

## **Challenges Of Peace-Building Among The Widikum Of The Bamenda Grassland Of Cameroon, 1870-2014**

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**Abstract:** *This Article examines the challenges faced by peace actors in efforts to promote peace in Africa and Widikum in particular of the Bamenda Grassland of The Republic of Cameroon from 1870-2014. Though several actors to promote Peace have been deployed to scale down the multifaceted land and or chieftaincy conflicts in the area under study, their efforts have registered limited success. The steady rise of the conflicts has drawn alot of attention and ink from many Scholars. This increasing trend of the conflicts was as a result of the overwhelming challenges faced on the field by peace actors to transform this war torn zone into peaceful ones both primary and secondary sources were used in the writing of this article. An analysis of the data reveals that most Peace building initiative and or agreements yield the durable peace as desired. Most often after few years of peace observed, the parties violate the peace agreement to full scale war. This raises the problem of sustainability of peace-Agreements reached with conflict. Probably because of the weaknesses of the peace deal and or the same factors that caused the conflict were still present. Thus, there was need for actors of peace to revitalize their peace efforts to break through the challenges of Peace-Building in this part of Africa.*

**Key Words:** *Conflict, Peace Building, Challenges, Actors.*

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### **I. Introduction**

The desire for peace has been a major challenge over the globe among peace-actors within local, national and international communities to better human conditions and makes it free from conflicts. Several scholars have enumerated challenges faced by peace actors on the field before, during and after conflict in their efforts to maintain sustainable peace. According to Murray, the largest impediments to post-conflict peace-building are the lack of clarity about the resources needed to implement peace agreements, the lack of meaningful security sector reform, and the lack of inclusivity in implementations. To narrow the challenges, peace efforts among the Widikum in the North West Region of Cameroon was fashioned by several challenges just like in any part of Africa and the world that needs to be addressed to effectively maintain sustainable peace in the area under study and the globe. This article examines the challenges of peace-building among the Widikum speaking people in Momo. The Widikum by this study should not be limited only to the people of Widikum Sub Division created by presidential decree No.92/187 of 1/09/1992 creating the Widikum-Menka Sub Division. It covers the entire area of Momo Division. The Widikums are located in Momo Division, some 22 km away south west from Bamenda capital of the North West Region in the Republic of Cameroon. The Widikum Ethnic group is one of the major ethnic group that constitute the North West Region of Cameroon with others found in Mezam, Menchum, Bamboutos, Lebialem and Manyu Divisions due to their history of origin <sup>1</sup>According to Nkwi, Momo Division is the Ethnic home of the Widikum where a majority of them are located with others unevenly distributed in other Divisions. To Nkwi, the Widikums constitute the people of Momo Division and include the Moghamo (Batibo), Menemo (Meta), Ngwo (Ngunu) and Ngie.<sup>2</sup> This geographical area constitutes the five Sub Divisions that make up Momo Division and include Mbengwi, Njikwa, Widikum-Menka, Ngie and Batibo Sub Divisions. This geographical disposition covers an area of 1792km<sup>2</sup> and as of 2005 population census, it had a total population of 138.693.

The widikum are located in the North Western portion of Cameroon. It is found specifically in momo Division of the North West Region. She is bounded geographically to the North by Mechum Division, the South by

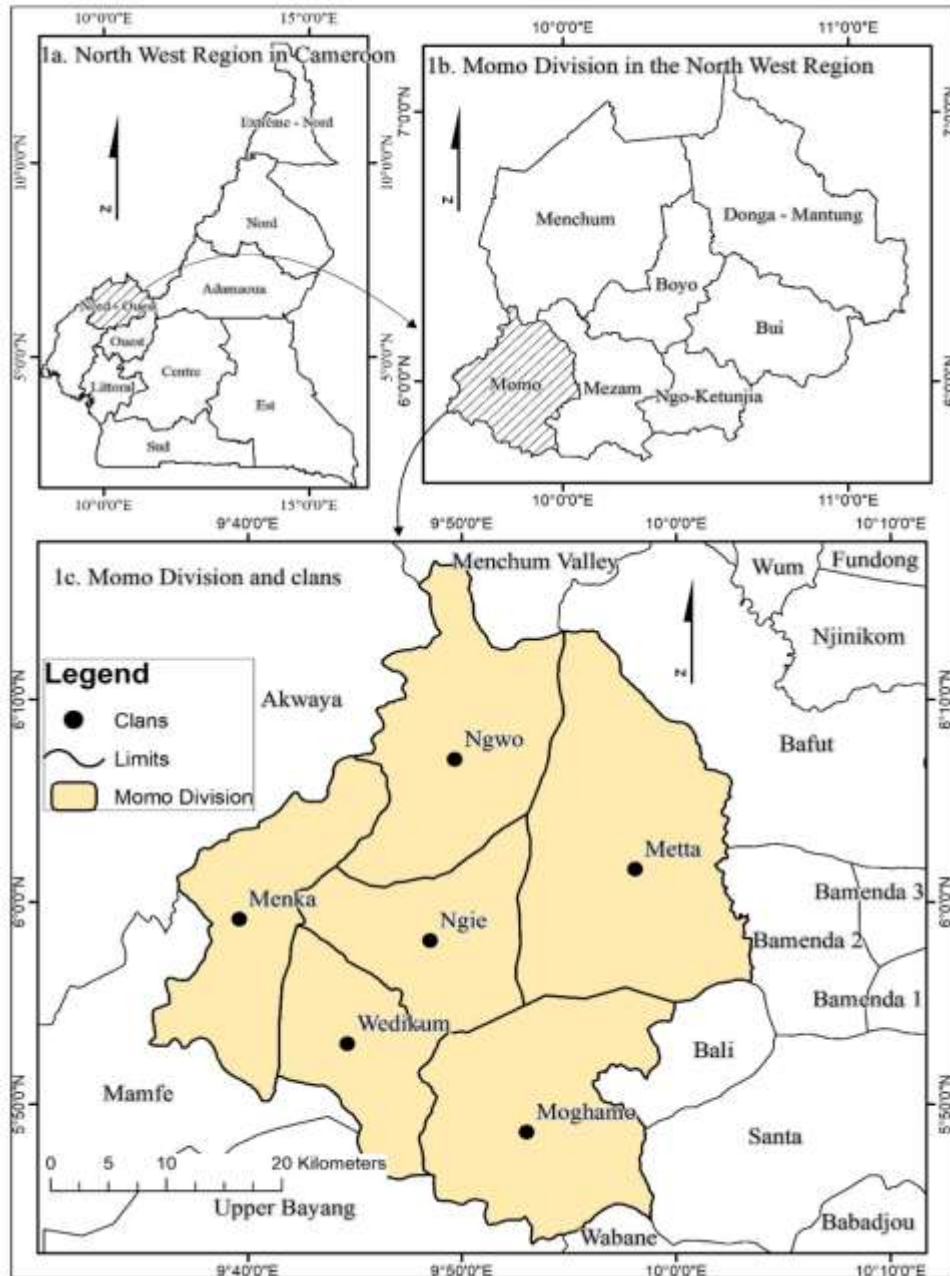
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<sup>1</sup>Nkwi, Paul Nchoji. *Traditional Diplomacy: A study of inter-Chiefdom relations in the western Grassfields, North West Province of Cameroon* (Yaoundé: SOPECAM, 1986),28

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. 28

Manyu Division of the South West Region, to the East by Mezam Division and to the West by the country called Nigeria. Consequently, she shares her Western boundary with a Nation, the Southern boundary with a Region and the rest with Divisions of the same Region. These are all elements that can influence her political and cultural institutions. The map below illustrates the location of the widikum.

