

Research Article

Ethio-Eritrean Peace Reconciliation: It's Implication for RSC of IGAD

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Abstract

This article is written on the Regional Security Complex (RSC) of Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The paper has critically scrutinized how the Regional Security Complex (RSC) of IGAD Region looks like. The notion of RSC which was brought by Barry Buzan into the discourse of peace and security has been employed to scrutinize regional security complex of IGAD. Moreover, the article mentioned different cases to show how geographical proximity, amity and enmity, and the advent of peace deals affected the RSC of a given Region: Ethio-Eritrean peace reconciliation in IGAD Region and Camp David Accord in Middle East has been taken as examples to scrutinize RSC of the aforementioned Region. Finally, the article wrap up, the happening of conflict or cooperation in one of the state would not only affect that state alone, rather, it would have a spillover effect on the entire RSC.

1. Regional Security Complex

The Concept of Regional Security Complex (RSC)

The notion of Regional Security complex was first designed by Barry Buzan in his work entitled "People, States and Fear" (Buzan, 1991). Regional security complex (RSC) can be defined as "*a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another*" (Buzan, 1991). In addition to this, RSC refers to "*most political and military threats travel more easily over a short distance than over long ones, insecurity is often associated with proximity*" (Buzan and Waever, 2003:11). Moreover, RSC can be understood as "*durable patterns of amity and enmity take the form of sub global, geographically coherent patterns of security interdependence*" (Buzan and Waever, 2003: 45). Their security complexes are also exposed to four major types of threats and their interaction: balance of power contests between great powers; lingering conflicts which emerge between states; intra-states conflicts that are usually spillovers of internal politics; and conflicts that arise from trans-national threats caused, for instance, by the rise of radical Islam and informal networks, state fragility, demographic explosion, environmental degradation or resource scarcity (Buzan, 1991). RSC is also a building block for Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) which had been updated by Buzan and Waever in 2003, in their work "*Regions and Power: The Structure of International Security*". As far as RSCT is concerned, its main argument is the 'regional' level as the locus of attention to study and analyze security.

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To wrap up, RSC is a building block of RSCT in which the national security of one state would not be defined in isolation from the others: close security interdependence because of geographic proximity. Therefore, the presence of a state of amity and enmity between states of a specific region, would have its own spillover effect on the entire RSC of a region. The following figure succinctly shows how states are interconnected and the existence of security complex in a given region.

