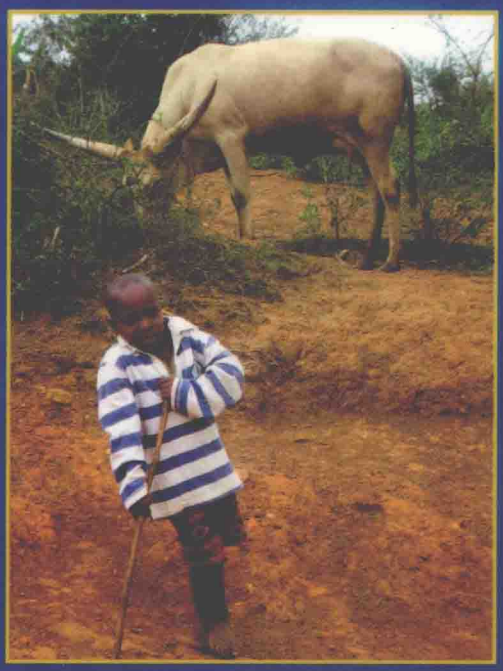
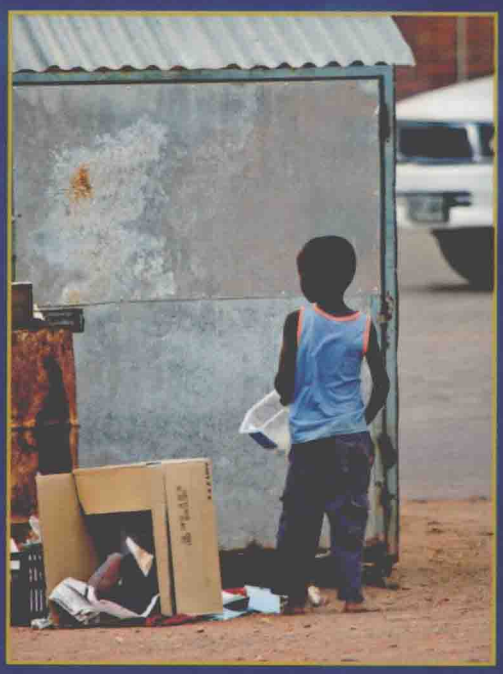
Advances in Police Theory and Practice Series

Security in Post-Conflict Africa

The Role of Nonstate Policing





Bruce Baker

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Security in Post-Conflict Africa

The Role of Nonstate Policing

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Series Preface

While the literature on police and allied subjects is growing exponentially, its impact upon day-to-day policing remains small. The two worlds of research and practice of policing remain disconnected even though cooperation between the two is growing. A major reason is that the two groups speak in different languages. The research work is published in hard-to-access journals and presented in a manner that is difficult to comprehend for a lay person. On the other hand the police practitioners tend not to mix with researchers and remain secretive about their work. Consequently, there is little dialogue between the two and almost no attempt to learn from one another. Dialog across the globe, amongst researchers and practitioners situated in different continents, are of course even more limited.

I attempted to address this problem by starting the IPES, www.ipes.info, where a common platform has brought the two together. IPES is now in its 15th year. The annual meetings which constitute most major annual event of the organization have been hosted in all parts of the world. Several publications have come out of these deliberations and a new collaborative community of scholars and police officers has been created whose membership runs into several hundreds.

Another attempt was to begin a new journal, aptly called *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*, PPR, that has opened the gate to practitioners to share their work and experiences. The journal has attempted to focus upon issues that help bring the two on a single platform. PPR is completing its 10 years in 2009. It is certainly an evidence of growing collaboration between police research and practice that PPR which began with four issues a year, expanded into five issues in its fourth year and, now, it is issued six times a year.

Clearly, these attempts, despite their success, remain limited. Conferences and journal publications do help create a body of knowledge and an association of police activists but cannot address substantial issues in depth. The limitations of time and space preclude larger discussions and more authoritative expositions that can provide stronger and broader linkages between the two worlds.

