

## **Editorial**

Rich documentary evidence exists to show the nature of violent transitions that many African countries went through following the epoch of independence. The period was characterised by natural calamities, non-inclusive political systems and blunt governance failures. Some countries went through some economic development successes and soon lapsed into decline. National GDPs of many states fell irredeemably. During the cold war, Africa underwent a violent period throughout the continent and experienced persistent armed conflicts and mass disruptions of civilians.

As the Cold War period ended and hope seemed to be returning to the world, conflicts in Africa re-ignited; Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and the DRC. At the same time, insurgencies such as the factions in DRC and Somalia powered by resources such as diamonds and charcoal resurfaced. This situation stagnated prospects for economic growth for Africa considerably. This stagnation however has been followed by the 21<sup>st</sup> century optimism for Africa and given hope for an end to inability and chronic poverty. There are signs for higher life expectancies on the continent, eradication of pandemics, better education and higher incomes. This promising scenario, should not however conceal the reality that instability and violence will persist and even increase in certain circumstances-reflecting the changing nature of conflict in Africa. There is every likelihood of increases of non-state combatants in conflicts as are the cases of Mali, Darfur and Eastern DRC. There is also the threatening tendency of the factions to be transnational and convergent thus posing danger to nations beyond their operational bases.

In this and the subsequent issues of the *Africa Amani Journal*, the editorial will pursue in detail trends of conflict in the region with particular attention to terrorism, sexual and gender-based violence, electoral violence, resource centred conflicts, electoral violence, triggers of conflicts from climate change, human and arms trafficking, piracy and cybercrimes. In the current issues authors have gone into deeper analysis of issues related to *terrorism, protection of civilians in transitional circumstances, transitional justice in post-civil war peace building and perspective on conflict models*.

The editorial welcomes you to this second issue of the journal with encouragement to join in both readership and contribution of material for future editions.

**Prof. Timothy Gatara**

***Editor***

## **Trends and changing nature of conflicts in the region**

*Brigadier Patrick M. Nderitu, Director International Peace Support Training Centre*

Challenges to peace and security in the region remain daunting. Electoral violence threatens peace in Burundi; sexual and gender based violence are as pervasive as ever, especially in the conflict zones of South Sudan and the Great Lakes Region; terrorism and its mutating nature accompanied by virulent radicalisation have reached alarming proportions; not least among these are the threats of piracy, human and weapons trafficking, cybercrimes and environmentally triggered conflicts rotating around access to vital life sustaining and development resources such as water, food and oil.

The International Peace Support Training Centre, (IPSTC) finds itself at the centre of these challenges. As one of its key responses, a new research agenda has been adopted to guide the work of the centre in 2015 as well as into the foreseeable future. This agenda recognises the trends and the changing nature of conflict in the region. This theme underlies the entire agenda. It encompasses subjects ranging from terrorism strategies in Eastern Africa to transnational insurgency in Africa with focus on the rise of the El Shabaab as an extremely prickly terror entity; the effects of the cross-border migrations on security; management of resource-based conflicts, alternative models of peace support operations, de-radicalisation of youth and responses to sexual and gender-based violence in the region.

As the centre delves into research and publication on the above challenges, I take the opportunity to welcome you to the second issue of the Centre's new journal, '*Africa Amani Journal*'. It is another milestone in advancing the sharing of knowledge in peace and security and in enhancement of deeper understanding of challenges to peace and security in modern times. More importantly, the application of knowledge gained to meet the challenges that face regional peace and security. In the current issue the journal presents work on the protection of civilians in disarmament initiatives within the context of the African Stand-by Force. The work examines the traditional disarmament and security threats to civilians and salience of '*practical disarmament*' in the protection of civilians. The journal also carries insights into '*transitional Justice and post-civil war peace building*' and attempts to address the question on how civil wars emerge after conflicts end. Among main works carried by the journal is also the application of the conflict theory to understanding conflict in Kenya and how it can be ameliorated or even averted.

In the days ahead and the coming issue of the Journal, I welcome all stakeholders in peace and security and those from related disciplines to not only the readership of the journal, but also to contributions from all. The Centre recognises with appreciation the continued support of the Government of Japan through UNDP and the partners of the Centre.

**Director,**

***IPSTC.***