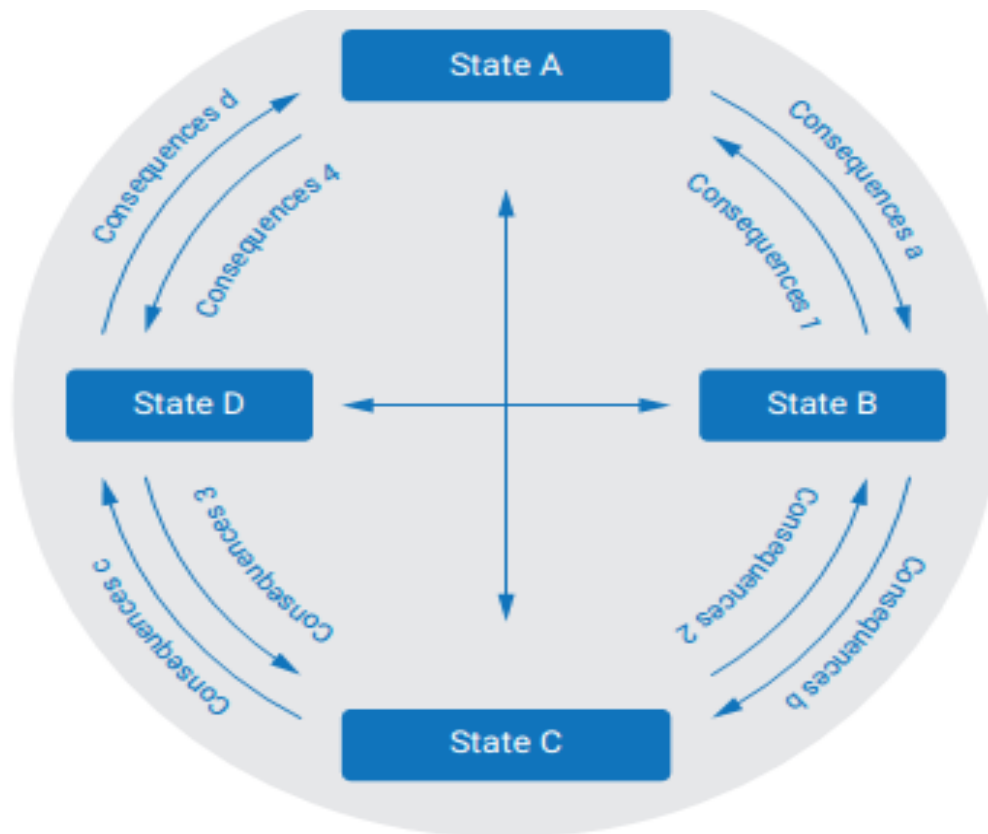


Figure 1: Illustrate RSC of a Region

(Developed by the Author).

The above figure illustrates security interdependence of states which found in the same regional security complex as the security of one state is linked with the others and it is unlikely to express the security of one in isolation from another. The happening of conflict or cooperation in one of the state would not only affect a single state, rather, it would have a spillover effect on the entire RSC.

Delineating IGAD

Buzan's definition of "the region" is the most widely used one because of its comprehensiveness. For the purpose of this essay, I have employed Buzan's definition of "region". For Buzan (1991:188), "region"

"Means a distinct and significant subsystem of security relations exists among a set of states whose fate is locked with each other because of geographical proximity."

The IGAD region stretches over an area of 5.2 million km² that comprises the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. The region has about 6960 Km of coastline with the Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Toudjoura and the Red Sea. Also, the IGAD region has a total of 6910 Km of international borders with Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania (IGAD Secretariat, 2016: 8). The delineation of IGAD Region is most of the time contested and equivalently equated with Horn of Africa and Greater Horn of Africa. For instance, Buzan and Waver (2003:231), Mesfin (2011) also made Ethiopia as the epicenter of the Horn of Africa (HoA). For him, Ethiopia is the nucleus of the HoA and countries sharing boarder with it are automatically qualified to be part of the region.

For the purpose of this article, I would like to include member states of IGAD as a RSC of the region. Therefore, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda are members of IGAD Region. The arguments made in this essay would incorporate members' states of IGAD region. To wrap up, as it was defined and conceptualized, the happening conflict (intra or interstate) in one of the member state would have a spillover effect over the rest of member states of the security complex.

Regional Security Complex of IGAD

The region is one of the most turbulent and conflict ridden region which is characterized by having High Intra- and inter-state conflicts, Terrorism and violent extremism, high unemployment, Refugee crises, Environmental degradation, and rising income inequality (Kessels et al, 2016). Almost all the countries of the region come across intra- and inter-state conflicts of varying degrees and intensity over the past few decades. A good demonstration of the inter-state wars witnessed since the late 1950s includes;

"the Ethiopian–Somali wars (1964, 1977–78 war and the 2006–9 military intervention), the Kenyan–Somali war (1963), the Ugandan–Tanzanian war (1978–79) and the Ethiopian–Eritrean border war of 1998–2000" (Kidane, 2013:28) and dreadful conditions of the environment and porous border, destructive cross-border communal conflicts also recorded in the region (Kidane, 2013). Of the above listed inter-state wars, the Ethio-Eritrean war of 1998-2000 was found to be the largest and lethal conventional war of the late twenty century. The war cost the lives of tens of thousands of soldiers, consumed huge amount of money, and displaced people from their ancestral lands and the unspeakable torture and humiliation of civilians (Daniel and Paulos, 2011; Kidist, 2011). In this vein, various literatures and research outcomes revealed that the conflicts witnessed in the region are closely intermingled and feed into each other (Kassahun, 2013). Concomitantly, the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea goes beyond being sites of conflict within national borders (Mosley, 2014; Wuhibegezer, 2013). This mean that the unfolded tense relations and stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea following the conclusion of the war induced unpleasant ramifications for neighboring states.