It is this realization of the increasing dialogue between police research and practice that has encouraged many of us—my close colleagues and myself connected closely with IPES and PPR across the world—to conceive and implement a new attempt in this direction. I have now embarked on a book series, Advances in Police Theory and Practice, that seeks to attract writers from all parts of the world. Further, the attempt is to find practitioner contributors. The objective is to make the series a serious contribution to our

knowledge of the police as well as to improve police practices. The focus is not only in work that describes the best and successful police practices but also one that challenges current paradigms and breaks new ground to prepare a police for the twenty-first century. The series seeks for comparative analysis that highlights achievements in distant parts of the world as well as one that encourages an in-depth examination of specific problems confronting a particular police force.

This third book in the series, *Security in Post-Conflict Africa: The Role of Nonstate Policing*, demonstrates that donors and governments are increasingly acknowledging that the post-conflict state in Africa lacks the capacity to provide an efficient and an equitable policing, to coordinate security agencies and to ensure human rights compliance. In this context the need becomes ever more apparent for partnerships with those actually providing policing services on the ground, which are invariably nonstate actors. Yet donors and states are nervous about the sustainability, reliability, human rights adherence and accountability of nonstate actors. They are also unsure how to support and collaborate with a sector so diverse, complex and mutable. Even when it is recognised that these are the dominant actors in the security sector and the preferred providers of everyday policing by most Africans in most circumstances, it is unclear to policy makers how support for such a group would be programmable. This is the first book to provide a comprehensive account of who these nonstate actors are in post-conflict Africa, what services they offer, how well they do it, what levels of local support and legitimacy they enjoy, and what are their accountability mechanisms. In doing so it challenges many of the negative stereotypes. Based on nine years field work in eight post-conflict countries, it honestly addresses the hazards of working with such actors and the potential. It also suggests ways in which programmes can be developed to enhance nonstate provision and to establish partnerships with the state police for the benefit of the citizens. It advocates a multi-layered approach that is supporting not just the state, but commercial and community-based policing groups as well. The urgent need is for a security model where the emphasis rests on the quality and efficacy of the services received by the end user, regardless of who delivers that service. This book takes us in this direction.

It is hoped that through this series it will be possible to accelerate the process of building knowledge about policing and help bridge the gap between the two worlds—the world of police research and police practice. This is an invitation to police scholars and practitioners across the world to come and join in this venture.

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Preface

This book grew out of research projects I have undertaken in Africa since 2000. I can still remember the day in Grahamstown, South Africa, 2000, when my state-centric mind finally digested the fact, self-evident to all Africans, that policing is not just done by the police. Faced with car guard cooperatives, armed response private security, street committees, vigilantes, and community paid-for additional police patrols, I had to rethink how security was provided for the average African and whether it mattered that the state was such a small player. The following nine years took me over east, west, and southern Africa asking people who it was they looked to for protection from crime and, when crime occurred, to whom they looked for response. The voices of those in cities and the countryside were almost universal: primarily they did not look to the state for either protection or response but to a whole range of nonstate actors. Initially, I was surprised by the choice on offer for most Africans most of the time and how they negotiated their security in different settings and circumstances according to their norms, experience, and financial abilities. Eventually, however, I had to face the policy implications of multichoice policing. Why was the reality of actual provision so removed from the world as seen by those engaged in security policy and reform? Why was nonstate policing judged by standards that, if applied to the state police, might lead to the withdrawal of donor funding? Over time, I came to bring my own research findings up against current policy and came to adopt a multilayered approach of support for policing providers, although not without meeting considerable skepticism.

Nine years ago, it was hard to gain a hearing, but now there are many voices calling for an approach to security provision in post-conflict Africa that are determined by the realities on the ground in terms of available and sustainable resources rather than by imitations of Western methods. Yet even those, like me, who call for a reevaluation of the delivery of security to Africans do not pretend that they have all the answers. The awful tragedy of conflict welded to structural economic poverty is a combination none would want to start from as a foundation for building security.