**Map: location of the Widikum ethnic group in Cameroon**



The Widikum are noted with typologies of conflicts such as land boundary conflict, chieftaincy conflict, farmer grazier and inter clan conflict. Peace efforts to remedy them have registered limited success because of the continuous resurfacing of the conflicts. This was as a result of the challenges faced by peace actors.

## **II. Corruption**

Corruption was a vital challenge to peace-building among the Widikum people. The Actors involved during or after conflicts, to build peace were often corrupt in negotiating for peace.

Christopher Che noted that, corruption was one of the challenges of peace-building among peace-building actors of land and other types of conflicts among the Widikum. He posit that in the process of mediation to maintain peace among conflicting parties, cases of corruption were rampant especially among members of the Ngwo land

Consultative Board Commission. To sustain this view, he quoted an example of a case of corruption noticed in the land conflict between Mankon and Nsongwa on the land case or inspection of 2012 by the land Consultative Board that Fon (Fon is the name given to a traditional ruler in the grass field) Angwafor II affirms in his letter to the Governor of the North West Region:

Some members of the technical Subcommittee like Formefret Victor (Secretary General) of the Bamenda City Council, Kotoko Jean Pierre (Divisional Officer of Bamenda II) and even the Fon of Guzang in Batibo Widikum appointed to mediate in the issue gave Mankon land as motivation to support the deploy of seizing Mankon land. These people were currently constructing on the land.<sup>3</sup> The Fon of Nsongwa confirmed thus, “we have paid a lot of money to the land commission. There have been payments of 150,000frs, 300,000frs and 500,000frs.... In fact, we are really drained because the matter has been a financial burden to us”.<sup>4</sup>

Like what prevailed in Mankon and Nsongwa land problem, the Ngwo farmer and Fulani grazier conflict in Ngwo clan and Batibo Tibenland conflict experienced this similar syndrome. In the case of Ngwo Farmer and Fulani grazier conflict of 2006, the farmer grazier commission dispatched was accused of corruption, favouritism of the Fulani to the detriment of farmers because the Fulani with their economic might resulting from the sales of their cattle used money to corrupt the land Consultative Commission to favour them. This state of affairs remains similar in cases of land conflicts and farmer Grazier Peace Commissions in Meta and Moghamo clans of Widikum. This result to the continuous surfacing of conflicts among the Widikum.

### **III. Top Bottom Approach**

A much more challenge with peace-building among the Widikum was the top down approach taken by promoters of peace to settle conflicts such as land and chieftaincy conflicts among the Widikum speaking people in Momo Division, North West Region of Cameroon. Peace-building programmes and activities designed by Government, NGO's and Civil Society Organization from the West or North are generally not suited to specific local contexts of the Widikum indigenous people and do not address local problems. This challenge was further compounded by the presence of many of these organizations which, because of specific donor conditionalities and demands, do not take a long-range view based on developmental peace-building and do not utilize conflicts-sensitive approaches in their programmes. Their goal was often to complete projects and programmes based on time lines stipulated by donors. In addition implementers of peace-building programme among the Widikum do not seek to address specific development challenges that might have been at the root cause of the conflict such as the chieftaincy conflict in Ashong that is still a menace to peace in the Moghamo clan of the Widikum speaking people. They do not either care to adopt the bottom up approach that address specific roots causes of the conflicts. As a result, the crusade for sustainable peace in the area of study becomes an illusion. Efforts put in place to maintain peace rather caused more conflicts.

In case of the Ashong chieftaincy conflict the recognition of Mbafor as Fon of Ashong by the government in 1971, he was accompanied by Gendarmes to his palace. To further buttress this challenge, NGOs had often competed with the government of Cameroon in the area of study in their efforts to promote and maintained peace. Such competition among the actor of peace-building has exacerbated the conflicts. The gap between NGOs and the government need to be bridged in order to avoid unnecessary competition to promote sustainable peace-building among the Widikum.

Another Top-Bottom approach as a challenge to peace-building in Africa and among the Widikum in particular was that external players often attempt to engage in peace building activities without seeking sustainable solution at the grass roots levels. Very often, peace-building was managed by international NGOs let alone Diplomats, who have no intimate acquaintance with the local environment. Their peace building programmes are designed with specific strategies for implementation. This peace-approach was problematic in the sense that designers and implementers are not accountable to members of the Widikum communities of Ngie, Ngwo and Meta where such programmes are implemented.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of Tanka EchibitMpeng land boundary conflict, a Top-Bottom peace-building approach was adopted by the Divisional officer for Batibo who decided to place a ban on the piece of land in September 1986 not letting Echibit Villagers on the land. The result was persistent conflict. There was need for administration within the five Sub Divisions of Widikum in Momo Division to begin to factor the Bottom –up approach which they

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<sup>3</sup>Che. *A Concise and an Analytical History*, 155-156.

<sup>5</sup>David J., *Peace and Conflict in Africa*, 126.

must consult the local people as key actors of the peace-process to adequately break the stalemate of this challenges of peace-building initiative. The result was the continuous resurfacing of the conflicts.

#### **IV. Inability of Conflicting Parties to accept Verdict**

Another challenge with peace-building among the Widikum ethnic community in Momo was the inability of conflicting parties to accept verdict or judgement. A verdict is a decision of a jury on matter submitted to it in trial. In the case of the Widikum, most parties in either land boundary or farmer-grazier conflicts were unable to resolve their problems among themselves. Even when these matters escalated and were brought before the traditional council or conventional court such as Mbengwi High Court. Some parties were still unable to accept the decision taken by the council or court for peace to reign. Thus posed as a challenge to peace-building.

In the case of the farmer grazier conflict in Ngwo clan for instance in a surmon no. 168/2000 of 7/12/2000 of the Ngwo Traditional council, Mrs. Akumu Mirriam of Nkun summoned Adu Banu of Nkun whose cattle destroyed its crops.

The council findings revealed that Adu Banu was guilty for trespassing into the farm of mirriam which was not a grazing land. According to the verdict that was passed, Adu Banu was to pay 5000frs as fine, 7000frs as charges for crops damaged. Instead Adu Banu refused to accept the verdict of the Ngwo traditional council and went ahead to report the matter to the Sub-Divisional officer of Njikwa.<sup>6</sup> In a similar case in 1982, a land boundary conflicts developed between Tanka and EchibitMpeng Villages which was summoned in Menka clan council. The Finding revealed that, the land belonged to Tanka.