Among several agendas of IGAD, as a sub-regional organization of the region is the stimulus of security, development and integration. It was primed to tackle security threats and development challenges. Despite its assumed role to reconcile the Sudanese internal strife and peacemaking efforts in Somalia (Healy, 2009), IGAD's role to bring peace and contain conflict in the region remains implausible, noting its incapacitated ability to mend the Ethiopia-Eritrea and Djibouti-Eritrea border disputes. From this, we can deduce that, the region is very much interconnected and the fates of the countries are interlocked with each other. Moreover, Tafesse (2009), strengthened it by arguing that, "conflict inter-linkage has made the IGAD region as a region of "security complex." Conflicts in the region of Africa in general are intractable and closely interconnected; the unfolding of conflict in one country can easily spill over into neighbouring areas (Dehez 2008: 10-14). In addition to this, states of the region connected by history, over lapping peoples; meaning, having the same ethno-cultural groups into different political jurisdictions. For instance, the Afar people are divided between Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Eritrea, Tigray speaking people are found on both sides of Ethio-Eritrean border, Similarly, Somali speaking peoples are divided between Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Kenya, again, Ethiopia and Kenya share Oromo ethnic group. Several other different groups also span across Kenya-Sudan, Ethiopia-Sudan, and Eritrea-Sudan frontiers (Tafesse, 2009:3&4). Therefore, the discontent of one ethno-cultural groups in one country would have a spillover impact over the other. For instance, Djibouti comprises two major ethnic groups: the Issa Somalis and the Afars. Afars felt politically and economically marginalized. Due to this reason, they established the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD), representing the Afar people, launched an armed insurgency since 1991 recruited its fighters from Afars in Djibouti, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. Moreover, after Ethio-Eritrean full-scale war, Ethiopia and Eritrea made Somalia as their theatre of proxy war with a spillover impact to other member states (Tafesse, 2009).

Finally, the military conflict which was erupted in November 04, 2020 in Ethiopia between the federal government of Ethiopia and Tigrian peoples Liberation Front is not culminated and becoming the concern of the Region and the international community. The former labelled the conflict as "Operation Enforcing Law and Order", while the Tigrian Peoples Liberation Front called it an invasion (Redie Bereketeab, 2021). Besides to this, according to Security Council report, on March (2021), there is "killings, looting and gender-based violence against civilians". Moreover, in the meeting the involvement of Eritrean soldiers had been verified and asked for its withdrawal. Moreover, huge number of refugees are in Sudan because of the conflict and in need of humanitarian assistance (Security Council report, March 2021).

To wrap up, from the aforementioned evidences, we found that, there is a security complex among countries which are located in the IGAD Region. A conflict that happened in one of them has a high spillover effect into other countries of the region. Furthermore, as Ethiopia is the most populated and epicenter of the region, its internal conflict would ramified into the rest of its neighbors and will add another security problems for the entire region.

Presence of External Actors: Implication for RSC of IGAD

The IGAD region is strategically vital as it connects Africa, Asia, and Europe. That is why superpowers, as well as emerging powers of the Middle East are on the race to scramble the region. To do this, they had established their military base on the Red Sea Coast (Kidist M., 2014). The region attracts the attention of major powers and emerging powers of the world. Currently, the HoA is hosting a number of military bases of various countries who are rivals on permanent bases. China and USA are ardent rivals politically as well as economically at the

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global level, China and Japan are regional as well as global rivals and finally the two leading Gulf powers, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, are among others here to counter the coming of Iran as well as to deter Qatar's influence in the region. The presence of rival powers in the turbulent region could fuel tension in the entire region, and instigate confrontation among the states (Gashaw and Zelalem, 2016). As Charles, Anouar, and Dawit (2019), succinctly illustrated in a document that was presented in Tana Forum, the intervention of the Gulf countries in the politics of the Horn could be the weakening of IGAD, and its security architecture which create suspicion among member states of the region as the Gulf States themselves divided along different alliances, and forged a relation that can scramble states of the Horn in line with their interests. As Saudi and Emiratis had played a tremendous role in bringing Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia to work together, the process would have completed the circle if it was successful in bringing Sudan on board. But it didn't. Even though, the tripartite arrangements between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia has its own merit, it create a suspicion, mistrust, and enforced other members of the region to be skeptical which can be perceived as a challenge for regional security (Getachew, and Dr. Abdeta 2018:33-36).

To wind up, hosting external powers which have discrepancies in terms of power, ideology as well as the level of adversity, is making the region encircled by external powers which have divergence of national interest. Furthermore, insurgent groups and oppositions of home states might allied with external powers by giving less care for the sovereignty as well as national interest of their country. In return, this would pose a negative spillover effect on the RSC of the entire IGAD region.