This book therefore is only a beginning of the long process needed to rethink policing. It tries above all to put before the reader the perspective of Africans themselves—how they perceive their security needs and how they evaluate those who offer security to them. To understand what is happening

on the ground seems a good place to begin before plans to "do people good" are announced by ministers of state. This account, as it unfolds, challenges several prevailing conceptions about policing, the state police, nonstate actors, vigilantes, customary practices, community policing, private/public distinctions, and state building. The most effective challenge is always that which is empirically based; it is hoped that this book provides some evidence for its claims, even if the limitations of my research allow no definitive statements.

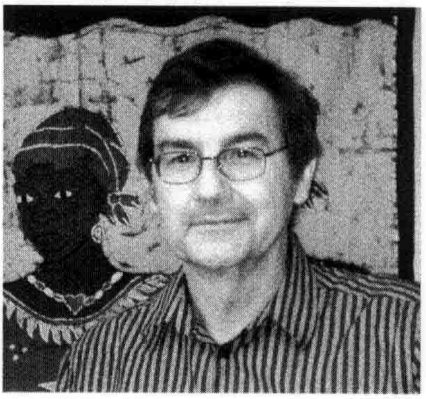
In the final analysis, I will be content if all the hundreds of interviews and hours spent traveling on wretched roads produces a book that challenges the current understanding of post-conflict policing in Africa and stimulates thought about the way states and donors might proceed in the future in those restricted circumstances and faced with those desperate needs.

Bruce Baker
Coventry

Acknowledgments

This book is based largely on my research since 2000. In all the countries I have worked, I have been assisted by dedicated and able colleagues, including Amadu Sidi Bah in Sierra Leone, Cecil Griffith and Roosevelt Sackor in Liberia, and Peter Andrews in Rwanda. Funding for the research has come from generous grants from the ESRC, British Academy, and Coventry University: British Academy grant, "The Impact of Policing in Mozambique on Democratic Institutions," 2002; ESRC research fellow, "Multilateral Policing in Africa: Its Nature and Socio-Political Impact in Uganda and Sierra Leone," 2003–2005, award reference R000271293; ESRC research grant, "Multichoice Policing Resources for Post-Conflict Situations: Rwanda and Liberia," 2006–2007, award reference RES-000-23-1102; British Academy grant, "An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Police Local Partnership Boards in Sierra Leone," 2006.

About the Author



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Africa and the Post-Conflict Security Environment

1

Defining Terms

Like the alluring words on an exotic image of a holiday advertisement, the title "Security in Post-Conflict Africa" makes use of big but ambiguous terms. The ad's promises are uncertain until the small print is examined. What, then, is this book offering when it speaks of Africa, security, post-conflict, nonstate, and policing?

Africa

First, as to the geographical scope, the Africa with which this book is concerned is sub-Saharan Africa; that is, the forty-seven countries that are fully or partially located south of the Sahara.[1] In limiting the study to one subcontinent, I am not arguing for African exceptionalism. Many of the features on policing, particularly nonstate policing, have been recorded in other continents and in economies richer than those of African states. I am also not arguing that any subcontinent, let alone nation, can isolate itself from transnational security, whether interstate organizations, commercial multinationals, or informal cross-border raids and networks. Insecurity that overlaps state borders has generated security that ignores borders as well. The study is therefore a roughly torn page from a bigger book that I hope you will be encouraged to read.

Security

In a "securitized" world (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998), security fills our anxious horizon from questions of "Is it safe to let our children play outside?" and "Should this tree be lopped lest a branch fall on a passerby?" to "Can we stave off another terrorist attack?" But, the security that is the subject of this book is personal or citizen security; that is, security from crime and disorder (Call 2007). Put positively, it is the security that assures people that all in the community of which they are part (including the rulers and the powerful) live by the agreed rules governing relationships. Not that this relatively narrow perspective of security can be totally divorced from "nontraditional" security issues such as threats of floods, droughts, famine, global

warming, ozone depletion, infectious diseases, and many more (Commission on Human Security 2003; Axworthy 2001). Surprisingly, it was only in the early 1990s that it was first explicitly argued that the objective of security policy should be the security of *individuals*, not the state, and that this security was more than military threats but anything that threatened people's safety, rights, and access to resources necessary for life (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] 1994). Such an apparently self-evident truth had sadly been buried under the state-centered focus of security.