The Traditional council passed its judgement in favour of Tanka. The inability of Echibit village to accept the verdict decided to summon the matter to the Sub Divisional officer for Batibo in which a land Consultative Board was sent to visit the site. In the final verdict of the Batibo land Consultative Board of 15 September 1982, it was decided that the land under dispute belonged to Tanka village.<sup>7</sup>

Few years after, the Echibit village still rejected the verdict and continued with their clandestine and nocturnal activities on the land. This act forced the D.O of Batibo Tontu Akundoh Peter to ban their activities on the piece of land on 3rd September 1986.<sup>8</sup> The inability of the parties in dispute analysed above to accept verdicts of the courts or Actors involved in peace-building such as the land consultative Board acted as a challenge to peace-building effort in Widikum.

In addition, another evident of challenge with peace-building among the Widikum speaking people in Momo Division was seen in the chieftaincy conflict by contestants. In 1968 a chieftaincy conflict over succession developed between Mbafor II and Enongang II of Ashong village of Moghamo clan. The insecurity created by this dispute in Ashong attracted the attention of the West Cameroon Government to send a chieftaincy advisory committee to Ashong for findings with V.T Lainjo as chairman of the commission. The outcome of the findings recommended Mbafor II as the legitimate Fon of Ashong. In 1971 Mbafor II was installed as Fon of Ashong.<sup>9</sup>

Few years later, in 1974, Enongang II rejected the verdict or decision taken by the government to recognize Mbafor II as Fon of Ashong. The pro-Enongang Supporters felt that any recognition of Mbafor II as chief meant a betrayal of the will. The outcome was a prolonged struggle that dragged until Enongang II died in March 1994 and the will was handed to his son Enongang III to continue the struggle. Mbafor II also died and equally handed the throne to his son Mbafor III.

The inability to accept defeat by the pro-Enongang against pro-Mbafor divided Ashong into two. Lower and upper Ashong ruled by Mbafor III and Enongang III respectively. This state of affair of the inability of

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<sup>6</sup> Hans. "Conflict and Conflict Management in NjikwaAub Division. The Case of the Ngwo and the Fulani, 47.

Decision N0.LC 73/E/.30.01 of 15<sup>TH</sup> Sepmtember, 1982

<sup>7</sup> Decision N0.LC 73/E/.30.01 of 15 Sepmtember, 1982.

<sup>8</sup> Sub Prefectoral Order N0. 22/1986 of 3 Sepmtember 1986.

<sup>9</sup> NAB. File N0. 113/1971/1: The Ashong Chieftaincy Dispute.

Enongang to accept the verdict of the government recognising Mbafor as Fon of Ashong, rendered peace-building in Ashong difficult.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, another evident of challenge with peace-building among the Widikum of inability of the conflicting parties to accept verdict was in the chieftaincy Conflict in Akanunku village. The death of Chief Anja Ake provoked a succession dispute between Akoko Lucas Anja and Menti Ignatius Wancho. The effects of the crisis were over bearing. The village was split into two factions: the pro-Menti supporters and pro Akoko supporters. Thus attracted the intervention of D.O for Widikum –Menka Sub Division to Send a chieftaincy Consultation committee to Akanunku. The findings revealed that, an election be conducted within the king makers since there were divided over the matter. Secondly, considering that, the king-makers were responsible to decide the fate of this office on who to be enthroned as village head as the custom and tradition required. In conclusion, an election was conducted on November 1, 1997 among the king –makers by the D.O YosimbomNkong John to choose their Fon. After the election, Menti Ignatius Wancho was elected as Fon of Akanunku with a vote of 5 against 1 vote for Akoko Lucas.<sup>11</sup> Unhappy with the result, the pro-Akoko supporters constituted themselves on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1997, two days after the election and wrote a petition letter to the SDO for Momo decried that the election was undemocratically conducted. The refusal to accept defeat by the pro-Akoko made peace-building more difficult challenge because the pro-Akoko supporter refused to accept the decision of the election result.<sup>12</sup>

### **V. Weaknesses of Cameroon Judicial System**

A challenge to peace-building efforts among the Widikum in handling and preventing conflicts was the delay of judicial proceedings to pass Judgement in a conflict. In that case, the conflict escalated in courts such as the Batibo and Mbengwi High Courts, the procedure taken to establish Judgments usually take months or years. Often the Judiciary keeps adjournment of proceeding before giving the final verdict. Frustrated litigants end up abandoning their cases or taking the laws into their hands by engaging in physical combat on the said piece of land resulting in casualties.

A good example was in the case of Anjing and Ngwo land boundary conflicts of 2008 that the delay of Mbengwi high court to establish a Judgment, caused the frustrated litigants to end up abandoning their case and taking the laws into their hands by engaging in physical confrontation at the site under dispute resulting to casualties as D.O takes longer time to intervene on land boundary disputes and when the situation degenerated,, that was when they deployed quo-toting Gendarmes who inflict casualties of their own adding assault to injury. A good example was in the case of Batibo –Tiben land conflict of 1968 when the forces of law and order were brought from Mbengwi and the individuals from Tiben arrested and Jailed.<sup>13</sup>

Also administrators are not pre-emptive enough on impending conflicts and even when fore-warned of an imminent confrontation, they actors of peace –building such as D.O kept a Luke Warm attitude to prevent it from escalation. Measures taken by peace actors among the Widikum speaking people of Ngie, Ngwo, Meta and Moghamo clans to resolve disputes are implemented piece meal, occasioning their re-occurrence.

#### **Conflict of laws**

The failure of the state of Cameroon to clearly define and harmonise customary laws with conventional laws in Cameroon was a challenge or hindrance to peace-building among the Widikum. Judgement in some instance passed using customary regulatory institutions and Authorities such as king-makers and traditional councils are not accepted by state regulatory institutions whose judgement were based on conventional judicial system. For example, in the case of Tanka –Echibit land boundary conflict of 1992, judgement passed by Menka traditional regulatory peace actors whose judgement was established by “Oath” taking was rejected in Mbengwi High court. As such there was need for Cameroon state authorities to revitalize conventional laws, to reconcile them with customary laws for effective sustainable peace in the area under study and Cameroon in general.

In a typical law court in Cameroon today such as the court in Batibo, cases related to witchcraft handled under customary law were thrown away under the premise that witchcraft cannot be proven whereas, there exist institutions in a typical village setting such as Akanunku that there exist institutions such as Ekang to dictate

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<sup>10</sup>Anjoh. “Power Politics in Moghamo Clan of Cameroon”, 2018.

<sup>11</sup>Chieftaincy consultation report of Akanunku, November 1, 1997.

<sup>12</sup>H.R H Chief Menti Ignatius Wancho, Age 65, Interview in Akanunku, February 6 2020.

<sup>13</sup>Mbah, “Batibo –Tiben Land Conflict 1968 –2010”, 46.

witches and wizard through “Oath” taking.<sup>14</sup> Thus, this made the process of peace-building among the Widikum much more difficult and challenging to handle.