When there is Amity and Enmity in the RSC of IGAD

The region has been a battlefield for several intra and inter-state conflicts. Among this, the Ethio-Eritrean and the South-Sudanese conflict took place in IGAD region (Shinn, 2009, cited in Berouk Mesfin, 2011). Following the 1998-2000 full-scale war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Eritrean regime had provided support to anti-government movements of its neighbours, most notably Ethiopia, for instance Oromo Liberation Front(OLF), Ogaden National Liberation Front(ONLF), Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front(ARDUF), the Tigray People's Democratic Movement (TPDM), and Ginbot-7 can be enumerated as insurgent movements which have got military bases and training from Eritrean government (Plaut, 2016). This succinctly illustrated how the RSC of the region is/was very intense and very much open for being a battlefield for proxy wars and amity and enmity between member states of the region.

After the coming of a new prime minister in Ethiopia, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed in April 2018, immediately heralded that Ethiopia would accept the 2002 boundary decision which ended a situation of 'no war, no peace' which was a hurdle of peace and security between Ethiopia and Eritrea in particular and the region in general (Susan and Payton, 2018). Moreover, the Prime Minister has made an incredible move in ending the war and decriminalized the above insurgent groups who had received base and military training in Eritrea to come back to their homeland, Ethiopia (Nanjala, 2018; Aaron Maasho, 2018). This clearly shows how amity and enmity changed; today's foe might change into tomorrow's ally. Although, amity and enmity had been a long story of this RSC, it had been intense since in time of cold war to here fore. In the Cold War period, HoA had been one of the playing fields of the then global powers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Those competing powers supported different regimes in the region and sometimes losing one for another. Ethiopia sided with the U.S. during the times of Emperor Haileilassie and switched to the Soviet camp with the coming of the Dergue regime and the

subsequent war with Somalia (Duah, 2011). Therefore, Ethiopia and Eritrea had given territories under their jurisdiction for the two countries' opposition and insurgent groups with the aim of toppling down one another. Thus, it is possible to deduce that the pattern of mutual subversion between Ethiopia and Eritrea had created insecurity in Ethiopia and Eritrea which had a spillover mutual destabilization over other member states of the IGAD region. This shows that, the occurrence of conflict or insecurity in one of them cannot be elaborated in isolation from the IGAD security complex.

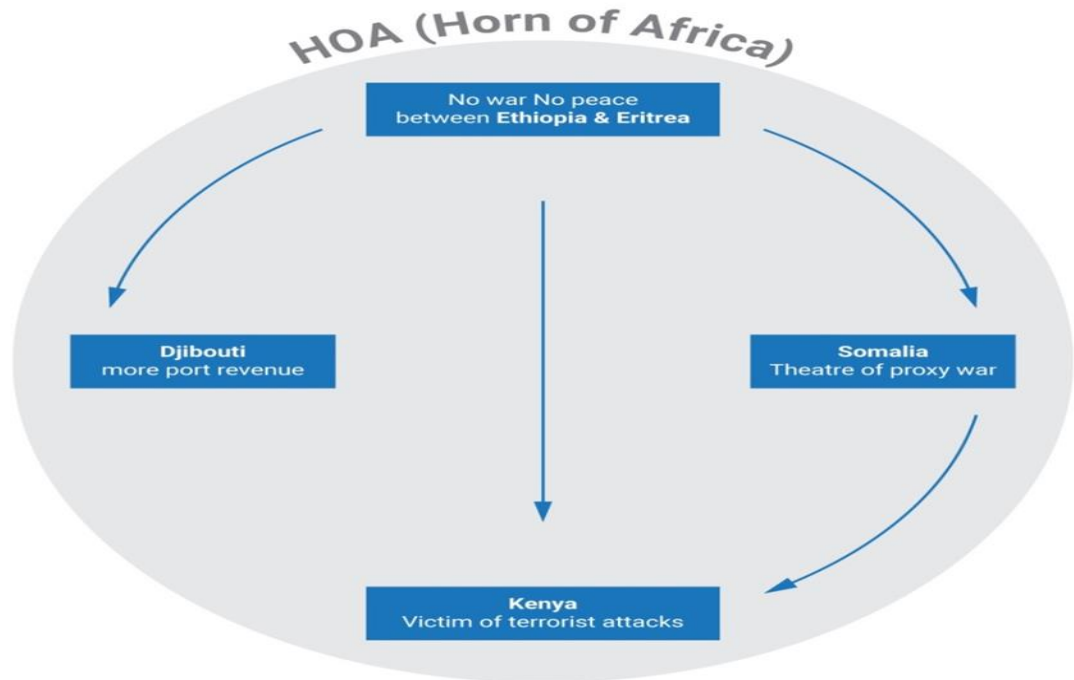


Figure 2: Succinctly illustrate how the IGAD region looks like in time of ‘no war, no peace situations of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

(Developed by the Author).