These wider security issues can intensify traditional insecurity because insecurity is a web of threats. The understanding of the interrelatedness of causes of tension and conflict has promoted in the last ten years an integrated approach, captured by the concept of "human security" (Canada 2000; MacRae and Hubert 2001; Thomas 2000; UNDP 1999). From this perspective, there is no human security until people can

> Live in freedom, peace and safety, participate fully in the governance of their countries, enjoy the protection of fundamental rights, have access to resources and the basic necessities of life and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and well-being. (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] 2000)

The focus of this book on the protection of people's lives and property, the resolution of their disputes, and the maintenance of the social order is therefore only a corner of a wide canvas. Yet, it is a crucial element because it is foundational to human security. Without it, access to other key services and rights will be restricted. For this reason, personal security is a central concern of poor people. Many local communities in the World Bank's Voices of the Poor research identified physical insecurity as their major barrier to development (Deepa et al. 2000). This view was reinforced by the Development Ministers of the OECD:

> Security matters to the poor and other vulnerable groups, especially women and children, because bad policing, weak justice and penal systems and corrupt militaries mean that they suffer disproportionately from crime, insecurity and fear. They are consequently less likely to be able to access government services, invest in improving their own futures and escape from poverty. (2005a, 11)

Just how individuals in post-conflict Africa are actually provided with security will unfold in the course of this book. All that need be said now is that internal security or policing in Africa is not a monopoly of the state. Nonstate policing is embedded in every community. It is ubiquitous to the point that few in Africa challenge its legitimacy, even if they criticize some of its practices. Such is the current low priority given by state police to the

protection of property that few, including the state police themselves, would deny that nonstate policing of whatever hue is seen as the best-available deterrent and the fastest responder in time of emergency. Notice that I used the phrase *state police* rather than *public police* here and throughout the book. This is because I have found very little understanding among the police of post-conflict countries that they in any sense belong to the public or are accountable to the public and local independent public authorities. The overriding view is that they are employed by the state and serve the state and its central government.

Conflict

Conflict in this book is used in the sense of collective violence. Previously, authors have worked within the construct of *armed conflict*, defined in terms of the participation of a state as one of the warring parties, a political objective, and the exchange of violence in battles. However, examining the conflicts that have marred the African Continent since 1980, it is apparent that they normally involve fighting between nonstate actors; the objectives of the conflict are as much economic as ideological or political, and the violence deliberately targets unarmed civilians (Brzoska 2007). In these circumstances, the broader definition of conflict is preferred.

The frequency and distribution of the conflicts across the continent of Africa are much greater than those relying on Western media reports might imagine. Many are scarcely reported, although to the people on the ground they are real enough. Since 1980, at least twenty-six states have endured the suffering and destruction of conflict over all or part of their territory (see Table 1.1 and Table 1.2) and, for some states, the slow dawn of reconstruction. They include Angola; Burundi; Central African Republic (CAR);

Table 1.1 Current (2008) Conflicts

Angola	Cabinda secessionists	1975 ff
DRC	Congo War	1998 ff
Côte d'Ivoire	Civil war	2002 ff
Namibia	Caprivi Strip secessionists	1966 ff
Somalia	Insurgency	1991 ff
Sudan (Darfur)	Insurgency	1983 ff
Chad	Insurgency	2008 ff
Kenya/Uganda	Armed pastoralist conflict	1980s ff
Niger/Mali	Tuareg rebellion	2007 ff