## **VI. Politization of Conflicts**

A very difficult challenge to peace building among the Widikum was the intervention of politicians in conflicts to make political gains. In this case, it became very difficult for peace-building to be achieved. In the case of the Ashong chieftaincy conflicts, politicians were often dragged into the conflict in order to make political gains which complicated situations and made every effort to restore peace much more difficult. These politicians include Adama Mbah, S.T Muna and Akum Fomum Peter.

In 1976, Adamu Mbah was appointed Sub section president of the Cameroon National Union (CNU) party of Moghamo clan. He exploited the Ashong chieftaincy conflict to lobby for votes to achieve his political dreams. To this effect, the Enongang faction always voted him to this post because to them, he was going to influence their course to see that the 1971 decision, recognising Mbafor II as Fon of Ashong by government be reversed. During his political career as Sub section president of the Moghamo clan, from 1976 to 1992, Adamu often presented Enongang II as chief of Ashong during branch or sub section conferences and he always took advantage during the conference to call on government to solve the chieftaincy problem in Ashong.

He made sure that he frustrated Mbafor's rule in upper Ashong. He turned this section of the village into a political setting than a traditional polity. He carved quarters in upper Ashong and named them after CNU Party organs such as New Town I, New Town II, Central New Town. Duties that ought to be performed by quarter heads were assigned to branch executive bodies of the CNU.

In 1982, chief Mbafor II complained that every activity in Ashong was carried on along party lines with party heads placed above traditional leaders at all levels.<sup>15</sup> It was normal that each time a new administrator was sent to Batibo Sub Division, Adamu Mbah and Mbafor II had to make themselves known in order to woo sympathy for their stance. As Adamu always presented himself as the political figure of the area, Mbafor II always made himself known as the chief of Ashong.<sup>16</sup> This made peace-building difficult for administration to intervene in the Ashong chieftaincy conflict because no peace actor such as the D.O was ready to disrespect the party hierarchy as it could cost his post, like-wise, he was not ready to speak against a traditional ruler as it could lead to curses.

The Ashong chieftaincy issue was therefore a difficult problem for actors of peace-building to solve. This explains why the Divisional Delegate for Batibo Sub Division Mbe Meme in 2003 said that the Ashong chieftaincy problem could be solved easily depending on the actors concerned.<sup>17</sup> Another high level politician who got involved in the Ashong chieftaincy problem was Akum Fomum Peter. He was a parliamentarian for Batibo from 1971 to 1981 who played within the two camps to triumph. Despite the fact that he was an in-law to Mbafor, he did not compromise his political ambitions with family relationship. He was aware that the population of upper Ashong was capable of influencing his way into parliament and so made it clear that he was interested in his votes and did not care about his Nephew becoming the Chief to the Ashong throne. This went a long way to complicate the process of resolving the Ashong chieftaincy matter.

Politician such as S.T muna also posed as a challenge to resolving the Ashong chieftaincy conflict. His rise to power in 1968 and 1970 as prime minister of West Cameroon and vice president of the Federal Republic of Cameroon complicated the chieftaincy issue in Ashong.

The breakaway of Muna from Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) in 1965 to form the Cameroon United Congress (CUC) was supported by the pro-Mbafor. It was obvious that the triumph of Muna made him to look back on those who sympathised with him in Ashong during the rainy days. As prime minister of West Cameroon and at the same time vice president of the Federal Republic, he therefore compensated the Mbafor for the sympathy they had shown him. He worked hard to reverse government decision of 1965 for gazetting Enongang I as Fon of Ashong. In 1971, he made it possible for Mbafor II to be gazetted as Fon of Ashong.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>HRH FonMenti Ignatius of Akanunku village Aged 65, interview Akunuku 20 February 2021.

<sup>15</sup>A complaint Addressed to the D.O. of Batibo by Mbafor II, 28 August 1982.

<sup>16</sup>Anjoh; “Power Politics in Moghamo Clan”, 6.

<sup>17</sup>Mbe Meme, D.O for Batibo remarks while handling the Ashong Chieftaincy Crisis in 2003.

<sup>18</sup>NAB File No. 113//1971/1: The Ashong Chieftaincy Dispute.

From 1971, the peace-process in resolving the Ashong chieftaincy conflict became much more difficult as Ashong fell under two chiefs. The intervention of the political class on conflicts was a potential threat to peace-building among the Widikum. The interventions of S-T Muna and Akum Fonum of Ashong so far have exacerbated the conflict making peace initiative difficult to be attained.

Another challenge with peace-building among the Widikum in conflict management was that some peace actors took sides with the parties in conflicts. This was most especially with chieftaincy conflicts where peace actors such as government favoured the nominees who supported the ruling party. According to Francis Adigwe;

Another way or means government uses to control the local population and which was peculiar to Africa is the intervention in succession or chieftaincy disputes by the central government to favour the nominees who supports the party in power. The nominee would then be expected to use his influence during the election times to secure victory for the governing party at the centre<sup>19</sup>

This was the dilemma that confronted the chieftaincy conflict of Akanunku in the 1990's that Peter Brown Engwo of the ruling Cameroon People Democratic Party (C.P.D.M), supported Akoko Lucas, a rival to the throne which complicated the chieftaincy conflict.

## **VII. Administrative Bottlenecks**

A challenge faced by peace actors in the prevention of conflicts among the widikum was the numerous administrative bottlenecks to arrive at a peace process. In any process of land or farmer-grazier conflict, there was often the tendency for the parties to undergo numerous stages before the matter was led to rest. This was most noticeable with land conflicts that often end in court levels where the case was adjourned several times before the verdict was heard. A case in point was the Ashong chieftaincy conflict. Sam Forchibe, a notable to Mbafor II confirms that, supporters of Enongang II organized the Nere dance in 1990 in their palace to counter the pro-mbafor camp. This stage of the conflict dragged them to court which the case was extended to 1996 and was adjourned over 22 times. In 1996, 7 of the 18 accused of the Enongang faction for organizing the Nere dance were made to pay fines of 70.000 FRS each.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, the presence of many state institutions in the prevention of conflict such as land conflicts was another challenge of maintaining sustainable peace among the Widikum. In Cameroon the government has put in place many administrative channels as institutions of peace building through which land or farmer-grazier conflict can be settled. These institutions include the land Consultative Board with headquarters at each Sub-Divisional level, with D.O as chairman, the court, law enforcement officers. All these peace-building bodies instead caused the prevention, control of the conflicts to be inefficient because each of the institutions in the cause of promoting peace and managing of a conflict claimed efficiency and at the end of the day end up not solving the conflict.<sup>21</sup>

Another challenge with peace building among the widikum was failure of government to fully allow the regulatory bodies to play key role in conflict prevention. Regulatory bodies such as *Abeng* have acted in the prevention of conflict and promotion of peace in the pre-colonial and part of the colonial era. By this note, there was supposed to be the lone body to manage conflicts among the Widikum because most of their members are the custodians of the community land.