The above figure succinctly illustrated that, during the time of ‘no war, no peace’ situations of Ethiopia and Eritrea, IGAD was impotent to resolve the stalemate that distracted the peace and security of the entire region. Moreover, Somalia were theatre of proxy war for Ethiopia and Eritrea, terrorists easily traveled into Kenya to launch terrorist attacks and Ethiopia shifted its sea outlet from Eritrea into Djibouti which helped Djibouti to generate a huge port revenue.

Detent of Conflict and its Implication for IGAD RSC

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Following the coming of a new prime minister in Ethiopia, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed in April 2018, immediately heralded that Ethiopia accepted the 2000 peace settlement without any precondition which was insisted by Eritrea for long (Susan and Payton, 2018). After a few days

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of silence, Eritrea has also positively reacted and this bring the two countries in a new era of rapprochement that has ended a situation of ‘no war, no peace’ which was a hurdle of peace and security of the region. The Prime Minister has made an incredible move in ending the war and decriminalizing insurgent groups who had received base and military training in Eritrea which came back to their homeland, Ethiopia (Nanjala, 2018; Aaron Maasho, 2018). The conflict between Somalia and Kenya resolved at least for a short period of time when Premier Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia mediated the discussions between President Uhuru Kenyatta and Somalia’s president Mohammed Abdulahi (Wakaya, 2019). Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, President Isaias Afeworeki, and President Uhuru Kenyatta made a state visit in Juba; South Sudan agreed to work together on the peace and security of the region. The following figure clearly shows how Ethio-Eritrean peace reconciliation has been very much crucial at least for a short period of time, although now it is not supported with institutions.

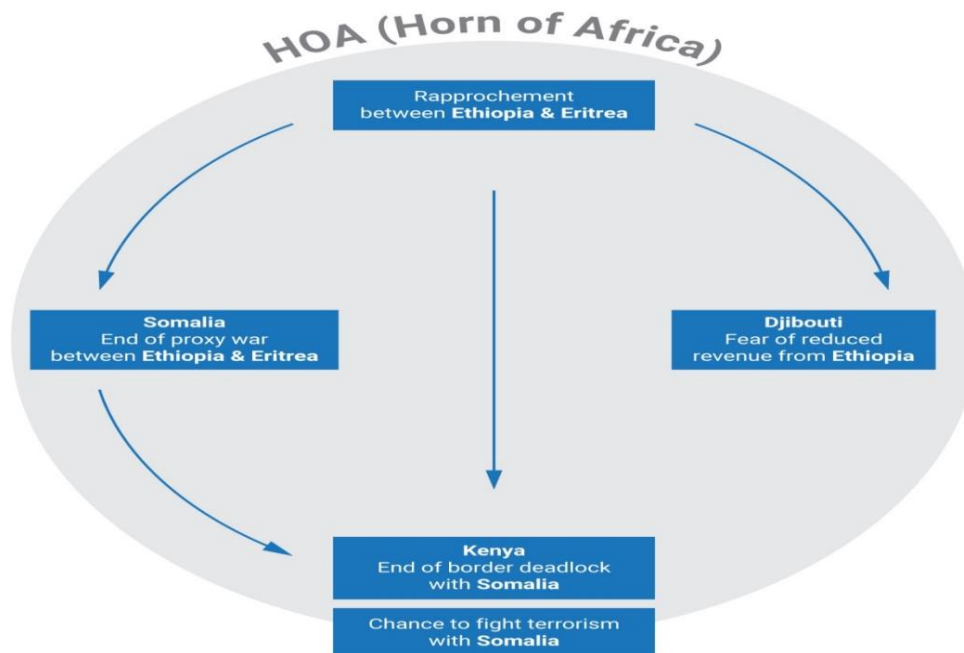


Figure 3: Illustrates implications of Ethio-Eritrean Rapprochement for the Region.

(Developed by the Student).