ff = & following

Table 1.2 Main Conflicts Since 1980

Angola	Civil war	1975–1992
Angola	Civil war	1992–2002
Burundi	Ethnic strife	1984–1989
Burundi	Ethnic strife	1990–1994
Burundi	Civil conflict	1993–2005
Central African Republic	Civil war	1990s
Comoros	Coups	1980s and 1990s
Comoros (Anjouan)	Secession	1997–2008
Congo (Brazzaville)	Civil conflict	1997–1999
DRC	Kabila rebellion	1996–1997
Eritrea	Independence war	1958–1991
Ethiopia	Civil war	1978–1991
Ethiopia	Second war with Somalia	1998–1999
Ethiopia	Eritrea war	1998–2000
Guinea	Mano River war	2000–2001
Guinea-Bissau	Civil war	1998–1999
Liberia	Civil war	1999–2003
Liberia	Civil war	1989–1997
Madagascar	Civil violence	1975–1992
Mozambique	Civil war	1970s–1992
Namibia	Independence war	1966–1990
Niger/Mali	Tuareg rebellion	1990–1995
Rwanda	Civil war and genocide	1991–1996
Senegal	Cassamance rebellion	1982–2004
Sierra Leone	Civil war	1990–2002
Somalia	Period of terror	1986–1990
South Africa	Civil conflict	1985–1994
Southern Sudan	Second civil war	1983–2004
Uganda	Civil war	1980–1985
Northern Uganda	LRA rebellion	1980–2008

Chad; Comoros; Côte d'Ivoire; Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); Eritrea; Ethiopia; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Kenya; Liberia; Madagascar; Mali; Mozambique; Namibia; Niger; Republic of Congo (Brazzaville); Rwanda; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Somalia; South Africa; southern Sudan; and Uganda.[2] And, several of these states have endured multiple conflicts.

Understanding the post-conflict context for security necessitates understanding the sort of conflict that has gone on before. What was the conflict

over, who was involved and affected, and what were the consequences? Some believe that since 2000 there has been an increase in conflict in Africa that revives and reflects divisions over ethnicities, regionalisms, and religions (Mbabazi, MacLean, and Shaw 2002). Others emphasize that at their heart conflicts concern the desire to exploit economic resources for profit (the so-called political economy of violence thesis: Collier and Hoeffler 2001; Forcese 2001; Smillie, Gberie, and Hazelton 2000; Duffield 2001; Berdal and Malone 2000; Howe 2001). Still others see conflict as the product of poor governance. In their view, economies have been impoverished by a mixture of bad management, imposed economic liberalization policies, and global markets. The resulting intensified inequality thus fuels conflicts to secure resources or a fairer distribution of them. As Reno (2000a, 2000b) argued, when weak African states begin to lose control throughout their territory, conflicts multiply over the shrinking national cake. Effective authority for "governance" comes to reside elsewhere, leading to an inability to contain either the causes or the consequences of conflict.

The conflicts in Africa must be differentiated not only in terms of their central dispute but also in terms of the nature of the protagonists. Was the conflict between states, between states and internal rebels, between rebel groups, or with and between what can only be called "criminal gangs," although they may have adopted more attractive titles?

Conflict, then, covers a broad landscape. Only as we understand the contours of the conflict can we understand the security needs and responses of the people in the post-conflict era.

Post-Conflict

The end of conflict may be a pivotal and defining moment in the life of people, but determining the point at which a conflict ends is not as simple as recording the date of the peace agreement.

> There are few truly post-conflict situations. Conflicts become more or less violent, more or less manifest or latent, but they seldom stop altogether. ... [According to the World Bank in 2004,] in 44 per cent of all post-conflict situations, war resumes in the first five years after the violence has stopped, and about 50 per cent of the post conflict countries revert back to war in the first decade of peace. (Junne and Verkoren 2005, 1)

Think of the repeated failure of peace agreements in Angola; Burundi; CAR; Chad; Comoros (Anjouan); Côte d'Ivoire; DRC; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Guinea-Bissau; Liberia; Mozambique; Namibia; Republic of Congo (Brazzaville); Senegal (Casamance); Sierra Leone; Somalia; southern Sudan; and northern Uganda. In fact, it is not uncommon to have a situation that can

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