But conversely, the government of Cameroon has failed to fully allow this regulatory body to play their roles. The only place that the government gave them was a bench in the Land Consultative Board wherein their decision was insignificant.<sup>22</sup> This posed as difficulty to maintaining sustainable peace of the multiplicity of conflict among the widikum.

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<sup>19</sup>Letter-Circulaires N0. 02150/2, MINAT du 13 Septmeber 2020.

<sup>20</sup>San Forchibe, Aged 84, Notable in Ashong interview Janaury 15; 2021.with reference to the court of Appeal of the then North West Province, Bamenda N0 BCA/NS/30C/94

<sup>21</sup>Kingsley AyukEyong. "Regulatory Societies and the Management of land conflicts in the Banyang country, from Precolonial Timesto 2018 (PhD Thesis in History, (The University of Bamenda, Janaury 2021) ,263.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.,267.

One other challenge with peace building effort among the widikum people was linked with marriage relationship. Inter marriages contributed on the other hand very greatly to promote peaceful –co-existence and reduce tension between conflicting parties, conversely within Ashong this was not the case. Marriage relationship was sometimes strained because the spouses belong to opposite camps of Ashong chieftaincy conflict. Some parents of the Enongang camp swore that they can never take the hand of a Pro -mbafor daughter into marriage. With this challenge, marriage in Ashong was not easy because one was not allowed to marry to or from a family of his or her choice. The resulting tendency was that they either move out of the village or get confined to particular families.<sup>23</sup> Marriages which were use as mechanisms to break the stalemate on the opposite camps among the other villages of widikum were seen repulsive in Ashong. This posed as a challenge with peace building among the widikum and the Ashong chieftaincy in particular. Another challenge with peace building among the widikum was that external players such as NGOs often attempt to engage in peace building activities without seeking sustainable solutions at the grass roots level. Very often, their peace initiative programs often end with top elites who have no intimate acquaintance with the local environment. This peace building approach has problems because the actors of peace are not accountable to the parties in conflict. As such community has no ownership of peace building processes designed by external players, minimizing the possibilities of any one having to account to members of local communities of Ngie, Ngwo, and Meta. The lack of experts to promote peace was another challenge with peace building initiatives to maintain peace among the widikum such as Ngie, Moghamo. Sometimes during conflict such as land boundary problems, the peace actor's dispatch to maintain peace rather cause more injury than solved the problem due to the lack of expertise. In the case of Batibo-Tiben land conflict, gendarmes sent to maintain peace rather escalated the conflict by arresting and wounding many. This helped to maintain peace in a short run and occasioning the conflict to re-occur in the long run. This posed a difficult challenge with peace building. Even members of the Land Consultative Board Commission are randomly selected to mediate in a conflict who lack the skills of expatriate knowledge.

### **Conflicting Interests**

A challenge to peace building among the Widikum community was the conflict over interest among parties to achieve their goal has exacerbated conflicts. Thus making any peace initiative difficult. A case in point was the Ashong chieftaincy conflict that has dragged over the years due to the conflicting interest between the Mbafor camp and Enongang camp over the throne. Whatever the case it was clear that if this conflict dragged for so long, it was because the parties wanted a win-win peace approach is not a zero –sum game of win-lose peace approach. Because no parties wished to loose. Thus make every peace effort to reconcile both camps difficult. To further aggravate situations, there was an outburst of bitterness among each party. The Enongang camp accused the Mbafor camp for conniving with the German administration to kill their cherished and brave ruler CheoAkamanda who succeeded Enoh Tembeck while the Mbafor hold that Akamanda was not a successor to Enoh Tembeck. According to them, Tebi was rather the successor to Enoh Tembeck.<sup>24</sup> This conflicting view of interest over interpretation on the rightful successor of Enoh Tembeck between both camps has gone a long way to drag the succession conflict in Ashong over the years and thus making peace building initiative difficult to be achieved.

To further make peace initiative difficult among the widikum such as the case of Ashong chieftaincy conflict, Mbafor argued that Peter Enongang who became Enongang 1 was never traditionally installed when mbafor 1 was in prison by the British administration but acted as regent after the death of mbafor 1 in (1951). The Enongang argue that the British had deposed mbafor and install the Enongang and put him in the gazette of (1965) as chief of Ashong.<sup>25</sup>

### **VIII. Loss of Confidence in State Authorities and Absence of the Rule of Law**

A major challenge with peace building among the Widikum communities was the loss of confidence on state legitimacy, authorities and the absence of the rule of law. Due to poor governance structures and the decline in public services have exacerbated conflicts and many peace building initiatives difficult to attain. Most parties at conflict among the Ngie, Ngwo and Moghamo have lose confidence on some state authorities to mediate for peace such as Divisional Officers, Chieftaincy Advisory committee to mediate due to high rate of corruption and their irregularities of their records to respect the law. In the case of the chieftaincy conflict in Ashong, in 1965 the government of Cameroon gazetted Enongang 1 as the village head of Ashong against the Mbafor's. Not long as the conflict persisted, in 1971, the state peace actors again at the time reversed the

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<sup>23</sup>Standly M.N “Government and Politics in Moghamo Country 1880 –1961”, 54.

<sup>24</sup>Anjoh, “Power Politics in Moghamo clan of Cameroon”, 12.

<sup>25</sup> NAB, File N0. 1b/1971/1, chieftaincy dispute in Ashong Village of Batibo Sub Division Momo Division, 1971.



decision to gazette Mbafor II as the new village head of Ashong.<sup>26</sup> The implication of this new decision has exacerbated the conflict making the Enongang faction as well as Mbafor's faction to lose confidence on state legitimacy to build peace. Thereby making peace effort to resolve the chieftaincy conflict difficult to attain. This hold same with the Akanunku chieftaincy conflict that on 22 may 1998, the Akoko camp wrote a letter to the minister of territorial administration, decried of the decision of the DO of widikum for making it possible for Fon Menti Ignatius to be elected as Fon of Akanunku.<sup>27</sup> They declared that the election was undemocratically conducted. They argue that Chief Menti Ignatius does not belong to the royal family. They called on the minister to cancel the decision.

### **IX. Problem of Sustainability**

One major challenge with peace building among the Widikum to contained conflicts was the problem of maintaining sustainable peace over a long duration without reoccurrence of conflicts. The measures of peace initiative implemented by some peace actors such as DO, Land Consultative Board to settle conflict were most often marred with a lot of weaknesses because it did not handle the root causes of conflicts. This gave rise for their reoccurrence, thus leading to the problem of sustainability. In the case of the chieftaincy issue of Ashong, Rose Fri posit that, the peace deal established by the government of Cameroon in 1971 between the two parties, recognizing Mbafor II as the Fon of Ashong in which EnongangII and his ally Adamu Mbah recognized Mbafor II as chief of Ashong lasted only for 3 years. This recognition ushered in a brief moment of peace in Ashong as Mbafor II equally recognized his rival Enongang II as chairman of Ashong traditional council.

