The question that remains in many people minds is whether Ouattara can rule without the support of Gbagbo supporters. Did the intervention on the side of Ouattara bring about stability in Cote d'Ivoire?

The Libya conflict is closely linked to what has been termed the 'Arab Spring'. The uprising in North Africa started in Tunisia and quickly spread to Egypt in late 2010. The regimes in both countries quickly collapsed and were replaced by transitional regimes. When the uprising spread to Libya starting in Benghazi in February 2011 there was a false expectation that Gaddafi would follow the Tunisian and Egyptian leaders by giving up power. Gaddafi instead decided to crash the uprising. He showed both the ability and resolve by placing his troops around Benghazi and was already poised to take it when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) led by France

and the United Kingdom decided to militarily intervene in the name of humanitarian protection. They invoked UN Resolution 1973 of 17 March 2011. The resolution authorized among other things the undertaking of all necessary measures to implement a no fly zone aimed at protecting civilians from imminent attack and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

A number of issues need to be noted regarding NATO intervention in Libya. First, the fact that Resolution 1973 was implemented two days after its passing indicates that it had been pre meditated and prepared for much earlier by NATO. This was something that the African UN Security Members, that included South Africa, had not anticipated. Second, the NATO intervention completely ignored the AU opinion and position of mediating between Gaddafi and the rebels. On 10 March the AU had come up with a Roadmap for Libya. This included a ceasefire and an end to repression of democratic activities, a transition to an inclusive and democratic government, humanitarian relief, protection of African migrant workers and the control of the spread of arms. The five African heads of state who were meeting in Mauritania on 18 March in preparation to go to Libya were caught by surprise the next morning when they were informed that they could not go to Libya because NATO had started bombing Gaddafi's positions. This was a slap in the face for the African heads of state and the AU. Third, NATO's Operation Odyssey Dawn was not just aimed at the protection of civilians but at regime change. It was in part a revenge on Gaddafi who had been a pariah for many years after the Lockerbie plane bombing. Regime change was not part of Resolution 1973. Fourth, NATO's intervention on behalf of the rebels completely altered the situation in Libya, putting the rebels in a position to reject reconciliation with the Gaddafi regime as suggested by the AU (Dewaal 2012). Fifth, the truth of the matter is that instead of civilian protection NATO intervention resulted in massive destruction and death that has come to be explained by the nebulous term 'collateral damage'. Neither has the defeat and death of Gaddafi brought peace or stability to Libya or its neighbours (Kumar 2012). Lastly, NATO intervention has resulted in tensions and disagreements within the AU. The current tensions are now between north Africa (which NATO defined as part of the Arab World) and sub-Saharan Africa; between Francophone Africa (that supported the French and NATO intervention) and Anglophone Africa; and between the big brothers – Nigeria and South Africa. The tensions are still simmering as evidenced by the failure to elect the Chairman of the AU Commission in January 2012.

In the two instances of Cote d'Ivoire and Libya, Zuma and South Africa were powerless in the face of France and its NATO allies. Might in these instances was accepted as right. It was the international interests that dictated what was to be done. This is a worrying development given the continental demand to settle its own problems and conflicts.

## Conclusion

South Africa and its three presidents, Mandela, Mbeki and Zuma should be commended for their efforts in helping to resolve African conflicts. Fortunately for Africa, South Africa has both the financial and the military means to do so. But what is more important has been the political will. South Africa has, however, followed a particular pattern in their attempts to resolve African

conflicts. It has always called for an all-inclusive negotiation process. The assumption appears to have been that every group has genuine grievances and have the interest of the country at heart. This has in many instances not been the case, given the existence of many African warlords and those who are bent on remaining in power or taking over power by all means. It has further advocated the creation of a transitional government in which the incumbent remains in place. It has been overly concerned with preserving the state and political order, and with avoiding the creation of a political vacuum. The main task of the transitional government has been to work out a new constitution and to organize the elections. But while this is acceptable in theory, in practice it has often given the incumbent an advantage which has been used to win the elections and stay in power. Lastly, South Africa has constantly called for the formation of a government of national unity and reconciliation. This in some instances allowed warlords and those who have committed crimes against humanity to be accommodated in government and to gain legitimacy. The choice made often reflects the notion that peace is better than justice. This is, of course, a major moral dilemma. In the case of Cote D'Ivoire and Libya, the French and NATO chose justice. This, however, was achieved at a very high human and material cost and did not bring either peace or stability.

A general question which needs to be asked is whether negotiations are the best way to resolve African conflicts. In many instances antagonists have entered into negotiations as a means of buying time rather than reaching an agreement. This is what accounts for the mostly lengthy and costly negotiations. One needs to remember Ugandan President Museveni's dictum – "you fight and negotiate, you negotiate and fight". In short, negotiations are part of the strategy to win the war and take your enemy off guard. This has to be factored into all efforts to resolve African conflicts.

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## Biographical Note
Professor Katabaro Miti obtained his Ph.D. (Political Economy) from the University of Toronto in 1980. He has taught at various universities including the University of Dar es Salaam, University of Botswana, University of Venda, Vista University, and is currently at the University of Pretoria.

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