Although the rapprochement is not clearly defined and institutionalized, three years ago, most member states of the RSC welcomed it positively and it had a positive spillover effect for the entire region. All states with the exception of Djibouti and Sudan reacted positively towards Ethio-Eritrean peace reconciliations. As we see in the above figure, even though Djibouti involved in the circle of the rapprochement through the mediation of Somalian President Farmajo, it has some discontent for fear of port revenue reduction as Eritrea became another option for Ethiopia’s sea outlet. Djibouti and Eritrea have started a dialogue on their border deadlock through the mediation of Ethiopia although, it is not culminated. The implication of

Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement on Somalia is so impressive in terms of avoiding a hidden proxy war between Ethiopia and Eritrea and to normalize Somalia's relation with Eritrea in which Eritrea was suspected as a supporter of Al-shababb (Amanuel T., 2019). Besides this, Somalia is a beneficiary of Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement that helped a lot to resolve its maritime border conflict with its neighbour Kenya. Peace between Somalia and Eritrea enables them to build trust, and as Eritrea was accused by aiding Al-shababb against Somalia, now, their restored diplomacy helps a lot to stop one walks against the other. Furthermore, the rapprochement was a panacea to bring back insurgent groups who had been in the soil of Eritrea. Moreover, the rapprochement creates a forum for members of the region by avoiding enmity which is indispensable for regional peace and stability. Here, what we deduce from the aforementioned points is that the security as well as the insecurity of member's states of the sub-region cannot be explained in isolation of one from the other.

Importance of Camp David Accord: Regional peace and Security

In this sub-topic, I would like to provide a piece of writing how the peace reconciliation between Egypt and Israel ended at least the advent of more Arab-Israel wars and changed the RSC of Middle East Region as the Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement had changed the RSC of IGAD Region. Indeed, the Arabs and the Israelis have fought four (4) wars against each other. The Israelis labeled Israel's 1948-49 clashes with the Arabs as their "War of Independence". Camp David Accords was a Framework for Peace in the Middle East region that includes Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and Menachem Begin, Prime Minister of Israel, met with Jimmy Carter, President of the United States of America, at Camp David from September 5 to September 17, 1978, and have agreed on the following framework for peace in the Middle East. Jimmy Carter was one of the main architects of the Camp David Accords received much credit, and domestic and international praise for his achievement in promoting peace between Egypt and Israel (Mohammad, 2012:48). As far as the importance of Camp David Accord is concerned, irrespective of its defects it has played a tremendous role to stopped further Arab-Israel wars and brought relative peace and security in Middle East Region.

Challenges of Regional Security Complex of Africa from the standpoint of RSC

Paul D. Williams (2019), presented the nature of conflicts and security complexes in Africa as "*intrastate armed conflicts, interstate armed conflicts, non-state armed conflicts, one-sided violence, Military coups, electoral violence, livelihood struggles*". The RSC of Africa is very much complex and most of them are posed by the legacy of colonialism. Among this, porous border could take the lion share. Borders in Africa are alien in the continent. According to Akinyemio (2019), much of the borders encompassed similar ethnic groups into two or more contrived citizenships, inflicting a huge blow to the social and economic endeavors of these very people. The words of Lord Salisbury describe the situation in the clearer "*We have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps where no white man's foot ever trod; we have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers were.*" Borders in the continent are hubs for violent and extreme groups. Islamic State in the Greater Sahel can be taken as an example here. According to Le Roux (2019), in 2018 the group was linked to 26% of all events and 42% of all fatalities and in 2019 more than 570 fatalities, more than any group in the region. The group is operating in along the border areas of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. One can also take Boko Haram as an additional example for the above cause. According to Salifu (2020), the group which is based in Nigeria is carrying out attacks in the neighboring countries of Benin,

Cameroon, Chad and Niger, because of the presence of porous borders along with the listed countries. To wind up, the RSC of Africa is very complex and it is difficult to scrutinize and provide a single security problem, rather, escorted with intermingles of multiple conflicts that make the RSC of Africa are very complex and interconnected each other.

Conclusion

To conclude, the RSC of IGAD region is characterized by hosting inter and intra state conflicts, terrorism, violent extremism, piracy, the involvement of antagonist and rivalry external powers, high unemployment, refugee crises, environmental degradation, and rising income inequality. Besides to this, the presence of voluminous of actors coerced the region to be a battle field for diversified interests. Moreover, states of the region connected by history, over lapping peoples; meaning, having the same ethno-cultural groups into different political jurisdictions, tight geographic proximity, amity and enmity make the RSC of the region very tough that enables threats to easily travel or ramify from one state into other states. To wrap up, the happening of conflict or cooperation in one of the state would not only affect that state alone, rather, it would have a spillover effect on the entire RSC.

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