The seven king makers that had been divided in favour of Mbafor II and Enongang II were brought together. One would have tempted to conclude that; the old age chieftaincy conflict was resolved but the peace lasted only from 1971 to 1974 when anarchy returned in 1974 between the two camps in full gear. This raised the problem of sustainability of the peace initiative since the peace deal was short-lived. Because in 1974, Enongang faction felt that, the peace of 1971 failed to adequately handle the root causes of the conflict. The Pro-Enongang II king makers namely Joseph Mukum, Jacob Njeck and Joseph Tenyi Abi felt that any recognition of Mbafor II as chief meant a betrayal to the will of Enongang I handed to them before his disappearance, .Second, Neako who had been replaced as chairman of Ashong traditional council equally envied the position and his alliance with Mbafor II only helped to weakened Enongang position as chairman of the traditional council. Most importantly by 1972, it became incumbent on Enongang II to transfer the traditional symbols to Mbafor II as requested by the administration (government).Enongang resistance to hand over the traditional items led to his removal as chairman of the traditional council and his seat was thrown out of the palace by Neako.Following this action, Enongang II and his ally swore never to respect any further administrative decision.<sup>28</sup>

Rose Frii further added that, the outcome was a prolonged struggle that dragged until Enongang II disappeared (lost) in March 1994, and was succeeded by Enongang III to continue the struggle. On this note, this raised the challenge with peace building efforts among the Widikum and the North West Region in general about the unsustainable conflicts because the peace actors do not adequately addressed the root causes of the conflict such as the case of Ashong chieftaincy conflict.<sup>29</sup> .

### **X. Lack of Experts and Reoccurrence of Conflicts**

Peace-building initiative among the Widikum ethnic communities of Ngie, Moghamo,Ngwo, Menka and Meta clans have witnessed reoccurrence or persistent of Land boundary and/or farmer-grazier conflicts after a few years of peace agreement established by peace actors. This challenged the efficiency of the peace building activities of actors involved in the promotion of peace among the Widikum. And the North West Region with land boundary problems amidst a multitude of the stakeholders to promote peace.

Lang Michael identify Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) in the Archdiocese of Bamenda as one of the peace crusader, whose efforts to promote peace in the area of conflict had not been very successful because of the steady increased in the number of land boundary conflicts within the region. He pointed out that, the most

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<sup>26</sup> *West Cameroon Gazette NO. 31, Vol. 12..of 29July 1972, Published by the United Republic of Cameroon.*

<sup>27</sup> Interview with HRH Fon Ignatius Menti of Akanunku, age 65, Akanunku, 8 February 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Anjoh. "Power Politics in Moghamo Clan of Cameroon", 7.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 7.

serious weakness of this institution is the lack of professionalism.<sup>30</sup> The peace organizations lacked the capacity to operate professionally when faced with some conflicts. The poor handling of the conflict give rise for their reoccurrence such as Bali Nyonga and Ngyengmbo land problem.

He further supported that scholars like John Fengo Observed that the peace building actors of the Justice and Peace Commission especially those stationed at the local level such as in the local communities of Widikum , seem to focus more on their faith –based motivation for peace-building, forgetting that peace building requires some skills and experience.<sup>31</sup> Though these faith-based peace workers have heavy influence in the North West region and Widikum in checking conflicts, land boundaries and farmers' grazier conflicts has been a difficult task. Inspite the presence of peace actors in the community of Widikum such a JPC with branches in Njindom (Meta clan) of Widikum, land boundary conflicts are still recurrent inspite of JPC'S extensive grassroots presence. It has failed to bring lasting peaceful resolution in cooling down Bali-Nyonga-BawockBali, -Nyonga-Ngyengmbo, Batibo-Tiben land conflicts. To put a nail on the JPC, he noted that Bamenda Grass fields remains an epicentre of inter-ethnic conflicts with some secular peace building organizations criticizing the JPC for failing to enhance sustainable peace. He concluded that it appears JPC's peace-building activities successfully ended hostilities and acted to turn it into lasting peace in the short and long-run, because the deep-rooted causes of these conflicts including structural, behavioural and above all, attitudinal aspects have not been rolled away. The persistent or reoccurrence of land conflicts such as in Bali-Nyonga-Ngyengmbo(Meta) Ngie-Andek, Batibo-Tiben, Oku-Mbessa was because the JPC has yet explored, analysed, questioned and reframed their positions and interests as way of building lasting peace. To Lang, this failure rest on the fact that the JPC does not have experts, enough trained personnel and adequate capacity.<sup>32</sup>

Another challenge faced by peace actors in mitigating conflicts among the Widikum and North West region in general was that some Peace Building Actors do not intervene in certain conflicts when their interest was threatened. Michael Lang criticised the JPC of the Archdiocese of Bamenda for turning a blind eye to the numerous conflicts between the Catholic Church and host communities.

Across the Archdiocese, there existed numerous waves of land conflicts between the church and local communities such as Weh, Bambui, Wum, Bambili as well as Widikum. From 2012 to 2014, the Catholic Church represented by the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Bamenda Cornelius Fontem Esua was involved in land conflict with Mbororo pastoralist in Nzah village. This contradicted the objective of the JPC of peace-building. The numerous Farmer Grazier Land Conflicts, the inter-ethnic conflicts, Between the Bali Nyonga and Widikum villages represents a silent example. The JPC rather sees the Catholic Church as instrumental in spreading peace and reconciliation throughout the Archdiocese. Lang further challenges the JPC claims on his website that it was actively engaged in constructive conflict management and the prevention of violence at all levels in order to build cohesive and stable communities.<sup>33</sup>

To him, this assumption was an over blown claim given that the faith-based institution has failed in managing some conflicts, does not intervene in every inter-ethnic conflict such as Ekoh-Ngwo and Tanka Echibit Land Conflicts among the Widikum and thus has turned a blind eye to the numerous land conflicts between the Catholic church and its host communities was a major challenge to the peace initiative of the institution and other Peace Actors in the Bamenda Grasslands and Widikum in particular of Cameroon.

## **XI. Sad Memories of the Past**

A significant challenge with peace building process to manage conflicts among the Widikum people in Momo Division centred on the sad memories of the past conflicts especially their reoccurrence. The parties engaged in conflict accumulate sad injury incurred on one party by another rival or party. The offspring's of parties inherited this past injury to revenge. A case in point was the on-going Ashong Chieftaincy Conflict that begun in 1870 and has evolved between two contesting parties of the royal family. The Enongang camp and the Mbafor's camp due to sad memories of the past. The seed of the conflict rest on the fact that in 1870, Enoh Tembeck Fon of Ashong who had several sons handed over the throne before his death to Tebi amidst hatred and jealousy by Akamanda. Fon Tebi plotted with the German Colonial administration and Akamanda was eliminated. In the guise of the sad memories of the past experiences, the off-spring of Akamanda was

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<sup>30</sup>Michael, Kpughe Lang. "Inter-Ethnic Conflict Management and Prevention in Cameroon North West: Assessing the role of JPC of the Catholic Archdiocese of Bamenda" in *Asian Journal of Peace Building* Vol. 7, NO. 1, 2019.

<sup>32</sup>Interview with John Fengo of Mbessa by Lang Michael 2019.

<sup>33</sup>Lang. "Assessing the role of JPC", 15.

determined to revenge what the father had suffered. Under this circumstances, the Enongang camp of Tebi offspring's versus Mbafor's camp of Akamanda offspring's emerged to compete on the throne of Ashong with far-reaching consequences on the Fondom.<sup>34</sup>

Another case of manifestation of sad memories of the past occasioning conflict was in the Akanunku chieftaincy conflict of 1992, following the death of Chief Anja Ake. In 1992, a chieftaincy conflict developed between Akoko Lucas Anja (son of the missing chief and Menti Ignatius. A school of thought holds that, the missing chief was not related to the royal family of Akanunku. They argued that Chief Anja Ake was a migrant from Anjing village. Proponents of this school of thought hold that Menti-Tintoh who was the legitimate son of Akanunku, before his death had willed the throne to his son Menti Ignatius Wancho who was still very young to assume his throne. They argue that the missing chief Anja Ake who was a regent to the Fon was asked to carter for the throne before Menti Ignatius become of age to officially assume the throne. Surrounded with this opportunity, Anja Ake seized the opportunity with the support of the government to assume the throne and gazetted as the Fon of Akanunku village.<sup>35</sup> It was within this context that, attempt by his son Akoko Lucas Anja to ascend the throne was rejected by the King-makers of Akanunku village and opted that the throne be handed to Menti Ignatius of the royal family. Under this context, Menti Ignatius was determined to reverse the sad experiences to seize over the throne to redefine the royal family.<sup>36</sup> In the case of Bali Nyonga-Ngyengmbo land conflict of 1994, the clash between the parties led to the death of Daniel Atanga of the Ngyengmbo and his corpse was carried and deposited in a nearby stream called "Mebindoh" by the Bali elements. This sow seeds for a spirit of revenge by the Ngyengmbo people.

In 2013, Ngyengmbo youths decided to avenge the sad memories of 1994 to stab a Bali on the land under dispute (Ngarifum) who was later rushed to the Mbengwi District Hospital and later transferred to the Bamenda Regional Hospital where he finally died.<sup>37</sup> This accumulation of sad memories of the past helped to make peace-building activities among the Widikum a difficult challenge to maintain sustainable peace.

## **XII. Hate Speech**

Hate Speech became a prominent challenge with peace-building efforts among the Widikum ethnic communities of Ngie, Menka, Ngwo and Meta clans in Momo Division of the Bamenda Grasslands of Cameroon. In the dissemination of information about conflicts, some individuals of the opposite camps of conflict used derogatory language or words which invited violence, making peace efforts difficult to be achieved.

In the process of peace-building, hate speech posed a challenge to peace efforts, as reconciliation became difficult among parties. Even though in Cameroon, there exist various legislative acts to regulate hate speech before, during and after violence such as prison or fines for those convicted. However, no prosecutions have been recorded on the basis of the laws. Hate speech became endemic among Cameroonians at the national, regional and local levels such as the communities of Widikum because there was a lack of political will for implementation. In the case of Etow-Wando, inter-clan conflicts among the Widikum, Chief Tangwo Linus of Echibit opines. "Schools in Wando clan have a right to disassociate themselves from the youth Day Celebration Centre at Akanunku in Etow-clan, for Wando differ entirely in Language from Etow-clan".<sup>38</sup> The hate speech retarded peace initiative of the Actors involved to mediate peace and complicated the inter-clan conflict as Etow villages decided to ban some villagers in Wando clan from farming.

In the case of Akanunku Chieftaincy conflict that begun in 1992, there was evidence of hate speech was manifested. One King-maker Enow Marcus stated that "The missing chief Anja Ake was not the legitimate Fon, but a stranger and migrant from Anjing village who assumed the throne of Akanunku as Regent to the legitimate ruler, Menti Tinto".<sup>39</sup> A challenge to peace-building initiative among the Widikum is the role of women. Modern civilization has significantly eroded the relevance of adhering to traditional norms and culture in situation of conflicts. The direct training of children by mothers among the Widikum has gradually demished as women are

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<sup>34</sup> NAB, File N0. 1b/1971/1, The Ashong Chieftaincy Dispute.

<sup>35</sup> Nab, File No. AF 37/411/21. Assessment Report on the menka district, Mamfe Division 1924.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Marcus EnowTipa, Age 85 King Maker of Akanunku, who part take in the decision, February, 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with NdasiChoforn, Age 61, chairman of Ngyenmbo Traditional Council, Ngyenmbo, May, 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Chief Linus Tangwo of Echibi, Age 60, Echibi, February 6, 2014.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Marcus Enow Age 85 February 2016.

burdened with economic challenges thereby leaving the early training in the hands of maids, in enlightened communities such as Ngie, Meta and Moghamo and later in life to school. Within the local communities of Widikum, the women in the course of their economic activities particularly with increasing rate of poverty to some extent abdicate their traditional roles at home.<sup>40</sup> The few time with the children at home are often devoted largely to watching films thereby taking the primary love of children from the family to what has contribute to the numerous conflicts among the Widikum speaking people.

The culture of individualism was a challenge to peace initiative among the Widikum. This culture was strange to Widikum communal life has it created a lot of problem such as the lack of accountability, love for fellow human being and commitment to peace. The implication was that, the right attitudes that should be cultivated from home and help to nature the young ones into becoming responsible and loving member of the society at large is lost. The Western culture largely emphasized individualism while Widikum culture was rooted in collectivism. The emergence of Western civilization and of Western governmental system particularly since colonialism has eroded significantly the Authority of traditional institutions and peace building. The failure of alternative mechanism for conflict management and peace building such as the police, court system, church, local and government of Cameroon added to the challenges of relying solely on traditional models of peace-building. Also, the Western approach to conflict management and peace initiative do not consider reintegration of the offender back to the society and the interest of the society or family to which the offender belonged. As such, however limits the role of peace actors as agents of peace.<sup>41</sup> One of the challenges faced by Actors of peace to maintained peace among the Widikum was in the land boundary conflict between Anjing and Ngwoat” Entoa”. Both villages have clashed over this piece of land since 1905 when the Germans arrives the area. In 1950s and 1970s other phases of the conflict were witnessed leaching to destruction of crops and loss of human livers. All peaceful initiative employ both by the traditional institution and government for parting to come together for mutual understanding failed due to the nature of the conflicts, because it involves two Sub Divisions.

In 2000, Anjing –Ngwo villages still clashed over the disputed piece of land. Attended by the Fon of Ngwo HRH colonel Dr. Hans Anna and the Fon of Anjing HRH Fon Mbi Zacheus to settle this dispute failed. Clashes between thetwo villages still continued on the piece of land that in 2000 attracted the attention of the Divisional officer for Njikwa and Widikum to intervene. The disputed land was consideredto be inter Sub Divisional matter. Today, the land boundary matters remain a threat between both communities amidst the presence of peace actors. The Bali –Nyonga and Ngyenymbo land boundary problem over “Ngarifum” remain a challenge to the peace-building initiatives employ by Actors of peace such as government. The land conflict started in 1901 and has evolved over time with successive phases of clashes such as in1994, 2009 and 2013 Conflicts with devastating material and human losses. All peaceful measures employ by the government of Cameroon under the auspices of the Governor of the North West Region to maintain peace have failed. The Bali-Ngonga – Ngyengmbo land boundary disputes remain unsolved.<sup>42</sup> Chieftaincy crisis in Baraka village of Wando clan has also been one of the challenges that traditional institutions have failed to build peace. On 14 August 1992, chieftaincy conflict in Baraka village of Widikum begun between Tanga Lawrence Abia from Wenbenmpah family and Pastor Jeramiah Tabit from Wendoraba family. Today the village is divided into two factions, those who favoured the chief and those who opposed his chieftaincy and wanting that the throne be handed to one of the Children of the missing Chief Mbe Aja. All attempts by the Baraka traditional institution and government of Cameroon to end the Chieftaincy crisis has not been successful. Threats from the opposite Camp made the reigning Chief Tanga Lawrence attempted to resign as Chief because of persistent attempts to kill him through witchcraft.<sup>43</sup>

### **XIII. Disrespect of Succession Rule**

A major challenge with peace building among the Widikum by actors of peace was distortions of Succession procedure on the institution of chieftaincy. The intervention of the colonial Administration in the institution of chieftaincy caused a lot of changes making it difficult for Actors peace to bring lasting solution on chieftaincy conflicts such as the case of Akanunku and Ashong.

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<sup>40</sup>Anweting Kevin .1 and OgarTomy. “Traditional Roles of African Women in Peace Making and Peace Building: An Evaluation” In GNO’s *An inter Disciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Practice Vol. 1. (2013). 12.*

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Christopher NdasiChofor ages 61, Chairman of Ngyembo Traditional Council, Ngyengmbo, 10 May 2021.

<sup>43</sup>Akon. “Traditional Insitutions and Conflict Management “, 88.

In Akanunku, a council of king makers (*Abeng*) was responsible for selections and enthronement of a successor to a missing Chief. However, the advent of colonialism distorted this succession practices. As two family of succession to the throne emerged that is Menti family and Ake Family that each has been on each other throat on the throne of Akanunku village. This was a similar case in Ashong chieftaincy conflicts Between the Mbafor and the Enongang's family caused by the distortions of the Germans and British. It has been very difficult for peace Actors to provide acceptable solution to these conflicts because each family claimed right to the throne. For instance, when the Germans arrived Widikum, they dethrone those Chiefs who were not loyal to them and replaced them with individuals who were loyal to sale the interest of the Germans.<sup>44</sup> In the same vein, when the British took over the administration of Widikum, the Indirect Rule System of Administration was introduced. Through this system, the British interfered with the chieftaincy institutions through the creation of Native Authorities.

This meant that traditional rulers were renamed as Native Authority. Also during British administration, Chieftaincy Institutions were preserved and modified to serve the interest of the British. This explains why warrant chiefs were appointed in some villages such as Chief Anja Ake of Akanunku to serve the interest of the British. This state of affairs resulted to a situation where a Chief who willed much authority over his subjects suddenly started losing them and some appointed warrant Chiefs gained more influence because the colonial master needed them to achieve their absolute control of Widikum. Hence the traditional checks and balances that existed were neutralized even after independent.

### **Cost of Reconstruction**

The cost to rebuild, or reconstruct the materials damaged in post conflict among the Widikum was enormous. Even to reconcile parties to resume normal life takes a lot of human and financial resources which become a difficult task for peace Actors to come by. The peace initiative of peace actors such as the government was often retarded by financial resources to rebuild the economy and infrastructures destroyed during conflicts so as to appease parties and avoid a spirit of revenge. Most often, the government depends, sole on external sources of finances than internal for reconstruction which often delay and when given was attached with a lot of conditionalities. This rendered the government inefficient as a peace crusader. A major challenge with peace building among the Widikum was to make peace as inclusive as possible and transform peace agreements into a deal that can be "owned" not only by the parties that signed the agreement but also by those who did not take part in the peace talks, including civil society and the Widikum population at large. As part of such efforts, it will be important to address issues of democracy and decentralization in new and creative ways.<sup>45</sup> There was also the need to reverse a trend whereby local developments in many parts of Widikum such as Ngie, Menka and Ngwo have become increasingly conflictual and led to serious outbreaks of violence and human suffering such as Wando-Etow inter-clan conflict of 2014 over issue of funds to boost development. These were sensitive issues with no quick –fix solution. If internal and external factors do not fully converge in favour of lasting peace, there may still be a settlement. In such cases, sustained third party involvement become important, particularly in land boundary conflicts such as Andek –Tezie land conflict that end with a negotiated compromise rather than total victory and capitulation.<sup>46</sup> Statistically, these conflicts are more likely to restart as one or the other party seeks to undo the compromise in their own favour. Third parties must try to anticipate future problems that the peace agreement did not address and which may undermine implementation. Monitoring events and providing reliable channels of information should be lessons to the peace Actors involved in mitigating the conflicts among the Widikum. This will help to build confidence, reduce uncertainty, improve communication and defuse alleged violations.

### **Conclusion**

The quest for development and the desire for a peaceful society pre occupy every nation in the world. Therefore, conflicts remain a hinderance in the attainment of development and peaceful co-existence of societies such as Widikum in the Bamenda Grassland of Cameroon. The multifaceted lands and chieftaincy conflicts among the Widikum have led to the emergence of peace crusaders or actors within and without to mitigate these conflicts and give peace a chance. The actors which so far has been directly or indirectly involved among the JPC in the Archdiocese of Bamenda, NGO's, Civil society, German and British colonial administration and the government of the Republic of Cameroon. The works of these peace actors have been hampered by some challenges making them to register limited successes to maintain sustainable peace. The challenges faced

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<sup>44</sup>NAB. MG/09/V133/1, Native Court of Menka, Ref. N.187/30/1925, 18 March 1930.

<sup>45</sup>Sorbe "Challenges to Peace –Building in Sudan. The role of the International Community", 2.

<sup>46</sup>NAB File N0 f/6/19/2/4, 'Inter-community Land Dispute between the V.H of Andek and the V.H of Tezie in the Bamenda Division.

included ; Corruption ,inability of conflicts parties to accept verdict, high cost of reconstruction ,Top-Bottom Approach ,weaknesses of Cameroon Judicial system, Administrative bottle necks, politization of conflicts, conflicting interest, problem of sustainability ,lack of experts to build peace and sad memories of the past, hate speech, disrespect of succession rule, tension between peace building and state building and the lack of comprehension between customary laws and conventional regulatory laws.

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